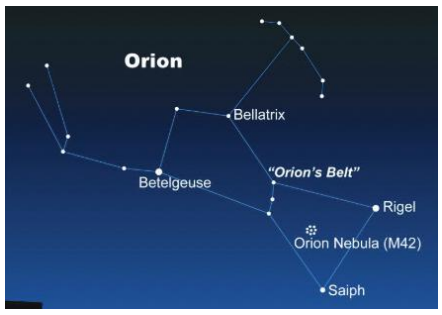
Local Health Highlights

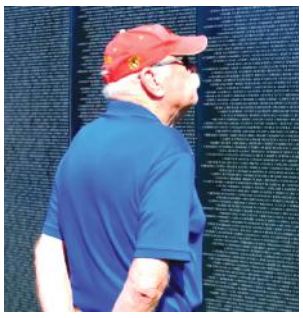
See Page 6-9



Nighttrek: What to See in the March Sky - See Page 11

"The Wall that Heals" Coming to the Valley

See Page 4



ENCINO ENTERPRISE

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Dead Body Found in Encino Back Alley

Officers responded to the 5400 block of Yarmouth Ave. in Encino last week after the Los Angeles Fire Department located a deceased individual behind an apartment complex. The body was found in the parking lot adjacent to the dumpster area and was initially reported as a suspicious death. After an investigation, the authorities determined the death was a result of natural causes. Details on the identity of the individual, who was found in a wheelchair, have not been released.

Studio City School Denies Responsibility for Teen's Death in Parking Lot

Campbell Hall School in Studio City is pushing back on allegations that their establishment is responsible for the death of a 15-year-old student. Cosmo Silverman died on the property last June when he was crushed between two cars during after-school pickup. The parents are now filing a wrongful death lawsuit citing "severe negligence and systemic failures in supervision and campus safety." The case further stresses that the school only implemented required safety improvements in the parking lot following his death. In response to the lawsuit, the private school claims that the student's "own negligence was the sole and proximate cause of the accident and any injuries they sustained." Campbell Hall has filed a cross-complaint against the alleged driver of the vehicle that struck Silverman, the driver's father who the school claims owned the car and the car company Rivian, which the cross-complaint claims manufactured the vehicle.

Daylight Saving Starts This Sunday - Spring Forward!

Are you noticing the days getting longer and the light lingering longer? Daylight Saving Time is almost here! Get ready to "spring forward" on Sunday, March 8, when clocks move ahead one hour at 2 am. In this digital world, most clocks will reset themselves but set a reminder to set any analog clocks one hour ahead on the night of March 7. Enjoy the longer evenings for a good amount of time as Daylight Saving won't end until Sunday, Nov. 1, 2026 at which time clocks "fall back" and reset to 1 am.

Sepulveda Basin's Newest Fire Prevention Fighters? Goats!

In an effort to combat fires that frequently plague the area, the Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Reserve welcomed some new, albeit temporary, residents last week. Over 1,000 goats were released on 35 acres to feast on brush and invasive plants in order to mitigate fire-fighting efforts and encourage further growth of native plants.

Spearheaded by multiple organizations including the San Fernando Valley Audubon Society, Mayor Karen Bass' office, the City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Councilmember Padilla's office and local LAFD stations, this pilot project aims to safely clear hard to access areas in a sustainable way. The idea initially struck in 2020, but navigating permission from multiple departments and delaying start dates thanks to Mother Nature took time and the goats have now been set loose!

Mike Choi of Fire Grazers Inc. provided the "trip" or group of goats whose grazing has been proven to be an ecologically-sound, cost effective and efficient means of fire-brush clearance. They currently occupy the field near the Apollo XI Model Airplane facility, adjacent to the wildlife reserve.

The goats (all of which are female!) will be allowed to graze for a few weeks before the official start of birding season, around March 15, when they will then be removed from the basin. An electric fence keeps them in a designated area, where a herding dog and a goat herder also reside to watch the trip and keep predators and intruders away.

The Army Corps of Engineers granted permission and a Right of Entry for Fire Grazers to occupy the space, while the city paid for a biological survey of the land before the goats' arrival. The funding for the goats themselves came from the San Fernando Audubon Society but member Pat Bates stresses, "it's thanks to the support and push of the mayor's office who went above and beyond or this wouldn't have happened."

If the pilot program proves successful, there is the hope to bring the goats back in mid-July in addition to other mitigation offerings. As locals can attest, fire has been an ever-constant threat in the basin and any efforts to reduce those threats is welcome. As stated by Katheryn Barton, President of San Fernando Valley Audubon Society, "SFV Audubon is committed to keeping our parks and reserves safe for wildlife as well as residents."

One of the thousand grazing goats ready for her closeup.

Members of the San Fernando Valley Audubon presenting a check to Fire Grazers Inc for their trip of goats.

CALENDAR

Community Calendar

* The Community Police Advisory Board will hold a meeting on Wednesday, March 11, at 6:30 pm with featured speaker Councilmember Bob Blumenfield. All are welcome at the meeting, which will be held at the Coomunity Police Station (19020 Vanowen St. in Reseda). Free parking at the West Valley Police Station or behind the library.

* The Paley Center for Media's annual television festival returns from April 4 to 12 at Dolby Theatre in Hollywood with cast conversations and screenings from *Scrubs, Emily in Paris, Shrinking, The Pitt, Nobody Wants This*, and more, plus a 50th anniversary reunion of *Charlie's Angels*. For the full schedule of events and to purchase tickets, visit paleyfest.org.

* The Encino Neighborhood Council will be holding their Public Safety meeting on Monday, March 16, at 7 pm via Zoom. For the agenda and link, visit the committee page on encinonc.org.

* The Sherman Oaks Encino Chamber of Commerce will hold their next "Lunch Break Live" on Thursday, March 12, from 11:30 am to 1:30 pm at Lemon Zest. The cost is $35 for members and $55 for non-members. RSVP at shermanoaksencinochamber.org.

* The Encino Tarzana Library will host "LA Made Presents: Songs Across Cultures With Natalya Grinbaum-Smyrnos" on Tuesday, March 17, at 6 pm. Natalya Grinbaum-Smyrnos is a graduate of music school in Almaty, Kazakhstan, a participant in music festivals across the United States and a laureate of the prestigious "Singing Issyk-Kul 2024" international festival. She will perform a collection of heartfelt and soul-stirring songs in Russian, Ukrainian, Hebrew, and English, showcasing the beauty and emotion of diverse musical traditions.

* Join the San Fernando Valley Audubon Society for "Birds & Beer" on Wednesday, March 18, from 6:30 to 8:30 pm. Meet fellow bird enthusiasts to look for great horned owls and more on a brisk walk around the golf course and Woodley Creek. After an approximate two-mile walk, arrive at Best Ball Bar for snacks and a no-host bar around 7:45 pm. RSVPs are required and can be done by emailing pat.bates@sfvaudubon.org or calling 747-237-3720.

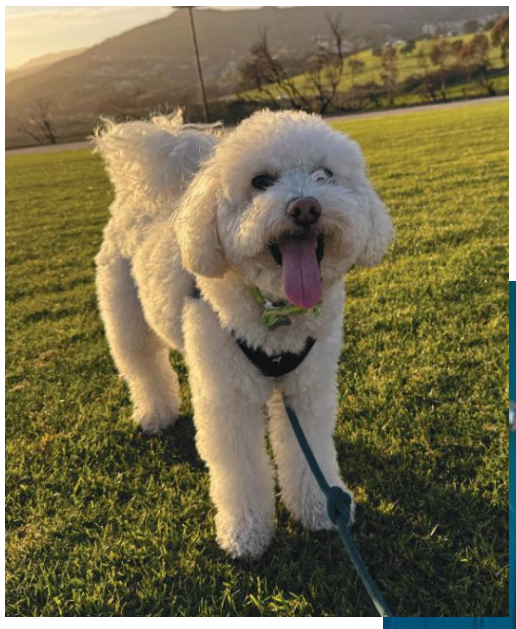
* Westfield Fashion Square, in partnership with the American Red Cross, will hold a blood drive on Tuesday, March 10, from 10 am to 4 pm. Schedule your life-saving appointment at redcrossblood.org.

* The West Valley Regional Library will host "LA Made Presents: First Women of Los Angeles With Mary Mallory" on Saturday, March 7, at 2 pm. Women have often been the movers and shakers for organizing the community, establishing the arts and even building monuments. This program will look at a few of these visionaries and pioneers such as Arcadia Bandini, Alice Barnsdall, Biddy Mason, Charlotte Bass, Christine Sterling, Christine Wetherwill Stevenson, Lois Weber, Anna May Wong, Clara S. Holtz and Aimee Semple MacPherson.

* Join Sage Learning in Retirement from 9 to 11 am on Friday, March 20 for their Spring Showcase at the St. Andrew & St. Charles Episcopal Church, 16651 Rinaldi St, Granada Hills. Learn about their lifelong learning classes and social activities in the San Fernando Valley. RSVP by calling 818-831-5064 or emailing sagelearners@csun.edu.

* Southern California Garden Club will hold their next program, "Celebrating Our Rose Garden," at 11 am on Tuesday, March 17. It is presented by NGC Gardening Consultants Natalie Bloxham and Robin Pokorski who will present the story and progress of the Rose Garden at the Sepulveda Garden Center. The event is located at the Sepulveda Garden Center, 16633 Magnolia Blvd. in Encino.

~~People~~ (Pup!) in the News



This past Friday, **Oscar**, a miniature poodle mixed mutt from Encino, was part of a truly unique playdate in Los Angeles that brought together children and dogs with a common link.

Both four-legged and two-legged friends all have had a hole in their heart that has been successfully treated!

As a pup, Oscar's parents were told he couldn't get neutered because he had a heart murmur. After discovering he had a common congenital heart defect known as a patent ductus arteriosus (PDA), Oscar was treated with an Abbott minimally invasive device (that spared him from open-heart surgery).

At the playdate, the active 5-year-old couldn't stop playing catch with the three kids there and met Mia (a Poodle/Schnauzer) – who are all thriving after overcoming the same hole in their heart.

Much like an emotional service animal, Oscar is a friendly example for kids that it's possible to overcome setbacks and live a happy, healthy life.

A few Abbott representatives were on hand to share in the joy and play a bit of fetch with patients and pups!

English Channel

By Rodger Sterling

English Channel offers the best of the late editor Rodger Sterling's columns that ran continuously in the local papers since 1968.

• Lawyer Roger Stanard, a dyed-in-the-wool Dodger baseball fan, tells us "Baseball is a religion without the mischief."

• Did you know that over 65 million years ago the first dinosaur blouse boutique opened? It was called Try Sara's Tops.

• When you think about it, good health is merely the slowest possible rate at which one can die.

• Glendene Zuk sends in these bumper stickers for old folks:
- I asked my wife if old men wear boxers or briefs. She said depends...
- And...I'm so old food has replaced sex in my life. Now I can't even get in my own pants.

• In the 60's people took acid to make the world weird. Now the world IS weird, and people take Prozac to make it normal.

• Lynn Homsy got a laugh with this one: While creating husbands, God promised women that good and ideal husbands would be found in all corners of the world. And then he made the earth round.

• We're at the age...so I went in for my check up before a colonoscopy, and one of the many sheets of information they gave me was one informing me that Anthem Blue Cross is the only insurance company that does not cover anesthetic for a colonoscopy procedure! Seriously? Should I tell their execs to try it without? Or maybe just where to stick it?

• Didja' hear about the boy who thought he was extraordinarily bright because his father called him "son?"

• Your fingers have fingertips, but your toes don't have toe tips. Yet you can tiptoe but not tipfinger. Go figure?

• Drink wine, it isn't good to keep things bottled up!

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The Wall that Heals Coming to the Valley

The Wall that Heals, the three-quarter scale replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and accompanying Mobile Education Center, is coming to Woodland Hills at Pierce College, March 9 through 22.

In November 1996, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (VVMF) introduced a mobile version of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. This replica, unveiled on Veterans Day, was created to bring the memorial's powerful message to communities across America. Since its first tour, The Wall That Heals has visited hundreds of locations, allowing millions to connect with its enduring legacy.

This powerful exhibit honors the more than 58,000 service members whose names are etched on the wall, while providing a place of reflection, healing and education for veterans, families and the community.

The Wall That Heals exhibit features a three-quarter scale replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. The replica is 375 feet in length and stands 7.5 feet high at its tallest point.

Like the original memorial, The Wall That Heals is erected in a chevron-shape and visitors can do name rubbings of individual service members' names on the wall. The replica is constructed of Avonite, a synthetic granite, and its 140 numbered panels are supported by an aluminum frame. Machine engraving of the 58,281 names along with modern LED lighting provide readability of the wall day and night.

As on the original wall, the names on The Wall That Heals are listed by day of casualty. Beginning at the center/apex, the names start on the east wall (right-hand side) working their way out to the end of that wing, picking up again at the far end of the west wall (left-hand side) and working their way back in to the center/apex, joining the beginning and end of the conflict at the center.

Admission is free and open to the public. All are encouraged to attend.

After 41 Years... Blissful Sleep Springs to Online Format

By Lucie Volotzky

After 41 years in business, Blissful Sleep is closing our doors — but this is not goodbye. We are moving forward and continuing online with e-commerce.

Our journey began in 1984 at the indoor swap meets, where we proudly served six different locations across Los Angeles. In 1988, we opened our first store on Sherman Way near Alabama. We were very successful there until the 1994 earthquake damaged the building — our merchandise survived, but the roof did not.

In 1995, we relocated to 6949 Topanga Canyon, where we have proudly served our community ever since.

In this store, I raised four wonderful children, and today I am blessed with six grandchildren. My four children all worked in the business. They learned responsibility, work ethic, and how to build success in life. While they have chosen different career paths and will not continue in the mattress industry, I am so proud of the people they have become.

Customer service has always been our priority. We are deeply grateful to our loyal customers and dedicated employees who helped make these 41 years possible.

Although we are sad to close this chapter, sometimes life calls for change. We will continue to serve you online, and we will keep the same phone number. I will always be available to answer your questions — because for me, serving you has never just been about selling a mattress. It's about helping you get a good night's sleep.

For the next month, we invite you to visit us for our liquidation sale. We are offering discounts up to 70% on floor samples and selected merchandise (while supplies last — first come, first served).

On March 14, we will host a farewell event in partnership with the Woodland Hills Chamber of Commerce, the Winnetka Chamber of Commerce, and the Northridge Chamber of Commerce. We would love to see you there — but you don't have to wait until March 14. Come visit us anytime during this final month.

Thank you for being part of our family of blissful sleep. We look forward to seeing you and serving you - now and online.

With gratitude,
Lucie Volotzky and the Blissful Sleep Family

Thank you for being part of our family of blissful sleep. We look forward to seeing you and serving you – now and online.

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HEALTH

It's Important for Families of a Senior to Make a Plan

By Sandy Rosenholz

As our new year has begun, it offers something powerful to seniors and their families: a fresh opportunity to plan, protect and prioritize health. While many people focus on resolutions, the healthiest decision a senior family can make is simple: make a plan. Planning ahead reduces stress, prevents crisis decisions, and creates peace of mind for everyone involved.

Consider this first step. Meeting with a professional who understands senior care. Too often, families try to manage everything on their own. They do their best, but without guidance they can miss valuable resources, benefits, safety upgrades, or care options that could improve a loved one's quality of life. A knowledgeable and trusted advisor can help evaluate needs and outline smart next steps before small issues become major problems.

A thoughtful family discussion is also essential. Gather everyone and talk honestly about the senior's current condition- physically, medically, mentally, socially, financially, and in terms of daily activities. Is mobility changing? Are medications being managed properly? Is there loneliness or isolation? How are finances structured for long-term care? These conversations may feel uncomfortable but having them early avoids confusion and conflict later. Transparency builds unity and planning can keep you out of crisis mode.

Legal preparation is another cornerstone of a healthy new year. Important documents should be current and easily accessible: Trusts, Wills, Durable Power of Attorney, Health Care Directives, HIPAA authorizations, POLST forms, DNR instructions, and written end-of-life wishes. If private custodial care becomes necessary, using a licensed, bonded and insured in-home care agency provides protection and reliability. Agencies offer trained caregivers, supervision, insurance coverage, and backup staff if someone calls out sick.

Most importantly, remember that we are living longer than ever. Extra years are gifts. Staying active and engaged keeps both body and mind strong. Encourage exercise appropriate for ability, social outings, community groups, faith involvement, hobbies, etc. New friendships and new interests can begin at any age.

The new year is not just about adding years to life — it is about adding life to years.

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Lead the Fight Against Alzheimer's

The Alzheimer's Association is seeking respected community and business leaders to serve in key volunteer leadership roles for the Walk to End Alzheimer's.

Executive Event Chair: Serve as the lead volunteer champion for the walk, working alongside association staff to drive mission impact, community engagement, and fundraising success. This high-profile role guides the Executive Leadership Team, secures top sponsorships, and helps shape the future of the event.

Executive Leadership Team Members: Join a team of influential leaders committed to raising awareness, recruiting sponsors and company teams, and helping exceed the walk's fundraising goals. Ideal for leaders passionate about community impact and corporate engagement.

Commitment: 10–18 months.

Impact: Meaningful leadership, community visibility, and progress toward a world without Alzheimer's.

To learn more or express interest, contact: Ronda Wilkin: San Fernando Valley Walk Executive Event Chair at rondawilkin@gmail.com.

Helping Seniors Navigate Selling Their Homes

By Scott Friedman

It's a rude awakening when a parent dies. Growing up, my father, Morton Friedman, was the biggest and strongest thing in my life. I was devastated when he passed 10 years ago. It also forced me and my mom to make some difficult decisions regarding her future. We tried live-in help, but in the end the only thing that made sense was to sell her home of 60 years and move into a senior community.

This is where it gets interesting.

I found that she had a very difficult time using a computer, had a very difficult time reading the 150 or so pages in a transaction (contract, disclosures, etc.) and had a very difficult time remembering what we discussed.

It took time and patience to walk her through the process of selling her home, sorting her possessions, deciding what to take to a new community – and even choosing that community.

It made me look at my job in a whole new light.

Selling a property for seniors, or for children of seniors, requires more than the routine sale and opening escrow. It involves working one-on-one with the seniors, documenting the process, and then making sure they understand step-by-step what they are doing and what decisions they are making.

I have assembled an entire team of Senior Real Estate Specialists (SRES) to work with seniors and the children of seniors to avoid all of these situations. On my team I also have a will and trust attorney, a senior escrow specialist and a member that will pack, move, set up the estate sale and discard unwanted items. We work together to make senior moves as easy and uncomplicated as they can be.

For more information, contact me at 818 317 2011 or scottmfriedman@yahoo.com. Contact me so I can help you and your family.

Friedman is a Realtor with Coldwell Banker Realty Sherman Oaks. He is also a Seniors Real Estate Specialist, short sale and foreclosure resource, certified negotiations specialist and is licensed in Medicare supplements and long term care.

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Fairwinds West Hills Offer Retirees Five-Star Fun

Fairwinds West Hills retirement community prides itself on “five star fun.”

Fairwinds offers its residents a wide choice of living arrangements, from studio apartments to a two-bedroom deluxe unit.

The beautiful building set among gardens and a walking path offers a large community room where the Wii tournaments, opera lectures, book club and more take place, residents gather with family and friends and a full schedule of activities is held.

The monthly rent at Fairwinds includes all the niceties of a hotel - with weekly housekeeping and linen service, cable TV, all utilities except for phones, and three meals daily in the elegant dining room.

Meals are offered from a full menu each seating with wait service. There is a full service salon on site, as well as a library, computer room and laundry facility. Scheduled transportation takes residents to shopping, events, activities and medical appointments.

Fairwinds is a retirement home, but residents can gradually move into assisted care as needed. Staff can offer assistance with bathing, dressing, medical management, incontinence, diabetes support and transferring. Eventual hospice care is also available.

One unique service is that assisted living care can be offered on a temporary basis such as after an illness or operation.

Fairwinds is located at 8138 Woodlake Avenue. Call (818) 938-2816 to schedule a tour.

Rise in ACL Tears in Young Female Athletes

Lindsay Vonn made headlines when she decided to continue her plans of competing in the Olympics despite suffering from a torn ACL. While the spotlight was on the Olympian, surgeons have been warning that this injury is perhaps the biggest health issue they are currently seeing in youth sports, outside of concussions.

Females are three to six times more likely to suffer from a torn ACL than males, with studies showing an increase of 59% in reconstruction procedures for girls aged 13 to 17.

An anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) is a fibrous band of tissue in the knee that connects the thighbone to the shinbone. Most injuries stem not from an intense collision, but rather a hard pivot or hard stop when the knee has incredible force put upon it that it just can’t handle. It happens quickly and painfully.

The reason more girls seem to suffer from ACL tears is possibly due to anatomical and hormonal differences not prevalent in men. Wider hips can often create an inward knee tilt and estrogen leads to more ligament laxity.

The reason for increasing ACL tears in high school athletes is often a combination of factors: playing year-round and increased pressure on the knee, not having enough health resources like athletes at collegiate levels have and slacking on strengthening routines.

However, prevention is possible if more attention is put into warm-ups before play and targeted moves to strengthen the area. A 20-minute warm-up called FIFA 11+ has shown it can cut ACL tears by up to 80% and is available for free on YouTube or printed out as a reference exercise sheet.

While it’s typical that young athletes experience the most ACL issues in soccer, any athlete can benefit from the training to build a stronger muscle and prevent injuries.

TIMING IS EVERYTHING.

And the time is now at Fairwinds.

From our signature program, PrimeFit Wellness, to a community calendar filled with activities, it’s the perfect time to start your tomorrow, today.

Call 818-938-2816 to schedule your tour today and ask about our Rent Freeze until 2027!

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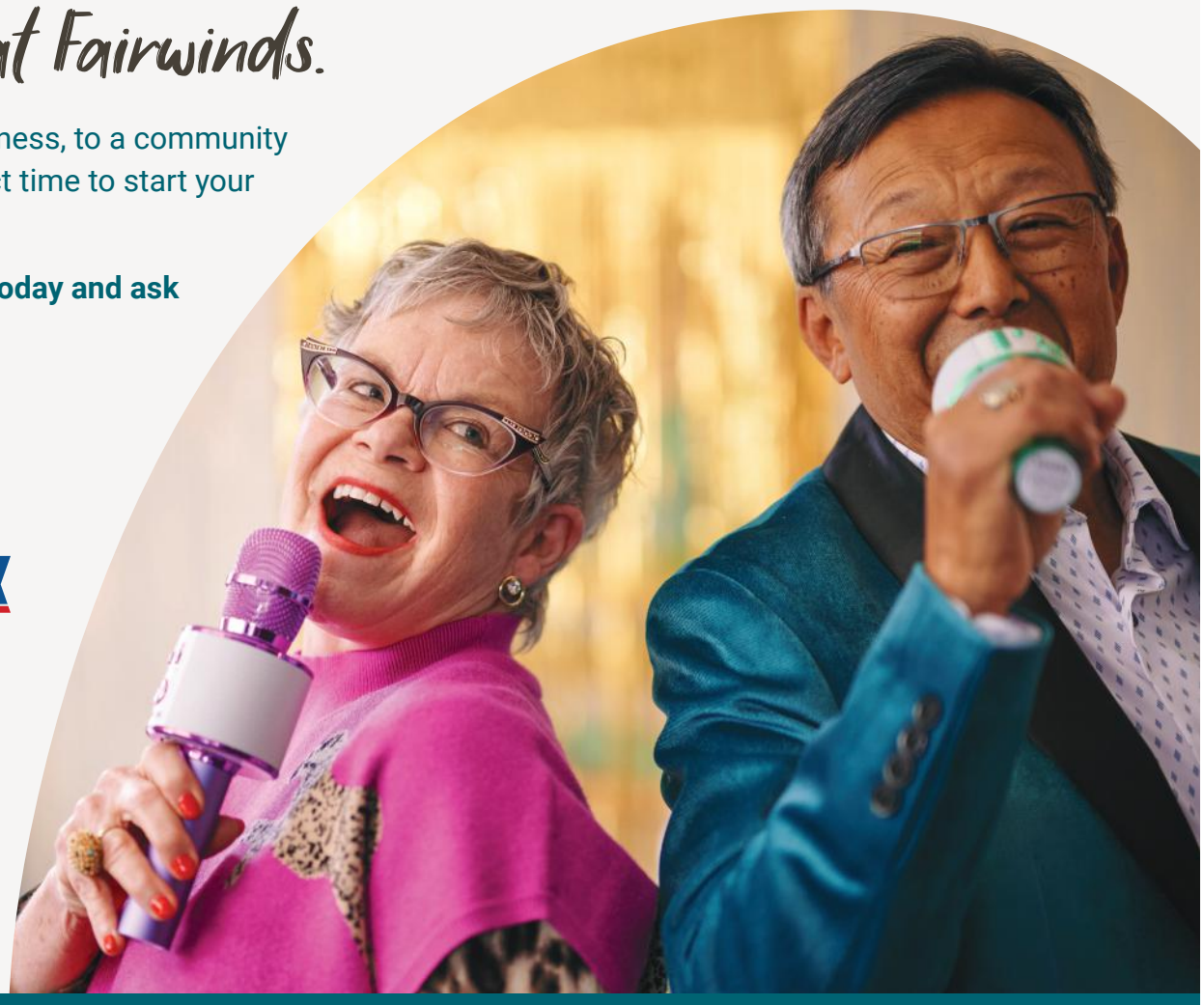

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REO SPEEDWAGON TRIBUTE
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Abbey Road
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August 2
New Romantics
TAYLOR SWIFT TRIBUTE
August 9
Start Me Up
THE ROLLING STONES TRIBUTE
August 16
Super Soul Group
MOTOWN
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LED ZEPPELIN TRIBUTE
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Megan Hilty, Jennifer Simard, Michelle Williams, Taurean Everett and Cast in the Original Broadway Cast of Death Becomes Her. (Photo by Matthew Murphy and Evan Zimmerman)

Broadway in Hollywood Announces 2026–27 Season

Broadway in Hollywood is proud to announce its new 2026–2027 season, featuring seven Los Angeles premieres direct from Broadway, a celebrated rock theatrical classic and the highly anticipated return of two of Broadway's most beloved blockbusters. All productions will play at the iconic Hollywood Pantages Theatre, located in the heart of Hollywood at the legendary intersection of Hollywood & Vine.

Broadway in Hollywood President Jeff Loeb states, "Live theatre creates a connection you simply can't replicate - the shared anticipation, the collective laughter, and the moments that leave an entire room breathless. Our 2026–2027 season brings together extraordinary surprises and bold storytelling from seven Los Angeles premieres and iconic favorites that audiences have been waiting for - including two Tony-Award winning Best Musicals from back-to-back Broadway seasons. Get ready for a theatrical lineup eager to bring Los Angeles audiences under our gorgeous roof to feel it and see it - TOGETHER."

The 2026-2027 season begins with the L.A. premiere of *Water for Elephants*, a breathtaking theatrical event that brings circus magic, romance, and daring stagecraft together in a visually stunning production filled with heart and spectacle.

Next, the season ignites with the electrifying L.A. premiere of the 2024 Tony-winning Best Musical *The Outsiders*, a gripping and emotionally charged adaptation of the iconic coming-of-age story that pulses with cinematic staging and a powerful contemporary score.

Rock history storms the stage with a new revival of *The Who's Tommy*, the legendary Broadway rock opera that redefined theatrical storytelling and remains a landmark event for music and theatre lovers alike.

Audiences will then be transported by the vibrant rhythms and infectious spirit of Havana with the L.A. premiere of *Buena Vista Social Club*™ , an uplifting story of big dreams, second chances, and the unbreakable bonds forged through making music together.

Comedy and intrigue collide with the L.A. premiere of *Operation Mincemeat: A New Musical*, the wildly inventive and Olivier Award-winning musical comedy that *Entertainment Weekly* proclaims as the #1 Broadway show of 2025!

The season continues with the L.A. premiere of the 2025 Tony-winning Best Musical *Maybe Happy Ending*, the charming and deeply moving new musical that blends heart, humor, and futuristic imagination into an unforgettable theatrical experience.

"Live theatre creates a connection you simply can't replicate – the shared anticipation, the collective laughter, and the moments that leave an entire room breathless."
–Jeff Loeb, President of Broadway in Hollywood

Spectacle and romance return with the L.A. premiere of *The Great Gatsby*, a lavish and sweeping new musical adaptation that captures the glamour, longing, and decadence of the Jazz Age.

Finally, audiences will delight in the L.A. premiere of *Death Becomes Her*, a drop-dead, hilarious, spectacular new musical that blends comedy, glamour, and theatrical magic into an unforgettable and dazzling finale to the season.

As previously announced, Hollywood Pantages Theatre will welcome back two Broadway blockbusters to Los Angeles as season add-on productions: Disney's *The Lion King* and *Hamilton*. Season ticket holders who purchase or renew into the new 2026-2027 season will have priority access to both productions: immediately for *The Lion King*, and beginning Tuesday, March 24, for *Hamilton*.

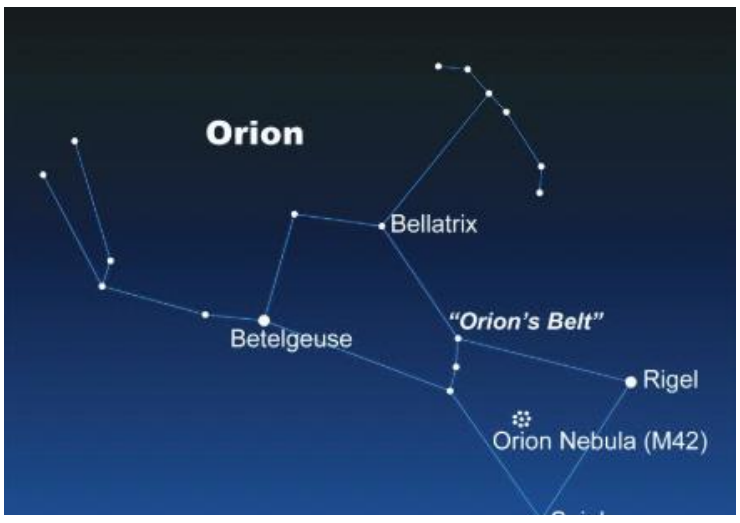
Season ticket packages are available now at BroadwayInHollywood.com/SeasonPackages or by phone at 866-755-BWAY (2929) (M-F; 9 am - 5 pm PT and Sat; 9 am - 3 pm).

Nighttrek: What to See in the March Sky

By Neill Simmons

The whole month of March brings us a brilliant Jupiter in all its glory. Look straight up to see the "King" of all planets after sunset. Four of Jupiter's 95 known moons are visible through binoculars. These four moons - Io, Europa, Ganymede and Callisto were discovered by Galileo in 1610, which provided early evidence for a sun-centered solar system.

For our night owls: A total lunar eclipse occured in the early morning on Monday, March 3 between the hours of 1:50 am and the full totality at 3:04 am. Totality lasted one hour and ended at 4:03 am. The Moon will be a copper red color during this time which makes it look like the planet, Mars. A total lunar eclipse takes place when the Earth comes between the Sun and the Moon and its shadow covers the Moon perfectly.



March's full Moon is known as the Worm Moon. It is believed this name referred to earthworms appearing as the soil warms in early spring drawing birds such as robins and signaling the changing of the season. At this time, the Moon will be in the constellation Leo the Lion.

On March 8, a Venus and Saturn conjunction will occur, with the two planets appearing very close together in the low western sky shortly after sunset. A conjunction occurs when celestial objects appear close to each other in the sky. This is an optical illusion caused by the observer's perspective since the objects are usually millions of miles apart. Every night from now until September, Venus will be getting brighter and brighter each evening. Look west.

One of our favorite constellations, Orion the Hunter, will be shining in the west. Orion is best found by locating its "belt" made up of three bright, evenly spaced stars in a straight line. Look for the reddish star Betelgeuse which is Orion's shoulder and the blue star Rigel which is his foot. to identify the full hunter constellation. In addition, look to the left of Orion to find the brightest star in the sky, Sirius, which is in the constellation Canis Major.

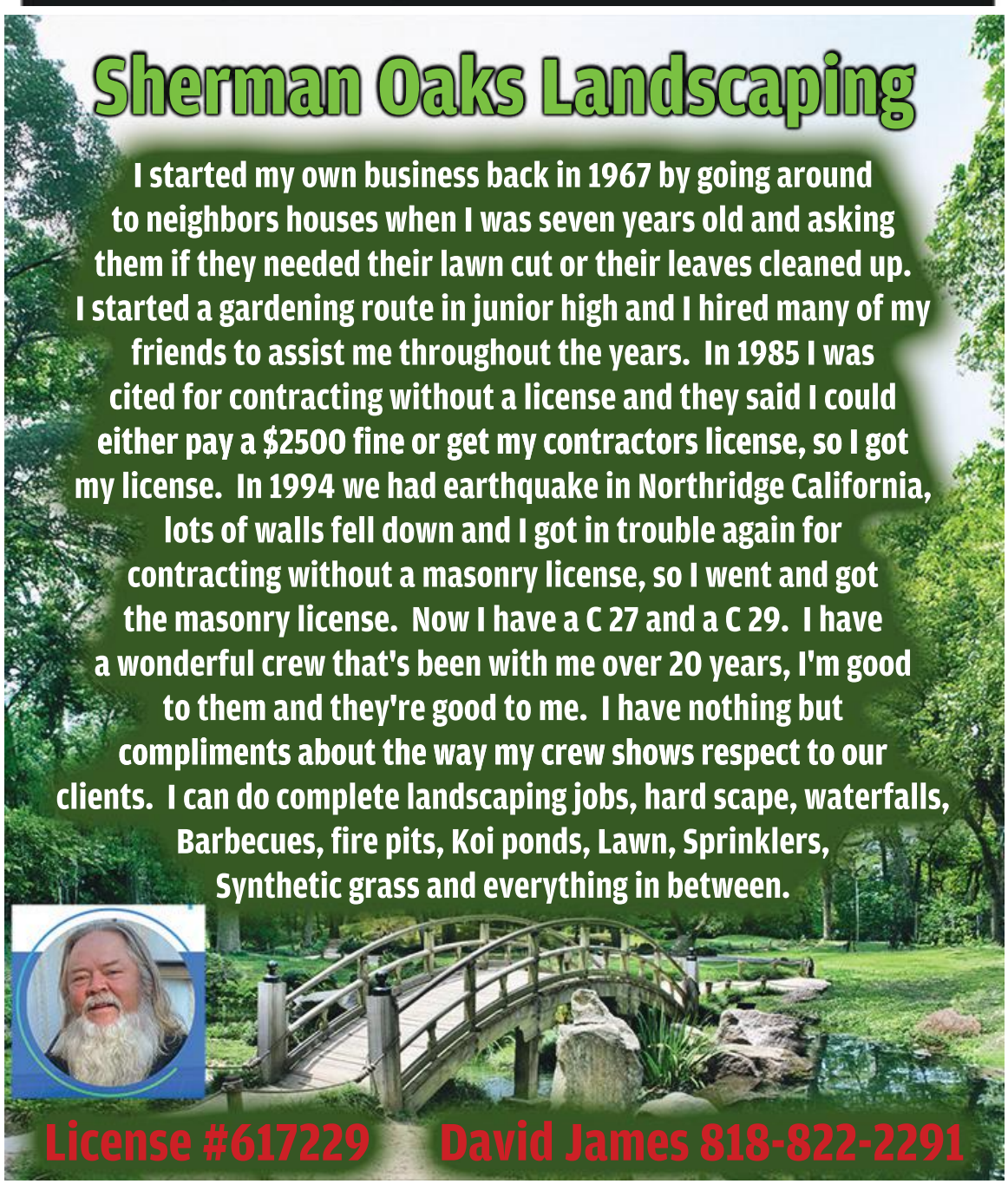
Orion is best found by locating its "belt" made up of three bright, evenly spaced stars in a straight line.

In March, the Big Dipper is a prominent feature of the spring night sky. Look northeast during early evening. It is now oriented "upside down" or standing on its handle. The Big Dipper is not a constellation. It is an asterism, which is a recognizable pattern of stars that is part of a larger constellation, Ursa Major. The most critical function of the Big Dipper is its role as a pointer to Polaris, the North Star. Polaris sits almost exactly above the North Pole. Once you find it, you will know which was is north, and consequently, east, west, and south.

When Elon Musk founded SpaceX his dream was to set up a colony on Mars. A lofty goal, mostly because we've really only sent rovers to take pictures of Mars. But now Musk wants SpaceX to change gears and instead colonize the Moon. According to Musk, a city on the Moon would take about 10 years to build. Don't book your ticket just yet!

Mark your calendars! On Friday, March 13 at 7 pm, the Ventura Country Astronomical Society (VCAS) will host a FREE and OPEN TO THE PUBLIC lecture. The guest speaker will be Sarah Elizabeth McCandless, Navigation Engineer at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory. It will be held at the Hillcrest Center for the Arts in Thousand Oaks.

When not stargazing, Neill Simmons is an Investment Executive with LPL Financial in Woodland Hills. If you have any astronomy or financial questions, he may be reached at (818) 936-2626 or emailed at neill.simmons@lpl.com.



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