

Voice of the Village

◆ the ◆ good ◆ news ◆ newspaper ◆

Volume 2, Issue 6

online at voiceofthevillage.org

June 1, 2011

LEADS:

New Congressional Districts - Your Help is Needed "Call to Arms"-page 2

WHO WE ARE:

Noemi Saves the world again - Sunland Resident to spend Summer at High Rocks-page 11

SCHOOLS:

History Comes Alive at Sunland Elementary School -page 18

On This Day We Celebrate...



On the Fourth of this month, July, we celebrate the birth of our nation – that day 235 years ago when our founding fathers signed the Declaration of Independence declaring themselves and our country no longer a British Colony but a free and independent nation. The British

disagreed of course and since they had troops stationed here, we had to fight our revolutionary war to make it stick.

Their 'Minute Men', their 'Hometown Heroes', fought, suffered and died in that war but eventually carried the day – earning for us with their blood and sacrifice the freedoms that we now en-

joy and so we celebrate them, and us, every year on the 4th of July.

We celebrate them for the opportunities they secured for us; and we celebrate 'us' for the use we have made of those opportunities – Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness a pursuit that require each and every one of us to 'soldier' as

the price of freedom truly is eternal vigilance and the willingness to fight back.

We celebrate with a parade - Not just any parade mind you but a parade Sunland-Tujunga style. A parade born in 1986 from the vision of local Rotarian, furniture storeowner, and all-around good guy Ted Mertz. Ted passed last month so this year's parade honors him and his memory. Ted was a straight-ahead guy whose handshake was his contract. Rotarian Ellis Robertson, chairman of this year's parade recalls that in 1986 he was part of the 'S-T Improvement Association' which put on a 4th of July picnic in Sunland Park. One day Ted asked him "How are you going to get people to come to your picnic?" Ellis recalls stammering out an answer about spreading flyers, etc. and Ted said, "Don't worry, I'll lead them down to you." and our parade was born.

Ted single-handedly planned the parade, took care of all the paperwork and details, and with the help of Don and Peggy Cates and a handful of volunteers, staged and

put on the entire event until a stroke in 2006 forced him to pass the torch to someone else.

So this year's parade starts with a float honoring Ted, whose vision and tireless efforts stated it all.

It features the Verdugo Hills High School's award-winning Marching Band and their all-city champion Drum Line –and our Grand Marshal, Dan McManus, president of the Sunland-Tujunga Neighborhood Council.

There will be the usual cast of local political and civic leaders and crowd favorites of course – but the real stars of the parade are us, the folks of the foothills. Equestrian groups, Business owners, Service Clubs, Musicians, Jugglers, Classic Car Enthusiasts and Bikers, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, homey, some would say hokey floats and a heck of a lot of fun.

Hometown Heroes

- This year our parade takes place under our own Hometown Heroes banners, which will line Foothill Boulevard between Newhome and Oro Vista. Another first for Sun-

Continued On Page 2

Working to Save the Verdugo Hills Golf Course

Karen Zimmerman

Last month the Los Angeles Prop O Administrative Oversight Committee and Citizens Oversight Advisory Committee authorized city staff to proceed with a detailed assessment of the Verdugo Hills Storm water Project. Proposition O is a water bond passed in 2004 by Los Angeles voters to clean up the City's rivers, lakes, beaches and ocean, as well as meet federal requirements for the Clean Water Act. The project was recommended

for Prop O consideration by L.A. City Councilmember Paul Krekorian, who has supported community efforts to save the Verdugo Hills Golf Course since 2007.

If the study demonstrates the storm water project meets the required criteria for Prop O, and if sufficient funding is available, the Verdugo Hills Golf Course would be acquired and likely overseen by a joint powers agreement agency. This would preserve the golf course and protect native habitat, while enhancing storm water capture

and bio-filtration to reduce contaminants. As the city moves forward in evaluating the storm water project local communities are not sitting idly by.

On Monday July 4th supporters of the VHGC will be participating in the Sunland-Tujunga Fourth of July Parade. All are welcome to join the 'Save the Golf Course' entry. Wear your 'Save the Golf Course' T-shirt (if you have one), golf attire, or anything that's just plain cool and comfortable. If you have golf clubs, a bag, or anything else 'golf-related', be sure to

bring that as well. And don't forget a hat and sunscreen! Children under eight should have some means of conveyance (a wagon, bike, stroller, etc.) in case they don't feel like walking.

The parade begins at 10am. Fans of the VHGC will rendezvous at 9am at the Von's parking lot, corner of Mount Gleason and Foothill Boulevard. Look for the "Save the Golf Course" banners. To RSVP or for more information, please email gcvoice@gcvoice.org.

Continued On Page 4

Staff Acknowledgements:

Editor in Chief
Bob Georgius
818-523-5494

Ad Sales - Sandy Shaffer-Broms
818-397-3835
adsales@voiceofthevillage.org

Ad Design - Jeannine Crowley

Liaison/Journalism Advisor
David W. Riemer

Layout Advisor
Arshavir Steven Saryan

Supervising Co-Editors
Samantha Willson
Amy Hwang

Section Editors
Josh Esquivel
Lina Hwang
Christy Kim
Connor Newell
Travis Pierce
Irene Penn

Web Address
www.voiceofthevillage.org

P.O. Box 4323
Sunland, CA 91041

Index:

News.....	page 2
Features.....	page 5
Who We Are.....	page 11
Business.....	page 14
School News.....	page 17
Service Clubs.....	page 22
Church News.....	page 25
Announcements.....	page 27
The Arts.....	page 29

Who We Are

Local Mountains Favorite Hideout for El Bandito Vasquez

Cecile Page Vargo

The narrow canyons and unusual rock formations near Lake Elizabeth, now called Vasquez Rocks, were like home for Tiburcio Vasquez and his men. They not only found safety in its many nooks and crannies, but family and friends lived nearby. Lieutenant Cleovaro Chavez was stationed here to handle operations north of the Antelope Valley. Horses were stolen from nearby ranches and exchanged for new ones that Vasquez had stolen further south, to make it less apt for them to be discovered.

The San Gabriel Mountains north of Los Angeles also came in handy for the banditos. Big Tujunga Canyon

was the most popular route when they needed to travel north or east. Three miles above the present Big Tujunga Dam, a narrow gorge with tremendous rock walls and various side canyons proved to be a good spot to hole up in. The end of the road also branched off to trails leading to other favorite spots, such as Chilao, Little Rock Creek, or the previous mentioned Vasquez Rocks. Vasquez was also able to take some time off from his life as a highway bandit, and tried his hand at mining in nearby Mill Creek. Near the Monte Cristo Mine he was said to have had an arrastra for crushing ore.

East of Big Tujunga, on the southern slope of Mount Lukens, and north of the town of Montrose, Vasquez found Dunsmore Canyon. Here, a mile

from the mouth, just where the canyon splits in two branches, a huge oak tree formed a natural screen where he could hide, yet he could easily observe anyone else who might try to come up the trail. There were passes in all directions except the north. All of Los Angeles County south of the San Gabriel Mountains, was easily reachable from here. Behind the camp and over the ridge was the Dark Canyon-Vasquez trail that allowed him to get to the Arroyo Seco and Big Tujunga and on to more trails.

Long before Newcombs Ranch became a favorite stopping spot for a bite to eat for modern travelers going up Angeles Crest, East Chilao provided a remote refuge for Vasquez. West Chilao and Horse Flat, with a long nar-

row valley, and a secret trail, provided grazing grounds for stolen San Fernando & San Gabriel Valley horses. Mount Hillyer, overlooking Horse Flat, provided a rock fortress - protection from any lawmen that might wander up after the bandits. Horses were often stolen from the United States government in Yuma, Arizona, taken up to Chilao where they were re-branded then sold down in San Fernando Valley. One time, a pair of extra large mules were stolen and brought to camp, but were too easily recognizable because of their size, and wound up being shot instead, so there would be no chance of the thieves being discovered. Before horses were taken to the Valley to be sold, Vasquez and his men picked the best for their own private use.

U.S. family law system "barbaric" when compared to other systems worldwide

Pat Kramer

The United States' Family Law system is archaic and unenlightened compared to Australia, England and Wales', says Family Law Attorney Mark Baer. His comments reflect the changing attitudes in the practice of family law as, first Australia, and now - as of April 6, 2011 - England and Wales, require divorcing couples to enter into mediation to sort out most disputes before they are allowed to use the courts.

"It's time for our government to affect a reform in the family law system to shift the emphasis from litigation, as the dominant practice, to mediation and collaborative divorce," says Mr. Baer. "Litigation is not only more

expensive but it is also far more damaging to the family system which still has to maintain contact and function, to some extent, when there are children involved."

In 1996, the Australian government took the lead in implementing the Family Law Act 1975 as its primary dispute resolution (PDR). It recognized that litigation is usually a slow, expensive and adversarial process, and that in family law matters, this behavior may make it difficult for the child to maintain an ongoing relationship with both parents and for parents to maintain their ongoing responsibilities. Since then, the law has evolved to require family dispute resolution (FDR) where all parties involved in parenting, financial issues or both, must make a genuine effort to resolve

the dispute through an accredited FDR practitioner before starting a case. Failure to do so can result in serious consequences including costs penalties for noncompliance.

Effective April 6, 2011, the British government will require divorcing couples in England and Wales to undergo mediation [for child custody and/or financial issues] to sort out most disputes before they are allowed to use the courts.

Attorney Baer points out that while in the U.S., many states have a mandatory divorce mediation requirement. The mandatory "mediation" is generally limited to child custody and visitation matters. Baer places quotes around the term mediation because he contends that it is not true mediation by any stretch of the imagination;

at least not in California where "mediation" is required before a court will hear a child custody or visitation matter. He added, "Each county within California enforces the mandatory mediation requirement in its own unique way."

The family court requirement varies across the U.S. Two states, which he says, have demonstrated successful family law systems are North Carolina and Utah.

"North Carolina is the first state to have a comprehensive domestic relations arbitration act, a collaborative divorce statute and mandatory medication rules," Baer notes. "The Utah legislature passed a mandatory divorce mediation statute effective May 2005, and results have proven very positive in reducing court caseloads, fees for divorce and stress levels of litigants and attorneys."

However, in California, where Mr. Baer practices family law, the legislature made major changes in 2011, which will actually increase litigation time, expense, and cause it to be more adversarial.

On that note, he says, "It is fascinating that when other countries are plagued with the same problems in their family law systems, they embrace mediation, PDR and FDR for consensual dispute resolution which resolve most, if not all, of the problems with litigation and courts in family law situations. Yet, in the U.S., litigation and courts are the still the first choice for the resolution of family law disputes. Here, alternative dispute resolution methods, such as mediation and collaborative divorce, are still not the first choice for the resolution of family law disputes."

According to Baer, the legal system in the United States is resistant to change. Specifically, lawyers earn less money when cases are not litigated so they have a vested financial interest in maintaining the existing system. Stating that the legal system is meant to benefit the public, not the attorneys, Baer believes it is time the government stepped in and completely overhauled the system to make it more family friendly and less costly, as they have in Australia, England and Wales.

Sunland Resident to Spend Summer Working with High Rocks Academy in West Virginia

Haverford College Press Release

Haverford, Pa. – Sunland resident Noemi Agagianian, a rising sophomore Psychology major at Haverford College in Haverford, Pa., will spend this summer working with High Rocks Academy in Hillsboro, West Virginia. High Rocks Academy is an academic enrichment and leadership program for middle and high school girls in the Appalachian mountains of West Virginia. During her internship, Agagianian will serve as the Math Intern and teach a creative math class to middle and high school girls.

Agagianian is working under the auspices of Haverford College's Center for Peace and Global Citizenship. She is one of more than 60 students who received stipends from the Center, allowing them to work on projects in the U.S. or abroad in areas related to peace making and peace building, as well as to social, political, economic and governmental challenges. A number of CPGC interns will be blogging

about their experiences throughout the summer at www.haverford.edu/news/blogroll.php.

One of America's leading liberal arts colleges, Haverford is a close-knit intellectual community located just outside Philadelphia on a serene campus that is a nationally recognized arboretum. Founded in 1833, Haverford is the oldest institution of higher education in North America with Quaker roots and is today a non-sectarian and highly diverse institution that retains many of the guiding principles of its founders, such as emphasis on community and respect for individual conscience. Haverford's 1,200 students, who enjoy an 8 to 1 student-faculty ratio, come from independent and public schools across the United States and 17 countries around the world. The Center for Peace and Global Citizenship extends Haverford's long-standing commitment to social justice through research, education and action.

About Haverford College: <http://www.haverford.edu/about/haverford/> - For more information: elotozo@haverford.edu

