

Voice of the Village

the good news newspaper

Volume 2, Issue 1

online at voiceofthevillage.org

December 1 2010

BUSINESS

Getting California back to work together...
- page 11

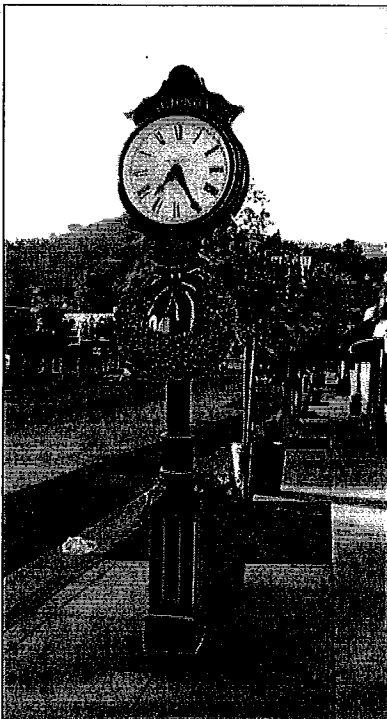
SERVICE CLUBS

Networking is not just for business...
- page 13

ARTS

Tujunga artists create a cultural institution:
The Snow Queen Ballet - page 24

It's Christmas on Commerce Ave



Sunland-Tujunga gets its first town Christmas Tree



Richard Stewart

This year, for the first time ever, we will have a community Christmas tree in Sunland-Tujunga and you all are invited to help create it. At 1:00 PM Sunday, Dec 5 the whole community is invited to meet at Bolton Hall on the corner of Commerce and Valmont where we will help to decorate the 14 foot hand-picked Christmas tree donated by the Rotary Club. Bring an ornament or two to help decorate the tree. We will also need your help to decorate the trees and the new benches on Commerce Ave that afternoon.

The official tree lighting will be on Monday (the following day), Dec 6 at 6 PM, there will be Christmas Carolers, music and, yes, this news has traveled all the way to the North Pole and Santa Claus has agreed to make a pre-Christmas visit for the ceremony. Bring the family and, if you wish, bring an unwrapped gift or canned goods for donations to local needy families.

This is an idea that caught fire at the Sunland-Tujunga, Shadow Hills Rotary Club meeting just one week ago and has raged through the community like a true wildfire. Here's the story...

Spontaneous combustion is a chemical reaction that occurs when combustible material is exposed to heat or a spark. And all it takes is one spark. In this case it was Berj Zadolian, a guest of past Rotary President Ellis Robertson, who provided that spark. He said he had an idea he wanted to share with the

club. Our Rotary Club loves ideas; especially ideas that helps the community and brings it together.

This one had promise. His words perked up the eyes and ears of all members present: "You guys had a successful Haunted House. Why not have a Christmas House?"

I could tell you that there was a brief silence, but I swear I could hear the wheels turning loudly in everyone's head - followed by smoke and intense discussion!

The obvious questions were all asked: "When?" "Who?" "How?" And then the question that nearly killed it: "Where?" "What house?" Sure we built a Haunted House, but building a Christmas House? silence...

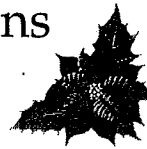
Then Rotarian Bob Georgius offered a quiet suggestion: "What about Bolton Hall?" - IGNITION! Flames of agreement! I wish you could have seen the smile on Berj's face.

Normally a fire of this intensity will simply burn out overnight. But not in this town; Richard and Susan Stewart carried the spark to the STNC Outreach Meeting the following night. More flames of agreement!

Flame Thrower Brenda Fortune took the news to that Human Torch Sonia Tatullian and the fire was now officially out of control!

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Who is Santa Claus: the origins of "Saint Nick"



Doug Crowder

Have you ever wondered who the jolly fellow in the red suit really is? Well, I've done some research on this character, here's what I found:

He was born sometime between the years 270 and 280 making him about 1730 years old - the second oldest man alive today, right behind Elvis. His last name is unknown. But his first name was Nicholas. He was born near Myra in what is now known as Turkey an only child of a wealthy family. Orphaned at an early age, he grew up in a monastery and at the

age of 17 became one of the youngest priests ever.

He was described as "very rich, generous, and loving toward children." He often went out at night, disguised in a hooded cloak, to leave gifts of money, clothing or food at the windows of unfortunate families. Nicholas allegedly died on December 6, 343 but, as history and evidence have shown, reports of his demise were greatly exaggerated. Legend tells of him dropping bags of gold down chimneys or throwing them through the windows where they

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Divorce insurance a bad idea - destroys the sanctity of marriage

Pat Kramer

Just weeks after the launch of the nation's first divorce insurance, Los Angeles Divorce Attorney Mark Baer is cautioning 'would be' insureds to think carefully before investing in this novel insurance; the consequences may very well outweigh the benefits and destroy the sanctity of marriage.

Over the years he's practiced law, Attorney Baer has helped hundreds of couples dissolve their marriages with the goal of causing the least amount of damage to their families. As a mediator, a collaborative law attorney and an experienced litigator, he often employs mental health professionals to assist in diffusing emotions during a divorce proceeding. With that in mind, Baer says divorce insurance removes the motivation for couples to work through their problems in a constructive manner. Baer believes that the only true beneficiary of divorce insurance is the divorce insurance company, itself.

This novel insurance became available for the first time in America on August 5, 2010, with the launch of the online insurance website, www.wedlockdivorceinsurance.com. The company sells individual policies which can be purchased in units with coverage ranging from \$1,250.00 per unit to a maximum of 200 units or \$250,000 in coverage. After 48 months (four years) the policies mature but insureds can

purchase additional riders at \$30.00 per unit to reduce the waiting period to 36 months (three years). If a marriage should fail after the policy matures, the couples walk away with a cash

"If you are buying divorce insurance because you think the marriage is going to fail, how successful of a marriage are you going to have?"

payment equivalent to the amount of coverage purchased.

After reviewing the entire package, Attorney Baer calls divorce insurance, "an entirely negative concept and a bad idea." Says Baer, "Studies show that people who negotiate a premarital agreement may have stronger marriages than those who don't as the process of creating the agreement acts as a form of premarital counseling. However, divorce insurance provides no such benefit. When couples hit hard times, instead of working to correct

these problems, divorce insurance will motivate them to seek an ending to their marriage to get a return on investment, ultimately promoting divorce."

He adds, "If you are buying divorce insurance because you think the marriage is going to fail, how successful of a marriage are you going to have?"

From the financial perspective, even with the high cost of divorce today, Baer says divorce insurance does not seem very cost effective. "If a standard policyholder, who purchased 10 units, divorced after 10 years, they would have paid over \$19,188 in premiums. The insurance company would pay them \$27,500, which would be taxed over the amount of their premium payments. To receive this settlement, they would have to be divorced, which could cost \$30,000 on the average to well over \$100,000, per attorney, on the high end where there are issues of child custody, retirement, business or property ownership to resolve."

Depending on the statistics you use, 40 to 50% of first marriages end in divorce. So 50 to 60% of those who purchase divorce insurance will never see a return on their investment and will lose everything they have paid-in. On the other side, for those 'lucky enough' to capitalize on their investment by divorcing, there would be costly legal fees and a break-up of their family structure.



Based on the overall costs and losses to the family structure, Baer says, "I would strongly suggest that someone re-evaluate entering into a marriage or remaining married to someone who is inclined to purchase divorce insurance."

Mark B. Baer has practiced law in Los Angeles for nearly twenty years with an office in Pasadena, CA. His firm represents individuals on issues regarding family law, divorce, child custody, child support, spousal support, restraining orders, paternity actions, or domestic partnerships.

For more information, please visit: www.markbaeresq.com

Pat Kramer, Writer For Hire, is a long-time Sunland resident. Visit her website at: www.writerpatkramer.com.

Dining in Sunland Tujunga (1887 until now)

Bill Andrew and Marlene Hitt

Al Read's on the corner of Mt. Gleason and Summitrose in Sunland started life in the 1930's as a hot dog and sandwich stand operated Al and Betty Read. They offered 10-cent hot dogs, watermelon and soda. It was purchased in the '50s by Bob and Opal Schlicher who operated Al Read's as a small café.

Dell and Doc Wolff bought Al Reads in the 1980s and Dell operates it to this day. It is one of only a few eateries still standing on the original site.

The one and only drive in restaurant that had carhop service, Don's, became Lynn's, then The Verdugan, then B.J.s, now Denny's. Don's dates back, according to the phone directory, to 1942.

In an interview with Mike Aiello, who has lived and worked in Sunland-Tujunga since the 1930s, we learned about some forgotten places. The Log Cabin Café was located at 8130 Foothill Blvd was open until 1960. Mr. Aiello recalls that the original building was

built around a tree. This structure was originally built in 1933, then gradually rebuilt to the present site (Mario's Catering) across from Sunland Park.

Another place was Buddy's café, remembered by many old timers. Buddy's, a family restaurant served a mix of food including chicken dinners and especially good pies. Buddy was well known at one time for hosting a model T auto on his roof (he didn't put it there). After Buddy's death, the place closed (1960s). The restaurant which became Laredo's Los Amigos, moved downhill from Commerce Avenue. Los Amigos became The Iguana, then Joselito's West.

Mi Casitas in Sunland was built by Cal Caliguieri, became Hey Compadre with Al Timmins as owner in 1960. Mi Casitas is still serving great food.

Jim Saurer recalls several eating-places from the 1960s. Jim recalls that the original Los Amigos, owned by Ernie Laredo was located in the original Record Ledger building on Commerce.

He remembered eating in the other places mentioned but added more - The Copper penny on Tujunga Canyon and Foothill, Love's Family barbecue (1970-1975) and another which many will remember, O'Handlin's on Foothill in Tujunga. One more that we may not recall was a café next to the "Where Else" bar once known as Bob Christopher's pancake house.

From the archive files I found an article about a small diner called the Palmer House Café. We read that "Palmer House served as a street car that traveled between Los Angeles and Santa Monica. From a public conveyance at the seashore to a public eating place in the beautiful Verdugo Hills is a high step."

The author remarked that the thrill of eating in the Palmer street car was as exciting as eating in a Pullman dining car, except that Foothill traffic speeds past you, rather than the other way around. He praised the food of two congenial smiling sisters, Bertha Gar-

diner and June Palmer who welcomed the local businessmen every morning for breakfast. The diner was opened at 5:30 a.m. to please the early risers. The sisters made the place just like home and with good home cooking.

One more place has an interesting history and that is The Sundown. Many years ago, it began as Tony's Café then became the Wooden Rattler. My Canadian Granny used to love to walk up to the Wooden Rattler for a coke. We thought the place was a bar so didn't go there but she was quite comfortable. It is said that a stick of yucca was a decoration there and the owner would wind a snake around it. True? The Sundown is considered the top of the heap as a drinking establishments at this time, according to a notation on the Internet.

C'mon in to the museum and view the contrasts between the eateries of yore and those of the now.

Networking continued from page 13

New groups come into being to meet new needs - the Sunland Tujunga Shadow Hills Community Grant Fund, offering matching grants to teams and groups of students at VHHS, funded by money raised at the community Fireworks Celebration held at the high school, is another collaborative effort by many different organizations. As part of the Grant Fund, the community newspaper, Voice of the Village, came into being to provide a forum in print for all of the activities and groups in Sunland-Tujunga. The formation of the paper saved the high school journalism class from closing and gave the

students real life journalism experience and networked them right into the life of the community! The Board of Directors of the Fund and the paper are all representatives of the organizations of Sunland-Tujunga.

There are thriving communities within our community - from equestrians enjoying the many riding trails in hills and mountains to artists, poets, musicians supported by McGroarty Arts Center. We have fighters defending the character of our community from those who would commercialize it, and those who enjoy living in solitude in the hillsides and canyons,

secluded from the big city just over the hill.

We have had Street Pairs, Harvest Pairs, the Shouting Coyote Poetry Festival and even a Liar's Contest that brought the community together. Laff Night and Dance Nights at the Elks Lodge sponsored by the Rotary Club have broadened our social opportunities and raised money for good causes.

"Doin' what comes natur'ly", our networking brings new friends into our lives, makes it possible for us to help others, and creates opportunities for us to have fun together, all the while creating a unique, distinctive

community personality.

If you aren't involved yet, but would like to find an organization or group with compatible interests, call the S-T Chamber of Commerce at 818-352-4433 Monday through Thursday morning and tell Fran or Sonia what you are interested in; or drop by a Neighborhood Council meeting and check out the groups for yourself. They would be happy to give you some suggestions!

Remember, the community that plays together stays together!