



HAPPY  
Easter Day

# THE PAPER

THE VOICE OF THE FOOTHILLS

MONDAY, APRIL 14, 2025

COVERING THE FOOTHILLS REGION FOR OVER 20 YEARS!

VOLUME 18 • NUMBER 71

## SUNLAND-TUJUNGA HISTORICAL CLOCK

*Like our neighborhood council, it doesn't work all the time!*

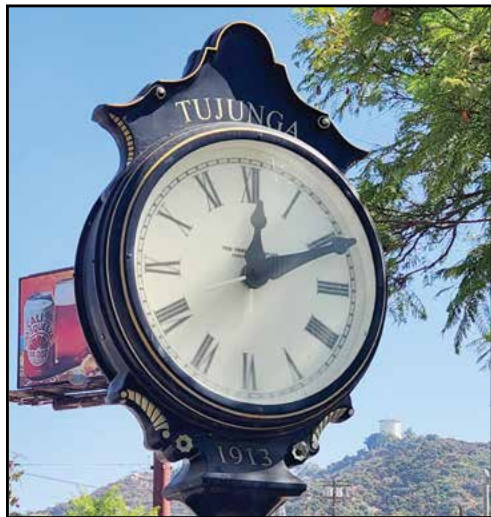
For over 10 years now, the clock that the community paid for, on the corner of Tujunga Canyon Rd and Commerce, hasn't worked. But as the saying goes, It's Accurate twice a day. It's a sordid tale but one that happens in Sunland-Tujunga on a regular basis.

It was only 8 years ago that the clock stopped working totally. Doc, the editor/publisher fixed it once and it ran for another year. And then it stopped working again. SNC Board member Mark Siegel, when he heard that Doc was going to fix it again, ran out of the C&M Printing building on Commerce Ave. and spent the next hour trying to make it work.

What a sorry state of affairs. It got to the point that whenever anything had to be fixed in S-T, a rumor would be started that the Doc was going to fix it for free. A game well played. You can read all about this and other events in Sunland-Tujunga's history book: Sunland Tujunga – A Reality Show.

And now, there is going to be another "No one showed up to vote – So we all won! election"

LOL■



## Our Cross Has Blessed The Valley Since 1923

By David "Doc" DeMulle'

The Annual Easter Sunrise Service, that is coordinated through the Verdugo Hills Ministerial Association (VHMA), will be a beautiful experience and a dramatic reminder of Christ's promised resurrection after his death. This service has been a Sunland-Tujunga Easter Tradition since 1926, and will be held at The Cross of San Ysidro on McGroarty Peak in Tujunga.

Vans will begin to transport people to the cross starting at 4:30 a.m., from the corner of Foothill Blvd. and Hillhaven (next to the Travel Inn). The service will begin promptly at 6 a.m. and conclude by 7 a.m.

The worship will be led by the New Hope Worship Band, along with musicians from many of the local churches.

The Verdugo Hills Ministerial Association has coordinated the service with several of the area pastors participating. In 1992, the Los Angeles Times religion editor John Dart wrote that old newspaper clippings indicate that a cross was first erected on the peak in 1923 and was

dedicated in a ceremony led by a Catholic priest. The sunrise service, which began around 1926, event and well-attended by members of the Foothill communities.

This celebration at the cross originally came about when the local ministers and Kiwanis Club members got together and started the early morning service, and it has grown to what it is today.

There are five ministers from five of the churches in the Sunland-Tujunga area that are involved providing the service. Each minister does a part of the whole service, which is nonsectarian. For 90 years, the Kiwanis Club had prepared the cross and area for the service.

On Saturday, church members clean up the area, bring up the chairs and, if it needs some touch-up work, repaint the cross. The association provides the chairs, sound system and lighting of the cross, which is lit Saturday night and stays on until after the service. All the setting up for the service is done by association members.

The preparation takes all day Saturday and a few of the members will spend the night at the cross.

There are usually around 400 to 500 people that attend the service. In the past, resident and Kiwanis member Sandy Miller dedicated a lot of time and energy in putting on the Easter Sunrise Service as a service to the community. Although she passed away 12 years ago, her family continues his dedication in putting on the Easter Sunrise ceremony. To honor the decades of work by Miller, who was the heart and soul of the annual service, the Miller family has continued to provide the assistance needed to enjoy this year's sunrise service.

The VHMA is grateful for the physical and financial support the Miller family has provided over the decades.

This year the VHMA is responsible for continuing the Easter Sunrise Service tradition to the community. The music group Tapestry from New Hope Community Church will be leading

Check out The Foothills Paper interactive website: [thefoothillspaper.com](http://thefoothillspaper.com)





# COMMUNITY NEWS

## [LETTER TO EDITOR]

### *They Call Themselves the Dream Team I Consider them a Nightmare*

People watch TV and read stories in the news about corruption in our city's government, but the problem is that they don't realize that there's corruption right here in our commu-

nity. Citizens have a right to know what is going on, and to have an opportunity to stop it from getting even worse.

There is a group of people running for the Sunland-Tujunga Neighborhood Council (STNC) who do not have the best interests of the community at heart. They already have demonstrated their incompetence at their jobs on the STNC. Worse, they don't follow Neighborhood Council rules, guidelines, or bylaws – just like the politicians that we read and hear about. This doesn't represent all of us in the community.

They harass community leaders. They threaten individuals. At least one of these candidates, Arnie Abramyan, has been captured multiple times on film assaulting people who dare speak out against them. He has left threatening, harassing, profanity-laden voicemails (many of which have been recorded and preserved). He also has a criminal record. Is this the kind of individual we want representing our community?

Let's give you another example: Sonia Tatulian, Roger Swart (Elections Committee members and Arnie Abramyan and others running for the STNC have been secretly helping Councilwoman Monica Rodriguez since she was on the L.A. City Public Works Commission. They want to change our community drastically, and they've engaged in a concerted campaign to destroy the good reputations of hardworking volunteers, some of whom are on the STNC or have been. It may take a while for the authorities to sort this out but its urgent that we stop it by all getting out and voting on April 27 – every vote counts.

The STNC Election Committee, which by law should be impartial, is actively promoting their own candidates while removing campaign literature from those they oppose. Emails reveal them engaging in behind the scenes discussions about things that are supposed to be open and transparent so that the community can learn what's going on. They're intentionally keeping the community in the dark.

Roger (Rock) Swart and Sonia Tatulian are on the STNC Elections Committee. They routinely abuse their position by prohibiting lawful campaign activi-

thermore, Neighborhood Council representatives from across the City of Los Angeles sent multiple emails and messages requesting the Mayor remove her as a commissioner for lack of attendance. Her neglect of duty resulted in quorums not being met and the cancellation of meetings people had driven from all over the City to attend.

Sandy Capps is running for Treasurer. Ms. Capps has attacked STNC and community members and engaged in her own "investigations" of private citizens, intentionally damaging their reputation with

trolled by Councilwoman Rodriguez. To do so they are willing – indeed, eager – to destroy the reputations of hard working people who combined have decades of experience and proven records of helping the community.

The Neighborhood Council's job is not to be friends with Councilwoman Rodriguez. It's to be the people's voice at City Hall and to hold the City Council's feet to the fire. Obviously Councilwoman Rodriguez is afraid of this kind of democratic oversight. Why is this plan to divide our community being put into place. The answer is that they have plans for our community and they need to get rid of the people who will stand in their way.

Not all the slate candidates are bad, but it's hard to trust those that have chosen to run with such a corrupt group.

If you feel quality of life in our community has declined – more homeless, more crime, more fires, gridlock, increased traffic deaths, lack of enforcement, and all the rest that's become depressingly familiar – then know that these candidates intend more of the same and perhaps worse. They don't care about you and me, they care about their own agenda and their cozy relationship with Councilwoman Rodriguez.

That is, if you don't stand up and help us save our community.

People say that votes don't count but in this type of election, one vote can make the difference.

I recommend as good choices to vote for only the following. If you see these names on the ballot, vote for them only.

Liliana Sanchez - President <From our Archives>.

*The Neighborhood Council's job is not to be friends with Councilwoman Rodriguez. It's to be the people's voice at City Hall and to hold the City Council's feet to the fire. Obviously Councilwoman Rodriguez is afraid of this kind of democratic oversight*

ties by anyone but their slate – the Dream Team. They routinely violate community members' First Amendment rights. Mr. Swart describes himself proudly as a "senior volunteer" for Councilwoman Rodriguez. Again, are these the kinds of people who should be entrusted with our community's future?

Sevada Hemelians is running for president. Mr. Hemelians does not think the rules apply to him. He has not done his job as Secretary. He has not updated the STNC website such as current bylaws and standing rules. Shooshig Avakian Koroghlyan is running for First Vice President. She previously had to resign from the STNC to avoid punishment for mishandling STNC funds as she clearly stated at a candidate forum. Fur-

malicious lies. She conveniently ignored the alleged crime which occurred while Ms. Avakian Koroghlyan was treasurer because they are friends.

Hrant Vartzbedian, owner of Code Blue and president of the Chamber of Commerce, has the most complained about building in our community and is violating building codes and for not following the law. He's running for Region 1 representative. Hrant stated at the candidate forum that he would like to see eight story "stack and pack" buildings and Foothill Blvd. to have lots of night clubs. He doesn't even live here. He lives in Glendale.

These individuals have a single goal: Elect their chosen slate of candidates to take over the STNC and pack it with members con-

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There is an old Chinese saying: "May you live in interesting times!" And boy-oh-boy are we in the middle of them. Th is year started out innocently enough with Russian Premiere Putin sort-a sword rattling, but then it got worse. But let's look at the Reality of how this happened. Trump was a true pompous ass, running around making in credible statements how Putin and Kim Jong-un were sending "love letters" to him. "They love me" he said. That said, from our pussy grabbing president. I wonder if they sent him K-Y Jelly? But it didn't stop there. Our last president Biden was under-gunned from the git-go. For all his 40 years of government service, he just didn't understand that you can't placate a monster. The man in the street has no real idea what it means to live under a totalitarian government, especially one that at a whim, can end your life.

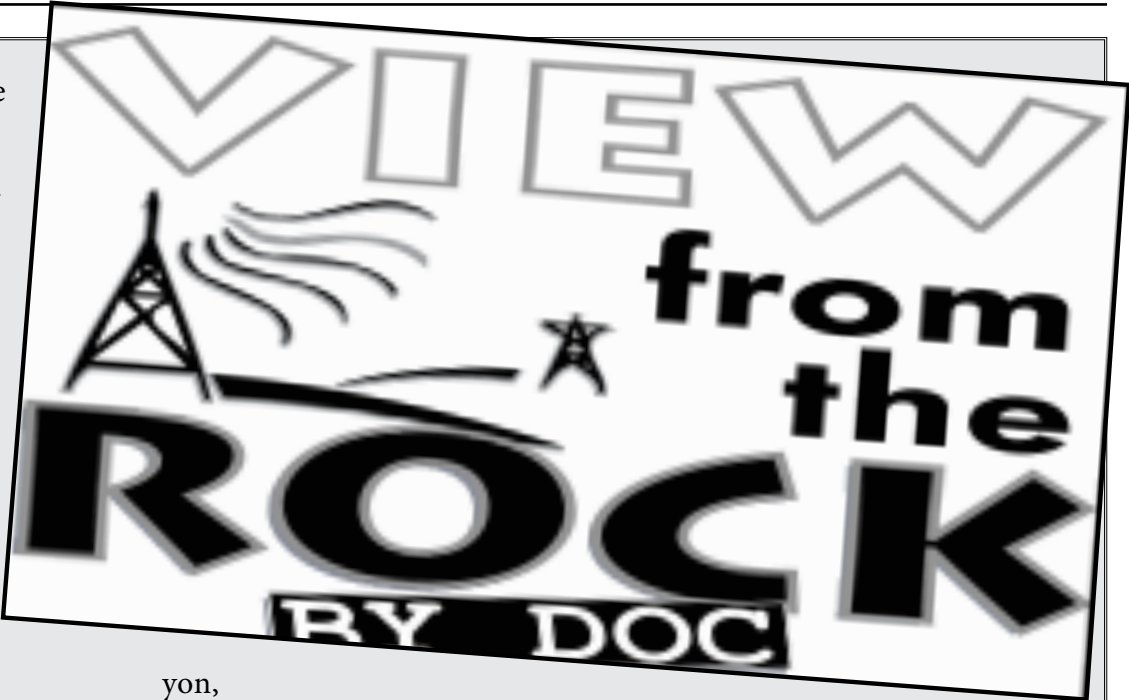
It's called the big lie. Two past Soviet agents were killed by the Russians on foreign soil and no one did any thing or really complained about it. Across the desert, we have Saudi ruler Mohammed bin Salman who ordered journalist Jamal Khashoggi's assassination. And once again, no one raised a finger. Long before Trump, I saw what money and corruption can do to every day citizens. It was on January 19, 2007 when I had been with Armenian journalist Hrant Dink in the Intercontinental Hotel when he was assassinated. And the new world order of denial and death began to be covered in the

world media. But people forget.

See boys and girls, money has a way of solving problems. And that brings us up to today's interesting times. Richard Nixon (one of my favorite mis-understood crooks) once said, "The masses are asses." And if you look around you, you will see that even he was prophetic. And it is found even in our little town. When everyone is a liar, that means that now the truthsayers are now the liars. All our checks & measures that are supposed to help us walk the line of rightness seem to have fallen away, leaving us with nothing to really believe in.

For once in the past 10 years, our neighborhood council is actually trying to do the right thing. Maybe the ZOOM meetings really helped in getting the word out? If you don't have to look your fellow conspirator in the eye, maybe they can fudge a bit in the direction of truth? Yes, boys and girls and all those in between, these are interesting times, hell, even the local AA has gotten a great following and people are actually sobering up.

Our committee chairpersons are creating viable programs that except for the City watering them down, are getting results. BUT, one of our problems is the carnage on Foothill Blvd and La Tuna Can-



yon, and no one it appears to me is really trying to do something about it. Maybe people think that if enough people die, there will be less people to contend with. And then of course, there are the mental problems of the homeless that no one (except for M-Rod who was pushing for in an election year) wants to address. There has been a solution to the houseless problem for the past 15 years, and yet the STNC, the County and the City have specifically fought tooth and nail to hide it.

You have to ask yourself why? I used to have a group of Armenian friends until one of their members began to systematically financially rape our community. Yup, blood is thicker than water but not as thick as money. I miss them, but I don't miss the way our community was destroyed.

And now as we stand on the brink of war in the Middle-East and this war in the Ukraine, might show us how precious freedom from op-

pres-sion really is?

This month, we have the annual Armenian Remembrance Day, and of course, the memories of the Holocaust continue. But the game has changed, we have a wanna-be oligarch that has, like the past Nazis of Germany, begun deportations, violations of human rights that are guaranteed by our constitution, and the segmenting and destroying those things that make our Democracy so precious. Even our local STNC elections are precious in whatever form they may become. Voting is a right, not a privilege, and we need to support them by voting.

Nationally, there appears that there is nothing that we here in Sunland-Tujunga can do about it, but maybe we can really begin to grow as a community without so much derision? I don't know. I've been so frustrated looking for an answer, that I just gave in and said: "IT 'S THE WATER"■

# LADWP's Home Energy Improvement Program

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**LADWP HEIP**  
Partners Trust Associate Heather Witt Leikin, who is a Certified



Green – Real Estate Professional went through this process and tells of her experience on the House Agents blog: "It took about a month to get approved for the program, and about two weeks after that they came out to my house. They took my house through a battery of tests checking my insulation, window, door sealing, sprinkler systems. They did a combustion test on my hot water heater and stove. Checked my thermostat, tested all of my smoke detectors, replacing some with a 10-year battery model for free.■

# You Can Be a Candidate



**VOTE 2025**  
**Saturday, May 17**

Local Stakeholders can file **March 1, 2025 through March 31, 2025** to run for a seat on the Sunland-Tujunga Neighborhood Council. Voting will be Saturday, May 17, 2025, to fill the 21 Board seats. Here's what you need to know:

**STAKEHOLDERS:**

You are qualified as a Stakeholder in the Sunland-Tujunga Neighborhood Council if you live, work, own property in the City of Los Angeles within the STNC boundaries.

**CANDIDATES:**

If you wish to join the Council in shaping the future of our community, submit a Candidate Filing Form by 11:59 p.m. Monday, March 31, 2025.



Everybody needs a haircut and the only place to go in Tujunga, is at my favorite barber.





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\*Add to your 120-hour kits leaving time to grab more valuable items.  
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# ANOTHER DAY IN THE HOOD

## NOW HIRING: WILDFIRE CLEAN UP CREWS TO CLEAR DEBRIS IN FIREPRONE NORTHEAST SAN FERNANDO VALLEY

Councilwoman Monica Rodriguez announced new jobs to support wildfire debris clean up in the North-east San Fernando Valley, particularly in the communities impacted by the La Tuna and Creek Fires. The jobs will be prioritized for veterans and individuals affected by these 2017 wildfires.

Councilwoman Rodriguez, in partnership with the City's Economic Workforce Development Department, secured a \$500,000 state grant to fund positions and improve the public trails and spaces damaged by the fires.

This funding complements current debris cleanup efforts in the Seventh Council District -- in 2018, the Councilwoman secured \$1 million to fund 70 full-time positions to remove wildfire debris, burned vegetation, and repair trails at several areas burned in the 2017 wildfires: McGroarty Arts

Center in Sunland-Tujunga, Lopez Canyon Landfill in Sylmar, Hansen Dam in Lake View Terrace, Cityowned land at Eldridge/ Harding in Sylmar, and La Tuna Canyon hillsides. In the 2018 program, brush was cleared along 25 miles of horse and foot trails in La Tuna Canyon, several thousand feet of burnt methane pipes were removed at Lopez Canyon, and debris was cleared in these high fire severity risk areas.

"We don't want a repeat of the recent devastating fires", said Councilwoman Monica Rodriguez. "This debris cleanup is one example of how we can do further preventative work to reduce the risk of these destructive fires".

For more information on the program and how to apply, please call Noel Khoshabou, Program Manager at (213) 355-5304 or Abigail Portillo, Case Manager at (213) 355-5300.■

## [GUEST EDITORIAL]

*James Carville: How to Turn Trump's Economic Chaos Against Him*



Courtesy of Cagle Cartoons.

In many ways, President Trump is a one-trick Shetland pony: He talks a big game, like building a border wall or ending Covid, and then tries to distract Americans when his promises go belly up. Back in office this winter, he promised a golden age for the economy and the end of inflation starting on Day 1 — and then we got served plenty of fish bait: blowing smoke about seizing Greenland, huffing and puffing about annexing Canada and throwing people into a tizzy over seeking a third term, which he will never be able to do.

Now we know why. Mr. Trump didn't have a plan to bring down inflation and make life better (except for the rich, who disproportionately benefit from his tax cuts), and he was hellbent on tariffs at all costs.

The problem is that smoke and mirrors only work until you screw up so hard that no act of lunacy can pull the American people's attention elsewhere. And boy, did the president just screw up royally.

In what will certainly be recorded as one of the most ignorant acts of political leadership in American history, the president of the United States has now willfully damaged the global economy with his tariff chaos. Not only was this an act of economic warfare, it has broken the cardinal rule in American politics: Never destabilize the economy. With it, the Trump administration is causing enormous damage to itself — and there can be no more distraction from this naked truth.

This is where the Democrats have an opening. In February I wrote a piece calling on my party's leaders to play dead, allowing the Republi-

cans to punch themselves out and crumble beneath their own weight. But many Democrats indulged Mr. Trump's lunacy or allowed themselves to become the story over the government funding and shutdown debate, while the president continued his campaign of chaos and distraction. Now, Democrats have an opportunity to allow the Republicans to edge closer to collapse as the party in full control of Washington — let's please not become the story again and get in their way.

In the coming weeks and months, many Americans are going to experience pressure and pain with the tariffs on China and the remaining tariffs on an array of goods and countries. Prices could rise sharply, consumer spending may well dry up and we are already seeing evidence of surging mortgage rates and a weakened bond market. The Trump administration will not be competent enough to dig us out. The path to stabilizing and strengthening the country starts when Democrats can take back the economic narrative from the Republican Party and persuade the majority of Americans to close the book on the Trump chaos.

This can only be done if we avoid the distractions — whether it's Mr. Trump's third-term talk or Democratic infighting on social issues — and instead focus on the economic foundations that matter to Americans most. My fellow Democrats, it's time we transform our party into a projector for the economic pain of the American people.

Please see **Guest Editorial**  
on Page 8



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ASK RUSTY

By AMAC Certified Social Security Advisor Russell Gloor, Association of Mature American Citizens.

# Will My Social Security Increase if I Keep Working After Applying?

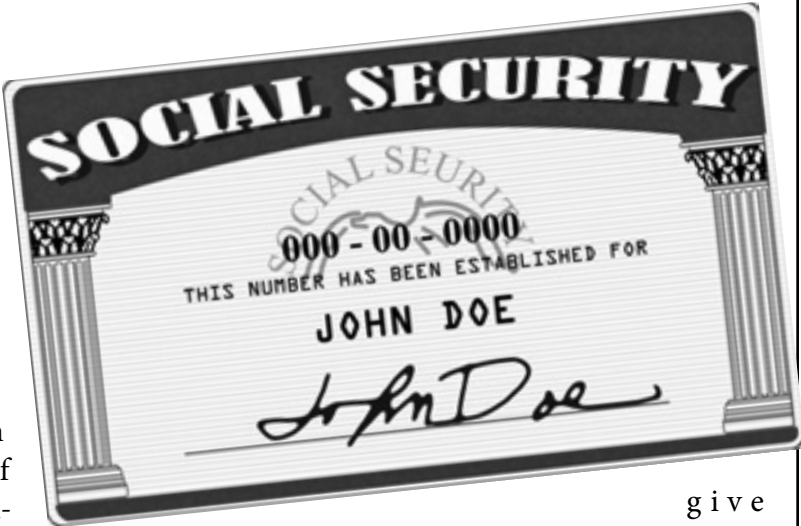
**Dear Rusty:** I am going to be 67 in a few weeks & I plan on working for another year or two. According to Social Security, they count the best 35 years to come up with your benefit. I currently have 30 years, with 2024 and 2025 taxes yet to be filed. If I take my benefit now, will I get an upward adjustment after filing my taxes for those years, or do I need to wait to apply for SS until after filing my taxes to get credit for those years? **Signed: Still Working**

**Dear Still Working:** Whenever you claim your Social Security benefit, SSA will look at your lifetime earnings record on file at the time (as received from the IRS) and calculate your "primary insurance amount" (PIA) using that record on file. They will use your highest earning 35 years to do that calculation and, if you do not yet have 35 years, they will use "zero \$\$" enough times to make it 35 years. In other words, your benefit will always be calculated using 35 years, whether you actually have 35 years of earnings on record, or not.

However, Social Security revisits your earnings record whenever additional information is received from the IRS, so if you file your taxes and add the additional year's income after you start your Social Security benefits, you will get credit for those additional earnings. Essentially, you will be replacing one of the "zero \$\$" years originally used to calculate your benefit amount, and Social Security will recalculate your monthly amount to reflect that, resulting in an increase to your monthly benefit.

Thus, as long as you work and earn and report your earnings to the IRS, Social Security will update your record and automatically give you a higher benefit if warranted by your more recent earnings. That recalculation usually happens later in the year (after April 15th), but Social Security will make any increase retroactive to the beginning of the calendar year, so you will get any higher benefit effective with January.

So, since you have already reached your full retirement age (FRA), you can (if you wish) apply for Social Security now and be confident that Social Security will



give you credit for any additional earnings after you apply. And for clarity, if you choose to wait beyond your full retirement age to claim, you will earn Delayed Retirement Credits (DRCs) which will continue to increase your monthly benefit amount until you are 70 years of age. DRCs will add 8% to your PIA for each full year you delay (.667% for each month you delay past your FRA).

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# Sierra Club Meeting



The Crescenta Valley Sierra Club presents, Bruce Hale's, The Mysteries of Easter Island, on Tuesday at 7:30 pm, May 14, at the Los Angeles County Public Library located at 2809 Foothill Boulevard, La Crescenta, California.

Bruce, a Sierra Club member and frequent presenter will give a slide show describing his recent visit to this isolated island, now a part of Chile in the middle of the Pacific Ocean.

Learn about the Rapanui people who first arrived around the 5th Century AD. Today descendants still live on this tiny island proud of their heritage. The Rapanui reflect a story of survival, most famous for the huge stone statues on the island facing the sea. What was the purpose of these statues? How did the Rapanui move them from the quarry? How did the Rapanui navigate their canoes over 2000 miles on the Pacific? Why were the statues knocked down? Are any of Thor Heyerdahl's theories correct? Who cut down the last tree? Bruce will discuss these and other topics while showing pictures of the island and statues.

Our program begins following news of Conservation and Outings. This is a free program and everyone is welcome. Refreshments will be served. Please contact Wayne Fisher, Program Chair for further information at 818 353-4181. ■



# Tujunga In-N-Out: 50 Years of Service

By Hally Winters

The first memories I have of the Tujunga In-N-Out are ordering from the walk-up window with my childhood family friends. On summer breaks, I remember the relief from the sun finally dipping below the horizon and expelling energy as we kids ran between the tables under a fading sunset as my parents chatted with their friends. There's still something special about the smell of the grilled onions at In-N-Out on a Saturday night in July that takes me back to that time. Although that would have been in the late 90s and early aughts and for many that is not too long ago, In-N-Out has this way with SoCal Residents of taking us all back in time when we first tried In-N-Out, or the times we've goofed off in the parking lot as teenagers, or the way it saved us on late nights with no other restaurants open. The sight of the arrow-shaped yellow sign, crossed palm trees, white paper bags, the smiling burgers stacked in brown boxes and the golden French fries carries a sense of nostalgia that feels local. When I turned 17 I got my first job working at In-N-Out in Glendale near the Americana. What I miss most about working at In-N-Out is dressing and wrapping the burgers: a deeply satisfying job that allowed my hands to create mini pieces of art exactly how each guest wanted them.

The art of making something to be consumed is a special art because its richness relies on its nourishment and short life. I know it sounds like "just burgers", but like the beauty of roses and sunsets a well-crafted burger isn't meant to last forever. The impact; however, lasts throughout the generations. As the Tujunga In-N-Out celebrates its 50th year anniversary in our community, read on to see how the Tujunga In-N-Out has impacted our residents and visitors through the decades.

## TOM MOON:

The Tujunga In-N-Out opened on April 9th, 1975. It was a Wednesday, and one of the last stores that Harry Snyder, one of the founding members of In-N-Out, opened. For this reason, the Tujunga In-N-Out holds not only historical roots in the greater community of Sunland-Tujunga but also historic roots for the company, In-N-Out. It was the 16th store opened and for that reason, it is called Store #16. The difference from 1948 to 1975 was palpable as Harry Snyder stood near the tile at the Tujunga store and said the tile alone cost more than the first store in Baldwin Park.

The day that Store #16 opened was a surprisingly big event on that Spring day fifty years ago. When In-N-Out first opened its doors in the Fall of 1948, they served bottled sodas including 7Up. They transitioned in 1958 to fountain sodas costing \$.10 for a 12oz soda, but no longer sold 7Up. That changed in 1975 when 7Up ran an ad that they were releasing specialty upside-down 7Up glasses at the Tujunga In-N-Out, and people flocked to get ahold of one. One of these special glasses has been donated to Bolton Hall from In-N-Out and will be on display!

If you've visited the Tujunga store, you've probably noticed the tags hanging on the wheel as the cook looks back and forth from the sizzling burg-



ers on the grill to the spinning wheel, making sure every burger is exactly as the tag says. Back in 1975, there was no wheel or tags to keep track of everyone's orders. The cooks instead memorized the orders, but that was when it was only around six orders at any given time.

I spoke with Tom Moon, the History and Culture Coordinator at In-N-Out who spoke of how small decisions that Harry and Esther Snyder made like staying open late led to the cultural phenomena and success that In-N-Out is today. Being open late has made it a local spot for high schoolers who frequent the Tujunga In-N-Out after local games, events, and hangouts. Store #16 also sees many celebrities driving through. Maybe not as many as the Hollywood In-N-Out, but Jay Leno is a frequent guest. Those who live in the greater area of Sunland-Tujunga, have all seen a schnazzy classic car with Jay Leno at the helm as he goes on his joy rides through the Canyon and around the Tujunga Wash. He stops by the Tujunga In-N-Out every once in a while ordering his signature meal: a double meat ketchup only.

Many of you may also know where he houses one of his car garages having seen him pulling out of it and yelling, "There's Jay Leno!". Lynsi Snyder, the current owner of In-N-Out, and Jay Leno also share a love for classic cars as well as the classic In-N-Out burger.

I asked Tom Moon if Store #16 might be getting an upgrade to a larger store, and he said as of now, no. Lynsi Snyder, like her grandfather, really enjoys the two-two-lanes for their customer customer-forward approach. I'm glad to hear that. While change can be good, seeing all of the In In-NN-Out locations with two lanes, think:

Pasadena, Norwalk, Studio City, and more tells a greater story about Los Angeles. Here is a town that's rich in history, anchored in community, and brimming with generations of families who've been going to In In-NN-Out for as long as they can remember.

## MICHAEL MC LAY

Mike Mc Lay grew up in Sunland on Wentworth building forts in the Tujunga Wash with his childhood friends. He was born in 1964 and was 11 years old by the time the Tujunga

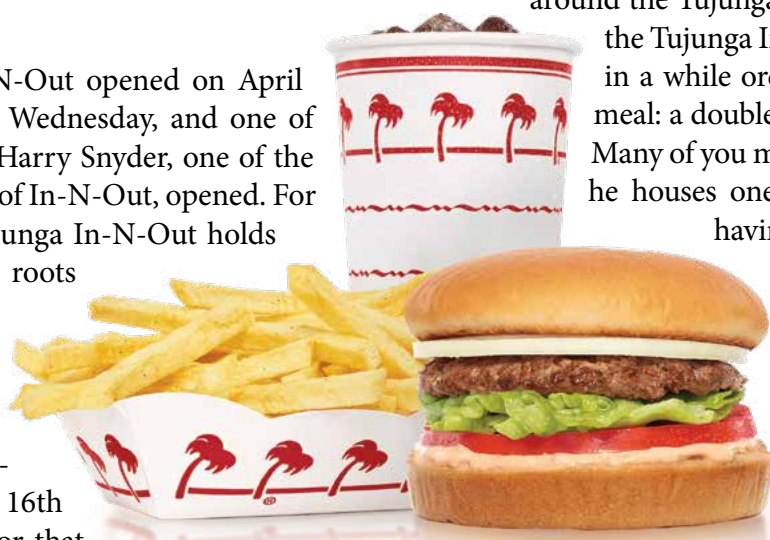
In-N-Out opened. While Mike attended Our Lady of Lourdes in Tujunga, his brother Danny Ancil played football and baseball as a Golden Knight for St. Francis High School in La Cañada Flintridge from the years of 1974-1978. He recalls driving home from his brother's games in the back of his dad's white Chevy truck and stopping at In-N-Out on the way home. His parents would park under the white awning and eat in the car with the windows down. His most fond memories of In-N-Out involve the summer of 1977, when he was 13 years old, getting dropped off in his mom's red Chevy Nova at the Boogie Bowl Skate Park with his friends. The Boogie Bowl Skate Park was on the intersection of Boston and Foothill and boasted an arcade, a little food kiosk, and a pro shop that Mike called, "Really an amateur shop". When the Boogie Bowl closed for the night, he and his friends would begin their descent riding their skateboards down Foothill Boulevard back to Sunland. They'd pool their money and stop at In-N-Out before riding home on full bellies and tired feet following the sun as it set on the Wash.

## MATTHEW GUNNELL

Matthew Gunnell was born in New York in 1968, but raised in LA moving from Hollywood to Glendale in 1973. He first recalls visiting the Tujunga In-N-Out in 6th or 7th grade around 1979 or 1980, when his mom came to him and said, "I want to take you to this new In-N-Out." He recalls them making an outing of it. When he started attending Hoover High in 1983, he would pile into one of his friend's cars and they'd take advantage of their off-campus lunch privileges to drive from Hoover High to the Tujunga In-N-Out eating in the car on the way back. Talk about In-N-Out fever! He recalls that on occasion when it would snow in the Angeles National Forest, he and his friends would drive up Angeles Crest Highway, shovel snow into the bed of their trucks, and drive through the Tujunga In-N-Out with their Toyota pick-ups full of snow.

Matthew moved to the Bay Area around 1991 and back again to Glendale in 2001 where he began working for the Glendale Police Department. From the end of 2001 to August of 2003, he worked the graveyard shift on patrol. Although the Tujunga In-N-Out was just out of the Glendale district, Lowell Avenue being the line between Tujunga and La Crescenta, he would stop there for lunch late at night.

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They called this area that he patrolled “The Hill”, everything just below Montrose to the unincorporated parts and right up to Lowell. He expressed gratitude that In-N-Out was open late because he didn’t want to have lunch too early on his shift. Matthew is one of many individuals who found solace at the Tujunga In-N-Out. As an Historical Society and museum that archives folk history, the Tujunga In-N-Out captures our hearts in its devotion to our community as a company that treats us like family with their fair pricing, outstanding customer service, and honest quality.

**JEFF JONES**  
Jeff Jones was born in 1981 and grew up in Sunland just like his mom. He also attended Verdugo Hills High School and worked at In-N-Out from 1997-1998 when he was 16 years old. On weekends and after school, he would drive from Verdugo Hills High School up Foothill Boulevard to work night shifts, but not closing, since he was a minor. His friends would come through the two-lane to say hello to him and his three other friends from Verdugo Hills High School. Jeff worked at In-N-Out during the company’s 50th anniversary in October of 1998. To celebrate all the associates were given gold watches. Jeff moved to Santa Clarita where he continues to patronize In-N-Out and still has the watch somewhere around here. One celebrity that Jeff recalls visiting the Tujunga In-N-Out was Jonathan Taylor Thomas the teenage heartthrob from the 90s who was rumored to live in La Cañada. As a new hire, Jeff tells the story about how one day it started raining, and his coworkers told him to go out and “squeegee” the drive lanes. (A flat type of mop used to push water into a drain.) As he stood outside effectively mopping up the rain, a voice over the loud speaker that announces numbers revealed the joke and told him to come back inside where it’s warm and dry. He thinks of his time working at the Tujunga In-N-Out fondly and as a fun job, he enjoyed, where the shifts went by fast especially when it was busy. He won-

ders about what his life would look like if he had stayed there, maybe he would have been closer to retirement now.

**KYLA UHERN NÉE DE SANTIS**  
Kyla Uhern was born in 1991 and grew up in Kagel Canyon among the gnarled oak trees and “No Hunting” signs. She was hired at In-N-Out in 2008 when she was 17 years old. At that time, she had switched from Verdugo Hills High School to Independent Study allowing her to work day and night shifts at In-N-Out. Her favorite position was working the fries. Kyla recalls that high schoolers from the local schools, Cal Crescanta Valley High and Verdugo Hills High would congregate there after football games. There was a bit of a turf war regarding this In-N-Out: “Back then phones didn’t have access to the internet,” Kyla says, “You couldn’t just whip out your phone and see that the dividing line between Tujunga and La Crescanta was right on Lowell.” Those from Sunland-Tujunga claimed the In-N-Out as their own while those from La Crescanta claimed it as theirs. Even though access to this information is now available, there are still many from La Crescanta who see the Tujunga In-N-Out as their own which speaks to the way In-N-Out has entered our community and our hearts. Online, when the company posts from their Instagram account a photo of Store #16, comments like “Tujunga. My spot!” Populate the comment section.

Kyla recalls a special memory from one of her past coworkers. When she moved away from Sunland-Tujunga as an adult and later moved back in 2016 she started working at the In-N-Out

in Burbank. Sometimes In-N-Out stores “borrow bodies” meaning one In-N-Out lends their workers to another if they’re short-staffed. In 2018, Kyla was borrowed from the Burbank In-N-Out back to the Tujunga In-N-Out for a day where she reconnected with a past coworker ten years later. Her coworker, Nancy, affectionately known as Mama Nancy, told her to follow her to the backroom where the lockers were. Nancy opened the door to her locker and pointed to a photo of Kyla when she was five years old. Kyla didn’t remember giving Nancy the childhood photo of herself ten years earlier, and she was so touched that Nancy had kept it in her locker all those years later. She described it as an “Unexpected, sweet surprise.”

As I think of all the ways In-N-Out was there for me on a personal level but also within the community, I can’t help but feel an immense sense of gratitude. There aren’t too many companies cut from the same cloth out there as In-N-Out with their strong convictions and relationship with their customer. I remember how In-N-Out stayed open during the 2020 Pandemic and their response to the recent wildfires specifically the Eaton Fire that neighbored Sunland-Tujunga, how they sent in their food trucks to feed firefighters and first responders during that very difficult time that rocked our community. As we celebrate five decades of In-N-Out in Tujunga, we welcome you to stop by the museum and share your memories of the Tujunga In-N-Out and reminisce on those days by grabbing a burger afterward or maybe before. Here’s to another 50!■



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Here’s how to do it:  
**First, focus on prices.** We must start with what matters most. President Trump won the White House on an overt promise to bring down prices. Let’s not forget his most oft-repeated claims: “Starting on Day 1, we will end inflation and make America affordable again, to bring down the prices of all goods” or: “Prices will come down. You just watch. They’ll come down, and they’ll come down fast, not only with insurance, with everything.” This promise is formally broken. The cost of trucks and vehicles is set to shoot up thousands of dollars. Dame, a sexual wellness brand that makes adult toys and personal care products, implemented a \$5 “Trump tariff surcharge.” Everything from seafood to cans of beer to clothing to toys will grow more expensive.  
**Editors’ Picks**

The most direct hit to working people’s pocketbooks will always be from the cost of daily goods. Making it clear that Trump and the Republicans willingly broke this promise should be in every ad, every podcast talking point, every message we send from now until the midterms.  
**Second, it’s not about the stock market, it’s about 401(k)s.** With six in 10 Americans lacking the savings to cover even a \$1,000 emergency expense, Democrats cannot afford to hinge our economic narrative on the rise and fall of a market for the privileged. For younger Americans, stocks will most likely rebound and grow over time. But the tariffs are a poison dagger for those who have saved and vested into their 401(k) their entire lives, just to see it depleted by the reckless actions of the president. You can bet certain retirees are now living in a panic, pausing home renovations and big-ticket purchases as their life savings start to drain by the day. If this continues, many

retirees will have to go back into the work force, spending what should be their comfortable years grinding in the office like they are in their 30s. This is a real, substantial pain that will be felt by the Americans who are the least deserving of it. As it turns out, older voters are also some of the most reliable, powering Trump’s re-election. Democrats, uplift their stories and connect their pain to the president. Do not focus on the market or the daily percentage drop in the Magnificent Seven tech stocks.  
**And third, make the message local.** It’s important that as a party we understand this is not about us and that the Democratic brand is tarnished at this given moment. And instead, take our prints off of the message as much as possible. This is not about us going on CNN or taking to X to complain about the president. The Democratic Party must now take local stories and project them where they matter most. Record the

story of Nicholas Gilbert, a dairy farmer upended by the tariffs — and localize it to Wisconsin. Focus on the Latino and Black men who supported his previous election, and take it to Georgia or Arizona. Go on influencer networks and podcasts talking about the looming increase in car prices and the fact that the president exploded Nintendo’s plans for the Switch 2. For the entirety of his tenure in American politics, Donald Trump for better or worse has lived on by the grace of the American people’s faith in his economic leadership. Now it is plain and clear, just as with his failures in Atlantic City or with Trump University, that President Trump never had any idea what he was doing all along. If we avoid the distractions to come and stay focused on the economy, Democrats can take back the one issue that has kept Trump on a respirator all this time. Through all the hardships to come, we bring the silver lining. And finally, we can begin again.■



# Arsonist or Just Plain Stupid?



Last Sunday while getting the Rover ready for off-roading if there was another wildfire, calls started coming in about a fire at the Santa Monica Mountain hiking trail.

And off went until we began to see the black billowing smoke coming up from the draw. There were 2 civilians at the gate and one was videoing it and the other just didn't know what to do. The LAFD had been called but it was about 15 minutes before they arrived and although the LAPD was called at the same time, they took about 25 minutes to arrive.

After it was all contained, it turned out that the "arsonist" was just trying to burn the rubber and vinyl coating off rolls of wire. Who'd a thunk it? The fire got out of hand and he began trying to beat it out and throw dirt on it.

Think about it. Someone creating a fire that could have caused millions of dollars damage for a few dollars of scrap. He finally gave up and the fire dept put it out and detained him. ■



## A GERSHWIN TOO FAR

By Joan Slater

Camerata Pacifica began its February program at the Huntington Library with Lara Morciano's Embedding Tangles, with flutist Sébastien Jacot, who had premiered the piece years ago. I don't often get to hear works for solo flute, so this sounded promising.

Pianist Irina Zahharenkova was next with George Gershwin's Prelude No. 2, from 1926. Unhurried and mellow, it felt like a low-energy, cloudy day, where you can barely summon the strength to get out of bed. Of course, being Gershwin, this tiny, almost throwaway piece would count as a triumph for the rest of us.

The main draw of the night was a selection of songs by Kurt Weill. German Soprano Sarah Maria Sun, with Zahharenkova on piano, sang what I expected to be German songs to be sung in German; I didn't expect that Sun expected the audience to know German. She delivered her spoken intro in German while TVs placed far offstage displayed the translations in walls of text. I could either turn away from the stage and concentrate on the TVs and hear my reading voice, or I could watch the performance and miss the words. We had the absolute worst seats in the house and that made it really difficult to see Sun or read the words. But, in spite of my small understanding of German.

Sun acted and spoke the songs more than she sang them. Her acting was really absorbing enough so that it kept me from walking out. I

really tried, but I couldn't follow what she was saying, and neither did the audience. There were a few in the audience that knew these songs and knew them in German. As a quick respite, sang "It Never Was You" in English, unfortunately I was nowhere near the speakers and her words came out as almost a whisper.

Now with wet hair, nightgown, and face mic, Sun returned as the vocalist. Zahharenkova, Jacot, Jose Franch-Ballester (clarinet), Jolente De Maeyer (violin, viola), and Ani Aznavoorian (cello) comprised the ensemble. Before I go any further, I state up front that the players and their performance were incredible. Unlike some other new works I see, I never heard a sour note or hesitation. The uncredited direction and lighting design were simple and moody. It was great. I could feel the tension of the words and when I could see the monitors, I was able to better understand the theory behind story.

Camerata Pacifica displayed the full text of the poems at once, making it impossible to follow the poetry and music as Schoenberg intended. It was a complete disconnect between music, words, and their meanings. And remember, the screens were far off to the sides. I could either view the performance or focus on reading. There is no point in displaying a translation if I can't connect it to the words being sung. It just becomes noise.

I looked forward to this program for

months.

I was intrigued by the concept of a set of 50 poems by Belgian writer Albert Giraud. Otto Erich Hartleben translated them into German, and Schoenberg set 21 of these to atonal music. The vocal part is spoke-sung and similarly difficult to follow. The result is highly expressionistic insanity set to music. It's all very interesting but mostly confusing. Schoenberg gets away with this lack of musicality, for lack of a better word, since it makes us listen to the words. However, it was performed in German, so, on top of the random notes was random vocalizations. When Pierrot Lunaire ended, no one clapped, just silence. Not a stunned silence, but a silence of people wondering if it was really over. Then everyone just got up and exited the building looking like they had been beaten about the head and body. ■

