## GOVERNOR NEWSOM SIGNED SB 2

*The Supreme Court's reckless and dangerous decision last year struck down common sense laws that regulate handgun permits and when people can carry guns in public.* - **SEE PAGE 4**

## Carjacking suspect leads L.A. police on dangerous

*A carjacking suspect was taken into custody after leading police on a chase spanning several areas of Los Angeles County Wednesday morning.* - **SEE PAGE X**


# THE FOOTHILLS PAPER

THE VOICE OF THE FOOTHILLS

THURSDAY, DEC 4, 2025 | *COVERING THE FOOTHILLS REGION FOR OVER 20 YEARS!* | VOLUME 18 • NUMBER 85



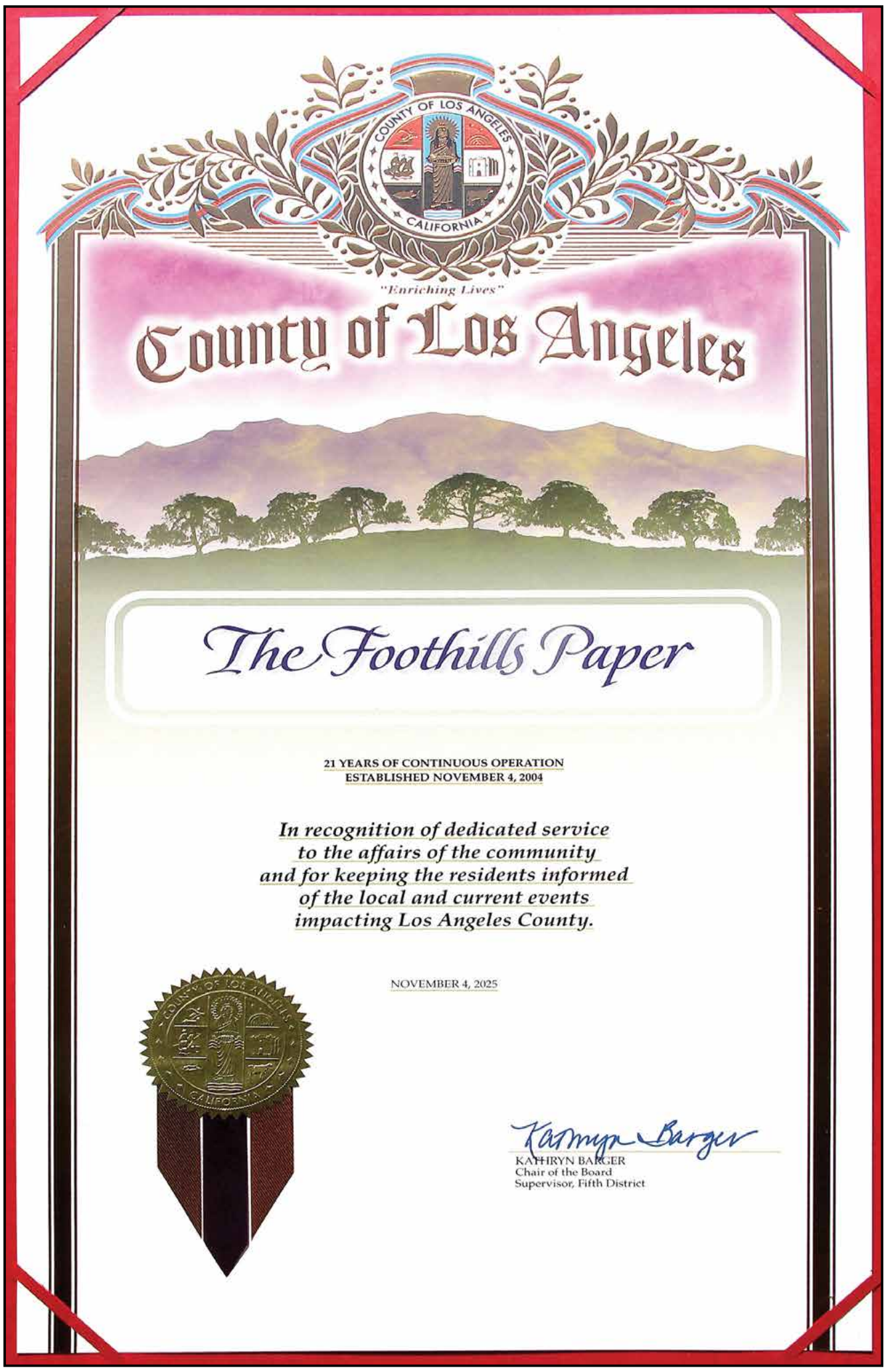
## Community members fought to keep the Pasadena Convention Center open

*For Altadena residents seeking refuge after losing their homes in the Eaton Fire*

**By Rosalind Jones, Photos by David "Doc DeMulle' & : Mykle Parker)**

In January, Southern California wildfires destroyed more than 16,000 structures and forced 100,000 people to evacuate. In the Pacific Palisades, fires on New Year's Day broke out in what was originally deemed the Lachman Fire and allegedly ballooned into a massive blaze on January 7. Altadena — an unincorporated and predominantly Black working-class community at the foot of the San Gabriel Mountains — endured the Eaton Canyon Fire, which ignited on January 7, burning for more than three weeks before containment. For the Altadena community, the devastation was especially severe.

*Please see* **Community members fought to keep the Pasadena Convention Center Open** *on Page 5*




*Presented by County Supervisor Kathryn Barger to David "Doc" DeMulle', Editor of The Foothills Paper*

**Check out The Full Color Foothills Paper Website: www.thefoothillspaper.com**

# COMMUNITY NEWS

# Senate Bill 43 would expand number considered "gravely disabled" and county worries that doing so could swamp ERs

A new law that significantly expands the rules for involuntary mental health holds takes effect Jan. 1, but San Diego County will consider delaying the change for one year, though it appears that idea will not sail through without significant debate.

The matter is set to come before the county Board of Supervisors for a vote at their regular meeting Tuesday.

Existing state law allows for the involuntary detention — often called a 5150 hold — and treatment of citizens if they may be a danger to themselves or others or if they are thought to be "gravely disabled." Today, the definition of that phrase means that a person can't "provide for their basic personal needs for food, clothing or shelter or has been found mentally incompetent."

But a new law, Senate Bill 43, signed into law on Oct. 10, broadens that definition to include conditions where, due to "a severe substance use disorder, or a co-occurring mental health disorder," a person is "unable to provide for their personal safety or necessary medical care." The law allows counties to delay implementation for up to two years.

People close to this law feel that there are many concerns that by expanding the meaning of gravely disabled at the first of the year could result in a significant increase in the number of "5150" holds that occur, especially among unhoused residents, potentially putting too much additional pressure on emergency medical resources that are already overtaxed.

The concern, she said, is that these holds won't do much but widen the current revolving door between the streets and local emergency departments if there isn't a better-laid path for how to make sure that holds turn into long-term treatment rather than a short hospital stay and a discharge back to the streets.

"We need to make sure that, if they end up in a hospital room, in an emergency room, that we know how we're going to make sure they get what they need, you can't do that just by saying, 'let's just open it up, and let's figure it out as we go.' I think that's irresponsible."

Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass took a similar stance, asserting that city firefighters and police officers spent "over 130,000 hours responding to over 53,000 behavioral health related emergency calls in the past year.

"This equates to 38 first responders spending their entire 10 hour shifts every day responding to behavioral health emergencies in my city alone," Bass said. "Many of these individuals are frequent high utilizers of emergency services, cycling from the streets, emergency rooms and jails.

"It is inhumane to allow this to continue and this issue demands action, not delay."

Local hospitals, though, clearly have significant influence on the implementation schedule because state law requires 5150 holds to be transported to certified medical facilities for evaluation by trained health care professionals.

"SB 43 is anticipated to significantly increase the number of people placed on involuntary holds brought to emergency departments who continue to be impacted by record level patient volumes without adding the capacity or other critical resources to make sure we are equipped to serve these individuals," the letter states.

"It would be foolhardy to try to implement this law before we have enough hospitals or mental health facilities" stated doc, editor of The Foothills Paper.

It remains to be seen how the change will impact the county's law enforcement agencies, which already respond to tens of thousands of mental health calls a year. In 2021, the most recent year of data available, local police agencies handled more than 38,000 crisis calls.

Police leaders have previously noted how time-consuming these calls can be for officers. It can take several hours to get an individual evaluated at a mental health facility or hospital — hours that could be spent investigating or deterring crime.

And while officers receive some mental health crisis training, it's not their area of expertise. It's why some agencies were quick to welcome the county's Mobile Crisis Response Teams, which are made up of behavioral health clinicians, case managers and peer support specialists, and can respond to some mental health emergencies.

It would appear that other counties are considering similar delays. Luke Bergmann, director of behavioral health for San Diego County, said Wednesday that the County Behavioral Health Directors Association of California, of which he is a member, has been receiving similar information from other counties considering delays.

"It seems that virtually every county is seeking that opportunity," Bergmann said, adding that most appear to be exploring delays until 2026 rather than 2025 as is the case in San Diego.

But Bergman noted that one big city, San Francisco, has already said it will implement the new law on Jan. 1, 2024.

He said that taking an additional year to prepare for implementation of SB 43 will give more time for organizations affected by the change to work together on a solid set of procedures for how an influx of additional 5150 holds would be handled.

A key topic of discussion and collaboration, he added, will be finding ways to bridge between hospitals and the outpatient substance abuse treatment centers that provide long-term treatment.

"One area of focus, certainly, will be coordinating what happens in emergency departments with what happens in community-based addiction treatment," Bergmann said. "There have been long-standing challenges there."

He added that additional work is also needed on helping patients manage withdrawal from drugs and alcohol, especially in cases, now the majority, who are using multiple substances simultaneously.

San Diego and Los Angeles Counties are but two of a handful of counties participating in a pilot project for CARE Court, a new government law that allows loved ones, service providers and others to petition the court for intervention with residents diagnosed with severe mental illnesses. Bergman noted that while the court has so far received only 40 petitions, the process has only been up and running for two months. Time is needed, he said, to make sure that there is enough training and procedure to make sure CARE Court and SB 43 procedures mesh.

Lyndsay Winkley contributed to this report.

David "Doc" DeMulle' Associated Press Managing Editor▪

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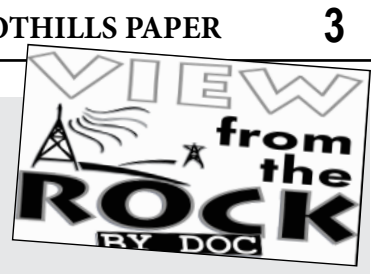



Darn, we Angelinos have forgotten what community fun is like. Yup, we're spoiled. I can't remember when I've fielded so many complaints about the impending DRIVE BYE-SHOOTINGS and Home Invasions around us.

And like a lot of other things, it seemed like there wasn't a thing we could do about it. But on the other side – there were some things that we could actually do something about.

Dis-organized crime was increasing with a rise in catalytic converter theft on the rise. Like the weather, there is really nothing you can do but protect your vehicle. And that takes getting out of the "denial" stage and actually making plans on how to make your vehicle inaccessible to thieves.

AND for once, people got mad enough to call the LAPD and lodge complaints about the problem. AND NO! The monthly Neighborhood Watch didn't mobilize and solve the problem. BUT they raised a hue and cry and got our councilperson to get the ball rolling on engraving peoples license number on the converters.

Their grass roots efforts got the problem solved and converter thefts have radically decreased.

Ah well, welcome to the new NORMAL. Where if it's out of the normal – then it is normal. I've been sitting on the side lines for years, watching what our Neighborhood Council has been doing – and who is doing what to who. Now don't get me wrong, the NC is doing the best they can with what they've got. Enough said on that.

Everybody has their demons, those do-gooders that are like the proverbial "bull in the China shop." There was a time when the Cleghorn dominated NC had their hitman Joe Barret attack everyone that they didn't like, and no one batted an eye.

Joe almost single-handedly destroyed Sunland-Tujunga. He finally got pissed off and attacked councilmember Mark Siegel while trying to steal the NC video camera. That didn't end up well for Barrett and he moved out of town.

Then there was Kurt "Curtles" Koestler who was the Rotary Club's stooge. Yup boys & girls, those were the heydays of the local clubs and political action groups.

AND now, it just doesn't seem to matter. What has replaced them are the new generation of liars here. And I'm really talking about those lackies that followed their leader "Lie-Cheat & Steal" Sonia Tatulian. It could really have been bad for us, but her followers were really stupid. An example of retribution was the period of time where these poor folk had blue koolade sent in letter to them. And of course, when they tore open the letters, koolaide dumped into their collective laps.

Ms. Sonia immediately called her minions and posted on social media:

Everyone call the fire and police dept. and say: "Help-help! I just had HAZMAT sent to me. I went to my mailbox, put on my blue latex gloves and called the police."

And you know, all of them told the authorities the exact same words. And of course my buddies at the copshop called and asked if I knew anything about it. I told them I'd look into it.

And then there was this really nice FBI agent who called and made an appointment to talk to me. He looked like he had just stepped out of GQ. (He asked that I not show his photo) and after shooting the bull for a few minutes, he asked me "Why do you think that everyone said YOU DID IT?" And I started naming the reasons starting with why I wouldn't sleep with Wally Wharton, and that she wasn't really a whore and ending with my personal relationship with Ms Sonia's dog Chewy. LOL

Back in the day when I was growing up, I grew up with a view of the world that wasn't as slanted as the kids have now. We learned about the Nazi party and how they were collectively angry and were going to change things. And what they did was so incredible that the world couldn't believe that it was happening.

We knew that the ALAMO could not be defended, yet we loved to hear the story of "13 Days of Glory." People want hero's, no matter how stupid the quest. NOW, what does any of this have to do with the STNC? It has to do with a bunch of good hearted (most of them) people believing that they really have a voice in LA City Hall. And they sided with the Scientologist members that were in it to take over our little burg, like Tommi-Lynn Bowling and her followers. I used to worry about it, but as I got older and a bit more knowledgeable of what these quasi-political bodies are really about. Look at Los Angeles. Doesn't anyone think it's amazing that ½ of the LA City Council were either arrested or indited?

What does that tell you about them? And let's fall back to our own politically impotent NC. Why are they still locked out of the North Valley City Hall under the direction of first, Felipe Fuentes, and now, Monica Rodriguez. You know, that yellow Kool-Aid that the city is passing out isn't necessarily lemon Kool-Aid.

Something is really wrong here. And then we should look at our good friend and elected official M-Rod, who we all fawned over and licked her feet. What happened there? The NC screwed up, they thought that they were really a voice in LA. But they weren't.

BUT, it appears that things are starting to change. Take a look at our beautiful completely renovated NV City Hall. For the 3rd time since it was rebuilt, it's decorated with Christmas Tree Lights and Christmasy things. WOW! It makes us look like a real community and not the prison camp that we're actually in.

But don't forget the big picture. It's time for a re-assessment of what's going on here with these ethnic drivers "curb Surfing, blowing off stop signs and lights and in some cases killing themselves (and others). So how much insult can our community stand before they start whistling the Horst-Wessel tune? Will anyone actually stand up and yell "We're tired of this and we're not going to take it anymore?" I really don't think so – not even while our friends are getting killed by the crazy/drunken drivers.

Ms. Monica is out of the running next December and her council seat will be up for grabs. It's time you begin to ask yourself if it's worth putting up with the status quo, and remember!

It's not the water.▪

# Thankfulness Buried in the Rubble

*by Robert C. Koehler*

Much as I love Thanksgiving — seeing my family . . . oh the turkey, oh the cranberry sauce —I feel like maybe a bomb fragment has hit the "thanks" part.

I find myself struggling to let a sense of thankfulness flow, because when I do — and doing so has always been a crucial part of the holiday — suddenly my gratitude for the blessings of my life starts to feel more like luck and, even worse, privilege. Yeah, how nice. I'm thankful for the books in my library. I'm thankful for the air I breathe, for my daughter, my sister, my nieces and nephews and all the friendship, all the love, that fortifies my life. But then . . .

As I give thanks to the walls of my house, as I kiss the computer at which I sit, I hear bombs flying and suddenly I can envision all of it . . . all of it, all of it … being taken from me in an instant. I envision digging for a child in the rubble.

Yes, this current war that is saturating the media — Israel's assault on Gaza, funded by the United States, emerging from seven and a half decades of Israeli occupation of Palestine — has entered my consciousness in a way I can't seem to ignore. It's only one of several hellish wars festering on Planet Earth right now, but I can't stop hearing the Israeli defense minister seeming to explain all of them: "We are fighting human animals."

And once again, genocide is just and righteous and necessary. And history's soul cracks open. The story of Thanksgiving is two cultures embracing and sharing a feast of life. But then one of the cultures stole the continent. As New York Times reporter Maya Salam wrote some years ago: "Thanksgiving facts and Thanksgiving myths have blended together for years like so much gravy and mashed potatoes, and separating them is just as complicated."

Yeah, stir in the genocide. Stir in the slavery. The holiday starts renaming itself: Thankstaking.

Here's a frequently left-out fragment of the Thanksgiving story. It's the story of Tisquantum, also known as Squanto, a member of the Wampanoag tribe in the 1600s. He's known to be the Pilgrims' rescuer who, after half the Pilgrim settlers had died during a harsh winter, taught those who were left some necessary survival skills, including how to catch eel and grow corn.

But, according to the Potawatomi website, Tisquantum's story is "less innocent than the narrative that he assisted the Pilgrims with teaching them how to grow crops and take advantage of North America's bounties."

What's generally not mentioned in the classroom is that six years before the Mayflower arrived, in what is now known as Massachusetts, a slave-trader had captured Tisquantum, along with a group of Native Americans, who were taken as captives to Europe. Tisquantum eventually wound up escaping and made his way to England where he learned English. He returned to the American continent in 1619.

As the Potawatomi site explains:

"While Tisquantum was overseas, New England's Indigenous experienced a monumental death rate, with some communities losing nearly every tribal member to the decimating effects of European diseases.

"Upon returning to North American and his village of Patuset, Tisquantum found only piles of bones of his fellow tribesmen killed by the plagues.▪

# Governor Newsom signed SB 2

The Supreme Court's reckless and dangerous decision last year struck down common sense laws that regulate handgun permits and when people can carry guns in public.

Since then, we have seen more and more weapons in public spaces, and rising gun sales and violence across our country. That's why I am more determined to fight for sensible gun safety and combat the Supreme Court decision head on. I partnered with Governor Gavin Newsom, Attorney General Bonta and gun safety advocates and introduced Senate Bill (SB) 2. SB 2 limits those who can obtain handgun permits, including setting 21 as a minimum age, it also requires strict training and prohibits weapons in many public places. And today, just more than seven months after introduction, I stood with Governor Newsom, Attorney General Bonta and gun safety advocates as SB 2 was signed into law. It's days like today that fuel my passion to serve. Our state's gun laws have been proven to save lives. That's real progress.

For more than a decade, I've fought organizations like the National Rifle Association and the gun lobby in Sacramento. I'm proud of this work, passing nation leading laws like banning the open carry of guns, raising the minimum firearm purchase age to 21, and requiring gun owners to safely store their weapons. President Biden has even called for a national law on the safe storage of firearms that is modeled after the bill I passed here in California.

While we have made progress in California, I am running for Congress because we must pass similar policies at the national level: universal background checks when purchasing firearms, a waiting period between purchase and picking up, an assault weapons ban and safe storage requirements.

Passing these policies will save lives. And, it's why I am running for Congress. In your service, Anthony▪

**Community members fought**
*continued from page 1*

Both the Palisades and Eaton Canyon fires caused massive damage, but race and proximity to power shaped how first responders and local government showed up.

Kaveh Naeeni, a community organizer with For the People Los Angeles and a resident of Pasadena at the time of the Eaton Fire, was in Altadena when the blaze began. He watched as the Palisades received an outpouring of government and institutional support that never reached Altadena.

"Altadena and the Pacific Palisades are two very different places," said Naeeni. "The agencies turned around and went the opposite direction [of Altadena]. I have family members who lost homes in the Pacific Palisades. I was really sad for them to lose their homes, but I was not worried about them getting back up on their feet. Even when it comes to a fire, and you see two communities get burned down, you still see that the system works for one that needs the help the least."

Heavenly Hughes — the Executive Director of the Altadena-based community organization My Tribe Rise — said that neglect was clear from the start, especially on Altadena's West Side.

"There was no action being taken for West Side Altadena," she told Knock LA. "We're talking about people who are supposed to be experts, watching where the winds are going and where the fire was leading, but they had no plan, and they showed it."

The lack of action from local government left residents to fend for themselves. On January 7, as the Eaton Fire grew stronger, Hughes saw her community ignored by first responders. To her, the response showed a clear anti-Black bias.

"Even now it's hard for me to talk about because I get emotional," Hughes said, "People would call me and say, 'I've called 911. Nobody is coming. I've been waiting and no one is coming.'"

Hughes' elderly and disabled mother lived in West Altadena. Neighbors, many of them seniors, were the only people who helped her evacuate. That night, a woman on the same street died when the fire engulfed her home.

As hurricane-force winds swept Southern California and encouraged the blazes, the calamity in Altadena reached new heights. Displaced residents entered into the support systems set up by local governments and NGO (non-governmental organization) partners. As folks fled the burn areas, the Red Cross opened up an evacuation hub in the Pasadena Convention Center.

What should have been a place of refuge for displaced people soon transformed into a nightmare for the evacuees. According to both Naeeni and Hughes, the facility quickly became uninhabitable and dangerous to residents' health. Red Cross staff at the Convention Center started turning away volunteers who showed up to donate essential supplies like clothes, hygiene items, and water. In an egregious step beyond that, Naeeni and Hughes confirmed that staff kept all donations from outside communities in the center's basement. None of it reached the evacuees upstairs.

All the while, certain community members decided they were not going to sit idle while the situation worsened at the Center. Longtime Pasadena resident and organizer Fahren James — who told Knock LA that she worried about the way Pasadena governance would impact Black Altadena residents — snuck inside the Convention Center on several occasions to document the conditions and make connections with the folks staying there. What she witnessed startled her.

"The whole bottom floor parking garage was packed with stuff," she said, after seeing Red Cross volunteers handing out used, company-branded blankets for the evacuees while an entire section of the building was full of new, untouched blankets that community members had dropped off. "The City of Pasadena was in charge of that stuff. There were some city workers who lost their homes, but it felt like they took all the good stuff so that they could distribute it to their own people versus giving that to everyone who was displaced. There was a hierarchy for who could get good or new stuff and people in the Convention Center got the scraps."

Despite getting sick a week into supporting families inside the center, James returned five days later to continue checking in on her community members. On her next visit to the Convention Center following her recovery, she found that the situation had deteriorated for evacuees.

"People still had on the same clothes, still in their pajamas. Some people still didn't have shoes," she said. "They made that Convention Center so uncomfortable, and I feel like it was by design. They made it unbearable that people wouldn't stay."

James witnessed firsthand as Red Cross staff and partner organizations mistreated the displaced folks and created a hostile environment.

*Please see* **Community members fought** *on Page 7*

# ANOTHER DAY IN THE HOOD


# CRIME MAPPING

**VEHICLE, STOLEN 231614427**
10400 BLOCK LAS LUNITAS AV

**ROBBERY 239931638**
BIG TUJUNGA CANYON RD & BIG TUJUNGA CANYON RD

**VEHICLE, STOLEN 231614408**
8500 BLOCK FENWICK ST

**VEHICLE, STOLEN 231614403**
10500 BLOCK WOODWARD AV

**VEHICLE, STOLEN 231614405**
10100 BLOCK COMMERCE AV

**BURGLARY FROM VEHICLE 231614419**
11900 BLOCK BIG TUJUNGA CANYON RD

**BURGLARY FROM VEHICLE 231614402**
8500 BLOCK KYLE ST

**VEHICLE, STOLEN 231614392**
7300 BLOCK APPERSON ST

**VEHICLE, STOLEN 231614378**
6800 BLOCK VALMONT ST

**VEHICLE, STOLEN 231614363**
11300 BLOCK RIVERWOOD DR

**VEHICLE, STOLEN 231614322**
10800 BLOCK PLAINVIEW AV

**VEHICLE, ATTEMPTED STOLEN 231614335**
8100 BLOCK HILLROSE ST

**VEHICLE, STOLEN 231614341**
8100 BLOCK GROVE ST

**VEHICLE, STOLEN 231614365**
8300 BLOCK APPERSON ST

**THEFT - PETTY 231614348**
8500 BLOCK TUJUNGA VALLEY ST

**VEHICLE, STOLEN 231614308**
7700 BLOCK SUMMITROSE ST

**VEHICLE, STOLEN 231614293**
10100 BLOCK SAMOA AV

**BURGLARY – ATTEMPTED 231614272**
10100 BLOCK MT GLEASON AV

**THEFT - PETTY 231600831**
10700 BLOCK NASSAU AV

**ROBBERY 231614231**
8500 BLOCK FOOTHILL BL

**VEHICLE, STOLEN 231614126**
10100 BLOCK COMMERCE AV

**VEHICLE, ATTEMPTED STOLEN 231614128**
8200 BLOCK HILLROSE ST

**THEFT FROM VEHICLE - 231614107**
10700 BLOCK ORO VISTA AV

**VEHICLE, STOLEN 231614093**
8100 BLOCK KYLE ST




*The suspect was arrested in Lancaster.*

# Carjacking suspect leads L.A. police on dangerous

**By Tony Kurzweil, Marc Sternfield**

A carjacking suspect was taken into custody after leading police on a chase spanning several areas of Los Angeles County Wednesday morning.

Police had been monitoring the white Ford work truck since the carjacking was first reported around 6:19 a.m. in the 8500 block of Foothill Boulevard in Sunland, a Los Angeles Police Department spokesperson said.

The driver led officers through the Angeles National Forest and into Antelope Valley where Sky5 live coverage showed him driving into oncoming traffic and through construction zones in his effort to escape. He struck at least two innocent drivers.

The suspect eventually jumped out of the truck and fled on foot into a residential neighborhood in Lancaster. After running through several backyards and hopping fences, the man was arrested without incident.

He is expected to face a wide range of charges including grand theft auto.▪

*A carjacking suspect led police on a chase from Sunland into Antelope Valley.*

ASK RUSTY

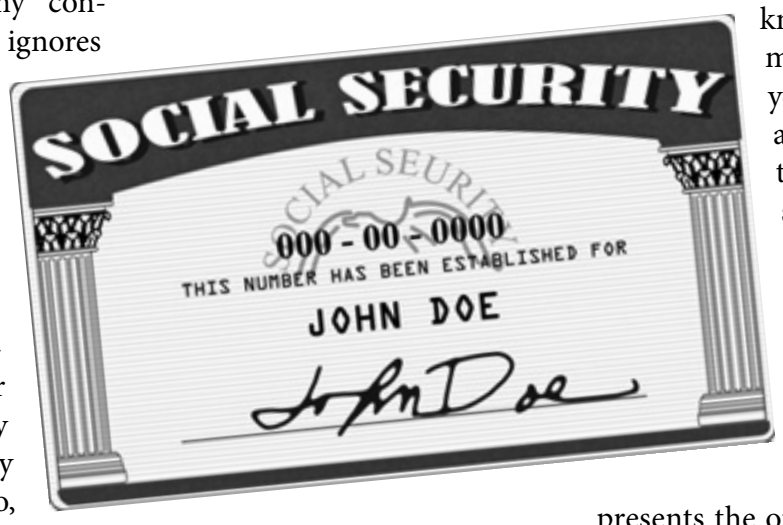
# Is Social Security Really a "good deal?"

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

***Dear Rusty:*** You've said in the past that most people recoup their SS contributions within five years of starting benefits, thus Social Security "is an exceptionally good deal." Your calculation is correct but misleading; if it were not, SS would have been insolvent long ago. I will, in fact, get "my" contributions back in about five years, but my employer's contributions will take another five years, and that is money that my employer could have been paying me, so they are really "my" contributions. But even that ignores the time value of money. I did a calculation as if my contributions, along with those of my employer, were invested in an account earning 5% per year. That would provide me the equivalent of SS income for 24 years, approximately what my life expectancy was when I retired. So, it's not a bad deal, but it is hardly exceptional. It is roughly the equivalent of me investing that money throughout my career and using the total to buy an annuity.

Of course, Social Security does have the advantage of certainty, at least until it goes broke. My portfolio would not earn a steady 5% every year, though that is at the low end of what financial managers would expect over a long period. And it does force people to save, many of whom would otherwise make no provision for retirement. ***Signed: Realistic Senior.***

***Dear Realistic:*** Thanks very much for your feedback on my previous article. I think it's important to draw a distinction for SS contributions made by an employer, because that is not money the individual personally pays, but rather an obligation for employers to help fund the Social Security program. Without that federal obligation, it is doubtful that employers would, instead, provide employees with equivalent additional compensation, so the thought that these are really your contributions is not a fair assessment. Indeed, they are contributions which happen to be tied to your earnings level (to a cap), for which employers receive relief on their corporate income tax, and likely would not make if not required by law.




As you have noted, Social Security has the advantage of certainty, something which is lacking when it comes to investing the equivalent amounts in the financial markets. And, as you have hinted, there exists a substantial failure by future American retirees to save adequately for their retirement, a problem well known in most financial circles. Thus, the certainty of Social Security makes it a crucial part of everyone's retirement planning – and it will be there! Despite all the angst attributed to the current financial issues facing the program, there is little doubt that Social Security is here to stay. The question is - what reform is needed to make the program fully solvent for generations of future Americans? The Association of Mature American Citizens (AMAC) has developed a proposal to sensibly reform Social Security and avoid the currently projected 2033 date that the SS Trust Funds are expected to be depleted (which will necessitate an across-the-board cut for everyone). We have little doubt that the reform needed will happen (it would be political suicide for Congress if it did not), and hopefully soon. You can read about AMAC's proposed solution at this link: www.amac.us/social-security-guarantee.

Again, thank you for your feedback and commentary. Please know that we very much appreciate your thoughts and are always willing to discuss these issues.

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**Community members fought**
*continued from page 5*

When a young woman approached a food distributor with a request for six plates to give to her family and her grandmother, the staff member scolded her, refused to serve her, and said that all family members — including the elderly grandma in her nineties — had to be present to get the food. The humiliation added to the trauma of being displaced was a cruel insult.

Community members fought to keep the Pasadena Convention Center open for Altadena residents seeking refuge after losing their homes in the Eaton Fire. (Photo: Mykle Parker)

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Both the Palisades and Eaton Canyon fires caused massive damage, but race and proximity to power shaped how first responders and local government showed up.

Kaveh Naeeni, a community organizer with For the People Los Angeles and a resident of Pasadena at the time of the Eaton Fire, was in Altadena when the blaze began. He watched as the Palisades received an outpouring of government and institutional support that never reached Altadena.

"Altadena and the Pacific Palisades are two very different places," said Naeeni. "The agencies turned around and went the opposite direction [of Altadena]. I have family members who lost homes in the Pacific Palisades. I was really sad for them to lose their homes, but I was not worried about them getting back up on their feet.

Even when it comes to a fire, and you see two communities get burned down, you still see that the system works for one that needs the help the least."

*Please see* **Community members fought** *on Page 9*

# Making Sense

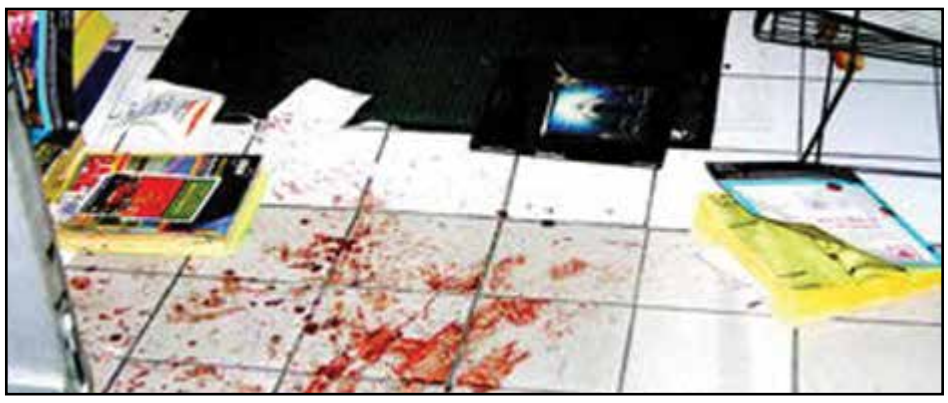

*Photo credit David "Doc" DeMulle'.*

**By Michael Reagan**

My daughter has a nice little house in a safe neighborhood in the San Fernando Valley.

Until recently she never really had to worry about crime or her personal safety.

But now suburban places like hers in Northern California and Southern California are being hit by a crime wave that has never hit them before.

As you've seen on national TV, "smash-and-grab" gangs are hitting shopping malls like the one near her – the same one I often take my granddaughters to.

And now there are even young thugs who'll follow you home from the mall and break into your house.

It's no wonder my daughter is afraid to go out to her mailbox in the dark by herself.

She's not alone. Many people in the multi-troubled state of California are living in fear.

It is bad enough that for almost two years the Democrats in charge of the state government have used the war on COVID as an excuse to expand their powers and abuse us with strict lockdowns, school closings and mandates.

But seven years ago the state's so-called progressives brought us Proposition 47, a sentencing "reform" measure that among other things essentially decriminalized retail theft by making stealing anything with a value of less than $950 a mere misdemeanor.

If you combine that dumb idea – which the Los Angeles Times points out "was co-authored by then San Francisco — now Los Angeles — Dist. Atty. George Gascón and strongly supported by Lt. Gov. Gavin Newsom" -- with the even dumber idea of defunding the police, you will understand why California is in the midst of a crime wave.

The 2023 crime stats for Los Angeles County tell the grim story.

Compared to 2024, homicides in LA through the end of October are up 75 percent.

Aggravated assaults involving a firearm are up 73 percent. Motor vehicle thefts are up 57 percent. Unlawful shootings are up 73 percent…

And, to show what happens when you defund the police, destroy the morale of your officers and threaten them with vaccine mandates that result in them quitting their jobs, arrests in Los Angeles in 2024 so far compared to 2022 are down 34 percent.

The criminals have gotten so bold that even progressives living in gated and walled mansions in Beverly Hills are starting to wake up and demand more police protection.

As we know, calls for more law and order by liberals are rare.

But that's what happens when the nice shops in your nice neighborhood – the ones on Rodeo Drive, for example – get hit by the smashers and grabbers.

And it's what happens when an 81-year-old philanthropist a few blocks away gets robbed and murdered in her zillion-dollar homedespite having an armed guard.

The state's justice system has become a tragic joke. The 14 smash-and-grabbers police arrested here last week were probably back on the street before the police returned home.

Also, everyone knows these well-coordinated mobs of smash-and-grabbers are not stealing baby food.

They're not poor kids. They're sophisticated punks who've figured out how to steal $500 purses and terrorize people – and "woke" politicians and subversive district attorneys are letting them get away with it.

You don't see these gangs operating in Florida. They're a homegrown product of California and its irresponsible politicians like Gov. Newsom and DA Gascón.

Thanks to them, we have a lot of ordinary Californians who are afraid if they go to a mall or sit down outside at a restaurant a bunch of thugs will show up and rob or terrorize them.

Everyone in Los Angeles now knows by now that the city's shrinking police force and upside-down justice system can no longer do the basic job of protecting them from California's Crime Wave.

Which is probably why one sensible public servant, Los Angeles Sheriff Alex Villanueva, had working extra hard to expand his department's ability to issue concealed weapons permits.



New Hope Church

CHRISTMAS Spectacular

Come and experience the Christmas Spectacular; A night bursting with joy-filled entertainment and a message of HOPE!

This Broadway-style production will transport you through the ages, as you experience a variety of timeless Christmas classics, as well as your favorite contemporary renditions. Relive the nostalgic music and yuletide attire of times gone by, revel in the fun and festive choreography of more modern melodies, hum along to the choral masterpieces presented in joyful exuberance, and encounter the miraculous anticipation of the triumphant arrival of the Christ Child, all from the comfort of your authentic theatre seat!

We have set the stage for this year's Christmas Spectacular to be better than ever! Alongside many of your cherished Christmas songs and scenes, we have added some incredible new numbers that are sure to delight every attender, young and old! Showcasing a cast of 100+ performers, professional theatre lighting and sound, over 300 hand-crafted costumes, dazzling music, dance and special effects, this is sure to be an evening you won't forget!

New Hope Church, thanks to generous donations from our sponsors, is presenting the Christmas Spectacular COMPLETELY FREE as a gift to our Community… because we believe that every person and every family should have the opportunity to experience the JOY and CELEBRATION of Christmas!

Dates of Performances: Saturday Dec. 13th at 5:30 pm.

Door Times: V.I.P Sponsors – Seating 5:45 – 6:15pm, we kindly ask that all V.I.P. ticket holders be seated by 6:25pm . General Admission – Doors open at 6:30pm, must have a ticket to enter.

Standby – Doors open for standby seating at 6:45pm on a first come, first served basis. Standby Tickets available at the door. ▪

**Community members fought**
*continued from page 7*

Heavenly Hughes — the Executive Director of the Altadena-based community organization My Tribe Rise — said that neglect was clear from the start, especially on Altadena's West Side.

"There was no action being taken for West Side Altadena," she told Knock LA. "We're talking about people who are supposed to be experts, watching where the winds are going and where the fire was leading, but they had no plan, and they showed it."

The lack of action from local government left residents to fend for themselves. On January 7, as the Eaton Fire grew stronger, Hughes saw her community ignored by first responders. To her, the response showed a clear anti-Black bias.

"Even now it's hard for me to talk about because I get emotional," Hughes said, "People would call me and say, 'I've called 911. Nobody is coming. I've been waiting and no one is coming.'"

Hughes' elderly and disabled mother lived in West Altadena. Neighbors, many of them seniors, were the only people who helped her evacuate. That night, a woman on the same street died when the fire engulfed her home.

As hurricane-force winds swept Southern California and encouraged the blazes, the calamity in Altadena reached new heights. Displaced residents entered into the support systems set up by local governments and NGO (non-governmental organization) partners. As folks fled the burn areas, the Red Cross opened up an evacuation hub in the Pasadena Convention Center.

What should have been a place of refuge for displaced people soon transformed into a nightmare for the evacuees. According to both Naeeni and Hughes, the facility quickly became uninhabitable and dangerous to residents' health. Red Cross staff at the Convention Center started turning away volunteers who showed up to donate essential supplies like clothes, hygiene items, and water. In an egregious step beyond that, Naeeni and Hughes confirmed that staff kept all donations from outside communities in the center's basement. None of it reached the evacuees upstairs.

All the while, certain community members decided they were not going to sit idle while the situation worsened at the Center. Longtime Pasadena resident and organizer Fahren James — who told Knock LA that she worried about the way Pasadena governance would impact Black Altadena residents — snuck inside the Convention Center on several occasions to document the conditions and make connections with the folks staying there. What she witnessed startled her.

"The whole bottom floor parking garage was packed with stuff," she said, after seeing Red Cross volunteers handing out used, company-branded blankets for the evacuees while an entire section of the building was full of new, untouched blankets that community members had dropped off. "The City of Pasadena was in charge of that stuff. There were some city workers who lost their homes, but it felt like they took all the good stuff so that they could distribute it to their own people versus giving that to everyone who was displaced. There was a hierarchy for who could get good or new stuff and people in the Convention Center got the scraps."

Despite getting sick a week into supporting families inside the center, James returned five days later to continue checking in on her community members. On her next visit to the Convention Center following her recovery, she found that the situation had deteriorated for evacuees.

"People still had on the same clothes, still in their pajamas. Some people still didn't have shoes," she said. "They made that Convention Center so uncomfortable, and I feel like it was by design. They made it unbearable that people wouldn't stay."

James witnessed firsthand as Red Cross staff and partner organizations mistreated the displaced folks and created a hostile environment. When a young woman approached a food distributor with a request for six plates to give to her family and her grandmother, the staff member scolded her, refused to serve her, and said that all family members — including the elderly grandma in her nineties — had to be present to get the food. The humiliation added to the trauma of being displaced was a cruel insult.▪

# FIRE CREWS ON THE SCENE OF A MASSIVE HOUSE FIRE ON SUNDAY, 2 FATALITIES

*Firefighters attempt to enter explosive house fire! (Photo by David "Doc" DeMulle'*

As fire crews arrived at the scene, they could hear ammunition being "cooked off," which is when unfired ammunition prematurely explodes due to high heat.

"Firefighters could hear ammunition being 'cooked off' continuously from the heat," LAFD said. "[Firefighters] received unconfirmed reports that the house is used in criminal dealings and could be 'booby-trapped.'" The reports of the home being "booby-trapped" remained unconfirmed.

LAFD Firefighters carefully examining the three structures heavily damaged by fire, have discovered weapons, ammunition and the remains of one person (undetermined age / gender / site affiliation) in the debris. No other injuries have been reported. As the three heavily damaged and structurally unstable buildings have been formally 'red-tagged' by the City's Department of Building & Safety as unfit for entry, LAFD crews will be working throughout the day alongside fire cause investigators, police officials and the Medical Examiner to assure hazard abatement that allows for a safe, thorough and methodical investigation of the fire scene, and removal of the decedent. LAFD and LAPD first responders remain deeply grateful to neighbors who quickly came forth at the time of the fire to share insight, observations and concerns, which allowed Firefighters and Police Officers to take immediate and effective action that protected neighbors, adjacent homes and emergency response personnel.

"The pattern and volume of that ammunition going off sounded like it actually might have been pulled by a trigger of a gun with some human intent," LAFD Captain Erik Scott told media crews. "Versus [the ammunition] just heating up to reach its ignition temperature."

Human remains were found in one of the property's back houses, officials confirmed. A K9 unit will search the area for more remains when the smoke dissipates.

The decedent's identity has not been released. A dog was also found dead inside one of the homes, LAFD Captain Scott confirmed.

Crews were able to extinguish the fire and declared the structure a knockdown by 6 a.m., about an hour and 11 minutes after it initially broke out. They will continue to address hot spots throughout the morning without entering the structure, fire officials said. According to LAFD Captain Scott, the firefight was more difficult due to the property having three separate homes on it, which forced crews to fight three separate fires at once.

Several weapons, including automatic weapons and a rifle, were found at the house, Captain Scott said. The LAPD Bomb Squad was initially supposed to assess the area Sunday morning, but due to the structural integrity of the home being compromised, they were unable to do so.

Officials from the Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety have red-tagged the building, meaning that it is "unfit for entry," officials confirmed.

"LAFD crews will be working throughout the day alongside fire cause investigators, police officials and the Medical Examiner to assure hazard abatement that allows for a safe, thorough and methodical investigation of the fire scene, and removal of the decedent," LAFD said.

KNOCKDOWN: While remaining in a defensive position due to heavy ammunition going off, firefighters were able to extinguish the fire in all three structures in one hour and 11 minutes with no injuries reported. Crews will work to address hot spots without entering the structure. LAPD Bomb Squad is responding to assess the situation for further actions. LAFD Arson is responding for the investigation.▪



## Experience The Nativity – a Free Gift to the Community

Community Christian Church of the Foothills in Tujunga invites you to experience the joy of Christmas at its Drive-thru Nativity Friday and Saturday, December 8th and 9th from 6:30-9:30pm.

Community Christian Church will offer the opportunity to step back in time and experience the first Christmas via a Drive-thru Nativity. Guests will drive past various scenes of the nativity story with actors portraying Mary and Joseph, the shepherds, the angel, and the wise men.

Approximately 2,000 people are expected to experience the Drive-thru Nativity, now in its 27th year. Community Christian Church considers it a privilege to be able to provide this presentation of the nativity to the community.

The Drive-thru Nativity will be held from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. on Friday and Saturday nights, December 8th and 9th, 2025 at Community Christian Church, 10193 Tujunga Canyon Blvd, Tujunga, CA 91042-just north of Foothill Boulevard and next to the Post Office.

To learn more about Community Christian Church, visit its website at CommunityChristianChurch.info, or phone 818-353-8080.

- Sunday Worship 10:00am
- Wednesday Night Kids program 6:30pm to 7:45pm Thursday Night Bible Study 7:00pm▪