UPCOMING VGNA TOWN HALL

HOW A MAJOR QUAKE WILL AFFECT VALLEY GLEN RESIDENTS

The photo you see above is not just any disaster photo. That was right here in the Valley when a 1994 magnitude 6.7 earthquake struck causing homes, buildings and freeways to collapse; injuring more than 9,000 residents; killing 60 people; damaging 40,000 structures; and leaving behind $20 billion in destruction. Earthquakes are the West Coast answer to hurricanes.

Join us August 16th at the VGNA’s Town Hall meeting when we will hear the latest predictions and science about the coming “Big One”. Our special guest will be CalTech’s own Margaret Vinci who will bring a state-of-the-art report of what we can expect and what scientists are now saying.

USGS reported that in June alone this year there were ten medium-strength earthquakes measuring magnitude 3 or greater. Scientists say both the California fault lines and the Cascadia Subduction Zone are long overdue a major earthquake of magnitude eight or above. Seismologists report their tests indicate the San Andreas Fault is capable of producing earthquakes of a maximum magnitude of 8.3.

At the National Earthquake Conference in California earlier this year, Southern California Earthquake Center director Tom Jordan warned that

continued on page 2
California could be hit by a massive earthquake at any time potentially killing thousands of people and costing hundreds of billions of dollars. The section of the San Andreas Fault in the Los Angeles area has been quiet for too long and Jordan believes it’s now a ticking time bomb that could produce an 8 magnitude ‘Big One’.

By comparison, one USGS survey estimated a 7.8 quake could result in “approximately 1,800 deaths, half because of the fires following the earthquake” and could cost $213 billion to recover.

Get the real scoop on the “Great California ShakeOut - Come to the Valley Glen Neighborhood Association Town Hall meeting, August 16th at Concorde College, Room 003 at 6:30 p.m. - 12412 Victory Blvd, North Hollywood.”

A record-breaking 500 Valley Glen residents and their families attended this year’s Spring Festival – double the guest count of the previous event. The celebration provided an affordable day of fun and music for adults and kids alike. Food trucks, giant moon bounces, pony rides, live music and a petting zoo made for a great day.

Thanks to this first-time partnership project with the Greater Valley Glen Council (GVGC) and Council District 2 Councilman Paul Krekorian’s office, it was a community hit. Special thanks go to the GVGC board and CD2 Field Representative Sahag Yedalian.

An unprecedented 100 volunteers, hundreds of hours and community leaders came together for a happy celebration of Valley Glen. More than 31 community organizations participated and more are asking to participate next year. The event generated citywide publicity for the Valley Glen community. A new relationship with US Grant High School was created which now fosters student participation in community events in exchange for student service credits.

The Literacy Group distributed hundreds of new books to area children and more than 125 plants and trees were distributed to Valley Glen homes.

Check the valleyglen.org website so you can check the date for the 2017 festival.
I am Asta Criss

Interview by Bruce Gaims, Vice President

She is descended from a long line of actors. Her father, fleeing the Communist regime in Russia in the late 1920’s, led his family and acting troupe to America. They settled in Los Angeles. She studied dance as a child and, at age eighteen, defied her father’s wishes and paid her own way to New York to pursue a dancing career. Her parents’ worries were quickly assuaged when she auditioned successfully - in a casting call of over three hundred - to dance for the New York Metropolitan Opera.

This remarkable woman is Valley Glen’s own Asta Criss.

Asta Harout would fall in love with William Criss, the first oboist in the Metropolitan Opera orchestra, get married, and move back to Los Angeles in 1960 to start her family life. Asta certainly had no idea that many years later she would be active in state and local politics and become a very important individual in the history of Valley Glen.

She and Bill settled on Bassett Street in a neighborhood then known as the “Beverly Hills of the Valley”. Asta spent most of her time raising her two boys, Jonathan and Stephen. She hadn’t inherited her father’s acting gene but she did get his passion for politics. After President Kennedy’s assassination, she felt a duty to step forward and contribute to her community. Meanwhile, Bill was a professional musician-in-demand around town. In fact, his oboe is can be heard prominently in movies themes like the “Godfather” and “Sophie’s Choice”.

More than 50 years later, she still lives in the same house but the area is now known as Valley Glen. Few continued on page 4
know how Valley Glen came to be or Asta’s role. Asta was instrumental, together with other residents, in working with then City Councilman Mike Feurer to get Valley Glen formally recognized by the City of Los Angeles. It required a daunting 70% approval vote of the residents. Asta spent hundreds of hours walking door-to-door to inspire a majority and get that vote.

Valley Glen was officially born in 1996 and Asta was elected the first woman president of the Valley Glen Neighborhood Association (VGNA). She knew how to get things done. Her hard work and talent earned the respect of many of the politicians, movers, and shakers. She was a major ally for Zev Yarslovsky in garnering public approval for the Orange line public transportation system. Another of her projects was the renovation of the Tujunga Wash and development of the nearby green space. She also helped to found several of the VGNA’s signature annual events like the annual picnic and Adopt-A-Family program.

Asta’s warm, straightforward approach to people and politics has won her many friends, thank-you’s and formal honors. When asked to summarize her outreach strategy for Valley Glen residents, she says simply, “Listen to what they complain about and make them love Valley Glen.”

Wow, what a woman, what a life story! Valley Glen residents are so lucky to have Asta Criss as a neighbor, leader, and mentor. ■

Asta Criss continued from page 3
Many Valley Glen residents have expressed concern over the growing problem of illegal fireworks. The days of a few simple sparklers is gone. Now cherry bombs have given way to explosives like M-80’s, M 100’s, M 150’s, aerial shells, rockets mortars, M-80’s and homemade incendiaries. Products are touted as being the loudest or promising the most impact. Backyard launchings are on the increase and now animal shelters have seen an alarming increase in lost and traumatized pets during fireworks-prone holidays.

Residents are expressing concerns not only about the noise and danger but environmental impact and the effect on veterans with PTSD as well as pets and wild animals. But unless there is an organized effort, the problems will continue. At the upcoming VGNA Town Hall on August 16th, Community Police Advisory Board member Cheryl Cashman will talk about this issue and explain what can be done. Our LAPD Senior Lead Officers will also be on hand. The VGNA plans to have a survey and petition you can sign as well as a survey. Both are critical as the results will be shared with the Los Angeles City Council.

If you want to see some changes, make your voice heard. Learn what other cities are doing. Come to the Valley Glen Neighborhood Association Town Hall meeting, August 16th at Concorde College, Room 003 at 6:30 p.m. - 12412 Victory Blvd, North Hollywood.
LAPD CRACKS DOWN ON DANGEROUS INTERSECTIONS

The Los Angeles Police Department is cracking down on traffic violations at dangerous intersections in the San Fernando Valley. The Valley intersections targeted in the enforcement crackdown are regarded as dangerous because of the number of serious crashes that have occurred in those locations. They’re part of what city officials call the “High Injury Network,” the top 6 percent of city streets where two-thirds of serious crashes occur.

One targeted intersection is Victory Boulevard at Laurel Canyon Boulevard in Valley Glen. The others are: Coldwater Canyon Avenue at Vanowen Street, Sepulveda Boulevard at Nordhoff Street, Devonshire Street at Woodley Avenue and Roscoe Boulevard at DeSoto Avenue.

LAPD Lieutenant David Ferry leads a task force monitoring five Valley intersections as part of the city’s new safety initiative called Vision Zero. Vision Zero aims to eliminate traffic fatalities by focusing engineering and enforcement efforts on problem streets that see the highest proportion of serious crashes.

“We’re looking for red light violations, right of way violations these are the major causes of property damage, injuries and death,” Ferry said. “We’re focusing specifically on areas with injury collisions.”

But officers are hampered in issuing tickets for speeding, a major factor in injury and fatality crashes. Under state law, police can only use radar or laser to monitor streets that have been studied by the city in recent years. And three-quarters of LA streets haven’t been surveyed.

As a result, LAPD told the LA City Council’s Transportation Committee they can’t enforce speed limits on the majority of city streets. The L.A. Department of Transportation says it is working to update the expired street surveys, but it could take several years. Under the newly approved budget, the department will get two new employees to help with the backlog of expired studies.

Los Angeles has roughly 30,000 traffic collisions each year that kill 200 residents and severely injure nearly 1,000 others. More than four in 10 traffic injuries and deaths involve a pedestrian or bicyclist. ■

Thanks to you our Spring Festival was a success!

CD2 Councilman Paul Krekorian
U.S. Grant High School Principal Vicky Damonte and Youth Volunteers
Greater Valley Glen Council
LA Animal Services
LA City Plants/DWP
LAPD - Van Nuys Division
LAPD - North Hollywood Division
LAPD Cadets
Los Angeles Valley College
President Erika Endrijonas

Lusy’s Mediterranean Cafe & Grill
MTA Senior TAP Program
Morongo Casino Resort & Spa
Pollo Campero
Santa Monica Mountains Cyclery
Talene Dermenjian
State Assemblyman Nazarian’s Office
Tequila’s Restaurant, Bar & Grill
The Audubon Society
The Literacy Club

UPDATED SERVICES DIRECTORY

Need to know which number to call to remove graffitti? Want to get reach your local police? Need to speak to the mayor? A posse of hedgehogs invaded your backyard and you don’t know who to call? The VGNA publishes an annual services directory for residents with all the important local and city phone numbers and email addresses. And the 2016 edition is now out. Just email us at info@vgna.org and we’ll email you one back! Or you can pick one up at the next VGNA community meeting.
VGNA Debuts New Website For Valley Glen

Valley Glen now has a new online resource designed with Valley Glen residents in mind! In 2014 the VGNA conducted a survey to learn what you needed and wanted from the VGNA. Residents let us know that serving as a communications resource was important and that the need was great for improving and expanding our communications tools.

The first step was a newsletter that was unveiled this May. And now we very proud to continued on page 8
Transportation Ballot Measure in November: Major Valley Impact

Expanded and improved mass transit, highway, biking and walking projects for the valley could lie ahead if voters approve a new ballot measure on November 8th. The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) voted to place a tax increase proposal on the November ballot that would generate at least $860 million per year for street repairs, highway improvements and new rail construction, including lines in the Sepulveda Pass and Van Nuys and extensions to Claremont and West Hollywood.

The ballot measure will ask Los Angeles County residents to consider a sales tax increase to fund a variety of transit, highway, biking and walking projects. The ballot measure is called the “Los Angeles Traffic Improvement Plan” and it would need two-thirds approval (66.6 percent) to pass. It would raise the countywide sales tax by a half-cent and to continue the existing half-cent sales tax.

Metro’s proposal is one of the most ambitious in modern U.S. history and it could transform a traffic-choked region. The Metro plan includes a timeline and funding amounts for a number of countywide transit, highway, local, pedestrian and bicycle projects over the next 40 years.

Earlier this year LA City Councilmember Paul Krekorian invited residents to a dial-in phone conference and talked about connecting the Valley to the basin via the Sepulveda Pass, bringing light rail to the Van Nuys corridor, dramatically improving the Orange Line, moving toward new bus rapid transit lines, expanding bike paths and pedestrian walkways, and easing traffic.

The ballot measure would also include dedicated funds for pedestrian and biking projects, along with funding for “state of good repair” projects to keep existing and future transit in good working order. The ballot measure also promises to keep fares affordable for those who most depend on transit, including seniors, students, the disabled and low-income riders.

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