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# El Pueblo

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## LA'S NORTH VALLEY

### A City Treasure

By Ruth E. Thaler-Carter and Roslyn Carter-Phillips, Contributing Writers



L.A.'s North Valley is a kaleidoscope of districts and neighborhoods, full of fascinating sights, people and events—some known not only locally but nationally and worldwide; some only familiar to local residents. The City Council districts that are considered to be part of the North Valley are: 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 12. Here are highlights of some of the wonders of the Valley and its many diverse communities, seen through the eyes of the Councilmembers who represent those districts.

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# A City Treasure

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## Council District 2, represented by Councilmember Paul Krekorian

The North Valley's Council District 2, one of the City's largest, has two outlying offices, in North Hollywood and Sunland-Tujunga, and nine distinct neighborhoods within its geographic limits, each with its own Neighborhood Council. Those Neighborhood Councils are among the achievements of which Council District 2 Councilmember Paul Krekorian is most proud. He has championed community empowerment and integrating the Neighborhood Councils, focusing on rethinking how they fit into City governance and making these entities stronger. He has also created the Krekorian Clean Team, with City employees training volunteers in dealing with illegal postings and yard sales, among other elements of neighborhood life.

The District includes the San Fernando Valley and some of California's most expensive residential areas, up in the hillside and canyon sections, as well as middle-class and working-class neighborhoods.

Councilman Krekorian calls District 2's Fryman Park "one of the most beau-



tiful places in Southern California." He enjoys a cup of coffee in Tujunga Village, "that beautiful little Village shopping area." Among his list of historical treasures are Bolton Hall and the McCroarty Arts Center, which are not only lovely places but "provide a sense of connection with the past." Adds Krekorian: "There are a lot of little neighborhood treasures in my District."

## Council District 3, represented by Councilmember Dennis P. Zine

Council District 3 is better known as Canoga Park. Popular events include a Memorial Day Parade and Dia de los Muertos Festival. Recent achievements in ongoing efforts to improve the area include a newly organized Farmers' Market, extension of the Metro Orange Line, and completion of a community center named for the Councilmember. According to Councilmember Dennis P. Zine, "The community has a rich history and will be celebrating its 100th Anniversary in 2012, which will be commemorated with events and programs for the remainder of this year and into 2012."

Councilmember Zine is not the only one to appreciate and recognize that Canoga Park is something special. "In 2005, Canoga Park was named the All-



America City, the only community in the City of Los Angeles to have ever received this distinction," said Zine. "The love, dedication and diversity that community members and organizations demonstrate every day make Canoga Park a true All-America City."

Favorite places to eat: Sagebrush Cantina, Stonefire Grill, Brandywine, Monty's, Las Fuentes, Maggiano's, My Brothers BBQ, Adagio Ristorante, Henri's, CiCi's Cafe, Cable's.

## Council District 4, represented by Councilmember Tom LaBonges

LA's Fourth Council District has been called the "geographic heart of Los Angeles." Griffith Park, one of the largest municipal parks in the U.S., is in District 4. Laurel Canyon, Toluca Lake, Mulholland Drive and North Hollywood are also in the North Valley end of the District. While not all are technically in the North Valley, some of LA's best-known, best-loved, most-iconic landmarks also are in Council District 4: the Hollywood Bowl; Universal Studios; the Hollywood Sign; and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Some of its residential neighborhoods are as famous



as its landmarks—the Miracle Mile, Koreatown, Silver Lake and the Hollywood Hills.

The entertainment industry is Council District 4's largest employer, followed by education and health care.

## Council District 5, represented by Councilmember Paul Koretz

Running along the "spine" of the City, in the Santa Monica Mountains, Council District 5 includes communities on the westside of Los Angeles from Hollywood to Bel Air, as well as ones in the San Fernando Valley.

Council District 5 may be best-known as home to the renowned University of California Los Angeles (UCLA), with Sherman Oaks Galleria, among many other popular shopping stops along Melrose Boulevard, also contributing to its renown. Among its better-known communities are Century City, Encino, Melrose, Sherman Oaks, and Westwood.

"The Fifth Council District, which I'm privileged to represent, is a wonderful and dynamic mix of Valley and Westside neighborhoods, including lovely residential communities and famed shopping, dining and recreational areas," said Councilmember Paul Koretz. "Especially vital to our success is our longstanding history of strong community leadership, great organizations and institutions, and many dedicated volunteers. CD 5 has a tremendous array of street fairs, beautification committees, neighborhood councils, homeowner associations, chambers, Business Improvement Districts, advisory boards, and Neighborhood Watch groups." Those groups result in what Mr. Koretz called "an abundance of dedicated



local heroes who are always ready and willing to roll up their sleeves and help care for their neighborhoods, schools, parks and libraries, often working in tandem with much-appreciated and dedicated City employees."

Councilmember Koretz has fond memories of "growing up in the District (and) getting a quality education from local schools, while also benefiting from the impressive sense of neighborhood that remains vibrant to this day." He learned from other elected officials who "embody a spirit of civic leadership that prioritizes governmental accountability, top City services and neighborhood empowerment," and said that residents of the District "have embraced that kind of civic engagement: They consistently set a fine example of how the public can partner with government and its employees to allow our City to meet even the toughest challenges with friendly respect and effective resolve."

## Council District 6, represented by Councilmember Tony Cárdenas

A scenic highlight of Council District 6 has special meaning for its Councilmember. "My father was a farmworker who eventually started his own gardening and landscaping business," said Council District 6 Councilmember Tony Cárdenas. "I grew up here in the San Fernando Valley with an appreciation of beautiful gardens and the many hands and hard work that goes into making them flourish."

That experience makes Councilmember Cárdenas especially proud to say that "the Japanese Garden in Council District 6 has been ranked as one of the Top Ten Japanese Gardens in North America, according to the Journal of Japanese Gardening. Visitors can enjoy more than six acres of an authentic Japanese 'stroll' garden, similar to those constructed for 18th- and 19th-century feudal lords."

The Japanese Garden is more than a tranquil, beautiful green space, though. "Beyond the serenity of the terrain, what is remarkable about the Japanese Garden is that this facility was created by the City's Bureau of Sanitation as a water reclamation plant," said Mr. Cárdenas. "Because of the modern thinking of City Engineers, we don't have a non-descript, cement treatment site, but a living garden."

Councilmember Cárdenas appreciates those who keep the District's Japanese Garden going. "Thanks to the volunteers and employees who lovingly care for the plants and grounds, Los Angeles has a beautiful landmark that not only celebrates a culture that forms part of the fabric of the people of our great City, but serves as a fine example of efficient land-use," he said. "On behalf of the constituents of Council District Six, I invite everyone to visit our very own



Suiho En – the Garden of Water and Fragrance."

*The Japanese Garden*  
6100 Woodley Ave  
Van Nuys, CA 91406  
818.756.8166

<http://thejapanesegarden.com>

Open for self-guided tours Monday through Thursday from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. (the last gate entry each day is at 3:15 p.m.). Be sure to call on the day you wish to visit to make sure the garden is open.

"A couple of favorite restaurants that I like to frequent are Chiba Sushi and La Sirenita."

"As someone who does not eat beef or pork, I appreciate restaurants that offer a wide variety of alternatives on their menus. La Sirenita, which is located at the former GM plant, has delicious shrimp tacos that my family and I enjoy. As a sushi fan who has sampled many restaurants in Los Angeles, I can say that Chiba Sushi, a restaurant operated by a Japanese family for two generations, has the best sushi in the Valley – I recommend the albacore sushi."

These restaurants are located at: La Sirenita, 7940 Van Nuys Blvd., Panorama City, 818-785-8005 Chiba Sushi, 11713 Saticoy St., North Hollywood, 818-765-9119

**Council District 7, represented by Councilmember Richard Alarcón**

District 7 surrounds the City of San Fernando and is the home of the majestic Hansen Dam and popular Richie Valens Park. District residents enjoy the Pacoima Holiday Parade and a Fourth of July Festival, along with shopping at the Panorama Mall. The area features a mix of prime industrial/manufacturing space and diverse, working-class neighborhoods. The District provides its residents with offices in Pacoima and Sylmar, as well as six Neighborhood Councils.

Some of Councilmember Richard Alarcón's favorite restaurants include La Sirenita, 9116 Van Nuys Boulevard, in Panorama City; Lenchita's, 13612 Van Nuys Boulevard, Pacoima; Caruso's Pizza, 13737 Foothill Boulevard, Sylmar; Big

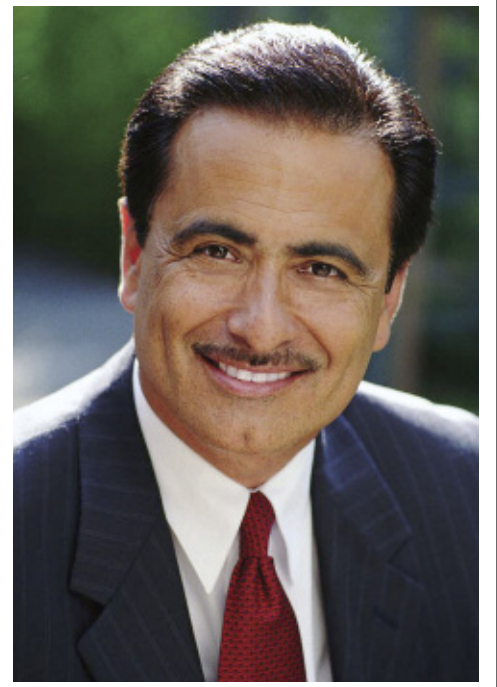
Pop's BBQ & Grill, 10755 Glenoaks Boulevard in Lake View Terrace; and Wendill's Thai Food Restaurant, 10337 San Fernando Road, Pacoima.

Councilmember Alarcón is proud to say that, "from the San Fernando Mission, to a world-class hang-gliding site, to numerous horse trails, to Mission College, Council District Seven has something for everyone. However, one of the assets I am most proud of in my District is the Hansen Dam Recreation Area, as we have transformed it from a blighted area with a muddy pond to a world-class recreation destination."

Mr. Alarcón recalls that "the once-flourishing site, which included a 140-acre lake, had become barren for two decades

in the aftermath of flooding in the late 1970s. But, in the 1990s, we were able to start the long process of revitalizing the area, which is now home to an eco-friendly library, a pedestrian walkway and bikeway along the Dam, a golf course, numerous picnic areas, the largest public swimming pool in the country, and a nine-acre fishing lake."

Councilmember Alarcón invited all ACEBSA members to "Join us at Hansen Dam, a gem of the Northeast Valley and a great place to spend time with your family, to exercise, to learn." He also encouraged residents to participate in the Annual Hansen Dam Triathlon.



**Council District 12, represented by Councilmember Greig Smith**

Council District 12 is in the northwest San Fernando Valley, with a District office in Northridge and a satellite office in Chatsworth. One of Councilmember Greig Smith's ongoing campaigns is getting rid of graffiti.

When residents, neighborhood councils and community-based organizations were alarmed to learn the City was considering cutting funding for graffiti removal in half as part of efforts to address the City's financial crisis, Councilmember Smith responded by pledging to find the money needed to make up for any reduction that may occur. Graffiti has been reduced by 20 percent over recent months, so community and City Council efforts are clearly working, but there's always more to be done. (If ACEBSA readers notice graffiti, be sure to call 311).

District residents share the commitment

to keeping the community clean and enjoy participating in twice-weekly Operation Clean Sweep clean-up efforts in Northridge every Saturday and Thursday.

To further protect the interests of District residents, Councilmember Smith has been a leading force in developing the Community Care Facility Ordinance, which aims to regulate the increasing number of unlicensed group/boarder homes in the area. More meetings will be held in the future to let residents voice their opinions on this issue.

On a lighter note, the Councilmember recently had the pleasure of seeing a dugout named in his honor at the opening of Dodgers Dream Field at Northridge Park. Current and former Dodgers stars and

Devonshire PALS kids attended the event, which included a baseball clinic. Dodgers owner Frank McCourt, Recreation and Parks General Manager Jon Kirk Mukri, and Anita DeFrantz, of the LA84 Foundation, unveiled a sign dedicating the "Councilman Greig Smith Dugout" in recognition of his work to benefit parks in the District.

Popular destinations and historic sights in District 12, according to Councilmember Smith, include the Stoney Point rock formations in Chatsworth and the old Wells Fargo depot, now just building footings, on the Old Stagecoach trail in Chatsworth, where the stagecoach stopped to change horses en route from Los Angeles to San Francisco. "In the park are the Minnie Palmer Home and Watson Museum, which is the oldest home in the Valley," he said.

Councilmember Smith is also excited about the recent acquisition of the Jack

Oakie (Oakridge) estate in Northridge. "This 1939 mansion will be open to the public in about a year," he said.

Since his District is primarily a "bedroom community," "we don't have a lot of big events, although our holiday parades in Granada Hills and Chatsworth draw more than 10,000 viewers." However, Smith and his constituents are looking forward to what he called "the biggest event in the Valley": the opening of the Valley Performing Arts Center at CSUN. "This facility is magnificent and will rival the Disney Hall," said Smith.

Councilmember Smith's favorite restaurants in his district are Arigato (sushi) in Granada Hills and Les Sisters (Cajun), Chatsworth.



Councilman Greig Smith Dugout



Greig Smith at Day of the Horse in Chatsworth



The Virginia Watson Chatsworth Museum



Greig Smith at Cancer Relay for Life



**Finding Out More about the North Valley**

One of the best resources for learning more about North Valley events and issues is the City of Los Angeles website. For more details and updates on services and current events in the North Valley and all Council Districts, go to <http://lacity.org>. Over the next couple of months, the El Pueblo Team will continue to uncover the many treasures of the City nestled in all Council districts.