

"Together we have clout!"



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Mental Health



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LA County  
Supervisor District 3



**CMDR BILLY BROCKWAY**  
Homeless Coordi-  
nator, LAPD Office  
of Operations

★ **LIVE COMMUNITY MEETING – NEW LOCATION** ★

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**WEDNESDAY, MAY 17, 2023 - 7:15 PM**

SHERMAN OAKS EAST VALLEY ADULT CENTER • 5056 VAN NUYS BLVD, 91403

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ALSO STREAMED ON ZOOM

## SOHA HOMELESSNESS ROUNDTABLE SHELTERING THE HOMELESS WHO REFUSE SHELTER

Don't miss SOHA's Homelessness Roundtable. Homelessness experts from LA County and LA City will share valuable insights, expertise, perspectives, and ideas on how we can work together to solve this challenging problem in our community. Led by SOHA's Board Member and Homelessness Committee Chair, Larry Slade, you will learn what the state can do, what the county can do, what the city can do, and what our community can do to address this troubling problem that plagues Sherman Oaks.

Homelessness in Sherman Oaks has been a growing problem for many years, and there are several factors that contribute to its prevalence. Our experts will tackle the complex issue of the Sherman Oaks homeless who present a danger to themselves and others by simply refusing to "go inside" into shelters or seek assistance from social service agencies. Whether caused by mental illness, drug addiction, distrust, or something else, they simply refuse help and refuse housing. Our expert Roundtable will engage in thought-provoking discussion about how to fix this prob-

lem quickly and effectively. We eagerly anticipate hearing their takes on how we can all work better together to address this challenging and pressing matter.

Email your questions and ideas for our roundtable panel to [SOHAZoomMtg@gmail.com](mailto:SOHAZoomMtg@gmail.com) by Tuesday May 16th. This is a live meeting, but we will also stream it via Zoom. We email the link to our members, and you can always find it on [SOHA914.com](http://SOHA914.com). The Zoom ID is 840 1984 9530 with passcode SOHA914. Streaming starts at 7:15 pm.

**RESTAURANT OF THE MONTH**

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**CASA VEGA**

*by Jules Feir, Community Liaison Chair*

We are happy to announce that Casa Vega is our Restaurant of the Month. Founded by Ray Vega in Sherman Oaks more than 62 years ago, Casa Vega is one of the longest continuously operating family-owned restaurants in greater Los Angeles.

Ray's daughter Christy worked side by side with her father growing up and learned the skills he taught her very well. She is carrying on the family legacy and Casa Vega, located at Ventura Boulevard and Fulton Avenue, continues to be a wonderful Mexican restaurant for all to enjoy.

Join us for dinner with Casa Vega at our Social Hour beginning at 6:15 pm.



# CASA VEGA

## **HELPING THE HOMELESS “GO INSIDE”**

*by Larry Slade, Homelessness Committee Chair*

In life, I often find myself in a position where this joke is applicable: “How many psychologists does it take to change a light bulb? Only one. But the lightbulb has to want to change.”

So too is it true when applied to that subset of the homeless population that refuse to “go inside”. You can build all the housing that you want, but it means nothing to someone who simply refuses the offer to go inside. So, what happens in that situation? What happens to the person who just won’t go? Is our community simply forced to accept the presence of the often highly agitated, consistently unpredictable homeless whose presence on the streets has the most immediate and significant impact on the quality of life in Sherman Oaks?

I have been writing and talking about this issue for months now. SOHA’s Homelessness Committee has dedicated its efforts at understanding and working to mitigate exactly this issue. To be sure, some of this population is served by hard-working and dedicated politicians and non-profits who work with these homeless at the ground level and can sometimes, after extensive and repeated efforts, convince someone to “go inside”. But often that is not the case for various reasons (mental illness and drug and alcohol addiction top among them).

So, what can be done? Can we find a way to forcibly remove people from the streets and lock them up? Put simply: no ... we cannot. First, the law does not permit it. Second, that is not a solution to the problem. That process fosters the “revolving door” approach that even the police have lost interest in pursuing.

No matter how we slice it, the first part of the solution is money. Without funds, we cannot harness the resources needed to proactively address this problem. Of course, we have been throwing money at the problem for many years and no matter what incremental reductions in this population are achieved, the homeless in this category continue to suffer on the streets and their presence continues to drain the sense of community that we have worked so hard to build here in Sherman Oaks.

There has been much attention paid to the political position that asserts that homelessness can be solved with housing. Again, that is true for most homeless but not all. In order to solve this issue, it seems, we will need a combination of love, money, grace, new laws, resources and (yes) housing – and we’ll address all these at our May Homelessness Roundtable.

## **DOES LOCAL CONTROL MATTER?**

*by Maria Pavlou Kalban, Legislative Committee Chair*

Everywhere we turn people are talking about “local control”. What does that really mean? The California Constitution recognizes the right for cities to choose between being a Charter City or a General Law City. LA is a Charter City. Therefore, it operates under its own city charter that has the force and effect of state law regarding municipal affairs. Land use has always been under the control of the city because it is considered a municipal affair.

Because the state declared a housing crisis of “statewide concern”, the state took control over Charter Cities’ land use, forcing cities to zone more land for housing. Cities no longer have control over how and where their cities grow, how high or dense a development becomes, whether the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA, one of the most progressive environmental protections any state has enacted) is enforced, and whether public input is considered. Through the numerous state laws being enacted, the right to control a city’s future is determined more by developers and the state than the city itself.

The loss of local control over housing starts with the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA). It is prepared by the state and identifies the state’s housing needs based on projected state population growth, vacancy rates, and household overcrowding during an eight-year cycle. Each city is allocated their housing numbers and needs to show the state they have enough zoning to accommodate their mandated housing.

The RHNA numbers allocated to each city for this current cycle are so high – more than double the previous cycle in most cases – that many cities could not find enough zoning to achieve their state-mandated housing goals. Not meeting these

goals opened cities to monetary penalties and their right to control their own development. Many cities have questioned their RHNA numbers, and a state audit was conducted. The findings were damning. The RHNA methodology was found to be flawed and the data not accurate. Independent researchers weighed in and stated that the housing numbers were mistakenly double counted, causing the massive increase in “needed” housing units. But the state has not backed down and instead threatens cities with major penalties if they do not meet the RHNA requirement within the next 8 years (2021-2029).

Will cities ever regain their right to plan their own communities? With a pending lawsuit and a possible ballot initiative to regain local control, we will find out. We will keep you updated on their progress.



## CAN'T READ YOUR PARKING METER?

*by Jules Feir, Community Liaison Chair*

Ever tried to park in Sherman Oaks and pay a parking meter that you can't read? Pretty tough when you can't see how much time is left or how much money it wants.

Our parking meters are 25 years old, dirty, unreadable, and undependable. It's time to replace them with modern meters.

We're working with our City Council office to expedite meter replacement. And you can help us out! Next time you try to park and can't read the meter, contact the Council Office at [ContactCD4@LACity.gov](mailto:ContactCD4@LACity.gov) and let them know that it's time to replace the meters.

## RUN ... HIDE ... FIGHT ... SURVIVE!

*by Sean Kurzweil, Board Member*

Given the on-going and dire matter of gun violence in our society, SOHA is spreading the word about an important upcoming community event that is being hosted by LAPD's Van Nuys Division Outreach Community Police Advisory Board. On May 18th at 7:00 pm, the LAPD Valley Bureau training unit will conduct a free “How To Prepare for and Survive an Active Shooter” event at The Buckley School – 3900 Stansbury Avenue, Sherman Oaks 91423. The social hour begins at 6:00 pm and food and refreshments will be served. Invited guests include LAPD Deputy Chief Alan Hamilton and Councilmember Nithya Raman. The event is open to all. Please spread the word so you and our community are prepared. If you have any questions, please contact Sean at [seankurzweil@gmail.com](mailto:seankurzweil@gmail.com).

## AIRPORTS UPDATE

*by Nancy Sogoian and Jay Weitzler, Airport Committee Co-Chairs*

**Van Nuys Airport “VNY” Update by Nancy Sogoian** – Airport issues are complex, technical and involve local, state and federal entities, including LAWA (LA World Airports, which manages LAX, VNY, and other airports), BOAC (Board of Airport Commissioners), and FAA (Federal Aviation Association, which determines flight patterns, hours, and more). VNY's Bonseph Helinet proposal ostensibly modernizes and expands an old hanger facility used for medical, TV news, and other helicopter services. However, Bonseph Helinet's proposed lease does NOT specifically preclude the rebuilt hanger from housing (or flying) jets, and therefore omission = permission for expansion of jet flights at VNY.



Bonseph is a builder of hangars, terminals, and office space which partnered with Aeroplex Group (property management services) to complete the VNY Bonseph North Facility in 2021, exclusively occupied by Sun Jets – which expanded flights from VNY.

Helinet Aviation provides a variety of helicopter services including charter – and boasts a new 6-seat, twin-engine helicopter. While we support modernization of the old hangar site, this proposal opens the door to increased jet flights and more charter helicopters. Our CD4 Council Office agrees Bonseph Helinet's proposal in current form is a back-door

loophole for expansion of flights and believes the lease in current form should not be approved by City Council. Stay tuned ...

**Burbank Airport “BUR” Update by Jay Weitzler – LA GETS A “WIN” IN THE BUR TERMINAL CASE!** Last month, the Ninth Circuit Court directed the FAA to address deficiencies in its construction noise analysis, in its cumulative impacts analysis, and the resulting deficiencies in its Environmental Impacts analysis. Though only a partial win since it dealt only with construction noise for Burbank’s new proposed terminal and not issues directly related to aircraft noise, pollution and resulting health problems, it will at least delay construction of the new terminal since they need to file a satisfactory EIR. There is no question that a new terminal will increase operations and make the noise and pollution much worse than it is now. We still must deal with these very serious issues, and we will keep you informed of new developments.

## **UPDATE FROM OUR COUNCIL OFFICE**

*by Councilmember Nithya Raman, Council District 4*

First, I’d like to extend my gratitude to SOHA and Vice President Bob Anderson for allowing me to share updates about our office’s work in their newsletter! This month I’m excited to discuss our ongoing work to combat homelessness in Sherman Oaks.

When I took office in December 2020, my first priority was addressing the homelessness crisis that had been worsening for several years – there were over a dozen larger street encampments in the district along our sidewalks at the time. In response, we built the largest Homelessness Team of any Council office and got to work bringing the inhabitants of those encampments indoors.

Several of our Encampment-to-Home efforts occurred in or near Sherman Oaks, including the Coldwater Canyon/101 underpass, the Van Nuys Blvd/101 underpass, and Fruitland/Ventura. Through our work, we housed every resident at those locations last year.

Our most recent Encampment-to-Home program has also been in Sherman Oaks – this time in the Library Square and Van Nuys/Ventura Boulevard area. Because of unique needs here, we convened regular meetings with the Mayor’s office, County Supervisor Lindsay Horvath’s office, LAHSA, the County Department of Mental Health, and local service providers to coordinate resources. Our Homelessness Team was on the ground there almost every day. One by one, people were enrolled in case management, matched with shelter, and moved indoors.

In just a few weeks, we’ve seen real results. A significant number of people experiencing homelessness have moved into shelter already, resulting in four oversized vehicles and multiple tents being removed from the street. And the work continues – more people are scheduled to go indoors this week. I’m extremely grateful to our city and county partners, the neighbors whose input and patience have helped this work be successful, and the members of SOHA’s Homelessness Committee who contributed their time and energy. Through partnerships like these, last year we were able to achieve the first reduction in street homelessness in Council District 4 since 2016.

Ending homelessness is possible – but it takes resources, patience, and hard work. You have my word that we’ll continue to work tirelessly until nobody in the district is without shelter. If you’d like to get involved with our office’s work to end homelessness across the district or share an issue you’re facing in your neighborhood, please reach out to [ContactCD4@LACity.gov](mailto:ContactCD4@LACity.gov).

## **NEIGHBORHOOD COMINGS AND GOINGS**

*by Matt Epstein, President*

Spring has arrived, and it seems like summer is just around the corner. Flowers are blooming and filling the air with sweet scents. In addition to the traditional springtime treats, there is a new taste treat in the neighborhood – Mrs Chips Cookies. The shop, located on Sepulveda Boulevard near Whole Foods Market, opened in mid-March, although they have been selling their cookies online for years. KTLA featured them as a TOP PICK for the holidays in 2019. It has taken three years



for them to open their first brick-and-mortar bakery. Six different types of Chocolate Chip cookies are available, along with a Nutella, an Oatmeal Raisin, and a Snickerdoodle Chocolate Chip cookie. Customers can try one or buy a box of these delicious cookies, which are crisp on the outside and chewy on the inside. They are all hand-topped with Maldon Sea Salt flakes from England. Mrs Chips Cookies also sell by the dozen or two-dozen, and they serve coffee as well. They offer a vanilla ice cream sundae for those looking for a different kind of sweet treat. (<https://mrschipscookies.com/>)

Our daughter is a vegetarian and when she was younger it was sometimes hard finding a restaurant that she loved. One of her favorite places was Kung Pao China Bistro where we would go to have the vegetarian orange shrimp. They had been open for many years but sadly Covid hit them hard, and they shut their doors a couple years ago. In their old location is now a new totally meatless option ... For those who love tacos and are looking for a vegan option, Sugar Taco on Ventura Blvd is worth a visit. After successfully launching their flagship plant-based eatery on Melrose four years ago, this vegan Mexican restaurant features delicious tacos, fantastic nachos, and tasty agua frescas. Check out the Churros for dessert and don't miss Taco Tuesdays! Female-owned and the owner says it was always her goal to empower women investors. The menu is great and it's a nice addition to the neighborhood. My wife, my vegetarian daughter, and I went there last night for dinner. We all had the 3-taco plate with rice and beans along with a margarita. And of course, the churro donut for dessert! We all loved it and will be going back! (<https://sugartaco.com/>)



Boneyard Bistro on Ventura Boulevard has been one of the top restaurants in Sherman Oaks for the past 20 years. The barbecue is consistently excellent, with options like brisket, tri-tip, baby back ribs, pulled pork, and chicken. Last week, I attended a meeting hosted by the owner, Aaron, who provided food from Boneyard. During our conversation, I discovered that Monday nights are Fried Chicken Night at Boneyard. It's a sensation with one-half fried chicken served either Nashville Hot or regular. Sides include coleslaw, baked beans, potato salad, fried Mac and Cheese, or fries. I highly recommend it and suggest getting there early since they often sell out by 7 pm. (<https://www.boneyardbistro.com/>)

Due to the pandemic and many people working from home, many large companies are scaling back unused office space. For example, the Berkshire Hathaway office at Fulton and Ventura has been nearly empty for the last year, and has therefore been closed. There's still a Berkshire Hathaway office in Sherman Oaks on Ventura - just west of Hazeltine near Mendocino Farms.

Last but definitely not least is my final Coming and Going – the illegal billboard is back on the south wall of the old Hamburger Hamlet Building on Van Nuys Boulevard just north of Ventura Boulevard. Now as you drive on Ventura Boulevard you can look up and see another illegal sign advertising Coke. SOHA reports this every time to the Council Office and then building and safety sends out a letter and after six months to a year the sign comes down. Meanwhile the building owner collects hundreds of thousands of dollars from these illegal signs, and at most gets a misdemeanor citation from the city. This is happening all over the city and the city does nothing to fix it. They would rather have us taxpayers pay more in taxes to help fight the homeless, the potholes, and all the other issues than doing their jobs. In any other crime when does the criminal get to keep their ill-gotten loot?

## **NOT A SOHA MEMBER YET?**

*by Nancy Sogoian, Membership Chair*

SOHA is the ONLY non-profit, member-supported, volunteer-run community organization dedicated to preserving and protecting the quality of life in Sherman Oaks. JOIN to help preserve and protect your community and quality of life (member benefits include our informative monthly Newsletter).

Just go to [SOHA914.com](https://SOHA914.com), click on JOIN SOHA, decide member level, and join via PayPal. To pay via credit card, select PayPal, then select Checkout as Guest. Your support is vital – thank you!

**WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT TO HELP KEEP SOHA STRONG!  
VISIT [SOHA914.COM](https://SOHA914.com) TO BECOME A MEMBER AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE!**

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