

# STUDIO CITY

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## COMMUNITY

### Angel of the Year Awards Accepting Nominees

The Angel of the Year Awards, honoring the spirit of Volunteerism in the communities of North Hollywood, Sherman Oaks, Studio City and Toluca Lake, is now accepting nominations for their 2005 Awards, to be held on Thursday, November 17 at the Beverly Garland Hotel. Nominations must be submitted by November 15. Awards are given annually to adults and youth who make a difference and are sponsored by the Rotary Clubs of North Hollywood, Studio City/Sherman Oaks, Burbank Sunrise and Universal City Sunrise. Angels who are selected will receive a cash grant for their favorite charity. For a nomination form, call (818) 988-1396.

### Wayne Williams Photo Collection at Associates in Art

"Visions of Light" is a collection of giclee landscapes on watercolor and canvas, including limited edition prints from Williams' book "America's Vanishing Landscapes, The Western States." Through November 14 at Associates in Art, 5211 Kester Avenue in Sherman Oaks, (818) 906-2132. Mon-Sat, 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Wed., 10 a.m.-10 p.m., closed Sunday. For more information on the artist, visit [WayneWilliamsStudio.com](http://WayneWilliamsStudio.com)

### An Inside Look at Politics: From Public Relations to Fund Raising

A two day UCLA Extension course taught by Jill Banks Barad, political consultant and fund-raiser. Guest speakers include Ron Kaye (The Daily News), State Senator Kevin Murray, Democratic strategist Garry South and talk show host Michael Reagan. Saturday and Sunday, October 29 & 30, 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. \$205 course fee. To register call (818) 784-7006 or visit [uclaextension.edu](http://uclaextension.edu).

### Ray Bradbury at Studio City Library

Presented by Friends of the Studio City Library, distinguished author Ray Bradbury will speak about his life and work. Sun., Oct. 30, doors open 5:30. Book signing will follow. 12511 Moorpark St. (818) 755-7873, [www.studiocitylibraryfriends.org](http://www.studiocitylibraryfriends.org)

### Studio City Chamber First Friday Breakfast Club

Guest speaker Mario J. Frommer, California Assembly Majority Leader, will discuss the statewide election propositions on the Nov. 8 ballot. Fri., Nov. 4, 7:30-8:45 a.m. Breakfast buffet, \$12. The Daily Grill, corner of Laurel Canyon and Ventura. For further info and reservations, call the S.C. Chamber of Commerce (818) 655-5916

### Friends of the Sherman Oaks Library Speaker Series

Author Linda O. Johnston will discuss her new Kendra Ballantyne, Pet Sitter mystery series. Sponsored by Friends of the Sherman Oaks Library. Sat., Oct. 29, 2 p.m. (818) 205-9716 or email [FriendSOLibrary@aol.com](mailto:FriendSOLibrary@aol.com) *continued on page 28*

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# A farewell to the Hallowed Haunting Grounds

*A 33 year-old Halloween tradition closes its portal to depart forever*

BY STEVE BIODROWSKI

*"Within these hollow grounds the anguished souls immortal Of the spiritless shall dwell, eternal without Portal."*

That's the inscription on a stone tablet outside the Hallowed Haunting Grounds, an elaborate amateur yard haunt that has been delighting Studio City trick-or-treaters—and their parents—every Halloween for more than three decades. Alas, even eternity must come to an end: this year will be the "Final Manifestation" of the Haunting Grounds, which will finally close its portal and send its "anguished souls" forever into the Great Beyond.

If you've never visited the Haunting Grounds, you might not understand why this feels like the passing of a beloved local tradition. Over the last ten years, "yard haunts" (basically, elaborately decorated private residences) have become a dime a dozen, yet the Haunting Grounds has them all beat.

It's an eerie, almost ethereal presentation, with moving tombstones, floating lanterns, transparent spirits rising from the ground—not to mention the ghostly musicians glimpsed through the front window of the house. The operators estimate that they get several thousand visitors on the few nights they are open each year, many of them drawn by the reputation the Haunting Grounds has developed over the years.



This skeletal harpist will soon play no more at the Hallowed Haunting Grounds.

So, why is the Haunting Grounds shuffling off its mortal coil? Gary Corb, who lives in the house on Babcock Avenue where the haunt manifests itself, puts it very succinctly: "Because we're thirty-three years old-

er than when we started!"

Corb was inspired by a visit to Disneyland's Haunted Mansion as a ten-year-old. With help from his parents, he started in 1973 with just a few gravestones and a haunted statue. The Haunt-

ing Grounds has grown increasingly elaborate since then, and because it features homemade props and effects, it is a tremendous drain on Corb's time.

"We work all year long," he says of his crew, which includes Mark Phillips, Steve Mann, Tim Doggett, and Nathan Hamilton. "Forget November 1st! While the show's still running, we're planning for the following year, because we're seeing what isn't quite working right, gauging audience reaction, and particularly what we ran out of time to do—that's what we do for the next year. So it takes up an awful lot of time."

The alternative to quitting would be to scale back. But "if we do that, then people are going to compare it to previous years. I'd rather have it just remembered for what it was. I don't want anyone to ever say it's not as good as it used to be. I'd like to go out on top, while the show is still good—like the Mary Tyler Moore Show."

"There's more to the year than just Halloween!" adds Corb, who has a degree in film *continued on page 6*

## Community spirit thrives at Gymboree New Zero to Three program enhances tradition

BY CHERYL HOLLAND

Adrian and Donny Becker define the very concept of community. They've each lived in Sherman Oaks practically their entire lives, attended Millikan Junior High and Grant High School, raised two children, and have built one of the foremost children's programs in the area, Gymboree. Since purchasing the first franchise in 1981, they now own two more locations in Calabasas and Northridge.

Gymboree's founder, Joan Barnes, was Adrian's boss at the Marin JCC in Northern California, where Adrian ran children's programs and helped Barnes develop a program called



Bubble, bubble, having fun is no trouble, at Gymboree in Sherman Oaks.

Kindergym. Barnes worked with the concept and further created Gymboree in 1976.

Meanwhile, Adrian and Donny — who *continued on page 19*

SCRA ♦ Dining for Under \$10 ♦ Notes from the Beat

**BRIEFS**



**Katrina Pet Relief: That's What Friends Are For**

Studio City based SMILE by Planet Jill has teamed with Sun editor Judith A. Proffer to create a key chain to help raise funds for the tens of thousands of animals who still remain homeless in Mississippi and Louisiana. The keychain features Proffer's pug Huka and 100% of the donations will go to organizations like Best Friends, who are working tirelessly to rescue, nurture and house the staggering amount of animals left behind. If you'd like to help, you can send your donation to (minimum \$5, please - if you send a check, make it out to Best Friends): Judith A. Proffer, Studio City/Sherman Oaks Sun, 3940 Laurel Canyon #336, Studio City, CA 91604.



**Riverside Elementary Hosts Fall Festival**

A SpongeBob Sponge toss, giant slide, face painting, food and entertainment were among the attractions at the Riverside Drive Elementary School Fall Festival last week-end. The event, which featured a silent auction (a Whole Foods gift basket and a tour of the Playboy Mansion were up for grabs) and an Arts & Craft Boutique, is the school's primary fund-raiser, supporting enrichment and education programs.

**SCRA** continued from page 5  
this development is expected in order to save this East Valley landmark.

**Oakwood School expansion**, 11230 Moorpark St.

Progress continues on the school construction project starting with the multi-purpose building adjacent to Woodbridge Park. For more information, contact Mikie Maloney at mmaloney@oakwoodschool.org. SCRA Board member Judy Schwartze and SCRA member Max Goldberg are working on the committees monitoring these activities. Good news: We have just learned that the crosswalk at Elmer Street on Moorpark St. has been approved. We are now awaiting details on the planned construction of a landscaped median at this corner, which is also one of the SCRA-negotiated mitigations for the school expansion.

**Proposed lot subdivision**, 3806 Laurel Canyon

The SCRA was approached to determine if we would support plans to proceed without a hearing. The SCRA told the

developer's representative that we support the public hearing process for all re-zoning actions.

**Multi-family development**, 11154-58 Aqua Vista St.

There is a real estate listing proposing the sale of this property for up to 77 units. The SCRA will continue to monitor this situation.

**Multi-family development**, 4252 and 4258 Whitsett

SCRA VP and Land Use Committee Chair Art Howard met with the developer's representative regarding a proposed development of 14 condos at this site. No commitments were made at the meeting as the immediate neighborhood will be consulted for their feedback. A hearing date for the project has not yet been scheduled.

**Laurelwood West**, behind Trader Joe's, 11976 Ventura Blvd.

SCRA met with a developer who is proposing a parking structure/multi-family unit building behind Trader's Joe's. More information on this pro-

posal will be forthcoming.

**Membership**

The SCRA is a staunch defender of quality of life issues in Studio City. But, we cannot do this alone. We need your help. The SCRA quite intentionally calls itself a "residents association" - we are open to all Studio City residents, not just homeowners. Whether you are a homeowner, condo owner, or renter, join us now by sending a check for \$25 (\$10 seniors) to the SCRA Membership, PO Box 1374, Studio City, CA 91614. \*

*Monthly General Membership meeting on Tuesday, November 8 at 7:30 p.m. at the Beverly Garland Holiday Inn to learn more about these and other activities of the SCRA. The American Red Cross will present a program on Disaster Preparedness for Families. In addition, the MTA will provide an update on the Valley Orange Line Busway.*

*Tony Lucente is president of the Studio City Residents Association (SCRA). SCRA@studiocityresidents.org.*



Gary Corb (above) and some his creepy characters (below) on display this October 27-31 in Studio City.

**HAUNTING** continued from page 1 and has worked as an editor and a set designer. "And I have other ideas, other plans, other shows I'd like to do. When I'm actually having to turn down real work in order to work on this, then something's out of balance. I'm writing plays and musicals, and I have some people interested in producing them. I'd like to be able to devote full time to that. So people will be hearing from me again." \*

**The Hallowed Haunting Grounds** will "manifest" on October 27 (preview night, not everything will be operating), 28-31, from 7 pm to midnight (weather permitting). 4343 Babcock Avenue (southwest of the corner of Whitsett and Moorpark) in Studio City.



**Councilmember Greuel Seeks Enhanced Enforcement and Compensation for Lapses in Cable Service**

Councilmember Wendy Greuel introduced a motion instructing the city's Information and Technology Agency (ITA) to review the city's cable franchise agreements to determine what authority the city has to force cable companies to compensate cable subscribers who are deprived of programming and other services.

Recently 175,000 Adelphia Cable customers in Los Angeles were deprived of service when the company mistakenly aired "Desperate Housewives" - the Nielsen-rated No. 1 program, in Spanish. The week prior to the "Housewives" incident, techni-

cal problems with Adelphia's system prevented the airing of the season premiere of another highly rated show, "Lost."

"The City of Los Angeles has received numerous complaints about the quality of service provided by Adelphia and their lack of responsiveness to subscriber complaints," said Councilmember Greuel. "Los Angeles residents pay a great deal of money for cable services and expect the system to deliver programming and services as promised, with no glitches or other technical difficulties."

In addition, Councilmember Greuel asked ITA to recommend

how the city can strengthen enforcement of franchise agreements to ensure that subscribers receive all of the services to which they are entitled.

While the City of Los Angeles recently created a new set of Customer Service Standards, including a Bill of Rights, to ensure that cable companies provide quality service to subscribers, it is unclear what recourse, if any, the city currently has to force compensation to customers for lapses in service and what enforcement mechanisms currently exist to prevent future lapses. \*



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