



Toluca Lake Pumpkin Patch Reopens After Fire

By Macee Binns - Oct 24, 2017

STUDIO CITY—The Toluca Lake pumpkin festival officially re-opened for business this week after a fire destroyed a large portion of the themed attraction on October 16. Amy Bastman of the Los Angeles Fire Department stated on Monday, October 16, “a fire was reported at the pumpkin lot on the corner of Cahuenga Boulevard and Riverside Drive near the 101 Freeway off-ramp at around 1:55 p.m.”

Thirty-one firefighters responded to the emergency and extinguished the blaze within 24 minutes. The popular annual pumpkin festival is run by the Toluca Lake Florist and features a haunted maze, pumpkin patch and petting zoo in the parking lot behind the florist’s main building on Riverside Drive in the Toluca Lake neighborhood.

No injuries were reported to people or animals during the incident. A public report from the scene stated that, “firefighters kept the flames from spreading to the florist’s building on the property, but much of the pumpkin patch and maze were destroyed by the flames.”

A spokesperson for the Los Angeles Fire Department indicated in a statement that there was no immediate word on what sparked the flames, and the cause of the fire is still under investigation.

The owners of the pumpkin festival reported to the Canyon News that the attraction has officially been re-opened to the public. The pumpkin patch and petting zoo will continue its scheduled run through Halloween, but the haunted maze will remain closed due to fire damage for the remainder of the season. Operating hours for the pumpkin festival are from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. everyday from now though October 31.

NATASHA BEDINGFIELD LISTS HOLLYWOOD HILLS HOME FOR RENT

By Dylan Gera

HOLLYWOOD HILLS—Pop singer Natasha Bedingfield has listed her Hollywood Hills home for rent with Inizio Property Management & Leasing.

The 3,386 square foot home consists of three bedrooms, 2.5-bathrooms and features views of Hollywood and Beachwood Canyon. The 21st century, Spanish-style villa is owned by Bedingfield and her husband Matt Robinson. They purchased the property in 2015 for \$1.65 million. The home was initially constructed in 2000 and features a two-story residence on top of a .18-acre ridgeline property. The residence features a



Natasha Bedingfield's Hollywood Hills home will be available for rent beginning November 1.

formal dining room, private patio, gourmet kitchen, and marble countertops. The property is walled and features both a flat grass yard and Zen garden. The interior rooms lie under high wood beamed ceilings and feature both floor to ceiling windows and French doors.

The property is available for lease beginning Wednesday, November 1 and can be rented for \$14,500 per month.

Bedingfield owns a larger home in the Laughlin Park community of Los Feliz which has been listed for sale since July. The property can be purchased for \$4.495 million, down from the initial asking price of \$4.75 million.

The listing for Bedingfield's Hollywood Hills home can be found at the Inizio Property Management & Listing website: <https://inizio.appfolio.com/listings/detail/ddf7660d-58b3-4b3e-a03-92e636808a93>.

DRIVER IN CUSTODY AFTER HIGH-SPEED POLICE CHASE

By Macee Binns

SHERMAN OAKS—The driver of a stolen Ram 1500 led California Highway Patrol officers in a high-speed pursuit through the San Fernando Valley on Monday, October 23.

Officials stated that the high-speed police chase began after authorities attempted to pull the driver over for speeding and reckless driving in the West Los Angeles area at around 1:48 a.m. The pursuit began on the 110 Freeway and moved into the downtown area as the suspect swerved through traffic nearly missing other vehicles, as he speed through the city.

According to reports, the



Authorities apprehended the suspect who led police on a high-speed chase throughout the San Fernando Valley.

driver disregarded traffic signals and stop signs as he sped away from police and continued onto the southbound 405 Freeway at Sherman Way driving at speeds between 80 to 105 mph. According to reports, the suspect

preceeded to exit the freeway at Wilshire Boulevard and got back on to the 405 driving northbound.

The pursuit continued throughout the San Fer-

nando Valley and into Panorama City and Mission Hills. The chase came to an end when the suspect pulled over on to the side of the eastbound 118 Freeway and exited his vehicle, as officers blocked all lanes of traffic. He attempted to escape by running in between apartment complexes.

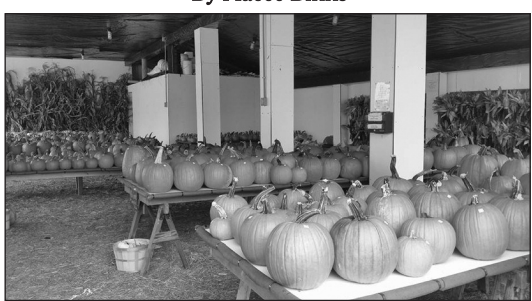
The suspect was arrested and taken into custody by the California Highway Patrol without incident. His name has not yet been released to the public. The Los Angeles Police Department and Los Angeles Sheriff's Department assisted in the pursuit.

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A pumpkin patch in Toluca Lake was damaged by a fire on October 16, but has since re-opened to the public.

and petting zoo in the parking lot behind the florist's main building on Riverside Drive in the Toluca Lake neighborhood.

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PAM O'CONNOR ORDERED BACK TO DISPOSITION

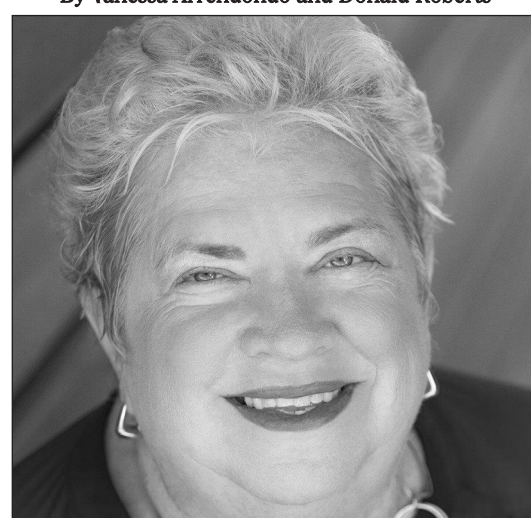
By Vanessa Arrendondo and Donald Roberts

SANTA MONICA—Santa Monica City Councilmember Pam O'Connor was ordered back to a disposition after walking out during questioning for a lawsuit alleging that the city of Santa Monica violates the California Voting Rights Act by under-representing Hispanics.

In a text message to the Santa Monica Lookout, O'Connor indicated she was acting on the city's advice, and left once questioning began about the controversial firing of communication's director Elizabeth Riel, of which O'Connor was revealed to have influenced.

O'Connor said the questions were inappropriate, but attorney Kevin Shenkman said it was necessary to prove that at-large elections "breed corruption," the Santa Monica Lookout stated. Councilmember Pam O'Connor has championed policies and partnerships that enhance community livability and wellbeing on the Santa Monica City Council since 1994 and her current term will expire on November 2018. She has served as mayor for the city of Santa Monica five times.

Pam O'Connor is a mem-



Santa Monica City Council member Pam O'Connor.

ber of the Regional Council of the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), the nation's largest metropolitan planning organization. She serves on SCAG's Executive Committee and is Chair of SCAG's Legislative and Communications Committee. As SCAG's President in 2012 she led the 84-member Regional Council in the unanimous adoption of the region's first Sustainable Communities Strategy. She represents SCAG on California's Road Charge Technical Advisory Committee.

According to the city of Santa Monica website, O'Connor holds Masters' degrees in Planning and in Technology Management from Eastern Michigan University and a B.S. in Communications from Southern Illinois University. She views community wellbeing as the natural next step in the evolution of local government, as well as a way to advance the connection between mobility and sustainability issues by looking at their impact through the lens of human flourishing. In April 2016, the Pico

Neighborhood Association and the Advocates for Malibu Public Schools filed a lawsuit in Los Angeles Superior Court, stating that the at-large election system intentionally hindered members of the community from joining the Santa Monica City Council.

Activist Oscar de la Torre lost during the November 2016 election for a seat on the city council and advocated for district-based elections.

For over 70 years, Santa Monica has had an at-large election system. Advocates state that according to the California Voting Rights Act, these kinds of elections can be prohibited if they are found to be racially polarizing, the Santa Monica Daily Press reported.

Attorneys for the city of Santa Monica have argued that the current system allows the council to focus on city-wide issues and makes it so that the council members give their attention to all neighborhoods in Santa Monica. Currently, two Hispanics, Antonio Vazquez and Glean Davis, serve on the city council.

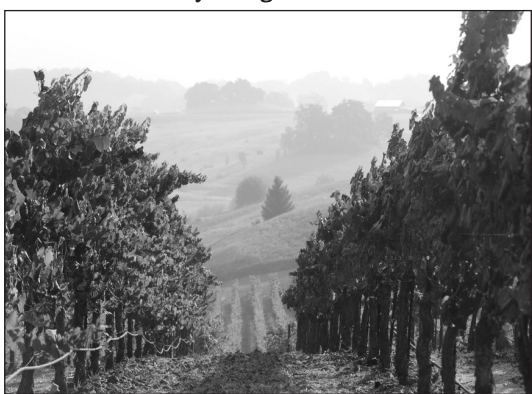
LAWYER SUING ON BEHALF OF NORCAL FIRE VICTIMS

By George Morris

SANTA MONICA—A Santa Monica lawyer is representing victims of the fires in Northern California by suing PG&E.

Bill Robins, a trial lawyer and managing partner of Robins Cloud LLP has taken on a case representing Wayne and Jennifer Harvell, who live in California wine country. Their home, along with almost all their property, was lost to the Wine Country Fires. Robins indicates that Pacific Gas & Electric Company should be held responsible for their losses. He believes this is just the first of many suits aimed at PG&E for homes damaged by the fires.

Robins indicated in a statement "this lawsuit seeks



A Santa Monica lawyer is suing PG&E for property damages after massive fires ravaged Northern California.

to change the way PG&E or other utilities operate in the future, resulting in safer conditions for California residents."

The claim accuses PG&E of negligence, as well as property damage, trespass by

fire, private nuisance and violation of state utilities and public-safety laws. The lawsuit indicates PG&E should have known about the fire risks posed by the Santa Ana winds and drought-like conditions, and

did not properly warn customers who utilize their services. The suit alleges that PG&E failed to properly maintain their power lines and that the fires may have been started or propagated by poorly-maintained electric equipment touching nearby vegetation.

The Harvell family are seeking restitution for their destroyed property, as well as the emotional damage they suffered that was created by the devastation.

According to his firm's site, Robins has represented tens of thousands of plaintiffs in various cases, including pharmaceutical, medical devices and major personal injury cases.

SANTA MONICA AIRPORT CONSTRUCTION, MOVING FORWARD

By Barry Ghabaei

SANTA MONICA—Attempts made by pilots James Babinski and Kate Scott to stop the construction process to shorten the Santa Monica Airport Runway, were successful for a temporary period. Judge Ronald Lew decided to allow the construction process after claims that the construction work required "permits, public hearings, and environ-

mental reviews" were dismissed.

Babinski and Scott argued in court that the process the airport will be going through is a "shortening" process. In the case of a "realignment" or "extension" of the runway, the city of Santa Monica would require a permit.

Earlier this month, the plaintiffs argued a violation of

the Brown Act between the city of Santa Monica and FAA where Judge Lew decided to halt the process, and give the public a chance to speak. Lew announced that the city of Santa Monica will move forward with shortening the runway from 5,000 feet to 3,500 feet.

Construction is expected to resume this week as

planned, and access to the SMO Airport will be closed overnight during Phase 1 and closed all day and night during Phase 2.

The deal agreed upon between the FAA and the city of Santa Monica, once completed in December 2028, will give City Manager, Rick Cole the opportunity to turn the SMO Airport into a park.

COASTAL COMMISSION APPROVES CIVIC CENTER PROJECTS

By Dylan Gera

SANTA MONICA—The California Coastal Commission issued its approval last week for the development of two public projects that will expand the Santa Monica Civic Center.

The city of Santa Monica will construct the Civic Center projects – a \$75 million expansion to City Hall and a three-building childcare facility – over the next decade.

The Commission ruled on October 12, during a session in Chula Vista that the projects would not impede public access to the beach, a concern expressed by multiple residents who assert that the finalized facilities will severely limit that amount of parking available at the Civic Center. The op-



Site diagram for the proposed Santa Monica Civic Center expansions.

position to the projects contend that planning has been piecemeal and public notification of the developments' progress has been inconsistent.

In June 2017, the Santa Monica City Council approved the construction of a

sports field near the Civic Center. Proponents of the sports field noted that if the Civic Center expansion projects move forward, they would impact necessary space and parking away from the field.

"Let's just say it's not a fa-

vored project of the City Council," said Maryanne LaGuardia of the Santa Monica Parks and Recreation Task Force, a private advocacy group representing one of the primary challengers to the development of the Civic Center expansions.

Despite the Coastal Commission's official view, LaGuardia believes that any action by the city to remove any more critical parking spaces from the Civic Center is logically incomprehensible. "Taking out 300 spaces is mind-boggling," said LaGuardia. "It's part of the city's war against private automobiles."

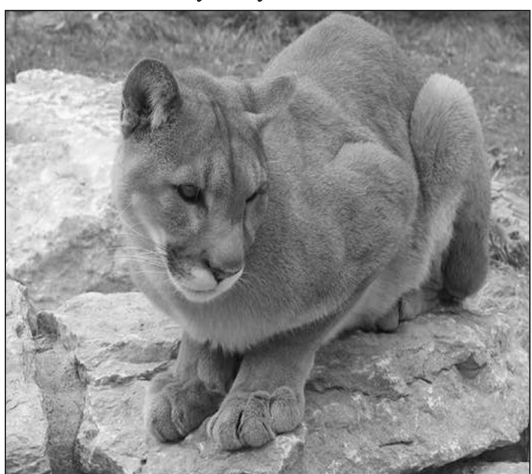
MOUNTAIN LION, KNOWN AS P-41, FOUND DEAD

By Barry Ghabaei

MALIBU—The mountain lion, P-41, known as the "Celebrity Puma" of the Santa Monica mountains, was found dead in his natural habitat of wildlife and vegetated canyons. Traced with an electronic GPS gear fastened around his neck. Officials lost track of P-41, who was later found lying unconscious by residents of the Verdugo Mountains.

Biologists are concerned by P-41's unexplained death because they expect mountain lions to be extinct within the next 50 years in the Los Angeles region because a lack of space to survive in its habitat.

Mountain lions currently reside in the Santa Monica



The mountain lion known as P-41 has died.

Mountains, which is the rampant land enclosed by the 101 and 405 freeways traveling north, and wrapping all the way around to

Pacific Coast Highway.

P-41 was a male puma that was 10 years old and believed to have fathered 2 kittens. Though experts be-

lieve that the La Tuna fires, which burned 7,000 acres of wildlife, were responsible for the lion's death, it is suspected that his death could have been due to his fear of crossing the freeways.

P-41 had been tracked since 2015 by biologists who were curious to see if he would cross the 210 freeway in a journey from the Verdugos to the San Gabriel Mountains.

Unlike the P-45 puma, who has been christened "The King of Malibu," and is believed to be a dangerous and vicious cat, P-41 was an "exhibitionist cat" that appeared photogenic.

ANNUAL HALLOWEEN CARNAVAL HAPPENING OCTOBER 31

By George Morris

WEST HOLLYWOOD—The annual West Hollywood Halloween Carnival is returning to Santa Monica Boulevard on Tuesday, October 31 from 6 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. between Doheny Drive and La Cienega Boulevard. Children and pets are discouraged from attending because of dense crowds.

There will be several live DJs throughout the event to keep people entertained. The bars and shops in the area will be serving special drinks and food to all Carnival attendees. The event is free to the public. Drinking in public is banned and no backpacks, tote bags or camera bags are allowed. Only plastic or clear bags can be brought to the event.

According to a press release from the city of West Hollywood, Mayor Jon Heilman, and several members of the city council will attend the event and will host a special program at 8:45 p.m. at the San Vicente stage.

"The annual Halloween Carnival is always such an exciting event," said Mayor John Heilman. "I'm amazed each year by the imagination and talent that go in to creating elaborate and inventive costumes. The joy of the crowd is palpable and the celebration is a wonderful testament to the City of West Hollywood's creativity."

Due to the Halloween Carnival, there will be street closures in the city from Tuesday, October 31 until the morning of Wednes-

day, November 1. Main closures are San Vicente Boulevard between Santa Monica Boulevard and Melrose Avenue from 12 a.m. on Tuesday, October 31, to 7 a.m. on Wednesday, November 1;

1.Santa Monica Boulevard between La Cienega Boulevard and Croft Avenue/Holloway Drive from 6 a.m. on Tuesday, October 31, through 6 a.m. on Wednesday, November 1;

2.Santa Monica Boulevard between Doheny Drive and La Cienega Boulevard and all adjacent side streets just to the north and south of Santa Monica Boulevard between Doheny and La Cienega from 12 p.m. on Tuesday, October 31, through 6 a.m. on Wednesday, November 1; and

3.La Cienega Boulevard will close to northbound/southbound traffic in the vicinity of Santa Monica Boulevard at 2 p.m. on Tuesday, October 31.

Additional street closure information is available on the City's website at: www.weho.org/visitors/events-in-the-city/halloween-carnaval/parking-information.

West Hollywood encourages Carnival-goers to leave cars at home, to carpool, or to use public transportation options. Metro offers several transit options to get to West Hollywood. A trip planner is available at www.metro.net.

The city will offer Carnival-goers three free transit options to help get to and from the Halloween Carnival:

1.CityLineX (Modified Service) – will run from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. from Hollywood and Highland to Santa Monica Boulevard/Sweetzer Avenue;

2.Hollywood Link (Special CityLineX Service to and from La Brea Only) – will run from 8 p.m. to 1 a.m. between Hollywood and Highland and Santa Monica Boulevard/La Brea Avenue. (Connect to The Pickup's Special Service from the stop at La Brea, on the south side of the street, to reach the Halloween Carnival); and

3.The Pickup (Special Service) – will run from 8 p.m. to 11 p.m. along Santa Monica Boulevard and will stop at all regular eastbound stops between Sweetzer Avenue/La Brea Avenue. Once the Pickup reaches its La Brea Avenue stop, it will take an express route west toward the Halloween Carnival via Melrose Avenue to its special Halloween stop on Kings Road/Santa Monica Boulevard. From 11 p.m. to 3 a.m., The Pickup will only run eastbound from Kings Road/Santa Monica Boulevard to La Brea Avenue/Santa Monica Boulevard.

West Hollywood's Halloween Carnival was launched in 1987 and is rooted in the foundation of the City of West Hollywood's diverse culture and community. Each year, the event is a gathering of phenomenal costumes, entertainment, culture, and self-expression with a myriad of observers, revelers, exhibitionists, and performers. People come from all over the region to take part in the fun.

For additional information about the West Hollywood Halloween Carnival visit www.weho.org/halloween or call (323) 848-6503. To contact the City's Communications staff during the event, please call (323) 513-7861 or (213) 248-1391. For people who are deaf or hearing impaired, please call TTY (323) 848-6496.