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# The Palmdale Journal

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Other Side of  
the Glass  
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**Local News That  
Directly Impacts  
Our City**

Volume I, Issue III

Published by Michael and Carol Ross

April 2022

## Lawsuits Claim " JJ's Reign of Terror "

### LA County's BOS Vote Against Sheriff's

By Franklin Castillo

On April 5th, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors (BOS) voted to remove Sheriff Villanueva's power to decide if he will discipline deputies for being unvaccinated while the county is still requiring vaccines to be mandated. The power is transferred to the LA BOS and the personnel director to make the decision on discipline and termination of officers for non-compliance with the county mandate. The rule change was



first introduced in February when the board voted to start this process against the sheriff and the county deputies. This motion on Tuesday solidified the board's disdain for the sheriff.

The vote was 4-1 in favor of the measure, which will now result in the loss of thousands of jobs throughout the county. Hilda Solis, Holly Mitchell, Sheila Kuehl and Janice Hahn were the 4 members of the board who voted to

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### Murky Details Surround Ex City Manager's Firing



By Lily DeValle

Lawsuits mount against the City of Palmdale. Four closed session agenda items for the April 6 council meeting mention "significant exposure" to litigation against the city. Some facts remain hidden from the public, but those who hired, and subsequently fired, former city manager J. J. Murphy should have seen it coming.

On June 15, 2018 KRQE news in Albuquerque reported that Murphy requested and received a 50,000 dollar housing incentive designated for police officers, though he never wore a badge. Taxpayers funded Murphy's excursion to Italy to investigate Olympic quality pools for a \$63 million dollar recreation complex project, and paid \$50,000 for Murphy to attend leadership classes at Harvard University in Massachusetts. In 2014 the city hired Murphy as a special consultant at \$183,000 per year, paying him throughout his tenure as city manager and after he left the position.

More recently, AV Watchman United We Stand laid out Murphy's dealings in a YouTube video, "Corrupt City Manager JJ Murphy Palmdale, CA." The video mentions his checkered New Mexico past and other shady dealings.

An anonymous source within the City of Palmdale noted how the workplace changed when the city council promoted Murphy to city manager. "Before Murphy, you knew your job expectations, but expectations began to change. Many of the projects in recent years came with fast solutions and skirting around policies and rules that are there for a reason. The projects began to be politically driven, to fit the personal agendas of the City Council and of Murphy."

Prior to Murphy the community surveys and citizen input informed the decision-making process. City staff received appropriate project timelines. But all that changed. "Gears changed to please the city manager, who also wanted to please the City Council. Many of us were thinking, 'We work for the residents, the citizens.

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### Marijuana Wars in the Antelope Valley

By Mario Presents

Cartelville, USA is a documentary created by Palmdale resident Jorge Ventura and produced by the Daily Caller. It highlights the scope and vastness of the illegal marijuana operations happening in our own backyard. While filming the documentary, local Congressman Mike Garcia said, "The magnitude of the problem is what shocks me."

The documentary pinpoints rural parts of Palmdale, Lancaster, Rosamond,



Acton, Juniper Hills, Lake Los Angeles, and Littlerock which hold the allure of remoteness. The homes with 200-400 amp hookups to the electrical grid provide power where solar cannot. With readily available components, illegal growers set up operations for up to 1,000 plants per site in as little as three days.

Home prices skyrocket when all cash buyers lure locals with up to \$100,000 over asking price and a short escrow. Local realtors have taken note that a new

See WARS on Page 4

## Palmdale City Council Votes for a Rotating Mayor Seat

By Amanda Palmer

It's official. Palmdale will no longer have a standing mayor, instead it will have a rotating mayor. The decision was made on April 6, 2022 with the four city council members, Loa, Bettencourt, Bishop, and Carrillo casting yes votes (a "si" vote in Spanish from Carrillo), and the mayor with the only dissenting vote. Most of the direction for the decision was made at the previous Council meeting, on March 16, 2022.

On March 16: The interim city manager introduced the agenda item and informed the Council and the audience that the consultant, Compass Demographics, was procured and secured to create several district maps, which were made public the Friday before the March 16 meeting, giving the community just four days to look it over.

The organizations, Salva, ALVA (Alianza Latino del Valle del Antilope), and the Dolores Huerta Foundation

showed up to support the move to five districts, without concern on the decision for a rotating mayor. Many of the speakers, about half of them in Spanish, stated that the decision would create equality and representation for the rapidly increasing Hispanic/Latino population. They pointed to the eastside-westside divide and lack of representation. One speaker even stated that they did not even care what map was chosen, just that we needed five districts, in the name of fairness.

Some of the speakers, from meetings prior, had warned about R. Rex Parris' influence on Palmdale with the potential of a rotating mayor. Some had pointed out that Parris had provided campaign contributions to certain city council members and feared it was a part of Parris' plan to weaken, or take over, Palmdale.

One active community member, Javier Flores, stated there may be some truth to the idea of Parris trying to extend his reach of control into Palmdale. He

claimed that Parris, in the past, had made racist comments and committed some of the most racist actions he had ever seen in the history of the area. He warned the Council, "Don't play with this man."

Hofbauer mentioned his disappointment in the eastside-westside debate; the Council "worked hard to correct the county's substandard criteria" when

Palmdale was first formed, which started in the central and east areas. He continued, "At the previous capital improvement [meeting] we had torn the map in half and [it] only changed the budget to less than 20%; the majority of the budget does go over [to the east

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## Help Wanted

Currently everyone on staff is a volunteer. Our readership is growing and we need more volunteers to stay afloat until these positions can be paid. We welcome local writers, print layout designers, and editors. Please consider joining our team!

All submissions to *The Palmdale Journal* are greatly appreciated and will be printed at the discretion of the editors. Submissions grants the editors permission to edit and print it. The articles do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the editors or owners.

ThePalmdaleJournal@protonmail.com



# Recall DA George Gascon Underway

By Franklin Castillo

A second recall effort is under way to remove District Attorney (DA) George Gascon. To date they have received more than 300,000 signatures of the required 566,857 needed. This puts the group ahead of the July 6th deadline for collecting signatures equal to 10% of the registered voters. They have also raised \$3.5 million to help add the Gascon recall to the November ballot.

For the Greater Los Angeles (LA) area, the push to remove DA Gascon stems from his lenient treatment of criminals. As soon as he took office, he removed sentence enhancements and pushed for a no cash bail system. Criminals have been released back onto the streets within a short time of being arrested, sometimes only hours.

According to the recall DA George Gascon website, there are now 13 crimes that can be committed in LA without fear of penalty. Trespassing, disturbing the peace, driving without a license, drinking in public and resisting arrest are just a few of them. These crimes will be declined by the District Attorney’s office and charges will be dropped.

Additionally, there is a current directive in place to discontinue the death penalty. State voters approved its use in 1978 and every attempt to overturn it has failed. Governor Newsom, by executive order, placed a stay against the death penalty in 2019.

The site also states that the DA’s office won’t charge an underage person as an adult regardless of the crime. This and the issue of soft crime sentencing, affected Palmdale residents directly due to an incident that occurred back in January 2014. James Tubbs, who was two weeks shy of turning 18, sexually assaulted a 10 year old girl at Denny’s in Palmdale. Hannah Tubbs (name change due to a sex change), now 26, is serving only two years in a juvenile facility for this crime because of Gascon’s policies.

Furthermore, the LA Association of Deputy District Attorneys (LAADDA) has shown no confidence in DA Gascon. Currently 9 out of 10 prosecutors are supporting the recall effort. LAADDA has filed two lawsuits against the DA accusing him of violating state law. One lawsuit is related to prosecutors no longer being allowed to use the three-strikes laws in the county, and the second is related to an order for prosecutors to reject cases Gascon doesn’t personally agree with. These actions are illegal. The three-strikes laws were voted-in in 1994 and it breaks all systems of law to pick and choose what you want to prosecute.

The group spearheading this second recall effort is called: Recall DA George Gascon. Though they are not related to the group from the first attempted call: Recall Gascon Now, they state they support their efforts.

Recall DA George Gascon is co-chaired by Desiree Andrade, mother of murdered Julian Andrade, and the widow of Sgt. Steve Owen, who was murdered in the line of duty, Tania Owen, along with 3 former district attorneys Sam Dordulian, Kathy Cady, and Steve Cooley, and former LA councilmember Dennis Zine. For more information on the effort or to support visit: [www.recalldageorgegascon.com](http://www.recalldageorgegascon.com)

# Legislature Hard at Work While We Sleep

By Denize Verduzco and Dawn Hardesty

As bills continue to flood the California Legislature Americans must voice their opinions. It seems as if representatives are throwing everything at the wall to see what sticks; and as a democratic society, people must remain vigilant to pending legislation and not lose hope.

Many citizens have responded to the call of urgency. For instance, Assembly Bill 1993, mentioned in last month's edition of *The Palmdale Journal* was pulled by its author Buffy Wicks because of large opposition. Although the People spoke, the possibility of its return remains. Representatives may pull a bill, but it does not equate to the bill being dead or defeated. Rather, it gives representatives time to re-word or amend the bill and revive it.

Since this legislative session is still active, there are bills that require attention. Some bills are scheduled to be heard in their distinct committees, while others have bypassed that process and gone straight to the Senate.

While the thought of tracking bills, writing emails, or determining who to contact is daunting, realImpact.us has made it easy. They have streamlined the process by providing information, such as email templates and committee phone numbers, to equip those who desire to make a change. Below are some bills that call for action:

**SB 1375**, introduced by Senator Atkins (D,) would allow for independent nurse practitioners to perform abortions without doctor supervision and reduces nurse qualifications. Currently, nurse practitioners are allowed to perform suction abortions (or vacuum aspiration) but only under doctor supervision. While

the presence of nurse practitioners is common in rural areas, it would add to the number of abortions performed, in turn costing taxpayers more money.

Although this bill is promoted as an advancement in women’s reproductive health care, in the event of any complications, a woman’s health and well-being would be jeopardized because a nurse practitioner is limited to the services that he or she can render.

**SB 906**, introduced by Senator Portantino (D,) would require parents of school students to report any firearms located in the home. Additionally, the child’s school would have the right to ask about the firearms storage or additional information they deem necessary. While the bill attempts to provide a sense of safety and security, California leaders have continually advocated for stronger and stricter gun laws creating thinly veiled and far reaching attempts into the private information of gun-owners.

**AB 2223**, introduced by Assembly Member Buffy Hicks (D,) would severely limit liability against practitioners performing criminal abortions. The bill's language would allow for perinatal deaths to occur without concerns. Perinatal death refers to deaths that occur at the span of 28 weeks of gestation up to 7 days after birth. Furthermore, it would nullify and prohibit using the coroner's statements on the certificate of fetal death to establish, bring, or support a prosecution or civil cause of damages against any person. It would be difficult to investigate after-birth deaths, and to secure justice for the infant lives lost.

**SB 1464**, introduced by Senator Pan (D,) would require law enforcement agencies to

enforce public health orders. If law enforcement agencies choose to oppose or adopt a policy to oppose the public health orders, they would be met with additional defunding. State funding would be stopped and instead be redirected to the Public Health Department. This would force law agencies to shift their focus off of crimes and emergencies like assault, violence, and theft. An increase in crime would be inevitable.

**AB 2229**, introduced by Assembly Member Luz Rivas (D,) would discriminate against police officers who adhere to a biblical worldview. Police officers would be required to pass an evaluation that would test for bias regarding religion, disability, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, gender, or nationality. However, the word 'bias' is not defined in the text which would leave the word up for interpretation and those that still hold conservative values already have a plethora of stigmas to battle. There is a shortage of law enforcement, and these requirements will leave fewer able to respond to the call of duty.

Change can happen when people get involved and become educated. Pushing back on bills that are morally wrong and infringing on the rights of Americans has proven to be effective when enough people become interested in the affairs of the State. Understanding the processes that bills must go through in order to become law is critical and will be presented in next month’s edition. For more information on bills previously discussed, visit [ThePalmdaleJournal.com](http://ThePalmdaleJournal.com) archives. Till then, remember that you are called to action!



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**BUILDING LEADERS IN THE ANTELOPE VALLEY**

## CITY MANAGER from Page 1

Why is the City of Palmdale holding a fireworks show in Lancaster?”

Then came the lawsuits. Four separate Palmdale city employees filed suits against the city under Murphy. Shanae Smith filed the most substantial suit, claiming failure to pay full wages, intentional and negligent infliction of emotional distress, failure to investigate discrimination and harassment, and violation of the Bane and Ralph Acts.

The lawsuit describes how Murphy carried “a gun to work [which] caused the City to call in the Sheriff’s when it planned to fire him at the December 15, 2021 City Council meeting.” No police report records the incident, but city employees verified that police showed up and entered the building.

Witnesses speculate that the city called a deputy liaison, rather than calling 911. “They went into the administration building right at closing time. He was not supposed to attend the council meeting. He was on paid leave.”

Maithi (Marie) Ricci filed suit against the city and Murphy on January 12, 2022 for whistleblower retaliation, discrimination, defamation, the gun incident and more. The Factual Allegations section states that Ricci “as a consequence of her good moral character, opposed Murphy’s illegal behaviors including corruption, self-dealing, and unethical conduct.” Video evidence shows Murphy severing dealings with a local business and using public funds to cover it up.

Two separate similar claims filed by Human Resources Manager, Patricia Nevarez on January 26, 2022 and Mike Behen on February 9, 2022 confirm these allegations. They also allege that “Murphy obtained a home loan from the City to purchase a \$1.8 million home at a reduced loan rate (maximum of 2% on \$1.2 million)... Thereafter, Murphy secured a further reduction on the loan to just 1%.”

As the suits began to pile up, Murphy himself filed a suit against the city

alleging subjection to a hostile work environment and negative employment actions. His suit claims that on December 15 he was “swatted by Andrew Pletcher [City Attorney] and perhaps other officers and/or employees of the City of Palmdale.” The three patrol cars and helicopter response ”cause Mr. Murphy great harm.”

Unnamed voices inside the city continue to advocate for local citizens, “The people of Palmdale deserve to have a competitive national recruitment process. For a city of 150,000 plus residents, there are big projects and events that many city managers would want. We are a fairly large city. We cannot let individuals in through the backdoor.”

The Palmdale City Council holds meetings on the first Wednesday of each month. Proceedings can be viewed via live webcasts on the Palmdale City website or on Spectrum local access channel 27. Citizens can join via Zoom to participate.



# Palmdale Releases Illegal Dumping Action Plan

## Press Release from the City

The City of Palmdale has released a comprehensive plan to address the problematic issue of illegal dumping and will soon announce a series of meetings to engage residents, businesses, and groups in collaborative efforts to help curb and prevent it in the community. The plan may be viewed at the City of Palmdale website. Just search "Illegal dumping plan Palmdale."

"Combatting illegal dumping has always been a priority for this Council," said Mayor Steve Hofbauer. "We're pleased to have developed a solid and aggressive plan that will help everyone play a part in keeping our City looking its best. We also appreciate the ongoing work of the dedicated volunteers that work at least one Saturday every month and who cleared over 800 tons of trash from the desert last year."

The document is designed to be a living document and will change as needs change, as efforts have been fully implemented, and as new ideas and approaches are identified. Some of the

key elements in the plan include actions to be taken by Code Enforcement to address illegal dumping, working with local non-profits and volunteer groups, and increasing penalties for those who are caught illegally dumping.

"The City is also working on providing more opportunities to responsibly dispose of waste items," said Councilmember Laura Bettencourt. "Free events such as mattress recycling, used oil and filter collections, and paint recycling are all part of the greater plan to engage residents."

According to the City of Palmdale website, Current year to date total of incidents, 567 compared to last year 655 (during the same time period July through January). If trend continues, the number of reports will decrease by over 150.

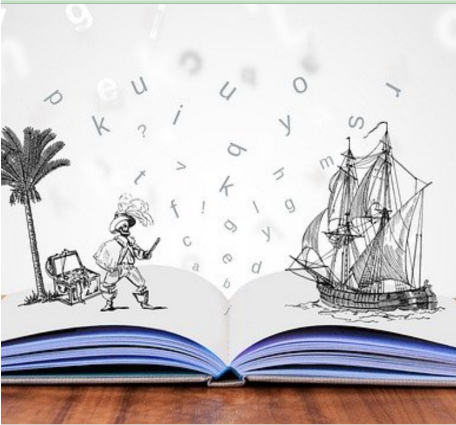
To get more information, or to provide comments and recommendations on the Action Plan, please call the City's Environmental Resources Division at 661/267-5300 or email [envirotech@cityofpalmdale.org](mailto:envirotech@cityofpalmdale.org).



As part of the City's Season of Service campaign, the next desert cleanup event will take place on Saturday, April 30 at 70th St. E. and Ave. S from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m.

# Bilingual Storytime at Our City Library

## Press Release from the City



The Palmdale City Library's spring Storytime sessions will run from April 19 through June 1 at the Chimbole Cultural Center, 38350 Sierra Hwy., located next to the library.

Bilingual Storytime for all ages will be held on Tuesdays from 10 to 10:30 a.m. Toddler Storytime for children ages 12 to 36 months will take place on Wednesdays from 9:30 to 10 a.m. Preschool Storytime for children ages 3 to 5 years will occur on Wednesdays from 10:30 to 11 a.m.

Registration is required. To register online, you can do an internet search, "bilingual story time city of Palmdale" and the Eventbrite link should pop up. Online registration will open one week before each Storytime, and reminders may be set up in advance on the Library's Eventbrite page.

"Studies show that the best thing you can do to get kids ready for school is to read to them," said Youth Services

Librarian Ellen Smith. "Our Storytimes make learning and reading fun and engaging for kids and paves the way for happiness and success later in life."

"Storytime is also a great way for little ones to start to socialize, and for their grownups to feel the support of the community," said Library Associate and Storytime Lead Fawn Kemble.

The Palmdale City Library is open Monday through Thursday from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., Friday and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sunday from 1 to 5 p.m.

For more information, please call the Palmdale City Library at 661/267-5600 or TDD 267-5167 or visit [www.cityofpalmdale.org/library](http://www.cityofpalmdale.org/library).

### MAYOR from Page 1

areas]... we have programs and services that prove it." He pointed to the fact that East Palmdale has 300 acres of parks versus 90 in West Palmdale and that three of the four new pools were located on the eastside.

On April 6: The interim city manager introduced Ordinance 1579, the finalization of the redistricting process, stating the yearlong process and the fact the most drastic changes were made in the last month. She listed the eight sections of the Palmdale Municipal Code that would be amended, the added sections, and repealing of code subdivisions.

One of the first speakers, Dave Bowman, called out the Council: By virtue of verbiage, the Council, "has gone ahead and adjoined the issue of the submission of the maps and the description of the boundaries to the issue of the mayor's office," stating this one agenda item includes two separate issues; the Council should allow the people input for the authority of the office of the mayor. He called this a deceptive act to fool the people into thinking that we could not pass the maps without a rotating mayor. Although he does agree with creating five districts for fairer representation, he felt the maps were held hostage to push forward the

councilmembers' agenda.

A long time AV community spoke on the establishment of a rotating mayorship stating Palmdale thrived under strong mayor leadership, and the plan of a rotating mayor should be submitted to the voters in the November election. He mentioned that the Hispanic voters could then, in the 2024 election, directly elect a four year term Hispanic mayor, which would be a symbolically stronger office.

Another community member was appalled that the four city council members would take away the role of mayor without the consent of the 160,000 that are governed in Palmdale. She pointed out that 50 years ago Palmdale voters decided to have its first mayor, Larry Chimbole. She continued, "There are already enough people at the county, state, and national level trying to take away our vote... to my knowledge, not one of you brought up this fifth district map idea to the advisory commission or any of the six workshops held from August of last year to January." She inquired, "Why did you wait 6 months? Why was Compass Demographics hired at taxpayers' expense, of \$35,000, to draw up a new map?" She accused the council members of betraying the people of Palmdale by taking their vote away.

Later in the meeting, speaking of the continuity and cohesiveness in the

running of the city, especially with concern in dealing with other cities and outside entities. Mayor Hofbauer warned the council members of the other cities whose rotating mayors do not show up for important votes.

As an example the mayor described an issue relating to sanitation rates. Because of the weighted vote of a board of supervisors, and because of a rotating city council member, "they literally were able to be a quorum of the committee by themselves. We have been able to hold a lid on our sanitation rates, but we would have been able to have those rates even more constrained if we had not had to fold, roll over because of the fact that we were outnumbered and quite frankly, bullied."

By the time this article is printed, it may be too late for a referendum, because the clock is running to overturn the council's action. Like an initiative, it requires a strict time frame for filing, signatures to be obtained and verified, and more. The process is complicated by the redistricting deadline for maps to be submitted to the county.

If Palmdale residents are interested in trying to regain their vote for a mayor, an initiative or charter amendment to the Palmdale City Charter would give plenty of time and could occur in the next election cycle.

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The Palmdale Journal is a town newsletter and entertainment periodical that is supported by local advertisers. It is a publication that offers an additional and distinct narrative, reporting and providing information on local politics, and how national, state, and county news impacts our city. The driving force is to provide a free flow of information that may sometimes be discluded or suppressed, providing a dissenting perspective on current events, an effort to get back to our own message. We hope to influence involvement by local residents, building up and sharing a common interest, relating together socially, and promoting truth and freedom in the process.

This is a record created by the community and for the community, the people of Palmdale. We hope that you will join us in this movement to tell our story.





A circular logo for "Beauty for Ashes International". In the center is a crown above the words "Beauty FOR ashes" in a mix of script and bold fonts, with "INTERNATIONAL" below. The circle's border contains adjectives: MAJESTY, GRACE, MAGNIFICENT, WORTHY, STRENGTH, SPLENDOR, ELEGANCE, VIRTUOUS, and GRANDEUR.

**Our Mission**

*Out of the Ashes. Beauty Arises*

*Women around the world struggle daily to find their beauty and self-worth. Beauty for Ashes, International emerged out of a pursuit to empower women so that their confidence is not washed away when the day is over; rather, their self-worth be their permanent state of being. Established in 2017, our mission is to empower women's self worth from the inside out through our community-based programs, organic beauty products, and health and wellness activism. We strive to bring God's light into the dark beauty industry to help women exchange their ashes for beauty. Want to hear more or partner with us? We are located inside Butler's Coffee and would love to chat with you.*

# The Nuremberg Code of Ethics

By Alyssa Ramos

There is one thing everyone in the United States and around the world have in common: they are affected by COVID-19, or better yet, government-issued mandates. Lives have been changed forever. Businesses have been lost. Fears have been shared and courage has been stirred. At this time, we are forced to look inwardly and determine what we are truly made of, what moves us, or what stirs us up to leave a mark in society.

Taking a look at our world’s history following World War II, Nuremberg, Germany held one of the most impactful prosecutions known to the human race. In the story about the Nuremberg Trials, History.com reports that the “13 Nuremberg trials took place after World War II throughout 1945-1949, for the purpose of bringing justice to the thousands of Jews who were victims of medical experimentation.”

They state that some of the most barbaric medical experiments performed were by Nazi German scientist, Joseph Mengele. He would inject serum into the eyes of children to study eye color. This caused agonizing pain. He would also purposely poison sets of twins to test if they would die at the same time or manner.

The professions of the defendants during the Nuremberg trials included doctors, lawyers, and industrialists who worked with Nazi-German party military officials.

These professionals worked for corrupt leaders instead of serving humanity through positive and productive research. Preceding these trials, the Nuremberg Code of Ethics was developed.

In an article by the National Library of Medicine, they state that the Nuremberg Code laid a foundation for bioethics in a more modern form compared to the Hippocratic Oath, which is based on a pledge to Greek healing gods.

There are 10 objectives in the Nuremberg Code which outline the rights of the human being participating in a medical experiment. One of them reads:

“The voluntary consent of the human subject is absolutely essential. This means that the person involved should have legal capacity to give consent; should be so situated as to be able to exercise free power of choice, without the intervention of any element of force, fraud, deceit, duress, over-reaching, or other ulterior form of constraint or coercion; and should have sufficient knowledge and comprehension of the elements of the subject matter involved, as to enable him to make an understanding and enlightened decision.”

What makes one a victim of a medical experiment is not being fully informed of the total risks/harm of the experiment or being stripped of the liberty to choose to participate. Does this sound familiar?

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quickly and nimbly trim the plants to pay off their debt to the cartels. Ventura, who's visited the southern border, has noted that the wristbands used to identify people moving across the US/Mexico border by cartels were present in the victims he saw in the Antelope Valley.

Escapees have talked to neighbors about the activity on the property; others were not so fortunate. Residents complained to authorities wondering what was going on in their community. Mayor R. Rex Parris responded, “These cartels are multibillion dollar organizations. They rival Amazon. Let's be clear about the scope of these operations. They run them like businesses.” Residents have also been told that laborers are under pressure to work or be eliminated. This is not about humans; it is about the product.

Locals who have been out for a hike, or enjoying the desert on off terrain vehicles, have come across illegal grow operations. They have been harrassed, questioned, and warned not to wander there again. One resident claimed to have been shown a picture of a red truck with bullet holes and a dead man in the driver’s seat while being told, “This is what happens to you when you come out here.” Sheriffs report being shot at by unknown persons and finding bodies in the desert, most likely due to the cartel activity.

Jorge Ventura also describes the faulty

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approve the measure. Kathryn Barger, who represents our local area, was the only member to vote no. Sheila Kuehl has stated, “We are not going to permit county lives to be jeopardized by an individual decision not to comply with the county policy.” While most of the state and country have gone back to their normal lives, our county continues to push a narrative about Covid being a large threat.

Sheriff Villanueva stated in February, “There is nothing that is driving them that’s based on science or combating the coronavirus because we’re surrounded by five counties who don’t have vaccine mandates...”. When the measure was proposed in February less than 60% of the Sheriff’s department had disclosed a status of being vaccinated. Currently, in the county the rate of people who test positive for Covid is .8% or less than 1% of the county a week. A total of 12 people in the county, with a population of around 10 million people, died from the illness in the last week; there is no information available on whether those deaths involved pre-existing conditions.

Tab Rhodes, president of the Professional Police Officers Association, told the supervisors, “The proposed revision of the county code on today’s agenda is a targeted overreach by members of this board to undermine the authority of one man...”. The County Board of Supervisors is known for having an ax to grind for the Sheriff. They have

policy surrounding the success of these illegal businesses. For example, the decriminalization of marijuana in California reduced the penalty for an illegal growing operation from a felony to a misdemeanor with a possible \$500 fine. Estimated yield on the smaller growing operations is close to \$1 million so the risk vs reward is heavily slanted in the criminals' favor.

The State of California allows for 6000 licensed legal high volume operations for the production of marijuana, of which only 1000 have been issued. The state has penalized those who follow protocol with endless red tape. There has yet to be an efficient policy that enables affordable and ethically sourced cannabis. There’s nothing cheaper than a product made with stolen water and free sunshine 360 days of the year. Legal growers are simply unable to compete with the underground market.

A single cannabis plant uses 3-6 gallons of water a day. With thousands of plants in a single operation and an estimation of 500 grow operations in our valley alone, the water loss is astronomical. According to estimates, water theft by illegal marijuana farms is estimated at 3-9.6 million gallons daily. Charles Bostwick, Antelope Valley Assistant Field Deputy for Los Angeles County Supervisor Kathryn Barger says, “One water board has stopped selling to

made many efforts to push back against Sheriff Villanueva.

In 2020 Mark Ridley-Thomas, former Supervisor, and Sheila Kuehl explored ways to remove him from office. Based on a statement from the Sheriff’s office from April 4th, their options are impeachment, legislative changes to appoint a sheriff (both of which require changes to the CA State constitution and county charter) and legislative changes to remove responsibilities. It appears that the county board of supervisors has opted for the latter.

*The Palmdale Journal* reached out to the sheriff’s department for comment and were referred to Sheriff Villanueva’s Facebook Live video by The Sheriff’s Information Bureau. In the video Sheriff Villanueva said, “They (the deputies) are not being fired as of today. The whole thing that the board is doing is a publicity stunt.” He went on further to say, “I have no intention of firing anyone for the vaccine mandate.” The Sheriff is holding firm to his position of not letting go of deputies, especially while his department is underfunded and understaffed.

It appears the battle may still not be over for our men in uniform. The county board and the sheriff have both dug in their heels, but the board is trying by any means necessary to undermine the sheriff. Their battle may come at the expense of the county's safety and the livelihoods of the sheriff’s deputies in our community. Let’s hope for our sake, the Sheriff wins the fight and we keep our streets a little safer.

these entities while another has been selling to water truck haulers for years.” While water theft and violence increase, marijuana abatement teams have been all but eliminated from the law enforcement budgets. Cartels are not threatened by law enforcement and brazenly set up shop in our neighborhoods. DA George Gascon, has failed to take action to prevent these sites from reappearing. To date, he has not prosecuted anyone connected to illegal grows in LA County. Residents are left to fend for themselves as they wonder if their children will have clean water as they grow or if it'll be contaminated along with the soil.

Cartels are wreaking havoc in the Antelope Valley. One resident noted that because of the cartel's ever encroaching presence, “We are very very close to driving down the freeway and seeing bodies hanging from the overpass. That is what is coming.”

Residents should stay safe by not approaching these sites and instead, alert authorities. Contact the local sheriff’s department at the non-emergency line if you see water trucks at hydrants, increased vehicle traffic on dirt roads, or trash walls hiding properties from view. Some companies have permits for water collection at hydrants, but not all. Visit [www.carteldoc.com](http://www.carteldoc.com) for the entire 30 minute feature.



# Youth and Education



## Palmdale Junior High Schools Played On...

By David Nurse

Thursday, March 17, Saint Patrick Day, was labeled Palmdale Middle School Championship Day. Championships for both boys and girls, 6th, 7th and 8th-grade, were crowned for the City of Palmdale.

The 6th & 7th-grade girl championships featured David G. Millen beating Sage Hill. You could tell by the girls' play that they hadn't competed in two years. These young athletes will have to put in some extra work to get ready for high school basketball.

The game between the 6th & 7th-grade boys' team was a nail-biter. A last-second shot by David G. Millen couldn't convert the score, and Sage Hill walked away with victory by one point. The skill level for the boys' team, although proportionately higher than the girls', was still lower than what it could and ought to have been.

The 8th grade boys game featured a very talented Desert Willow team taking on Shadow Hills. Both teams featured a couple of shooters destined to make some high school coaches very happy.

After games being halted for over a year due to Covid mandates, it was a joy to see these players enjoying the game and improving their skills. The stands were filled with families and friends, cheering the kids on. Hurrahs were poured over the winners, tears were shed for the losers, but the most wonderful thing was looking at the court and seeing all those youthful faces beaming with emotions and life.

For the generous return to normalcy, almost too good to be true, parents and players alike want to thank the school administration.

Here is the list of some of the heroes who are making it all possible:

- Superintendent Raul Maldonado of Palmdale School District
- Jason Deaville, Principal, David G. Millen
- Timothy Howell, Principal, Desert Willow
- Kathy Moshier, Principal, Shadow Hills
- Larry Lueck, Principal, Sage Hill



## How Healthy is Your Student?

By Mark Napolitano

The CA Dept of Education conducts a survey which is “a comprehensive student data collection system that addresses school climate, health risks, and behaviors and youth resiliency.” The survey is distributed among fifth, seventh, ninth, and eleventh grade students. Schools receiving Tobacco Use Prevention Education (TUPE) funding are required to conduct the California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS).

Some parents are concerned with the questions posed as their children came home saying they took a survey that asked “weird” or “gross” questions. Some argue it is necessary for the State to ask these questions, for the well being of children. Other parents are calling this an invasive attempt to destroy a child's innocence.

The survey covers a broad spectrum of questions, including topics on social, emotional, physical and mental health, safety and violence awareness, alcohol and drug use, gang awareness, after-school activities, and sexual behavior. But these questions are not set in stone; the state does allow districts an option to customize the survey according to local interest topics.

Pursuant to California education code sections 51513 and 51938 (c), there are two kinds of consent options for parents: active and passive. Active consent requires a written notification be sent to the legal guardians of a student, requesting student participation in the survey; this is required for fifth grade. Passive consent also involves a written notification to parent or legal guardian, allowing parents to review the survey and then inviting them to notify the school if they DO NOT want their child to participate. Passive consent is required for CHKS survey grades seventh through twelfth.

Before taking the survey, students are instructed: “You do not have to answer these questions, but your answers will be

very helpful in improving school, and health programs. You will be able to answer whether or not you have done or experienced these things." Answers vary from multiple choice, strongly agree/disagree, true or not true, and to what level of frequency.

Questions 1-17 touch on family background and home life. Questions 18-46 are class and school related topics as well as student well being. Questions 47-91 are alcohol, tobacco and drugs use, and harm/risk associated. Questions 92-118 violence, safety, harassment, and bullying in school property Questions 119-132 are personal well being.

Results of the survey are tabulated and used to enlighten district and schools. They then determine student body needs to initiate certain programs and campaigns ie: DARE or tobacco/vape education. Below are some of the questions presented in the Westside Union School District middle school survey.

3. What is your gender?
  - A) Male
  - B) Female
  - C) Non-binary
  - D) Something else
4. Some people describe themselves as transgender when how they think or feel about their gender is different from the sex they were assigned at birth. Are you transgender?
  - A) No, I am not transgender
  - B) Yes, I am transgender
  - C) I am not sure if I am transgender
  - D) Decline to respond
5. Which of the following best describes you?
  - A) Straight (not gay)
  - B) Lesbian or Gay
  - C) Bisexual
  - D) Something else

See HEALTHY on Page 6

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HEALTHY from Page 1

- E) Not sure  
F) Decline to respond

During your life, how many times have you used the following?

51. One full drink of alcohol (such as a can of beer, glass of wine, wine cooler, or shot of liquor)  
A) 0 times  
B) 1 time  
C) 2 times  
D) 3 times  
E) 4-6 times  
F) 7 or more times

52. Marijuana (smoke, vape, eat or drink)  
Answers same as above  
53. Inhalants (things you sniff, huff, or breathe to get “high” such as glue, paint, aerosol sprays, gasoline, poppers, gasses)  
Answers same as above  
56. Very drunk or sick after drinking alcohol?  
Answers same as above  
57. “High” (loaded, stoned, or wasted) from using drugs?  
Answers same above

- During the past 30 days, on how many days did you use...  
65. One or more drinks of alcohol?  
A) 0 days  
B) 1 day  
C) 2 days  
D) 3-9 days  
E) 10-19 days  
F) 20-30 days

67. Marijuana  
Answers same as above  
68. Inhalants (things you sniff, huff, or breathe to get “high”)  
Answers same as above

91. In a normal week, how many days are you home after school for at least one hour without an adult there?  
A) Never  
B) 1 day  
C) 2 days  
D) 3 days  
E) 4 days  
F) 5 days

- During the past 12 months, how many times on school property have you...  
94. Been afraid of being beaten up  
A) 0 times  
B) 1 time  
C) 2-3 times  
D) 4 or more times

100. Been offered, sold or given an illegal drug?  
Answers same as above  
104. Been threatened or injured with a weapon (gun, knife, clubs etc)?  
Answers same as above

118. During the past 12 months, did you ever consider attempting suicide?  
A) No  
B) Yes

127. My family life as... [Describe my...]  
A) Very dissatisfied  
B) Dissatisfied  
C) A little dissatisfied  
D) A little satisfied  
E) Satisfied  
F) Very satisfied

California Healthy Kids survey info was found at the CA Department of Education website and m.KidsData.org. Most districts survey students, but may use a different tool, like the Youth Truth Survey. Call your district for more information.

Teacher's Unions: It's Time to Opt Out

By Lily DeValle

Labor unions have historically played a powerful role in the advancement of American society. Their entire premise is to foster justice between the employees and employers, to recognize and value the productivity of each worker, and provide equal opportunities. Many people maintain that America’s strong middle class is due to the efforts of labor unions.

A memorable and moving example of union power and its potential for change is the work of Cesar Chavez. His activism for farm and field workers is regarded as heroic. Before he appeared on the scene, workers were regarded with minimal consideration. Farmers issued short-handle hoes that required the handlers to spend hours in the sweltering heat doubled over. Planes dropped insecticide over crops and workers alike. And there was no such thing as a lunch or bathroom break. Cesar Chavez brought all of this to the light of public opinion, advocating basic civil rights.

For all the advancements championed by labor unions over the years, and the respect and gratitude accorded them by their members, much has changed since the days of Cesar Chavez, and the politicization of unions has become a polemical issue. One particular union has become so seeped in politics that its entire public image has seemingly changed as well as its apparent goals: the teacher’s union.

There used to be a proportionate balance between parents, teachers, and the welfare of students, but the intricacies of the teachers’ union have so corrupted that balance, that society at large is starting to be aware of it. Debunking the myth that “stronger teacher’s union equals better education,” California can claim the double distinction of having one of the strongest teachers’ unions in the nation and also some of the lowest test scores.

Dues are collected from members and are used to promote politics which may or may not align with the individuals’ beliefs. Even if teachers opt out of having their dues funneled towards political platforms, they are still paying for the salaries of those that push the very politics they disagree with.

Some local educators have had

enough, and in the face of harsh threats are exiting their union and joining independent organizations. Below, a local educator, who wishes to remain anonymous for fear of retaliatory actions, shares her experiences:

“I began questioning the role of teachers’ unions early in my career. I noticed that the union interfered with efforts to maintain a safe and healthy learning environment for students. There was a teacher across the hall and fights were constantly breaking out in his class. Students were smoking. Girls, would beg me to allow them to be in my class, rather than go to his class. This broke my heart; students could not feel comfortable enough to be in his class to learn. One time, a fire broke out in his classroom! Administration tried to get rid of him, but the union was too strong. They ended up just transferring him to another site.”

She continued: “At a staff meeting, the administration encouraged us to put learning targets on our boards so students could have a clear picture of their objective for the day. This is a research-proven strategy for improving student outcomes. However, after the staff meeting during our union meeting, the union site representative countered this by saying that since it was not in our contract to write objectives, we were not obligated to do so. I thought, ‘it takes two minutes to write an objective.’ Isn’t it worth two minutes to try and improve a student’s progress?”

This same educator expressed her frustration at the teachers’ union prolonged resistance to reopening the schools after the state closures were lifted. “It’s obvious that students of poverty, and Black and Hispanic, would suffer the most and have the greatest learning loss. These educators tout ‘equity,’ yet chose to continue the farce of online learning.”

One daring teacher, Mikki Martinez, left her district’s union to join the Association of American Educators, an alternative that provides liability coverage, legal counsel, scholarship opportunities, and other discount programs. On her social media platform, she said, “Do your research, my friends, and if what you find does not align with

your personal beliefs, make that change. I am so proud to now be able to truly say, ‘not my circus, not my monkeys’ when people reference the negative impact the union has had on students.” She posted photos of educators who tried to postpone the return of in-school instruction while having fun on vacation during the lockdowns.

Martinez posted a long list of reasons why she opted out of the union, starting with the highly political agenda “that has little to do with education.” In spite of its proven defects, she said the union had failed to protect her from discrimination when she was subjected to weekly asymptotic testing because of her vaccination status. Another divergent point for her was the union’s complete embracing of Critical Race Theory (CRT). CRT, Mrs. Martinez insists, replaces equal opportunity for students in the classroom with a curriculum that pits groups against each other.

The For Kids and Country (FKC) website boldly avers that “educators have been silenced and bullied for years.” Discontented members who begin to question union viability are met with threats: loss of job and professional development opportunities, lower insurance rates, and liability coverage. Teachers need to hear otherwise, they need to know that they still have a choice. FKC suggests adopting a teacher and references the book, Standing up to Goliath by Rebecca Friedrich. The book is a guide for those seeking to empower teachers and bring safety and healing to the schools.

Besides providing a freedom of conscience and political thought, switching unions can save teacher’s hundreds of dollars. Dues for the California Teachers Association amount to over \$1100 a year, while alternatives ask for less than \$20 dollars per month. If you are a teacher, you can check out the website forkidsandcountry.org to purview the options available to you. If you are a community member who wants to learn more about the highly politicized agenda of teachers’ unions, or would like more information on how to adopt a teacher, you can also visit the website. The next generation needs our help to protect them.



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# Features & Columns

## Not a Victim: What Good Can Come Out of Palmdale?

By Adriana Salcedo

Hey, you! Yeah, YOU! Did you know that you are created to change the world? Did you know there is only one of you? That no one can ever replace you? You are made to fill a need that goes far beyond you. You are an original, not a copy, and have been created for a purpose.

What if I were to say that your education, background, or upbringing does not define you? After all, isn't this America where we are known to live the American dream? We all have a story. We all have setbacks. Some of us have had great comebacks, while others are still in the setback stage waiting for the opportunity to step into a comeback. If this is you, wait no longer. Start creating your victory now. We at Beauty for Ashes International want to partner with you and be a part of your journey to win back what was lost and resurrect what is dead.

Success isn't an event, it's a journey. I am a licensed hairstylist and have been for 16 years. The beauty world is very familiar with John Paul Mitchell Systems. Did you know one of its founders, John Paul DeJoria was homeless, not once, but twice? Yes, you read that correctly, twice! According to Laura Franta-Abdalla's article, "11 Very Successful Business People Who Had a Tough Time in Their 20s," the first time he was homeless, he was 22 years old. He also had a 2-year-old child to worry about.

The second time was at the time he started the \$900,000,000 a year hair care company. In 2021, DeJoria was a billionaire on the Forbes 400 list. DeJoria informed Forbes that all entrepreneurs should, "Be prepared for a lot of rejection— people saying 'no' to the service or the product you want to sell. People saying, 'Oh, it's too difficult. I don't want to do it.' If you knock on 100 doors and they all say 'no,' on door 101, be just as enthusiastic."

Next, I'd like to introduce you to Wendy Davis. As reported by Franta-Abdalla, Wendy Davis is a Texas state senator who obtained national attention on June 13, 2013, "when she spoke for 13 hours to filibuster the passing of the bill that further restricted abortion rights for women in the state." Davis graduated from Harvard law and she has held seats in her city and state government for 15 years. Yet, as a young mother in her 20's, she was divorced. Because of unfortunate circumstances, she had to drop out of Texas Arlington University. During this time, she worked as a receptionist and waitress. It was at a later point that she remarried and continued her education.

Davis shared with the New York Times how she struggled with insecurities. She felt she didn't have enough education. "I had a lot of insecurities about not having done enough with myself. I remember so vividly when [my husband] would talk to peers about their education or their travels, fine wines or foods. I just felt so left out of those conversations. And I had a little bit of a chip on my shoulder about it. So I wanted to prove to myself, more than anything, that I could be one of those people, too. I could get an education like that, too."

Another triumphant story is Steve Jobs', one of the founders of Apple, Inc.. Forbes now ranks Apple as the world's most valuable brand. Yet at one moment, Jobs dropped out of college after only 6 months, mentions Franta-Abdalla. He lived with his parents when he started Apple out of their garage. At the age of 30, his board of directors terminated him from his own company. This didn't stop resilient Jobs from starting neXT and Pixar. This brought him back to Apple after the company purchased neXT.

I love Jobs' inspiring commencement speech to Stanford graduates: "I'm pretty sure none of this would have happened if I hadn't been fired from Apple. It was awful tasting medicine, but the patient needed it. Sometimes life hits you in the head with a brick. Don't lose faith. I'm convinced that the only thing that kept me going was that I loved what I did. You've got to find what you love. That is as true for your work as it is for your lovers. The only way to be truly satisfied is to do what you believe is great work. And the only way to do great work is to love what you do. If you haven't found it yet, keep looking. Don't settle. As with all matters of the heart, you'll know when you find it. And, like any great relationship, it just gets better and better as the years roll on. So keep looking until you find it. Don't settle."

Last but not least, is a story that comes from our own backyard. Palmdale is home to a lot of successful entrepreneurs, one of them being Paul George. According to David Nurse, "Paul George is a graduate of Pete Knight High School. He put in the work and now plays for the Los Angeles Clippers and is an 11-year NBA veteran. As a high school player, he helped Pete Knight High School take part in the CIF finals. Today, he runs a basketball academy called "Paul George Elite." Paul used his great success to help expose high school players to college coaches creating opportunities for recruitment.




With these stories, our goal is to inspire our community to never give up, give in, and lose heart. Be courageous and stand against the lie, "What good can come out of Palmdale!?" Now, go out and change the world. Better yet, change your city, Palmdale is waiting for you. We would love to sit with you, hear your story, and drink a cup of coffee. Come and see us at Butler's Coffee.

Sincerely, Adriana Salcedo, founder of Beauty for Ashes International.



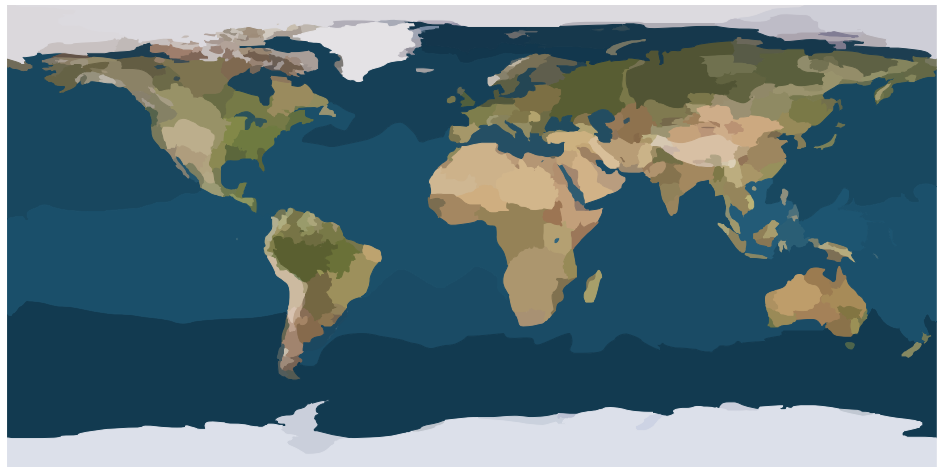
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## Earth Day, Every Day

Environmental Column, By Teresa Palmer



So, you finish your water, crunch the bottle, approach the trashcan and– stop. Suddenly, you are faced with the following questions: What type of human do I want to be? Do I care about my planet and recycle this? Or can I just throw it away and not give it another thought?

The word “recycle” has been etched into our brains. We see the three green arrows everywhere and are reminded of how to properly dispose of our waste for a cleaner Earth. The practice of recycling is an effective way to dispose of waste but if we truly want to take care of our planet, then we can start taking steps before recycling crosses our minds. Examples of this are cutting down on waste by reducing consumption, conserving energy, and being a sustainable shopper.

Reducing our consumption is a key way to help our beautiful planet. We always want to be up to date on the newest tv, car, or home gadget but if we want to start reducing our consumption, then using what we already have is a surefire way to achieve this goal. It's usually good to wait until something is broken and unrepairable to buy it new. Also when shopping for something new, place emphasis on quality. Ask yourself,

“Is this something that will last?”

Avoid shopping until you need to and when the time comes, make a list and stick to it. Making a list will remind you of what you need and keep you from buying what you don't (cha-ching, more money for you). It's always good to reuse what you have. Additionally, try to see if you can cut down on using plastic waste by bringing your own reusable bags. You can even get creative by giving an old pair of jeans a new life as shorts or cutting stained towels into cleaning rags. These are just some easy and practical steps that you can do to reuse the resources available to you.

Helping our planet can also be done by limiting your use of energy. Conserving energy is something that will be hard to adapt to at first, but we can start small and make habits over time. Some of these small changes can be as simple as turning off the lights when you leave a room or doing full loads in the washing machine. Many don't consider the small impacts like unplugging chargers, TVs, and lamps when they aren't being used. According to an article by Joel Anderson in GoBankingRates, this practice alone can save you up to \$200 every year.

See EARTH on Page 9

## Palmdale History: Part 1

By Franklin Castillo

In the past 10-15 years, Palmdale has seen a dramatic increase in commerce, population, and overall growth. Many of its residents have migrated here from nearby cities, counties, or states seeking lower housing prices, affordable cost of living, safer conditions to raise a family or the hometown feel without losing the accessibility of a large city.

Now, as we stand in the whirlwind of a nationwide political and governmental upheaval, Palmdale residents are taking it upon themselves to preserve their own city– not only for themselves but for generations to come. In order to recognize the vantage point from which we view Palmdale and what we are trying to preserve for the future, we have to look at its rich past.

During the next few issues, we will be taking you on a journey through the city's development, starting today with its Native American Settlers.

Did you know that Palmdale was once the home to a migratory group of American Indians known as the Kitanemuk tribe who were not known for their homesteading and farming? Although they traded with many other tribes, the Kitanemuk mainly hunted in and around the Antelope Valley for thousands of years.

In 1769 many were recruited to help Francisco Garces, a missionary from New Spain to build the Spanish missions. He and Juan Bautista de Anza were some of the ones who led settlement expeditions across the Mojave Desert.

Garces and Bautista de Anza set up Spanish ranches all along their route through to Monterey. Most of the large cattle ranches were later broken up as Europeans continued to settle into the valley. As they recruited Indians from different tribes, the Indians were lumped into the group known as the Mission Indians causing the Kitanemuk tribe to begin to dwindle in numbers. Finally, by 1840, many of the remaining members of the Kitanemuk tribe were tragically wiped out by the smallpox epidemic. The last bits of the tribe are now associated with Tejon Ranch (Sebastian Indian Reservation) and the Tule River Reservation.

In the next Palmdale Journal issue, we will discuss how in the late 1880s, the first European settlers made their way west into the Palmdale area and helped set the foundation for the thriving city we live in today.



# Lancaster from the Other Side of the Glass


By Rebecca Miriam

I walked in a man’s blood. I saw the brown of my boots against the deep red. I felt the thick liquid easing beneath my steps. Moments before, a 67-year-old man had stood on this spot, leaning over his walker and repeatedly stabbing his neck with a pair of kitchen knives. The ceiling of the two-room apartment was low, the windows closed, the lights off, and the floors covered in trails of blood. “Be careful!” someone said. “It’s slippery.” I turned around and my eyes fell on the bed, rumpled and unmade, and the blood splattered book lying on the covers. A Bible. There were three more on the nightstand.

I had never been on a ride-along with a deputy sheriff before. I had come not knowing what to expect, and with what I thought was an open mind. What I discovered was another world.

Earlier that day, I arrived at the Lancaster Sheriff’s Office to report for my ride-along. Unlike the bustling place I anticipated, the office felt like an empty hospital ward. Silent. The atmosphere, indifferent and aloof. The bathrooms were locked, the outlets covered. Behind the counter a window of one-way glass seemed to further draw the line between us and them.

There was only one receptionist and she was frequently disappearing into the back, for long periods of time. Occasionally, an officer would emerge to speak with a client, before hurriedly retreating into the back again. We in the lobby stared at each other. Somebody scoffed, “And they want more funding!” Another warned, “You think they’re here to serve. But they’re not.” A young man looked up: “I know they’re not.”



Over an hour later, someone called my name. An officer of medium height smiled at me and motioned me to the back. I felt eyes watching me as I left the lobby, crossing that divide into the other sphere. I would later learn that a young man had been in the lobby that morning, reliving himself in front of the counter as a matter of personal satisfaction.

My deputy-companion welcomed me into what he called his office for the day—his car. From midnight to 3.30 pm there had been two hundred and sixty 911 calls, designated as either Routine, Priority, or Emergency, Emergency being the most urgent. And with every hour, that number would continue to climb.

It was one stop after another, with little time in between or none at all. In what turns out to be a daily and regular struggle for homeowners, a husband and wife had chased squatters from their rental property and were worried the intruders might return. A commuter had come home to find his car in the driveway vandalized. A tiny woman met us at her front door and even though it was night, 53o F with 20 mph winds, she insisted on talking outside for fear of her son. He had a history of domestic violence and had been threatening her and her daughter.

The last call was an Emergency: a man was threatening a woman on the street with a gun. By the time we arrived the man was gone. The woman emerged from the house where she’d fled, her face twisted with emotion, shaking and trembling uncontrollably.

The people who called the police that day were everyday people in trouble, looking for help, answers, and protection. The threat to them and to us, as I learned, was and is very real and very present. As we drove, the deputy sheriff pointed out neighborhoods and street corners owned by competing gangs, the Bloods, the Crips, the PIN’s, the Lancas—a cornucopia of Blacks, Latinos, Armenians, and Whites, segregated according to race, the lines and loyalties delineated with blood. “Gangsters from L.A. and other big cities move here, or they put their families here, because the housing is better,” he explained. The lack of territorial boundaries, the chance of a gang member being recognized, caught, or surrounded by another gang, often has fatal consequences.

The incident that impressed me the most, however, was not gang related. We had just entrusted to the fire department a brush fire begun in an abandoned vagrant camp when we received the alarm: a man had dialed 911, threatening to cut his throat. Minutes later we reached the apartment complex, a few more and we found the room.

The three deputies took up positions and I was instructed to remain behind a pillar. My companion knocked on the door, calling through the open window for the occupant to open. A voice answered, telling us to go away. Then a strange sound: squish-squish. One of the policemen was quietly dispatched to procure the keys from the manager. Meanwhile, the officer continued to ask the man inside to open. Each time the response was the same and the sound persisted: squish-squish.

Finally, the keys were found and the door opened. Immediately, all three deputies began shouting: “Put the knife down! Put the knife down!” But the man ignored them. He stood leaning over his walker, one kitchen knife at his feet in a pool of blood, another knife in his hand as he stabbed himself in the neck with it. Squish-

See GLASS on Page 9

# The Human Connection: Sleep Sound

Health & Wellness Column, By Sabeth Perry

The soft whisper of rain falling and the low rumble of thunder are the sounds that lull me to sleep at night. As my head hits the pillow and I close my eyes, I am thankful for audio apps and pray that my required hours of quality sleep are fulfilled. If not for those apps, I would be kept awake by the usual night sounds: banging trash can lids, dogs barking uncontrollably, music blaring from the party house down the street, or my husband's snoring.

Sleep. Who needs it anyway, right? Well, we do.

Getting less than 6 hours of sleep on any given night is perfectly normal for many people. Little do they know this routine can lead to various health issues affecting their overall emotional, mental and physical performance. An article in Science Daily released on July 6, 2021, explains the outcome of a study that looked at the consequences of sleep habits logged in for 8 consecutive nights. The study’s conclusions found that just one night of lost sleep caused a number of physical and mental problems for the trial group.

As the sleepless nights continued, by day three, the symptoms spiked, “participants reported a pile-up of angry, nervous, lonely, irritable and frustrated feelings as a result of sleep loss. They also experienced more physical symptoms, such as upper respiratory issues, aches, gastrointestinal problems and other health concerns.”

Many run to the doctor, hoping for solutions to their numerous physical ailments, looking for prescription drugs that give temporary solutions. However, one of the various causes may simply be overlooked– a lack of sleep. Did you know that low-quality sleep can contribute to serious health consequences such as immune system failure, cancer, obesity, depression, diabetes, heart disease, memory loss, and more? Let’s not forget the mental and emotional exhaustion the body goes through being forced to function day after day on limited sleep.

So, how do we combat this unhealthy, sleepless cycle that we are in? Well first, it’s always important to get the advice of a trusted healthcare professional before embarking on any lifestyle changes that you are unfamiliar with. It is vital to get physical check-ups to ensure there are no issues more pressing that need to be addressed.

To further help you, here are a few suggestions, some of which I have personally practiced with successful outcomes. Don’t be alarmed, some may sound unconventional but definitely are worth a try.

1. Before grabbing an over-the-counter medicated sleep aide –which can cause unwanted addictions– try natural supplements and herbs. Some options are melatonin, valerian root, magnesium, and chamomile.
2. Check to see if you are getting enough Vitamins D, B, and E. People have mixed emotions about CBD, but this non-addictive plant component has helped numerous people with a variety of health issues, including lack of sleep.
3. Get regular exercise. Go for evening walks or find a physical activity that you enjoy and will do on a regular basis. This may help sleep quality by reducing the time it takes to fall asleep and also helps mood stabilization and decompression of the mind.
4. Stay away from heavy meals, caffeinated drinks, and sugary snacks in the evening.
5. Create your ideal bedroom ambiance. The lighting in a room can make or break your sleep patterns. The less light, the better. If you need to have a nightlight, red tones are most conducive to proper sleep. Blue lights can inhibit the production of melatonin making shut-eye more difficult. Cover unnecessary small lights like those of electronics with small stickers.
6. Background sound, “white noise”, such as soothing music, rain/ocean sounds, and audible books can also be helpful. The consistency of the sound creates a masking effect that blocks out sudden noise changes such as snoring, barking, train whistles, etc.
7. Keeping the temperature in the room at a cooler temperature, ideally between 60-67 degrees and your room free of unwanted clutter can also help in setting the right ambiance.
8. Deep breathing exercises are great for reducing stress and anxiety. This also helps produce more melatonin and slows the heart rate which makes it easier to fall asleep.
9. Limit the time on electronic devices such as cell phones, computers, and television before bed. Technology stimulates the brain during active and even inactive use, as the blinking lights next to your bed can also cause unwanted awakenings. If you like reading before bed, try reading a physical book. If you have to read on your electronic device turn the light setting to dark/night mode.
10. Clear your mind. Journal writing and list-making help decrease distractions, overthinking, and worry. This practice seems to decrease cognitive arousal and rumination.
11. Try using a weighted blanket. This is a heavy blanket, specifically made with mini chains or beads inside the material. This has been known to help people with ADHD, bipolar disorder, insomnia, depression, anxiety, and hyperactivity.
12. Hone in on all of your senses. Before bed, take a warm bath/shower, turn on an essential oil diffuser with your favorite blend, play a relaxing audio background, dim the lights, and sip a nice hot cup of chamomile tea.

I pray you sleep soundly.

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# The American Dream: Tony Castro

By Melissa Chavez

Why do you love America? For many of us, that answer is simple. We love America because of its freedom. Year after year thousands of people risk their lives, spend their money, and leave everything they know in hopes of stepping onto the soil that the free build their lives on, plant their dreams in, and establish generational blessing on.

This is the land of opportunity, where the American Dream finds creativity like the Spirit hovering over chaos. It helps bring purpose where there was a disadvantage. The American Dream can be explained in many ways, but ultimately, it is the equal opportunity for everyone in America to reach success despite their circumstances at birth or stature in society. This dream requires grit, perseverance, humility, and drive.

Tony Castro, an esteemed member of the Palmdale community, knows this dream and opportunity very well. As we sat with him, he caught *The Palmdale Journal* up on his story by starting at the beginning— his family’s escape from Cuba. Under harsh and dangerous conditions, they swam to freedom in shark-infested waters, seeking freedom in the greatest country on earth, the United States of America. Upon arrival, they set out to work hard and utilize the resources available to them while instilling a strong work ethic and love for this country in their children.

One of the things that he is most commonly known for is owning a local

Cuban restaurant, Baracoa. While discussing his decision to open Baracoa, though already having a successful career in aerospace, he states, "My brother and cousin began discussing the idea and then brought it to me. I’ve never been risk-averse because without big risks there is no big reward. If you’re super safe, you’re not going to experience life.”

Many would advise: Never go into business with family. However, Tony Castro says, “We made a promise to each other. We said, ‘It doesn’t matter what happens; if we lose all of our money or if we go out of business, we will never let it affect our relationship.’”

The value of relationships is a quality that every leader should possess in order to preserve every aspect of the American Dream. After all, the dream is only successful when it serves others. Baracoa, for example, currently employs over 15 people thus allowing others to pursue their own ambitions.

Coming from a family that fled Fidel Castro’s communist Cuba, we discussed the propaganda that the Hispanic community is susceptible to and so with this in mind, and to serve our Hispanic community, a question was presented to him in Spanish:

The Palmdale Journal: ¿Qué le dirías a la comunidad hispana para que se dé cuenta de que sus derechos están siendo robados por ideales comunistas?

Tony Castro: La manera más fácil es ver la historia de los otros países que

aceptaron los principios comunistas. Todos cayeron y mucha gente murió. Mejor usemos un buen ejemplo. El país que ha tenido más éxito y con más rapidez que ha sido EE.UU. Eso es mucho porque se ha establecido en los principios bíblicos. El comunismo siempre engaña a mucha gente por ofrecer cosas gratis, te ofrece comida gratis o renta y servicios de salud. Eso es lo mismo que Fidel Castro ofreció también. Los principios comunistas están en contra de los principios bíblicos. La involucración de los Hispanos en esta batalla empieza con agradecimiento a las oportunidades que ofrece este país.

To summarize, he states that we must learn from history and follow the example that America has set by being founded on biblical principles which go directly against communism. Appreciation for the opportunities that this nation offers is what causes Hispanics, and everyone else for that matter, to engage in the fight for freedom.

As a Navy Veteran, Tony Castro reflects on two of the many noble reasons that motivated him to enlist – love for his country and to defend the U.S. Constitution. “We all need to stand up again and defend our Constitution. If we don’t stand up and do our part now, then our children are not going to have the same country that we grew up in." He goes on to say, “The American Dream cannot exist without the Constitution, the

Constitution facilitates the dream. The US Constitution establishes a lot of the ground for the American Dream which is the right of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.”

Tony Castro has lived in Palmdale for about 30 years and has considered possibly running for City Council in the future. When asked what would motivate him to run, Tony Castro responded, “Answering the call, seeing the need and asking, ‘Can I help in this area?’” Additionally, he shares his thoughts on the future of this city:

“There’s a lot of untapped potential and a lot of land. What does that mean? There’s a lot of area for development. We have a big demographic that commutes a lot and if we open more jobs here, we can invest and build to increase the quality of life for our citizens. There’s a lot of potential for more aerospace projects, like a museum to promote Palmdale’s legacy which will give people a sense of pride in our community and create attractions to draw in tourists and stimulate our economy.”

Above all, Tony Castro’s motivation and influence come from his faith in Jesus who was the greatest servant of all. With this, he believes that the job of all leaders is to serve those who fall under their influence, advocating for everyone’s God-given rights. In reaching his goals, Tony Castro continues to faithfully serve his community and country.

## GLASS from Page 8

squish. Squish-squish.

The deputy lunged forward, snatched the weapon and dropped it on the ground not five feet from where I stood. Then he brought out the second knife, this one even more drenched than the first. Bloodied knives lying on white cement.

The man would live. Afterwards, my conductor gave me an encouraging smile, assuring me I had seen nowhere near the worst. Not long ago, the sheriff’s office received calls from neighbors reporting a possible gas-leak in a nearby house. Police arrived to find the house quiet and, peering in through a window, saw what appeared to be a woman in bed with a decapitated body.

The door was broken down and the unmistakable odor of rotting flesh filled their nostrils. The man of the house greeted them calmly. Voices, he claimed, told him his two elder sons were demon possessed and that the only way to exorcise the spirits was to cut off the boys’ heads. He had done so, forcing his two younger sons to watch. The surviving children were locked up in a bedroom, their hair and nails long, their clothes filthy.

“Those are the cases that mess with your mind,” the deputy said. And I believed him. But the hardest sight of all to process for him was that of a dead child. Once, he’d been called to an apartment building where a little girl was found floating dead in the pool; she was three years old, the same age as his son. In another incident, a man left his house after having an argument with his girlfriend. After she’d gone to work, he returned with a sawed-off shotgun. He murdered his girlfriend’s mother and his own four children, then marched to the police station to turn himself in.

I had never thought a deputy sheriff’s job was easy or simple, nor was I completely ignorant of the risks involved, but there was one aspect that had escaped my attention before. For my companion it was the heaviest burden to bear: the constant fear of recognition. “My wife and I have a codeword. If I see someone I’ve arrested, I work the word into a sentence. She takes the kids and walks. I don’t want anyone to ever see my family and come after them.” Not even his neighbors knew his occupation. “I don’t want them knowing I’m a cop! Everybody hates cops!” I asked if he wanted his children to become police officers. The negative answer I expected, but not the reason: “I don’t want them to see the world like I see it.” As I too had come to see it.

This was not the Lancaster I remembered growing up. I knew the street names and places, yet nothing looked familiar. I was viewing it all from behind the mirror of civilization, from a different angle, upside down and inside out. A quiet, dilapidated building with an American flag outside, was actually an illegal gambling facility, a place where stolen cars were stripped for parts. Every signal light was an opportunity to check license plates for stolen vehicles, and a person’s dress was code for gang membership. Shopping centers, cul-de-sacs, parking lots, and street corners, were a succession of battlegrounds.


At 10 pm, we started back for the station. For me it had been an eight-hour shift, for my companion sixteen. He would spend the next two hours doing paperwork before clocking out. It was the hardest part of his day, he confided to me, flipping that switch off and not taking any of it home. He wanted to be a good father and a good husband in the few hours he had with his family. The next day, he would do the whole thing all over again.

I shuddered at the cold as I walked to my car, relieved to hear the door snap shut, to turn up the heat and head home. And I thought of that deputy who hadn’t seen his kids in three days.

Maybe policemen are not here to serve. But they sure as hell do try.

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## EARTH from Page 7

This is great news. We are saving the Earth but we are helping our pockets out a little too. Californians are used to setting timers for their lawns but what about our showers? Taking shorter and colder showers can save up to 5 gallons of water for every minute you cut out. Speaking of saving water, we can also turn off the tap while we brush our teeth or scrub the dishes.

I understand that conserving and reducing can be difficult because we often find it more convenient to run out and purchase what we need, but — there are ways to shop sustainably. Sustainable shopping is a newer concept but it can be really helpful to prevent waste. Buying from local businesses is great because not only are we supporting our community but also helping our environment. Here in the Antelope Valley we have The BLVD Farmer’s Market every Thursday where they have all kinds of produce vendors. You can also make more conscious choices like buying laundry detergent that is packaged in cardboard. Also shampoo and conditioner bars save water, lessen wasteful packaging, and last just as long

if not longer than the liquid kind. If you need clothes, consider going to the thrift store. With a little time and patience you can find any style for a cost effective price. Donating and buying from the thrift store helps the environment by reducing clothing production.

You will be surprised at how you can influence the preservation of our planet by choosing the right places to shop. By doing your own research you can find brands that support a cleaner earth and make a silent but powerful statement.

If we all just take little steps, we can have a cleaner and better earth for us and future generations. Collectively, we can make a huge difference that benefits our health, our world, and even our bank account. Reducing, conserving, and sustainable shopping are keys in helping to achieve a brighter future. Remember, it’s not just about recycling, though we hope you do recycle that crunched up water bottle. For this reason, make sure to pick up the next issue of The Palmdale Journal where I will discuss how to properly recycle when the opportunity presents itself.





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# Understanding CRT

A Parenting Column, By Denize Verduzco

Critical Race Theory, popularly referred to as CRT, has been around for over four decades. CRT’s foundation was inspired by the philosophical writings of legal scholars, Derrick Bell, Alan Freeman, and Richard Delgado. However, Kimberle Williams Crenshaw, a law professor at the U.C.L.A. School of Law and Columbia Law School, was the first person widely credited with coining the term.

The original intent behind CRT was to train law students on how to interpret the law through a racial lens in order to illustrate racial disparities under the law – meaning, systemic racism. Being that it was designed with future lawyers in mind, how did Critical Race Theory slip into our K-12 school system?

Moreover, how is it being presented in schools? Should parents be concerned? How is it affecting our children? And why are some states outlawing CRT? These are just a few of the questions that parents have asked and deserve answers to.

The first thing to note about CRT is that you won’t find it as its own curriculum. Rather, it is a practice that is embedded into subjects or given a different name. For example, California passed a bill known as AB 2016 in 2016, which requires the teaching of Ethnic Studies in each school district including charter schools. On April 1, 2022, the State Board of Education will adopt an additional Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum.

According to Manuel Rustin, who is part of the committee that oversaw the drafting of the model curriculum stated, “Ethnic studies without critical race theory is not ethnic studies. It would be like a science class without the scientific method then. There is no critical analysis of systems of power and experiences of these marginalized groups without critical race theory.”

When reviewing the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum from the California Department of Education – it outlines the importance of teaching about institutionalized systems of advantage, anti-blackness, anti-Indigeneity, antisemitism, Islamophobia within our culture, and governmental policies. It also calls to focus on the clarification of the role that race and ethnicity play both in California and the United States.

Proponents of the module believe that given the events which have transpired over the last two years, from Capitol Hill, police brutality, to hate crimes, are all more of a reason to focus on the

dynamics of racism. Districts such as the Los Angeles Unified School District and Fresno Unified School District will adopt ethnic study courses as a requirement to graduate High School.

While there are many proponents for the curriculum, you also have those who differ in view. States such as Idaho, Florida, Arkansas, Tennessee, Iowa, New Hampshire, and Oklahoma have banned teachings related to CRT. Why? Because they find these teachings to be racist at its core. The focus on one race being superior to others, the idea that all white Americans are racist and the segregation of races into oppressors versus oppressed, is not something they want to embed in the minds of children.

Parents in the Antelope Valley have already begun to see the influence of CRT being adopted into their children’s curriculum. A parent who wishes to remain anonymous, expressed concerns regarding a biography her daughter, who is in Kindergarten, was asked to view. In this biography of Martin Luther King Jr, the video accurately described the persecution happening during that period. However, it emphasized the color of the skin of the oppressor more than the persecution itself. The video depicted all white men as evil and hateful.

The parent goes on to say that although she never wants to negate the fact that evil and hate exist, the label towards one race was not only biased, but racist in itself. The mother, although saddened, was glad she watched the video with her daughter because it allowed for a teaching moment. It allowed the mother to explain that hate isn’t subject to skin color, but rather a matter of the heart.

As mentioned in last month’s article, children are malleable. If they are being immersed with biased information on a day-to-day basis, it doesn’t allow for them to think freely or objectively. This now begs the question for those that oppose CRT; Why not put more emphasis on the heart of the matter – hate and evil– rather than the race of the individual? If hate and evil can be tackled head-on for what they are, then root issues can be addressed effectively.

While the teaching of history, systems, government, and institutions is crucial and fundamental to the growth of this country, it must be done in a way that portrays all humans as equally subjectable. We must allow individuals to think freely and come up with their own conclusions. Parents have every right to know what and how their children are being taught so they may counter or add on to those lessons. Till next time...

Denize Verduzco



Nuremberg Trials - Photo borrowed from Encyclopedia Britannica

## NUREMBERG from Page 4


Just recently companies like Johnson & Johnson, Pfizer-BioNTech, and Moderna issued COVID-19 Vaccines without the rigorous testing that vaccines of the past had to undergo.

Due to the quick manufacturing, there is currently no way to determine the long-term effects of these vaccines and so their recipients are at the mercy of these companies, whose data constantly shifts and changes. Look no further than the need to have booster shots to keep these vaccines working. What will the effects of these boosters be on the human body? We have a right to know.

Additionally, many individuals around the United States were coerced into getting the vaccine out of fear of losing their jobs. Many were not able to

continue their education at universities, or allowed to visit their dying family members in the hospital due to being unvaccinated. This directly violates the bioethics of the Nuremberg Code, with coercion and duress as a main motivator to get the vaccine.

Many have thought that the immoral and unethical experiments that took place during WWII could never happen again, but look around and see how many lives have been affected by the medical mandates of the experimental COVID-19 shot. Today I am grateful that the efforts of the Palmdale Freedom Coalition pressed towards getting the Palmdale City Council Members to pass Ordinance NO. 1577 that protects against, “the use of mandatory COVID-19 vaccinations and the use of vaccine passports,” as stated on the Palmdale Freedom Coalition website.



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# Valley Voices

## Out of the Mouths of Babes



Recently, Lancaster School District finally made the decision to remove plastic shields from student desks, being the only school district in the AV with this stated mitigation strategy. Some credit the removal to Bradley, who gave his speech to the Board just two days prior to the shields coming down.

“Hi, my name is Bradley and I am 7 years old. I am in the second grade at West Wind. I really love going to school

and I'm very smart. I can even read 9th grade words. But lately school feels like jail. Want to know why? Because every student has to learn with big shields around their desk. It makes it so hard to learn. It makes it hard to see and hard to hear. My desk is in the back so I have to look through four shields! Can you imagine trying to read the board through all of that plastic?! What is worse is wearing a mask all day, especially as a kid with asthma! It makes me want to quit school. Is this what school will always be like? I want to learn and grow. Kids are strong and healthy, we don't need to live like this anymore. Other places are letting their students go to school normally. I hope I can do that one day. I am begging you to remove these shields and masks! Help me and my peers have a bright future. Please! I don't want to feel like I am in jail everyday. Please let me see clearly, breathe freely, and show others my awesome smile. Thank you.”

To hear the speech, you can watch the February 15 board meeting on the District's YouTube account or website, time stamp 1:53.

## Response to the Antelope Valley Press

By Adriana Salcedo

Reviewing the AV Press article, “Palmdale passes ordinance to ban virus mandates,” written by Allison Gatlin (March 4, 2022), there are a few statements I would like to address. The article was written about the passage of Ordinance 1577 and suggests that support for this ordinance was not universal. Yet, the rise of COVID-19 has opened the door to fear, which brought in vaccine mandates, violating medical privacy and causing many to lose their jobs. Many recognized this and that is why the ordinance was unanimously passed. The Palmdale Freedom Coalition collected 2,700 signatures from community members in support of this ordinance, which reflect the community's desires.

The first remark in the AV Press article was that city council chamber was filled with a “raucous” crowd. Webster's Dictionary defines “raucous” as “harsh,” which is an embellishment. If anything, I would describe the crowd as passionate- about liberty, freedom of choice, and deeply rooted value- a diverse group of people who truly care, both in word and in action, for Palmdale citizens. We are the embodiment of the quote “Palmdale Cares.”

My husband and I are on the board of Butler's Coffee, which operates as a job training center for the youth in our community. Also, I am one of the founders of Beauty for Ashes International and Boutique, where we empower our community to recognize the beauty, both, inside and outside of themselves. To some, I may be a face in the crowd described as “raucous.” But as we all know, a journalist must understand both sides of the story. Knowing the “why” is key. My “why” is my family..

Since the beginning of this pandemic, I have been attending city council meetings because of my children. They, like many, were not able to attend their graduation, any kind of social gathering, even school. They traded all of this for mask mandates, online schooling, and forced vaccines. My youngest child's health was harmed so much that she fell into a depression, lost her motivation, and was diagnosed with type one diabetes all in the span of one year.

If this wasn't bad enough, because of our protests and community involvement,

we began to receive death threats in the mail.

Mayor Hofbauer was quoted in the article, “He has heard personally from people opposed to the ordinance, but have not wanted to come there... because they don't want to get beat up.”

Yet, Butler's Coffee, our church, and even our own homes were plagued with letters detailing how we would die, that we were being watched, that they would rape us, and how we were all going to burn. These threats became so concerning they came under investigation by a detective. The people who have a right to fear violence are those who are rising up

## We the People: Rights and Protest

By Scot Sutherland

The U. S. Constitution establishes American citizens as the final authority for all laws and government programs. Citizens may choose whether to comply with government restrictions. During wartime hundreds of thousands of citizens willingly left home to follow military orders, to fight, and even die. When COVID-19 broke out in 2020, citizens willingly complied with government lockdown orders to slow the spread.

No one questioned the enemy threat during World Wars I and II, but many protested the war in Vietnam. Smallpox and the Spanish flu killed millions. When the COVID-19 pandemic was declared in 2020, no one protested even the most drastic quarantine measures allegedly put in place to protect the people. But as the Covid death toll failed to reach the million mark as predicted and news of early treatment protocols leaked out, citizens began to suspect foul play.

The writers of the U. S. Constitution anticipated government overreach, establishing three forms of checks and balances to ensure that fundamental rights would not be violated by the government. Horizontal accountability holds the three branches of government in check. Vertical accountability holds higher authorities accountable to lower authorities, and the right to protest puts the ultimate power in the hands of the citizens.

An example of horizontal accountability occurred when Congress passed a bill that limited the manufacture and sale of

## Silver Raindrops

By Carol Ross

Silver raindrops descend from heaven

I think that God is crying.  
Looking down upon this nation,  
His broken heart is sighing.  
He sees not our faces.  
He only sees our backs.  
As rebels turned against Him,  
we defiantly launch attacks.  
“In God we trust.”  
It's just a saying.  
To whom is it that we're really praying?  
Lured by our lusts,  
inch by inch we fall,  
dancing with the darkness,  
not aware of it at all.  
The darkness is deceiving.  
It's promises are hollow.  
Although we're shown the truth,  
how many hearts will follow?  
Like eyes resting in darkness,  
our hearts disdain the Light.  
I think that God is crying  
at this cold and awful sight.

## Letter to the City

Re: City Manager Position

I am writing on behalf of a sizable number of Palmdale citizens and groups of citizens who are of one mind regarding Palmdale's current Acting City Manager, Ronda Perez. The purpose of this letter is to inform you that whereas, Ms. Perez is a former member of Lancaster's City government and whereas, we have reasonable concerns regarding her continuing ties to members of said government, and whereas, we oppose the Lancaster City Council, any of its members, or its Mayor having any undue influence in the City of Palmdale or its governance, we vehemently oppose her becoming our City Manager. Further, I would remind you that you derive your right to govern from the consent of the governed. That being the case, we, the governed, make known herein that we do not consent to have Ms. Perez' current position made permanent. Should you decide to confirm her as permanent City Manager, please know that we will use any and all legal measures to have her removed.

As an alternative, because we believe “consent of the governed” should not cease with the casting of ballots, we would like to suggest the formation of a committee composed, at least in part, of citizens whose task would be to assist in finding a suitable candidate for the position of City Manager.

Last, please know that our organization does not exist solely to make things difficult for the Palmdale City Council. On the contrary, we stand willing and able to be your allies when we are in agreement about what is best for the citizens of our city.

Thank you for your time and your service.

Sincerely,  
Rich Gallego

See RESPONSE on Page 12

military grade weapons to citizens. The bill became law when President Barack Obama signed it. Opponents of the law challenged it in court.

Lower courts upheld the law and a series of appeals brought the case to the Supreme Court. The highest court answers only one question, “Does any part of the law violate the Constitution?” In the most recent case, Caetano v. Massachusetts 2018, the court decided that the law violated the Second Amendment and laid out strict criteria that limits enactment of any such gun laws. It was a satisfying moment for supporters of Constitutional rights.

Vertical checks and balances follow the doctrine of the lower magistrate. Officials closest to the people who elect them can choose to abide by or challenge higher authorities. In 2008 Californians amended the state constitution to define marriage as between one man and one woman. The state Supreme Court upheld the amendment but opponents challenged the ruling. Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger appealed the decision, and the federal circuit court struck it down. Both Attorney General, Jerry Brown, and Governor Schwarzenegger refused to appeal the decision to the U. S. Supreme Court.

The authors of the amendment appealed the case, and it reached the Supreme Court. The court decided not to hear the case because only the governor or attorney general of California has the right to appeal. The California state

constitution still contains the marriage amendment, but it cannot be enforced until a final decision has been reached.

The constitutional framers knew that all three branches of government may pass and uphold unjust laws. A just law in one state or city may be unjust in another. So they created a separation of powers that extends down to local governments, counties, and cities. For the most part, city authority supersedes county authority. However, tax dollars flowing through the system can complicate matters.

For example, under the emergency powers declaration Governor Gavin Newsom issued a COVID-19 stay-at-home order. The governor can only enforce the lock down at state properties, like parks and beaches. If local authorities choose to open all businesses, the governor cannot stop them. Likewise, if governors and state officials decide not to enforce emergency powers as directed by the federal government, the Feds legally cannot stop them. The final authority lies with the citizens and their local officials.

Citizens can take immediate action to preserve freedom through local protest. If enough people convince city and county officials they are willing to risk infection, those officials can open businesses even during a state-wide lockdown. Sparsely populated counties in California east of the Sierra Nevada mountains did just that. As a result, at the peak of the lockdowns,

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Palmdale Freedom Coalition meetings are held every Wednesday at 6:30 p.m. at Butler's Coffee, 40125 10th St W , Palmdale All are welcome!

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RESPONSE from Page 11

not our greatest fear. Instead, we fear our freedom of choice being restricted. We believe in truth above any “science” not founded in fact.

To those who feel that they would be in danger for attending city council meetings, I invite you to come and have coffee with me. Let’s learn how to disagree civilly again. The reality is that we have been the ones receiving threats of violence, and yet we still show up in prayer, word, and action. Instead of fear, we choose to believe in “one Nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all,” even for those with whom we disagree!

Sincerely,  
Adriana Salcedo  
Love your city.

PROTEST from Page 11

lodging in vacation spots like Mammoth Mountain remained booked for months in advance.

Martin Luther King taught us a half century ago: it will be the quiet resolve of principled people that change society for good. In the sixties, local governments violated the constitutional rights of their citizens by segregating black citizens. Ordinary people tipped the scales, walking peacefully through the streets under the leadership of a strong, compassionate, and articulate pastor. The state and local officials could do nothing to stop it.

The success of a constitutional republic relies on courageous citizens who follow principled leaders. The quality of leadership can be measured by

the character of those who follow. Color, class, and religious affiliation did not define the character of the people who followed King. His nonviolent message of equality under God resonated with a wide swath of citizens. His courage convinced Americans to follow him, even in the face of danger!

King’s opponents shouted vitriolic slogans, threatening violence and death. Yet courageous principled citizens would not back down. They faced imminent danger with quiet resolve. Enough people following principled leadership always drowns out violent protest. Just as the quality of leadership depends on the character of its followers, the quality of government depends on the character of its citizens. What kind of citizen will you be?