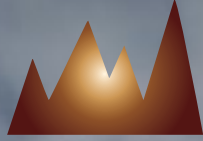


SUMMIT SOCCER

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MAY 2015



Park resident Urban Labrencic kicks soccer ball into homemade goal posts on Summit tennis court. He was named President of the newly formed Summit Soccer Association in May. Larry LaCom/Summit Life photo.

A NEW WAY TO GET YOUR KICKS: SUMMIT TO SPONSOR TENNIS COURT SOCCER

This story would never have happened had it not been for the tenacity of 27-year-old Urban Labrencic, a native of Slovenia, who now lives in the park and sorely misses soccer, a game he played almost daily in the little town of Celje where he was born.

While he's now the lead vocalist in a three-person Summit pop recording group headquartered here (See Summit Life, July 2014), he still keeps his hand in soccer, playing pickup games on the park's slowly deteriorating tennis court. Because the fence is low, he has the extra burden of shagging soccer balls that often end up on a street two blocks below the court.

There's something sad about all of this. In its heyday, men and women in white tennis shorts played here, often wielding expensive carbon fiber racquets under powerful overhead lights. Now the twin courts are mostly deserted. Trash litters the ground along with dog droppings. The wire mesh entrance gate swings in the wind on damaged hinges.

But thanks to Urban, the old court will soon find new life. Like the Flight of the Phoenix, the court will rise from the ashes this summer and become a highly unusual sports venue. MOBILE HOME TENNIS COURT SOCCER or MHTCS for short is about to make its appearance on the world stage.

Instead of implementing a park improvement plan that would bury the old court beneath expensive solar panels at a time when the park can least afford it (See "A Fine Mess," Summit Life, April 2015), Urban has presented park management with a practical and low-cost alternative. A uniformed soccer team in intramural competition on the Summit tennis court could build a strong fan base and add a little salsa to Summit living.

"Throughout most of Europe, soccer is often played on the hard, cobble-stoned streets of small towns and villages," Urban says. "Soccer nuts don't mind a little bleeding. They wear kneepads and keep on soldiering." He points out that



As President and Vice President respectively of newly formed Summit Soccer Association, Urban Labrencic (right) and Raymond Villa (left) discuss appropriate award for winning name of park soccer team. Names should be submitted to the pair via email at vrbanvsrex@gmail.com. *Larry LaCom/Summit Life photo.*

playing on a tennis court is actually an advantage over a soccer field. Instead of eleven players for each team, only five players will be required. The game will be faster, player recruitment easier. He taps numbers into his smart phone. "A soccer field traditionally measures 100 meters by 45 meters, while a tennis court, just a moment here, while a tennis court probably measures no more than 36 meters by 18 meters."

Urban comes from one of the most highly educated countries in the world. In Slovenia, elementary schools are the equivalent of U.S. high schools and high schools are the equivalent of U.S. colleges. Urban was within four years of graduating from medical school when he decided to come to the U.S. to pursue a musical career. He plays four musical instruments, speaks five languages, has studied mathematics up to advanced calculus and can quote almost word for word the philosophical writings of Aristotle and Plato.

Needless to say, Urban is now the President of the newly formed Summit Soccer Association. He will get park funding to assure the emergence of two, five-man soccer teams ready to play competitively on the park's tennis court by this July. His job will not only involve recruiting, but also player compensation, team uniforms, team trophies and other promotion oriented tasks. He has appointed Raymond Villa as the Association vice president. The Westhills resident currently plays midfield for El Camino Real's soccer team. He will be responsible for recruiting players from El Camino and in promoting games between El Camino and the Summit.

The pair will begin door-to-door player recruitment in the park beginning June 1. They can be contacted by phone



Raw land shown here is eventually scheduled to become a park recreation area. When graded, it may also become the permanent home of the Summit's newly formed soccer team. *Larry LaCom/ Summit Life photo.*

at 310-499-6665, by email at vrbanvsrex@gmail.com, and in person on the tennis court where they play most afternoons.

Bruce Kuhn, a 12 year resident of Mountain View, the Summit's neighboring mobile home park, has volunteered to recruit potential players from that residential community beginning June 1. He will also solicit players from the major league Baseball Action Team at El Camino Real Charter High School where he heads a monthly Woolsey Canyon cleanup campaign.

The history of soccer in the United States has numerous different roots, according to Wikipedia. The modern-day game is often considered to have been brought to the United States through Ellis Island during the 1870s. However, recent research has shown that the modern

game entered America in the 1850s through New Orleans when Scottish, Irish, and German immigrants brought the game with them. It was in New Orleans that some of the first organized games that used modern English rules were held.

However, some variations of soccer in the U.S. began well before then, with Native American tribes, primarily the Algonquin and Powhatan tribes playing a variation of the sport known as Pasuckuakohowog. Pasuckuakohowog, literally meaning "kicking ball sport," was reported to be played on fields a half mile in diameter and as long as nearly a mile. Teams would have nearly 100 people. Some believe that the Pilgrims played the sport during the original Thanksgiving festivities. ❖

ATTENTION SUMMIT MEN

YOU CAN STILL CHOOSE AN ELECTRIC SHAVE OR OLD-FASHIONED STRAIGHT RAZOR WITH LOTS OF FOAM AND HOT TOWELS AT CALI CUTS

By Marci Wormser

Sporting a “gangsta”-style, semi-shaved haircut and full sleeves of tattoos on both his arms, Luis Ramirez seems like an unlikely traditionalist. But the 29-year-old is every bit as comfortable having a conversation with his coworkers using their street lingo as he is holding a conversation about business with his more conservative customers. It’s because of his ease with both the “older” and “newer” elements of society that the father of one has become one of the most successful barbershop owners in the San Fernando Valley.

Luis, who owns Cali Cuts in Chatsworth, along with his wife, Angela Lara, owes his success to his “old school, new school” approach to barbering.

That “old school” approach translates to an “old school” full-service shave, he explains. Luis and his team of four licensed barbers use straight razors to give shaves, at a time when most barbershops have eliminated them in favor of electric shavers. The “old school” shave comes complete with two hot towels and foam from a foam machine. The team also gives facials.

“I try to give them the experience they can’t get anywhere else,” explains Luis.

The “new school” approach to his business, he said, means keeping up with current styles and trends.

His customers, according to Luis, range from children and women to teens and young men looking for the latest haircut styles to businessmen who want a fresh look.

Like his four employees, L.A.-bred Luis has been cutting hair since he was a teen.



THE FIRST CHAIR: Luis Ramirez mans the first chair. The shop is his baby, opened two-years ago with money he saved by working at other barbershops.

He learned to cut hair, he explains, because his mother couldn’t afford the trendy haircuts that he wanted so he could fit in with his peers.

Subsequently, he learned the “art form” on his own and soon began cutting his friends’ hair. A natural-born entrepreneur, he became so good at his trade that he started earning \$300 a week.

He didn’t formally attend barber school and open his own business, however, until his job in construction took a nosedive.

He and wife Angela, who he met while she was attending cosmetology school, opened Cali Cuts – short for California Cuts - on Luis’ birthday two years ago. The shop, which is licensed, was opened with the cash he had earned from his previous stints as a barber.

“I gave it to myself on my birthday,” he said, adding that he always wanted to own his own barbershop.

But like with most small businesses, the barbershop initially faltered.

“During the first few months (after opening), I thought it was a mistake,” Luis said, adding that he was bringing in only \$200 in profits during that initial period. He had made \$2,000 a week working as a barber for someone else before opening his own shop.

“But my mom didn’t raise a quitter,” Luis said. “I never give up on anything.”

The turnaround, he explains, came after he started drumming up business by going to public places, like local malls, and meeting one-on-one with prospective customers and telling them about his services. He also hired his first barber, Oscar. Soon Cali Cuts became profitable through word-of-mouth alone after only five months.

The barbers bring their business cards with them wherever they go, and they now have the luxury

of offering free haircuts for charity events.

“Wherever we go, we represent,” Luis explains.

Customers are also drawn to the shop because of its relaxed and “sporty” atmosphere, he said.

The shop boasts a pool table, basketball hoops, large flat-screen TV’s, a kids’ small play area and graffiti art on the walls. The graffiti, Luis explains, is a nod to the shop’s Southern California heritage.

“This is a man cave for every man who doesn’t have a cave,” said Luis.

Recently, Cali Cuts received a prestigious honor when it was rewarded by Yelp for having received more than 100 five-star reviews from customers.

Chatsworth resident Philip Sales was initially drawn to Cal Cuts after discovering the positive reviews on Yelp. But it was the atmosphere and good haircuts that kept him coming back for more.

“It’s very welcoming,” he explained. “And the cuts are ‘fresh.’”

“I’m very particular. No one else can do it,” he said of his “fade cut.” “But Oscar nailed it.”

Oscar works as the barber for the Mariners baseball team, and the shop counts celebrity Cedric the Entertainer as one of its regular customers.

The barbers have become so in demand - with clients traveling from as far away as Lancaster and Long Beach - that Luis is planning on soon hiring another barber and is also planning to open a barbershop next year in Simi Valley. He also dreams of opening locations in Thousand Oaks and Beverly Hills.

The new locations will mean even longer hours for Luis and his wife, who already work around the clock. But that’s ok with them.

“It’s an art,” he said. “It’s not work.”

Cali Cuts is located at 21820 Devonshire Street. The barbershop can be reached at (747) 202-3603. ❖



THIS IS NOT YOUR FATHER’S BARBER SHOP: To cut sideburns more accurately, a young customer is tilted sideways and trimmed with straight razor by barber Jimmy Ramirez.



DOOR AND FLOOR SAYS IT ALL: Entrance to Cali Cuts is hardly conservative, hitting customers in the eye with a list of many services and bright marble flooring. *All photos by LACOMSTUDIO.*

SPURRED BY RISING HOME PRICES, DEMAND

Strong demand for low-cost housing is proving a boon to mobile home sales, according to the Wall Street Journal.

At the same time, rising demand from families seeking space in the parks has allowed mobile-home landlords to raise rents, producing strong growth, the Journal article said in its April 28th national edition.

“I’ve been at this for about 10 years and I would say the demand right now for manufactured housing communities is at an all-time high,” Jonathon McClellan of Marcus & Millichap told the Journal. He is senior director of M&M’s national manufactured home communities group with 78 offices throughout the U.S. Mobile homes are also called manufactured homes because they are built in a factory and shipped to a community.

“Manufactured homes are becoming trendy across the nation. That’s because they are the last, best hope for middle-class renters and buyers, explained Paul Jacobson of Gold Star Realty, Encino.

“I liken the situation to the wave of fans in the stands at Dodger Stadium. As home prices rise across the nation, a wave of intelligent, hard working people are standing up and saying ‘this is not for me, not on my budget.’ Mr. Jacobson noted.

According to the Journal, the number of metropolitan areas that saw double-digit percentage increases in home prices more than doubled during the first quarter, reflecting a mix of thin supply and strong demand that points to heated competition.

In an article on May 20, the L.A. Times picked up on the same theme, “Southern California home prices and sales climbed in April for the second



Paul Jacobson of Gold Star Realty, Encino, has sold and leased more than 50 homes at the Summit.

straight month, signaling a tough summer ahead for buyers, who face a dwindling supply of homes in most areas.

“Investors are betting the mobile home industry’s fortunes will continue to improve, according to the Journal. In the 12-month period ended in March, the total return for the three public manufactured housing Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs) was 44%, the best performance of any REIT category, according to the National Association of Real Estate Investment Trusts. Although performance has slipped in the stock-market volatility of recent weeks, the category remains one of the top performers among REITs.”

According to the National Association of Realtors, the median U.S. price for an existing single-family home was \$202,600 in February. In contrast, the average price for a manufactured home was \$64,200 as of November 2014. Meanwhile, The Journal wrote, apartment landlords have raised rent nearly 15% over the past five years, putting the average rent at about \$1,131 at the end of the first quarter of 2015, according to REISInc., a real-estate research firm in New York.

For an average price mobile home purchased with a mortgage, the typical monthly costs can run about \$800, with about half going to monthly mortgage payments and the

FOR MOBILE HOUSING HITS ALL TIME HIGH

other half going to the landlord of the mobile-home community where the house is parked. Those low numbers, the Journal article inferred, apply to the eastern and midwestern parts of the U.S. only. On the West Coast, the price can be considerably more than that, climbing into the \$2,000 monthly range for mountain parks with views and \$4,000 up in seaside communities like Malibu, said Mr. Jacobson.

Eugene W. Landy, chairman of the board of UMH Properties Inc., said that companies like his are doing well because of growth through

consolidation, or renting out existing properties, not because the industry itself is expanding. Mr. Landy said his company has been buying mobile homes and renting them out because some families have struggled to get mortgages in a tighter credit environment.

“For many years, what we tried to do was build established communities with good service to the tenants and tenants all own their own homes,” he said. But now, “we’re like an apartment company.”

Still, the company is growing. During 2014, UMH acquired 14

communities with 1,600 developed sites for \$42.6 million, the company said. In total, the company now owns 89 communities with 15,200 sites. UMH said that occupancy for the same properties increased to 83.2% in the fourth quarter of 2014 from 81.5% in the year-earlier quarter.

Mr. Jacobson has sold and leased more than 50 homes at the Summit over the years. He’s a full service broker, offering sales and leases at both ends of a transaction. He can be contacted at 818-601-9257 or by email at paulbrianj@aol.com. ❖

EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY: WATER DISTRICT RESTRICTS PARK IRRIGATION TO TWO DAYS PER WEEK

In response to continuing drought conditions and state mandates to reduce water use, the Las Virgenes Municipal Water District (LVMWD) has adopted a two-day per week irrigation schedule for all District customers including residents of the Summit.

Beginning on June 1, 2015, park residents may only irrigate their properties for 15 minutes per irrigation station after 5 p.m. on Tuesdays and Saturdays. That means irrigation may not occur on any other days of the week and not between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. Excess runoff to paved surfaces or adjacent properties is prohibited. Penalties can reach to \$500 for repeat violations within a one-year period.

Here are a few ways to use water wisely under current drought conditions: Repair dripping faucets and save up to 2,700 gallons a year. Fill your bath halfway full and save 30 gallons. Turn off water when brushing your teeth to save 5 gallons. Soak pots and pans instead of letting the water run while you scrap them clean. Never put water down the drain when there may be a use for it. Minimize evaporation by watering during the early morning hours when temperatures are cooler and winds are lighter. Install high efficiency toilets. Chill a pitcher of water in the refrigerator instead of running the tap for cold drinks, so that every drop goes down you, not the drain. Install permeable hardscapes, like decks and decomposed granite walkways, instead of grass. Re-landscape with California friendly plants.

TEN WAYS TO HELP KEEP THE SUMMIT SAFE AND PRISTINE

1. No Ads on the entrance gate.
2. No clutter in the carports.
3. No street clothes in the pool or spa.
4. No dog poop on the street, please use containers that are provided.
5. Walk pets on a leash.
6. Walk at night with a stick or flashlight.
7. Do not leave pets loose outside at nights.
8. Do not barbeque with wood fuel.
9. Do not toss cigarette butts into the street.
10. Obey all speed limits and stop signs.

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