Saving... Remove

Add Tags

Saves

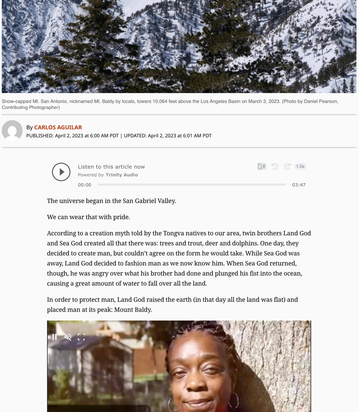
Activate Account

Confirm Account

techblog.page

OPINION

San Gabriel Valley creation myths and all this rain



Snow-capped Mt. San Antonio, nicknamed Mt. Baldy by locals, towers 10,064 feet above the Los Angeles Basin on March 3, 2023. (Photo by Daniel Pearson, Contributing Photographer)

By CARLOS AGUILAR
PUBLISHED: April 2, 2023 at 6:00 AM PDT | UPDATED: April 2, 2023 at 6:01 AM PDT

Listen to this article now
Powered by Trinity Audio
00:00 03:47

The universe began in the San Gabriel Valley.

We can wear that with pride.

According to a creation myth told by the Tongva natives to our area, twin brothers Land God and Sea God created all that there was: trees and trout, deer and dolphins. One day, they decided to create man, but couldn't agree on the form he would take. While Sea God was away, Land God decided to fashion man as we now know him. When Sea God returned, though, he was angry over what his brother had done and plunged his fist into the ocean, causing a great amount of water to fall over all the land.

In order to protect man, Land God raised the earth (in that day all the land was flat) and placed man at its peak: Mount Baldy.

The recent round of rainstorms brings the origin story close to home and reminds us how the interplay between water, mountains and ingenuity has shaped the San Gabriel Valley for millenia. In order to secure the future of our patch of paradise, though, we must support and protect our natural resources.

Today, the Santa Anita Dam above Sierra Madre runs the risk of overflowing, as do several of the other 14 dams built in the first half of the 20th century. In the 1860s, rain waters washed away gold prospector camps and dams, and made quick work of the hunter and hiker resorts that followed decades in their wake. The Great Flood of 1938 damaged over 5,000 homes in Los Angeles County and served as a stark reminder of our vulnerability. While our present-day system has allowed for the blossoming of bedroom communities, we risk property damage and loss of life by neglecting their upkeep. Today, two of the three valves that control the release of Santa Anita's water are clogged by silt.

The Los Angeles Times noted Los Angeles County homeowners pay only $28 a year for the upkeep of our reservoir system, a rate that hasn't increased since the 1980s. Our county leadership ought to remedy this, first by redirecting resources and later, if necessary, by increasing taxes.

In 2014, after dogged lobbying efforts by local conservation groups, President Obama declared the San Gabriel Mountains a national monument, thereby granting them new resources and protections. The San Gabriels provide nearly a third of our drinking water and approximately 70% of our county's open space. The San Gabriels shape our everyday lives. In order to preserve its integrity, we need to improve access, increase education, maintain trails and expand protections. The Protecting America's Wilderness and Public Land Act (HR 803), introduced by Judy Chu, promises to do just that. It passed the House and is currently awaiting Senate approval. San Gabriel Valley organizations like Nature for All and Amigos de los Rios are working to make sure this happens.

Ethnologist Anna Booth separated North American creation myths into eight categories: our tale of Land and Sea God is considered a type of Two Creators and Their Contents. This motif is common across the Southwest and northern Mexico, with variations involving the invocation of natural disasters like earthquakes to boot.

Today, of course, the San Gabriel Valley is home to a variety of origin stories: Judeo-Christian. Buddhist. Even our friends at JPL have a story to tell. In the end, origin stories remind us that the forces of nature might be bigger, stronger and older than us but with a little imagination and luck, we can keep the San Gabriel Valley thriving for the next millennia.

Land God, look at us now.

Carlos Aguilar of Covina is editorial director at Quantasy and Associates, an advertising agency in Los Angeles, and publisher of the parenting blog bigbrowndad.com.

The Opinionist: Get out of your bubble with daily links to informed commentary on local, state and national issues...

Email address SIGN UP

By signing up, you agree to our Terms of Use, Privacy Policy, and to receive emails from San Gabriel Valley Tribune.

MORE FROM OUR NEWSROOM



Azusa man stabbed his girlfriend to death with kitchen knife after argument in his home,...
Thursday, October 8



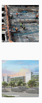
8 alleged Mexican Mafia prison gang members charged with attempted murder, extortion in...
Wednesday, October 7



$1 million in goods allegedly stolen from trains is found at Whittier business



Metrolink proposes further service cuts to start as soon as next month
Monday, October 12



Aging workforce, immigration crackdown are depleting skilled workers
Tuesday, October 13



Disneyland reduces size of new parking garage
Monday, October 12



NTSB releases preliminary report into NBC4 helicopter crash in Chatsworth
Tuesday, October 6



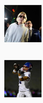
Evacuation orders lifted in Covina after electric vehicle fire
Saturday, October 10



Mail carrier charged with animal cruelty for August peacock attack in Pasadena



San Gabriel Valley child praised for saving mom from drowning
Thursday, October 8



Selma Blair accused of attacking 2 flight attendants and assaulting a police officer and...
Monday, October 12



SGV high school football: Previews, predictions for Thursday's Week 7 games
Wednesday, October 7

SPONSORED CONTENT



Restaurants In Covina With Good Senior Discounts
By Comparisons.org
Seniors at CA Should Claim These Benefits

MORE IN OPINION



Editorial: Rob Bonta will win re-election, but he hasn't earned our endorsement



Editorial: Columbus truly united the world



Letters to the Editor: Is AI our friend?



Punishing success is not golden for California

Harper & Wells

Submit a letter to the editor

ZOLUCKY shop now »

RECOMMENDED FOR YOU

1. Hilda Solis, CA-38 candidate, 2026 election questionnaire
2. San Gabriel Valley child praised for saving mom from drowning
3. Aging workforce, immigration crackdown are depleting skilled workers
4. 8 alleged Mexican Mafia prison gang members charged with attempted murder, extortion in Pomona
5. SGV high school football: Previews, predictions for Thursday's Week 7 games
6. Azusa man stabbed his girlfriend to death with kitchen knife after argument in his home, prosecutors say
7. Evacuation orders lifted in Covina after electric vehicle fire
8. SGV high school football schedule for Week 8, Oct. 15-16
9. Selma Blair accused of attacking 2 flight attendants and assaulting a police officer and nurse
10. What's closed for Indigenous Peoples Day or Columbus Day on Monday in LA County

Copyright 2026 San Gabriel Valley Tribune. All rights reserved. The use of any content on this website for the purpose of training artificial intelligence systems, algorithms, machine learning models, text and data mining, or similar use is strictly prohibited without explicit written consent.

SKYLINE MediaNews Group