

Metro Monitor



JOHN HALL

Onion, polishing up the chain's tarnished rep, sponsoring a big party at his place May 18 to raise funds to restore the Veterans Memorial in Hillcrest Park. "To forget them would be cruel to their spirits," says John's flier of the 107 Fullertonians who have died in war for America. Somebody cares.

For Bill Taormina, always our hero, Anaheim's No. 1 Angel — from remodeling old gas stations to converting abandoned Elks lodges into shelters for the homeless — and he's at it again ... donating his trash trucks to pick up the canned goods dropped by baseball fans in the "Stamp Out Hunger"

program starting today at Anaheim Stadium. Softest touch in the kingdom.

Only on Sunday ... But EVERY Sunday game day the rest of the season.

SERENADE IN BLUSH: It was a letter labeled "Words Of Wisdom" to Ann Landers from a "Long-time Fan" ... I saved it because it reminds me of sportswriters and my own sportswriting days trying to dead-serious forecast such things as Saturday's Kentucky Derby winner. See ...

I'm careful of the words I speak,

I keep them soft and sweet.
I never know from day to day
Which ones I'll have to eat.

LOUD MAN OUT: What's new? How about the oud? How about the guy who plays the oud, John Bilezikjian?

Well, neither is exactly brand new. Just new to me. The oud has been around more than 2,000 years going back to when modern civilization was just getting rolling in the Fertile Crescent.

And Bilezikjian, 39, Laguna

Hills, has been playing the soup out of the oud all his life.

It looks like a pregnant guitar, a pear-shaped, 11-string piece of magic that is strummed with an eagle's feather attached to the pick.

Bilezikjian has played his oud for belly dancers in nightclubs, at church socials and at major league concerts.

"The oud is my life," he said, although he also plays 39 other instruments, including the mandolin for the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra the past 17 years.

I discovered him at Ozzie's, that little slice of Armenian heaven on Katella Avenue in Orange.

He's slightly amazing. Speaks and performs in at least 11 languages — Turkish, Armenian, Russian, Spanish, Arabic, Persian, French, German, Greek and both Laurence Olivier English and Willie Nelson English.

After a stint this next week with the Joffrey Ballet at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, he'll be strumming up a storm

on his oud closer to home at the Triple-X Spring Dance on Saturday at St. John's Greek Orthodox Church in Anaheim ... and then at the Inn At The Park on June 6 for the Second Anniversary Banquet of the Armenian Apostolic Church of Newport Beach.

John Bilezikjian, no doubt, is at the top of the page in Oud's Who. You oud to discover him, too.

SAME DIFFERENCE: OK, OK, the "Brea Welcomes You, Speed Checked By Radar" message you get leaving La Habra on La Habra Boulevard just before it becomes Central isn't on one sign but two just a few feet apart — still close enough to make it a beautifully schizoid sentence. It all translates into our favorite and most useful single piece of advice. Watch it!

COUNTING 10: Latest on the ORCO marquee spied from 55 heading for the bay: "We Seldom Regret Words We Don't Speak." There it is again. Watch it!

TRY ME: So Cal State Fullerton paid \$10,000 to former White