

Benedict Canyon

Fall 2020

Benedict Canyon Association Newsletter

Volume X Issue 10

NO HOTEL IN BENEDICT CANYON

Robert S. Mann

Despite the global pandemic, which has all of us dealing with social, economic and family issues, the developer of what he now calls “The Retreat at Benedict Canyon” continues his efforts to build the biggest party house in Los Angeles. This commercial developer is asking the City of Los Angeles to rezone Benedict Canyon from residential to commercial so that he can make money at our expense by building more than 450,000 square feet of hotel and guest houses, a parking garage for hundreds of cars and 8 large homes. Although he plans to rip out hundreds of mature, protected Oak trees, and grade thousands of cubic yards of earth, he and his PR team are now attempting to mislead our community by branding this commercial project as a “retreat” that will somehow create environmental benefits to our community. In my opinion, this developer couldn’t care less about the environment. He has only one goal: to build a commercial hotel



and make money. If this project succeeds, we will suffer the economic, safety and environmental consequences for decades to come and the precious natural resources of the Santa Monica Mountains will be opened to commercial development from Griffith Park to Malibu.

This project will require thousands and thousands of truck and car trips to and from the project during construction. By the developer’s own admission, it will take over 6 years to complete the construction of the hotel. In his marketing material, the developer claims that we will somehow never see or hear this commercial project.

We need look no further than Hutton Drive east of Deep Canyon to demonstrate the impact of construction in our neighborhood of narrow streets. Currently, only a few houses on Hutton Drive are undergoing construction---but even with this limited work, Hutton is a mess. There are trucks parked on both sides, there are construction materials stacked on the street, and only one car at a time can get through. Now imagine what our Canyon is going to look, feel and sound like with construction occurring for 6 years for a project that is 100 times larger.

Worse, the problems won’t end when the project is completed, they will just begin when the party house swings into operation. We will experience hundreds and hundreds of car and truck trips daily onto Benedict Canyon and lower Hutton for the tourists who will rent the rooms, the guests who will attend events, the staff who will work at the hotel, the caterers, suppliers of food

Cont. on pg. 7

**NO HOTEL, NO RETREAT -
OUR COMMUNITY STANDS TOGETHER TO DEFEAT THE DESTRUCTION OF OUR CANYON**

President's Letter

This has certainly been a trying year. At a time when we were already grappling with many serious issues, the Pandemic hit and exacerbated all of these problems. The BCA Board has been working closely with City Officials and other local organizations to keep our residents safe, and to mitigate the effects that Covid-19 closures has had on our Canyon.



Nickie Miner

During Covid-19 we saw an increase in nuisance party houses in our Canyon – recently we had a fatal shooting at a home. Fortunately, there has been some recent relief for the party house problem. LADWP has begun shutting down water and power to these party houses, and the City Attorney is filing charges against the party organizers as well. The lack of entertainment outlets has also led to an increase in street racing. Residents along Benedict Canyon have been bearing the brunt of the noise from these hooligans who enjoy speeding up and down the street at night while also performing dangerous “tricky” maneuvers on the Benedict Canyon and Mulholland intersection.

Our entire Canyon has been experiencing a construction boom which has also brought a plethora of construction violations. While there is a shortage of building inspectors to give adequate oversight, the BCA has worked hard to develop direct access to inspectors in the West Los Angeles Area. We need your assistance in reporting violations, please call the BCA Hotline. Also, sign up for our mailing list so we can keep in touch with you, and reach you with timely and time sensitive information.

Finally, the developer who purchased the Kirk Krikorian property, is still determined to build a hotel in our Canyon. Safady has continued his various marketing campaigns in an attempt to convince our residents that his project will not be harmful but will indeed be beneficial. He is waging a social media campaign because he can't win on the merits, and he isn't backing down. We must do everything in our power to stop him. The Pandemic has also had a silver lining – it has strengthened our resolve. Now, more than ever, we must come together as a community; to preserve our quality of life and the incredible unique ecosystem of the Santa Monica Mountains is always a top priority. The past eight months have taught us how precious life is and the importance of setting our priorities. If we work together, we can accomplish a great deal.

Sincerely

Nickie Miner
President, Benedict Canyon Association

REPRESENTATION IN OUR NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL



One of the many ways that the BCA represents the interests of the residents of the Canyon is through its representation in The Bel Air-Beverly Crest Neighborhood Council (BABCNC). The BABNC is certified by the City of Los Angeles to represent the City's hillside communities stretching from Laurel Canyon to Sepulveda Blvd., and from Sunset Blvd. to Mulholland Drive. The BABCNC seeks to promote participation in local government and to assist the City of Los Angeles in understanding and responding to the needs and requests of our neighborhood; it also sponsors events that benefit the community and will be co-sponsoring its 4th blood drive on December 6th between 10am-4pm at TreePeople.

The BCA holds 4 seats on the Council. Currently, Nickie Miner serves as assistant Treasurer, Bob Schlesinger is chair of the Planning and Land Use Committee, Don Loze is a senior member of the Land Use Committee, and Mindy Mann is chair of the Ad-Hoc Environmental Committee. Monthly meetings are usually held every third Wednesday at 7:00pm at The American Jewish University. During Covid-19 meetings are held via Zoom. All community members are invited to stay informed by visiting the website at babnc.org and by attending meetings.

A GARDEN TO TREASURE

Mindy Rothstein Mann

A garden can be a bright spot during difficult times; it can heal the body and soul.

It was in this spirit that we planted a new garden at the northern entrance to Benedict Canyon in late spring, replacing the previously derelict entrance to our Canyon. Garrett Carlson and I had been discussing the possibility of this garden for a couple of years. Garrett is a gifted landscape architect who has lived in the Canyon since 1973; he was responsible for replanting the pots along the storm drain in lower Benedict many years ago and has been maintaining them ever since. When Covid-19 hit we decided that the Canyon needed this renewed space more than ever. Garrett was convinced that the time was ripe and that we could not postpone the project.



Upper Benedict Landscape Project

During these unprecedented times we have all reassessed our priorities. While we were sheltering at home in our magnificent Canyon, many of us gained a new sense of appreciation for our uniquely lush surroundings and renewed our commitment to preserving the environment and the wildlife it supports. Garrett and I wanted to give the Community and all the people who enter our Canyon an enduring gift of beauty. Cleaning up the northern entrance to our Canyon and planting a drought resistant garden seemed like the perfect project.

As it turned out, our timing for planting the new garden could not have been better. Benedict Canyon was devoid of cars and it was easy to accept delivery of soil amendments, and plant material. Many landscape contractors and nurseries were slow in the early stages of the Corona Virus and were happy to fill orders, and find work for their employees. Most important of all, we received some late rainfall, and our garden received the benefit of some free irrigation and a good kickstart.

If you haven't yet had the chance, take the time to stop by and see our new garden. If you like to walk, you'll find that the old uneven dirt path is now a soft path covered with bark chips. As always, Garrett worked his magic with this area. He took a bare and dusty area on the west side of the road, where diseased trees had been removed, and created an exquisite garden filled with succulents and a mixture of native shrubs and trees. We are grateful to Virginia O'Brian for her cooperation and participation in this project, and for her assistance in maintaining this garden. This garden would not have been possible without her!

Just as the 60 pots in lower Benedict have matured under Garrett's loving care and have become an integral part of our Canyon, so too will this new garden contribute to the fabric of our Canyon for years to come as all the plants take root and fill in. Our charming garden will greet thousands of residents and commuters every day as they enter our glorious Canyon.

Garrett generously donated his design, supervision, and a large portion of the cost of this project. His appreciation of nature and trees truly have no bounds! Our pots and our new garden, along with many of his amazing garden creations can be seen in his new book "LandArc-101 Special Gardens" (see page 5). We thank Garrett from the bottom of our hearts for his generosity.

If you appreciate the new garden designed by Garrett as well as the lushly planted 60 pots he lovingly maintains, please make a donation. Your support will provide for the regular maintenance of both landscapes and ensure that they thrive for years to come.

STREET RACING MIGHT TAKE A TURN



New Delineators @ Benedict and Mulholland

Street racing on Benedict Canyon is a menace. The Pandemic has seen a huge increase in street racing, not only in our Canyon, but throughout the City. With less traffic, and less entertainment options available, people have unfortunately been getting their thrills by racing through our streets at night and/or by following these street racers via twitter.

The BCA has been working with Councilperson Koretz' office as well as West LAPD to find solutions to this problem that is plaguing our community. The bottom line is West LAPD does not have enough personnel to deal effectively with this issue. The Councilperson's staff, however, did come up with a solution to put a "dent" in the night-time activities

of these racers. The City has recently installed stanchions in the center divider at the top of Mulholland where it intersects Benedict Canyon. The intersection at this portion of Mulholland is particularly wide and offers a great view. It's been a favorite spot for street racers to burn "doughnuts" – but the delineators will make it more difficult! The BCA will continue to work on this alarming issue.

CONSTRUCTION GONE WILD – WHAT CAN YOU DO?

It's a Saturday morning...you've had a long, hectic week and you've been looking forward to a quiet, lazy morning. Suddenly you hear a jarring "Rata-tat, rata-tat-tat" as your windows vibrate from the construction work across the street. You are angry, annoyed, and frustrated. You think to yourself "Is this legal - do I have to put up with this?" The answer to your question is a resounding "NO!" – it's not legal, and you don't have to put up with it.

Unfortunately, Building & Safety is understaffed and having difficulty keeping up with our building boom, so some builders are taking advantage and ignoring the rules. Ordinance #184827 which outlines the specific restrictions for our Hillside Construction Regulations District (HCR) can be viewed on-line in its entirety, but here are the hours which govern when construction and hauling are permitted in our Canyon:

- Hauling operations shall be conducted between Monday-Friday, 9:00AM-3:00PM. Hauling operations on Saturdays, Sundays, and state or federal designated holidays is strictly prohibited.
- Construction activity shall be limited to Monday-Friday, 8:00AM-6:00PM. Exterior construction work at any other time is strictly prohibited. However, interior construction work may be conducted on Saturdays 8:00AM-6:00PM.
- Excess Exterior illumination of the site through the use of floodlights and/or similar devices is strictly prohibited after 6:00PM on any day.

To report a violation of Permitted Construction/Demolition Hours, please call the BCA Hotline at (310) 553-4222.

THERE'S A NEW SHERIFF IN TOWN

Our Senior Lead Officer (SLO) from WLAPD, Chris Ragsdale, is retiring January. Officer Ragsdale will be transitioning our new SLO, Officer Pete Ojeda, from now until January. SLO's provide a link between the LAPD within a particular division and its community. Officer Ragsdale has attended our monthly meetings and provided us with invaluable information; we thank him for his years of service and wish him well in his future endeavors.

Our new SLO, Pete Ojeda, has been with LAPD for over 18 years and transferred to the WLA Division in 2004. We welcome Officer Ojeda and look forward to working with him. If you have any issues in that require the assistance of the LAPD, you can reach Officer Ojeda at 36393@lapdonline.org.



SLO, Pete Ojeda

ACORN WOODPECKERS

Mindy Rothstein Mann

One of the positive results of Covid-19 is that many of us have been taking more walks and have had the opportunity to discover the natural wonders of our Canyon and the Santa Monica Mountains. On one of my recent walks I was greeted by a very noisy “whack, whack, whack” sound - no, I’m not talking about the disturbing noise from one of the numerous local construction sites. I looked around trying to find the source of this chatter and to my amazement I found a boisterous group of small woodpeckers flying back and forth between a telephone pole and a specimen pine tree. When the woodpeckers alighted on the telephone pole, they landed in a cluster and displayed their wings which were a glossy bluish black, splashed with a bold white stripe down the center. The tops of their heads were a blaze of red and their faces were surrounded by pale yellow plumage.



Acorn Woodpecker

I was stunned to see such a large gathering of woodpeckers. On occasion, individual Nuttall’s Woodpeckers have visited the birdfeeder in my garden, but I had never observed a flock of woodpeckers. Excited to learn more about these woodpeckers, I curtailed my hike and returned home to see what information I could gather about these colorful and raucous birds. A few minutes of searching through the internet revealed that the “whacking” birds that I had observed are called “Acorn Woodpeckers” and they are unique in several ways. They are the only animals known for their habit of hoarding and storing acorns (hence their name), even though they are actually omnivorous; they eat insects, flowers, nectar from trees, and a variety of flying bugs. The birds drill small holes in dead trees, or telephone poles – called granaries- then harvest acorns in fall and store them in the individually drilled holes to be eaten during winter. Each winter they add more acorns to the granary tree; the tree may be riddled with up to 50,000 holes and may be used by generations of woodpeckers.

Acorn Woodpeckers are highly social, and they live in large family groups of up to a dozen or more birds. They live in what we might consider a “commune”. They work together in gathering, storing, and defending the food in their granaries, and the food that they collect is shared and belongs to everyone in their commune. In addition to sharing their food, the birds share mates and raise their young in groups. You could say that Acorn Woodpeckers are the “hippies” of the bird world.

This is a perfect time of the year to encounter the Acorn Woodpeckers as they are busy collecting their acorns. Next time you are out on a walk, or simply enjoying time in your backyard, I hope you encounter these entertaining birds. *For more information about acorn woodpeckers and other birds in our area, go to www.audubonca.org.* Happy bird watching!

Protect these woodpeckers and other birds in our Canyons by preserving our specimen trees and trimming trees in the late fall and winter months instead of spring and summer (which is nesting season).

A BOOK FOR GARDEN LOVERS



Our own resident landscape architect, Garrett Carlson, just published a book available on Amazon, “LandArc, 101 Special Gardens”. During his career spanning more than 40 years, Garret has had the most astonishing list of “who’s who” clients and has created magnificent gardens and magical spaces for private residences and commercial buildings. Garrett has graciously been maintaining our 60 potted plants, and most recently, he designed and supervised the completion of the new garden at the northern entrance of Benedict Canyon (both are included in his book). Garrett shares 101 of his favorite projects and some of his “bag of tricks” in this beautiful book.

BENEDICT CANYON ASSOCIATION

TREES OF SUPPORT 2020*

JACARANDA \$1,500

Yvette Mimieux Ruby
Hollis Leech & Christopher Saigal

OAK \$1,000

Anonymous
Mary Bell
Judy Gasson
Michael J. Libow
Mindy Rothstein Mann & Robert Mann
In honor of Boss, Riley & Sunshine

SYCAMORE \$500

Anonymous (2)
Elaine & Michael Agran
Barbara Berkowitz
Gary Bird
Judy Feder
Nanette & Burton Forester
Susan & David Horn
Kadisha Family
Robert Krieger
MJ Durand & Howard Levy
Maureen McQuiston
Ed Moshaver
Anne P. Murphy
Frederick M. Nicholas
John Power
Rachelle & Jim Rosten
Andrea & Sheldon Shapiro
Janet Wood & Jay Silverman

EUCALYPTUS \$250

Anonymous (11)
Robin & Marco Astani
Jacqueline Bisset
Judith Shelton & Ronald Boldt
Pamela Boyer
Marcy & Barry Braiker
Sonia Batra & Puneet Chandak
Rafe Cohen
Randy & Brian Cohen
Patricia Dawson
Ranee & Ken Devlin
Jonathan Hakakha
Liz Levitt Hirsch
Lauren Ina
Barbara Jaynes
In Memory of Gloria Kahn
Miryam & Robert Knutson
Doris & Ian La Frenais
Linda & Thomas Markovits
Roya & Farhad Melamed
Frederick M. Nicholas
Tisno Onggara
Laurine & Martin Pichinson
Melinda Petersen & Phil Proctor
Patricia & Fred Reinstein
In honor of Respecting one another
Joyce Rey
Gayle Rosenthal
Rachelle & Jim Rosten
Sunny & Larry Russ
Carole Saikhon
Myrna & Gene Schwam
Claudia Falkenburg & Andrew Solt
Melissa Rosenberg & Lev L. Spiro
Lucy Suzar & Larry Steinman
Daniel Stewart
Meredith Jackson Voboril

PINE \$100

Anonymous (26)
Maria & Robert Abeloff
Valerie Edwards & Michael Abrams
Gary Alter
Lynn Fireside & Jim Anderson
Anju & Rajive Bagrodia
Stephen Baker
George Bender
Blanche Bersch
In Honor of Janice K. Bonnell
Lorraine & Marc Bozeman
Kati Breckenridge
Dolly & Larry Bretter
Ellen Brown
Jan Cannan
Judy & Jeffrey Caren
Elaine & Hyman Chase
Nancy & Richard Clement
Johanna Falduto & Andrew Cohen
Rafe Cohen
Josephine & Alessio Coppola
Margaret & Mark Damon
L.G. David
Susan & Robert Davidson
Joy Denton
Judith & Laurence Dornstein
Dyan Sublett & Alan Echeverria
Barbara & David Elson
George Eshaghian
Michael Feldman
Julie & Henry Fisher
Cathie Forstmann
Philip Forte
Sharon & Joe Freed
Bradley Friedman
Roberta & Martin Goldblum
Ann & Alan Grodin
Courtney Gross
Inger & Marvin Gross
Joyce Grunauer
Renee & Paul Haas
Patricia McVerry & Roger Halfhide
George Hamori
Christine & William Harper
Elizabeth Harris
Michelle, Philip & Christopher Harris
Robert & Cynthia Hart
Mary & Leopoldo Hellmund
Mary & Bob Herman
Kathleen & Thomas Holland
Deepa Salastekar & Michael Howard
Erica & Jessie Ignjatovic
Nancy & Len Jacoby
Joel Jaffe
Shirley Stamen Jaffe
Susan & Jay Jordan
Margaret Kane
Pam Fenton & Marshal Kaplan
Michelle & Alan Kaye
Sanjay Khiani
Francesca Kimpton
Don Klein
Candace & Abraham Konowitch
Andrea & Chad Knowles
Jodi Korn
Lloyd & Rose Krieger
Afsaneh Malaekheh & Brian LeSage
Belle Frieman & Norman B. Levy

Phillip Lewis
Justine I. Linforth
Karyl Sisson & Mark Liszt
Victor Lopez-Cuenca
Hal Margolis
Roderick McGrew
In Memory of Larry Miner
Matlin Mirman
Bethany & Ira Moreski
Sandra Mosk
John Mullican
Mary Ann Musico
In honor of My Treasured Grandchildren
Maud Nadler
Christine & Joe Nell
Barbara Nichols
Soheila Nuveen
Mishelle & Leon Owens
Sally & Hunter Phillips
Joan Plotkin
Nita & Gary Polinsky
Sandra & Lawrence Post
Cheryl & Joel Prell
JJ Ramberg
Michael Reiff
Reagan Restall
Paul Rohrer
Val & Gil Romoff
Kelli Sager & Steve Rosenwasser
Saul Rosenzweig
Janet Albaugh & Jack Roswal
Beth Rubin
Marilynn Schnair
Myrna & Gene Schwam
Jack Grossbart & Marc Schwartz
Paula & Robert Schlesinger
Arlene & Arthur Schwimmer
Nayereh & Soleyman Sefaradi
Evelyn Shapiro
Libby & Norm Shapiro
Helen Schram
Barbara Shuler
Janis Hirsch & Larry Shulman
Rick Rankin & Matthew Siedhoff
Susan & Stanley Sokoloff
Francine & Richard Solomon
Annette Yee & Loren Steck
Robert Thompson
Freddee Towles
Chrisann Verges
Carol Vitkay
Linda & Michael Wachtell
Dennis Washington
Tobi & Brandt Wax
Mark Freeman & Andrew Webb
Barbara & Murray Weiler
Eleanor & Barry Weinstock
Ann Philbin & Cynthia Wornham
Philip Yaney
Clare Yorkison
Virginia & Greg Young
In Memory of Lewis Ray Young
Leslie & Michael Zinberg

*As of 10/20/2020



No Hotel in Benedict Canyon *cont from cover*

and drink, linens, flowers, and the hundreds of visits to maintain and repair the hotel as it ages. We will hear the noise and disruption from parties that will go into all hours of the night. We will have a flood of tourists who do not understand or respect our Canyon, who will drive to and from the Hotel oblivious of the need for caution and fire safety, who will leave parties drunk, who will make noise and disrupt our community as they drive through our narrow streets. All it takes is one careless visitor to throw a burning cigarette out the window and our Canyon could burn to the ground.

There is also the bigger issue of rezoning – the problem of opening Benedict Canyon, and the Santa Monica Mountains to other commercial developments. There are at least three other large, undeveloped properties in Benedict Canyon. There is no doubt that the owners of those properties are watching the proposed hotel project carefully to see whether they too can exploit and commercialize Benedict Canyon. We are the caretakers of our beautiful Canyon and the Santa Monica Mountains. Our Canyon and the Mountains are a legacy that we must leave for future generations, so that they, like we, can enjoy this haven of peace and serenity in the middle of our city. We cannot allow this developer to set a precedent for commercial development that would forever destroy our Canyon and the Mountains. This is one of the principal reasons why Paul Koretz publicly and in writing opposes this project, and why TreePeople, the Bel Air Beverly Crest Neighborhood Council, and The Hillside Federation, all oppose this project.

What is the solution to this problem? The answer is simple: we must unite to resist and oppose this project. We must stand up with one voice to make this developer understand that we will never allow this commercial project in this Canyon. That there will never be a hotel. That there will never be a “retreat.” We must stand united behind these simple statements: No Hotel In Benedict Canyon. No Retreat In This Canyon.

To accomplish this, the BCA needs your support. If you have not already done so, join the BCA and make a contribution. We will need funds to oppose this project because this developer isn’t going away quietly. We will have to push him away and it will take time, money and effort.

BCA CONTACT INFORMATION
 Mail: P.O. Box 1265, Beverly Hills, CA 90213-1265
 Hotline: 310-553-4BCA
 Email: info@benedictcanyonassociation.org
 Website: www.benedictcanyonassociation.org

**Scan QR Code
to donate today**



FIRE SEASON IS NOW YEAR-ROUND



First responders may not be able to reach us right away in the event of a fast-moving wildfire and we must work together as a community.

Members of the BCA have been working with West Bureau Commander Chief Armando Hogan both independently and through our representation in the BABCNC to find ways to ready our community. The LAFD has launched a new page on their website focused directly on wildfire safety. The emphasis is on providing the public with critical information regarding various aspects of preparedness. Visit lafd.org/wildfire for new information which may determine whether you survive a wildfire.

Chief Hogan has also just announced the installation of Alert Wildfire cameras. The purpose of these cameras is to add to LAFD's pre-incident preparedness posture by providing pictorial information on hard to reach areas. The locations of these cameras are as follows: The San Vicente Peak site, Mountaingate, Westridge Road site and Canyonback trail site; the San Vincente site can be viewed online.

This partnership with LADWP will allow the LAFD to explore more installation options for cameras on land owned by DWP . Chief Hogan wants everyone to know that this is only the beginning and that he envisions an additional 25 plus cameras in the next few years.

CONSERVING OPEN SPACE

Jamie Hall and Mindy Rothstein Mann

Do you have land to donate in exchange for a tax write-off?

Governor Newsome just announced a new executive order aiming to conserve more than 30% of California's lands and coastal waters by 2030. Part of his plan is to "promote biodiversity protection, habitat restoration, and wildfire resilient landscapes". Given the devastating wildfires that we are experiencing this year, this order seems especially critical. Locally, our Santa Monica Mountains are being developed at a rapid pace and we must do our part to set aside natural open space where plants and wildlife can thrive. Benedict Canyon is located in a unique and environmentally sensitive area; it is home to a watershed and greenbelt in the vastly developed plains of Los Angeles.

One way to preserve open space and biodiversity is to take a hard look at the remaining undeveloped parcels and see whether it might be more advantageous for owners to donate them to a conservancy/land trust in exchange for a tax write-off. Alternatively, a landowner can sell at less than fair market value and obtain a tax write off for the discount provided to the conservancy/land trust. Any parcel of any size can potentially be donated, but it is especially applicable in cases where parcels are faced with challenges; e.g. parcels that are land-locked, extremely steep, or parcels that are or difficult or impractical to develop. Of course, owners of larger parcels can also choose to donate a portion of their land as well. In the last few years, the Laurel Canyon Land Trust (the sister organization of the Laurel Canyon Association), has successfully participated in the acquisition of 15 properties.

"We started the Laurel Canyon Land Trust because we couldn't stomach seeing our precious open space being lost to development; these lands are home to mature native trees that sequester carbon and provide valuable habitat to wildlife" said Jamie T. Hall, President of the Laurel Canyon Land Trust. "We monitor the real estate listings and are constantly on the lookout for vacant land that is for sale for development. We then talk to the realtors and explain to them that their clients can obtain a substantial tax advantage if they donate their precious wildlands to a 501(c)(3) organization."

If you would like to explore the possibility of donating a parcel, or if you are aware of a perspective parcel in the Canyon, please contact the BCA.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA MOUNTAIN LIONS

Mindy Rothstein Mann

For those of you who have been following the plight of our mountain lions, April 16th was an uplifting day. That day the Department of Fish and Game voted unanimously to take under consideration the possibility of listing Coastal and Southern California mountain lions as protected under the Endangered Species Act. They heard compelling reports from biologists, local government representatives, and over 50 concerned private citizens who called in and voiced their support, including BCA board members.

Los Angeles is the only megacity in the world, other than Mumbai, that has big cats living in its city limits. The mountain lions in Northern California are faring well but the mountain lions in our region could be facing extinction by 2050. Ours are struggling for several reasons but mainly due to loss of habitat and the fact that they are living on an "island". They are bordered by the ocean on one side, and freeways and increased development on the other sides. Biologists have already found



This is a Cute Emergency

the first abnormalities linked to inbreeding depression in our lions.

Since the hearing in April we were greeted with mixed news. The sad news is that one mountain lion died due to the effects of anticoagulant rat poison and another one was killed while trying to cross the 101 Freeway. The good news is that Governor Newsome just signed a bill protecting wildlife from toxic rat poisons and 13 kittens were born to 5 moms between May and August. A much-needed bridge is being planned at Liberty Canyon which would give lions safe passage over the 101 – it will also improve the

genetic diversity of our isolated lion population.

While the final decision over their future protected status is yet to be determined, at least our mountain lions are temporarily protected until next April. Between now and April the members of the Department of Fish and Game will continue to gather information and meet with all sides to iron out any concerns/issues.

We hope Fish and Game lists them officially as an endangered species next April and that the funding for the Liberty Canyon Bridge comes through sooner rather than later. Our 13 cubs deserve a brighter future where there is room for humans and mountain lions to coexist.

To learn more about our Mountain Lions and what you can do to help them go to nps.gov/samo/learn/nature/pumapage.htm

Scan QR Code



FERTILIZE YOUR MIND - Learn @ Home With TreePeople

Have you ever wondered what tree would be most appropriate to plant in your front yard? Has the thought of starting a compost heap intrigued you but seemed too daunting? Are you looking to provide your children with an entertaining but educational on-line experience?

Well, look no further! TreePeople has the answers for you with their "Learn @ Home" series. Due to Covid-19 TreePeople was forced to close Coldwater Park, but it used this opportunity to take its highly acclaimed education and engagement programs online. TreePeople's Learn @ Home webpage tackles topics ranging from water to trees to waste reduction using engaging content geared towards all ages. More recently, TreePeople has added a live speaker series, which offers viewers the opportunity to engage with Industry Experts. Go to treepeople.org/learnathome for more details.

BARBARA BLINDERMAN - A FORCE OF NATURE

Mindy Rothstein Mann



Plaque at base of the Blinderman Trail

Very few people have had a greater impact on our Canyon and the Santa Monica Mountains than Barbara Blinderman. You may not know her by name; yet for over 50 years Barbara served this community steadfastly in her unassuming but determined manner and dedicated her heart and soul to preserving the mountains and protecting them from over-development.

Barbara and her late husband Elliott bought their first and only house at the top of Clear View Drive in 1966. They raised three children on Clear View and did so while juggling successful professional careers and being active members of the community. Just a couple of years after moving into the Canyon Barbara enrolled at UCLA's graduate school of Public Administration and received her MA. During her studies she heard about a local

community organization – the BCA. Barbara attended a meeting and, as they say, the rest is history! She joined our Association and it wasn't long before she agreed to be the secretary, believing it wouldn't require a large time commitment. Barbara was in for a surprise, but she threw herself into the work in only the way that Barbara knew how and within a few years Barbara became President of the Board.

During her years on the BCA Board Barbara was involved with advocating for the protection of the Canyon and the rights and safety of our residents in several key development projects in the Canyon. In each of these projects she successfully minimized the impact of the development process on our community – Deep Canyon, The Kollsman Property (later purchased by Paul Allen), Beverly Park, and The Merv Griffin Property (now known as “The Mountain”).

Barbara always enjoyed writing and during the 1970's she channeled this passion by writing numerous articles for the community newspaper called *The Canyon Crier*. This influential paper was often referred to as “The Voice of the Hills”. As if this wasn't enough, Barbara decided to get her law degree and become a public interest lawyer. She went on to represent communities in their battles with government for 30 years. Among her many cases, she represented Councilman Bernardi in a case that invalidated the City's Downtown Redevelopment District, and she represented Dorothy Green, founder of Heal the Bay, in the City's notorious “secret pay raise” case. During those same years Barbara served on the Board of the California First Amendment Coalition, whose focus and dedication was and remains open government.

While pursuing a successful career, Barbara still managed to find time to stay involved in local issues. she was active in the Hillside Federation and was one of the founders of a group called “Mulholland Tomorrow” which set out to protect the Mulholland corridor. During her tenure as president the group succeeded in preserving Mulholland as a scenic parkway. Barbara, however, has never been one to gloat and she will tell you that much of the group's success was due to the remarkable members of the Board which included a host of celebrities - Jack Nicholson, Don Henley, Donna Mills and Warren Beatty to name a few.

Another great success story was her involvement with the William O. Douglas Outdoor Classroom in Franklin Canyon Park, where she served as president for 14 years. Today, when you visit the ducks or hike on the trails, you'll see that one of the trails is named The Blinderman Trail. This park is a true gem in the midst of our City, and you can thank Barbara and Elliott Blinderman in great part for its existence.

When I asked Barbara whether she was particularly proud of any one accomplishment, she quickly quipped “that's easy, marrying Elliott!”. Perhaps that's why she wrote a book about him for her grandchildren, called “Who is Grandpa Elliott, and Where Is He Now?”. And where is Barbara now? After living in the Canyon for 53 years Barbara decided it was time to downsize. she sold her house earlier this year and moved to Santa Barbara leaving an indelible mark on this Canyon and the Santa Monica Mountains. Her involvement will be sorely missed.

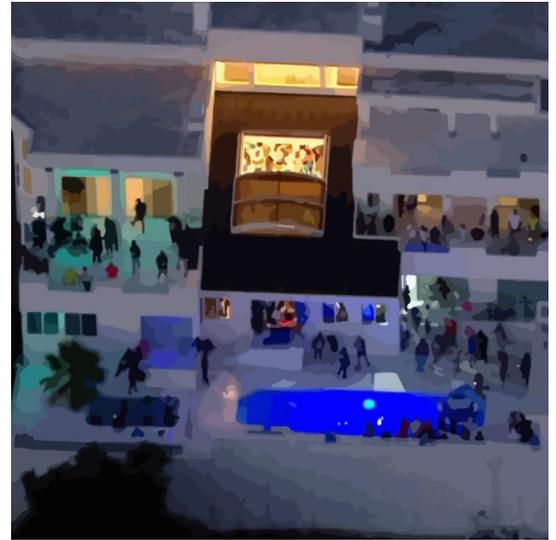
SHUTTING DOWN PARTY HOUSES

Robert S. Mann

The Hollywood Hills and Benedict Canyon are favored locations for party houses. Owners of large homes rent them out for parties at very high prices---many times for more than \$25,000 for the evening. The parties attract hundreds of people and cars, create noise, fire danger from smoking, drug and alcohol abuse, destruction of property from people urinating and defecating on the streets, street racing, car accidents and, increasingly, death and serious injuries from gunshots. The parties become super-spreaders of Covid-19 because the guests do not wear masks or observe social distancing. The spread of Covid-19 puts all of us at risk.

What can our community do to stop this?

First, there is gathering momentum to stop party houses. As a result of the homicide that occurred in the early morning hours of August 4, 2020 at a party house on Mulholland Drive, followed by the murder at a party house on San Ysidro, our Councilmember Paul Koretz, Councilmember David Ryu and Mayor Garcetti have announced their intent to crack down on party houses in a number of ways. The Mayor announced that the DWP will have the authority to disconnect electrical and water service to party houses and has already disconnected service to several houses. Councilmember Ryu has announced that he intends to seek increased fines against the owners of these houses. Councilmember Koretz has stated that he will continue to have “zero tolerance” for party houses. LAPD has stepped up the training of its officers to deal with party houses and has set aside 2 special “party cars” that are dedicated solely for responding to complaints about party houses.



Second, you need to be aware of the rules and regulations and help the BCA in reporting the party houses so that the BCA can work with the City government to shut down the party houses. Party Houses are governed by Municipal Code section 41.58.1. This statute provides, among other things, for fines and the closing down of party houses on a theory that they are a public nuisance. Most importantly, Municipal Code section 41.58.1 (b) provides that the LAPD can order persons at parties to leave the premises.

Third, you need to report party houses to the LAPD every time an unlawful party is taking place; unless you take action, most likely nothing will happen. Police reports assist the City in the process of declaring the party house a public nuisance. The Senior Lead Officer for our area and West Los Angeles is Pete Ojeda - you can reach him at 36393@lapd.online. Veronica de la Cruz-Robles serves as West LA Neighborhood Prosecutor – her email address is veronica.delacruz-robles@lacity.org. It is important to remember that a police officer cannot issue a citation unless the officer actually witnesses the infraction. Here’s what to do:

1. Call the Non-Emergency phone number 1 877 ASKLAPD (call 911 only if there is a true emergency situation) as soon as you hear or see the unlawful party starting – this will give the officers more time to respond. You might be placed on hold for a while, and this can be frustrating, but it is critical that you file the report. If you can see the party while you are on hold, you can use this time to take photos or a video to create a record.
2. Ask the responding officers to call you when they are on the way and ask for an incident number after they have arrived.
3. If the party house complaint involves a blocked road or driveway, call parking enforcement at 213 485-4184.

Fourth, you need to help the BCA in this effort. You can help by joining the BCA if you are not already a member. You can help by making a contribution to the BCA so that the BCA has the resources to work with the City to solve this problem. Solving this problem will require our entire community to work together and to demonstrate our resolve to our elected officials and the LAPD.

Benedict Canyon

Benedict Canyon Association
P.O. Box 1265
Beverly Hills, CA 90213-1265

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