

Benedict Canyon

Summer 2005

Benedict Canyon Association Newsletter

Volume V Issue 8

JOSEPH STEFANO: BENEDICT'S RESIDENT MASTER OF FRIGHT

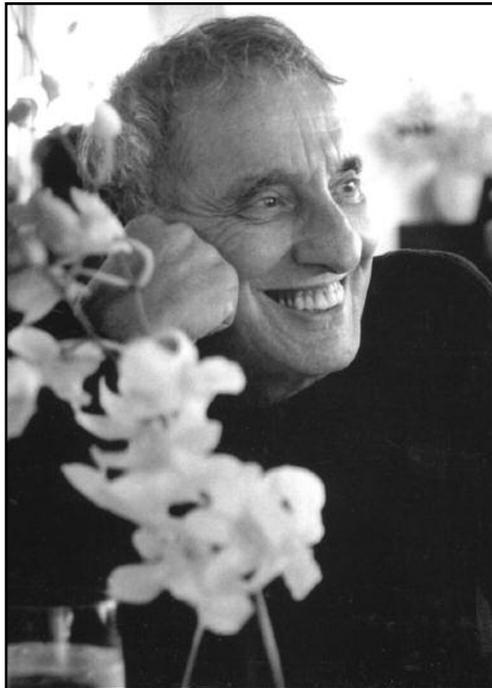
By Geoff Miller

Even in a community as rich with talent as Benedict Canyon, it's rare to meet an individual responsible for writing one of the most influential movies of all time. Case in point: Joseph Stefano, renowned as the author of the screenplay for Alfred Hitchcock's original *Psycho*, and a Canyon resident since 1960.

One would hardly cast the lively, jovial Stefano as the chief collaborator in creating Hitchcock's most chilling (and controversial) masterpiece. Even Joe was surprised at "Hitch's" interest in the original book upon which it was based. As he told Hitchcock biographer Donald Spoto* some years ago:

"Psycho is important not so much for what it is, but for what it is not. It lacks everything predictable in Hitchcock up to that time. The characters in it were not people he knew or wanted to know—they were not the Cary Grant or Grace Kelly or James

Stewart types. But he had reached a point in his professional life when he was ready for a totally different kind of picture.



In Hitchcock's previous films he told things about himself he thought were true, but in *Psycho* he

told more about himself, in a deeper sense, than he realized. He had been very concerned about his health, and I think he made the film at the very time he was grappling with his own mortality. After all, he had been very ill in 1957, and Alma had been very ill in 1958. Then in 1959 along came this murderous film. I think it was the sudden-death aspect that involved him emotionally."

Spoto's analysis continues: "Stefano's script took shape quickly and much to Hitchcock's pleasure. ('Alma [Hitch's wife and sometimes collaborator] liked your opening scenes very much' was the only way Hitchcock could express his satisfaction and was the single moment of appreciation he offered the writer.)"

The picture is also different, and surreptitiously shocking, for the degree to which Stefano and Hitchcock manipulate viewers into becoming unconscious co-conspirators. When the killer, Tony Perkins,

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Joseph Stefano
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tries to dispose of a car containing the corpse, for instance, Stefano's script called for the car to pause momentarily before sinking into the swamp. As Spoto notes, "the viewer is relieved when it disappears at last with a septic gurgle."

Joe and his wife of over 40 years, Marilyn, moved into their house on Cielo Drive not long after the release of Psycho. Marilyn, a tireless civic activist and board member of the Benedict Canyon Association, remembers first meet-



ing Joe over a jukebox in New York City. Marilyn had strolled over to select some music when Joe worked up the nerve to sidle up and say, "Pick that one."

"Why?" Marilyn asked

"Because I wrote it," Joe grinned.

Indeed, Joe began his career as a songwriter in Manhattan, before Hollywood offered him a contract after he had begun combining his bread-and-butter composing with

successful TV scriptwriting. With mock pride, he admits to turning out the original jingle that helped launch Ford Motor's notoriously unsuccessful Edsel. For good measure, he'll even sing a bar or two for you.

Following Psycho, Joe wrote several more successful films before turning his attention primarily to television as a series producer for The Outer Limits and writer of countless other series and made-for TV movies. His favorite method for turning out so many imaginative scripts has to do with the years he shared the peace and quiet of his Cielo Drive hideaway with Marilyn and son Andrew. As Joe puts it, he would spend many "pre-conscious" hours working on domestic projects surrounding the very bucolic environment of the house, then retire to his study to write the stories which had been percolating all the while just beneath the surface.

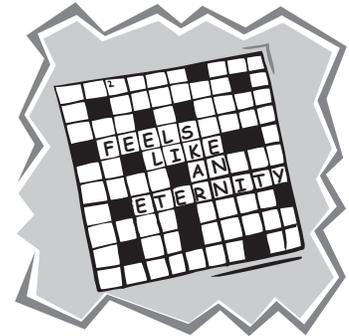
Of the many writing awards he has won over the years, one in particular sticks in Joe's mind. It was the 1960 Edgar Allen Poe Award from the Mystery Writers of America for the script of Psycho. Ironically, they chose Robert Bloch, author of the book upon which the film was based, to present the award. As Stefano was making his way to the podium, Bloch remarked, "I don't know why they picked me to give out this award. I never even saw the movie."

"That's okay," Stefano quipped, as he reached the microphone "I never read the book".

**The Dark Side of Genius: The Life of Alfred Hitchcock, by Donald Spoto: Little Brown and Company 1983 ■*

LIFE IN BENEDICT CANYON

- Top Five List -



1. While waiting to enter Benedict Canyon traffic, you manage to complete the L.A. Times crossword puzzle.
2. Your car costs more today than your house did in the 1970's.
3. Your dog can bark in Spanish.
4. You've actually considered a hand crank generator for your TIVO during power failures.
5. Your neighbor invites you to his party, not to see you but rather to secure your parking spaces.

(with thanks to Phil Proctor)

Take a Deer to Lunch . . . The Four Footed Gardener

Kathryn Scott Miller

Early one Spring morning, as I padded out to our driveway to retrieve the newspapers, I glanced across the street and was captivated by the sight of deer moving through my neighbor's garden. At that peaceful hour of the morning, with misty fog still clinging to the hillsides, a doe and her Bambi moved easily through the ground cover feeding on tender young shoots and budding saplings, all newly planted.

I stood for long minutes, barely breathing, watching the deer feed. At times the animals ventured to within thirty feet of me to browse on a low hedge near the street. Soon rush hour traffic started whizzing down the canyon road and the deer strolled leisurely back into the denser brush toward the ridgeline. I turned back to the house, thrilled once again by my proximity to nature and wildlife in Benedict Canyon. The sight of the graceful doe, and her young spindly legged offspring, was so enchanting I have to admit I gave scant thought to the devastation in my neighbor's newly landscaped front yard.

However, on another early morning months later, I looked out through our bedroom window to catch a fleeting glimpse of several deer leaving our back garden. This time I was less than captivated when I realized I'd provided these marauders with a tasty smorgasbord. My garden was destroyed, not a single bloom or bud left. Every rose bush along the winding walkway was stripped, only bare twigs remaining.

"Damn deer," I muttered as I walked through my flower beds, bemoaning the fallen wire mesh fence at the rear of our property that had been left flattened during brush clearance. Obviously, what is a glorious, magical sight in a neighbor's garden is less than welcome in one's own backyard.

We've had other encounters with deer, too. A number

of years ago we had to telephone the Department of Animal Services to fish an injured deer out of our swimming pool. On that occasion two animal control officers, utilizing a special harness and pulley contraption, managed to wrangle the floundering animal out of the water.

In certain situations such as this, an equine air rescue team is deployed to airlift stranded and injured deer by helicopter.

Sadly, several times during our many years living in Benedict Canyon, we've had to call the City's Bureau of Sanitation to report a deer lying by the roadside, killed by a speeding car. Mule Deer often bound onto the road without warning and/or stand mesmerized by oncoming lights.

Collisions between deer and vehicles are common, and can cause considerable damage to vehicles and injury to occupants. Most deer are killed or critically injured by the impact. According

to a spokesperson with the Bureau of Sanitation, in one 30-day period there have been up to six reported collections of dead deer in Benedict Canyon alone.

Mule deer present little danger to people, although male deer (bucks) can be aggressive toward people or pets during the fall breeding season (a time known as the "rut"), and can strike out with their hooves or use their antlers to charge intruders. Normally Mule deer chose to



"She'll have the White Azaleas with Asparagus Ferns and I'll have the Deep Canyon Special with the Prized Rose Garden Appetizer."

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DEER TO LUNCH

Cont. from Pg. 3

flee when approached by humans or dogs, and they panic easily. Often they will injure themselves by becoming entangled on fences, or crash through windows in an attempt to escape.

Mountain lions are their major natural predator, but with fewer preying in urban areas, the Mule deer population has increased-and those of us who take pride in our gardens have to accept some responsibility for these voracious browsers. "After all, an irrigated garden with a lush buffet of rose bushes and green lawns is very appealing," says Lieutenant Wendell L. Bowers, a 16-year veteran of the City of Los Angeles Department of Animal Services. "And our sprinkler systems, bird baths and swimming pools provide water. One of the most sensible solutions is to landscape with deer resistant plants."

Indeed, landscape damage is the most common complaint about deer. The Department of Animal Services, Wildlife Division, provides a number of useful tips on reducing damage. Exclusion fencing is effective, but so are repellants that deter browsing. Among the home remedies are cayenne pepper, bone meal and blood meal sprinkled around plants. Try hanging ammonia soaked rags on fences where deer tend to congregate. Hang aluminum tape strips from trees and plants, or bars of deodorant soap on susceptible plants. String noise-makers, such as cans, around areas deer frequent.

USEFUL NUMBERS:

Dead Animal Pickup:
The City of Los Angeles, Bureau of Sanitation: (800) 773 - 2489.

City of Los Angeles Department of Animal Services: (888) 452 - 7381
Web: www.laanimalservices.com

California Wildlife Center - volunteer organization for sick, injured, orphaned wild animals. (818) 591 - WILD ■

Common Deer Resistant Plants



**Annual/
Biennals**

- Pansy
- Periwinkle
- California Poppy
- Dahlia
- Sweet Basil
- Snapdragon
- Marigold
- Verbena
- Honeysuckle
- Myrtle
- Virginia Creeper
- Wisteria
- Sweet Pea
- Morning Glory
- Nasturtium
- Parsley

**Perennials/
Bulbs**

- Anise
- Baby's breath
- Bee balm

- Buttercup
- Calamint
- Common dill
- Clematis
- Geranium
- Foxglove
- Euphorbia
- Evening primrose
- Delphinium
- Ferns
- Sage
- Hyacinth
- Heather
- Lavender
- Rosemary
- Rhubarb
- Oregano
- Mint
- Mullein
- Painted daisy

Trees/Shrubs

- Holly
- Bittersweet

- Juniper
- Buckthorn
- Fir
- Common lilac
- Deodar Cedar
- Beech
- Crape Myrtle
- Bottlebrush
- Boxwood
- Gingko
- Dogwood
- Oleander
- Pines
- Sumac



Beverly Hills 1924

Speed Demons on Benedict

By Geoff Miller

Like many Benedict Canyon Drive residents, I live on a curve. Not a blind curve, but one with the proverbial “limited visibility.” Accordingly, my wife and I exit our driveway with extreme care, even during light traffic hours. We make sure there are no cars visible, then make a jackrabbit right-hand run for the one available lane, well aware that cars can roar up behind us out of nowhere. We gave up making left-hand turns onto Benedict years ago—it just wasn’t worth the risk.

Nonetheless, we are treated at least once a week to a horn blast from someone outraged that we would dare to interrupt, even for a second, their 60-mph Grand Prix up Benedict. I’d like to believe that none of these rude, reckless fools are fellow residents, but I suspect, sadly enough, this isn’t the case. In the almost 30 years I’ve lived on Benedict, there have been at least 15 serious accidents in front of our house, virtually all of them the result of speeding, and many of these incidents have involved Canyon residents. The newly-painted stripes on the side of the road have helped, to the extent that it has lessened curb-hugging on the part of the curve-loving speeders.

Lately, we’ve begun to notice an even more insidious habit on the part of the lunatic leadfoots. They think nothing of crossing over the double line, even on a blind curve, and passing not just one car, but often two or three. Some will take advantage of a traffic signal or stop sign to sprint around another car. Increasingly, I find myself dogged by fanatic tail-



gaters who often enough simply run the traffic light at Clearview, only to be held up later by the long light at Hutton—what are they gaining? Speed limits are clearly marked all along Benedict, usually 35 mph, which is appropriate for any residential neighborhood.

Many years ago, my beloved neighbor Tony Dalu, taking note of the increased traffic on Benedict, hand-carved the elegant and ornamental wooden sign near the storm drain at the Beverly Hills foot of the canyon, reading: “BENEDICT CANYON RESIDENTIAL AREA. DRIVE CAREFULLY.”

Tony was a deeply civilized man and a true citizen of the canyon. He conceived and built the romantically

modern two-story Mediterranean home next to ours, and it is still truly at one with its setting. But Tony’s sign was from a kinder, gentler time in the canyon. If he were still my neighbor, I’d propose to him that he attach an addendum to the sign, perhaps in less elegant lettering: THIS ISN’T A FREEWAY!

We may not be able to do much about the marauding hordes who use Benedict as their personal speedway to and from the Valley, but as fellow residents, perhaps we could at least resurrect the earlier spirit of respect and neighborly consideration for those who are merely trying to exit their homes and side roads safely. It might even demonstrate to the outsiders that a little civility is in order. ■

Too Hot to Handle - A Boy Learns a Lesson

By Kathryn Miller

Early one Sunday morning in Benedict Canyon, a six-year-old boy came across all the ingredients he needed to make mischief: a small pile of dried Poinsettia leaves, some discarded gift wrap and an electronic fire starter. In less than a minute he'd started a blaze. There was more combustible material nearby, and the fire could have spread quickly if the smell of smoke hadn't alerted his parents, who were lingering over breakfast in the kitchen. They raced into the living room, horrified to find their son kneeling on the hearth, transfixed by the flames licking at the mounds of tissue and wrapping paper.

The child, who knew very well that he had done something wrong, even dangerous, jumped to his feet and ran.

While his father stomped out the fire, the mother followed the boy to his room where she found him hiding in a closet, frightened and crying.

Disaster had been averted, but the "what ifs?" were terrifying-and perplexing. The boy had been instructed in fire safety both in school and at home, but once he'd managed to get his hands on the

electronic fire starter his parents thought they'd stored in a safe place, he just had to see if he could make it work. The lure of shooting sparks from that red plastic wand was too tempting to resist. So, aside from their own vigilance, his parents wondered how they could reinforce the fire safety measures they had already taken, to avoid another, possibly worse, incident.



The following day, as the family drove along Mulholland Drive, the boy's father spotted a bright red fire engine sparkling in the sunny driveway outside Fire Station #99. On impulse, he pulled off the road and parked, hoping the firemen wouldn't mind if his family dropped in unannounced. As it turned out, they were warmly welcomed and soon found themselves invited to

tour the firehouse, beginning with a demonstration of all the features of the shiny fire engine parked out front.

The first thing the boy learned was the difference between a fire engine and a fire truck: the engine carries water, and a fire truck carries the hook and ladder, fire fighting tools and such special equipment as the Jaws of Life. As a result of fundraising sponsored by the Benedict Canyon Association this past year, the fire department now has a portable backpack with a battery-operated Jaws of Life for use in car accidents and over-the-hill rescues. The second thing he learned was that firemen only use ladders made of wood, not metal, because they are more durable and don't conduct electricity. Most captivating was the enormous nozzle on top of the engine that, without having to

hook up to any lines, can produce up to 600-1,000 gallons of water per minute, and the huge panel of gauges that looked to the boy like the cockpit of a starship.

The family also toured the kitchen, recreation room and the eight-bed dorm and locker room, where everything was in its proper place, easily accessible. The child's parents, looking around the neat, orderly living quarters, could only hope their son was picking up more than fire safety tips.

The boy, himself, was fascinated by the mound of boots and pants on the floor next to each bed. "You see," he was told, "if the alarm sounds in the middle of the night, a

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Benedict Canyon

BENEDICT CANYON ASSOCIATION 2005 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

I want to help protect and preserve our canyon and the environment in which we live and express my support by joining the Benedict Canyon Association at the following membership level:

| | | |
|-------|---------|------------------|
| _____ | \$1000+ | Oak Tree |
| _____ | \$500 | Sycamore Tree |
| _____ | \$250 | Eucalyptus Tree |
| _____ | \$100 | Pine Tree |
| _____ | \$75 | Basic Membership |

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Daytime Phone _____ Evening Phone _____

E-Mail Address _____

Benedict Canyon Association mailing lists are strictly confidential and are never sold or shared.

_____ I do not wish my name to appear in the BCA Newsletter, but please accept my enclosed contribution.

You can become a member of BCA through Basic Membership or as part of our "Trees of Support" Donor Program. Many members are choosing to designate their membership "In Honor of..." or "Memory of..." for someone who used to live in Benedict Canyon, a beloved family pet or anyone whom you would like to honor in this special way. Basic Membership names will not be published. Also, you may contribute at the donor level and elect not to have your name published. Benedict Canyon is protected only through your individual contributions. Thank you for supporting your community.

For membership information, please call our Hotline - (310) 553-4222(4BCA)
Benedict Canyon Association is a non-profit organization.

My payment of \$ _____ is made by:

_____ Check payable to Benedict Canyon Association

_____ Please charge my _____ VISA _____ MasterCard _____ AMEX

Card# _____ Exp. date _____

Name as it appears on card _____

Signature _____

Please return this application along with your payment to:
Benedict Canyon Association, P.O. Box 1265, Beverly Hills, CA 90213
Summer 2005

Cut On Dotted Line



Benedict Canyon

2005 BCA "Trees of Support" Donor Program Roster

OAK TREE

Richard & Diane Naegele

SYCAMORE TREE

Alex Bouzari & Yuki Nariai
Barbara Jaynes
Maurice Marciano

EUCALYPTUS TREE

Joshua & Jennifer Berman
Joni Berry
Jacqueline Bisset
Ted & Karen Coyne
Kenneth & Randee Devlin
Vera Dunn
David & Barbara Elson
Evans Frankenheimer
Keith Herman
In Memory of Gloria Kahn
The George R. Kress House
Ian La Frenais
Deborah Klar Marks
Margaret Maw
Mark & Irene Montgomery
Eustace Moore
Ellie Neumaier
Fred & Joan Nicholas
Rick Nicita & Paula Wagner
Norman & Mary Pattiz
Mr. & Mrs. John T. Pigott
Lee M. Polster &
Marguerite E. Cascio
Linda Shokrian
Lev L. Spiro & Melissa Rosenberg
Albert Ruddy & Wanda McDaniel
Art Spence
Joseph & Marilyn Stefano
Richard Weisman
(1) Anonymous

PINE TREE

Robert & Maria Abeloff
Michael Abrams & Valerie Edwards
Dennis & Elaine Abramson
Michael & Elaine Agran
Virginia Ambrosini
Jim Anderson & Lynn Fireside
William & Phyllis Axelrod
Adam & Amy Bass
George & Carolyn Bender

Dr. & Mrs. Issac Berman
Babette Bloomgarden
Ronald Boldt & Judith Shelton
Ron & Jan Cannan
Gary & Rochelle Carmona
B.G. Carp
Scott Chaplan
Michael Chasteen
Larry Chrysler
Eric Cleveland &
Annette Stanton
Jeffrey Cohen
Rafe & Susan Cohen
Gary & Mary Ann Collins
Cheryl Conhaim
Craig & Kira Cooper
Hal & Marta Cooper
Mr. & Mrs. Alessio Coppola
Healy & Gary Cosay
Mark & Maggie Damon
Marvin & Patti Demoff
Joe DiStefano & Beth Rubin
Evelyn Furtah-Dorfman
Nassir Ebrahimi
Don Empakeris & Viktorija Joga
Lisa Engel & Brent Smith
Ferdinand & Lennie Fam
Ruth K. Felmus
Don & Sandy Fenmore
Alan Fine
Burton N. Forester
Philip Forte
Samuel & Ardyth Freshman
Bradley Friedman
Carla Hacken &
Lorraine Gallacher
Mr. & Mrs. Sam Gordon
Harland N. Green
George & Nana Gregory
Peggy Guggenheim
Sajeevi Gunasekera
Paul & Renee Haas
Gwen & Arthur Hiller
Roger Halfhide &
Patricia McVerry
Stanley & Miriam Handman
Bill & Chris Harper
Robert & Cynthia Hart
David & Bridget Hedison
Robert & Mary Ridings Herman
Edward & Sherry Heyman
Curtis & Irina Hill
Urban S. Hirsch III

Richard & Dea Holesapple
David & Susan Horn
Chapin Hunt, Jr.
Joel Jaffe
Ricky Jay & Chrisann Verges
Preston & Vicki Johnson
Greg & Susan Kay
John & Melissa Kelly
Bernard Kester
Gertrude Kline
Rosa Koppens
David & Terry Kramer
Don & Hope Kurz
Morrie & Patti Lachman
Daniel & June Lang
Lee Lasker
Monte M. Lemann II &
C.C. Pulitzer-Lemann
Dr. & Mrs. Marvin Levin
Lawrence Leviton & Arlene Ruby
Paul Lipari
Gene Lucero & Marcia Williams
Mr. & Mrs. Mahdavi
Gail Malmuth
Joel Mandel
Barbara Marcus
Gerald & Sandy Margolis
Ferne Margulies
Thomas & Linda Markovitz
Lowell & Wende Mate
Jim McGuirk
Steven & Marsha Mermelstein
Geoff & Kathryn Miller
Larry & Nickie Miner
Wm. Montgomery
Jeff & Sheila Morris
Alex Moscowicz
Richard & Sandy Mosk
John & MaryAnn Musico
Frederick M. Nicholas
Barbara Nichols
William L. O'Toole
David Parry
Elizabeth Parry
Marshall Peck
Dick Perlman
Eddie Pinchasi
Gary & Nita Polinsky
Max Ramberg
Carol & Stephen Randall
Paul & Allison Rohrer
Gil & Val Romoff
George Rose

In Memory of
Dr. Sheldon Rosenfeld
Jim & Rachele Rosten
Norman & Mary Lou Rotenberg
Bill & Linda Rouse
Roman & Ida Russ
Larry C. Russ
Joanne Sackheim
Jeffrey & Mindy Salberg
John Samore, Jr.
Sam & Shanit Schwartz
Stephen & Sara Schwartz
Stanford & Randi Schwimmer
Arthur & Arlene Schwimmer
Martin & Sheila Seaton
Evelyn Shapero
Norm & Libby Shapiro
Bernie & Mary Sharf
Sheldon & Andrea Shapiro
Dariush Shirmohammadi
Barbara Shuler
Perry & Linda Silver
Jay Silverman & Janet Wood
Cortez Smith
Gordon & Diane Smith
Bill & Lisa Sobel
Andrew Solt &
Claudia Falkenburg
Jeff & Annie Stein
Ted Steinberg & Ellen Brown
Larry Steinman & Lucy Suzar
Alana Stewart
Jim & Randi Swindel
Frank & Suellen Symons
In Memory of Tess the Baroness
Jim & Morgan Thomas
In Memory of Dudley Trudgett
Scott Vaughan
Robert J. Wagner
George Wallach
Brandt Wax
Barry & Eleanor Weinstock
Ernest Weiss & Elaine Lotwin
Jacques & Lynn Wertheimer
Glen Williams & Elizabeth Hirsch
Lawrence & Nancy Wolf
Timmy Woods
Joan Worth
B.A. Yorkshire
Greg & Virginia Young
Robert Yuro & Rosemary Forsyth
Michael & Leslie Zinberg
(7) Anonymous

**Donations received after June 15, 2005 will appear in the next newsletter.*

TOO HOT TO HANDLE

Cont. from Pg. 4

fireman can jump into his turnout boots and pull up his turnout pants in a matter of seconds.” To the child’s delight, one of the firemen then demonstrated the firemen’s pole by sliding down it.

At one point in their visit, the boy’s father quietly mentioned the incident with the fire starter. With barely a word in his ear, the fireman looked at the parents knowingly and took the boy aside for a private chat about the dangers of playing with fire. Then, the tour over, the boy was presented with a small red fireman’s helmet and a junior fire badge, both of which he proudly brought to school the following day to show his classmates.

As the family climbed back into the car after their visit, the boy told his parents, “I’m sure glad that’s behind me. I’m never going to play with fire again. Starting fires can hurt a lot people and animals.” Later that week, the boy wrote a thank you note to the firemen and delivered it with a plate of homemade brownies and a gift of some kitchen utensils.

Little boys (and girls) with matches are a lethal combination, and parents should do anything they can to reinforce lessons in fire safety. Captain Tim Quinn, a 38-year veteran of the fire department, says that perhaps two children a week visit his station on Mullholland for a personal tour and a little talk to dissuade them from playing with fire. While the standard procedure is to organize a visit

with a school group, a personal tour of Fire Station # 99 is welcome anytime during daylight hours.

The two fire stations that serve Benedict Canyon are:
 Fire Station # 99
 14145 Mullholland Drive
 Fire Station # 71 107 S. Beverly Glen at Sunset Boulevard

Captain Tim Quinn also mentions that two of the most serious fire safety issues in the canyon today involve brush clearance and roadside parking on narrow streets. Fire and emergency vehicles require 18-20 feet clearance to pass. There have also been a number of traffic accidents lately involving vehicles losing control on streets that are wet from run-off caused by sprinklers and irrigation overflow. Benedict Canyon is entirely residential, and our narrow, winding streets carry a huge volume of traffic between Beverly Hills and the Valley. Be on the lookout for safety hazards! ■

What a Dump!

City residents who have paint, motor oil, pool and garden chemicals, electronics or other dangerous materials can now safely dispose of these materials at the newly opened UCLA S.A.F.E. Center for household hazardous



waste. The facility is now open
 Thursdays,
 Fridays
 and
 Saturdays
 from 8:00
 a.m. to
 2:00 p.m. It
 is located at

550 Charles E. Young Drive (just south of Strathmore on campus). Electronic waste is only accepted on Saturdays.

For more information, call 1-800-988-6942. ■



Benedict Canyon - 1926 - North from Sunset Boulevard

BCA President's Letter

"Start your Engines, Summer is Finally Here"



Our roadway will soon be completed and I know you all will be pleased. Scheduled completion is November of this year.

New curbs, gutters, guardrails, drainage and surfacing should allow

for smooth driving, but remember to obey our speed limits. The new road will be enticing us all to exceed the limits of current automobile technology. Please drive safely!

Many of you know that this past year your BCA, along with 5th District Councilman Jack Weiss and unanimous support of the City Council, passed an ordinance which limits the height of retaining walls in hillside areas. Although we wanted stricter limits than were ordained, we are pleased that "certain" victory was achieved. The maximum height of retaining walls is now 12 feet or two 10 foot walls separated by at least 3 feet. A landscape plan must be submitted for walls 8 feet or greater.

Crime is at a level previously unknown to us. If you have an alarm, make sure you turn it on. Report any suspicious activity to the police. Be aware of any vehicles following you home. Don't be a victim of a "follow home robbery".

We have a new gardening service which will continue to keep our canyon road clean and orderly.

I wish you a pleasant and safe summer in the canyon.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Chasteen
President
Benedict Canyon Association

County Ridgeline Ordinance Passes!



Congratulations and our sincere thanks to Zev Yaroslavsky, our County Supervisor, for his proposal for a Grading and Ridgeline Ordinance for the Santa Monica Mountains, and promoting its prompt passage by the County Board of Supervisors on Oct. 26, 2004. BCA sent representation to the meeting and spoke in support of its passage.

The Ordinance applies to unincorporated county areas in the Santa Monica Mountains that are outside of the coastal zone. This covers over 30 square miles of the Santa Monica Mountains. The ordinance require a CUP (Conditional Use Permit) for any grading over 5,000 cubic yards of dirt, including total cut plus total fill, or creates a graded area of more than 15,000 square feet of land. It also requires that grading activity will be performed in a manner that maximizes preservation of visual quality and community character through design features that include, but are not limited to, reduced structural height, architectural design features of shape, materials and color that blends with the surrounding environment, and the use of indigenous vegetation for concealment. A list shall be maintained of appropriate landscaping materials required to satisfy this provision.

The Ordinance also provides that the highest point of a structure requiring a permit, shall be located at least 50 vertical feet and 50 horizontal feet from a significant ridgeline, unless it can be shown that this precludes any use of the site, in which case a variance may be sought.

We are encouraging our City Councilman, Jack Weiss to put forth this same initiative for the City of Los Angeles, and for the Santa Monica Mountains.

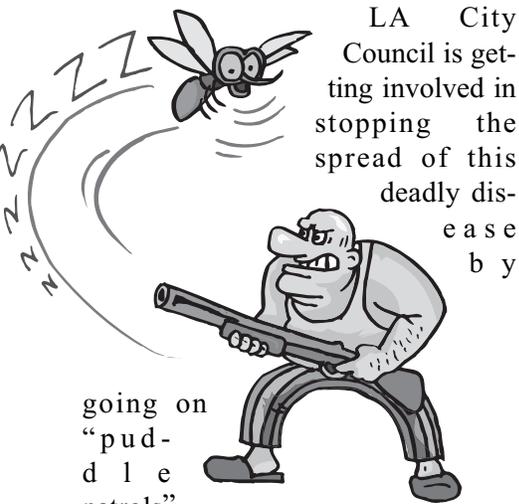
Barbara Nichols

Mosquitoes in Our Midst

By Monica Schilling

In an effort to prevent the spread of the West Nile virus in our canyon, take a good look around your property for stagnant water. Clear all puddles of water in and around your property as they are the breeding grounds and preferred gathering places for mosquitoes and other insects as well.

Californians from nine counties have been infected and state officials expect the virus to eventually be found statewide. More than 115 Californians have contracted the virus this year, and nearly 500 people have been infected nationwide. The elderly and people with weakened immune systems are most at risk.



LA City Council is getting involved in stopping the spread of this deadly disease by

going on "puddle patrols".

The Council has also introduced a motion directing city employees if they see stagnant waters on public streets to report that immediately. For more information on the West Nile Virus, please visit the Mosquito & Vector Control Association of California website at <http://mvcac.org>. ■

Slip Slidin' Away - Hillside Ground Cover

By Mr. Greenjeans

There are many good drought tolerant ground covers that work well at holding slopes and keeping weeds out. The following all need a little water in the beginning to get rooted in . . . then will do well on their own with just a little water now and then.

1. **Trailing Verbena:** likes full sun, great color - pinks and purples.
2. **Trailing Lantana:** Full sun, any soil, great color - white, yellow, purple, orange, used this in "pots" on Benedict Canyon Drive.
3. **Good ice plants:** (not too heavy)
 - a. Delosperma - small white flowers, stays low.
 - b. Drosanthemum - profuse flowers, pink or purple.
4. **Ceanothus:** native to California, different types grow from 12" to 3' with spreads of 10' to 30'. I like C. Griseus compacta, 12" high 3' wide with glossy green leaves and small blue flowers, sun or part shade.



5. **Vinea Major or v. minor:** shiny dark green leaf with blue flower, and very good in deep shade.
6. **Trailing Gazania:** full sun, any soil, very hardy with lots of flowers, white or yellow.
7. **Ground cover Roses** do well and add a nice splash of color; very hardy; don't over water.
8. **Several low growing junipers also do well:** very nice to mix with other plants, nice gray green color, good texture.
 - a. Buffalo Juniper 3'
 - b. Tam Juniper 12" - 18" with 3' - 4' spread
 - c. Shore 6"

9. **Evening primrose:** great pink flower, spreads like crazy.
10. **Ivy geranium:** get trailing variety in pink, red or white, flowers all year, also used in the "pots" on Benedict Canyon Drive.
11. **Santa Barbara Daisy:** full sun, white flower, very nice look. These are only a few, a drop in the bucket to what's at your local nursery. It is also nice to add other plants to your ground cover for a little bulk, such as agaves, sages, butterfly bush, lavenders, rosemary, red hot poker, aloes (many different types with great flowers), etc..

A planted hillside is good fire protection, attracts wildlife (birds, butterflies, etc), scents the air, keeps the dust down and is just nice to look at. So . . . go ahead and plant your hillside! ■

Retaining Wall is the Law

By Barbara Nichols

On January 7, 2005, the Los Angeles City Council unanimously passed a Retaining Wall Ordinance for the City of Los Angeles, which will limit the height of retaining walls in hillside areas to one 12 foot wall, or two 10 foot walls, separated by 3 feet. The walls will be required to be landscaped.

This is the first such ordinance in Los Angeles to establish a limit on the height of retaining walls. We are hopeful that we will never again see walls like those on Davies Drive that are 35 and 42 feet high. Property owners should develop their land with regard for the impact of their development on their neighbors.

We thank Our City Councilman Jack Weiss, who named some of the offending developments as "Hillside Stranglers", and his Deputy Bonnie Kopp, for their efforts, in proposing this ordinance to the City Council. We will be seeking further improvements in the ordinance to clarify the landscaping requirements and modify the down slope retaining wall separation of the two walls in order to permit better landscape options.

Next on our agenda, we will push to have the City Council pass a Ridgeline and Grading Ordinance for the City of Los Angeles, like the one approved by the County Board of Supervisors, for property in the Santa Monica Mountains under county authority.

Many of us on your Benedict Canyon Association Board of Directors, specifically Michael Chasteen and Michael Vignieri, have attended numerous meetings, and have spent hundreds of hours on this Ordinance. We are proud to have accomplished something of benefit for the entire City of Los Angeles and all of its residents. ■

THREE JEERS FOR THE GREEN, BLACK AND BLUE

By Sandy Margolis

How can we make Benedict Canyon more attractive? What do we have to do??

The City of Los Angeles is spending mega-bucks to improve our roads and water drainage systems to create better safety and a more attractive environment for all of the residents.

Unfortunately, the main road, sidewalks and side streets of the canyon are decorated with our large, ugly green, black and blue trash barrels!

City ordinances clearly state that trash containers cannot be placed out prior to 6:00 PM on Wednesdays and need to be removed by 6:00 PM. on Thursdays.

Please comply with the ordinances. Trash containers left out on sidewalks, and in the streets where there are no sidewalks, can and do cause accidents.

We will all enjoy admiring lovely landscaping and beautiful homes without these eyesores.

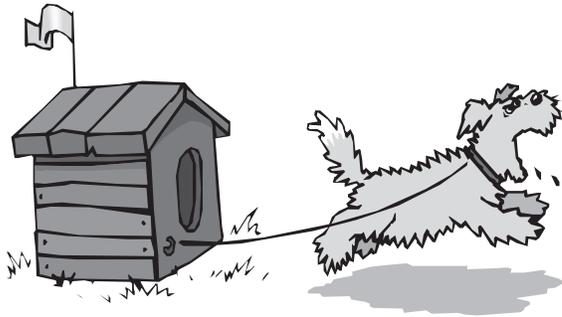
Thanks for your cooperation. ■



HOW TO BE A GOOD NEIGHBOR

– Top 10 List –

1. **LITTER.** The law requires you to pick up your trash & throw it away. Please encourage your children to do so. (LAMC 57.21)
2. **LEAF BLOWERS.** The use of gas powered leaf blowers within 500 feet of a residence is prohibited within the city of Los Angeles. (LAMC 112.04c)
3. **HONKING THE HORN** to call for people in buildings and homes is illegal. The car horn is for emergencies only. Using it any other time is against the law. Ask your visitors to respect the law and our neighborhood
Vehicle Code 27001 states:
 - a. The driver of a motor vehicle when reasonably necessary to insure safe operation shall give audible warning with his horn.
 - b. The horn shall not otherwise be used.
4. **STEREOS.** Loud car or home stereos are against the law. Be considerate. Play it for yourself, not the neighbors. (LAMC 116.01) It is the policy of the City to prohibit unnecessary, excessive and annoying noises from all sources.



5. **DOGS.** It is against the law to allow a dog to bark continuously or to be off leash. Sanitation laws require all dog owners to pick up after their dogs immediately and to dispose of properly. (LAMC 53.49)
6. **CURFEW LAW** requires all children under the age of 18 to be inside by 10 PM. (LAMC 45.03)
7. **NO TRESPASSING OR CREATING A NUISANCE** (LAMC 56.30, 41.57)
8. **GRAFFITI.** It is against the law to deface property with graffiti. Each violation is punishable by 6 months in jail or \$500. Parents are liable for up to \$10,000. (LAMC 91.8104.15)
9. **SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN.** They are your responsibility. Parents can be prosecuted if they fail to provide adequate care, control, protection or supervision of children. (Penal code section 272)
10. **DUMPING** old furniture is illegal & unnecessary. Call 311 or 800-773-2489 direct for Bulky Item Pickup. There is no charge for this service. (LAMC 66.27)

PLEASE CALL 311 IF YOU SEE A VIOLATION

Benedict Canyon

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HELP PROTECT BENEDICT CANYON



BECOME A BCA MEMBER

-DETAILS INSIDE THIS ISSUE-

Due to this year's excessive rainfall
the brushfire danger in Benedict Canyon is extreme.

Please brushclear your property with extra care.

Be "Fire Smart" and "Stop the Start".


Benedict Canyon

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