

Benedict Canyon

Spring/Summer 2006

Benedict Canyon Association Newsletter

Volume V Issue 9

Canyon Treasure

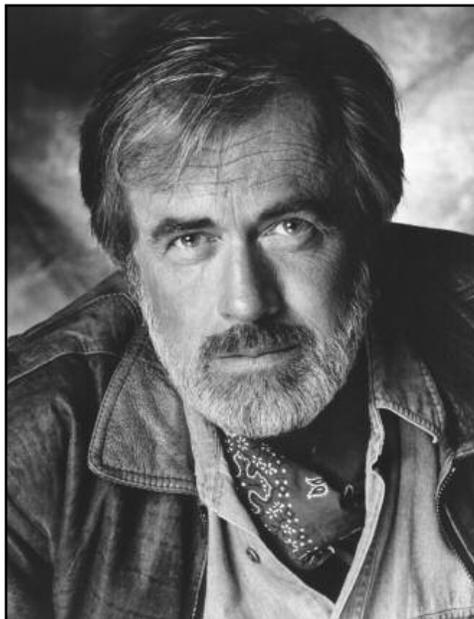
By Kathryn Leigh Scott

Meet actor, writer, artist Aron Kincaid, a sweet-natured bear of a man, whose Benedict Canyon home is a treasure trove of rare finds culled largely from back alley trash.

"I don't want people to think everything I have came from a junk heap," he protests, then interrupts himself to show off five magnificent emerald green, sculpted tiles cast off by former restaurateur Don the Beachcomber. The large Chinese tiles now adorn the entrance gates of the 1917 hunting lodge Aron calls home. The wood and stone structure tucked into a woodsy hillside is a rare treasure itself, featuring a soaring 23-foot peaked beam ceiling, mahogany wainscoting and a massive old stone and "clinker brick" fireplace.

"I like my outside to come inside," Aron says. Indeed the long tendrils of ivy clinging to the fireplace gain entrance to the living room through the roof. French windows are thrown wide welcoming squirrels to come in and dine on walnuts in the bowl on the trestle

table. Fresh water and kibble are provided in the garden for generations of raccoons. Despite this



overt hospitality toward critters and plant life, Aron's home is immaculately clean and in good repair.

In terms of décor, he is quick to point out that both the bowl and the trestle table, as well as the rawhide chairs, bookcases, rag rugs, Stickley

furniture, saddles, harness, steamer trunk and brass gong in his living room were all at one time someone else's "junk." The hanging tin lamp once belonged to Orson Welles. The green velvet drapes still bear a prop master's labels from a silent film set.

He first got into "junking" when he met Mary Dietrich, a former Goldwyn Girl and the wife of Noah Dietrich, Howard Hughes' right-hand man. "She used to go out scavenging in her station wagon at sunset with her cleaning lady. One evening she invited me to 'go junking' with them. Once I found a couple of really good things, I never looked back."

But it's Aron's artistic eye and clever refurbishment that restores other people's trash into useful, prized household items. Will Rogers would have felt right at home in this Craftsman paradise; Ralph Lauren would eat his heart out for the vintage authenticity.

"Here's what really sold me on the house," Aron says, pushing

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Canyon Treasure
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against a bookcase below the balcony that swings back to reveal a secret room, a “speakeasy” that became a necessity during Prohibition.

In addition to the well-stocked wet bar, the hideaway is fitted out with a low beamed ceiling, fishnet draped walls, a ship’s rope ladder and a built-in daybed. Among the many other artifacts is a much-valued Christmas gift to Aron from a set-designer girlfriend—a Dagon statue that appeared in both a temple scene in Cecil B. DeMille’s “Samson and Delilah” and a party scene in Billy Wilder’s “Sunset Boulevard.”

The “Casablanca Room” features a carved mother-of-pearl chair from Humphrey Bogart’s office and a divan backed with carved wooden screens that once belonged to Ann Miller, set among Moorish columns and Persian carpets. A bookshelf contains an Egyptian diorama, an installation Aron created from sand and 25 miniature vintage figurines. There’s also a prized red leather bound script of “Samson and Delilah” autographed by Cecil B. DeMille, each page displaying up to ten individual celluloid frames clipped from the Technicolor film, and DeMille’s 12-volume set of an 1879 edition of “History of Egypt.”

The “Anna Mae Wong Room,” with her signed portrait framed in bamboo, is a sun-filled office with Art Deco file cabinets rescued from neighborhood trash, and a World War I wooden trunk found in a church sale. A 1936 leather desk blotter that once belonged to Eleanor Powell and Glenn Ford, commemorates the Fifteenth Anniversary of Paramount Studios.

The Secret Garden is proof that Aron doesn’t confine his “junking” to furnishings alone. “Most of these plants that weren’t seeded by squirrels and birds, were found in the flats of Beverly Hills,” he says. “People leave plants, sometimes whole trees, next to their green bins.” A thriving palm was found on Rexford Drive in 1967, a flowering gardenia in an alley behind Crescent Drive.

In 1995, Aron acquired the adjacent property, a house built in 1947, to use primarily as a studio. An easel dominates the high-ceilinged living room, with canvases and art installations on display throughout. His work space, too, is furnished largely from “hand-me-downs,” including the woven rawhide chairs in the safari-themed “Stewart Granger” room, and the Gaffers & Sattler stove in the kitchen. In the vintage oven, Aron baked the coconut custard meringue pie that earned him second prize in the Beverly Hills Farmer’s Market pie-baking contest. His “Love Song of Kahlua” pie, decorated with white orchids and fern, is dedicated to Debra Paget, honoring her 1952 Twentieth-Century Fox film, “Birds of Paradise.”

Aron bought the hunting lodge in 1966 “for a low, five-figure sum” at a time when he was appearing in beach movies, Westerns and episodic television shows. His first film was a non-speaking role in Spartacus (“I stood near Laurence Olivier”) while he was still a student at UCLA. Movie posters featuring a young, blond and tanned Aron Kincaid surrounded by a bevy of bikini-clad teenage girls adorn the walls of his office. He recently wrote the Foreword to *Hollywood Surf and Beach Movies* by Thomas Lisanti (McFadden, 2005).

These days the still-handsome bachelor is a voice-over actor and graphic artist, who doesn’t want his Canyon neighbors to think he does nothing but rummage through their trash bins. But when pressed, he is willing to offer some tips about “junking.” Is it any wonder Aron claims “The Price is Right” is his favorite TV show? ■

EDITOR’S NOTE: Long time readers of The Benedict Canyon Association Newsletter will recognize Aron’s artwork. Since 1980 - more than a quarter of a century - Aron has contributed his original drawings that illustrate life in the canyon. In this issue see pages 5 & 6. Thank you Aron.

- Editor

Aron Kincaid’s Junking Tips

1. Timing is everything: The night before trash pickup is best. Keep in mind that people tend to clean out on the weekends, so Monday is always a good throw out day.
2. Keep your eye out for tear-downs. I lamented the destruction of the Gershwin-Rosemary Clooney house, but I managed to salvage some pool house tiles.
3. Cruise the alleys and if you see something exotic, like zebra skin, sticking out of a bin, hit the brakes.
4. Don’t second-guess: If you are in doubt, take it. It may turn out to be a treasure; otherwise you can always throw it away.
5. Not everyone appreciates knowing something was found in the trash. Creative people get it. Most people back off.



Benedict Canyon Association

OUR MISSION:

To promote, advance, further and protect the community interests and general welfare of the homeowners and residents residing in the general area of Benedict Canyon Drive.

WHO ARE WE?

We are a 100% volunteer organization made up of area residents.
All of our work is funded by donations. We are not sanctioned by any entity.

WHAT DO WE DO?

Monitor ongoing projects, programs and policies by private entities and city agencies outside our area which may impact or set precedent for land use and development within the canyon.

Monitor crime, safety, traffic, development and quality of life in the canyon.

We have four seats on the Bel Air-Beverly Crest Neighborhood Council,
an officially recognized component of our city government.

We have one executive seat on The Federation of Hillside and Canyon Associations.

Preservation and beautification of our Canyon.

WHAT DO WE PROVIDE FOR OUR MEMBERS?

Annual meeting for members at the Beverly Hills Hotel

Monthly meetings open to the public at the Beverly Hills Women's Club

Representation at greater Los Angeles civic meetings

Representation at the West Los Angeles division of LAPD

Emergency preparedness information

Regularly published newsletter

Hotline: (310) 553-4BCA

Website: www.benedictcanyon.org

WHEN AND WHERE DO WE MEET?

The Second Monday of every month

Beverly Hills Women's Club

(Benedict Canyon Drive @ Chevy Chase Drive)

7:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Open to the public

Free parking

Refreshments

BCA PRESIDENT'S LETTER

"The first requisite of a good citizen in this republic of ours is that he shall be able and willing to pull his weight."

-Theodore Roosevelt

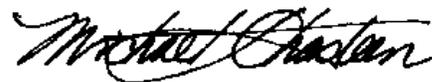
Now that we are into the new year, I find myself reflecting on the achievements and challenges of 2005. At last year's annual meeting we were all alarmed by the rash of home invasions and robberies. Fortunately the perpetrators were apprehended and that specific crime spree has stopped.

The annoyance with the road reconstruction from Mulholland Drive to Hutton drive escalated due to unusually heavy rains. Many of you had complaints regarding the lack of performance of the newly constructed storm drains, and rightly so. Fortunately the City of Los Angeles re-engineered the drains and completed the project early. Some of you might have been at the Celebration event on November 13th in honor of the road reconstruction's completion. Not only was the ribbon cutting ceremony delightful, but I must say the new roadway and design was worth the agony. Congratulations to City Council member Jack Weiss, his staff and all the city agencies, for a job well done. Bravo!

This year we'll continue to deal with ongoing land use/zoning, traffic, safety and crime concerns. While the BCA board was victorious in its efforts with our City Council in passing a retaining wall ordinance, we will pursue more stringent requirements. In addition, priority has been placed on the development of a ridgeline ordinance within the city in order to protect our remaining natural habitat and view corridors.

I am excited about the future of Benedict Canyon and in particular the year that is before us. "Your" Benedict Canyon Association is an all volunteer organization. Take a moment to analyze your schedule. Join us at our monthly meetings. Get involved. Make a difference!

While I would like to thank all of you for your financial support in the past, 2006 presents new challenges that require your donations to our "Trees of Support." I extend sincere gratitude to those of you who have so graciously given of your time and look forward to your continued contributions.



Michael Chasteen
President
Benedict Canyon Association

THE DOUBLE NOCTURNAL AMBUSH OF LATRODECTUS MACTANS

The Black Widow Spider

By Don Fenmore

Throughout our beloved Benedict Canyon an eons-old survival ritual goes on night after night – the skillful ambush by the dreaded *latrodectus mactans* of its hapless prey – usually only insect residents of the canyon, but sometimes its homosapien residents as well. In the darkness this highly accomplished killer hangs upside down in her shaggy ugly irregular web, waiting to ambush her evening meal. Her pitch black color blends in with the darkness, but on her large spherical abdomen, the famous insignia of her fearsome kind is proudly displayed – the bright red hour-glass marking conveying the unmistakable message – “BEWARE.”

If she has recently mated, she may be dining on her considerably smaller and non-biting male mate – thus aptly earning her the title of the black widow spider. Before this treacherous lady of the evening dines on you as well, is there any way you can spring a double ambush on her and deliver a toxin as deadly as her legendary venom? Indeed there is – your toxin will come in the form of a black, yellow & red aerosol can marked Raid Wasp and Hornet Spray. If any of this spray touches our notoriously wicked lady, she’s history. She has no chance of survival whatsoever.

How do you get a safe and clear shot at her? First, you must identify her telltale web, typically located close to the ground. Next, your ambush must take place in total darkness. If she’s a mature, street smart *latrodectus mactans*, any light for more than a very short period of time will cause her to instantly vanish into her hiding place. Game over – she

wins for the night. Younger spiders are not as light-savvy and therefore easier to ambush. Carefully and quietly creep up to the area where you know the web is located, wasp spray in one hand, flashlight in the other. At about a four or five foot range, turn on your flashlight and fire away with your wasp spray. If you’ve managed to douse her, game over – you win.

But let’s take a look at a different scenario – you meet up with a Benedict Canyon *latrodectus mactans* who is quicker than you are, and—simply put, you’ve got a big problem.

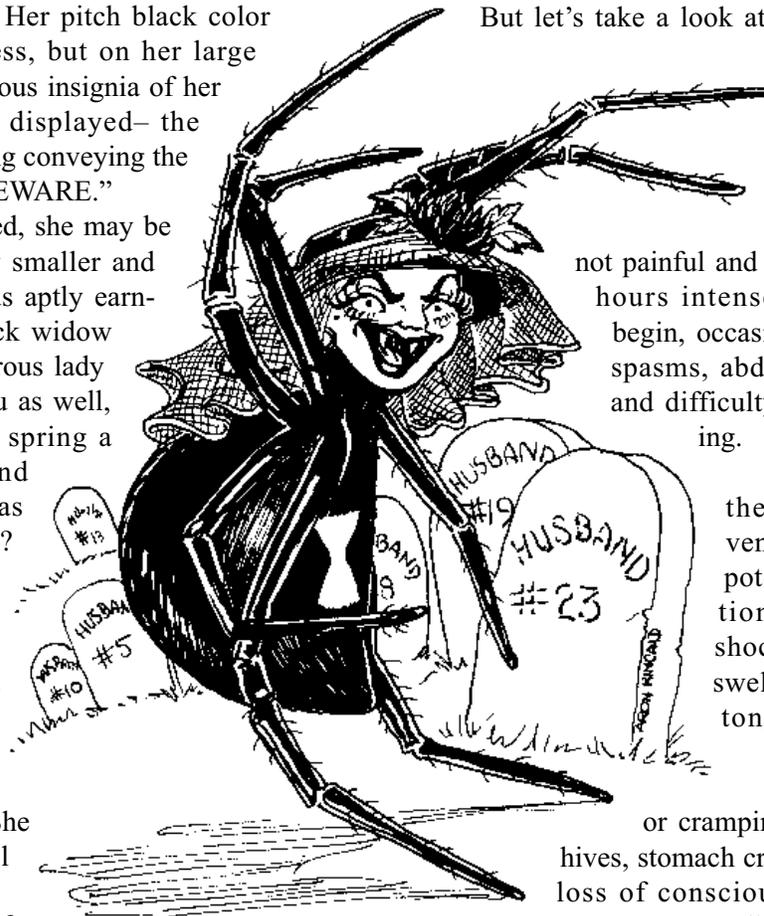
Although the actual bite is not painful and may pass unnoticed, within hours intense pain and stiffness may begin, occasionally followed by muscle spasms, abdominal pain, chills, fever, and difficulty in swallowing or breathing.

If you’re really unlucky, the black widow’s famed venom could trigger in you a potentially fatal allergic reaction known as anaphylactic shock. This can include rapid swelling around the eyes, lips, tongue, or throat, difficulty breathing, wheezing or hoarseness, severe itching

or cramping, or numbness, dizziness, hives, stomach cramps, and last but not least, loss of consciousness. You must receive emergency medical care immediately. Get

yourself to a hospital emergency room (probably UCLA if you live in lower Benedict Canyon, Sherman Oaks Hospital on Van Nuys Boulevard if you reside in upper Benedict) right away if you experience these symptoms.

While not all of our Canyon neighbors are friendly, some can be deadly. ■



What's wrong with "Topping"?

By Bridget Heddison

If you are lucky enough to have trees in your garden, you also have the responsibility of maintaining them. Other than cutting down a healthy tree, the worst thing you can do is to top it. While this is common practice, it is extremely damaging to the tree, and also defeats the purpose. A tree badly trimmed, particularly if it has been topped, will grow out of control and will possibly not survive.

While they would never consider hiring an unqualified electrician to rewire their house, tree owners will often employ the person with the cheapest estimate to trim their trees. But what they usually get for their money is someone in possession of a chain saw who is willing to climb a tree, not someone who has any knowledge of trees and how to maintain them. Tree trimming is not the same as brush clearance!

This from *Sunset Western Garden Book* on "What's wrong with Topping"?

Topping – *reducing the height of a mature tree by sawing off its top limbs – is the fastest way to ruin a tree's appearance. It doesn't reduce height for long, either. Unlike a bushy hedge that soon sprouts new growth even after severe shearing, an older tree does not grow back in a natural-looking way when its upper limbs are pruned to stubs. Instead, it sends out scores of weak shoots from buds near the cutoff points, and these shoots are often taller, coarser, denser, and more weakly attached than the natural top was.*



"Hello, you must be our new neighbors the Loppers"

Topping may also shorten a tree's life, both because the resultant large wounds are exposed to decay and insect attack and because the process removes much of the leafy growth needed to manufacture food for the plant.

Though some topped trees can eventually recover their form, it may take decades. A good professional arborist will not top a tree that has grown too large for its space, but instead will gradually scale it back by making thinning cuts to groups of branches in the upper part of the canopy.

Please note that this applies not only to topping but to any form of trimming back to maintain size and shape.

A list of certified arborists in our area can be obtained from The American Society of Consulting Arborists – www.asca-consultants.org/ (tel: 301.947.0483 fax: 301.990.9771), or from The International Society of Arboriculture: <http://www.isa-arbor.com/findArborist/findarborist.aspx>

There are many landscape maintenance contractors who, while not certified arborists, have the knowledge and experience needed to trim trees in the correct way. They will usually not be the cheapest, not only because they deserve the higher rates but also because they carry permits, licenses and insurance for their workers.

For recommendations and more information, please feel free to email me at bhedison@aol.com, or call me at (310) 247 2220. ■

Benedict Canyon

BENEDICT CANYON ASSOCIATION 2006 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:

- | | | |
|--------------------------|---------|------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | \$1000+ | Oak Tree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | \$500 | Sycamore Tree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | \$250 | Eucalyptus Tree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | \$100 | Pine Tree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | \$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
2006

Cut On Dotted Line



Benedict Canyon

Final 2005 BCA "Trees of Support" Donor Program Roster

OAK TREE

Richard & Diane Naegele
(1) Anonymous *

SYCAMORE TREE

Jacqueline Bisset *
Alex Bouzari & Yuki Nariai
Laifun Chung & Ted Kutcheff *
Keith Herman *
Barbara Jaynes
Maurice Marciano
Fred & Joan Nicholas *
Peju Winery *

EUCALYPTUS TREE

Joshua & Jennifer Berman
Joni Berry
In Memory of Nacio Herb Brown, Jr. *
Ted & Karen Coyne
Kenneth & Randee Devlin
David & Barbara Elson
Peter & Susan Feibleman *
Jo & Peter Forman *
Evans Frankenheimer
In Memory of Gloria Kahn
Dr. & Mrs. Morteza Kerendian *
The George R. Kress House
Ian La Frenais
Deborah Klar Marks
Margaret Maw
Mark & Irene Montgomery
Eustace Moore
Ellie Neumaier
Rick Nicita & Paula Wagner
Jackie Patterson *
Norman & Mary Pattiz
Mr. & Mrs. John T. Pigott
In Memory of Denise Polk
Lee M. Polster & Marguerite E. Cascio
Gene & Myrna Schwam *
Linda Shokrian
Lev L. Spiro & Melissa Rosenberg
Albert Ruddy & Wanda McDaniel
Art Spence
Joseph & Marilyn Stefano
Richard Weisman
(2) Anonymous *

PINE TREE

Robert & Maria Abeloff
Michael Abrams & Valerie Edwards
Dennis & Elaine Abramson
Michael G. Agate *
Michael & Elaine Agran
Virginia Ambrosini
Jim Anderson & Lynn Fireside
Bijan & Sima Ansari *
William & Phyllis Axelrod
Stephen Baker *
Adam & Amy Bass
George & Carolyn Bender
Dr. & Mrs. Issac Berman
Gary Bird *

Paul & Marie-France Bloch *
Babette Bloomgarden
Ronald Boldt & Judith Shelton
Ron & Jan Cannan
Gary & Rochelle Carmona
B.G. Carp
Scott Chaplan
Betty Chaplin *
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
Francis & Eleanor Coppola *
Healy & Gary Cosay
In Memory of Dorothy G. Cutler *
Mark & Maggie Damon
Marvin & Patti Demoff
Joe DiStefano & Beth Rubin
Evelyn Furtah-Dorfman
Nassir Ebrahimi
Joseph A. & Marilyn Eisenberg *
Don Empakeris & Viktorija Joga
Ray Exley & Lois O'Brien *
Lisa Engel & Brent Smith
Ferdinand & Lennie Fam
Ruth K. Felmus
Don & Sandy Fenmore
Alan Fine
Margaret Fisher *
Burton N. Forester
Philip Forte
Samuel & Ardyth Freshman
Bradley Friedman
Sidney & Linda Furie *
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Mr. & Mrs. Sam Gordon
Harland N. Green
George & Nana Gregory
Marvin & Inger Gross *
Jack Grossbart & Marc Schwartz *
Peggy Guggenheim
Sajeevi Gunasekera
Paul & Renee Haas
Albert P. Harris *
In Loving Memory of Chick Harris *
James E. & Jean M. Harris *
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.
Lee Ann Jacobs *

Len & Nancy Jacoby *
Joel Jaffe
Ricky Jay & Chrisann Verges
Sam & Ziva Jenkala *
Preston & Vicki Johnson
Robert & Sylvia Jones *
Pete Kameron *
Greg & Susan Kay
John & Melissa Kelly
Bernard Kester
T. Gregory Kirianoff *
Gertrude Kline
Rosa Koppens
Robert Kopple *
Esther Korman *
David & Terry Kramer
Don & Hope Kurz *
Morrie & Patti Lachman
Alan W. Landsburg *
Daniel & June Lang
Lee Lasker
Howard & Carol Levy *
Monte M. Lemann II & C.C.
Pulitzer-Lemann
Lemmon Family Trust *
Brian LeSage *
Dr. & Mrs. Marvin Levin
Lawrence Leviton & Arlene Ruby
Paul Lipari
Mark Liszt & Karyl Sisson *
Gene Lucero & Marcia Williams
Mr. & Mrs. Mahdavi
Gail Malmuth
Joel Mandel
Barbara Marcus
Gerald & Sandy Margolis
Ferne Margulies
Thomas & Linda Markovits *
Dorothy Marlowe *
George & Sally Mason *
Lowell & Wende Mate
Jim McGuirk
Mike & Mary McLachlan *
Robert Gregory Meidel *
Steven & Marsha Mermelstein
Geoff & Kathryn Miller
Larry & Nickie Miner
Candy Mintz & David Caplan *
Claudia Mirkin *
Wm. Montgomery
Jeff & Sheila Morris
Alex Moscowicz
Richard & Sandy Mosk *
John & MaryAnn Musico
Barbara Nichols
Colleen O'Rourke & Phil Carson *
William L. O'Toole
David Parry
Elizabeth Parry
Joe & Marti Paskal *
Marshall Peck
Dick Perlman
Lisa Pierozzi *
Eddie Pinchasi
Gary & Nita Polinsky
Stefanie Powers *

Phil Proctor & Melinda Peterson *
Max Ramberg
Carol & Stephen Randall
Paul & Allison Rohrer
Gil & Val Romoff
George Rose
In Memory of Dr. Sheldon Rosenfeld *
Suzanne Rosenthal *
Jim & Rachelle Rosten
Norman & Mary Lou Rotenberg
Bill & Linda Rouse
Jolyn Rudelson *
Roman & Ida Russ
Larry C. Russ
Joanne Sackheim
Faraj & Hiromi Saedi *
Jeffrey & Mindy Salberg
John Samore, Jr.
Jeremy Sauter *
Sam & Shanit Schwartz
Stephen & Sara Schwartz
Stanford & Randi Schwimer
Arthur & Arlene Schwimmer
Martin & Sheila Seaton
Evelyn Shapero
Norm & Libby Shapiro
Bernie & Mary Sharf
Sheldon & Andrea Shapiro
Dariush Shirmohammadi
Barbara Shuler
Henry & Jeanne Silberberg *
Perry & Linda Silver
Jay Silverman & Janet Wood
Cortez Smith
Gordon & Diane Smith
Bill & Lisa Sobel
Stanley W. Sokoloff *
Andrew Solt & Claudia Falkenburg
Jeff & Annie Stein
Ted Steinberg & Ellen Brown
Larry Steinman & Lucy Suzar
Alana Stewart
Jim & Randi Swindel
Frank & Suellen Symons
Steve & Rosalie Tenenbaum *
In Memory of Tess the Baroness
Jim & Morgan Thomas
Kim Troy *
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
Steven Zax *
Michael & Leslie Zinberg
(9) Anonymous *

* Indicates donations received after June 15, 2005

Shake, Rattle and Roll

by Michael Chasteen

What's the buzz in "the Canyon?" Answer: Rattlesnakes, as I discovered upon returning home one Sunday afternoon last summer. I glanced out the garden window and there, stretched out as straight as an arrow, was a very bulky, three-foot-long serpent. From my boy scout training I easily recognized the specimen as a "rattler." I rounded-up my Yorkshire terrier before he had an opportunity to stick his nose into trouble, and called Animal Control. While waiting for them to arrive, I gazed in awe at the beauty of this fascinating reptile.

I had heard stories about rattlesnakes in our canyon, but never imagined I would encounter one in my own back yard. But we had just reseeded our lawn and covered it in steer manure, which emits a lot of heat, attracting the snake.

HERE ARE A FEW FACTS ABOUT THESE ANIMALS:

In Benedict Canyon, you will most likely come across the Southern Pacific rattlesnake.

Rattlesnakes have a dual visual system. They see not only with their eyes, but have sensory organs in their jaws that detect infrared images. Due to heat-sensing pits behind their nostrils, which categorize them as pit vipers, they can detect heat from flame 30 feet away, and perceive fractions of a degree of heat at less than a foot away. Heat given off by animals creates a heat image and allows these creatures to hunt effectively even in complete darkness.

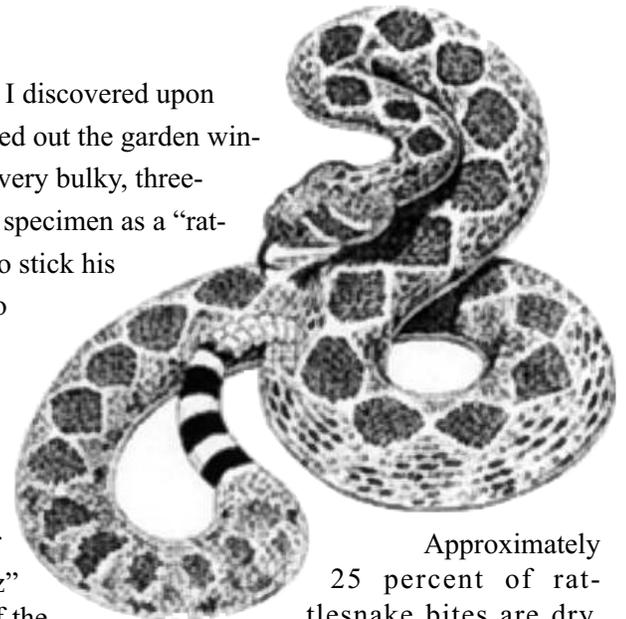
A rattlesnake is heavy-bodied and has a blunt tail, with a "rattle" on the end. The rattle is composed of a fibrous protein called keratin and contains one or more seg-

ments. The various segments bump against each other to produce the frightening "buzz" that some of us have heard. The "buzz" is the result of movement of the rattle back and forth 60 or more times per second. Rattlesnake tails look stumpy, while other snakes have tails that come to a smooth tapered point.

The rattlesnake has a triangular shaped head, much broader at the back than at the front. The eyes are hooded with elliptical pupils. They have a series of dark and light bands near the tail, just before the rattles, which are different from the markings on the rest of the body.

Rattlesnakes have long hollow fangs that allow the snake to inject venom from glands located toward the back of its head.

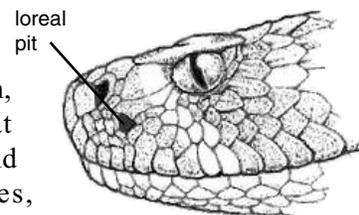
Rattlesnake venom, a toxic saliva that destroys blood and paralyzes nerves, functions primarily to help capture and digest prey. Snake venom consists of combinations of proteins that range from hemotoxins to anticoagulants and neurotoxins that may cause circulatory arrest or respiratory paralysis.



Approximately 25 percent of rattlesnake bites are dry, meaning that no venom is injected. There are very few human deaths from rattlesnake bites. Adult rattlesnakes can control the amount of venom they inject, but baby snakes are more likely to inject all their venom. Rattlesnakes are born live and come equipped with teeth and toxins. They can be very dangerous. All rattlesnake bites require medical attention. Take the victim to an emergency room immediately, or call 911 for assistance.

These natural predators help keep down our rodent population, which in turn carry disease. Rattlesnakes are an important part of our ecology and have inhabited these hills long before man arrived. Most rattlesnakes avoid contact with humans. You are most likely to see them when the temperature is between 70 and 90 degrees F, regardless of the time of day. They can climb trees and

Cont. pg. 12



IN MY CANYON VIEW

by Rodney Kemerer

Five Reasons
Why We Love
Benedict Canyon

1 SUNDAY MORNINGS
The stillness and freshness of the air. With a cup of coffee and the Sunday paper, the canyon feels like perfection.

2 WILDLIFE
The chance encounter when you least expect it. The deer, raccoon or bobcat that looks directly at you and acknowledges your shared landscape.

3 TREES
The change of seasons marked by Sycamore leaves. It may not snow here but you still know when to turn on the furnace.

RIDGELINES **4**
The unbroken greenery that travels across your view from window, car or patio. The fog that nestles in the hillside and frames the mountains.

5 COMMUNITY
People who care about their environment and neighbors. A real sense of place in a very large and ever expanding city.

Federation of Hillside & Canyon Associations

By Marilyn Stefano

Many residents of Benedict Canyon are unaware of the history and purpose of the the Federation of Hillside & Canyon Associations. The Benedict Canyon Association has been a founding member for 50 years. The goals are to improve and protect the Santa Monica Mountains, and enhance the quality of life for residents and property owners. The Federation is an amalgamation of, at present, 39 home-owner associations, ranging from Mt. Washington to Pacific Palisades, that are non-profit organizations recognized by the State of California. The Federation works to enforce and support all of the LA City, County and local plans, codes and ordinances regarding land use, zoning and other issues that have an environmental impact.



Among the Federation's greatest strengths is sending representatives to appear at Planning Land Use Management, Planning Commission hearings, and Mulholland Design Review Board meetings to speak in defense of environmental issues, and then to inform the public about how specific planning proposals will impact our communities. For example, the Federation participated in a lawsuit that challenged the City's revision of the 1964 General Plan Framework. The Federation saw the proposed changes not as an improvement, but as a scheme to increase population growth without adequate infrastructure or an adequate Environmental Impact Report. The Federation won its case when, in effect, the Court set aside the Los Angeles General Plan until the City comes up with adequate traffic mitigation.

If you really care about living in this city, and want to know what you can personally do to safeguard your community, attend a Federation meeting. I went out of curiosity – and got hooked! I was so impressed by the passionate, knowledgeable and committed attendees, and the wealth of fascinating material presented and discussed, that I decided to join. Meetings are held at 8pm on the first Wednesday of each month at the Tree People Building at the corner of Mulholland Drive & Coldwater Canyon in Studio City. I urge you to attend. I don't think you'll regret it. ■

MARILYN STEFANO is the Benedict Canyon Association Representative to the Federation of Hillside & Canyon Associations.

“Dancing In the Street”

By Elizabeth Parry

Sunday, November 13th marked a special day for the construction-weary residents of our Canyon. It was the official end to a twenty year endeavor by the BCA and the residents of the Benedict Canyon to get the County and City of Los Angeles to complete the final phase of rebuilding our roadway. After years of negotiation, and 22 months of actual construction, our new roadway was officially opened with a gala celebration.

The project encompassed far more than just the repaving of a crumbling road surface. The \$6.2 million dollar project—to date, one of the city’s largest—included reconstruction and resurfacing of approximately 9,800 feet of roadway from Hutton Drive to Mulholland; the construction of a 4,300-foot-long, low-flow storm drain system and new catch basins to prevent future roadway deterioration; the installation of

19,600 feet of concrete curb and gutter; the replacement of aged and leaking water main lines by the Department of Water and Power; the construction of a steel beam and concrete lagging bulkhead that supports the road, and the replacement of guard rails. North of Wallingford, a 2000-foot portion of the roadbed was rebuilt with reinforced concrete to reestablish the foundation discovered to have been weakened by the Northridge Earthquake. The resurfaced road included white striping on both sides to better define and narrow the roadway to help control speed, and to define safe parking.

The celebration at the top of Benedict Canyon Drive next to the Mulholland intersection was kicked off with a street fair that ran from 12:00 noon until 3:00pm. The BCA organized the closing of the street and the opening of festivities with live jazz music from the Paul Gormley Band, delicious food and drink and information booths for residents from the Lange Foundation (pet adoption), Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, DWP’s free trees program (Trees for a Green LA), our local LAPD mobile command unit from the West Los Angeles Community Police Station, and Fire Station 99.

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(From L to R) Vahik Vartanians, Project Manager, Bureau of Engineering, City of Los Angeles; Zev Yaroslavy, County Supervisor; Michael Chasteen, President of BCA; and Jack Weiss, Councilman 5th District

SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL

Cont. from Pg. 9

walls. They tend to prefer the protection of low-growing shrubs, rocks and concealed spaces - although you might find them sunning themselves on a rock, your pool deck or patio.

While waiting for animal control, I watched this beautiful creature lie peacefully in the sun and then gracefully make its way over to a stone wall before disappearing into the ivy on the hillside. I was reluctant to see him escape at first, but I'd also come to admire the snake. I felt a true respect for this serpent, and the thought of ending its life was something I could not bear. After all, what was this creature doing but basking in the sun!

Animal control did arrive, much too late. The officer informed me that the snake would have been killed, and for once I was content that one of our city servants was tardy. My snake lived to hunt another day. Unless your snake is an immediate threat to you, your pet, or a family member, I urge you to give some thought to sparing its life. Try to respect them and understand their important ecological value among us. They will remain a part of our environment, whether we like it or not.

Among the ways to discourage snakes from taking up residence in your yard is to remove piles of boards or rocks around the home. (A tip: rattlers sometimes like to coil in the pool skimmer basket due to the warmth these containers provide. Always check before reaching in to remove debris.) Do be cautious, and should you confront one of our complex friends don't be ashamed if you, like me, scream out - RATTLESNAKE! ■

“DANCING IN THE STREET”

Cont. from page 11



Barbara Nichols and Kathryn Miller greet visitors with a bottle of cold water and a smile at the Benedict Canyon Association's tent.

An official recognition was held at 1:00pm. The ribbon cutting Master of Ceremonies was City of Los Angeles Public Works Board President Pro-Tem Paula Daniels. Fortuna Ippoliti, previously Field Deputy to Councilmember Jack Weiss and now Area Director for Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, City Councilmember Jack Weiss, from our Council District 5, and County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, City Engineer Gary Lee Moore, and Assistant Director of the Bureau of Street Services Ron Olive all spoke of the complexities of the project and expressed appreciation for all involved. BCA President Michael Chasteen presented both Supervisor Yaroslavsky and Councilmember Jack Weiss with plaques to commemorate the occasion.



Congratulations to the entire Benedict Canyon community for their patience and persistence in completing a difficult project. ■

A big “thank you” to go with Elizabeth Parry’s “Big Scissors” for her fantastic job of organizing the BCA Ribbon Cutting Event.

THE GANG THAT COULDN'T STAND UP STRAIGHT . . .and other stories of early Benedict Canyon

By Geoff Miller

It's hard for residents of today's pristine and manicured Benedict Canyon to imagine, but little more than a century ago, this area was the site of Indian raids, persistent cattle rustling and frequent bloodshed.

Los Angeles County itself, which then included what is now



Benedict Canyon, circa 1880

Orange and San Bernardino Counties, was a sparsely populated, largely lawless no-man's land, host to an average of one murder a day.

All this is related by first-person participants in a 1934 book recently unearthed by local historian and archivist Marc Wanamaker. The volume, entitled *History of Beverly Hills—in two parts: Narrative and Biographical*, was edited by Pierce Benedict, son of E. A. Benedict, the largest landowner of the somewhat uncharted Canyon.

In the summer of 1868, E. A. Benedict, who had run a grocery store for about seven years in downtown Los Angeles, filed claim on property in the canyon that would ultimately bear his name. On July 4, the family had a picnic dinner on the land and decided to build at the

mouth of the canyon. Grain and vegetables were planted and cattle were acquired, but in the custom of the time, the cattle were all stolen in 1873.

Pierce Benedict had been born in 1856. At the age of 20, he purchased 230 acres of land and built a house farther up the canyon, adjoining his father's property. There he planted walnut trees, vegetables and beans. Parcel by parcel, he disposed of his canyon holdings until 1932, when the last of the Benedict family's original property was subdivided.

Among the more colorful incidents reported in Pierce Benedict's history of the area is an account called "The Last Indian Raid." As will be noted, the adventure might be more appropriately titled "The Posse That Couldn't Shoot—Much Less Stand Up Straight."

In 1853, it seems a particularly

determined swarm of Owens River Indians traveled hundreds of miles through other rancher's herds to steal about a dozen horses from Don Benito Wilson, an Indian Agent. The famous Bella Union Hotel, the Beverly Wilshire of its day, was controlled by the "Yankee Don," and the scene of the crime was Don Benito's rancho, situated where Westwood now stands:

"Full of wrath, Don Benito galloped into Los Angeles on Monday morning and called for volunteers to pursue and chastise the marauders. Amid such scenes of enthusiasm, as described by Major Bell in his "Reminiscences of a Ranger," a posse was organized.

"Ferocious looking warriors dashed up and down Main Street with an immense clatter of spurs, with comfortable looking rolls of blankets on behind their saddles, which said blankets had been patriotically and gratuitously given by our generous merchants. Canteens were in great demand, and when a hero was fortunate enough to secure one, away he would dash to the Bella Union or the Montgomery, where the canteen would be passed

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Benedict Canyon, circa 1880

THE GANG THAT COULDN'T STAND UP STRAIGHT

Cont. from page 13

to generous old Hodges, of the former place, or to chivalrous Getman, of the latter, and the said canteens would be promptly returned to their respective owners, filled with something more efficacious on a campaign than holy water or iced tea.

"In fact the atmosphere of the bar was so attractive, the sluggards so slow in preparation, that departure was delayed until one o'clock.

"The hardy Indian fighters at length rode out of town in columns of fours, westward across the dusty plains, determined to skin enough Redmen to make razor straps for the next generation. In two hours they reached Don Benito's ranch, and as the hour was already late, decided to spend the night there. Typical California fare—beef, tortillas and coffee—aided the warriors in preparing for the morrow's combat with the savages.

"The next morning they feasted again and then moved up Beach's Canyon and crossed the ridge. By this time their canteens were again empty. Commander Wilson had once faced and been clawed by an angry bear; he had once volunteered to patrol the hills to keep watch for the terrorizing bandit, Garra; but he couldn't face the prospect of a long, dusty journey with an empty canteen. So the band halted at Vicente de la Osa's Rancho Del Encino.

"There the courageous volunteers again fortified themselves, and the hospitable Don Vicente invited them to spend a few days with him, arguing that the Indians already had a 40-hour start. He took the empty canteens, smiled and said, "Aquai liay basante,"—"Here there is enough."

"But anyhow, that the savages had been given a great scare was proved to the satisfaction of everyone—even to those who joshed the volunteers upon their return to town that night—by the fact that this was the first time they were ever pursued

by Americans and the last time they ever raided the valley of this area. And the loss of the horses was no great blow to Don Benito financially."

A final note: Los Angeles County, when organized in 1850, included the present San Bernardino and Orange Counties, and part of Riverside and Kern Counties. It was larger than most Eastern states and almost as large as Ohio. The total real estate therein was valued at all of \$785,000!

No doubt there was much talk even then of a "real estate bubble."

We are deeply indebted to Marc Wanamaker for his help in preparing this article. Marc's book, *Early Beverly Hills*, detailing the history of the Beverly Hills area from 1880 to 1940, is published in Tradepaper by Arcadia Publishing. The book is available through Amazon.com, and locally in Book Soup, Dutton's Beverly Hills, Barnes & Noble and Borders. Volume II, available next year, will cover the period through to the present day. ■

"LIGHT THE WAY"

**2006 Membership Program
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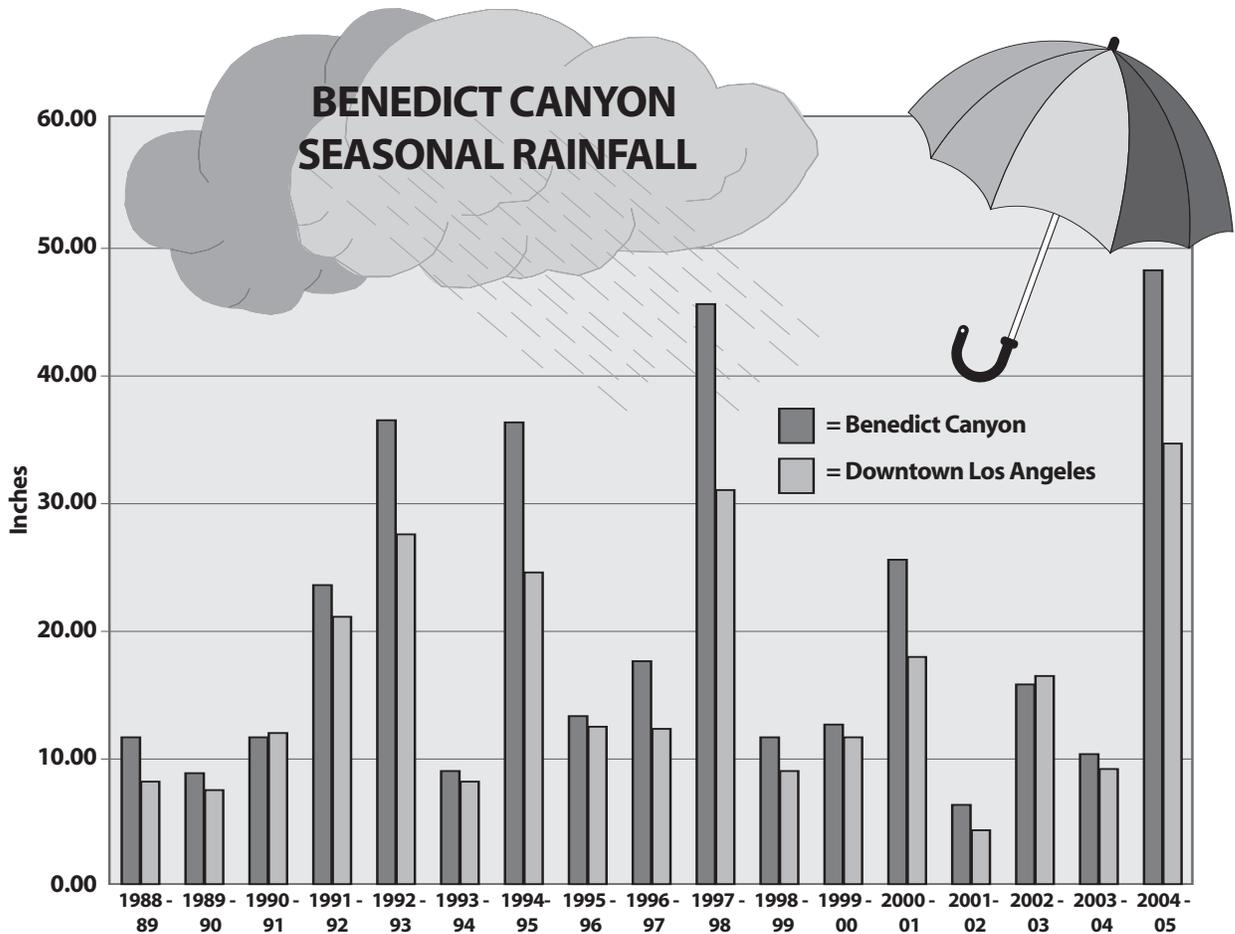


For the 2006 Benedict Canyon Association Membership Drive, the BCA Membership Committee is offering a free Coleman Classic battery operated emergency lantern with every paid membership at the Eucalyptus level (\$250) and above. It's the perfect light source for those frequent canyon power outages or for just a romantic evening at home. Each lantern is imprinted with the BCA name and logo to remind you that your generous donation will help to "Light the Way" for a better canyon living environment. Supply is limited so please use the enclosed membership form on page 7 and join today.

“Raindrops Keep Falling On My Head”

by Alan G. Fine

Los Angeles – the land of perpetual sunshine, of orange groves and movie stars! That is the image that some tourists have in mind when they head for Southern California. If they were here last winter, their perspective changed somewhat. We had one of the wettest seasons on record.



Some years ago I installed a rain gauge in my back yard, and have kept a record of the rainfall in Benedict Canyon every season since then. Above is a chart, which compares it to the published record of downtown Los Angeles. You will note that, here in the hills, we receive considerably more rain than in the flatlands. For instance, this last rainy season we received 48.03 inches compared with 34.51 inches downtown, a difference of about 39%! In the driest year, we received 6.4 compared with 4.42. So whenever you read about the amount of rainfall here in the daily papers, always mentally add a few inches for canyon living.

I wish I had been keeping a record in the late seventies, when the Canyon was turned into a muddy river. I remember having to wade from my stalled car, leading my wife and two small children through the rushing torrent. We reached home safely, a little damp but none the worse for wear. With our new storm drain project completed, this scenario will not be repeated. But, whenever the rain is upon us again, keep that umbrella handy! ■

**City of Los Angeles Emergency Phone Numbers
for BHPO residents and issues
within the LA City boundaries:**

- 911 Emergency dispatcher (LAPD, LAFD) when calling from a land line
- (213) 928-8206 Emergency dispatcher (LAPD, LAFD) – when calling from a cell phone
- (877) 275-5273 Non-Emergency dispatch (LAPD, LAFD)
- (877) 284-7328 Terrorist tip line (LAPD)
- (213) 485-4131 LAPD (ITS) - Commercial Crime Division – Identity Theft, Identity Fraud
- (310) 444-0701 West LA Community Police Station
- (310) 444-0735 Senior Lead Officer (general number)
- (310) 444-0741 Sr. Lead Officer Michael Moore – voice mail
- (310) 622-3984 Sr. Lead Officer Michael Moore - cell
- (818) 756-8699 Fire Station 99 (Mulholland/Beverly Glen) – non-emergency
- (310) 575-8571 Fire Station 71 (Beverly Glen/Sunset) – non-emergency
- 311 or
- (213) 473-3231 City Services Hotline – can connect you with any City of LA department
- 211 County Services Hotline – can connect you with any County of LA department

**City of Beverly Hills Emergency Numbers
(These numbers should only be used for
matters within the City of Beverly Hills)**

- 911 Emergency Dispatcher (BHPD, BHFD) when calling from a BH land line
- (310) 550-4800 Beverly Hills Police Emergency Dispatcher
- (310) 550-4900 Beverly Hills Non-Emergency Fire
- (310) 550-4951 Beverly Hills Police Non-Emergency dispatch (for general police services such as parking problems, construction or loud parties)
- 211 County Services Hotline – can connect you with any County of LA department

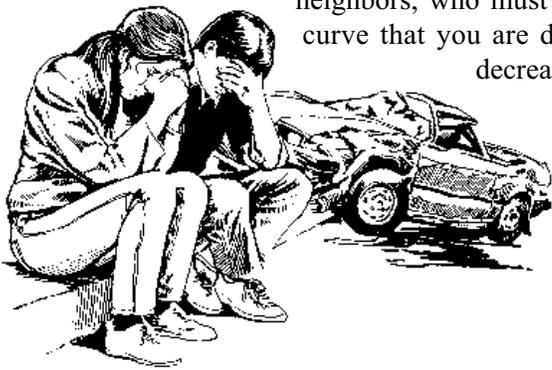
RULES OF THE ROAD

By Don Loze

Now that the new upper Benedict road is completed, let's appreciate that the unique character of our neighborhood creates some special driving conditions. The winding road limits sight lines for driveways and intersecting access roads. Traffic volume with commuters multiplies the risk, and weather conditions compound all factors. Some elementary facts give some perspective. The entire length of Benedict Canyon from the Beverly Hills city limit to Mulholland is only 3.9 miles, 4.9 miles measured from Sunset Boulevard. The posted speed limit is 35 MPH, although a safe speed is less than that in many places. Driving the entire length of the Canyon at 40 MPH, instead of 35 MPH saves 1.07 minutes. At 45 MPH, one saves less than 1.9 minutes. Hotshots who exceed the speed limit at 50 miles an hour save only 2.57 minutes.

Is that extra few minutes in your trip worth your life or somebody else's?

There are 128 houses that border the roadway, all with driveways. Additional side roads empty into the canyon. Your neighbors, who must enter traffic from those driveways and side roads, cannot see around the curve that you are driving—nor can you. The closing time from the driveway sight line is decreased proportionately when you speed, enhancing the danger to both drivers.



To stop, a driver must first see a danger, then react and then make the onrushing vehicle stop. Analyze this information and visualize its impact. At 35 MPH stopping distance is a full 1/3 of a football field.

Speed	Stopping Distance
30MPH	120 feet
40MPH	189 feet
50 MPH	268 feet

What damage will result if your reaction time is slower because you are talking on your cell or are distracted by your passenger? Think about night driving conditions. Low beams illuminate only 160 feet. There is no time to react should you need to slam on your brakes for parked vehicles, service trucks, construction or people exiting their driveways.

The vehicle code prohibits crossing the double yellow line, which is there for everyone's safety. The blind curves in the Canyon hide on-coming traffic. Even the straight-aways carry unforeseeable dangers. Why invite the double danger of decreasing the closing time, or risking a head-on collision?

Enjoy our new road. Let's be responsible and respectful of each other in using it. ■



DOG OWNERS:

THINK ABOUT IT:

ALLOWING YOUR DOG TO STAY OUTSIDE AND BARK FOR HOURS WHEN YOU ARE AWAY FROM YOUR PROPERTY ALERTS PROSPECTIVE BURGLARS TO THE FACT THAT YOU ARE NOT HOME.

PS: Excessive barking is also against the law.

Are You Prepared?

By Alan G. Fine

Since the disaster spawned by Katrina, we have often heard the phrase “wake-up call” used. Perhaps this is the time for us to open our eyes and look at our own situation here in Los Angeles. We are told that an earthquake – the “Big One” – is inevitable, although we don’t know when or where.

Keep enough water on hand. 1 gallon per person per day for drinking and sanitation. (Don’t forget a supply for your pets!) Buy 1-gallon bottles, date them and store them in a dark place. Replace them once a year. (Keep the empties – they are always useful!)

At least a ten-day supply of non-perishable food. Canned food is good for about two years, so date them and replace when necessary.

Always keep a tank of gas in your car. Most people are probably like me and let the needle go to nearly empty to reduce trips to the gas station. This is not a good idea. In the event of a prolonged power failure, you will not be able to buy gas.

Keep some cash on hand, including small bills and coins. Banks will be closed and ATM’s will not be working.

If you have other items you think should be added to the list, or if you are a ham radio operator, please let us know. The information can be included in our next newsletter and on our website. Please call our hotline – (310) 553-4BCA (4222).

There are a number of stores around town that stock emergency supplies and equipment. Check the Yellow Pages (under “Earthquake Products”) or go online.

Other supplies that you should keep on hand:

- Flashlights (1 for each person in the household).
- A portable battery radio
- Plenty of batteries
- First Aid Kit
- Medicines (Aspirin, Tylenol, nose drops, etc. etc.)
- Extra prescriptions
- Bug Repellent
- Towels and garbage bags
- A whistle
- Dust mask
- Extra pair of glasses
- Tools, including wrenches, pliers and screwdrivers.
- A list of needed phone numbers (relatives, friends, emergency, etc.)
- Cell phone(s) (Although these may not work if a power failure disables transmission towers.)

USEFUL WEBSITES:

www.infobeagle.com/home/emergency-kits.htm

www.lafd.org/index.htm

www.disastercentercom/guide/earth.html

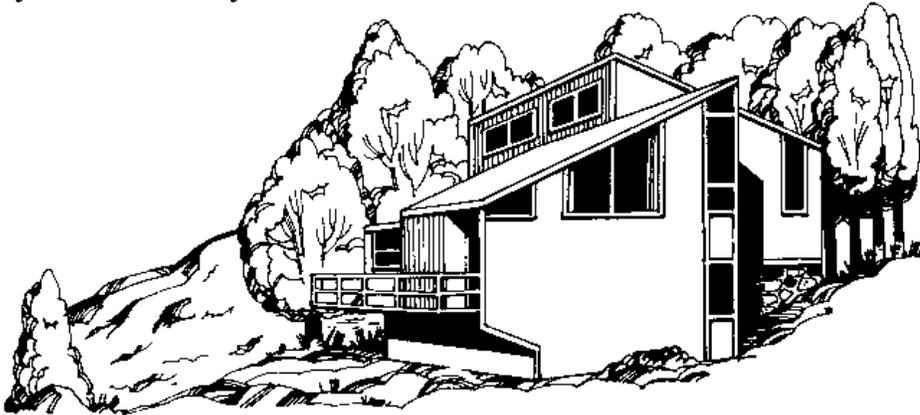
www.hsus.org/hsus_field/hsus_disaster_center/disaster_preparedness_brochures.html

www.quakecare.com

PROTECTING THE RIDGELINES

It's a Tough Job, But Somebody Has to Do It . . .

By Elizabeth Parry



Passed by the County Board of Supervisors on October 26, 2004, the ordinance (Santa Monica Mountains North Area Implementation Program Grading and Significant Ridgeline Ordinance) applies where significant ridgelines have been identified in the unincorporated area that's covered by the North Area Plan (the unincorporated L.A. County areas of Santa Monica Mountains between Mulholland Highway and the 101 Freeway), which includes everything outside of the Coastal Zone in the mountains. This covers more than 30 square miles of the Santa Monica Mountains. It does not cover the parts of the ridgeline in incorporated areas such as the City of Los Angeles, including Benedict Canyon.

The ordinance sets tougher restrictions on ridgeline development by requiring the following:

1. Any project proposing to disturb more than 15,000 square feet of soil per lot would require a public hearing and a Conditional Use Permit (CUP).

2. Any project proposing to

move more than 5,000 cubic yards of combined cut and fill per lot would also require a public hearing and CUP. Before the passing of this ordinance, residents and developers could grade up to 100,000 cubic yards of soil per lot with only a simple grading permit that's issued over-the-counter, without public review.

3. No structure could be built within 50 vertical or horizontal feet of a significant ridgeline.

It also requires that grading activity 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 colors that blend with the surrounding environment, and the use of indigenous vegetation for concealment.

"The Santa Monica Mountains are an asset for everyone. As California's population continues to grow, the Santa Monica Mountains are the only place on the coast between Orange County and Santa

Barbara that will still be open," said Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky. The coastal range is a precious resource. "It's absolutely ridiculous for us to squander this resource."

Therefore, we are encouraging City Council District 5 to put forth the same initiative for the City of Los Angeles, and for the Santa Monica Mountains. ■

Benedict Canyon Association

Benedict Canyon Association Board of Directors

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