

Benedict Canyon

Fall 2007

Benedict Canyon Association Newsletter

Volume V Issue 11

Lady of the Canyon

By Geoff Miller

Newsweek magazine once declared Jacqueline Bisset “the most beautiful film actress of all time.” Now, as then, the still-beautiful Ms. Bisset resides happily in Benedict Canyon.

She first moved to the Canyon from Malibu in 1971. “I’d been living the beach life in the mid-60s, in what was really a converted packing crate, and I was tired of always worrying about being flooded out,” she says. “I didn’t have aspirations to stay in the United States at the time,” but then her film career took off in 1968 with *The Detective*, opposite Frank Sinatra, and *Bullitt* with Steve McQueen. The Canyon struck her as a good place to live because it was “in the middle, near all the studios.”

Despite her French-sounding name, Ms. Bisset was raised in England. She grew up “in a 16th-Century thatched cottage that was always dark,” and yearned “to find one of those U-shaped houses built around a sunny courtyard. But all the real estate agents kept showing

me these enormous Hollywood homes with pools ‘perfect for skinny-dipping.’ That wasn’t at all what



Jacqueline Bisset

I was interested in,” she says with a laugh.

It was love at first sight when she was shown the tile-roofed, provençal-style villa tucked into the

hills of Benedict Canyon. Originally built in 1928, the wood-beamed house with white-washed walls was once home to actor Vincent Price and his famous art collection.

“Back then, I could barely afford to buy it and moved in with two director chairs, a mattress, a table and some candlesticks a good thing because the former owners had even removed the light bulbs!” Today, the airy, spacious home with skylights, stone floors and white plaster fireplaces is elegantly furnished in country-style comfort. “I wanted it clean and simple,” she says, “and sturdy, because I love to entertain. I decorated slowly. I don’t believe in compromising.”

Ironically, having long ago escaped the fire and flood threats of Malibu, she was confronted last summer by one of Benedict’s several brush fires. “Fortunately, the Fire Department soon had it under control, and I was so grateful I walked up the street to one of the trucks and asked the firemen if there was anything I could do for them. One of

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IN MY CANYON VIEW

by Rodney Kemerer

The shots rang out into the canyon night as clear and sharp as the life they ended. I was responsible and felt terrible, and I also knew it was the right thing to do.

Let's start at the beginning of this canyon story. It was an uneventful Friday evening in June of this year (and yes, somewhere a dog did bark), and I was in bed before Jay Leno's monologue. Sleep did not last long because I was awakened by the not uncommon sound of a pack of coyotes on the hillside very close to my house. In this case too close, as I was soon to learn. By now I was wide awake and went to the back window with a high-powered flashlight, looking for the coyotes and hoping to break them apart. The coyotes were long gone and nothing but the cool night air mixed with chirping crickets met my flashlight beam. I went back to bed, thinking the incident was over, and was fast asleep before midnight. No coyotes woke me the second time; this time it was a violent thrashing on the ivy-covered hillside. Again I went to the window with the flashlight, looking for the source of the noise. There she was, close to the house, hiding as best she could -- a yearling deer, wide-eyed and trying to be as small as possible. Something was not right. Her body language was all wrong. Her face was pure fear.

After years of living in the Canyon, I've learned that with wildlife, all you have to do is to be still, wait and watch. All will be revealed, and in this story, it was. The deer tried to stand and it instantly became clear that she had been mortally wounded by the coyotes. The details are too gruesome for this telling, but know that it is an image I will never forget.

The problem was as clear as the night sky. What to do? Leaving the deer as she was would only bring the coyotes back to finish her off or worse, a long, slow and most likely agonizing death, alone in the night. By now it was long past midnight, and I was fully awake trying to figure out what to do. None of my options seemed

clear or correct.

I remembered an old BCA Newsletter that had published the phone number for the Westside Los Angeles Animal Services (310-207-3156). I did not know what to expect but, out of options, I dialed the number. Officer Hoang Dinh answered the phone on the first ring. I quickly explained the problem and he said he would be there in thirty minutes. Unbelievable: A City of L. A. service that actually worked at 1:00 in the morning. As promised, within a half hour Officer Dinh pulled into the driveway. I am not sure I could get an ambulance or a paramedic to my house that quickly. We climbed up onto the hillside, being careful not to get too close to the wounded yearling; once startled a deer will try to bolt, and in this case that would have made things much worse.



Once Officer Dinh saw the condition of the deer, we both knew what needed to be done. Here is where I tell you that I am more gun-shy than most dogs. I did not grow up with guns and I just don't like them. So when Officer Dinh pulled his service revolver from the truck, I froze in my shoes. This was not what I expected. In my mind it was going to be a rifle or at the very least, a slick automatic weapon with a silencer screwed onto the barrel. This is the result of a youth spent watching too many

movies. Silent and swift, that was my idea of this solution. It was not to be.

Officer Dinh then informed me we had to call the LAPD to alert them that we were going to be firing a weapon in a residential area. I'm standing there thinking, does anyone actually notice gunshots in L. A. anymore? How jaded have I become? Once the police were notified, we climbed back onto the hillside, Officer Dinh with a gun and a flashlight, me with only a flashlight. I was not comforted.

I will limit the details here by adding that a gun is much, much louder in the dead of night in the Canyon, and yes, there is a very bright muzzle flash from the barrel. Both alarmed me and did nothing to reduce my sudden fear of ricocheting bullets. This was not a fun evening. Our unfortunate yearling did not go gently into that good night -- the will to live is unbelievably strong. Total shot count: three.

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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

By Michael Chasteen



Canyon Birds

It has been a year since my last letter to you and I hope this note finds you healthy and prosperous. This summer is proving to be one of the driest in recent memory and is creating conditions which are prone to fire. I am reminded of last year's fire that started at the end of Rimmel Drive. Had the conditions been even slightly less humid and the vegetation any drier, we would have faced a situation of disastrous proportions according to the fire department's analysis. I urge all of you to properly clear the vegetation on your property as required by the City of Los Angeles.

I am sure you have all noticed the state of the landscaping in the sixty pots that line the southwest edge of the canyon. The pots were completely overhauled three years ago with new trees and flowering plants through a grant from the city. After much care and attention by Garret Carlson, a canyon resident and landscape architect, the plants were flourishing. Through a chain of events that is much too involved to explain in this letter, the City of Los Angeles Urban Forestry Division cut off the water supply and, without authorization, ordered pruning by an outside contractor. We are in the process of restoring the greenery that has been such a welcome sight for over forty years. The beautiful trees and flowering plants do a great job of softening the storm drain and I look forward to their complete revival soon.

Your Benedict Canyon Association Board is busy working for you and addressing the concerns that plague our canyon. Your donations pay for the printing of the newsletter as well as our monthly and annual meeting accommodations. I ask that you join me in supporting our membership donor program if you have not already done so. Please take a moment to fill out and mail your membership application. Come and grow with us. Develop your personal talent by becoming a board member. Fulfill your obligation to serve your community. Help your Benedict Canyon Association continue to strive for the perfection we seek as residents of the most beautiful canyon in the city of Los Angeles. ■

"I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the whole community, and as long as I live it is my privilege to do for it whatever I can... Life is no "brief candle" for me. It is a sort of splendid torch which I have got hold of for a moment and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to future generations."

— George Bernard Shaw

Respectfully,

Michael L. Chasteen
President

PARTICIPATE IN THE BENEDICT CANYON ASSOCIATION

by Don Loze

We live in one of the most beautiful and unique residential areas in California. We choose to live here because of Benedict Canyon's special character.

Over its sixty-year history, the Benedict Canyon Association's efforts have contributed to our Canyon being a highly valued place to live. The Association's purpose is to further and protect the community's interests and the general welfare of the residents and property owners in Benedict Canyon. The work of the Association has been conducted through the dedicated efforts, individually and collectively, of our neighbors. All have given their time, often in great quantities. Some have provided professional expertise and many have contributed significant funds far beyond the annual donations that allow our volunteer organization to exist from year to year.

information to the Board that can be translated into action.

BCA volunteers interface with groups with similar interests in the city through our Neighborhood Council and the Federation of Hillside Home Owners. The Neighborhood Council's larger area extends from Laurel Canyon on the east to Sepulveda on the West. Its northern boundary is Mulholland Drive and its southern border is Sunset Boulevard. The Federation extends throughout the Santa Monica Mountains from Mt. Wilson on the east to the Palisades on the west. The BCA maintains a high degree of respect from those larger groups because of the consistency and integrity of its approach not only to issues affecting this Canyon but to issues common to all hillside residents and property owners in the City.



Weapons of Mass Construction

The volunteers gather on the second Monday of every month at the Beverly Hills Women's Club at the corner of Benedict Canyon Drive and Chevy Chase. The Board of Directors addresses issues affecting the homeowners and residents. Serious attempts are made to confront specific issues. Although solutions are not always easy, these volunteers have learned that a conscientious and informed attempt to do the right thing benefits everyone. The BCA's concerns include land use, traffic problems, Police and Fire protection, emergency preparedness, Neighborhood Watch, community beautification and other matters that affect the neighborhood. Between monthly meetings, committees focus on the specifics of each issue, then bring valued

The BCA also interacts with all City Departments, Administrative Agencies, Council Offices, the Mayor and sometimes the Courts.

Many of the Benedict Canyon Association's volunteers have been donating their services for many years. Others are new to the process and more newcomers are welcome and needed. Participation in the BCA is a wonderful opportunity to contribute, gain insight, share experience and use that experience for furthering and protecting the community's interests. You will meet uniquely interesting people who truly care about what happens in Benedict Canyon.

Please participate. You are needed. You can make a difference. Join the Benedict Canyon Association today.■

REAL ESTATE IN BENEDICT CANYON - by Aron Kincaid



The Los Angeles Fire Department Certified Brush Clearance Contractor List

The Los Angeles Fire Department has strict rules that a Brush Clearance Contractor must meet in order to be certified. All brush clearance work that is contracted by the City of Los Angeles is done by Certified Contractors. (Note: This list is provided as a convenience only, and does not constitute a recommendation by The Benedict Canyon Association.)

ABC Contracting

Los Angeles, CA 90210
(408) 603-6700

Pepo Weed Abatement, Inc.

Palmdale, CA 93551
(661) 943-1445

Avalon Landscape

Sherman Oaks, CA 91423
(818) 981-0452

Ray Buyers & Company

Castaic, CA 91384
(661) 724-9096

Brian Walsh Brush Clearance

Los Angeles, CA 90027
(323) 662-9062

Silent Fire, Inc.

Pasadena, CA 91109
(323) 244-7144

International Environmental

Van Nuys, CA 91411
(818) 892-9341

Van Gogh Landscaping

Studio City, CA 91604
(818) 787-7711

Waste Unlimited

Tujunga, CA 91042
(818) 994-1079

BCA ANNUAL MEETING

by Kathryn Scott

In the more than thirty years my husband and I have lived in Benedict Canyon, we have attended many BCA annual meetings and often fumed afterwards in the car on our way home because so many issues remained unresolved. Why is it, we'd rant, that residents who play by the rules never get anywhere, but those who break the rules always seem to get away with it? Why aren't our elected officials fixing the problems they promised to deal with when they wanted our votes? Why aren't the laws, restrictions and ordinances already in place enforced?

Our particular nightmare involved an eccentric neighbor who, one Easter Sunday, employed a swarm of workers to construct a concrete tower on our shared property line to house a Jacuzzi with a motor that sounded like a B-47 taking off, then encircled the structure with ropes of barbed wire. That evening, when he'd finished his labors, he stepped into his glass-enclosed spa in full view of our bedroom windows. Although the structure was built illegally, and we had photographs documenting its construction, there seemed to be no way we could get it removed short of a costly, contentious court battle. As irascible as our neighbor could be, we also wanted to live as harmoniously as possible with the old gent, and did, until he died a couple of years later. In the meantime, instead of instigating a lawsuit, we made do by landscaping our property line with a curtain of fast-growing bamboo.

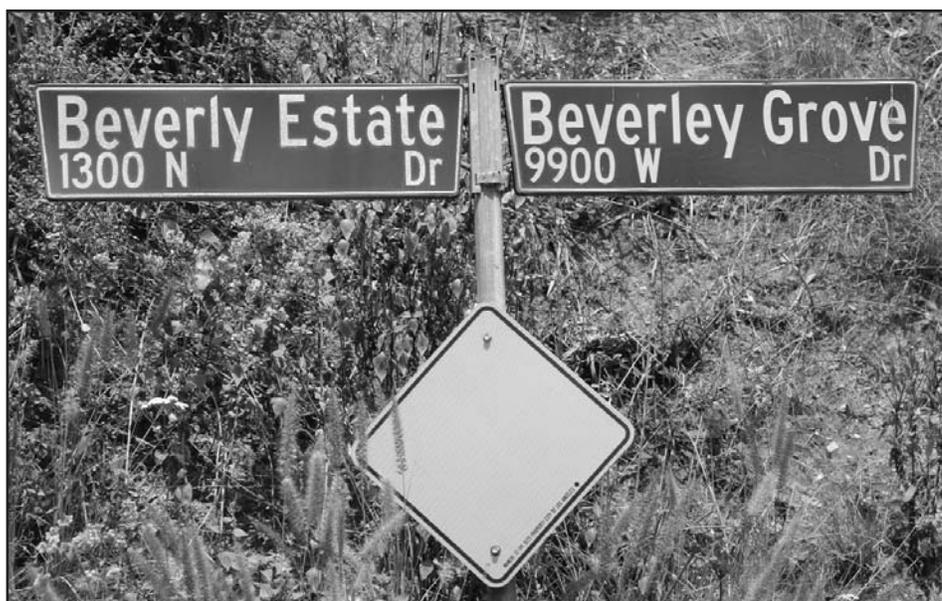
At the height of our frustration, my husband and I began attending monthly BCA meetings, joining other homeowners coping with their own particular land use and

quality of life issues. It wasn't until we became BCA board members, however, that we began to understand just how difficult it is to enforce construction codes or redress violations. At any given time, up to a dozen properties are under investigation by the BCA's Land Use Committee, which includes architects, attorneys, real estate agents and an historical preservationist. Monitoring permits for construction in Benedict Canyon is a painstaking enterprise on its own, involving hours spent in time-consuming hearings and on-site inspections. The payoff for this hard work lies in the incremental victories that add up to curbing the most egregious examples of massive retaining walls and ridgeline degradation.

This year, going into our 60th Annual Town Hall Meeting on February 26, BCA Members thought there were no major hot button topics--after all, the Upper Canyon road work is at long last completed. But how wrong we were! Our lively, often contentious Open Mike Forum drew attention to several major issues, including ongoing concerns about "McMansionization," illegal construction and the urgent need for road repairs on streets leading off Benedict Canyon Drive.

But the most fiery complaints were about the proliferation of "party houses" in residential neighborhoods which are rented out for commercial purposes.irate homeowners reported repeated instances of noisy, late-night parties held in houses on narrow streets so choked by traffic and parked cars (despite "NO PARKING" signs) that residents could not enter or leave their own driveways. Emergency vehicles and fire trucks could not have made it through the clogged streets. One homeowner reported a three-day party with valet parking that took place in a house that had been used more than a hundred times for private and business events during the course of the past year. Most of this activity takes place without permits for parties or filming, and despite complaints to authorities about noise and illegal parking, there has been little or no enforcement of existing codes.

Party houses are a serious matter that the BCA has dealt with in the past, most notably with their success in shutting down the infamous Beverly Grove Drive party house. The BCA is taking action once again--and needs the sup-



You say Beverly, I say Beverly

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“PERFECT FOR A DAY AT THE BEACH”

2007 BCA Membership Program Premium Gift



BCA Totebag and Book

For the 2007 Benedict Canyon Association Membership Drive, the BCA Membership Committee is offering a free BCA embroidered canvas totebag (in Hunter Green and Ivory) along with a copy of *Beverly Hills 1930 - 2005* by Marc Wanamaker. Both gifts will be sent to you with your paid BCA Membership at the Eucalyptus level (\$250.00) and above. The totebag is the perfect shopping bag (and plastic bag substitute) for that quick trip to the market. And while you are waiting in traffic, you can read Mr. Wanamaker’s

fascinating look at “the way it used to be” in Beverly Hills 90210. Supply is limited, so please use the Membership Form on page 9 and join or renew your membership in BCA today. Tote your way to a more perfect canyon environment. ■



MORE TREES, PLEASE

By Mr. Greenjeans



As everyone knows, we have had less than three inches of rain this year. Our average is eleven. Watering our gardens, trees and hillsides will be very important this fall to help protect us from fire. The first fire of the season was a few months ago in Malibu that started in a grove of unwatered dry Eucalyptus. Within minutes, four houses burned to the ground. The next fire was in Griffith Park -- another area with a lot of old Pines and Eucalyptus that had not been watered in years.

A lot of our plant materials in California, such as Pines and Eucalyptus, are very drought-tolerant. The reason these plants are so drought-tolerant is that they are able to produce an oil in the root system that the plant sends up into the leaves or needles that stops the plant from transpiring moisture. What most people don’t know is that when you water these plants they fill up with water and don’t produce the oil. In fact, these plants, when watered, can hold quite a bit of water and in so doing will protect you from fire.

Quite a few years ago, I landscaped a large 20-acre property in Malibu for one of our local BCA members. The property had quite a few old Pines and Eucalyptus that we

saved and worked around, trees that were 60-80 feet tall. The garden and trees had automatic irrigation and got water on a regular basis. A few years after the garden was finished, the big Malibu fire swept through this area and burned everything except my client’s property. The business managers called me into their office to show me aerial photos of the fire area. Everything was completely black except for my client’s property which appeared in the photos as a circle of green. They realized that the garden saved the house. Not one Pine or Eucalyptus had burned. The key is watering on a regular basis -- it does not take much.

Another tree that holds huge amounts of water is the California Sycamore. I tend to plant a lot of these in fire areas. Small plants and succulents are also good, but it’s the big trees that hold the most water and will give you the most fire protection.

You might have noticed that the freeway plants are now being watered again. This provides good fire protection, puts water back into the ground and helps the plants produce more oxygen. Have you ever asked yourself why you feel so good walking on a golf course? ■

Benedict Canyon

BENEDICT CANYON ASSOCIATION 2007 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
2007



Benedict Canyon

2007 BCA "Trees of Support" Donor Program Roster

OAK TREE

In Memory of Gordon A. Smith
(2) Anonymous

SYCAMORE TREE

Alex & Yuki Bouzari
Raul Diaz & Viki Temesvary

EUCALYPTUS TREE

Joann Berry
Jacqueline Bisset
Jeffrey & Judy Caren
Michael Chasteen
Ted & Karen Coyne
Mark & Maggie Damon
Ken & Randee Devlin
Vera Dunn
Michael & Lori Eisenberg
David & Barbara Elson
Peter & Susan Feibleman
Evans Frankenheimer
Stan & Mimi Handman
Bob & Cynthia Hart
Chapin Hunt
Urban S. Hirsch III
In Memory of Gloria Kahn
The George R. Kress House
Ian La Frenais
Michael J. Libow
Gene Lucero & Marcia Williams
Armand Marciano
Margaret Maw
Larry & Nickie Miner
Geoff & Kathryn Miller
In Memory of Doris A. Moore
Mary Ann Musico
Fred & Joan Nicholas
Hugh & Virginia O'Brian
Kevin & Elizabeth Parry
Lee & Marguerite Polster
Gene & Myrna Schwam
Link K. Schwartz
Lev L. Spiro & Melissa
Rosenberg

Sheldon & Andrea Shapiro
Art & Renee Spence
Tower Park Development
Glen Williams & Elizabeth
Levitt Hirsch
(2) Anonymous

PINE TREE

Robert & Maria Abeloff
Dennis & Elaine Abramson
Michael & Elaine Agran
Virginia Ambrosini & C.R. Nev
Jim Anderson & Lynn Fireside
Bijan & Sima Ansari
Gordon & Nancy Armstrong
Neil & Suzy Aspinall
Mr. & Mrs. William Axelrod
George & Carolyn Bender
Kerry Berger
Beverly Hills Land Holdings
Paul & Marie-France Bloch
Ronald Boldt & Judith Shelton
In Memory of
Dr. Harold & Amy Brown
Ron & Jan Cannan
Betty Chaplin
Hy & Elaine Chase
Larry Chrysler
Eric Cleveland & Annette Stanton
Jeffrey & Rachel Cohen
Hal Cooper
Alessio & Josephine Coppola
Gary & Healy Cosay
Delatorre's
Morris & Marlene Dennis
Eddie W. De Ochoa &
Denise Anthony
Evelyn Dorfman
Joseph & Marilyn Eisenberg
Donatas & Viktorija Empakeris
Ruth K. Felmus
Don & Sandy Fenmore

Alan Fine
Margaret Fisher
Philip Forte
Samuel & Ardyth Freshman
Sidney & Linda Furie
Joanna Giallelis
Harland Green
George & Nana Gregory
Marvin & Inger Gross
Paul & Renee Haas
Roger Halfhide & Patricia McVerry
William & Christine Harper
James & Jean Harris
David & Bridget Hedison
Bruce & Lynn Heymont
David & Susan Horn
Terry Jackson
Len & Nancy Jacoby
Joel Jaffe
Elizabeth James
Ricky Jay & Chrisann Verges
Preston Johnson & Vicki Marti
Marshal Kaplan & Pamela Fenton
Greg & Susan Kay
Bernard Kester
Deborah Klar
Gertrude Kline
Michael Kopcha
Rosa Koppens
Herbert A. Kramer
Jerz Kupiec-Weglinski
Don & Hope Kurz
Morrie & Patty Lachman
Brian & Afsaneh LeSage
Howard & Carol Levy
Mark Liszt & Karyl Sisson
Elaine Lotwin
Gerald & Sandy Margolis
Dorothy Marlowe
Lowell & Wende Mate
Simon & Larrisa Moore

Ira & Bethany Moretski
Mark & Sylvia Morton
Alex & Dagmar Moscowicz
Richard & Sandy Mosk
Barbara Nichols
Othella Owens
Stan & Sallie Plaskoff
Gary & Nita Polinsky
Phil Proctor & Melinda Peterson
Max Ramberg
John Rieber & Alex Duda
Gil & Val Romoff
Rosalie Rosenfeld
Jack Roswal
Beth Rubin & Joseph Distefano
Jolyn Rudelson
Roman & Ida Russ
Joanne Sackheim
Martin & Marilyn Salvin
John & Gayle Samore
Barry & Nancy Sanders
Arthur & Arlene Schwimmer
Martin & Sheila Seaton
Evelyn Shapero
Norm & Libby Shapiro
Vivek Shetty & Christina Floegel
Barbara Shuler
Brent Smith & Lisa Engel
In Memory of Joseph Stefano
Jeff & Annie Stein
Ted Steinberg & Ellen Brown
Swindel Family
In Memory of Dudley Trudjett
Carol L. Vitkay
Robert J. Wagner
Tobi & Brandt Wax
Jacques & Lynn Wertheimer
Lawrence & Nancy Wolf
Greg & Virginia Young
Steven Zax
(6) Anonymous

Contributions received after June 15, 2007 will appear in our next publication

IN MEMORIAM: GORDON SMITH

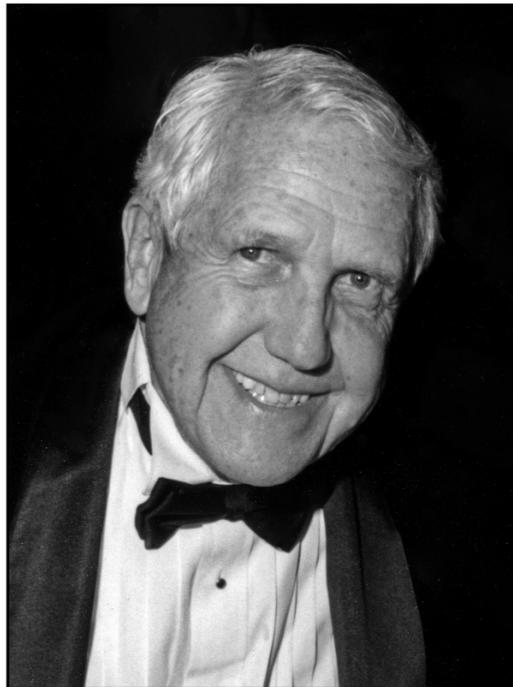
by Vera Dunn - Lindsay Doran - Chapin Hunt

We sadly announce the passing of BCA Board Member and former BCA President Gordon Smith who died last fall in a boating accident in Argentina. He was 84 years old. Gordon is survived by his wife, Diane, and four adult children.

If you didn't know Gordon, the story of his last moments tells you everything you need to know. He and Diane were on vacation in Argentina, cruising in a private boat on Lake Nahuel Wuapi. When the weather unexpectedly turned bad, the boat began to take on water. Gordon was the oldest passenger on board. Instead of looking out for his own well-being, he unselfishly stayed on the ship and helped every passenger to safety. When his job was completed and it was time for his own escape, the boat unexpectedly capsized. Gordon was the only passenger still on board. His body was never recovered. His lack of concern for his own safety, coupled with his steadfast belief in helping others, saved a lot of lives that day. Knowing Gordon as we did, we can say without hesitation that given the opportunity to repeat the events of that day, Gordon would have made the same choices all over again.

Gordon was one of this world's true unsung heroes. As Diane says, "He never had a bad word to say about anyone and he was always happy. He just didn't know how to be any different." But his positive attitude never led him to assume that his personal efforts weren't necessary to make his world and his community a better place. A former Marine officer who served in Korea, Gordon worked in the defense industry after earning his MBA from USC. He later managed the

computers at Cal Tech as part of his noteworthy business career. He was a member of the Bel Air-Beverly Crest Neighborhood Council, and chaired the Traffic and Crime/Safety Committee of the LAPD West Bureau Traffic Committee. He previously served on the Holmby Park Advisory Board for the LA Recreation and Parks Department, and on the Board of the Westwood Homeowners Association. Gordon was also actively involved in the LAFD's Adopt-a-Fire-Station program for Stations 71 and 99.



But the list of Gordon's contributions can obscure the warm personality of the man behind them. Those of us who worked with Gordon on the Board of the BCA know that he could light up a room with his smile. Even at the dullest of meetings, he could lift our spirits with the turn of a phrase. When Gordon spoke, people listened. They listened because they knew he had something to say. They knew his words carried the banner of truth and that he would back up his words with action. He wasn't a person who assigned tasks to others; if something needed to be done, Gordon just jumped in and did it himself. No questions asked.

Gordon's contributions to the BCA, and to the community he lived in, will not be forgotten. But we will remember him most of all for his spirit. Every second Monday of the month, we find ourselves looking to the place where he used to sit -- second row, third chair from the right -- and we sometimes catch a glimpse of a smile, a shock of silver hair and a twinkle of blue eyes. Gordon will always be with us.

During the search for Gordon's body, Diane was heard to say, "I just want to bring the big guy home." So do we, Diane. So do we. ■

"What will survive of us is love."
— Philip Larkin

EVERYTHING YOU WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT HOLDING TITLE TO YOUR CANYON HOME... BUT WERE AFRAID TO ASK

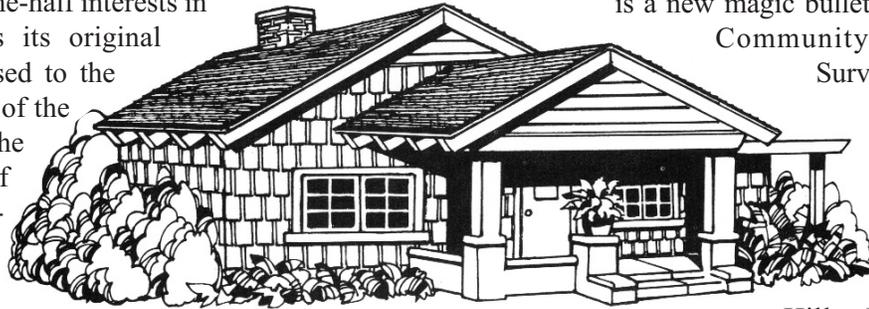
By Don Fenmore, Esq., JD, CPA

1. Q: I want my spouse to own 100% of our home upon my death, so we've decided to hold it in joint tenancy, as husband and wife. Isn't that the best way to do it?

A: No it's not, unless you feel the IRS should get more than it's entitled to. The good news about joint tenancy is that it avoids that worst of all fates, having to go through probate court administration after a death to clear title. The bad news is that you've given an unnecessary gift to the IRS, because the surviving spouse does not get a "step-up" in his or her tax cost basis as would be the case if it were held in community property.

What does "step-up" in tax basis mean? It means that when the first spouse dies, each of their respective one-half interests in the property has its original cost basis increased to the fair market value of the property as of the date of death of the initial decedent spouse (or alternate valuation date selected for estate tax purposes).

Let me give an example: John and Jane Doe, husband and wife, hold their home in community property (which means each can will his or her half to the heirs of their choice). They bought it for \$600,000 eight years ago, and John was the first to die, at which time the home was worth \$1,000,000. John and Jane each have a provision in their will, or revocable living trust, that upon the demise of the first spouse, the surviving spouse receives the residence. Because the home is held in community property, both John and Jane's respective half interests in the property have their cost tax basis increased ("stepped up") from the original cost of \$300,000 for each one-half community property interest, to one-half of \$1,000,000, or \$500,000 for each interest. [Internal Revenue Code (IRC) § 1014(b)(6)]. If the property was held in joint tenancy, Jane's half as the surviving spouse would not get stepped up, and would



remain at \$300,000. It should be further noted that for estate tax purposes, property that one spouse wills and transfers to the other is not subject to estate taxes under an estate tax deduction called a "marital deduction." [IRC §2056(a)].

Assume that Jane later sells the house for \$1,350,000. What is her taxable gain for income tax purposes? If the property had been held as community property, the taxable gain would be \$1,350,000 less the \$1,000,000 stepped up cost basis, or \$350,000. However, if the property had been held as joint tenancy, the taxable gain would be \$1,350,000 sales price, less John's stepped up basis of \$500,000, and less Jane's original cost basis of \$300,000, for a total of \$550,000. That \$200,000 difference in taxable gain translates to an unintended gift to the IRS.

2. Q: OK – holding title in community property probably makes more sense than holding it in joint tenancy because of the step-up in tax cost basis, but it doesn't avoid the probate courts, does it?

A: You are correct, it doesn't. Fortunately, however, there is a new magic bullet to solve that problem – called Community Property with Right of Survivorship.

3. Q: What is Community Property with Right of Survivorship?

A: In 2000, the Beverly Hills Bar Association sponsored legislation which rectified the problem of community property having to be administered by the probate court. It created a new form of real property ownership in California called community property with right of survivorship. The new law provides in part that "Community property of a husband and wife, when expressly declared in the transfer document to be community property with right of survivorship, and which may be accepted in writing on the face of the document by a statement signed or initialed by the grantees, shall, upon the death of one of the spouses, pass to the survivor, without administration, pursuant to the terms of the instrument, subject to the same procedures, as property held in joint tenancy." [Cal. Civil Code §682.1].

The Grant Deed is structured slightly differently from other forms of deed conveyances, but with this new form of ownership now permitted in California, it probably makes more sense for a husband and wife who otherwise might

Cont. pg. 13

want to hold title in the form of community property (or in joint tenancy) to hold title in this new form since it gives the benefit of the step-up tax basis while avoiding probate court administration.

4. Q: What about holding title in a revocable living trust?

A: The important benefit of holding property in a revocable living trust is that it also avoids probate court administration, just as the right of survivorship in joint tenancy and community property with right of survivorship do. The trust form does not, however, create savings in either income or estate taxes. Thus, if a husband and wife hold title to their home in a revocable living trust, and the trust provides that the home constitutes a community property asset and further provides that the house goes to the survivor of the spouses, this would accomplish the same result as holding the home in community property with right of survivorship – namely, it avoids costly probate court administration and achieves a step-up in tax basis upon the first spouse to die.

5. Q: How should a sole owner hold title?

A: A revocable living trust would be the best bet, and a much better choice than holding title in one’s individual’s name. The trust agreement can set forth how the owner wishes to manage the property and how to distribute it upon his or her death, and it avoids expensive and time-consuming probate court administration. Holding title in your individual name -- such as Jane Doe, an unmarried woman, or John Doe, a married man as his sole and separate property -- virtually assures probate court administration to clear title by your heirs, who will not be happy with you for your lack of planning.

6. Q: How do I convert ownership from one form of ownership to another form?

A: Very carefully, so you don’t trigger a re-assessment of your property by the County Assessor. On any deed transferring from one form to another, a legend must be placed on the face of the deed which states: “The Grantors and Grantees in this conveyance are Comprised of the Same Parties who Continue to Hold the Same Proportionate Interest in the Property. Not a Change of Ownership. R&T 62(a)(1), 11923(d).”

7. Q: I have heard legal fees can become very expensive in preparing revocable living trusts. Is that true?

A: That is absolutely true, but it depends upon what you want. If you want a very elaborate estate plan, be sure to bring along a well-filled checkbook. The other end of the spectrum is to try doing it yourself with a trust book from www. nolo.com. Somewhere in the middle is to have an attorney prepare a simple revocable trust, perhaps only dealing with the house, and leave disposition of your other assets to the creation of yet another trust. Once a revocable living trust is created, it is important to actually transfer the assets into the trust, or such assets will be treated as non-trust assets and be subject to probate court administration.■

EDITORS’ NOTE: Before making any changes to your estate planning, you need to obtain the advice of your personal attorney.

**THE NEW BCA
E-MAIL LIST-SERVE
Are You Being Served?**

The BCA has a new E-mail List-Serve to all members who have provided BCA with their e-mail addresses. The BCA sends out regular e-mails to its members on the List-Serve, providing them with important and updated information concerning crime, brush fires, canyon events and related topics.

Be an informed resident of Benedict Canyon - join the BCA and be certain to include your e-mail address on the membership application form to ensure that you will be included on future BCA List-Serve e-mails. And, of course, make sure that your spam blockers do not block the e-mails when they arrive. Your e-mail addresses will be kept confidential by the BCA and will not be disseminated or disclosed to any outside persons or groups.

If you are already a BCA member and want to be sure that your e-mail address is on the List-Serve, please call the BCA Hotline: 310-553 4BCA (4222) and leave your information.■

ORGANIZE A NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

...And Watch What Happens

By Barbara Nichols

Some areas of Benedict Canyon have experienced an increase in burglaries, or attempted burglaries, of residences. These have usually occurred when the occupants were away. In some cases, property owners have been followed home and held up in their garages. We rely on the police to catch the culprits, but as we all know, we have very limited police presence in our area. After several burglaries in the Clear View/Kip/Anthony neighborhood of Benedict Canyon, the neighbors decided to organize and fight back.

Our first step was to plan a neighborhood meeting at the home of one resident. Flyers were sent out to all neighbors in the three streets giving the time, place and purpose of the meeting. Neighbors exchanged contact information, and emergency contact numbers for the police department were distributed. Neighbors were also directed to the LAPD website www.lapdonline.org to learn more about protecting themselves, their home and their property from robbery. They also signed up to receive monthly crime statistics for our area. Neighbors contributed the names and



phone numbers of non-attendees from the neighborhood and a new list was distributed. Neighbors were given tips on how to prevent break-ins, secure their belongings and deal safely with possible follow-home robbers.

The next step in setting up the Neighborhood Watch was to meet with our LAPD lead officer, Officer Christopher Ragsdale. He drove the three streets with a couple of residents, indicating that we needed four Neighborhood Watch signs and where they should be located. The next step is for neighbors to stay in touch and keep a sharp lookout for any suspicious activity, noting any suspect car's license number and a description of the vehicle and occupant.

If the residents of any other group of streets would like to set up a Neighborhood Watch for their neighborhood in Benedict Canyon, contact BCA and we will be happy to assist you. Neighborhood Watch Works! ■

BCA Annual Meeting *Cont. from page 7*



port and assistance of residents throughout the canyon. As one of the largest and most proactive Homeowners Associations in Los Angeles, encompassing some 2600 property owners, the BCA can draw on strategic relationships developed over the years with elected officials, police and fire departments, as well as the professional expertise of its volunteer Board members, to eradicate this blight that affects our safety and quality of life.

There is power in numbers. Channel your indignation, fury and frustration into positive action at our monthly BCA meetings (7 - 9 pm, second Monday of the month, 1700 Chevy Chase Drive). All of us, whatever our backgrounds and talents, pitch in to work on issues involving crime, safety, traffic, land use and beautification. Join us! Be a part of what happens when neighbors band together to make life better for all of us. ■

LADY OF THE CANYON

Cont. from pg. 1

them said, 'Yeah, we could use a jump cable!' It seemed one on their trucks had stalled. I was happy to oblige and went to fetch one from my car."

Since then, she says she's observed "at least one driver tooling up the canyon dangling a lit cigarette out of an open car window. I went berserk and chased the car up the road. When I caught up to the driver, she was quite startled when I gave her a piece of my mind." Her suggestion: Posting "No Smoking" signs throughout the canyon-and for good measure, trimming tree branches overhanging Benedict Canyon Drive to reduce the risk of spreading fires.

The international film star, who studied ballet as a child and first worked as a model to support her ailing mother and later to pay for acting lessons, may have won her early roles because of her stunning beauty, but she has long since earned recognition as a fine actress. In addition to her work in *Bullitt* and *The Detective*, she is best-known for appearances in François Truffaut's *Day for Night* and *The Deep*, in which her underwater swimming scenes launched a world-wide wet T-shirt craze.

Recognition as a serious actress was finally accorded her after her performances in 1981's *Rich and Famous*. She also received Golden Globe nominations for her roles in *Who is Killing the Great Chefs of Europe?* (1978) and *Under the Volcano* (1984).

Her acting career continues to flourish. She was seen in multiple episodes of the TV series *Nip/Tuck*, gleefully playing "quite a vicious character." Recently she's appeared in a Lifetime TV movie based on Nora Roberts' novel, *Carolina Morn*.

When not filming, she's more than happy to settle into her cozy Canyon home, reading, gardening and entertaining. "And, yes," she smiles, "I did actually add a pool in my back garden."

In fact, as Peter Yates, who directed her in both *Bullitt* and *The Deep* recalls, "Jacqueline is typically English in that she's careful never to exaggerate what she's capable of doing. Before we began filming *The Deep*, she suggested I come 'round to her house in Benedict Canyon to see her swim. I did and, of course, she swam beautifully." ■

IN MY CANYON VIEW

Cont. from pg. 2

We now had to remove the body. Leaving it until morning was out of the question -- the coyotes would return and devour it there or try to drag it into the mountains. The term dead weight is exactly what it sounds like. Too much for one man to lift. I scrambled to find old blankets and sheets to transport our charge. I found that I did not want to see the face of the deer since minutes before she had looked to me for help and now she didn't look at all.

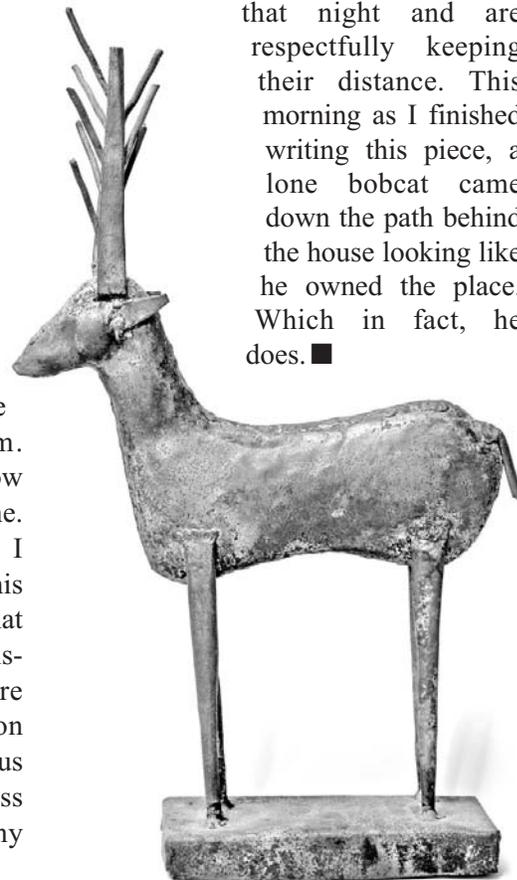
Sometimes being the adult is just plain hard. Once the deer had been loaded into the truck, Officer Dinh turned and thanked me before I had a chance to thank him. I objected, trying to explain how much his help had meant to me. Apparently and unknown to me, I was the exception to the rule for his animal rescue calls. He told me that his callers usually fall into two distinct groups -- people who are incensed that any animal is on "their" property, missing the obvious concept that we live in a wilderness area; and people who feel any

animal, no matter how severely injured, must be saved. To them euthanasia is murder and they won't allow it.

"We now had to remove the body. Leaving it until morning was out of the question..."

Officer Dinh explained that it was refreshing to help someone who seemed to know how to live with the animals in our hillsides. I immediately conjured up an image of a modern Dr. Dolittle walking through the Canyon. After thirty years of "Dr. Dolittling" in the Canyon, this was the first time I had to end a life. Not fun and not much like the Dr. Dolittle I know.

Today the hill behind my house is quiet. The families of deer that were daily visitors are gone. They seem to know what happened that night and are respectfully keeping their distance. This morning as I finished writing this piece, a lone bobcat came down the path behind the house looking like he owned the place. Which in fact, he does. ■



Editor's Note: This is a BCA "encore" article first published Winter 2002

GAS LEAF BLOWERS: *Illegal Health Menace*



Gas-powered leaf blowers appear to be sneaking back into use in the Canyon despite being illegal in Los Angeles and in the city of Beverly Hills. It is the responsibility of the homeowner to make sure his or her gardener is in compliance with the law and to remind neighbors to also comply. Keep in mind that homeowners are breaking the law as well by permitting leaf blower use and are subject to a fine along with their gardeners. It should be noted that while electric leaf blowers are legal they create some of the same problems as the gas powered version.

In terms of your garden, leaf blowers do far more damage than you imagine. They rob the soil of proper mulch, blow off valuable topsoil and generally "fry" your plants and lawns with a continuous blast of high-pressure air as well as

the gasoline and exhaust fumes. Damage to your landscaping is only half the story. The damage to your health is far greater. To get an idea of how much pollution is generated, the South Coast Air Quality Management District estimates that leaf blowers in Southern California spew 5.6 tons of hydrocarbon emissions in the air per day. According to recent studies, one single leaf blower spews as much pollution in one hour as one car driven from New York to Washington, D.C.

On a personal level, when a leaf blower is used near your home, the air you are breathing is a highly toxic mix of dust and dirt particles, dried animal feces, airborne pesticides and fertilizers as well as asbestos dust from car brake linings. Breathing this mixture is the health equivalent of going outside and licking the street. *If you wouldn't lick*

your street, why would you willingly breathe the same mixture?

Many residents of Benedict Canyon are very health conscious. They make regular visits to the gym and do home exercises, do not smoke, eat the right foods and take vitamins. Yet they still subject themselves in their own home to the highly toxic fumes and byproducts of leaf blowers on a regular basis unaware of the negative impact on their health.

A gas powered leaf blower:

- Is illegal in Los Angeles and Beverly Hills.
- In most cases, exceeds acceptable noise levels for residential areas.
- Creates unnecessary and dangerous air pollution for the gardener as well as the homeowner and neighbors.
- Ruins plant life and robs gardens of natural mulch and organic matter.

People have maintained beautiful gardens for centuries without leaf blowers and, at the same time, have enjoyed the peace and quiet of their homes and neighborhood. Take control of your home environment. Tell your gardener that you want to obey the law as well as protect your own health and well-being. Say "no" to gas powered leaf blowers. Help to keep Benedict Canyon peaceful and healthy. ■



The Benedict Canyon Association:

57 YEARS AGO
DECEMBER 1950



It costs less than 10¢ per week to be an Association Member.

Benedict Canyon

ASSOCIATION

Bulletin

JOIN TODAY
Your Membership is needed!

December, 1950

Since our last Bulletin, we've had many interesting little problems, but your BCA officers have ably represented our Association, I guess. Oh, well, we are still an RI zone and we haven't had any serious auto wrecks or fines. To the best of our knowledge, the only really serious problem is the decomposed granite haulers. At the present, they aren't operating in BC area. However, they are really wheeling 'em down Coldwater. Dope on this problem will be found elsewhere in this little gem. We are to have a civilian defense set-up very soon according to His Honor, Mayor Bowron. We are rather pleased that we are to get cooperation on this vital problem at least from our city government. Of course we (editorial) can't really let ourself go on this subject as our BCA prexy is a stout supporter of his national counterpart. We have been hushed on this subject, but will be glad to air our personal views to any good Republican or unbiased Democrat. We will be "going" soon so must take every opportunity to get across our ideas before censorship stops such loose talk.

Our only serious editorial comment is it's been a lot of fun writing this almost half serious Bulletin and working with officers and directors of the Assoc. As an unbiased (?) observer of the management of this outfit, we can say that it's been a very productive year in

that your officers have done a good job! Many things have been handled without fanfare or publicity that help continue the value of our property. Home Owner Associations are vitally important in an area as big and uncontrolled as Los Angeles. We are fortunate in having such an able and aggressive Councilman representing us as Mr. Davies. He's the type that American city governments must have to survive. City government is mighty important and nobody can do a better job of explaining just how important than Mr. Dick Graves. Mr. Graves is the Executive Director of the League of California Cities. If you ever have a chance to hear this man speak or to talk to him personally, do so. In our opinion, he's the smartest man in City Government circles in the West. Believe it or not, he does not have any axes to grind except clean City Government. This is probably the only chance we'll get to express our admiration for Mr. Graves and his work. We certainly recommend listening to this gent if you ever have the opportunity.

INSPECTION TRIP THAT WILL PAY OFF.

Bill Walker and Mr. Janey, who is the fieldman for Dept. of Public Works, W. L.A. office, made a complete inspection of the BC area and checked the street conditions, gutters, white lines and the

Benedict Canyon

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CLIP THESE IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS FOR FUTURE REFERENCE

FIRE Dial 116 or call ARIZONA 3-1155 direct

POLICE Dial ARIZONA 3-1161 (West L.A. Division)

GARBAGE PICKUP Dial ARIZONA 3-1827 (for information as to pickup days of wet garbage and cans)

Fall 2007

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Volume V Issue 11



The Residents of Yoakum Drive

It seemed like any other fall Sunday morning on Yoakum Drive in Benedict Canyon. I picked up the LA Times in my driveway and greeted familiar neighbors walking their dogs. Then, after going inside, I heard a strange “popping” sound. I glanced out the front window and saw my neighbor across the street running out and shouting, “There’s a fire on the hill!”

I went back out, looked up and saw in the distance billows of smoke rising above the ridge. It was an alarming sight.

Almost immediately, firefighting helicopters appeared and dumped fire retardant on Oak Pass Road above upper Yoakum Drive. The noise was awesome. Soon four fire engines entered our street and closed it to traffic. Thanks to the fast response of the LAFD, the fire was put out very quickly.

No TV coverage of major fires prepares you for the reality of a blaze close to your home. Following another recent fire originating on Rimmel Drive that closed the Canyon and threatened Clearview

Drive, anxious residents in that area met with the LAFD. Similarly, Yoakum Drive residents contacted

“safe houses” on our street, the ones we should go to for shelter in the event of a fire. The concept of a “safe house” was new to us -- a house built with a minimum of flammable materials such as stucco, and limited adjacent vegetation that could burn and spread to the structure.

Captain Evans also suggested we draw up an emergency phone list with AM, PM and cell phone numbers for everyone on the street, as well as pet information including where leashes are located in case of evacuation.

We all know how important it is to be prepared for a canyon fire. We must all be vigilant about brush clearance ALL YEAR LONG. We also need to be prepared to leave our houses on the spur of the moment, with keys in an easily accessible place.

Yoakum residents now realize how quickly we can go from a peaceful environment to a dangerous situation. We owe many thanks to our local fire station for their protection, and to Captain Evans for instructing us in emergency preparedness. ■

FIRE LIGHTS A FIRE UNDER NEIGHBORS
By Mary Ann Musico

Fire Engine Co. 99 on Mulholland Drive last fall to learn more about the Oak Pass Road fire.

Spurred into action by a fire so close to our homes, we organized a meeting with LAFD Captain Craig E. Evans at the home of one of our neighbors. Captain Evans reported that the Arson Unit had not determined the cause of the brush fire but that it had started near a home on Oak Pass Road and moved to a carport, damaging a vehicle. Fortunately, climate conditions did not cause the fire to spread. Captain Evans went on to explain what the LAFD does when a Canyon fire ignites and the roads must be closed.

Captain Evans offered to return with his staff to help us identify

~ FIRE CAPTAIN CRAIG EVANS'S CHECK LIST ~

- 1 RED FLAG DAYS** are called when there is a particular fire danger. All cars should be off the side streets to allow for fire engine and equipment access. All illegally parked cars are subject to tow. Call 311 or Station 99 at 818-756-8699 for information on Red Flag Days.
- 2 SIDE STREET PARKING** - Many side streets have no legal parking on either side, at any time. Illegally parked cars jeopardize the safety of all your neighbors. Please obey the No Parking signs and monitor your guests' parking. Call Parking Dispatch at 213-485-4184 regarding violations.
- 3 LIABILITY FOR ILLEGALLY PARKED CARS** - Six years ago there was a death on Yoakum Drive. The paramedics could not reach the house because cars parked illegally on lower Yoakum blocked their access. Because fire trucks and paramedics must have access at all times, blocking the street with a vehicle, or parking in any way that delays their access, will not only cause civil liability but criminal liability as well.
- 4 EMERGENCY STREET CLOSURE** - In the event of a fire, you may not have access to your home. You need to make a contingency plan for pet evacuation. Giving a neighbor a key and instructions can save a life.
- 5 BRUSH CLEARANCE** is required all year long. Any questions or violations should be called in to 818-778-4902 and/or LAFD.org.
- 6 PROCEDURES FOR EVACUATION IN THE EVENT OF A FIRE** If a fire is far enough away and the area can be evacuated safely, the fire department will come to the street and order an evacuation. In the event that a fire is rushing through the canyon, go to the nearest **SAFE HOUSE** on the street and wait for instructions.
- 7 MEDICAL PERSONNEL** - Make a list of medical personnel living on your street or within walking distance of your home.
- 8 MEDICAL CONTACT LIST** - Your friends, relatives and neighbors should have a copy of all your emergency contacts. This includes all daytime and nighttime phone numbers and cell phone numbers. Update your list at least once a year. It is also helpful to have an out-of-area contact in case local phone lines are out of service.

SEEN IN THE CANYON



Rudolph Valentino's "Falcon Lair" Gets a Face Lift

Benedict Canyon Association

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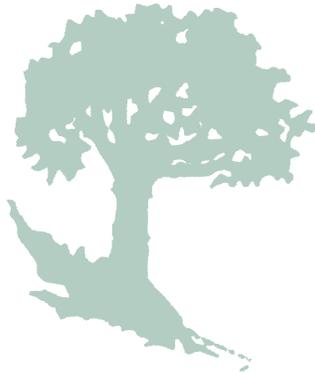
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HELP PROTECT BENEDICT CANYON



BECOME A BCA MEMBER

-DETAILS INSIDE THIS ISSUE-



BRUSH CLEARING

is a year-round responsibility.

Make sure you and your neighbors clear
the required 200 feet from all structures.

See Page 6




Benedict Canyon

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