



Howlings from Lobo

"Home begins at Triunfo and Kanan" – Jay Cordell

Triunfo-Lobo Community Association Newsletter - Fall 2003

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

Join and Have a Say on How Our Beautiful Community Grows

AS ONE OF MY FIRST DUTIES AS PRESIDENT, I would like to thank the outgoing President and Treasurer. The outgoing President and new Vice-President, Michael Frawley, has brought his great wealth of knowledge and expertise to all things Canyon-related. In one year, he has been able to forge a good relationship with the Fire Department and single-handedly badgered the County to do a Traffic Study (see results in the newsletter) on Lobo and Triunfo.

The outgoing Treasurer, Ms. Yvette Robertson, has diligently served on the board for more years than she cares to remember! Yvette lent her sensitive and often humorous opinions to board meetings and will definitely be missed.

I would also like to welcome the new officers and members of the Board: *Barry Bakalor*, Treasurer; *Terri Webb*, Recording Secretary; Members-at-Large: *Chris Willig* and *Shyam Reyes*; and the

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Here Come the Rains...

by Paul Culberg

SITTING HERE LOOKING THROUGH the window instead of writing this article, I see the last of this late summer, warm air, song birds, the quail parading by my window, and I day dream. At least my mind wanders and I know that in not too long, if we are lucky, we will be cheering the rain as it, hopefully, becomes a constant, slowly saturates the land, and not only ends the fire season but sets the stage for a spring bounty of wildflowers.

I look out over the back meadow and remember the year when the meadow—



...We Hope: 1998 photo of of Triunfo and Lobo confluence.

rift by oversaturation of rain and the creeks unable to handle all the water—crashed and tumbled down the canyon. The creeks which border the meadow never over-

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Canyon Traffic Study Results

A TRAFFIC STUDY WAS CONDUCTED by The Department of Public Works, Traffic and Lighting Division between 7/10/03 and 7/13/03 in order to assess the speed and daily average volume on Triunfo Canyon. The results showed the average daily volume of 1266 vehicles and the speed averages supported a 40 mph speed limit.

Additionally, a survey was taken at the corner of Lobo and Triunfo Canyons to determine the viability of installing a multi-way stop control. The survey revealed that the average number of vehicles and pedestrians fell far below the
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Damming of the Blue Line Creek

Dear Residents of Lobo Canyon,

I really want to know if it is legally, morally, and environmentally allowable for Saddle Rock Ranch to have two small lakes on the property which were created by the damming of the Blue Line Stream which runs through Lobo Canyon into Triunfo Creek and on into Lake Malibu and then into Surfrider Beach. Considering the vast implications of the loss of water to this vital watercourse it is imperative that some research is done as to the legality of the damming. Shouldn't this water flow freely? Over the twelve years

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Join and Have a Say

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backbone of the Board, Ms. Leah Culberg, as the Corresponding Secretary.

Thanks also go out to Paul Culberg and Shyam Reyes for a stunning “new look” of our newsletter.

I have heard it said that the TLC Board and Organization is “Nothing but a bunch of Busybodies” and I would have to agree with that statement. We all lead very Busy Lives so it is very difficult to find people who are committed to, and concerned about, the future of this beautiful place we live or work in. The Triunfo-Lobo Community Association was setup to give a strong, unified voice to all that concerns people who live or work here. If you live or work here, the Association is your vehicle to address any issues that bother you and if we speak with one voice, we can make an impact on government agencies, developers, etc.

Most of the people who live or work

in our canyon are fiercely independent; they are not “joiners” and would prefer to be left alone to do whatever they do. After all that is why they moved here.

However, the Canyon is changing whether we like it or not. Government is more invasive with its rules and regulations, and economic forces are at work which will eventually change the look of this place. These economic forces (North Area Plan, lack of housing, continued immigration, etc.) will continue to push up the price of land and property, and that means people will build bigger and bigger estates to justify the price of the land.

I just finished building my house at 4,000 sq. ft. and other properties under construction at this time are approximately 6,000, 8,000, 10,000 and 12,000 square feet. The conservative estimate as to the number of residential lots left to develop, number between twenty and twenty.

Let’s play devil’s advocate and say the average size will be 8,000 square feet. When all those lots are gone, people will start looking at the smaller houses on good lots as teardowns. Whilst this will do wonders for the equity status in our homes, it

also means that, for the foreseeable future, traffic will remain the number one problem, followed quickly by safety because of only one canyon exit route.

As I write, this letter smoke is billowing over the mountain ridge and blacking out the sun and I just had to explain to my two small boys that we would have a family meeting in five minutes to discuss possible evacuation. I have cleared my brush but my swimming pool which is still under construction, is sadly empty and I wish that there was some kind of early warning or tracking system from LAFD. If you are like me, your home or business is probably your largest asset, its location is also part of that asset so it makes sense to do the utmost to protect and manage that investment.

Join with other like-minded people and let us manage our investment. Let us take pride in our beautiful community and have a say in how it grows and how to solve our common problems.

May you and yours have a Happy and Peaceful Holiday Season.

— Kieran Healy

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Paul Culberg & Shyam Reyes

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Traffic Study

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level at which multi-stop control can be considered.

The review also identified horse traffic along the east side of Triunfo Canyon which appeared to be coming from one or all of the commercial equestrian centers located on the east side of Triunfo Canyon. The result is that the division will install “Equestrian Symbol” signs on Triunfo in the vicinity of Lobo Canyon.

The entire report communication is available upon request of any of the TLC board members.

Send Contributions to Our Community Newsletter

COMMUNITY INPUT FOR UPCOMING newsletters is most welcome: news item, comment, photo, story, poem, recipe, or idea. Please address all letters, story submissions and comments to Paul Culberg:

E-mail paul@lobocreek.com

Tel. 818-991-1872

32063 Lobo Cyn. Rd.

Agoura, CA 91301

TLCA Website: We’re developing our community Website. PDF versions of this newsletter are available for downloading: www.triunfolobo.org

Damming

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that I have shared habitation with the flora

and fauna of Lobo Canyon I have observed a dramatic decline in wildlife and in vegetation. The Blue Line Stream, which comes down from Saddle Rock, runs through my forty acres and through the forty acres just below me. I walk all this acreage constantly and have been watching a dramatic decline in the amount of water flowing or sitting in pools. The implications of this are dramatic and insidious.

Firstly; those of us on wells are cheated of our supply, the amount of which is unknown but evident during the dry season. Secondly; the wildlife which depends on this water for survival has to search for other sources including swimming pools and ornamental water ponds. Three weeks ago the female baby Golden Eagle was found dead in my swimming pool drowned in an attempt to get a drink.

By the way, in case you didn't know; there is only one nesting pair of Eagles remaining in the Santa Monica Mountains. National Parks Service spotted the nest—which is located on Saddle Rock Ranch—from the top of my property. They saw two eggs and this spring the eggs hatched and we watched the hatchlings grow into flight-trained young-uns. The Parks people came to my place with a high-powered telescope to view the nest because they were refused access to Saddle Rock Ranch. By the way, there are grapes planted right up to the rock outcropping containing the last breeding nest.

Can these magnificent birds survive



herbicides, pesticides, and a lack of clean flowing water?

I am now putting water out for the bobcats and the deer because the small pools in the stream which used to last until the new winter rains are all dried up. Is this natu-

ral or is this a result of the stemming of the stream by Saddle Rock Ranch? How many of you are aware of this situation and how many of you care to challenge the ignorant greed of a few to benefit the greater good?

A lot of development is occurring in our canyon and that is unavoidable. The impact that the development is having on the natural environment is also unavoidable; but the blatant taking of a natural resource is avoidable if we get together and do something about it.

Any information about the law and about how to enforce it is welcome and I ask for an open forum on this most important issue. Peaceful and rightful co-existence is easy if we care and are aware of the consequences of our behaviors. I ask for everyone's help in this matter because I am tired of walking around with a combination of anger, sadness, and futility. Thanks for your attention.

— Judith Marx at La Loma in Lobo Cyn.

Forwarding Our Newsletter

Great newsletter! The geology article alone makes it essential reading. It's OK if I forward it (the whole newsletter) to others, yes? — Nicolas Noxon

"Cleaned Up Mess"

Good newsletter - informative and entertaining. It appears the board has "cleaned up" the mess at Lobo Canyon/Lobo Vista as much as can. Mike & I both thank you for your efforts. — Pam Cavanah

We Were In Westerns

This is the first of a series of interviews with retired, ageing actors from the Western movies, many of which were filmed in our local mountains.

(Excerpted from "Good Guys, Bad Guys, Rattlers and Cows" by Earl Pomerantz)

THE CHINESE LAUNDRYMAN

"Back then in the nineteen —thirties, I pretty much had two choices. I could play a Chinese laundryman or I could be a Chinese laundryman. I chose the former."

VULTURE

"What I remember most is the heat. Hot? Smell of death in the air? Bring in the Vultures."

"We had three moves. Sit on a tree, hover on the ground or circle in the sky. Not too challenging, but it paid the bills. There was this 'special business' bit, where we'd spread our wings wide and 'caw.' Vultures don't caw in real life—that's crows- but they liked the sound, so they dubbed it in later."

"Circling was the worst. Three or four takes, going round and round, you can get pretty queasy. But we'd have fun with it. If you watch closely, sometimes we're circling in one direction, and when they cut back to us, we're circling the other way"

"Once as a gag, I did Figure eights. I didn't work for a year."

"My big scene was when I sat on a Buffalo carcass, and, you know, did my thing. They claimed that it wasn't a real buffalo, just a prop. I was there Charlie. That was a buffalo."

"I hated the word 'carrion'. It was **food**."

Canyon Climes

by *Elfin Forest*

MANY OF OUR NEIGHBORS have moved to Lobo or Triunfo Canyon in the last few years. While you might have noticed a frost or two, you may not have experienced the full climatic range our part of the world experiences. Why should you be interested? If you're designing your home or planting a garden you will be seriously affected by the climatic variation. If you are wondering how much variation there is, our native flora might give you a hint. That is if you know something about California's plants.

The most noticeable clue is the stately valley oak forest in Triunfo Canyon (there are many others if you look). Valley oaks revel in the cool wet winters and long hot summers of Northern California. Get the picture?

Considerable Variations

While we don't have an official National Weather Station in our area, we know from long time locals that there is considerable variation in temperatures both daily and through the seasons. This contrasts with Los Angeles and other surrounding communities, let alone Malibu only five miles to the south. They enjoy fine Chamber of Commerce weather that is some of the mildest in the nation. Why then do our canyons, with an elevation of only 800-900 feet, differ so markedly from the surrounding areas? Like real estate location, location, location is the most important factor in determining weather.

Air temperature is based on a number of factors. We all remember the phenomena of convection, conduction and radiation from our high school classes. During the day the sun warms the air from below by heating the ground causing air convection. At night the soil, and particularly rock, loose heat rapidly to space cooling the air

from below and causing subsidence. The rate of heat gain or loss is dependent on a number of factors, most importantly the ratio of surface area to volume. We know this from the movie theatre because small people are usually the first to complain about the air conditioning and I have yet to hear my large son utter a single grumble about it ever.

Our canyons are but folds in the Santa Monica Mountains. The surrounding Santa Monicas, including 2,800 foot Castro Peak, tower above the floors of Lobo and Triunfo Canyons. This convoluted land surface produces small pockets of air surrounded by sharply sloped land producing a high ratio of chaparral and rock to volume of air.

During the summer with the sun almost directly overhead, rocks and slopes get very warm. This causes the air to heat producing temperatures up to 117°F. In winter the sun lurks low in the southern sky and its path is partially obscured by the mountains. Cold air, particularly from north facing slopes, slides down the slopes into the canyons and ponds, driving any remaining warm air to higher elevations. This is often called a *temperature inversion* (temperature rises with elevation instead of the normal condition where air cools as elevation increases).

With long nights and a cold air mass, temperatures can drop far below record lows of Thousand Oaks and Los Angeles. Temperatures as low as 10°F or less have been seen in Lobo Canyon. During the spring, there can often be remarkable 24-hour swings of 50°F or more: warm days followed by a sharp frost. Elevation can reduce the effects of the inversion and as little as 50-



100 feet can reduce frosts substantially. Those of you located above the 1,000 feet level will see much higher lows and escape frost damage in all but the exceptional year. Daily and annually, Lobo and Triunfo Canyons are temperature challenged.

The worst freezes occur when a mass of prechilled air arrives in our area direct from Alaska and the Yukon. Recently, freezes afflicted 1972, 1978 and 1990. So we're more than a decade away from the last freeze. Could this December or January bring another morning we'll remember for decades? Time and the plants will tell us.

Effect on Home and Garden Design

How might this climate affect your home and garden design? Using extra care with insulation, heating plant design and most importantly frost protection for pipes is certainly warranted. Solar hot water systems and irrigation lines are very vulnerable to damage. Proper choices in plant material might save you with expensive pruning and haulage charges with frost damaged shrubs and trees.

Which species are at risk? Many subtropicals often seen in the San Fernando Valley like jacaranda, most ornamental figs and many palms are at severe risk. Even stalwarts, hardy trees such as the California pepper, red gum eucalyptus, olive and redwood are damaged badly by the worst frosts. Choose landscape plants wisely and you'll have an intact landscape after the next great freeze.

“With long nights and a cold air mass, temperatures can drop far below record lows of Thousand Oaks and Los Angeles..”

Here Come the Rains

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flowed, at least in the traditional sense. Instead, the water accumulated underground until the soil could no longer absorb anymore.

Chris had told me that our lands do not drain, for nothing will penetrate the basalt underlying the topsoil. This would explain why my back meadow erupted and formed a mini canyon in its center. We heard the crash of the land breaking away that night, dumb to the reason for the thunder-like sounds until morning when we could clearly see that the meadow was cut in half. The rift is 8 feet deep and 20 feet across.

Fire and Rain

We had pretty good rains last winter, pretty consistent, and we hoped for much less of a fire season this summer. The pattern of living in these canyons is that of hoping for rain and praying against fire. This fire season has been a wake up call ushered in by the Santa Anas.

As these newest fires erupted this fall, we recall that it is 25 years to the day since Lobo and Triunfo were in the


midst just such a conflagration. Without significant rain we are still at risk as 2 days of hot Santa Anas will dry out the moist chaparral very quickly. It isn't over yet.

Beware of the Runoffs

I tell myself that the rain will come and it could come in quantities that can clog the canyons and make getting around very challenging. There has been significant movement of earth of late (grading) and the mud-filled runoff could well drain to, and clog, the road and the creek beds. The rains that inundated us in 1979 actually closed clogged Lobo for nearly a week.

I recall clearly, for had it not been for a couple of brave neighbors who, like the Pony Express, managed to get to the freeway and return with some badly needed medication for me, there was no way of getting off of our hill. The wonderful flat where the burros are was underwater and a good long section of Lobo Canyon was covered with mud, which was impassable even with 4-wheel drive.

We all would like to believe that this cannot happen again, but do not trust your wishes. I have no photos of that '79 storm damage but do have one (*photo on front page*) of the confluence of Triunfo and Lobo looking across at Pegasus. This photo was taken in 1998 when we had a relatively light winter.

To those that remember, be reminded; and to those that do not, be warned and know that there is much experience residing in these canyons. And that knowledge, when shared, can be valuable in understanding and instructional in how to cope. The fire department on Cornell Road usually provides sand bags every winter and understanding the runoff can and will save time and money. 

Migration...What Will You See?

WE'RE LUCKY TO LIVE IN CALIFORNIA FOR MANY reasons, not the least of which is that we have a front row seat during migration. We're smack in the middle of the Pacific Flyway, one of the four basic routes of migration here in North America. And September marks the beginning of what can be a fascinating look at our migrating visitors.

So what you can expect to see in the coming months? It's a good time to spot a migrating *passerine*. Passerine is the order of birds pertaining to perching birds and song birds. Keep your eye out for a *yellow rumped warbler*, who might still be in full breeding plumage. *White-crowned sparrows* return, as do *evening grosbeaks*. You may also catch site of an orange crowned warbler or a cedar waxwing. We've already heard of a couple of sightings of *waxwings*, so they're a little early this year.

As exciting as migration is, it can also be heart-breaking. It's estimated that half of all birds die during migration. Some fall victim to natural causes of mortality, but many others die because of continued loss and degradation of their stopover habitats. You can help. Make migration easier by offering a habitat with food and water for the birds as they pass through your yard. Try to landscape with native evergreens and fruit-bearing trees, shrubs, grasses and vines. Design your garden so that plants flower and bear fruit throughout the seasons. Put out seed, suet, fruit and nectar feeders and provide a source of water to help attract migratory birds to your backyard, where they can rest and rejuvenate before continuing their journey.

(From: *Birdtracks, Wild Birds Unlimited - Woodland Hills, CA*)

A very good introduction book on the birds of our area is: "An Introduction to Southern California Birds" by Herbert Clarke.



DID YOU KNOW?

THE ANNUAL TRIUNFO LOBO Community Association **HOLIDAY PARTY** will be held on **Sunday, Dec. 14th.**

LOCATION: Sue and Barry Klein's
31325 Lobo Canyon Road, Agoura
Please bring a dessert. Coordinate with Yvette Robertson, (818) 706-8671.

PROPANE DEAL

Most of you likely received a flyer in you mail in late August highlighting a switch to "Suburban Propane" which touted a price of \$1.44 per gallon. Those of you that have participated in the program established by the TLC board several years ago should feel pretty good that you are paying only \$1.10 for propane delivered by Proflame. Those of you that are not taking advantage of this canyon deal, call **Ron** at Proflame and ask for the Triunfo Lobo Canyon deal. (805) 647-1622

EARTH MOVERS

Congratulations to: *Nick and Hollace Jackson* whose wedding lit up the back of the canyon in mid October.

CHEERS & JEERS

JEERS to the folks mid-canyon who continue to park on the pavement greatly constricting the navigable roadway in front of 31400 Lobo.

JEERS to all of the speeders on both Lobo and Triunfo.

CHEERS to *Pegasus Creek Ranch* for **excellent parking management** at their October event. Most of the cars were parked at other businesses and those parked on Triunfo were **all** parked on the shoulder off of the pavement.

Bobcat Sightings

LATE THIS SUMMER, WE WERE SEEING a whole family of bobcats in the back of Lobo Canyon. While writing this piece, I looked up from my keyboard and watched an adult bobcat step over the low wall directly in front of my window which is at ground level. He stood on the wall. Looked both ways as if watching for traffic and stepped down and lazily glided down the path toward the pool.

We have been seeing a momma and two

babies for the last month, but this is the closest I have ever been to an adult male. He was just 10 ft. away. Earlier, Leah spotted a gangly juvenile with huge feet hunting in our front yard and he was not fearful for he stopped and looked at Leah before he dropped over our front wall. I hope he likes ground squirrels as they are prolific this year. It had been an unusual summer for we have, in past years, only seen these cats along our road and in the meadow along Lobo by the Healy place. — *Paul Culberg*

Plan Your Parking, Please

THE LAST NEWSLETTER NOTED that regarding parking on our canyon roads, county regulations prohibit any parking that in any way impedes the roadway. This regulation is to ensure our safety as it is imperative that the fire department and other emergency vehicles have unimpeded access. This last weekend Lobo was inundated by hundreds of cars for an event at the narrowest portion of the canyon.

When such an event is planned, a basic courtesy is the notification of the event to the community and the responsible handling of the parking. When cars are parked on both sides of the road and there is insufficient shoulder space then the roadway is impeded and in this case actually blocked. Courtesy and consideration are part of community and will provide goodwill and cooperation.



Avoidable Road Constriction at Lobo Canyon.

Plant Natives of Triunfo-Lobo

by *Elfin Forest*

Blue-eyed grass

(*Sisyrinchium bellum*)



PLANT TYPE: Low perennial (possible ground cover)

FLOWERING SEASON: February to June

PROPAGATION: Division in the wet season or seed sown in the fall.

CULTURAL REQUIREMENTS: Requires very little care although more water causes better growth and a longer bloom period. Adaptable to any soil.

SELECTIONS: There are a number of shorter growing variants offered in the nursery trade although our own native type is quite nice. Bright powder blue stars make this iris relative beautiful in the rock or perennial garden. Each flower only lasts a day, but they keep coming for months in the spring. The foliage is as the common name implies, grass-like. This species naturalizes and spreads readily when given half a chance. Don't use your string trimmer until after seed has set in the fall. We now have blue-eyed grass spreading extensively down our property appearing in areas where it can be enjoyed.

This plant and many more California natives are available from: The Theodore Payne Foundation, 10459 Tuxford Street Sun Valley, CA 91352, Tel: 818-768-1802 Website: www.theodorepayne.org