



Howlings from Lobo

www.triunfolobo.org

"Home begins at Triunfo and Kanan." – Jay Cordell

Triunfo-Lobo Community Association Newsletter - Spring 2004



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Speeding on Narrow Roads

LAST MONTH, I GOT A \$300 SPEEDING TICKET on Kanan Road. I tell you this to illustrate the fact that we have all, at some time or another, been guilty of speeding.

When I turn onto Triunfo Canyon, I make a conscious decision to slow down. As they say in Ireland: "The last mile home is always the longest." However, by slowing down I get to enjoy the beautiful scenery in the canyon; I'm obeying the law; and I'm not going to kill somebody's children.

Recently, when leaving the canyon on Triunfo, a lady in a white SUV tried to overtake me. She narrowly avoided a head-on collision with another car. Again,

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SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS NORTH AREA PLAN

Grading and Significant Ridgeline Ordinance

THE PASSAGE OF THE NORTH AREA PLAN was the result of the cooperation and the coming together of various government offices, agencies, local interests and private individuals whose efforts resulted in the crafting of a government document designed to protect natural resources as well as private ownership well into the 21st century. The guiding principle has been to "let the land dictate the type and intensity of use."

Proposed amendments to the plan suggest and create grading criteria and ridgeline setback requirements in the North Area Plan which would be consistent with the guiding principle.

Additionally policies contained in the Hillside Management section of the plan defines the manner in which natural and environmental features should be managed and provides guidelines for dealing with erosion, safety and vegetation.

Copies may be obtained at the Los Angeles County office of Regional Planning. 

Panoramic View of Lobo Canyon. In view of a lot of grading going on in the area, Chris Willig photographed this panoramic view from a cliff north of Lobo Canyon on December 23, 2001 so we would remember "how it was...". It shows a winding line of sycamores along Lobo that have turned gold.

PART TWO OF THE BUD VARNEY INTERVIEW:

3 Homes in the Canyons

Bud Varney: There were a few cabins down at the mouth of the canyon and there were people there on weekends and they were out there shooting high-powered rifles on the weekends. There were only two places down below, there where Pat (Robinson) lives. The only house between those at the mouth of canyon and here (the back of Lobo) was the Bower's cabin.

I know when the three oak trees were still down here at the bottom (inside the gate at the end of Lobo) when we were kids, we'd walk down here all the time and we'd pick up lots of broken purple glass. So there had been someone camping there.

Gary Varney: There used to be an old homestead cabin there in that meadow. It is on an old topo map.

BV: When the glass had turned purple, ancient glass, somebody had camped

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Planting of Native Grasses Protects Against Fire

Excerpted from "The Mountains Experience,"
Mountains Restoration Trust (MRT) Newsletter.

A new approach to brush clearance is taking hold in the Santa Monica Mountains. In the Cold Creek Watershed, MRT is removing non-native grasses and creating a meadow of native bunch grass in an effort to minimize fire danger and increase wildlife habitat.

In the past, parklands within 200 feet of a structure must be cleared of native vegetation. Disking creates a visual blight as well as loss of topsoil during windy and rainy days. Disking also invites invasive weedy annual grasses with a short growth period that become extremely flammable in dry weather.

Native perennial bunch grass resists burning. Imagine that the non-native grasses are like a sheet of newspaper that burns very hot and quickly. Now roll up that sheet of newspaper and it burns more slowly like the bunch grass.

There are many other benefits for

planting these native grasses. A meadow has a higher aesthetic value than a disked, raw, dirt field. The nutrient value of native grasses is much higher than the non-native grasses.

To create an effective fire barrier, European grasses must be disked, or mowed two to three times a year. Native grasses can be mowed once a year at a much lower cost.

Non-native grasses have a root system that is only two to three inches resulting in soil erosion that negatively impacts streams with excessive run-off and sedimentation.

In contrast, native bunch grasses grow



in clumps with roots two to three feet deep that help stabilize the soil.

Implementations of fuel modification techniques are effective and less costly. Restoration of disked wasteland to a beautiful native habitat will support a variety of birds and animals. Our streams will be cleaner, and that will benefit wildlife and the beauty of our natural areas.

We Were in Westerns

The second in a series of interviews with retired, aging actors from the western movies that were filmed in our local mountains. Who knew? Excerpted from "Good Guys, Bad Guys, Rattlers and Cows" by Earl Pomerance

The Foreman

"My character never got anything. He had a lot of responsibilities. He basically ran the place, but no way did he have a chance at inheritance. The ranch was earmarked for the owner's trigger-happy favorite son and, after he got gunned down, to his ineffectual other son who would hopefully grow in the job. But never to the foreman. I also had a thing for the owner's young wife, but that did not pan out either."

"There was a girl at a rival ranch nearby, but the Good Guy ended up with her. The foreman got nobody."

"I tried not to play the part bitter, I'd think to myself, 'Look, you're outdoors. You get to ride the range. Be in charge—in a foreman kind of way—you should be happy.' And I was — sort of."

"Sometimes, I'd be the bad guy, plotting to capture what was rightfully mine, not through inheritance, but through loyalty and hard work. That usually got me killed."

"I always felt underappreciated. When it came to ridin' and ropin'. I could run rings around the Good Guy. I guess that doesn't count for much in the movies."

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Please Contribute to Your Community's Newsletter

We need community input for future newsletters: news item, comment, concern, photos, story, poem, recipe, or idea that you think should be included in the newsletter. 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

Hummers All Year Long

SIXTEEN SPECIES OF HUMMINGBIRDS are found throughout the United States during various times of the year. All but one is considered migratory, meaning that they move in and out of their breeding ranges. The only species not considered migratory is the Anna's Hummingbird, which lives here all year long.

Anna's hummers are husky, about 4 inches long. They've adapted better than most hummers to the loss of their habitats. They're avid visitors to feeders.

Males secure their territories and signal potential mates through a combination of aerial acrobatics and song. (The "song" of the Anna's hummer is more like a series of scratchy notes than it is a melody, but it is music to a female Anna's ears.) A male

Anna's will let foraging females feed at "his" feeders, but drives other males off.

Females have full responsibility for building the nest and raising the babies. She needs spiderwebs to make her nest sturdy, so lay off the pesticides and learn to love our arachnid buddies. Anna's feel comfortable around humans so it's not unusual for them to build their nests close by human activity. Keep your eyes peeled for a small, cup-shaped nest.

Many plants flower here after the winter rains begin. Anna's hummers take advantage of that flowering to initiate breeding. Males begin to sing and display as early as November. Breeding continues



through spring.

So, if you've taken in your feeders because you thought all the hummers had disappeared for the season...they haven't! Anna's are here - they're ready to have a family - and they're hungry! So put your feeders back out and continue to enjoy watching those "jewels of nature."

(Wild Birds Unlimited • www.wbu.com)

Bud Varney Interview

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among those oak trees.

Dad says that what he knew about Tevercio Vasquez and he seemed to know a lot about Tevercio Vasquez, that this was one of his hideouts.

Leah Culberg: Vasquez rocks? He was a bandido?

BV: He says that Vasquez was still active at that time.

The (Varney) family came out of Nebraska. Dad got out here in 1886. My Dad's name was Edmund Varney, and he was born in 1865. My grandfather was in the Civil War for three years.

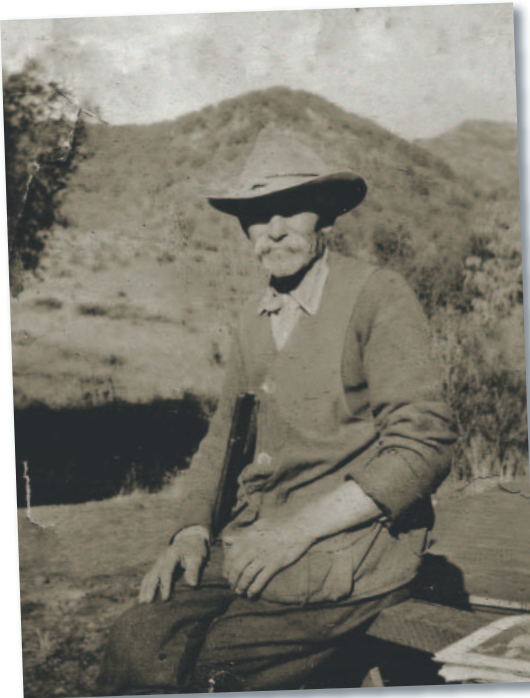
Another thing my dad told us about: His brother, Uncle Charlie. Well, he's the one who helped put the pipeline down in from the springs up there. The springs are up behind the bullhead rock up there. Two springs up there and they both bubble and you hold a match over them, over the bubble there and they would ignite.

That water always flowed, didn't make a difference if it was a wet year or not it always seemed to keep flowing.

One thing Charlie did. There's that point up there, Canon Rock. Well Dad told me that Charlie was up there looking around for the property lines and everything, and he discovered a cave, caved in. And he dug in there and he found a skeleton in there and leather bags and he got all the gold, there was gold in there.

I don't know how much gold there was in there. There were several pouches with gold in them. Apparently it was almost caved in when he dug in there. Somebody had done some mining up here, up in the crik.

There was some quartz up there and somebody had dug it up. There is gold up in these mountains 'cause Dewey Lubers, an old cowboy friend of the family, grew up in New Mexico, and he panned for gold. He was a real piece of history, Dewey Lubers. His mother raised Billy the Kid in Silver City, New Mexico.



California State Game Warden who lived for a time at the Varney Ranch approx 1913 to 1917? Bud Varney does not recall his name but the game warden just disappeared leaving his favored rifle and all of his belongings at the ranch. At that time there were active poachers living in the mountains and it was assumed that one such family, whose livelihood depended on the sale of deer meat to the better restaurants in Los Angeles, eliminated the threat of a game warden. Oh, murder so foul!

EARTH MOVERS

Hugh Robertson has fully recovered from his go cart sand dune excavation. The brakes failed and Hugh and his racing cart catapulted into the dune. Though Hugh was seriously injured, he has rebounded and is again racing. Try a bulldozer next time Hugh.

Congratulations to **Laura** and **Steve Gilbard** who were honored by Temple Beth Haverim at its annual Dinner Dance in January.

Congratulations to Sue Bakalor-President of the Conejo Newcomers Association.

CALENDAR

Saturday, May 22nd: The *Mountains Restoration Trust* will conduct a **Fuel Modification Seminar**.

With co-operation from the Fire Department, this seminar will discuss the ways to maintain attractive, low fuel landscaping through the mixed use of natives, ornamentals and food bearing planting.

WHERE: Paul and Leah Culberg's, 32063 Lobo Canyon Road, between 1:00 pm and 3:00 pm.

CHEERS & JEERS

CHEERS: It looks like many in the neighborhood have had a good headstart at fuel modification and brush clearing. This is good news as this year could have another bad fire season.

JEERS: Despite notice in previous newsletters and neighborly requests, inconsiderate and illegal parking continues at 31400 Lobo restricting passage and constricting Lobo. See *President's Message* on page 1 for the corresponding speeding that together with thoughtless parking will result in serious accidents.

Historical L.A. Rainfall

THE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE's official downtown Los Angeles weather service Station, located on the campus of USC, recorded 13.37 inches of rain for the calendar year 2003. This is more than 6 inches above the total for 2002 which was 7.29 inches. The average yearly rainfall for the years 1878 through 2003 (126 years) is 14.96 inches. The year 1884 recorded 40.29 inches, the highest and the lowest was 1953 at 4.08 inches.

Since 1990 the total rainfall has been 217.12 inches and the average is 16.70 inches. The combined rainfall from the first of the season in 2003 to December has been measured here at Rancho Culbergo at the end of Lobo Canyon at 11.50 inches. We were 5 inches short of the average.

Artisans Search

DO YOU KNOW AN ARTIST OR ARTISAN that lives and works in these mountains? Let us know so that we can publish a list of local artisans in the fall as a holiday resource. We have found several and want to share them with the community. Please e-mail: paul@lobocreek.com

Roaming Dogs Warning

COUNTY ANIMAL CONTROL has contacted a board member and spoke about the number of dogs roaming free in the canyon. Animal Control has had complaints and they prefer to have the community maintain control over its pets. They remind us that it is a safety issue both for people and the animals. Animal control tells us that they will begin patrolling the canyon. Dogs sleeping on the road are a hazard which combined with speeding, road constriction and late afternoon sun in the west make a formula for accidents.

Speeding

(Continued from page 1)

last week, a grey 4x4 succeeded in overtaking me coming back into the canyon.

From where I live on Lobo, we watch cars speeding by at all times of the day and night. It is only a matter of time before somebody gets seriously hurt or killed.

Mike Frawley's efforts with the county traffic department last year failed to lower the speed limit because the average speed of canyon traffic was only just below the posted limits.

It is amazing to me that it is legal to overtake another vehicle on Triunfo Canyon Road. I am sure that most of you adhere to the speed limits, but I think we need to do better than that and set an example by lowering our speed in the canyon. It would also help if you can tell your family, friends, contractors, clients, film crews, etc. that they must adhere to the posted limits.

I know that, as a parent, I worry about my children being anywhere near the road. I'm sure you feel the same if you're out walking your dog, riding your horse, or bicycling. If you see someone speeding through the canyon, try to get a license plate number and description of the vehicle and contact any of the board members.

Also, if you have any good ideas about how we can make the canyon safer, please contact the board. This is my absolute favorite time of year in the canyon; let's make sure we can all enjoy it safely.

— Kieran Healy

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Please help keep our neighborhood roads accident-free.