



Howlings from Lobo

Triunfo-Lobo Community Association Newsletter - Summer 2003

“Home Begins at Triunfo and Kanan”

—Jay Cordell (06/11/03)

Community Association Annual Meeting

THE TLC 2003 ANNUAL MEETING WAS HELD JUNE 11TH AT PEGASUS CREEK. Thank you, John, for the hospitality and the use of the great meeting room. There was sufficient room to have accommodated many more than the 37 people representing 24 families who did attend. Barry Bakalor and Randy Billsland, both new to the canyons, were welcomed to the community. Elections were held and new board representatives were elected. Remaining board seats are held by: Leah Culberg, Michael Frawley, Keiran Healy, Terry Webb and Chris Willig. Michael Frawley spoke about his information on Certified Emergency Response Training (CERT) which is offered by the Fire Department and they will administer this program for TLC with as few as 10 participants. Anyone

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This red-tailed hawk “Lancelot” is owned by Falconer Cynthia Maxwell who lived in Lobo Canyon for a number of years back in the late ‘70s. See related article, “Loving Red-Tails,” on page 4.

NEW ASSOCIATION OFFICERS

President Kieran Healy

Vice President Michael Frawley

Treasurer Barry Bakalor

Recording Secretary Terry Webb

Corresp. Secretary Leah Culberg

Newsletter Paul Culberg

Publishers & Shyam Reyes

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Spontaneous Combustion!

by Leah Culberg

THE MORNING OF MAY 21, 2002, I was awakened at 4:00 a.m. by a call from Judy, my neighbor who lives up in Hidden Highlands. She said there was a fire at Saddle Rock Ranch at the intersection of Kanan Road and Mulholland Highway that was burning down her back hillside with flames that looked like they were leaping 20 feet into the air. Luckily it was not yet fire season, even though we had just experienced the driest winter since records have been kept, and there was enough moisture in the chaparral to allay my concerns sufficiently to allow me to fall back asleep. At 6:20 a.m., I was awakened once again by a phone call, but this time it was from Gary Varney, another neighbor at the

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An introduction to the Canyons’ geology

Triunfo-Lobo Canyon Rocks

by Hugh Robertson

THE HILLSIDES AROUND OUR TRIUNFO AND LOBO Canyon neighborhood are underlain by lava flows or extrusive volcanic rocks included in the Conejo Volcanics Formation. These rocks were deposited during volcanic eruptions between about 13 and 16 million years ago.

The different types of rock you see on road cuts and exposed on slopes in the canyon were deposited during different types of eruptions from ash flows to lava flows under water. Layering associated with different eruptions is inclined northward.

Lobo Canyon runs parallel to north dipping layering in the Conejo Volcanics. Localized older faulting and folding has

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Remember When?

DRIVING OUT OF LOBO THE OTHER DAY I PASSED SEVEN CARS INCOMING. As I navigated around the parked flatbed tractor trailer on the left and then the low boy on the right unloading a backhoe, I thought back to my early days in The Triunfo Lobo, some 25 years ago. This same route had but little traffic and I would see a bobcat (not the mechanical type) in the meadow where the backhoe was unloading, red-tail hawks nesting in the sycamores by the low boy and the spring wild flowers that danced in the meadows along the road.

Either by design or neglect these meadows were not disked under which allowed the natives to bloom and reseed before the fire department regulations were implemented. Further on, as I swerved around a parked car on the right, protruding into the lane close in to the low wall where there is no shoulder, I was forced into the middle of the road where I had to stop to avoid the dogs sleeping there. On to the bridge at Lobo Vista, heavy equipment was parked on the left and on the right, workmen with the doors to their pickups left open further constricted the roadway, I negotiated oncoming traffic, also in the middle of the road. I thought I had seen the last of this game of chicken in the '60s and even back then, I remember, this game was never played on blind curves.

Surviving the vehicular confrontation with canyon-employed commuters, I felt the relief of "traffic control" directing all around the road construction. Finally, someone whose job it was to keep some semblance of order! The disinterested looking orange vested traffic organizer held a sign that said "slow" so I crept around the backhoe trenching the road only to encounter another car coming at me. Common courtesy prevailed and neither of us wound up in either the trench, the creek bed or crumpled into the parked cars or white fence.

Making the right turn onto Triunfo

at the school bus stop occupied by heavy equipment carriers and construction materials proved even more hazardous for the steady stream of SUVs speeding down the center of the road from Kanan, drivers, one hand on the wheel, one on the phone cupped in the left ear and the another restraining the toddler trying to climb out of the safety seat, whizzed past the intersection without apparent regard for either speed or other traffic.

I could not help but notice the debris on the roadside on Triunfo. Coffee cups, fast food containers, plastic bags, cigarette boxes and the detritus from our mobile consumer culture. A few months earlier we had organized a cleanup and had picked up and disposed of an uncounted mound of garbage bags filled with the roadside waste collected and here it had all apparently escaped the dump and returned to the canyon. Boomerang litter.

I remember when I knew every car or walker, runner or biker I met on the road and stopping to chat, caught up on the doings and don' tings in the canyon. That was part of the charm of coming or going. Stopping to chat did not require pulling over for it was unlikely that it would impede traffic for there wasn't any, but we all seemed to do so anyway. If there was other traffic it was likely that it was someone who would simply join the conversation. I remember when there was so little traffic that we had the freedom to check

Annual Meeting

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interested should contact Michael.

Officer Derek Midollo, the CHP community relations officer, spent the entire evening and sat in for the business session after his very informative and knowledgeable presentation. Derek pledged support and responsiveness for all of our concerns and complaints. The topics of primary concern were the speeding in the canyon and the parking. Officer Midollo clarified the standard parking regulations on non-posted county roadways, which is regulated by the needs of the fire department to assure access in the event of emergency. Parking is allowed only off of the pavement and any vehicle continuously parked with protrusion into the roadway (on the pavement) will be ticketed.

President Michael Frawley notified the community that he has been successful in scheduling a traffic study on Triunfo this summer so as to determine the quantity and velocity of the traffic.

out the wild flowers, the nesting of birds and raptors, landscape and canyon improvements. I remember when courtesy prevailed and horses, walkers, joggers, bicyclists and cars shared an unimpeded roadway.

There are those that remember farther back than I and they lament the growth I nostalgically remember from 25 years ago. Read the last newsletter with the recollections of Bud Varney. Dialing back the years is not an option but remembering is and that exercise reminds me of why I came here in the first place. I remember when and why and I savor those memories. Aside from the sanctity of home, despite the spring's bringing of looky loos in an environment of low interest rates my memory remains, uncluttered and unchanged.

A Renter's View of the Canyon

by Wendy LaBarge

WHAT A WONDERFUL SPRING WE HAD IN LOBO Canyon. The green thumbs at the end of the road, aka Leah, Paul and Raul, produced spectacular gardens with as many varieties of beautiful, colorful blooms as birds that flocked to them and nested among them. How lucky was I to have grown accustomed to the whirring sound and sight of the tiny, iridescent green hummingbirds that hovered over my patio constantly this spring.

It will take me a long time to learn the names of the all the native flowers that seemed to spring to life overnight along the upper reaches of the road, but I won't forget the intensity of their color, from pink to fuschia, lilac to deep purple. I had the supreme, and I understand very rare pleasure of gazing upon a solitary chocolate lily growing tall along the road. I had never seen one before, but hope to see another some day here in Lobo Canyon.

Since moving here almost a year ago, other wild natives have revealed themselves to me. A beautiful ring-tailed red fox crossed the road in front of me, then

kept looking back at me as it sauntered down the hill. Though I have yet to see the golden eagles recently spotted in the area, I marveled at the hawks' wing spreads as they soared overhead. I am always amused by our two resident turkey vultures as they keep vigilant watch over a stretch of Lobo Canyon Road they have claimed as their own. The long and lovely gopher snake that has long resided on our grounds showed me his rattlesnake imitation to illustrate the limitations of our relationship.

I never saw a coyote before I moved here, but I heard them screaming in packs at night. I have spotted a number of these creatures in our Canyon, but always traveling alone. I spied one trotting along the perimeter of our property on a sunny Saturday morning around 10 a.m.; another stared at me one late afternoon from the base of the big oak tree that towers over my patio. Surprisingly, I have not once heard a screaming coyote pack in Lobo Canyon. That's fine with me. I prefer the deep guttural sound that resonates from

my beloved neighbor, Yeti, the white Komondor, when she warns prowlers that they are unwelcome.

To me, the horse, of course, is the soul of Lobo-Triunfo. From the moment I turn onto Triunfo, their sight and smell transport me to the other world that is home to me now. My wholly unsuccessful attempts to dominate these majestic animals have added to my sense of respect for them and my preference for seeing them reinless and free, a common site here.

I particularly look forward to the sight of that magnificent white horse who lives in a small pasture on Lobo Canyon Road. He was gone for a while and I missed seeing him terribly. I consoled myself with visits to Elsie's burros, two of which I have come to know on a first-name basis, Lolita and her son, Junior. They never fail to welcome me home when I stop at the mail box before making my way to the end of Lobo Canyon Road.



Canyon Rocks

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disrupted the sequence and layering of the rock. The Conejo Volcanics tends to vary from moderately hard to very hard and resistant. The rock is locally fractured and broken which results in raveling, sloughing and rockfalls on steep slopes. The prominent peaks south of Lobo Canyon through which the Kanan Road tunnels pass are underlain by intrusive volcanic rock. Intrusive volcanic rocks have been pushed through existing rock, cutting across layers and pushing along beds. Rockfalls locally exist below hard

resistant outcrops. Evidence of rock falls can be observed on higher slopes above Lobo Canyon.

The low-lying areas along Triunfo Canyon and Lobo Canyon are underlain by alluvium consisting of poorly consolidated mixtures of sand and gravel with silt and some clay. Alluvium thickness decreases as you travel upstream. Talus composed of gravel and sand locally blanket the slopes ascending above Triunfo Canyon. The hillside north of the intersection of Triunfo Canyon and Lobo Canyons is blanketed by older alluvium representing a prior stream level in the geologic past.

A geologic map of the canyon area can be obtained from the Dibblee Geological Foundation located in Santa Barbara.

The canyon south of the intersection is included on the Point Dume Quadrangle (T.W. Dibblee and H.E. Ehrenspeck, 1993, DF-48) with the area to the north of the intersection shown on the Thousand Oaks Quadrangle (T.W. Dibblee and H.E. Ehrenspeck, 1993, DF-49). These maps can be purchased through the SBMNH / Dibblee Geology Center, Attn: Map Sales, 2559 Puesta del Sol Road, Santa Barbara, CA 93105, Tel. 805-569-3170, E-mail: Dibblee@sbnature2.org, or E-store: www.sbnature.org/estore.

Loving Red-Tails

by Keith Hackland

THE RED-TAILED HAWK, *AGUILILLA COLIRROJA* (or *Gavilan Colirrufa* or *Aguililla Parda*) (Mexico), *Buteo jamaicensis* (Scientific), is 19 inches tall with a 43-inch to 56-inch wingspan, weighing 2.4 lb. Female is larger than the male.

Possibly our most common hawk, it is stable or increasing through its summer breeding range, from Alaska and Canada (except the arctic tundra), south through Florida, Mexico, Guatemala and Honduras. In winter it moves south to the Canada/U.S. border area and south through Central America and the Caribbean.

It utilizes many different habitats (mixed open country, deserts with trees, open lightly wooded mountains, open swampy country) and is tolerant of human activity. It is often seen perched on a tall utility pole or high on a tree.

Typical adults have a distinctive red tail that is lighter underneath, a dark upper and light streaked under side. East of the Mississippi a band of streaks across the under side is evident. There is a great deal of variation in this species. It is best to use a good field guide to clarify the different forms and subspecies. Juveniles may be difficult to identify.

According to Paul A. Johnsgard in "Hawks, Eagles and Falcons of North America" (1990), diet and hunting method is modified to suit locality and season, and also varies with individual preference (within the same area).

He writes that studies indicate there is great variation in diet. Weighted averages show mammals at 68%, birds 17.5%, reptiles and amphibians (mostly snakes) 7%, invertebrates (grasshoppers, etc.) 3.2% of

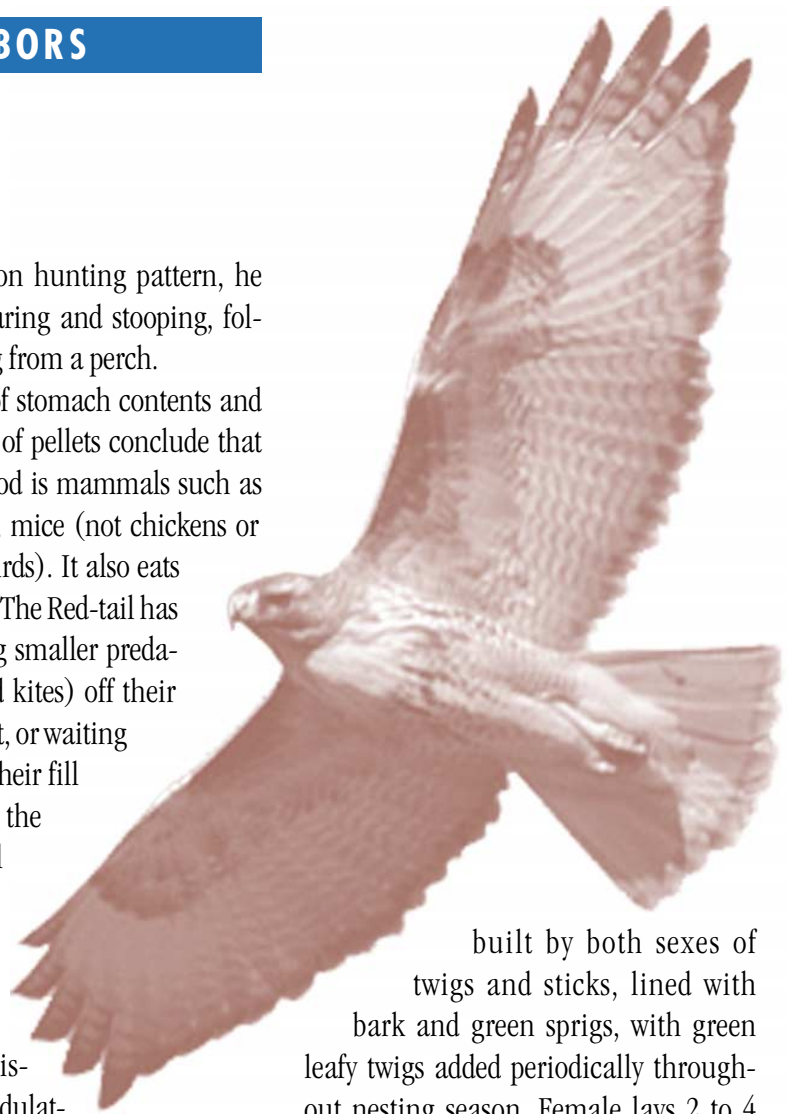
diet. The common hunting pattern, he points out, is soaring and stooping, followed by hunting from a perch.

Old studies of stomach contents and modern analysis of pellets conclude that the bulk of its food is mammals such as rabbits, squirrels, mice (not chickens or ducks or game birds). It also eats fish and crayfish. The Red-tail has been seen driving smaller predators (falcons and kites) off their food and taking it, or waiting for others to eat their fill and then taking the remains. Its call

is a wild descending cry, r e p e a t e d "keeeeyaaaaah".

Courtship display includes "undulating flight, alternately swooping down and zooming upward, tilting over majestically for the next roller coaster dive". They "often fly with feet dangling, calling to each other". Dick Dekker in "Hunters On The Wing" (1996). It is thought that Red-tails pair for life.

Often returning to its previous nesting territory, it prefers large, tall trees, using a branch crotch, as a nest site, 30 to 90 feet up. It will use cactus, a shrub, or a cliff when no tree is available. It selects a site with a commanding view. Breeding season begins February (south) to April (north). Nest is bulky, 30 inches diameter,



built by both sexes of twigs and sticks, lined with bark and green sprigs, with green leafy twigs added periodically throughout nesting season. Female lays 2 to 4 smooth, non-glossy white or buff eggs with blotches of brown or purple 2.4 inches long. Incubation is by both, with female doing more and often fed by male. Young fed mainly by female who tears up food brought by male. By 5 weeks young eat unaided, fly at 6 weeks and learn to hunt at about 9 weeks, but remain with parents a few more weeks.

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"The common hunting pattern (of the Red-tail hawk)... is soaring and stooping, followed by hunting from a perch."

Spontaneous Combustion

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back of the canyon. He was hearing helicopters (that, thanks to his early morning phone call, I was now hearing as well) and wanted to know if I knew what was happening. I told him I assumed they were making drops on the fire up at Saddle Rock Ranch. The helicopters continued making their rounds for two days.

On the second day, Paul and I went up there to see the fire for ourselves. We followed two sets of hoses in from Mulholland that were hooked up to the nearest fire hydrants which might have been as much as a mile away. There were approximately 150 firefighters fighting the fire. We saw vehicles from HazMat and the Health Department, as well as the Air Quality Management District.

What's Goin' On?

By now you are probably wondering what was happening. No one in the canyon ever questioned me about the fire, so maybe you did not smell the smoke in the lower reaches of the canyon although we continued to smell it for a couple of weeks, and the ashes rained down on us for as long as the fire burned, which was three weeks.

Saddle Rock Ranch has at times been a working horse ranch, as well as a venue for celebrity weddings and such, and they had been using the hillside above Judy's house as their own private and, as I now understand, illegal garbage dump for many years.

Shortly after Judy moved into her home, she spotted a tractor working on the hillside above her home. When she took out her binoculars to see what it was doing, she realized it was dumping and spreading manure out on the hill-

side. This was the beginning of Judy's campaign. She started calling the health department to report illegal dumping. They went to the Ranch for a visit and found nothing. She insisted they come to her house so they could see it from there. They went back and checked and said it was okay because there were no flies.

The first winter of heavy rains she experienced in the canyon, Judy found disposable baby diapers, plastic utensils and plates, and sanitary pads in the creek which ran down that same hillside. She took the garbage in to the health department and still they did nothing. She continued to call at least once a year to no avail while incurring the wrath of the Ranch management. The Health Department insisted that the Ranch was not in violation. It became obvious that they had never done more than make a visual inspection from the top of the hill.

Even though the weather was not hot on May 21, the composting manure was burning. The Fire Department believed that it had been burning underneath the garbage pile for awhile, but not until the flames reached near the surface did the contact with the oxygen in the air cause the flames to suddenly flare up. This was a fire caused by spontaneous combustion, which can happen at any time of the year.

Just imagine if this had occurred in mid October at the height of the Santa Ana season. A large section of the mountains could have been wiped out. Saddle Rock Ranch was required to remove every bit of the trash and manure.

Tricky Cleanup

The tractors worked for many weeks to remove the 30-foot deep accumulation, but in the first few weeks, every

time they bared another unexplored area, flames from the underground fire would shoot toward the sky once again because of the access to oxygen. As I understand it, the Ranch was cited by several of the agencies that came to investigate, and they were required to pay for the costs incurred by the Fire Department during the three weeks they oversaw the removal.

New County Protocol

Obviously, we have a shared interest in preventing anything like this from occurring again. There is new County protocol regarding manure piles. If you see untended manure piling up anywhere, call the Fire Department. Do not call the Health Department. They are only concerned with flies and vermin. If you have a pile of composting manure, keep it well watered. It will compost faster and should eliminate the possibility of an incidence of spontaneous combustion.

I know none of us likes to report our neighbors, but our canyon has experienced brush fires before and this may really be a case of life or death.

Contributions to Our Community Newsletter

Community input on and/or for future newsletters is welcome: news item, comment, concern, photo, story, poem, recipe, or idea that they 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

DID YOU KNOW?

The **Galbraith Family** had a commercial poultry farm at what is now *Pegasus Ranch*.

The **Blue Geese Cottages** had a bridge across Triunfo Creek which collapsed in the 1950s. This property is now known as *Sunny Skies*. – Courtesy of Mary Webb

Was anyone watching when the **Neighborhood Watch** sign was stolen?

EARTH MOVERS

Congratulations to:

Tim Murch and *Jody Ringel*, married in a well-lit ceremony at the back of the canyon.

Brandon Webb, graduated from Newbury Park High School.

Mark Bakalor, for achieving a BA in theater from San Jose State University. Watch for Brandon in an upcoming Burger King commercial. He will be the young man you do not recognize.

Russell Ramos and *Jaynie Bankson* on their recent wedding in the Canyon.

Nick Jackson and *Hollis* who have actually become engaged to wed.

Kieran Healy for his 7th Emmy nomination. Let's hope Kieran does not become the Susan Lucci of Lobo Canyon.

CHEERS & JEERS

Cheers to *Joe Grosswendt* and *Lindel Lummer* for the obvious enhancements to their properties.

Jeers to the *blatant speeders* in the canyons and to the accumulating garbage along Triunfo Canyon road.

Letter from New Zealand

Hello From New Zealand,

My name is Siri Whalen-Bell (maiden name Clary). I married a New Zealander and live here now. My family lived on lobo canyon road for many years since the 1930s. My grandmother owned most of the land of the second half of lobo canyon. Her house was at the top of the hill at 31559 – over the water-dip – and of course has long since been torn down.

I thought that you might be interested to know that when I was a kid in the '70s, an elderly man came to visit us who had lived in an old cabin at the very top of the ridge across from the Bakalor property. (That old cabin lasted until 1978 when the big fire roared through Lobo Canyon and virtually changed the landscape overnight!) He said that in the 1800s, the canyon was so full of wild wolves that you had to carry a shotgun to protect yourself - particularly if you were carrying a dead deer. Hence the name, Lobo Canyon (which you would obviously know is *wolf* in Spanish.)

There were many recluse types and several famous people who used to hide out in various hideaways on Lobo. It was a haven for “hippies” during the sixties and seventies who all lived at the very end of the road – and who I used to babysit for, much to my father's dismay!

Ronald Reagan was a good friend of my grandmother and spent a lot of time there as well as many of the old character actors. I still vividly remember (and gross out my Kiwi friends by telling them) racing my horse back up Lobo trying to get home before dark - and having bats get stuck in my long hair on more than one occasion! I could probably write a book about the weird and wonderful life I had living there.

Anyway, I won't bore you with too many details or endless reminiscing! Lobo Canyon is a wonderful place to live.

Kind Regards,
Siri

Annual Association Membership Fees Are Due

Be sure that your membership is current so that you may participate and benefit from the work and information that the Triunfo Lobo Community Association provides. Participate and have a voice in your community. The yearly dues are only \$25.00. Please send checks to:

Barry Bakalor, Treasurer
31700 Lobo Canyon Road
Agoura, CA 91301
(818) 865-9222
barry@bakalor.com

EMERGENCY LIST Information Request

The association has a very outdated resident emergency list and would like to have an updated version. This list is the basic contact list in the event of an emergency, such as fire. Please provide the following information: NAME, ADDRESS, PHONE #, WORK PHONE, EMAIL, FAX#

Please email this information to: paul@lobocreek.com or simply put it in the Culberg's mailbox at the back of Lobo Canyon. Thanks!

If you want to receive this newsletter via e-mail, send me a note at paul@lobocreek.com

Please help keep our neighborhood roads accident-free.