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President's Message

Ben Curtis

Are YOU ready for the next emergency?

During the recent fires it was brought to everyone's attention just how important it is to be prepared BEFORE the inevitable happens. Your PCPOA has instituted the "One Call" system, and those that have chosen to take part by simply submitting their phone numbers, were kept "In the loop" on the status of fires in and around our canyon. All attempts are made not to unduly alarm our residents, but the reality is that when the Officials suggest there be a voluntary evacuation, it makes it pretty simple for us to pass on that information.

There are those in the Canyon that feel as though we 'cried wolf' with our suggestion for a small part of the Canyon to prepare for evacuation. Our actions in the future will NOT be altered by those naysayers. My opinion is that I would much rather apologize for an early alert than to try and understand the grief of a neighbor that may have lost their home, livestock, pets, or even worse. It is important to know that those directly affected by our suggestion to evacuate were all very supportive of what was done.

Please join with us and provide the PCPOA with the needed Disaster Preparedness Information so that we can properly protect you and all our neighbors from loss in the future. Given the seeming inability or unwillingness for the Agencies to coordinate their disaster planning efforts, it is left to us to do what we can to prepare for disasters and to coordinate with those Agencies when and if they ask for our plans.

PLACERITA GOLD

Linda Tarnoff

MELBA WALKER FISHER

This Placerita Gold takes us several miles up Placerita Canyon to an abandoned rock house on the north side of the road where a very special now 92 year old Newhall resident was born. Journey back in time as we meet Melba Walker Fisher.

If the Walker name sounds familiar, it is because Melba is the daughter – one of a total of 7 sons and 5 daughters – born to Frank Evans Walker and his wife Hortence Victoria Reynier in 1916. Frank Evans was a miner and a rancher raising sheep, cattle, chickens and ducks.

Due to the poor soil, although they had a garden, there were no crops grown. The Walker Ranch consisted of 640 acres, with the only tools they used being their hands, Melba says.

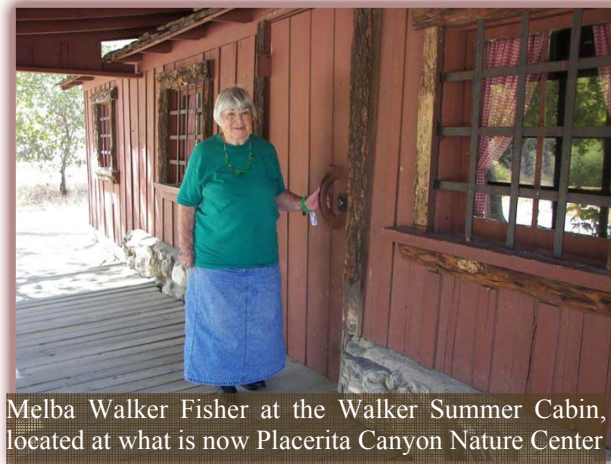
FISHING FOR GOLD

Since the first gold was discovered in Placerita Canyon by the Oak of the Golden Dream, according to Melba, her father "always said he was gonna strike it rich but

never did". He had only finding gold on his mind, he was "fishing for gold". Actually he did find a nugget once, the size of a 50 cent piece which he took to Los Angeles for money which amounted to the grand amount of \$22.! Melba also said that her father "never finished anything he started" which is probably why there is an unfinished fireplace sitting in Placerita Canyon as well.

LIFE IN PLACERITA

In the early years of the 20th century when Melba was a child, the family lived in not one but two small cabins adjacent to Placerita Creek. The winter cabin with a heater,



Melba Walker Fisher at the Walker Summer Cabin, located at what is now Placerita Canyon Nature Center

still located today next to the Placerita Canyon Nature Center and a summer cabin approximately two miles up the canyon. Today the fireplace remnants of the summer cabin are a destination point for hikers and equestrians and in fact, there is a Walker Trailhead sign on Placerita Canyon.

Next to what is now the Nature Cen-

(Continued on page 3)

Dear Residents:

I welcome walkers, runners, bicycle riders and horses, but Parents, please keep your kids and their off road vehicles out of Quigley Canyon.

Thank you,

Phil Rawlins

Editor's Note: Phil Rawlins owns property in Quigley Canyon, adjacent to Fox's Pasture

Placerita Canyon Fires...

Thanks for having the plan in place. I was contacted on my home phone, my cell phone and my work phone. I am appreciative that you have worked so diligently on having some way for us to be notified of an emergency.

Thanks,

Rick Delia

Lola Williams...

I felt compelled to tell you how much I enjoyed the article on my dear friend, Lola Williams. I had the good fortune of meeting Lola in the spring of 1970 while purchasing one of her magnificent horses. Instantly becoming friends, Lola patiently answered my many questions and assisted me in all of my horse endeavors.

It is hard to realize the years that have passed since meeting Lola in the spring of 1970. We have remained good friends and I cherish the wonderful memories of Lola, her family and beautiful horses.

Sincerely,
Carole Gatti
MJG Entertainment, Inc.
P.O. Box 2404
Orange, CA 92859

Membership/Board Meeting

The November 14th Placerita Canyon Property Owners Quarterly Meeting was a standing room only event. Residents filled the terraced classroom seats and stood outside in the corridor. The Masters College hosted the meeting in the Reese Science & Mathematics Building with refreshments including their famous Chocolate Chip Cookies and Peach Iced Tea.

President Ben Curtis brought the meeting to order. Guests included Officers Brenda Cambra and Travis Kelly from the Santa Clarita Sheriff's Station. Brenda reviewed crime statistics for Placerita Canyon in 2006 and 2007. Combined stats for crime in the Canyon is 1 Aggravated Assault, 7 Burglaries, 7 Larceny Theft and 1 Grand Theft Auto. Also from the SCV Station was Travis, a Motorcycle traffic Officer reviewed the status of the Canyons private and public roads. In addition he answered questions regarding off road vehicles and their drivers and presented info on the Dangerous Teen Driving Program 1-877-310-STOP to report dangerous, speeding or reckless drivers.

Paige Herman gave a report on her proposal to build a Soccer Training 'park' just East of the gate on Placerita Canyon Road. She answered questions from the audience, and it was agreed that residents send their questions and concerns to the PCPOA for consideration. Dave Armstrong, representing Masters College, reviewed the latest plans for the Chapel (Performing Arts Center) Development at the proposed Dockweiler access area.

PCPOA Vice President Gene Leary gave a brief presentation on Safety Preparedness. Del Nelson reported on the North Newhall Redevelopment and Specific Plan. Chris and Linda Townsley are keeping an eye on the proposed Recycling Plant at the east end of the Canyon, just beyond the boundaries of the Placerita Canyon Special Standards District.

After the presentation was a very active Q&A session with most taking part. Poinsettias and Emergency Radios were given away to lucky raffle winners.



MELODY RANCH Fall 2007

The sun has set on the town of "Deadwood" for the last time, without the wrap-up two hour film, as had been anticipated for

this past summer. With the cancellation of "John from Cincinnati" after one season, HBO's commitment to Melody Ranch officially ended on November 2. However, the friendly guard Roy who was a fixture at the front gate during HBO's tenure will be remaining to provide security and wave hello to folks who pass by.

Now that HBO has departed the scene, Melody Ranch will be restoring its treasured western town to its former glory, without a Deadwood feel. Especially, since Hollywood is interested in making more Westerns, it's just a matter of time before another outfit rides into town. For recent photos of both the interiors and exteriors of the sets, check out the studio's website at: www.melodyranchstudio.com.

Lastly, wanted to let you all know that the recent firestorm barely singed the Valuzet Motion Picture Ranch located in Saugus. Till next time.

Linda Tarnoff

ter, the entire family lived in a cabin consisting of several bedrooms, a living room with fireplace, dining room and kitchen. The cabin now is only one bedroom since two bedrooms were torn down by the movie companies who leased it for \$5 a day, wanting it to look like a little prairie house.

Melba said that she had a great imagination due to no television or pictures, pointing up to the mountain and saying that this white mark was a mark of Santa Claus. In fact, Christmas was her favorite time of year with Santa Claus leaving oranges and apples, two pieces of hard candy, and a rubber ball. She remembers bouncing her rubber ball. "It really didn't take much in those days to make some one happy", she says. She rode a horse all over, and hiked many times up what is now the Los Pinetos Trail, up to the top. In fact, she says she has climbed every tree and hiked every trail in Placerita Canyon.

The Placerita Creek ran year round then, providing fresh water as well as serving as the only bathtub the family had, all sharing the same towel, according to Melba. She recalls making their own swimming pools with everyone taking off their clothes and getting in the water – nobody even owned bathing suits – and it was no big deal then.

The children were never allowed to go on any trails alone due to fear of mountain lions and snakes. "The rattlesnakes were our worst enemy. They were around here first so we had to respect them". Coyotes were also a major problem.

EARLY EDUCATION

Since no school was in the neighborhood, the children all went to Newhall Elementary which was over six miles away. They traveled in an old bus driven by a Mrs. Kennedy and the journey on unpaved Placerita Canyon took quite some time. Note: the first part of Newhall Elementary was built in 1904, and then added on to in 1917. In World War II, it was reinforced for a bomb shelter, and is earthquake proof, according to Shirlemae Beverly.

Since their mother passed away when Melba was 14, Melba wasn't able to attend high school as she was needed to take care of her younger siblings. But if she were to have attended high school, the nearest high school at that time was located in San Fernando, she says.

HART RIDES AGAIN

Interestingly, Melba fondly remembers William S. Hart riding his horses over to her family ranch, giving each one of the children a dollar. "On my goodness, I thought I was rich" she says, "I bought a pair of sandals for 98 cents, and had two cents left over.

Hart filmed many movies over on the Walker property, with each day, her father charging \$5 dollars to allow the filming.

A LITTLE ABOUT MOM AND MUSIC

Melba's mother was a musician. Lots of parties were at the Walker Ranch, with neighbors coming from miles around, the children curling up on the concrete floor and going to sleep while their parents would keep on dancing all night until the sun would come up.

NEWHALL SHOPPING

Melba remembers there being one grocery store then and one gas station. She also remembers the train stopping in front of the Saugus Café, with people getting off the train, crossing the road to eat. For furniture, one would have to travel to San Fernando.

To serve the large livestock population was a hay and feed store located on San Fernando Road that had been owned by the Frew Family.

GETTING AROUND

In the early 20th Century, people mostly had horses and buggies when she was a child, and that's how people would get around. "It would take all day to get to Newhall and back", she remembers traveling on a rutted dirt Placerita Canyon Road. Later she remembers her father buying an old Model T truck in 1923.

THE FIRST RADIO

The Walker family had been the first to get a radio. She remembers neighbors would come from miles around to listen in.

MELBA'S FAMILY LIFE

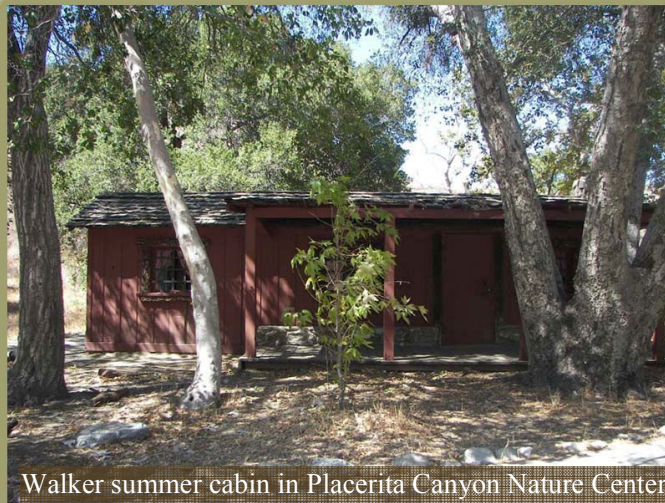
Melba first married in 1936 to George Starbuck (no relation to Starbuck fame), living in Glendale and raising two children George and Gayle who now live in Oregon.

After her first husband passed away, she remarried in 1948 to Walter Fisher to whom she was married for 53 years, living

once again in Newhall. They had two children, Gayrose and Walter Jr. who live in Bakersfield. For the past 40 years, she has up the hill on 8th Street, in an area known as Snob Hill, she recalls living next to Ruth Jones, a teacher at Newhall Elementary School. Her husband Wally was a major property owner and businessman, which included serving as a Director of the Santa Clarita National Bank. He passed away at the age of 94 in 2002. Melba continues to live in her 8th street house on the hill but is frequently visited by her great grandson Tyler Nuss, a Castaic resident and student at Hart High, as well as other family members. In addition, she says she has "eight or nine grandchildren."

Most of her siblings live in Oregon, except for her brother

(Continued on page 4)



Walker summer cabin in Placerita Canyon Nature Center

Melba Walker Fisher (Continued from page 3)

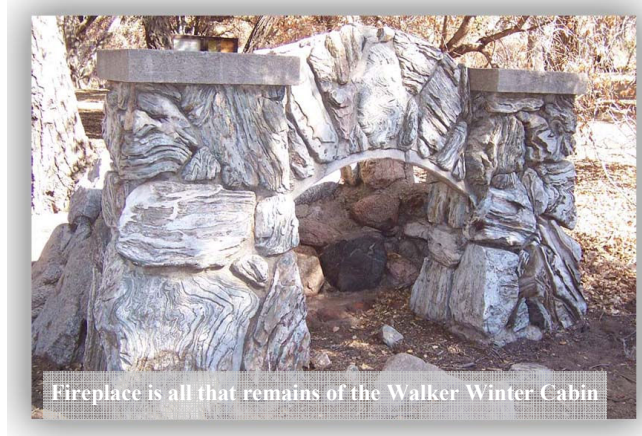


Melba and great grandson Tyler Nuss holding Frank Walker's gold pan under the watchful eye of husband Walter Fisher

Tommy, a former Newhall resident who now lives in Palm-dale.
SENIOR
CEN-
TER
Since the Santa Clarita Valley Senior Center

first opened up in 1958, Melba says she has attended regularly, each day walking to and from her 8th Street Home. She has made

great friends and enjoys her daily routine of having lunch there. In fact, it was from one of these lunches that she met Chuck Beverly, telling him about her life which in turn inspired him to contact me. I interviewed Melba, along with Chuck and Shirlemae,



Fireplace is all that remains of the Walker Winter Cabin

(Continued on page 5)

Christmas Greetings....

(Formatted to fit)

The embers glowed softly, and in their dim light, I gazed round the room and I cherished the sight. My wife was asleep, her head on my chest, My daughter beside me, angelic in rest. Outside the snow fell, a blanket of white, Transforming the yard to a winter delight. The sparkling lights in the tree I believe, Completed the magic that was Christmas Eve. My eyelids were heavy, my breathing was deep, Secure and surrounded by love I would sleep. In perfect contentment, or so it would seem, So I slumbered, perhaps I started to dream. The sound wasn't loud, and it wasn't too near, But I opened my eyes when it tickled my ear. Perhaps just a cough, I didn't quite know, Then the sure sound of footsteps outside in the snow. My soul gave a tremble, I struggled to hear, And I crept to the door just to see who was near.

Standing out in the cold and the dark of the night, A lone figure stood, his face weary and tight. A soldier, I puzzled, some twenty years old, Perhaps a Marine, huddled here in the cold. Alone in the dark, he looked up and smiled, Standing watch over me, and my wife and my child. "What are you doing?" I asked without fear, "Come in this moment, it's freezing out here! Put down your pack, brush the snow from your sleeve, You should be at home on a cold Christmas Eve!"

For barely a moment I saw his eyes shift, Away from the cold and the snow blown in drifts. To the window that danced with a warm fire's light Then he sighed and he said "It's really all right, I'm out here by choice. I'm here every night." "It's my duty to stand at the front of the line, That separates you from the darkest of times. No one had to ask or beg or implore me, I'm proud to stand here like my fathers before me. My Gramps died at ' Pearl on a day in December, "Then he sighed, "That's a Christmas 'Gram always remembers." My dad stood his watch in the jungles of ' Nam ', And now it is my turn and so, here I am. I've not seen my own son in more than a while, But my wife sends me pictures, he's sure got her smile. Then he bent and he carefully pulled from his bag, The red, white, and blue... an American flag. I can live through the cold and the being alone, Away from my family, my house and my home. I can stand at my post through the rain and the sleet, I can sleep in a foxhole with little to eat. I can carry the weight of killing another, Or lay down my life with my sister and brother, who stand at the front against any and all, To ensure for all time that this flag will not fall."

"So go back inside," he said, "harbor no fright, Your family is waiting and I'll be all right." "But isn't there something I can do, at the least, "Give you money," I asked, "or prepare you a feast? It seems all too little for all that you've done, For being away from your wife and your son." Then his eye welled a tear that held no regret, "Just tell us you love us, and never forget. To fight for our rights back at home while we're gone, To stand your own watch, no matter how long. For when we come home, either standing or dead, To know you remember we fought and we bled. Is payment enough, and with that we will trust, That we mattered to you as you mattered to us."

Christmas will be coming soon and some credit is due to our U.S. Service men and women for our being able to celebrate these festivities. Let's try in this small way to pay a tiny bit of what we owe. Make people stop and think of our heroes, living and dead, who sacrificed themselves for us.

LCDR Jeff Giles, SC, USN
30t h Naval Construction Regiment
OIC, Logistics Cell One
Al Taqqadum , Iraq

(Special Thanks to Terry Payne, former PCPOA Board Member for bringing this to us)

Melba Walker Fisher (Continued from page 4)

after lunch at the center. The Senior Center is a special destination for many people, including Melba.

MELBA'S FIELD TRIP

After our interview, we took Melba on a field trip through our Placerita Canyon and up to the Nature Center. While driving through the canyon, she commented that no pavement existed then, nor were there any houses, only oak trees and the dairy. She remembers Quigley Canyon, though without houses on it.

When we arrived at the Nature Center, she looked into the cabin, her old home, and added that each one of the fireplace rocks had been carried by hand by her and her siblings. When he drove further up the Canyon, she pointed out her birthplace which still sets on the side of the road (the area's first homestead built by her father), and that this land had been sold to the Mitchells. She also pointed out where the summer cabin was located down near where the Placerita Creek runs (near the Walker Ranch Trailhead sign). She also pointed out the water trough for the livestock.

On the way back, we drove once again through Placerita Canyon, this time driving by our own homes. Melba repeated several times how much we must enjoy living here in Placerita Canyon.

PARK DESIGNATION

It should be noted that Los Angeles County took possession of the Walker Ranch area in 1959 to add to the rest of the State park's acquisition in 1949. This action thereby serves to maintain the legacy of the Walker Ranch for present and future generations to experience and enjoy. The park is now maintained by Los Angeles County.

ADDITIONAL TIDBITS

According to a Signal article appearing on February 20, 2000, featuring an interview with Melba's son George Starbuck and then Placerita Canyon resident Tom Walker. Melba was mentioned as having remembered missionaries from the San Fernando Mission crossing the mountains at what is today the Nature Center to try to convert the local Indians. In 1918, the original Walker house burned down and the family moved down the canyon to the cabin now at the Nature Center. The reason that two homes, a winter cabin and a summer cabin were needed

was because the road near the summer home was impassible in the winter. In the late 1930's, the family moved permanently into the summer cabin, located on now what is known as the Walker Ranch section of Placerita State Park.

The Signal further said that Frank Walker's parents, William Raymond Walker and Rosa Belle Evans had mining concerns on the present Golden Valley Ranch site and that when Frank built the original house on the homestead, the family legacy began in Placerita Canyon. Melba's mother's parents were Jean Joseph Reynier and Hortence Sambien, with Jean Joseph coming over from France around the 1860's, bringing grape vines with him which flourished in the area, descendants of which can still be seen in Placerita and Sand Canyons. The Signal quotes Melba as saying "I would crush those grapes for \$2 a week", referring to the grapes being crushed for wine at her grandparents' home.

Interestingly, in the late 1950's, the Walt Disney Co. took over a portion of property off of Placerita Canyon Road, which is now home to Disney Golden Oaks Ranch. According to the Signal article, "Walt Disney and his wife visited our father at the ranch." Tom Walker recalled proudly.

Until the 1980's when PacSun LLC acquired some of the Walker Ranch property from the Mitchell family, the land had been used extensively for cattle grazing. Since the Signal article was written, the City of Santa Clarita decided to not grant PacSun development rights for this portion of Golden Valley Ranch, citing instability concerns, with plans for this land also to become immortalized as open space.

OUR PLACERITA GOLD

Without a doubt, Melba Walker Fisher is living Placerita Gold with her recollections about living in Placerita Canyon enriching our own perspective about how life used to be in generations past. We express our deep appreciation to her for sharing her stories and bringing such rich history to Placerita Canyon residents.

In addition, gratitude in preparation of this article is expressed to our first Placerita Gold honoree Shirlemae Beverly and her husband Chuck; Dianne Erskine Hellrigel, volunteer with the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy and leader of the SCV Community Hiking Club; and SCVHistory.com.

Linda Tarnoff

Happy Holidays from your PCPOA Board

“Free” Membership in PCPOA

The first question a prospective member asks before joining PCPOA is, “What does it cost?”. He or she is usually surprised at the answer: “Nothing.” Here’s why it costs each member nothing and PCPOA can still provide services such as: street signs, regular newsletters, as well as an annual meeting with lunch.

More than 20 years ago, Placerita Canyon was a peaceful rural area in northern Los Angeles County. The residents lived contentedly among their horses and oak trees. Even then, there were activists among us. Dorothy Riley was famed for her ability to summon her neighbors to ring any threatened oak tree and prevent its being cut down. Her fame only grew when she hanged a County Supervisor in effigy; the poor man was soundly defeated at the next election.

One day a corporation, AES, came into the Canyon and proposed building a cogeneration plant. Placerita Canyon had oil, but it was more sludge than liquid; drilling for it was expensive. A cogeneration plant would provide two benefits:

1. The turbines would produce steam that could be injected into the wells liquefying the oil and making it easier to bring to the surface and refine.
2. The surplus steam could be used to generate electricity for the Canyon residents and others in the Santa Clarita Valley.

Since Canyon residents were not pleased with the proposal, our leaders told the corporation to build its cogeneration plant elsewhere. But the corporation was determined and the nation needed the oil the plant could provide. Ultimately the PCPOA Board of Directors knew they had to compromise. A meeting was held with representatives of AES to negotiate a plan that would satisfy the corporation’s desire to provide oil and electricity and the Canyon’s desire to continue its bucolic existence.

Therefore, a plan was drawn up so the cogeneration plant was well camouflaged from the street; AES agreed to be monitored for any air, water, or noise concerns it might create and to correct them immediately. In addition, as a goodwill gesture, the corporation offered PCPOA \$500,000 to do its good works throughout the Valley.

Both parties shook hands and the deal was made. The cogeneration plant continues its operation to this day and Placerita Canyon residents continue to enjoy their horses and oak trees. Because of PCPOA’s sound investments, we are able to continue to support worthy projects within the Canyon and worthy organizations throughout the Santa Clarita Valley.

Val

PLACERITA TRAILS COUNCIL FALL 2007

Hello everybody! Since our last report, we continue to monitor the Master’s College expansion, Whitaker-Bermite and other project discussions for preservation of existing trails and looking ahead for future trail additions. Having said this, in our own backyard, we are taken back by the increased number of Private Property, Right to Pass Subject to Permission of Property Owner signs or other obstacles appearing on land and easements that have historically been used for trails. However, the good news is either the property owner has given blanket permission for equestrians and hikers to use the property or there are other alternatives to bypass these particular areas and still continue to enjoy the beauty of Placerita Canyon trails.

Interesting to note is State Civil Code Section 846 which allows for recreational use on private property which is not fenced by removing responsibility for liability; in other words, someone traversing an unfenced property cannot sue a property owner for damages.

The recent call for evacuation due to the Placerita Fire beyond the back gate is truly a wake up call for the need for additional preparation, especially for horse owners. Both Atlasta Ranch and Bob Jones Stable are designated safe locations if an emergency dictates evacuation. It is important that Placerita residents do visit the PCPOA website or call Val Thomas at 255-2967 to provide emergency contact information for use only during a disaster. In addition, we will be working with the Sand Canyon Trails Council and

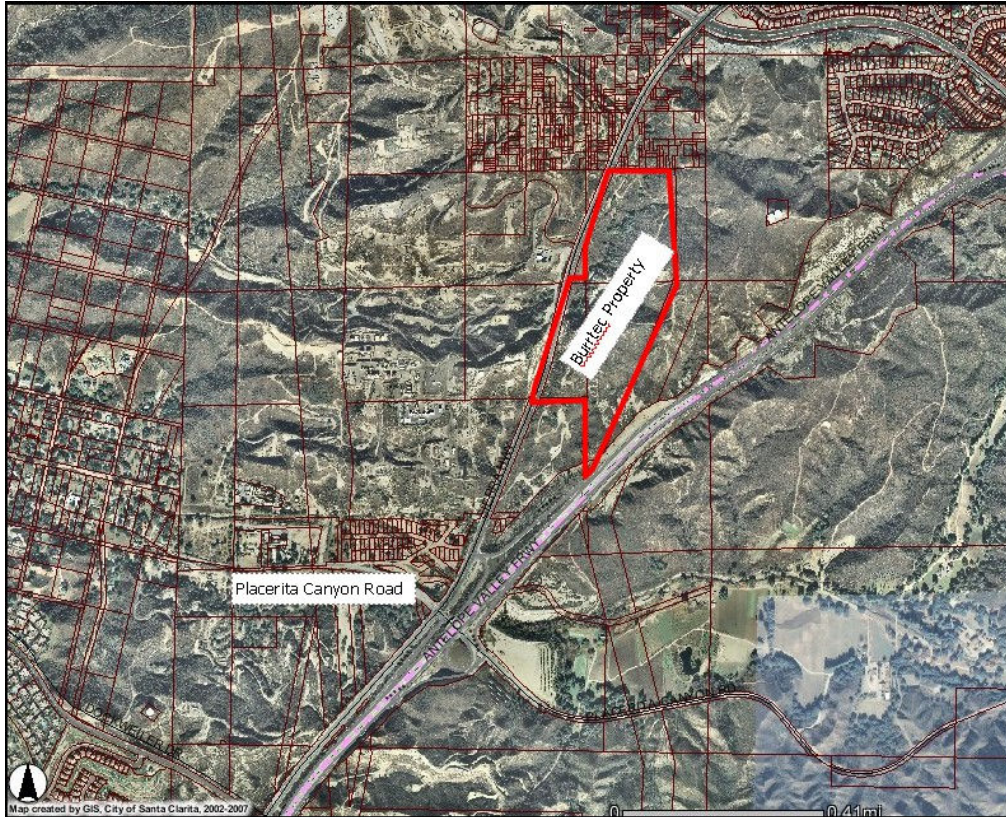
the Fire Safe Council as we fine tune Placerita Canyon’s disaster preparedness procedures.

The Trails Council would like to express our deep appreciation to Pastor John Boone, (direct descendent of Daniel Boone), of Haven House Church for his aggressive action to deter vehicular speeding activity on Quigley Canyon and Cleardale Avenue. Not only has he personally spoken to parishioners about the need to drive slowly through our neighborhoods, but he has ordered several “please drive slowly” signs that are now visible for all to see, parishioners and residents alike. Thank you Pastor John!

Lastly, the Trails Council is supporting Heads Up Therapy with Horses Program. As you may be aware, Jim Tindell successfully made a heroic attempt to save the 11 horses in his care, however in the process suffered major burns requiring a stay at the Grossman Burn Center. The horses have been relocated temporarily to a ranch in Sand Canyon. The Tindell family will be moving there shortly. In addition to our PCPOA Board making a financial donation to support the family, Trails Council members are donating horse equipment as all tack had been lost.

The next meeting of the Placerita Canyon Trails Council will be early into the new year where we will be reviewing all issues, and strategizing our goals for 2008. In the meantime, have a great holiday season and Happy Trails!

Burrtec Waste Management Property Proposed Material Recovery Facility



Is this good for our canyon?
Stay Tuned for more information



Placerita Canyon Property Owner's Association

Post Office Box 222204

Santa Clarita, California 91322

<http://www.pcpoa.com>

The PCPOA is formed under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code as a Public Benefit Corporation that is exempt from Taxation.

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Disaster Information:

The Board of the PCPOA highly recommends that you keep your radio tuned to KHTS1220 (am) for exceptional local coverage in times of emergencies, and that you set the City Website at www.santa-clarita.com as a 'favorite' on your computer for the timely information they can provide as well.

Placerita Canyon Property Owners' Association
Post Office Box 222204
Newhall, CA. 91322

Or Current Resident

Working To Preserve and Enhance Life In Placerita Canyon