



# The Rattler



## In This Issue:

- ◆ Frank Hovore Dedication
- ◆ Canyon Trail
- ◆ A Trip With Beverly
- ◆ Donations Listings

---

## *Placerita Canyon Nature Center* **Over 50 Years of Nature Education**

### *PCNCA's Mission Statement*

*To inspire a passion, awareness and respect for the environment, and to preserve and protect for future generations the history and ecosystem of Placerita Canyon.*

**November/December 2012**

---

Hello Friends,

The holiday season is coming and I want to send you all our best wishes for good health, happiness and the ability to enjoy the beautiful nature around you.

The holiday craft faire is on December 1 and 2. Put this on your calendar. The Nature Center is the only place in this valley where you can make your holiday decorations with fresh greenery, pinecones, seeds and pods and have so much fun. There are also children's crafts so the whole family should be able to have a good time.

You will notice that the format for this Rattler issue is a little bit different than usual. On September 29, we dedicated the classroom at the Nature Center to Frank Hovore who was our mentor for many years. The docent program was shaped by his efforts and his knowledge and I hope that after reading this issue, you will have a better understanding of what kind of person he was.

The big news right now at the Nature Center is that mountain bikers are allowed on the Canyon Trail which is the trail along the stream. To accommodate them, much construction is starting on that trail and is projected to last until April 2013. Please, be very careful and use caution: do not turn your back to oncoming traffic, be aware in curves, do not let your children walk ahead on the trail and please report any accident to the office. If you want a quiet walk in nature, may I recommend the Waterfall trail, at least during the construction phase (for more details on this new policy, see article). The equestrians have the right of way and then hikers and third mountain bikers, but a mountain biker going full speed might not see you in time.

The end of the year is always a very busy time but the beginning of the year is a time for new resolutions and projects. What about joining Docent training? If you like children and nature, have some free time, you might want to jump at this opportunity. You will learn so much and will join a nice group of people ready to help you...More details are inside the Rattler.



**The Rattler is a bi-monthly publication sponsored by the Placerita Canyon Nature Center Associates to promote the preservation and enjoyment of the Placerita Canyon Natural Area. Please come, enjoy, learn...and volunteer.**



### Vasquez Rocks

Have you been to Vasquez Rocks recently? The temperature is cooling off and it might be time to have a look at our neighbor natural area which has so much to offer: striking rocks, large open sky and many trails, even the remains of the Asher house with the BBQ area that nobody had the heart to destroy when the house was removed in the late 1970's. You might be interested to see how the new building for the Nature Center is coming along which should be ready around December. The new docent group is very enthusiastic and work at Placerita and Vasquez until their new nature center is ready. We wish them all the best; they are ready to go...



## The Rattler

Editor:

**Evelyne Vandersande**

661 254-2972

Publisher:

**Heidi Webber**

661 251-7978



If you have an article you feel would follow the interests of this publication, please feel free to submit it. The deadline is the 10<sup>th</sup> of every other month. Mail your article to:

Placerita Canyon Nature Center  
19152 Placerita Canyon Road  
Newhall, CA 91321-3213

or you can email it to Evelyne at [evelynvandersande@gmail.com](mailto:evelynvandersande@gmail.com). Please email your article in MS Word if possible.

Visit our Internet site at [www.placerita.org](http://www.placerita.org)--Ron Kraus is the webmaster.

Moving? Please let us know so you won't miss any issues of the Rattler.

## Board Members

President:

**Jim Southwell**

Vice-President:

**Ron Kraus**

Recording Secretary:

**Debra Barroso**

Corresponding Secretary:

**Fred Seeley**

Treasurer:

**Heidi Webber**

Directors:

**Bob Moss**

**Evelyne Vandersande, PR Chair**

**Bill Webber**

**Rick Brammer**

**Teresa Jacobs**

**Jack Levenberg NCA Rep**

**Sandra Balaram**

Alternate Directors:

**Deb Clem**

**Jim Harris**

The Rattler is printed by  
Valencia Printers on Recycled Paper

### Disclaimer

Because there is often limited space on various field trips, we find that we need to enforce the following: All trips and dinner celebrations are open only to Placerita Canyon docents and volunteers who have paid their yearly dues. Many trips can be open to family and friends but only with previous authorization from the person planning the trip. Thank you for your understanding.

The Placerita Canyon Nature Center and Natural Area Park are located within the unincorporated area of Los Angeles County in the Supervisorial District of Michael D. Antonovich. The Natural Area and Nature Center are operated by the County of Los Angeles, Department of Parks and Recreation, in partnership with the Placerita Canyon Nature Center Associates

Pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the County of Los Angeles, Department of Parks and Recreation, has designated an ADA Coordinator to carry out this Department's compliance with the non-discriminatory provisions of the ADA.. For more information you may contact the ADA Coordinator's Office at TEL 213-738-2970 TDY 213-427-6118 FAX 213-487-0380; Upon 3-day request notice, sign language interpreters and related materials in alternative formats (Braille-transcript, large print, audio-record, video-captioning, live-description) or any other reasonable accommodations are available to the public for County-sponsored activities and events.



*Creating Community  
through People, Parks and Programs*



## **TRAIL ASSESSMENT RECOMMENDATIONS UPHELD FOR HERITAGE AND CANYON TRAILS**

Following two community meetings and the review of all comments, the County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation announced today that it will uphold the Trail Assessment recommendations for the Placerita Canyon Trail and Vasquez Rocks Heritage Trail. The recommendation is to not allow mountain bikes on the Heritage Trail at Vasquez Rocks Natural Area in Agua Dulce and to allow mountain bikes on the Canyon Trail at Placerita Canyon Natural Area in Newhall.

The recommendation to not allow mountain bikes on the Heritage Trail is based on the presence of significant cultural resources which could be negatively impacted by additional trail use; a lack of trails or connections to other trails outside the natural area where mountain biking is allowed; existing trail conditions which have been significantly compromised by many user created trails and the significant revegetation necessary to clarify the trail alignment.

The recommendation to allow mountain bikes on the Canyon Trail is contingent on the addition of pinch points, signage, erosion control measures and other trail maintenance items.

Trail maintenance for both trails will start within the next few weeks and following the completion of maintenance on the Canyon Trail, which is estimated to be completed in March 2013, mountain bikes will be allowed on the trail. The Department will address the safety concerns as identified in the Trail Assessment Report to ensure that the Placerita Canyon Trail is a safe trail for all users.

"We greatly appreciate the feedback we received from the community during and after the two community meetings," said Russ Guiney, Director of the County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation. "We received 784 comments and took each comment into consideration. Trail use is a passionate issue for hikers, equestrians and mountain bikers. We are hopeful that working together the user groups will enjoy the recreational benefit of the trails while allowing trail and resource sustainability for years to come."

## Frank Hovore Classroom Dedication

Saturday September 29, 2012

Frank Hovore was our mentor, our friend, and left a strong teaching legacy at Placerita so dedicating the classroom to his name was the logical and loving thing to do.

He also taught us to lighten up and have fun so we started the evening by having a pot luck candlelight dinner on the patio. A few yellow jackets joined the party right after sundown but undaunted, 57 of us had a good time chatting from one table to the next in the warm summer evening.

After desert, we gathered in the classroom to see the moving and fun video prepared by Ron Kraus. That set the tone for the evening and introduced many of the new docents to Frank. They saw the scientist and the teacher in action as well as the big kid having fun.

Jim Southwell made a presentation explaining what the new museum, classroom and patio will look like when the new projects are completed. Ron showed some slides of the drawings of the future exhibit. It was very interesting to clearly see the changes that will be happening soon.

Former superintendant Valerie Vartanian regaled us with stories about Frank and his way of showing her to lighten up. He rigged her business cards to fly out of her desk, he wrote funny little inserts on employee evaluations without Valerie's knowledge, and he started rubber band fights in the office. Those were the days!

Robert Fischer told us about the very special memories he had of Frank, especially going on a study trip with him to Costa Rica and some students from CSUN University.

Dr. Janet Kubler, who took over Frank's place teaching Ecology 1 and 2 in docent training, said the trick to following in Frank's footsteps is to take complex information and make it simple and understandable. Janet has carried on with Frank's lecture "We are all connected to the whole world through our cereal bowl". A simple image but you can see the ramifications very quickly.

Marsha McLean reminded us how much she depended on Frank's expertise to fight against the proposed dump at Elsmere Canyon. He knew the endangered plants and animals in the area and helped her; even putting his career in jeopardy, to make sure this piece of land would be protected. She presented us with a plaque and we thank warmly the City of Santa Clarita and Marsha McLean for honoring the memory of Frank Hovore.

David Perry, deputy for Supervisor Antonovich, was on hand and presented us with a beautiful certificate. We really appreciated his effort to share this evening with us.

Kathie Hovore introduced her family. Some of us have seen Tom (F.T. Hovore the 5<sup>th</sup>) and Holly growing up at Placerita. Now they are adults and have spouses and children of their own. Tom came from Arizona just for the weekend with his family. Holly, also with her family, would not have missed this evening in spite of moving the next morning. We were happy to see the little one: Franklin Thomas "Tommie" Hovore the 6<sup>th</sup>. It is a dynasty and we can hope little Tommie will grow up to be a scientist like his grandpa.

Then it was time for the plaque unveiling. Jill Goddard painted branches and leaves and of course, Frank's beloved beetles on the cover sheet making it a work of art. Fred Seeley and Jim Southwell unveiled the plaque slowly and we all applauded. Frank's memory will be forever in this classroom.

I have to mention that Fred Seeley, Jack Levenberg, and Pam Koch were responsible for designing the plaque. Pam also organized the evening, composed the program with the help of Jill Goddard's expert cover art, and thought about every detail to honor Frank's memory. She finished the evening by reading Frank's poem "the small lives" that you can find in another part of the Rattler. Please read it slowly and let every word sink into your soul. It was the perfect end to a great evening and it ties so well with our mission statement:

*To inspire a passion, awareness and respect for the environment, and to preserve and protect for future generations the history and ecosystem of Placerita Canyon.*

It was a great time together: good food, fun, memories, nice people...We still miss Frank but I think he would have enjoyed the evening.

Here are some comments after the evening:

Dolores Olson: *"Unfortunately, it was not my luck to meet him; he must have been an incredible individual. Intelligent, warm hearted and funny is what I get out from what I saw and heard. Not to mention he was really good looking!"*

Jim Southwell: *"I was moved to see Tom's son wanting to come on the stage. I wanted to say "Let him, Frank would have loved that".*

Ron Kraus: *"I was really moved Saturday night meeting Frank's family and Valerie. It got me thinking of all the great people that have come before us at Placerita, looking around at the kids and younger folks, all the people, both volunteers and staff that will come after us to carry on the programs and traditions of the place. Angie Hovore, Frank's daughter in law, asked for a copy of the movie and I offered her, in addition, copies of all the videos I have from Frank. She said she was very glad to get them because she wants her son to know what his grandfather was all about. Also, she said it is so nice to know Placerita will always be there for him to visit. You can't buy a moment like this for a million dollars. Priceless."*





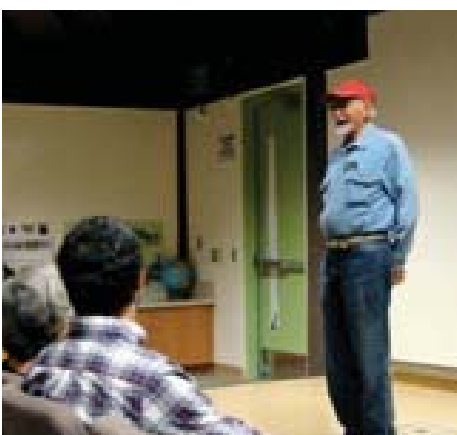
**Frank Hovore  
Classroom Dedication  
September 29, 2012**

Frank T. Hovore Classroom

“to our children,  
and to all children who will come;  
To all who care –  
share this canyon of cool beauty”

In memory of  
Franklin Thomas Hovore IV  
Naturalist and Educator  
August 19, 1945 – September 22, 2006

Placerita Canyon  
Nature Center Associates





Frank Hovore passed away suddenly of a massive heart attack while in Ecuador on September 22, 2006. He was collecting insects in the Amazon with his dear friend Dick Penrose. He was only 61 and he was doing what he liked the most: collecting beetles. Frank was a



respected entomologist as evidenced by his many writings and books. His collections were respected in the whole world, he even discovered one new beetle and had the privilege to name it, and he participated in a BBC naturalist series "Life in the undergrowth" about beetles.

Frank helped design the education program for the docent organization and would give the most fascinating classes to the new docent each year. When he passed away he was going to receive his certificate for 35 years of involvement with Placerita.



Frank was supervisor at Placerita for many years but even after he started his own business, his heart stayed in Placerita. He was a board member, participated actively in all our functions, was an artist who put his creative talent doing face painting for all our events, a writer who would participate and send articles for the Rattler, but most of all he was the soul of PCNCA. It was his creation and he would fight to keep it at its best.

He knew so much about the past of the park and was a resource for so many of our questions, from a scientific point of view or political past history.

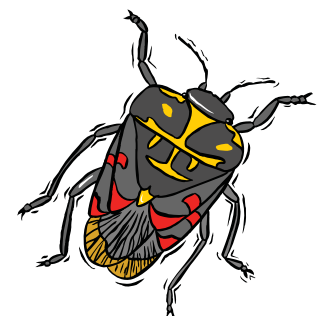
It is only fitting that the classroom was dedicated to Frank Hovore as a small token of the deep appreciation for all his efforts and we hope that his legacy will stay with us forever.



the small lives,  
 tied into each other;  
 life within life, their reality  
 neither harsh nor cruel –  
 necessity.  
 wasting not, working against want;  
 united, spirit and flesh.  
 we stand before this,  
 it is ours to know  
 and to pass on to those  
 who know it not;  
 it is ours only to become one with;  
 to protect, to shelter with reason  
 from the oblivions

of thoughtlessness;  
 the disasters of the unaware.  
 it is ours to understand with respect,  
 to perpetuate for eternity  
 through those who would inherit our  
 place;  
 to our children,  
 and to all children who will come;  
 to all who care –  
 share this canyon of cool beauty;  
 look to the future with a peaceful  
 hope:  
 the message of life which spoke to you  
 here

will forever speak  
 to those who follow and would listen  
 F.T.H.





## Who was Frank Hovore?

*This article was written shortly after Frank Hovore passed away in 2006*

I had just sent him all the questions I use on a regular basis for each interview. I found that he was in Ecuador and would answer them when he returned. Then, the unthinkable happened... Heidi Webber, in tears on the phone telling me Frank had a heart attack in the jungle... the feeling of being punched in the stomach, the pain and the grieving for so many of us at the Nature Center. Why? If you Google Frank Hovore, you will get over 700 entries.



Here are some facts about the scientist:

- *After earning a BA in biology and English at Cal State Northridge in 1971, Hovore worked for 23 years as a park naturalist and a natural areas supervisor for the Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation. In 1984, he started his own biological consulting company and since 1987 he has worked as an adjunct biology professor at Cal State Northridge. He is currently a PhD candidate in evolutionary biology at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA).*
- *Hovore's tenure as a park naturalist brought him to some of California's most intriguing areas of scientific*
- *interest, which include Eaton Canyon, Devil's Punchbowl, Vasquez Rocks, and Catalina Island. As a biological consultant, Hovore's company specializes in sensitive species surveys, habitat and natural communities' conservations plans, parks planning and environmental education. Frank Hovore is an experienced field biologist, with 30+ years professional research in California and most of the southern tier of the US, Mexico, Central America, and northern South America; former Natural Areas Administrator for LA County; 50+ scientific publications in Entomology; Adjunct Prof. Biology, CSU Northridge, Tropical Biology; PhD, AbD from UCLA.*
- *Area of Expertise: Entomology; Coleoptera; Cerambycidae, Pleocomidae; Southern California general natural history, fire ecology.*

This is starting to be quite impressive—the scientist has definitely all the credentials, then you read some more and you start seeing the man:

- *Hovore-Horn Fellowships—New research fellowships in entomology are available to Latin American students starting in 2005. Funded through an endowment established by biologist Frank Hovore in honor of his parents, Alice and Andre Horn, the fellowships are open to all Latin American graduate and undergraduate students interested in Neotropical entomology.*

I have known Frank for 20 years and I had a deep admiration and affection for him; I know that he was hit by lightning, had bouts with prostate and skin cancer, but he was superman for us. Nothing could touch him. My daughter said it well” When I was little, I thought Frank was a God because he knew all the answers.” Well, many of the grown-ups had the same thought.

The way we were all introduced to Frank was essentially the same: We would attend docent training and the teacher for the second class was this blond, handsome, well-spoken, funny scientist who could hold his audience spell-bound explaining animal adaptation or and insect skeleton for hours at a time. Frank did not have notes, his head held all of the detailed information and his heart held the passion he felt. We all responded to this passion with appreciation for his knowledge and shared his enthusiasm.

Frank was extremely charismatic and he was one of the top scientists in his field but he also lived his life to the fullest, liked to have fun and just be goofy sometimes. He had a scientific mind, quick wit and calm manner. He was very intelligent, sometimes even intimidatingly so, but you could come to him with simple questions and he would give you a clear, easy-to-understand answer. When he knew you were faced with difficulties, I was always amazed at his good sense and gentle advice straight from the heart.

We saw Holly, his daughter, growing up at the Center and when she attended the Holiday Craft Faire and he was so proud of his beautiful daughter.. He was so very happy when his son got married last summer, but would grumble that he lived too far away (in Arizona).

He loved Ian Swift deeply; trained him and pushed him into the scientific world and into taking charge of the Nature Center. They often went to South America to collect specimens traveled to French Guinea to assist in the filming of the BBC documentary on insects entitled “Life in the Undergrowth” with footage of the titanus giganteus.

Frank Hovore will always be at Placerita Canyon Nature Center in spirit and love. Thank you, my fine friend, for all your years of teaching and helping us to really look at the world around us. Goodbye Frank; I will end this article the way you signed all your emails, “Cheers”.

Evelyne





*This article was written by Frank Hovore, Natural Areas Administrator for Los Angeles County Parks and Recreation in December 1979 at the time of a devastating fire. Frank taught us fire ecology and showed us to look at it as part of the life-cycle and an opportunity for rebirth.*

*When Frank McDaniel was fading away last year, I told Frank Hovore I was feeling sad. He took me aside and gently but firmly told me it was not fair to concentrate on the death of the person but it was important to celebrate his life and his achievements.*

*This lesson stays with me and somehow, his writing, speaking of the circle of life seems to relate to his death. It is up to us to keep his teaching and his programs alive at the Nature Center that he started...but it surely will take some getting used to.*  
*Evelyne*

The world has, for a time, gone gray. A jay and some sparrows gingerly pick and peck aimless routes through the charred debris at the base of a rather forlorn-looking oak tree. Wisps of smoke drift across the somber backdrop of blackened shrubs: the wind swirls plant ash into fluffy piles around the scorched bases of their former selves. Along the trail the nightmarish corpse of a rabbit, caught in full running posture, sits in mute testimony to the speed and fury of the onrushing flames. It is

as if life was somehow paradoxically frozen by the fire's incredible heat.

Viewing such scenes, the waves of human emotion threaten to overwhelm even the most practiced professional objectivity. It is, however, premature to grieve the apparent loss of much of our beloved Placerita Canyon. What stretches before us now as unbelievable devastation is more accurately perceived as the cathartic act of ecological rebirth. The vision is not pretty. The canyon does not beckon to us to revel in its shaded glens and linger by its cool waters. It assaults the senses and soils the body—it starkly challenges us to love it still.

We move to meet that challenge! Placerita has undergone a dramatic physical change, and whether or not we are easily able to relate to that change has little to do with its actual value to the ecosystem. Much of what we had observed as verdant woodland was in fact old, senescent (people get senile, plants get senescent) growth, understoried with heaps of decayed limbs and thick, unproductive layers of rotting leaf debris. Like a colony of healthy but very old people, allowing little or no new growth to occur, it had at best a limited future. The old must eventually make way for the new if the system is to retain strength and vigor. We must not be swayed, then, by the terror of those final moments—much of the “damage” that we see is ephemeral. Most of the shrubs are not dead, and will soon sprout new stems from their root crowns. Dormant seeds, dropped over the past several decades, will now germinate and cover the ashy soil with a carpet of spring greenery. Birds were not nesting and so the toll on wildlife was not severe. Those animals which did perish in the flames and smoke will quickly be replaced by individuals from other areas, carrying within them new genetic material which will mix with that of the survivors to assure a more viable future for the species. The process of regrowth is necessarily slow—we should not deceive ourselves by hoping that in one or two seasons the canyon of yesterday will have returned. It cannot. But each passing season will usher in another subtle chapter in the succession of community growth, as the chaparral once again moves toward its predestined fire climax stage. The park that we so cherished was, after all, the visible result of such a sequence, repeated no doubt hundreds of times over the millennia. When the seas retreated and the land rose, the chaparral evolved as the most appropriate vegetation form for our particular blend of climate, weather and soil. It is now known that fire has always been an integral part of the growth patterns of the chaparral. If we appreciate the end product, then we must endure the process.

We shall go, then, with this understanding, to explore, to observe, and to interpret for others the postfire mosaic of change and renewal. The fire and its aftermath are now part of our resources, and we will find within this scene of incredible drama new “messages for those who would listen”.

But it surely will take some getting used to.

*Frank T. Hovore*  
*December, 1979*



## On the Road with the Rattler



Denny H Truger and Irene Heerlein decided that The Rattler would rock at “The Rock Inn” in Lake Hughes.



Linda and Bill Kopatz took the Rattler to the museum just before leaving for Guatemala and Costa Rica to build houses for Habitat for Humanity.



Lanita Lee Algeyer is sitting in the Governor’s office reading the Rattler



Deb Clem took the Rattler to Ipswich, MA.

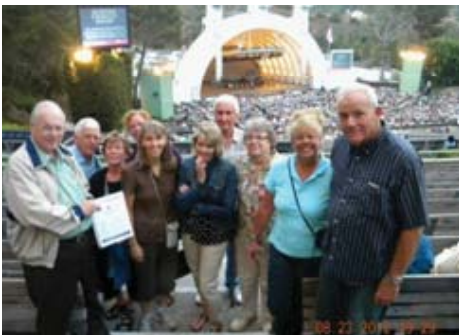
It is the oldest port in the US. 1655. Capt John March started a ferry service to Salisbury in 1688 and the US Coast Guard was born there 7/23/1791.



Irene Heerlein took the Rattler to her home town Goerlitz, Germany where she was born and raised. This town was founded in 1071, and has lots of old beautiful architecture.



Johan Vandersande took the Rattler with him to Ventimiglia, Italy.



The Rattler went to the Hollywood bowl for a Mozart concert. Not everyone who went was in the picture because they had to take the picture while there was sufficient light



Helen Sweany and Nikki Dail are posing with their Rattlers on the summit of Mt Whitney after they finished their climb of the highest mountain in continental US. It was starting to hail on them at this point. Congratulations.



Michael Elling took his vacation in the Cook Islands. Here he is at the airport in Aitutaki

## Poo, Poop, Scat, Feces, Frazz and a Host of Other Names

Paul Levine

I was in Taipei, Taiwan last week for a conference. I had a few hours on Tuesday and took myself to the Taipei Zoo which, I had been told, had an outstanding butterfly garden (pictures to follow separately) for about 3 hours. I also stopped by for an hour on my way to the airport on Thursday a.m. Suffice it to say that while there, I needed to use the rest room but just once. Posted above each urinal was a small sign with some interesting question and answer about “poo”. Once I saw this, I took a picture of each sign and then had to check each restroom in the section of the zoo that I was at, much like a dog sniffs and pees at each tree although I was just looking.

In that many elementary school children who will start returning to PCNC as part of a school trip seem to be fascinated with this subject, I thought I would share the questions and answers as posted in the restrooms at the Taipei Zoo (I cannot comment on what might have been in the Ladies Restroom as I did not investigate that area). There were some clear grammatical errors but I did not correct those. I was just thrilled that they also had the information in English rather than Chinese only. A picture of one of the small signs is located at the end of this Q&A.

### Q: Can poo be used to build houses?

A: Yes – they can! In the early days, cows were not only used by Taiwanese farmers to till the fields but their dung was also mixed with mud and used to cover the walls of their homes. This made the mud stick much cohesive.

### Q: Doesn't it smell living in a house built with poo?

A: Poo doesn't smell after it is dried in the sun. In the early days, the Kavalan people in Eastern Taiwan would cover the lower half of their huts with cow dung. This was good waterproofing and kept bugs away.

### Q: Do they use poo to build houses overseas too?

A: Yes they do. In Tudor England, they would first use timber to build the frame, then add brick walls. This was then covered with a mixture of cow and horse dung, mud, lime, twigs, straw and gravel. A layer of smooth plaster was applied at the end.

### Q: Is it true that some insects use their poo to attract other insects?

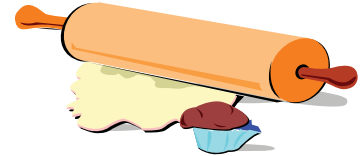
A: The poo of some cockroaches contain pheromones that tell other cockroaches where they are.

### Q: Is it true that some caterpillar's poo smells nice?

A: Some caterpillars eat citrus leaves so their poo have a citrus smell.

### Q: Is it true that some insects use poo to build bridges or houses?

A: After the young of the *Athyma selenophora* (common name: *Staff Sergeant*) eat the front half of a leaf, they use their poo to build a web or boo bridge. Behind the poo bridge, they build a “poo nest” to hide from their predators.



### Placerita Canyon Nature Center Cookbook

When we were a smaller organization, the parties at the nature Center used to be catered affairs. The food was pleasant, not too warm but expensive. It was always difficult and time consuming to set up and I remember a certain holiday dinner where the caterer could not find our location and most of us took a turn waiting on the side walk to wave to the driver and stop him!

Things had to change when each docent training class was bringing 30 to 35 new trainees. We could not afford those dinners any more so we decided to have pot luck dinners. The quality of the food improved drastically right away, the variety and the tasting experience became something we were really looking forward to. People started to exchange recipes and we came up with this fantastic idea: Do we have time to put together a cookbook for the holiday craft faire that we can sell it there and then?

If we keep the format very simple, similar to the printed version of the Rattler, it would be feasible. We had one month to gather those recipes. A Trails and Nuggets was sent and recipes started to pour in.

I can tell you I tried a few and they are very good. People sent recipes they have tried before and made a few times so we know they will work every time.

This will be a treasure to keep and use and many of us are planning to buy them as gifts for the holidays. Who knew the Nature business was also in the cooking business? This cookbook came from good times, good friends, good food, laughing and working together and it will be a treasure we will cherish and use for years. If you are interested to have a look, come to the craft faire on December 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>.





### Nethercutt Collection at San Sylmar

The docents had a tour organized by Lanita Algeyer and there was much interest. The collection consists of the world's most outstanding assortment of beautifully restored antiques and classic automobiles

showcased in an exquisite re-creation of an opulent automotive grand salon of the 1920's and 1930's. An amazing collection of automobile mascots, antique furniture, clocks and watches, and one of the world's finest collections of Mechanical Musical Instruments are displayed on the 3 other floors. Then it was time for lunch!



### Two Towhees by Bob Fischer

The one seen most often and easily is a plain brown nine inch bird hopping along on the ground under the shrubbery in the chaparral and occasionally on the path just in front of you. The other is a spectacular black-headed, white-breasted, black and white striped sided, bright rufous flanked, black tailed, slightly smaller bird. The first is called the California Towhee and the second is called the Spotted Towhee. Towhees are in the Emberizid family which includes the many sparrow species and juncos along with some of the buntings, longspurs and a few tropical seed eaters. California Towhees and Spotted Towhees are resident in the chaparral areas of Placerita Canyon and while California Towhees are easy to see because they are more abundant and frequent more open spaces, the Spotted Towhee will be deep in the leaf litter under dense shrubbery. Your best chance for an unobstructed look at this handsome bird may be in the spring, when males sit on the shrub tops to sing their buzzy songs. This is a good excuse to take a spring time hike in Placerita Canyon.



California Towhees are essentially large sparrows, with a sparrow's short rounded wings, thick, seed-cracking beak but with a longer tail. The long tail and short wings can give this bird an ungainly look in flight. Few birds are as uniformly matte brown as a California Towhee. A patch under the tail called the crissum, giving the bird its scientific name, is a noticeably warmer ruddy brown. Females look the same as males. California Towhees hop or run on the ground but tend to stay close to the protection of low shrubs and trees. When not foraging they may perch on shrubs, rooftops, and backyard fences, to sit and chip for long periods. The California Towhee feeds on the ground or in low scrub where it prefers a variety of seeds and some insects. It is most often seen traveling or feeding singly or in pairs with mixed flocks. they usually hop on the ground like many small birds, but will run if disturbed. they will occasionally hide under parked cars when in danger. The call is a metallic sounding chink and the song consists of a long repeating series ended with a trill. California Towhees typically build their nests in a low fork (3-12 feet high) in a shrub or small tree. The female incubates the nest of 2 to 4 eggs alone for 11 days. Eggs are laid from March through September. Young leave the nest after 8 days.

Watch a Spotted Towhee feeding on the ground; you'll probably observe its two-footed, backwards-scratching hop. This "double-scratching" is used by a number of towhee and sparrow species to uncover the seeds and small invertebrates they feed on. One Spotted Towhee with an unusable, injured foot was observed hopping and scratching with one foot



Early in the breeding season, male Spotted Towhees spend their mornings singing their hearts out, trying to attract a mate. Male towhees have been recorded spending 70 percent to 90 percent of their mornings singing during the breeding season. Almost as soon as they attract a mate, their attention shifts to other things, and they spend only about 5 percent of their time singing. In the breeding season, Towhees eat mainly insects including ground beetles, weevils, ladybugs, and darkling beetles. They also eat seeds berries and acorns. In fall and winter, these plant foods make up the majority of their diet.

*References for this article include the National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America, "Lives Of North American Birds" by Kenn Kaufman and The Cornell University Lab of Ornithology web pages.*





**Vasquez Rocks Nature Center Docents Rock Agua Dulce at the Country Fair**

On Saturday, September 22, an enthusiastic group of the newest Vasquez Rocks Docents organized a booth and joined in the festivities for the annual Agua Dulce Country Fair. This marked the first local community event for the group and gave the Docent/Naturalists a chance to interact and share their knowledge about local geology, plants, animals, insects, reptiles and birds as well as the area’s rich native and pioneering history, with neighbors and friends. It also gave people an opportunity to learn about the new Nature Center, slated to open later this year, and place their names on the list for membership as soon as it opens. It was a great “first local outing”, the first event of many more to come!



**First In-service Training of the Season**

Ron Kraus planned an in service for the docents to review the names and locations of the plants along the different trails before the school tours start in October. To make this easier, he carefully composed a list of the important plants along the trails and stopped to review while the docents asked questions, took notes and photos. Everybody noticed how the plants survived the long, hot dry summer and learned about the fruits and seeds on various plants to be seen at this time of the year. It was an interesting class and they all went home thinking about what they learned that morning.



Reg Fear did the same but when he came home, he glanced through his back window and he was quite surprised to see a mother bob cat and her 2 babies strolling through his back yard. Thank you for having your camera ready Reg. Good timing.



## Why do Leaves Change Color in the Fall?

Leaves are nature's food factories. Plants take water from the ground through their roots. They take a gas called carbon dioxide from the air. Plants use sunlight to turn water and carbon dioxide into oxygen and glucose. Oxygen is a gas in the air that we need to breathe. Glucose is a kind of sugar. Plants use glucose as food for energy and as a building block for growing. The way plants turn water and carbon dioxide into oxygen and sugar is called photosynthesis. That means "putting together with light." A chemical called chlorophyll helps make photosynthesis happen. Chlorophyll is what gives plants their green color.

As summer ends and autumn comes, the days get shorter and shorter. This is how the trees "know" to begin getting ready for winter.

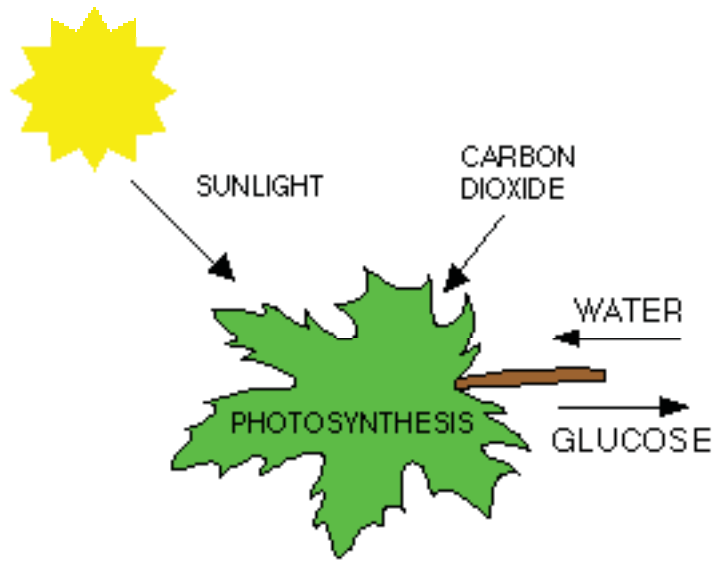
During winter, there is not enough light or water for photosynthesis. The trees will rest, and live off the food they stored during the summer. They begin to shut down their food-making factories. The green chlorophyll disappears

from the leaves. As the bright green fades away, we begin to see yellow and orange colors. Small amounts of these colors have been in the leaves all along. We just can't see them in the summer, because they are covered up by the green chlorophyll.

The bright reds and purples we see in leaves are made mostly in the fall. In some trees, like maples, glucose is trapped in the leaves after photosynthesis stops. Sunlight and the cool nights of autumn cause the leaves turn this glucose into a red color. The brown color of trees like oaks is made from wastes left in the leaves.

It is the combination of all these things that make the beautiful fall foliage colors we enjoy each year.

Reference : Science made simple



---

**Autumn** or **fall** is one of the four temperate seasons. Autumn marks the transition from summer into winter, in September (Northern Hemisphere) or March (Southern Hemisphere) when the arrival of night becomes noticeably earlier.

The equinoxes might be expected to be in the middle of their respective seasons, but temperature lag (caused by the thermal latency of the ground and sea) means that seasons appear later than dates calculated from a purely astronomical perspective. The actual lag varies with region. Some cultures regard the autumnal equinox as "mid-autumn", others with a longer lag treat it as the start of autumn. Meteorologists (and most of the temperate countries in the southern hemisphere) use a definition based on months, with autumn being September, October and November in the northern hemisphere, and March, April and May in the southern hemisphere.



In North America, autumn is usually considered to start with the September equinox. In traditional East Asian solar term, autumn starts on or around 8 August and ends on about 7 November. In Ireland, the autumn months according to the national meteorological service, Met Éireann, are September, October and November. However, according to the Irish Calendar which is based on ancient Gaelic traditions, autumn lasts throughout the months of August, September, and October, or possibly a few days later, depending on tradition. In Australia, autumn officially begins on March 1 and ends May 31. According to United States tradition, autumn runs from the day after Labor Day (i.e. the Tuesday following the first Monday of September) through Thanksgiving (i.e. the fourth Thursday in November), after which the holiday season that demarcates the unofficial beginning of winter begins.

*From Wikipedia*



### A New Back Door

Great news, we have a new back door at the cabin. The old one just could not close properly and little creatures from the wild would be able to come underneath. Not anymore, this is a thing from the past and they will have to find another place to spend the winter.



### A Photo is Worth a Thousand Words

Each photo was taken by Paul Levine. Not only is he “the butterfly whisperer” but he takes beautiful pictures of all insects and spiders.



A tailed swallowtail (*Papilio multicaudata*). This is the State Butterfly of Arizona. This was a particularly fresh specimen with vibrant colors and both tails on each wing fully intact.



This is in the family of Calligraphy beetles but rather than a beige background color, it is a red-orange. Perhaps this one is waving the flag saying “I am poisonous, don’t eat me.”



### County to seek State Funds for Braille Trails, Habitat Protection

County Park director Russ Guiney is seeking Board of Supervisors approval to pursue 2 state grant funds for two projects at Placerita Canyon Natural Area.

One project will restore and preserve approximately three miles of Placerita Creek by installing two aluminum bridges, elevating the trail out of the creek bed. The project will include rock face leveling and shoring to assist in the restoration and preservation of the creek bed and riparian habitat. In addition, the leveling will enhance public safety for trail users. The total cost of this habitat restoration project is \$555,000 and if the county gets the \$200,000 in State money, the county would allocate \$300,000 in park bond money and the parks department would provide \$55,000 in in-kind labor.

The other project, Placerita Canyon Braille Trail Project, is described as follows: “The project will involve installation of approximately 1,500 linear feet of concrete curbing, fabrication and installation of Braille interpretive signage. In addition, a detailed miniature sculpture of the historic Oak of the Golden Dream will be created and will offer a unique, tactile and educational experience for the visually impaired”. The total cost of the Braille Trail Project is \$65,000; supplementing the \$29,000 from the State would be \$29,000 in park bond money and \$7,000 in in-kind labor.

The proposed improvements for the Canyon Trail (bridges and shoring) are for habitat preservation. They are needed to reduce erosion, improve safety and keep trails users out of the water so that they won’t disturb the creek environment.

Ref: SCVNEWS.com. Wednesday Sept.12.2012



A yellow crab spider with a house fly.



A Praying Mantis is making a meal of a Monarch butterfly.





Vietnam Vet, Cardiologist, Butterfly Guy

### **The Butterfly Whisperer**

By Jim Harris

When did Dr. Paul Levine get the idea he could catch butterflies as well as the next guy?

Maybe it was the time his older cousin Joel wouldn't let him go along on a collecting expedition because "I'd only scare the butterflies," said Levine.

The older boys had failed to catch one butterfly prize, the Monarch. "Not knowing how hard it was to catch a Monarch Butterfly, I saw one on a Zinnia in the front yard of a neighbor...I naively picked it up by its wings and went to Joel to ask him if he wanted this Monarch for his collection," said Levine, grinning.

Cousin Joel took the Monarch, not at all grateful to his little cousin.

"That was the start of it," said Levine, "and it grew from there."

Grew indeed. Today his digital photo collection is in the thousands (he does not collect dead butterflies). He belongs to several naturalist organizations, and lectures about butterflies throughout Santa Clarita, including Placerita Canyon Nature Center where he is a docent/naturalist. He belongs to NABA (North American Butterfly Association), the Lorquin Entomologic Society, and the Xerces Society, all groups that deal with insects (the Butterfly is an insect) and other invertebrates.

A high point in his youthful butterfly career was the New York State Science Fair. It started when Levine was asked to bring in his butterfly collection by his biology teacher. "I ended up teaching all the biology class sections on insects," he said.

With the extensive collection, Levine won the local and district science fairs. But, he got a "left handed compliment" from the state judges when they refused to place his collection.

"They (state science fair judges) said the butterfly collection was impressive but there is absolutely no way a 10<sup>th</sup> grader could put together that extensive a collection. But I had been collecting for years...I actually did collect, mount and identify every butterfly....but since there was no way a 10<sup>th</sup> grader could do that in their minds, I did not even place," said Levine with a grin.

Nevertheless, he kept up his passion about butterflies until three things got in the way: medical school, post-graduate training, and Vietnam.

In Vietnam he ran into a collection problem. "I brought a small portable net. Once I knew where it was safe, I did go out collecting. One day I even collected on the base. My CO spotted me and called me to one side and told me it didn't really look good."

That stopped his Vietnam collection, "...at least on the base," said Levine. Butterflies and war zones didn't seem to go together, especially when you are a lieutenant and a general medical officer.

"I had the feeling that he would have liked to MedEvac me for psych reasons, but as senior medical officer on the base, I had to sign off on all MedEvacs," said Levine, a twinkle in his eye.

Medical school also conspired to slow down Levine's collecting. "Medical school and post-graduate education occupied me 24/7. My call schedule was every other night-every other weekend. I was on Monday, Wednesday, Saturday-Sunday, Tuesday, Thursday-Friday. If I wasn't on duty, I was either back at the books or journals looking up something with respect to one of my patients or sleeping."

Even more intense was his life as a cardiologist. That is when his physician wife, Lucille, "...suggested that I really needed to do something more than just cardiology--that one year I might want to retire unless I died first with my proverbial boots on.

She suggested that...I resume this hobby (collecting butterflies). She was right and I did and I am grateful to her for that," said Levine.

Dr. Lucille Levine passed away in January 2011. With his wife's suggestion in mind, Levine continues to collect and educate the public on butterflies while still clinically active at Olive View UCLA Medical Center and Saint Jude Medical, from where he retired in 2010.

In recent years, Levine has given lectures on butterflies of the Santa Clarita Valley to the LA Chapter of NABA, LA County Mountain Recreation Conservation Authority (MRCA), Towsley Canyon Nature Center, Placerita Canyon Nature docents and summer camp participants.

"I am willing to talk to any group that invites me regarding butterflies, but few know about me, I don't advertise and I don't charge. It gives me pleasure to get others excited about the natural beauty right here in our back yard," he said.



The Placerita Canyon Nature Center  
Presents its Annual

# Holiday Craft Fair

Saturday and Sunday, December 1 & 2

10:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M.

at

**Placerita Canyon Nature Center**

19152 Placerita Canyon Road, Newhall

1 1/2 miles east of the 14 freeway

Create and decorate your own holiday wreaths, centerpieces, candles and ornaments using a large assortment of fresh-cut greenery, pine cones and other beautiful natural treasures.

*Supervised candle dipping for the kids*

**The Nature Center Gift Shop will be open to help you  
finish off that holiday shopping list**

(661) 259-7721 • [www.placerita.org](http://www.placerita.org)

# **Volunteer-Naturalist Training Placerita Canyon Natural Area**



## **Become a Volunteer-Naturalist!**

- *Learn about the natural environment*
- *Teach children about nature*
- *Make a difference in your community*

No special background needed,  
just a willingness to attend training and to volunteer at least twice a month.

**Training Starts Tuesday, January 8th, 2013**  
**Classes meet Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9AM to 12 Noon**

Volunteer-Naturalists attend a 9-week training program. Topics include native plants, ecology, insects, amphibians, reptiles, birds, mammals, geology, history, and interpretive techniques. Instructors include noted professionals in the various fields. The cost of the training is \$45, which includes all training materials (instruction manual, field guide, T-shirt, and related items.) Visit our website ([placerita.org](http://placerita.org)) for further information regarding the Volunteer-Naturalist program.

Other volunteer opportunities are also available at Placerita Canyon Natural Area that don't require the 9-week training program, such as office helper and trail maintenance team member. Bilingual (English/Spanish) volunteers are especially needed.

**For further information call or visit:  
Placerita Canyon Natural Area  
19152 Placerita Canyon Road, Newhall CA 91321  
(661) 259-7721  
Email: [placeritatraining@earthlink.net](mailto:placeritatraining@earthlink.net)**





### Breakfast of Champions

This tradition was started by Phil Rizzo who felt the summer was just too long without seeing his docent friends at least once. Who are the champions? The docents are, so we get together in August for a pot luck breakfast and have some fun. Two awards were given at this time because Collette and Ray could not join us at the end of school year dinner.

Collette Lash received a gift certificate and was getting recognition for the project she did, taking the photos of all the docents, volunteers and staff to make a display with all the photos. We have had very large classes and it is sometimes difficult to remember the names of all the docents. Our wall of fame is a good

place to discretely make sure we have the correct name. She did a beautiful job, spending many hours taking those photos and she photo-shopped each portrait to make sure we would look our best. The photos are going to be used to go on the new county badges. Thank you Collette.

Ray Orloff received a plaque for his dedication and hard work for PCNCA. He patrols the trails and reports any safety concern: fallen tree, rock slides or any problem that need to be addressed. He has done many projects: sanding and staining the bridge, refurbishing the farm equipment around the cabin, building a base and enclosure for the grizzly. We are all very grateful for all you do, Ray to make the Nature Center a better place to visit.



We did the unveiling of the Grizzly bear in his new display case. We missed Fred Seeley who worked really hard to make this a reality.

Then it was time to play the game prepared by Ron Krauss "Are you smarter than a fifth grader?" We were separated in teams and we could choose our questions category: fauna, flora, history from the Nature Center and even math problems...Not easy at all and the competition was fierce but good humored. The Road Kill team won the contest and they all got a cap, with a turkey vulture on top, designed by Jill Goddard. She is so talented (How very appropriate for the Road Kill team: Olivia Miseroy, Ray Orloff and family and Pam Koch and family.)

Again, we had record breaking crowd, a fantastic buffet and so much fun, a really great morning together at Placerita.



### Holiday Craft Faire

The holiday craft faire will be held on Saturday December 1<sup>st</sup> and Sunday December 2<sup>nd</sup> from 10am to 3pm. This is our main fund raiser of the year so spread the word.

It is always a big event in our community and people call weeks ahead to have the information. The wreath making is very popular because the results are always so spectacular. You buy a straw wreath and you approach the tables covered with greenery, pinecones, seeds pods, etc. With the help of a glue gun and ties it soon becomes a work of art. It is very easy but you would not know when you see the final product.

If you have dried berries and other evergreen-type trimmings from your yard, bring them in as close to Saturday as possible so they are fresh. The more variety we have, the more creative we can be.

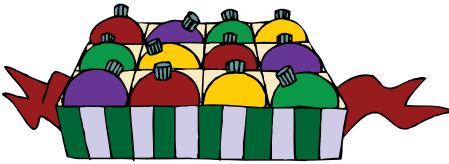
We have a fun time and the room smells so nice with all those evergreen branches. There are plenty of different crafts for the children to do so the whole family can have a great time and decorate the house for the holiday. A food truck will be on location so we can have a bite and keep on working. If you have never been to this event, you will be amazed – that's a promise.

Many thanks to those of you who donated so generously to the care and feeding of our animals.

Bob and Armida  
Brooks

Shirley Morano

Evelyne  
and Johan  
Vandersande



### A Trip with Beverly

In August, Beverly Browe brought a group of docents to the Autry National Center of the American West. This history museum is dedicated to exploring and sharing the stories, experiences and perception of the diverse people of the American West. They sure had a good time, even lock locked in jail!

Docents help each other with grape harvesting! Bryan Miller has a home winery in Acton and it was time to harvest the grapes. It is a small vineyard, about ¼ acre but it produces some pretty good wine and the grapes dictate when they are ready to be picked. The docents came to his rescue to help with the harvest. They picked the grapes, tasted many along the way, then crushed them to get them ready to ferment. When all was ready, it was time for a barbecue! Summer is a fun time.

Photos by Beverly Browe





**Grand Theft – Nectar  
Carpenter Bees  
Paul A. Levine**

I observed an interesting phenomenon in San Gabriel Canyon along SR 39 just north of Azusa on April 15<sup>th</sup>. I was there looking for butterflies and while I saw some, I was intrigued by very large black bees. This was the California Carpenter Bee. It gets its name from the fact that it bores into wood to make its nest but it doesn't eat the wood. Its food source is nectar from flowers. It tends to be a solitary bee and while the female has a stinger, the male does not. Even the female however tends not to sting unless there is a major league provocation. These are generally solitary bees and while a number may live in close proximity, they do not have a hive with thousands of worker bees, some drones and one queen as does the famous Honey Bee.

They are large bees and are often confused with bumble bees. In researching this, the abdomen of the Carpenter Bee is "naked" where as the Bumble Bee is clothed in hairs. The Eastern Carpenter Bee has yellow hairs on its thorax while the Western Carpenter Bee is totally black. I did see some Yellow Faced Bumble Bees as well.



As shown in the picture above, the bee was too large to enter into the corolla of the flower to get to the nectar. As such, it would not make contact, except incidentally, with the anthers and would not accumulate any pollen on its body to transfer to the next plant. While some bees do eat the pollen as well as the nectar, this bee's primary food source is nectar.

I observed a number of these bees on the Wild Canterbury Bells Phacelia and all demonstrated the same behavior. They landed on the outside of the flower and walked to its base where a small slit was created at the base of the flower (if they can chop through wood to make its nest, it can certainly cut through the petal of the flower) allowing it access to the nectar. Flowers produce nectar to attract bees and other insects so that in the process of obtaining the nectar, the insect will be dusted with the pollen to then pollinate the next flower/plant. But the Carpenter Bee is taking the nectar under false pretenses – it is not distributing the pollen. Hence, Grand Theft – Nectar.



***This is the California Carpenter Bee nectaring on Wild Canterbury Bell Phacelia (thanks to Ron K for assistance in identification). Notice the shiny abdomen – it has no hairs. It is "naked" in public but it doesn't seem to mind***



***This is the Yellow Faced Bumble Bee nectaring on Common Phacelia (Phacelia distans). One can also see a yellow ring around the distal abdomen***

**References:**

1. Wikipedia, Carpenter Bees, 2008
2. Jones SC, Carpenter Bees, Ohio State University Extension Fact Sheet, HYG-2074-06, 2006
3. Jacobs S, Carpenter Bees, Entomologic Notes, College of Agricultural Sciences, Penn State University, 2007



## Pow Wow at Hart Park

This year's Pow Wow at Hart Park was another great success, in part because many of our *Nature Center Associates* joined us in welcoming the visitors as they arrived for and were picked up by shuttle right in front of Hart Hall. Although somewhat detached from the main event (location), we were the only ones in The Hall and therefore the only ones in the air conditioned building all weekend – yea, because it was hot!!

Thanks to all who participated and made Placerita's an outstanding venue, we had a bunch of folks bring some of their really cool stuff from home too and worked both days as well (we know who you are J). Thanks especially to Marietta who worked "Buddy", our raven, and to the other bird handlers that worked "Orion", "Tidbit", "Apollo" and the gopher snakes "Dirty" and "Sylvester" as well.

Frank



Antelope Valley Indian Museum: a very impressive collection of Native American artifacts in an amazing location. Some docents went on the trail after the visit, some relaxed at a shaded picnic table where the breeze was light and pleasant, and then we all went to Charlie Brown's for lunch. Food was good, the company of friends was even better.

Dolores Olson

## In Search of Placerita's Boundary

*By Ron Kraus*

Most of us who hike the Los Pinetos Trail assume that the boundary between the Angeles National Forest and Placerita Canyon Natural Area is at the pipe gate near the top of the trail (See picture 1.) However, I was curious about this and took my GPS out to verify where the boundary really was.

To my surprise the real boundary is located about three quarters of a mile north of the pipe gate, down the trail closer to Walker Ranch (See picture 2.) I plotted this on an aerial photograph (See picture 3.) It was interesting to learn that the Placerita Canyon Natural Area property does not go as far up the Los Pinetos Trail as everyone thought.



**Mt. Whitney Climb Highlights  
& Fall Color Hike,  
November 10, 2012, 9AM at  
Placerita Canyon Nature Center**



**Placerita Canyon Nature Center Associates  
Thank You!**

- Yes! I want to contribute to help fund programs at Placerita
  - \$25 Friend    \$50 Donor    \$100 Sponsor Wall
  - I can pledge \_\_\_\_\_ monthly
  - Please contact me about the Adopt-an-Animal Program
- 

Your tax-deductible donations are needed to help fund programs provided by volunteers.

Send your donation to:

PCNCA  
19152 Placerita Canyon Road  
Newhall, CA 91321-3213

This past summer, a group of CHC hiking friends climbed to the summit of Mt. Whitney, the highest mountain in the contiguous United States, with an elevation of 14,505 feet. On Saturday, November 10, they will share their experience with us at Placerita Canyon Nature Center starting at 9AM. This endeavor required an extraordinary amount of training and planning to accomplish and we look forward to seeing and hearing about their great adventure!

After the presentation (which should take about an hour and a half), Placerita docent Ron Kraus will lead a fall color hike from the nature center to the Walker Ranch area. We don't have the spectacular displays of color seen in the eastern United States, but there are many subtle and nuanced shades of fall that can be experienced along the Canyon Trail at Placerita. Bring water and a light lunch—this interpretive hike should take about 2 hours or so to complete.

## FALL - WINTER PROGRAMS

### **FAMILY NATURE WALK**

Every Saturday from 11 to noon.

An easy 1-hour walk exploring the area's natural and cultural history.

### **ANIMAL PRESENTATION**

Every Saturday from 1 to 2 pm.

See, learn and ask questions about live native animals of the area.

### **BIRD WALK**

Second Saturday of the month from 8 to 10am. For all levels of birders. Bring binoculars, water and field guide.

### **BIRD WALK, CASTAIC**

The Placerita Canyon Natural Area docents lead a monthly bird walk at **Castaic Lake Recreation Area** on the first Saturday of the month at 8:00AM.

### **BLOOMS OF THE SEASON**

Learn about native plants and what is blooming along the trails. Meet in the patio at 9:30 for a one-hour stroll on the fourth Saturday of every month. Bring your camera and questions. For more information about this free program, call 661.259.7721 or 259.7832.

### **JUNIOR RANGERS**

Third Saturday of every month from 9:30 to 11:00 am, for children between the ages of 6 and 12 years old. Learn about different natural wonders both in our science lab and in the field. Each month explores a different topic and we always hike. Call the park office for more information at 661.259.7721.

### **COMMUNITY HIKING CLUB**

A non-profit organization that invites all members of the SCV and community at large to: Join weekly planned hikes; Attend monthly nature series educational presentations; Participate in community outreach programs such as Calif Condor micro-trash clean-ups and maintenance of trails and native garden; Partner with groups such as Boys and Girls Club to introduce youth to nature. For more information, go to the website at [communityhikingclub.org](http://communityhikingclub.org)

**For more information, please call 661.259.7721 or visit our website at [Placerita.org](http://Placerita.org).**





### ADOPT-AN-ANIMAL

PCNCA gratefully acknowledges the following special guardians who are helping in the care and feeding of their adopted animals at our Nature Center:

Vilija Salazar - Squirt, the western pond turtle  
Claudia Ribas-Armengal - Turbo, the desert tortoise  
Girl Scout Troop No. 2932 - Miss Muffet, the tarantula  
Daniel Campos, Jr. (a birthday gift) - Lady, the red-tailed hawk  
Tina Alunni - habitat improvement for all the animals

Many thanks to all of you for your generous support!

P.S. Adoption packages begin at just \$25.00, and they make great holiday gifts! We can personalize them in many different ways and gift wrap as well. Our animal adoptions are wonderful gifts for those nature lovers on your holiday list, and supporting our Nature Center in this way will be a gift to us as well.

Pick up a brochure at the Nature Center or call Judy McClure at (661) 252-6187 for all the details. Happy Holidays!



## The Rattler

*Placerita Canyon Nature Center  
19152 Placerita Canyon Road  
Newhall, CA 91321-3213*



*"We exist so children  
and oaks  
can grow together."*

NATURE CENTER ASSOCIATES OF  
LOS ANGELES COUNTY