



Canyon News

Black Mountain Park • Del Mar Mesa Preserve
Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve
Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.

July, Aug., Sept., 2013
Volume 27 No. 3

Jack-O Lantern Mushrooms

Les Braun

This year has proven to be one of the driest years in decades. However the sprouting of mushrooms can be confounding. This past spring, despite the minimal rainfall, some mushrooms came up. I photographed these large Jack-O Lantern mushrooms in Penasquitos Canyon despite the low rainfall.

Most people are unaware that the majority of the fungus is underground, called mycelium and mushrooms are just the above ground fruiting body of the fungus. The mycelium are microscopic fibers present in the soil or substrate year round. In this case the mycelium is present in the soil and the roots of the nearby oak tree. This particular mushroom is a classic root rotting fungus. Regrettably this oak tree's years are numbered.



Consider the mushroom to be similar to an apple on a tree or the fruiting body of the mycelium. These particular mushrooms are called Jack-O-Lantern mushrooms. Why they are called that is a mystery to me. Typically the caps of the mushrooms are 10 to 18 cm wide. The mushrooms pictured here are considerably larger. These mushrooms are quite common (not this big) in Penasquitos Canyon and throughout Southern California.



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The scientific name of this mushroom is *Omphalotus olivascens*. The reason for mentioning the scientific name is not the genus but the species name, *olivascens*. The word *olivascens* implies a green color but these mushrooms are anything but green. So why *olivascens*?

When these mushrooms are exposed to bright sun light (a fresh specimen) and taken into a dark room they glow green!

Jack-O Lantern mushrooms are not edible by humans. They are consumed by some insects and snails. These mushrooms also act as hosts to certain species of fungus gnats.

Upcoming Hikes and Volunteer Opportunities

Maps of Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve and Black Mountain Open Space Parks are available at www.Peñasquitos.org

All of our hikes are free. There is a fee for the Tracking survey classes. See below for details.

Wear good trail sneakers or boots and sun protection (hat, sunscreen or both), and bring plenty of water. Call 858-484-3219 for more information.

Repeating Events

Every Saturday and Sunday:

Historic Adobe Ranch Tour

San Diego County Park docents lead a free guided tour of San Diego's second oldest standing residence, Rancho Santa María de los Peñasquitos, at 11 a.m. on Saturdays and 1 p.m. on Sundays, lasting 45 minutes. See an historic Mexican era rancho with three foot thick adobe walls, settler and Indian artifacts and tour the grounds. The Ranch House is located on Canyon-side Park Driveway off Black Mountain Road between Mira Mesa and Rancho Peñasquitos.

Every month:

Wildlife Tracking Walk

Sat. 8 a.m. - 10 a.m. Aug. 10, Sept. 14 Oct. 12, Nov. 9, Dec. 14

Everyone is invited to join a knowledgeable San Diego Tracking Team instructor for a free, easy introductory tracking walk to learn about the art of tracking and the Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. Look for tracks and scat of coyotes, bobcats, raccoon, deer and other wildlife in the area! Information at www.sdttd.org. Rain cancels. Meet at the Historic Adobe Ranch House on Canyon-side Park Drive and Black Mountain Road, Rancho Peñasquitos.

Every two months:

Black Mountain Open Space Park Citizens Advisory Committee

Thurs., 6:30 p.m. July 11, Sept. 12, Nov. 14

Public is welcome to attend this meeting to plan park activities. Meet in the Canyon-side Recreation Center at Black Mountain Road and Canyon-side Park Driveway, Rancho Peñasquitos.

As the weather warms up, please remember to bring plenty of water and sun protection (hat or sun screen or both) when you visit the parks and canyons. Hiking boots or trail sneakers are recommended.

Peñasquitos Canyon Citizens Advisory Committee

Thurs. 6:30 p.m. July 18, Sept. 19, Nov. 28

Public is welcome to attend this meeting to plan park activities. Meeting is at the Historic Adobe Ranch House on Canyon-side Park Driveway and Black Mountain Road, Rancho Peñasquitos.

Friends of Peñasquitos Canyon Board of Directors

Tues., 7 p.m. July 2, Sept. 3, Nov. 5

Members are welcome to attend this business meeting to plan Friends' activities. Meeting is at the historic Adobe Ranch House at Black Mountain Road and Canyon-side Park Driveway, Rancho Peñasquitos.

Quarterly:

Beginning Tracking Wildlife Surveys

Sat. 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. July 20, Oct. 19

This class prepares you to participate in surveys that monitor the wildlife in major open space preserves and other critical areas. Topics include basic recognition and identification of animal tracks and other signs, introduction to track patterns and gaits, wildlife journaling, an overview of the survey protocol, and more! Classroom time is supplemented with plenty of time in the field ("dirt time"). This training is required for survey volunteers and also serves as a prerequisite for the Intermediate Tracker/Naturalist class. After this training, students are expected to participate in at least one SDTT wildlife survey. Preregistration is requested to reserve your spot. The \$25 fee includes a number of valuable reference materials. Dress prepared to spend time outdoors and bring a sack lunch and water. More information at www.sdttd.org. Email info@sdttd.org or call 760.715.4102 to register. Meet at the Historic Adobe Ranch House on Canyon-side Park Driveway and Black Mountain Road, Rancho Peñasquitos.

Intermediate Tracking for Wildlife Surveys

Class: Wed. 7- 9 p.m. Sept. 18

Field: Sat. 8 a.m.-4 p.m. Sept. 21

This class expands on the beginning training and includes recognition and interpretation of tracks and sign on a variety of surfaces. There are exercises in speculative tracking, aging, soil dynamics, debris interaction, trailing, mammal skull and dental identification, and tracking on various substrates. Additional gait interpretation is covered. Cost: \$50 (\$10 discount for SDTT or Friends members). Pre-registration re-

quired. More information at www.sdttd.org. email info@sdttd.org or call 760-715-4102 to register. Meet at the Historic Adobe Ranch House on Canyon-side Park Driveway and Black Mountain Road, Rancho Peñasquitos.

Advanced Tracking Wildlife Surveys Class: Wed. 7- 9 p.m. Nov. 13

Field Sat. 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. Nov. 16

The Advanced Class continues to develop your proficiency as a tracker. Subtle details of track identification are presented. Techniques and exercises for trailing animals through various surfaces will enable you to stay on the right track. Drills and exercises will help expand your knowledge base, point out areas to work on, and give you a preview of the tracker evaluation process. Cost: \$50 (\$10 discount for SDTT members). Pre-registration required. More information at www.sdttd.org. E-mail info@sdttd.org or call 760-715-4102 to register. Meet at the Historic Adobe Ranch House on Canyon-side Park Driveway and Black Mountain Road, Rancho Peñasquitos.

Hikes & Volunteer Opportunities

July

Night Hike with Mike Kelly

Sun. July 7, 7:30 - 9:30 p.m.

Naturalist Mike Kelly leads this moderately paced and flat hike to enjoy the Preserve at night. Chance to meet Mule deer, bats, owls, tarantulas, and more. Enjoy the smells and sounds that make the Preserve a different place at night. Bring water, bug protection, and a flashlight. Meet at the kiosk at the corner of Park Village Road and Camino del Sur in Rancho Peñasquitos.

Night Walk with Will Bowen

Sat., July 20, 7:30 - 9:30 p.m.

We start at dusk and walk out into the canyon as night falls, hoping to encounter deer, owls, bats; sometimes snakes, scorpions, and various beetles. We look for fragrant night-blooming plants, such as Jimson Weed and Evening Primrose. We listen to the quiet of the nature, punctuated only by a symphony of crickets, cicadas, and frogs. There are spider webs to admire; and above, the stars, planets, and the constellations invite contemplation. Please bring a flashlight, water, and insect repellent. Meet at 4206 Sorrento Valley Blvd.

August

Night Hike with Mike Kelly

Sun., August 4, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Naturalist Mike Kelly leads this moderately paced and flat hike to enjoy the Preserve at night. Chance to meet Mule deer, bats, owls, tarantulas and more. Enjoy the smells and sounds that make the Preserve a different place at night. Bring water, bug protection, and a flashlight. Meet at the kiosk at the corner of Park Village Road and Camino del Sur in Rancho Peñasquitos.

Night Walk with Will Bowen

Sat., August 17, 7:30 - 9:30 p.m.

We start at dusk and walk out into the canyon as night falls, hoping to encounter deer, owls, bats; sometimes snakes, scorpions, and various beetles. We look for fragrant night-blooming plants, such as Jimson Weed and Evening Primrose. We listen to the quiet of the nature, punctuated only by a symphony of crickets, cicadas, and frogs. There are spider webs to admire; and above, the stars, planets, and the constellations invite contemplation. Please bring a flashlight, water, and insect repellent. Meet in the parking lot at 4206 Sorrento Valley Blvd.

Park After Dark

Friday, August 23, 7:00 - 9:15 p.m.

Some creatures love the sunshine, while others prefer the shadows and darkness beginning at twilight. As the "day crew" beds down for the night, a whole host of creatures become active. Be prepared to see bats and owls as we explore the nighttime preserve. Wear dark colors and bring a flashlight, light jacket and insect repellent. No pets. Meet naturalist Brian Swanson at the west end of the Canyonside Park ball fields. 12350 Black Mtn. Rd. Rancho Peñasquitos



Please be aware of where you are stepping when out in the canyons. Snakes, lizards, and other wildlife are increasingly abundant as the weather warms.

September

Night Hike with Mike Kelly

Sat., Sept. 7, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

Naturalist Mike Kelly leads this moderately paced and flat hike to enjoy the Preserve at night. Chance to meet Mule deer, bats, owls, tarantulas and more. Enjoy the smells and sounds that make the Preserve a different place at night. Bring water, bug protection, and a flashlight. Meet at the kiosk at the corner of Park Village Road and Camino del Sur in Rancho Peñasquitos.

Park After Dark

Sat., Sept. 14, 7:00 – 9:15p.m.

Some creatures love the sunshine, while others prefer the shadows and darkness beginning at twilight. As the "day crew" beds down for the night, a whole host of creatures become active. Be prepared to see bats and owls as we explore the nighttime preserve. Wear dark colors and bring a flashlight, light jacket and insect repellent. No pets. Meet naturalist Brian Swanson at the west end of the Canyonside Park ball fields. 12350 Black Mtn. Rd. Rancho Peñasquitos

Park After Dark

Sat. Sept. 21, 6:45 – 9:00 p.m.

Some creatures love the sunshine, while others prefer the shadows and darkness beginning at twilight. As the "day crew" beds down for the night, a whole host of creatures become active. Be prepared to see bats and owls as we explore the nighttime preserve. Wear dark colors and bring a flashlight, light jacket and insect repellent. No pets. Meet naturalist Brian Swanson at the west end of the Canyonside Park ball fields. 12350 Black Mtn. Rd. Rancho Peñasquitos

Full Moon Spider Hike with Will Bowen

Sat., Sept. 21, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.

In late summer and early fall, in the first hours of each evening, the Orb Spiders build a brand new huge beautiful and circular web across the trail and in the trees. This is a hike to look for and admire these webs. We will also seek out colonies of black and brown widow spiders with their red hourglass markings, white egg sacs, and three dimensional fractal-like webs. Bring a flashlight, water, insect repellent, and a camera. Meet in the parking lot at 4206 Sorrento Valley Blvd.

Trail for All People Update

Jas Arnold

The City has entered into a contract with the RBF/Rick team to complete the trail design and produce a set of construction documents. This bid set will serve as the basis from which several contractors will propose a cost for the grading and trail construction. The Park & Recreation Council has allocated funds for this trail construction. Hopefully, these funds can be made available soon after the bidding process is complete.

The Trail for All People project is a collaborative effort between the public and private sector. The public sector is being funded by developer fees and Park & Rec funds. These funds are being used to create the construction documents and build the trail. All private and corporate donations (both cash and like-kind) have been used to conceptualize, topographically map, create the parcel, and design the trail.

A new contributor to the project is the San Diego Mountain Biking Association. Take a look at the bottom of this exhibit. The ever expanding support network is overwhelming. Thanks to all of you.

All of you are encouraged to go to the site just north of the Miner's Ridge parking lot. You will find survey stakes set by city of San Diego surveyors that will guide you along the trail path. An exhibit has been added to the kiosk to show visitors what the trail is all about.



A Grave Report

Story and Photos by Will Bowen, PhD

Recently, I came across information which indicated that Don Pedro Bovet, the builder of the Bovet Adobe in Carroll Canyon, was buried in Calvary Cemetery.

The now-defunct Calvary Cemetery, located in the eastern part of Mission Hills, above Old Town, at 1501 Washington Place, was administrated by the Catholic Church of San Diego, and fully operational from 1875 to about 1919, with the occasional burial from then on up to the last burial in 1960.

When it was in use, Calvary Cemetery was referred to as the "New Catholic Cemetery" to distinguish it from the older El Campo Santo Cemetery in Old Town. After 1919, Holy Cross Cemetery, located on Hilltop Drive, took the place of Calvary Cemetery as the Catholic cemetery for San Diego.

The city of San Diego bought ten acres of land for the Calvary Cemetery from J. Manasse in 1875 for \$50 an acre, with five acres set aside for burials. Father Antonio Urbach of the Old Town Catholic Church oversaw the operations of the cemetery and actually requested a different ten acres from Manasse because Urbach considered the original ten to be too hard packed and stony for burials.

After a flurry of burials in 1919, the most for any single year, due to the world wide flu epidemic which killed more people than WWI, Calvary Cemetery went into disrepair and neglect, as burials were shifted to Holy Cross.

Shortly before 1970, the Catholic Church gave up its claim

to the land on which Calvary Cemetery is located with a "quit deed" action. The city removed all the tombstones, except for a symbolic handful that were cemented in place in the southeast corner of the park, near Grant Elementary School (built 1914), and turned the area into Pioneer Memorial Park. Although the tombstones were removed, all the bodies (estimated at 4000) were left in place.

The tombstones were photographed or etched and then trucked over to a corner of Mount Hope Cemetery where they were buried.

A number of important people of early San Diego are buried in Calvary Cemetery and the information on their burial records is very useful. Several individuals, such as Francisco Alvarado, Pedro and Louisa Bovet, and Elias Lopez, are directly relevant to Penasquitos Canyon Preserve.

I went up to Pioneer Park to look at the old tombstones, which I remembered seeing years ago after the night classes I took at Grant School. I found one tombstone which read "Marie Louisa L. Bovet" which I thought might belong to the Bovet family of Carroll Canyon, and might even be Don Pedro's wife because of the dates of her birth and death.

As it turns out, this tombstone was that of Bovet's wife, Maria Louisa Encarnacia Lopez, who was born in 1838, married at age 16 in 1854, and died two years before Don Pedro in 1902, at age 64. The burial records of Calvary Cemetery indicate that Don Pedro was also buried here in





1904, after he died of pneumonia at age 76; however, a tombstone for him was never recorded.

Maria Louisa Bovet was the daughter of Bonafacio Lopez and his first wife Maria de los Dolores Rosa. Bonafacio Lopez owned Soledad Canyon (Sorrento Valley) for some 20 plus years and had a country adobe there located near the confluence of Carroll and Penasquitos Creeks, which later became the site of Andrew Cassidy's (the first San Diego bay tide keeper) ranch.

Maria Louisa Bovet was also the sister of Ramon Lopez, Sr., who started a dairy farm in Lopez Canyon in the early 1880's. Maria Louisa is also the mother of Juanita Bovet who married Alonso Alvarado, the son of Diego Alvarado. Diego Alvarado, the son of Francisco Alvarado, built the El Cuervo Adobe and first surveyed Lopez and Penasquitos Canyon.

Maria Louisa Bovet was also the sister of the wife of Phillip Crosswaite. Crosswaite owned Rancho Poway and had fought at the battle of San Pascual. Crosswaite often visited the Bovet adobe and also the country adobe of Bonafacio Lopez's, where he kept one of his dogs—a female pointer.

Three of the Bovet's children are also buried in Calvary Cemetery. Maria Dolores Bovet who was born in 1855 and

died of consumption in 1891, at the age of 36, at the Bovet adobe in "Sorrento", which is the old way they referred to Sorrento Valley/ Penasquitos/Lopez Canyon area. Maria Louisa Bovet, who died at age one year, in 1883, is also buried here, as is Pedro Bovet, who died at age 2 years in 1882.

The Calvary Cemetery records also indicate the Francisco Alvarado, to whom Royal Presidio commandante Francisco Ruiz gave his Penasquitos Canyon land grant, is buried there. Alvarado also was the recipient of a grant for Rancho Soledad (Sorrento Valley), given to him by the Mexican governor of Alta California.

Cave Coutts, who founded Ranch Guajome in Vista, built with materials he took from a deteriorating Mission San Luis Rey, is also buried at Calvary and his tombstone is still in the park. Coutts bought Rancho Soledad from Francisco Alvarado in 1853 and the very same day resold it to Bonafacio Lopez.

Elias Lopez, who was one of the sons of Ramon Lopez, Sr. and his wife Maria de la Soledad Duarte is also buried in Calvary. He died at the age of 24 from TB at the Lopez farm in Lopez Canyon in 1907. An article on his death appeared in the San Diego Union newspaper.

The records for the Lopez family point to something important. According to the burial records, Ramon Lopez Sr.'s son, Ramon Lopez, Jr., who built the Old Lopez Road, was born in Mexico in 1879. Enriqueta Lopez, Ramon Jr.'s sister, who lived with him in Lopez Canyon, was also born in Mexico, in 1880. But Elias Lopez was born in "Sorrento" (old name for Sorrento Valley/West Penasquitos area) in 1883 and Guadalupe, another sister, was born there in 1884.

This indicates that the Lopez dairy farm dates back to 1883, when Elias Lopez was born, even though Ramon Sr. was officially given title to the land as a US Government Land Grant of 160 acres in 1890.

Photos by Will Bowen:

Calvary Cemetery Memorial at Pioneer Park in Mission Hills (left)

Gravestone of Maria Louisa Bovet, wife of Don Pedro Bovet (above)

Days of the Great Yankee Cattle Barons: Growing up in the Peñasquitos (Part 2)

Eve Ewing

Ed. Note: This is a reprint of a three part article originally printed in Canyon News, January, 1988

There is so much to tell about those exciting years, I hardly know what to try and tell here and what to leave for another day. I think I'll just continue and give a few more details of an era too young for the History books, but all but gone forever none the less. Just as the Johnson-Taylor Ranch is all the thing now, as well it should be, someday the old adobe and barn on Horseman's Park (if still there) will be remembered as part of the days of San Diego's Great Yankee Cattle Barons.

I remember there was a spell of hard feelings among various relatives after George Sawday and Oliver Sexon died. I was pretty young but I remember that when Russell had to go up to certain of the other ranches he always put his pistol in his truck and mentioned one day that all the men at one of the ranches he had delivered cattle to were all wearing guns. I guess bug land holdings don't often get divided up very peacefully, and in those days lawyers didn't enter into settling feuds as much as they do now. Fortunately no one was shot and things got settled somehow.

One of the striking things about many of the great cattle barons like George Sawday, Oliver Sexon, and Russell Peavey was their honesty. You see, in those days contracts, with feed lots for example, were often made verbally. For example, if a stock contractor came up to San Ysabel to buy cattle, Sawday would arrange to sell so many hundred head at so much at such and such a time and place and not a single pencil or piece of paper every came out of anybody's pocket. All contracts, many involving thousands or even hundreds of thousands of dollars were all verbal. Verbal contracts were a spoken but unwritten law, which made honesty as necessary a part of you as hands and feet. An honest man just stood taller, that's all. And then I imagine there were a number of men who couldn't read well in California's early days. A great deal of pride went with that honesty as well. When Russell Peavey's son was born and named after Oliver Sexon. Sexon sent him a note to be given to him on his

fourth birthday that simply said: "Remember, son, if you always tell the truth, you can look any man in the eye and tell him to go to hell." Young Carl Oliver Peavey would never forget that. He came out of the same fiber.

Russell Peavey's family came west in a covered wagon and Russell had to help raise his younger brothers and sisters and never had a chance for schooling past the sixth grade. He was a cowboy who married the schoolmarm (her name was Florence George) and through his hard work, sense of integrity, exceptional intelligence, honesty, some good luck, and a lot of help from his educated, ambitious and intelligent wife, he too became a cattle baron before he died in about 1970.

No doubt many of you are thinking that these cattle barons lived like kings, sort of like a stage set from Dallas. Oddly enough, most of them led very simple and modest lives. Their time, their life's purpose and their money were tied up in their land, their cattle and horses. Paying taxes drove most of them to sell in the sixties and seventies, as it partly did for the Peñasquitos and Rancho Bernardo next door. Only after the land was sold was their money used for many luxuries. Also, there were bad years that needed a lot of capital to get them by. Those were the unlucky years when they had to buy cattle at a high price and were forced to sell at a low, or when drought that started in the late forties, lingered on through the sixties. They were sometimes forced to sell their cattle to the feed lots on bad years when little grass grew. Those hard years often as not bankrupt the smaller outfits, but the Peñasquitos was big enough to survive and Russell had an uncanny savvy for figuring out ways such as moving cattle to other areas or even other states till things picked up.

Peavey had a great love and respect for the land. He didn't believe in over grazing, which was a temptation during the years it didn't rain, which meant if he didn't want to abuse the land he often had to sell a huge percentage of his cattle at a loss or buy feed he could ill afford. But he could see how the resulting erosion could destroy the land. I remember one year in the early fifties when we got only three inches of rain for the whole year and the grass never grew higher than a Weenie Dog's stomach.

Russell shook his head and said: "I remember when the spring grass grew up high as your stirrup when you was riding." I could hardly believe what he said, as I grew up in the country during the Great Drought which began in 1946 and lasted until 1976 with little let up for over twenty years.

Russell could not have survived without his wife's help. She kept the books as Russell was partially illiterate which was something his exceptional intelligence could never completely compensate for, she cleaned the house, raised the kids who as soon as they were big enough to straddle a pony were out helping dad, she cooked the meals, did the laundry and ironing, canned peaches and baked pies and made the beds and packed lunches. She herself would ride almost every day with her husband to help work the cattle and save on the overhead of too many hired hands. At night she came home and cooked a hot meal after 8 – 12 hours in the saddle. She also helped plan barbecues and vigorously promoted beef through the women's auxiliary to the California Cattleman's Association called the Cowbells and championed causes that might help prolong their loved and useful way of life. And somehow she still had time for family and friends like me. I never knew how she could keep it all together.

Russell and Florence Peavey and their two children grew to be a family. Not that we didn't have their differences. I was always trying to save coyotes or ban control burning to save birds and animals, an error our whole generation of sentimental city dwellers, mostly newly arrived from other parts of the country, made. Nature burns brush naturally in the form of dry lightning storms and in the past by the help of Indians and later by ranchers. By not burning, we are now faced with holocausts because we have created unnatural situations where brush that is filled with natural tars and resins and used to burning every ten or fifteen years, has reached fifteen and twenty feet high and in some areas has not burned for over seventy years. Unlike trees, our brush starts to die out after about sixty years unless burned back when it then can start anew from the crown. If brush is burned frequently it doesn't burn trees and it is called a ground fire; but when the brush and grasses are tall it catches the trees on fire and we have what we call crown fires and that does kill trees. Much of (see pg. 8)

Wal-Mart Foundation Donation Received

Friends of Peñasquitos board members and Councilwoman Sherri Lightner accepted a \$5000 donation from Wal-Mart's Bill Moore as part of the Wal-Mart Foundation's Initiative for Sustainability.

Wal-Mart and the Wal-Mart Foundation concentrate on helping people understand how families and communities can live better by using fewer natural resources, as well as growing healthy food in a more sustainable way.

The donation to the Friends was for all the work done by the Friends to restore and sustain the canyons and preserves we oversee.



Membership Application

Membership category: (circle 1 below)

Senior (62) or Student \$10	Individual \$15
Family \$20	Sponsor \$30
Corporate \$250	Life \$1000
Patron \$100	
Contribution \$ _____	

I/We are interested in the following:

- Volunteer to help a committee (call to discuss)
- Hikes
- Indian Culture
- Educational Workshops
- School, Family, Youth Programs
- Environment (Plants, birds, mammals, geology)

Other: _____

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City State Zip _____

Home Phone _____

Email _____

Please make checks payable to:

Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, Inc.
P.O. Box 26523, San Diego, CA 92196

Thank you for your support! Your donation is tax deductible.
Call **858.484.3219** or **858.342.8856** for more information.

Friends' Directory

Officers

President: Les Braund	858-566-3958
Vice-President: Don Albright	619.443.5937
Treasurer: Pat Watkins	858.538.2527
Secretary: Edward DiBella	619.563.0717

Other Members of the Board of Directors

Jeanie Anderson, Anne Harvey, Mike Kelly, Mary Lueking, Janet Nelson, Brian Swanson

Walk Leaders

Don Albright, Will Bowen, Diana Gordon, Arne Johansen, Mike Kelly, Linda King, Mary Lueking, David Robertson, Brian Swanson, Pat Watkins

Committees

Conservation Chair: Mike Kelly, 858.342.8856
 Newsletter: Janet Nelson, 619.519.3150
 nelson.janet1@gmail.com
 Tracking Team Coordinator: Rick Botta,
 858.672.0584
 Webmaster: Beth Williams

(Days cont.)

our whole county is a time bomb waiting to go off instead of a natural series of patch-works of some newly burned areas, next to some older burned areas. The newly burned patches stop the spread of fire. But if fires have been prevented unnaturally for decades, there are no patches and fires can go unstoppable for days and days and burn horses and cattle and houses and thousands of acres much as it did during the wild fire of 1970 when it burned from Cuyamaca to the Mexican Border. The brush around Scripps Ranch and Mira Mesa are a case in point. Now the brush is so tall it may be impossible for controlled burning. These are all the things the Peaveys knew long before out National Foresters and Ecologists caught on. But I was bone headed, and sometimes just impossible to shake out of my city boots, so I didn't learn these things any faster than most of the rest of us. Now I know that people who spend their life on the land usually understand it the best.

Russell Peavey's life long goals were straight forward and clear. "I just want to raise good food at a price people can afford to pay". It used to make him mad when he saw how much meat cost in the market, and that lots of people couldn't even afford to buy it.

Like most ranchers, the Peaveys were very conservative, mostly because their way of life is always fragile and can only survive if labor is cheap and other things are just so. It survives best in the underpopulated regions of the country far from urban centers or in areas that are too dry for farming and too unappealing for living. The population boom after World War II was the beginning of the end for most of the cattle barons of San Diego County. So the Peaveys, like most ranchers, were against unions, and taxes and liberals and subdivisions, and middle men who drove beef prices up, and lax immigration laws and muddling Government bureaucracies that dictated unwise policies like no controlled burning, and sheep herders of course. People like the Peaveys and the cowboy drifters who worked for them, were our frontiersmen, our chapter from the Old West, our pages of History.

Once I asked Florence if they ever ate lamb. She was very indignant and quite defensive and said: "Of course we

eat lamb. We eat it quite frequently". At that point I had known the Peaveys for over twenty years and had never remembered eating lamb at their ranch except once after they ran over one in their truck on the highway. "How often is frequently?" I asked ... my youthful curiosity leading into dangerous waters. "Well," said Florence in her most serious and pensive manner, "I know we've eaten lamb at least twice since we've been married". They'd been married for over twenty-five years at that point. Well, I guess that was a cattlemans idea of eating lamb frequently.

Russell was known all over the county for his good horsemanship. "You can cowboy around and break a colt and run it around and yank on its mouth and plumb terrify and ruin it forever or, you can be patient and gentle on a horse and have it for a working partner for twenty year." I think the saddest I ever saw Russell was when his best cow pony, Mlssie ... "She's got more cow sense in her than I do", he used to say ... was shot just before she gave birth to her first colt. That, plus higher and higher taxes and all the cut down fences and shot up windmills, rustled cattle, broken beer bottles that ruined more than one horse, and illegal trash dumps, and uncontrolled brush fires, were all signs of San Diego's post war boom. This, coupled with relentless drought, finally drove the Peaveys and the Sawday heirs to sell the Peñasquitos in the sixties. Their way of life was over in coastal San Diego, a chapter in history closed and I had had the privilege of having lived with the Peavey Family on the Peñasquitos during summers and holidays for all those years. I grew to love them and respect them as deeply as my own family, and their ways, wisdom and warmth have left an indelible stamp in my heart and mind.

I am going to close by telling you something that Russell said over thirty years ago that I have never forgotten. I was twelve years old at the time. From a nearby hill we were overlooking the grading going on for a new highway later to be known as I-15. It cut through the heart of the best grazing land on the Peñasquitos. There was a lot of housing developments mushrooming all over the county at that time as well. Russell said in his slow country drawl: "Some day we are going to be hungry in America. We can't go on forever putting up houses in the fertile valley bottoms that can grow food.

We should only be putting houses up there on those rocky hills where you can't grow no food."

I think Russell Peavey would be proud to stand here if he were still alive and could see your struggles to save some of the land he loved so long. Of course he'd want to put the land to work raising food and see cattle grazing, which would help keep the fire hazard down, and he wouldn't let you gallop your horse like a fool or chase his cattle and leave the gates open, but other than that, city folk and ranchers have a lot in common. We are after all, all human beings who need some country, and some peace and some beauty to help us stay human ... and of course some foot do put in our bellies ... hopefully at a price we can afford to pay.

Thank you.

The Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve thank Ms. Ewing for sharing her personal experience, insight, and historical account into Peñasquitos as most of us will never know.

