

MOTOCROSS UPDATE

The code compliance officer for this region for the County of Kern has apparently served the owners of the Wilsted motocross track with their third citation. The reason for the citation is the failure to return the track to original grade. The owners did not complete the conditional use permit process, as we understand it. It is reassuring to see that Kern County is following through on these kinds of code enforcement issues.

TRASH PICKUP RESULTS IN INTERESTING STUFF

The CVPA trash pickup was held Saturday May 15th. A hardy group gathered and divided into work groups, and then picked up trash and trash and more trash. As one drives by a roadside, one often notes some trash. By walking the roadside, you would be amazed at how much more trash is frequently present that you can't see as you whiz by in your car. Bags and bags and bags of trash were gathered and placed into a large trash bin. The group then enjoyed a wonderful lunch at Winnie Graham's red barn. Thanks to all who participated and particularly to Winnie for

sharing her wonderful barn setting with us.

Trash pickups are always interesting ecologically and sociologically. One often finds very intriguing stuff! At the recent CVPA board meeting, the board members laughingly remembered some of the highlights of the past trash pickups. One famous find on a previous trash pickup was one-half of a woman's bra. One wonders where the other half ended up! There must be a great story here for an investigative reporter!

ON A SAD NOTE

We lost a strong CVPA supporter and friend when Ed Delver passed away. He will be greatly missed and our thoughts are with his widow, Dianne.



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JUNE 3RD MEETING - HEAR ABOUT THE **EARTHQUAKE OF 1952**

William "Bill" Sommermeyer will be the guest speaker at the June 3rd meeting of the Cummings Valley Protective Association. The meeting will be held at 7:30PM at the Stallion Springs Community Services District building, located at 28500 Stallion Springs Drive in beautiful Stallion Springs. Mr. Sommermeyer's topic for the evening will be "The Earthquake of 1952" and will include slides from the period.

Bill Sommermeyer is a California native and is a Registered Civil Engineer in California. From June 1949 to August 1952, he was a Technical Student with the Southern Pacific Railroad Company, based in Bakersfield. After graduating from the University of California, he participated extensively in the surveys and in construction supervision for the damage repairs made necessary by the 1952 Tehachapi earthquake. His firsthand knowledge and experience will make this evening both informative and interesting. See you on June 3rd! Thanks to Susan Mueller for her excellent efforts in lining up interesting speakers for us!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW ! BARBEQUE TIME IS APPROACHING!

The annual CVPA Barbeque will be held Saturday, September 25th, 2004 at the Souza Ranch. This beautiful ranch is located at the west end of Cummings Valley Road. The social hour & ½ will be from 4:30-6 PM, and wine and beer will be available. Dinner will be served at approximately 6 PM. Ticket prices will be \$15 for CVPA members, \$17 for non-members.

The Barbeque is always a great opportunity to visit with interesting people and to enjoy some exceptionally good food. There will be music also, so this will be the place to be! Mark your calendars now and watch for more information in the next issue of this newsletter.

WARM WEATHER CAN MEAN WILD FIRES •• ARE YOU READY?

Word has it that there will not be Kern County Fire personnel based at the Stallion Springs Fire Station during the 2004 Fire Season, which has already started. We've already had a fire up high in Bear Valley Springs.

All CVPA folk are encouraged to take a really close, hard look at your fire protection and escape plans. A recent insert from the Bakersfield Californian (entitled "Living with Fire", published with the April 25, 2004 issue) noted that much of our mountainous areas are high hazard fire environments. That is our entire area.

Fire is a natural feature of where we live. As development occurs, it seems as if many homes are built in these areas, without significant regard to the risk of wildfire. As more homes are built, more people are here, and the risk of fire increases. Wildfires can start quickly, burn dramatically and can be difficult to control. This means a greater chance of loss of life, more potential property losses, and more damage to natural resources. Plus, this all means we need more money for



firefighting, and yet we see budgets at the state and local levels being cut, and fire stations like the one at Stallion Springs being left un-staffed. Putting this all together, you can see it is not an encouraging picture.

If there were a large fire in our area, fire resources would be stretched. The odds of having a fire department truck sitting in your driveway ready to protect your house during a large fire are very low. YOU will need to be the first line of defense.

We have included below information from the "Living with Fire" insert. Your editor has special respect for fire, having lost two sailplane friends in a fire at Malibu. They were trying to evacuate when the fire overcame them and their vehicle.

There are three "R's" of defensive space: removal, reduction and replacement. Removal means eliminating entire plants, particularly trees and shrubs, from the site. Reduction involves removing plant parts, such as mowing dried grass, removing low tree branches, and pruning dead wood. Replacement involves exchanging more hazardous plants with less flammable vegetation.

Tree limbs within fifteen feet of a chimney, encroaching on power lines, or touching the house should be removed. Emphasize use of mulches, rock and non-combustible hard surfaces, such as concrete sidewalks, brick patios and asphalt driveways.

Follow the Lean, Clean and Green concept for the area within thirty feet of your house: lean (small amounts of flammable vegetation), clean (no accumulation of dead vegetation or flammable debris), and green (plants are healthy and green during the fire season).

Have more than one exit route out of your home area. Make sure that your house number is clearly posted. Make sure everyone in the family knows the emergency meeting place and the exit plan (i.e. pets, where to meet, what if's, what are the most important items to take if we only have five minutes). Also, know your own limitations. If there is someone in your home with physical disabilities, you need to be particularly vigilant to ensure your exit plan is workable. Think about your neighbors, particularly any of them with physical disabilities.

The insert also listed some great ideas if you have to evacuate your home and property. They recommend closing all interior and exterior doors and windows. Turn on a local radio station. Place vehicles in the garage, have them pointing out, and roll up the windows. Close the garage door but leave it unlocked. Disconnect the electric garage door opener so it can be opened manually. Put combustible patio furniture inside. Prop a ladder against the house so firefighters can have easy access to the roof. Attach garden hoses to faucets and attach a nozzle set on spray. Leave a light on in each room. Move overstuffed furniture to the center of the room. Open the fireplace damper, but place the screen over the hearth to prevent sparks and embers from entering the house.

The Kern County Fire Department, the Kern River Valley Fire Safe Council, the US Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management developed the "Living with Fire" insert. It is excellent. If you are interested in getting a copy, contact Janice Armstrong at 821-0346 and she will see about copies.

CAN YOUR REALLY SELL A CEMETERY?

An opinion - by Janice Armstrong

Talk about the rural, rustic life. The Fickert family owned much of Bear Valley for nearly 100 years. They moved into Bear Valley in 1869. Ten Fickert children were raised on their 25,000 acre Bear Valley ranch. Four of the children died during childhood, and the other six made it into adulthood. As nearly as we can tell, burials at the Fickert Family Cemetery began in 1876, when 11 year old Tommy Fickert died. The most recent burial there was the last of the ten Fickert children (2nd generation) that took place in 1969. The ranch was then sold and eventually Dart developed it into what is present today.

The cemetery, according to a knowledgeable old timer who recently passed away, has 17 graves in it. Four of the graves are marked. We believe it probably includes the original settlers, their 10 children, two spouses, and three others. I am working with the Fickert family descendents to identify the individuals buried there. Pete Vukich shared that he thought the other three individuals might be Native Americans, and he wondered aloud if there were other Native Americans buried there, since he vaguely remembered a mention of that many years ago.

The Fickert Family Cemetery is located in Tract 3431, on lot 105, in Bear Valley Springs. It can be

accessed either from McCray Court (head south at the end of the cul-de-sac) or from Deertrail Road (just west of the intersection of Deertrail Road and Rand Court). It is in the lot next to Janice and Dan Armstrong's home, and you will probably remember we had a joint event there last fall with the American Association of University Women Tehachapi Mountain Branch and the Tehachapi Heritage League.

Apparently, recently someone approached the owner of the cemetery lot (the Bear Valley Community Services District) about selling the lot. The decision was made to sell the lot, and it is currently in escrow. None of the neighbors were notified about any public hearing (none took place) and the Fickert family was not notified. I was notified about the sale by an observant and concerned citizen, and quickly contacted Fred Fickert, the great-grandson of the original settlers. Fred had lived and worked on the ranch for a number of years, and was aghast that someone would sell their family cemetery. He and I have been fighting the BVCSD ever since. We have received much support from others and are continuing the battle. We were able to stop the approval of an easement in the past week and will be attending further meetings. Bakersfield Channel 23 recently did a television piece on the cemetery during their local news program.

Fred Fickert and I are looking closely at the original deeds, legal issues, historic issues, and cemetery and burial law, along with a number of other things. The Tehachapi Heritage League is also opposing the sale of the cemetery. I have spoken with many individuals in Bear Valley and haven't found one who thinks the cemetery should be sold.

My perspective is that these wonderful historic cemeteries should be protected. The Fickert Family Cemetery should not fall into private hands. It should continue to be owned by the Community Services District and it should be protected. I also believe that the last generation of Fickert family members who lived on the ranch should have the option of being buried in the family cemetery.

Anyone with any information about the cemetery or any suggestions or ideas on other ways to fight this sale are encouraged to get in touch with me, Janice Armstrong (821-0346, danarmstro@aol.com). Any help will be gratefully appreciated. ja

CVPA BOARD LOOKING AT SIGNAGE ISSUES

With the growth we've had in the Brite and Cummings Valleys and the entire area, we have noted a number of new signs in the area. Your CVPA Board is reviewing those signs in relation to the sign ordinance. Our goal is to ensure the ordinance is followed, and to protect the rural atmosphere and our rural quality of life. If you have any questions about any signs please give one of the board members a call!

Cummings Valley Protective Association, Inc.				
Membership Application - July 1 through June 30				
Name(s) _____				
Local Address _____			Phone () _____	
Mail Address _____ (If not same as local)			Phone () _____	
Check Appropriate Area				
<input type="checkbox"/> Alpine Forest Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Country Oaks	<input type="checkbox"/> Golden Hills	<input type="checkbox"/> Oak Knolls	<input type="checkbox"/> Stallion Springs
<input type="checkbox"/> Bear Valley Springs	<input type="checkbox"/> Cummings Valley	<input type="checkbox"/> Hidden Oaks	<input type="checkbox"/> Old Town	<input type="checkbox"/> Tehachapi
<input type="checkbox"/> Brite Valley	<input type="checkbox"/> Fairview Ranches	<input type="checkbox"/> Indian Hills	<input type="checkbox"/> Sand Canyon	<input type="checkbox"/> ? _____
e-mail addr: _____				
Annual dues are \$12 per family.			Mail with payment to:	
Please check one:			Cummings Valley Protective Association	
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