

The Historical Society of the Crescenta Valley Ledger

Montrose

La Crescenta

Verdugo City

Highway Highlands

La Canada

Flintridge

October 2009

The Newsletter of the Historical Society of the Crescenta Valley

Issue 63

CURRENT HSCV INFORMATION

The Pinecrest Flood of 1978



This is the Genofile's house in 1978, nearly covered with debris and wrecked cars.

In 1975 the front range of the San Gabriel Mountains above La Crescenta burned off, setting the stage for several mudslides in the years immediately after. In 1978, a massive debris flow came out of Shields Canyon and tore through the new subdivision of Pinecrest, damaging several houses, and nearly killing the Genofile Family. The incident was immortalized in a book by John McPhee called "The Control of Nature," which has cemented awareness of the dangers of mudslides into the psyche of Southern California. Our presenter Michael Fife will tell us the story of this event, its causes and its long-term effects. Jackie Genofile, who was at ground zero of the flood, will join him to tell her family's story.

Unfortunately, we face the same scenario today in the wake of the Station Fire. We'll wrap up the program with a presentation from Los Angeles County Public Works, who will answer our questions about what we can do to help prevent "Pinecrest Flood II".

Michael Fife is a CV native and the son of HSCV member Kay Fife. He grew up in Pinecrest, and although he was a child in 1978, he is fascinated with the story. He brings this information to our community as a cautionary tale, and wants residents to be aware of the dangers they face this winter.

Join us on Monday, October 19th, 7:00 p.m.

At the **Center For Spiritual Living**

(formerly known as the La Crescenta Church of Religious Science)
Located on the corner of Dunsmore and Santa Carlotta

Backstage Tour of the Historic Alex Theatre



The Alex Theatre in Glendale is a remnant of the grand movie palaces that were a highlight of the golden age of Hollywood. It has been lovingly restored and serves the city today as its premier arts venue. The *Friends of the Alex Theatre*, an all-volunteer group that provides support for this historic theatre, invites us to an exclusive backstage tour to reveal its fascinating history.

Alex Volunteer Andrea Humberger will provide an overview of the venue's 82-year history, restoration process and current activities and programs. She'll explain the background of the architecture, sculpture and other art objects that grace the interior and exterior. **Please note, this will be a walking tour that includes climbing many stairs. Also, this tour is not recommended for small children.**

While on the tour keep a sharp eye out for ghosts! Although not included in our tour of the Alex Theatre, later that same day, at 2PM and 8PM, world famous psychic/medium Michael Kouri will answer the question, "Is the Alex haunted?" followed by the 1963 horror classic "The Haunting". For ticket info on this movie and show, call 818-243-ALEX (2539) or visit their website at www.alextheatre.org.

Saturday, Oct. 24th at 10AM

Meet in front of the Alex Theatre, 216 North Brand Boulevard in Glendale.

Validated parking is provided in the Orange Street Parking Garage, one block west of the theatre.

This tour is free, thanks to the Friends of the Alex Theatre.



Crescenta Valley Heritage

By Sharon Weisman

All local jurisdictions are holding community meetings and consulting with experts on how to cope with the aftermath of the **Station Fire**.

Glendale even held a sand bag filling morning in **Dunsmore Park** in anticipation of heavy rains and debris flows this winter.

Hazardous conditions are liable to persist for a few years so we'll have to get used to K-rails, sandbags and straw wattles in our neighborhoods. That's the new term I've learned: Straw Wattles, also known as straw worms, bio-logs, straw noodles, or straw tubes are man made cylinders of compressed, weed free straw (wheat or rice), 8 to 12 inches in diameter and 20 to 25 feet long. They are encased in jute, nylon, or other photo-degradable materials, and have an average weight of 35 pounds. They are installed in a shallow trench forming a continuous barrier along the contour (across the slope) to intercept water running down a slope. (From the US Dept. of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service website.)

The **Station Fire** has certainly increased my vocabulary, first pyrocumulus clouds and now straw wattles.

For ongoing information on winter preparedness at the city of Glendale, see:
<http://www.ci.glendale.ca.us/winterweatherpreparation.asp>

For the unincorporated area, see the Crescenta Valley Town Council site:
http://www.thecvcouncil.com/flood_mudslide_preparedness.html

For La Canada-Flintridge,
<http://www.lacanadaflintridge.com/index.htm>

For Los Angeles:
<http://www.lacity.org/SAN/WPD/Site.org/residents/wetweatherprep.htm>

Another result of the **Station Fire** is the temporary loss of coyote and mountain lion habitat. Until the chaparral re-grows, our streets and yards are prime hunting grounds. We've seen coyotes prowling neighborhoods in the middle of the day. Please be vigilant with your pets and small children.

While we have been busy planning for Mother Nature's activities, our friends at the SunroomDesk blog have been keeping up with **Glendale's** draft of the **Wireless Ordinance** to try to exert local control of the placement of cell phone towers and other facilities. There will be a series of Community Meetings, Wed. Oct. 28, 6:30 pm at Pacific Park, 501 S. Pacific Ave., Thurs. Oct. 29, 6:30 pm, Central Library, 222 E. Harvard St., Mon. Nov. 2, 6:30 pm, Brand Library, 1601 W. Mountain St., and in our neighborhood last, Sat. Nov. 7, 11 am, Montrose-Crescenta Library, 2465 Honolulu Ave.

The City of **Glendale**, **Glendale Unified Schools**, and the **Crescenta Valley Town Council**, particularly **Robbyn Battles** have been focusing on pedestrian safety, especially around our schools. **Glendale** continues with its **Safe and Healthy Streets Plan** to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety around town. There is a series of meetings to gather community input

and our local one is Wed. Nov. 4th at 7 pm in the **Sparr Heights Community Center**, 1613 Glencoe Way. There will be a city-wide wrap-up meeting Wed. Nov. 18 at 6:30 pm in the Central Library, 222 E. Harvard St.

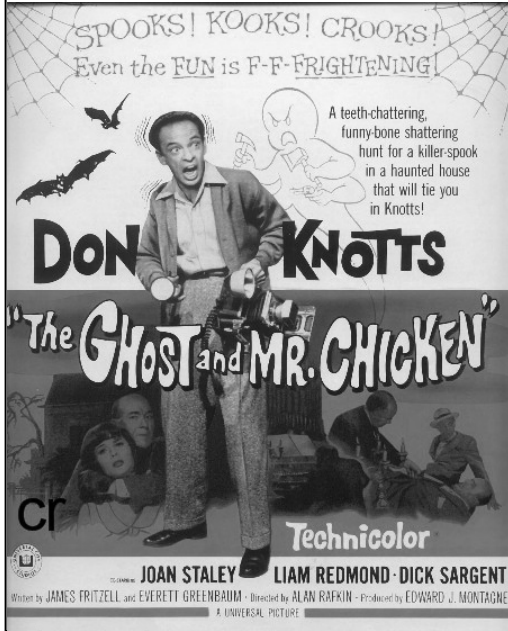
It's time to select **Crescenta Valley Town Council** members again. Application deadline is October 18th 2009 midnight. There will be a **Candidate Forum: Thursday October 15th**, 6:30pm, Rosemont Middle School Cafeteria. To participate your application must be submitted prior to the Forum.

Election Day for the CV Town Council is November 7th, 8:00a.m.-5:00 p.m., at the **Rosemont Middle School Cafeteria**. This volunteer opportunity doesn't come with any tangible income but successful candidates will have a similar effect on land use policy for the unincorporated area as the much more lucrative position noted below has on **Sunland-Tujunga**. Everyone in the unincorporated portion of our valley is encouraged to participate, either by running, or at the very least, voting.

Los Angeles Council District 2 narrowed down the large field of candidates to succeed **Wendy Greuel** who has moved up to **City Controller**. **Christine Essel** and **Paul Krekorian** are in a run-off election December 8. Neither candidate has roots in **Sunland-Tujunga** so it is imperative for local voters to make an informed choice. Candidate websites: <https://www.essel09.com/> and <http://www.paul4council.com/>

Please encourage anyone you know in L.A. Council District 2 to register and vote in this crucial election.

Ghost Stories and Movie in the Park



Come to a spooky family-friendly Halloween ghost-fest in the park after dark! A ghost story and a scary movie will get you in the mood for a haunting Halloween holiday.

Glendale City Councilmen are serious, sober public servants, but did you know that one of them has a spooky past? Councilman John Drayman will tell his own local ghost stories, guaranteed to make you think twice before walking through the Montrose Shopping Park at night!

Next, if you haven't been scared away, stay for a showing of the Don Knotts 1966 classic comedy "The Ghost and Mr. Chicken". Many parents will recognize this fun-filled movie from their own childhoods, and now you'll have the opportunity to relive the silliness of Don Knotts, and to introduce your own children to this mildly creepy classic.

Friday, Oct. 23, 6:30 - Dunsmore Park

4700 Dunsmore Ave, in La Crescenta

Bring your own chairs and blankets, and dress warmly.

Rain Cancells.

This free event is brought to our community by Glendale Parks and Recreation.

Members Remember...

Local resident, Bill Costello, recently sent a letter to Mike, which included some of his memories of an earlier La Crescenta.

Bill Costello writes:

I was born and raised in La Crescenta. Born in 1948, my folks moved here from Chicago after my dad got out the Army. The first house we lived in was in the 2900 block of Piedmont, when it was a dirt road. I remember milkmen making deliveries at the back door (through the "wall access door"), our backyard incinerator, the Good Humor ice cream man and Helms Bakery trucks. As a kid, with my brothers and friends, we all hiked the Verdugo mountains. We played Army on the cliff at the bottom of La Crescenta Ave., across from the nursery. We caught horn toads and frogs in the wash and brought them home. We stopped and petted the horse at the house on the corner of Sycamore. Many times we would stop at Rogers Drug store to read comics and get a malt at the soda fountain.

In 1956, my dad bought a lot in the 2800 block of Piedmont and built a new house himself. He was a

Glendale fireman, and at the time it wasn't that unusual since many fireman were involved in construction as second jobs. Anyway, at that time one of the Urquidez family in his 80's or 90's lived on the corner of La Crescenta and Piedmont (I think it was a bus stop building before it was purchased by the 4 Square Church). He was somewhat of a recluse but came by regularly and my dad got to know him well during construction.

Growing up I had many paper routes (the Independent, Ledger, Herald Express and Mirror News). I had yard jobs in Whiting Woods and worked for the longest living iron lung lady on the corner of Prospect and La Crescenta. Later, while in high school, I worked as a cook at Dominicks Restaurant and worked home construction jobs with firemen.

In my twenties, I began collecting anything having to do with the history of the area (La Crescenta, La Canada, Glendale, Sunland-Tujunga and Eagle Rock), mostly pictures and articles, many of which, I'm sure you already have.

However, while working for the So. Cal. Gas Co., I encountered many old timers from the area in their 80's and 90's. I accumulated

many first hand accounts and information, which I have always felt was fascinating. Unfortunately, I didn't record their names; since I was doing this for my own enjoyment and didn't think anyone would be that interested. I've got many stories and first hand accounts.

I built my own house in the 2900 block of Harmony Place in 1979, and over the years have collected pictures, artifacts, and I've got bits of information in particular regarding the following: Feed & Fuel - Vasquez - Urquidez - Florencita Market - Settani's Market - Rock Haven - 1934 Flood - Black Lumber, the chicken ranch on Montrose ave., etc.

Did this bring back any memories for you? Please share them with us:

Mail to: HSCV c/o 2717 Altura Ave,
La Crescenta, CA 91214

e-mail to: lawlrmom@yahoo.com

Members Remember...

By Charles Bausback

The Connection Between Crescenta Valley and The “I Love Lucy” Show

Back in the very early 1950's when the “I Love Lucy” show first started, there was an entirely different morality code in the movies and on television than we have today! A man named Will Hays was the guiding force behind all of this. He had established strict rules over what could be shown in both of the mediums. There were no swear words permitted, and if a bedroom scene was called for, only married couples could be shown, and they had to occupy twin beds! The words “Pregnant” and “Having a baby” were strictly forbidden! If the female star of a TV series became pregnant, the show had to be cancelled immediately.

Lucille Ball and Desi Arnez had purchased the old Paramount Movie Studios on Melrose Avenue in Hollywood, and had formed a new television production company there called “Desilu Productions.” The entrance and exit for the studio were two very high arches next to each other, with a large sign over the top of them reading, “Through these portals pass the most beautiful girls in the world!” This was a very famous slogan at the time.

The “I Love Lucy” programs had the highest Nielsen ratings (audiences) of any program on television during 1953, 1954, 1955 and 1957 (in 1956 the \$64,000 Question was highest rated).

Then “Lucy” became pregnant! Under the Hays Office Morality Code, her program would immediately have to be cancelled. She had a very successful and wonderful program and she wanted to keep on working, so she decided to completely ignore the Hays Office Morality Code!

Lucy and Desi owned the studio together, so there was no one “higher up” who could say “NO!” She became directly responsible for breaking the stranglehold that the Hays Office had over the movie and television industries.

Lucy planned a program where her husband, Desi, was performing in his nightclub with his Cuban band, and someone from the audience had handed a note to the waiter, who gave the note to Desi. (Desi had written a song called “We’re having a baby, My baby and me!”) He announced over the microphone that, “Someone in this room is going to have a baby and she has asked me to sing this song.” Then he walked around the room as he sang and looked at each woman sitting at the tables, who would then shake their heads indicating “No.” At last he came to Lucy, who was sitting alone at a table, and she nodded her head indicating “Yes!” The Nielsen rating for that program indicated that it had the largest viewing audience of all time, breaking all previous records!

Then Lucy completely broke the morality code of the Hays Office by appearing very pregnant in every episode of the show, during her pregnancy!

And now let me explain how our Crescenta Valley enters into the picture. We had no local high school at the time, so every school day a bus picked us up and took us to Glendale High School. There was a fellow in my class named Max Mayer. His family owned a small grocery store on Florencita Avenue just below Montrose Avenue. It was also the only place in the valley where you could send a telegram. There were two telegraph services at that time, Western Union and Postal Telegraph, and the Mayer family offered them both.

My father went in to send a telegram and Max asked him which telegraph service he wanted to use. When my father said, “Western Union,” Max said, “Just a moment, Sir,” and he disappeared into the backroom. When he returned, he was wearing a Western Union hat, and he said, “Now I can take your telegram.”

Max got married soon after he graduated from Glendale High School. And nine months later his wife gave birth to twin boys!

I can no longer remember which hospital it was in, but I can remember that Lucille Ball was in the same hospital giving birth to “Little Ricky.”

All three boys were delivered on the same day, and all three of them were placed in cribs in the nursery next to each other.

Naturally all of the producers and staff and cameramen of the “I Love Lucy” program came to see Lucy’s “Little Baby Ricky” in the hospital. They were amazed to see two identical twin boys in the hospital nursery right next to where Lucy’s baby was.

The producers then asked the hospital who the father of the twins was, and the hospital gave them Max’s telephone number. They then called Max and obtained his street address.

They visited him and explained to him that they wanted to use his twins in the “I Love Lucy” show because a tiny baby cannot be exposed for very long periods of time to the very hot lights that are used to film television productions. If they had two identical boys, they could switch them from time to time and the audience would not know the difference. Max signed a contract with them, and he went back to college and got his degree, paying for all of his tuition with the money he received from the “I Love Lucy” shows.

During the programs the twin boys grew up into early childhood. They learned to talk and then had speaking roles in the programs, which meant that they then received higher pay. The actual “Little Ricky” never appeared on the show!

Editors Note: The jointly planned HSCV/CVTC “Movie in the Park” night at Two Strike Park in August, was cancelled due to the “Station Fire”. We were to show “The Long, Long Trailer” and have Frank Gorey, Lucy’s chauffeur and personal assistant, to speak. We still hope to bring Frank back for another chance to share his experiences, but were unable to arrange it before the re-showing of “The Long, Long Trailer,” along with “Looney Tunes cartoons,” that showed in late September (with not enough notice for it to be in our September newsletter. Our apologies!) Charles Bausback shared this memory at that event and we reprint it here, with his blessings, so those who were unable to attend could enjoy it too.

Raging Flood Destroys Homes

By LOREN LEDIN
Staff Writer

A raging torrent of water, mud and boulders swept down from Shields Debris Basin in La Crescenta early Friday morning, cutting a path of destruction to homes along Pine Cone Road above La Crescenta Avenue.

At least nine homes in the swank, foothills neighborhood suffered mud and structural damage from the flood. Three of the homes were damaged extensively.

There were no injuries, but the mud and boulders trapped many residents inside their homes. Residents were without water and electricity all day Friday.

The most severely damaged home, 2824 Markridge Pl., sits at the bottom of Pine Cone Road and caught the full force of the flood waters. The onslaught, which carried with it automobiles, trees and concrete columns, gushed through and around the house and yard.

By the time the flood waters subsided, the furniture and windows had been displaced with mud. The backyard became the graveyard of nine, crushed automobiles.

The residents, Mr. and Mrs. Bob Genofile and their two children, managed to escape uninjured.

Twenty workers from the Los Angeles County Flood Control District, augmented by a similar number from the Los Angeles County Parks and Recreation Department, worked Friday to clear debris from the Shields Basin and divert excess rainwater to the La Crescenta Wash.

Those efforts, barring heavy rainfall, were expected to be successful by Friday evening, said Flood Control District officials.

The Shields Debris Basin, burdened to capacity by seven inches of rain Thursday and Friday morning, overflowed in a sudden burst at 1:30 a.m. Friday.

The discharge converted Pine Cone Road into a fast-moving mountain river.

"I was standing in front of my house, watching the rain," said Charles Hall, 5438 Pine Cone Rd. "Suddenly I looked up and saw a whole flood of water coming up the street."

"I saw three, cars, including my own, get picked up and just go whoosh, right on by."

Mrs. June Barr, a teacher at Rosemont Junior High School, was looking out the

front window of her home at 5448 Pine Cone.

"I heard my daughter scream and then came this terrible roar," she said. Mrs. Barr went out to the front yard with her pet cat, but fell into a hole that the flood had washed away in the sidewalk. She was shaken but not hurt.

Among her losses she said, was her car which had been carried away in the flood.

Mrs. Raymond Amoroshe said she will never forget the sound of the flood.

"It was just like a river outside," she said. "It was incredible."

The waters sped down Pine Cone Road while skipping, except for those located on the Pine Cone Road corner, homes situated on cross streets.

Hard hit were homes at 5564 Pine Cone, which was filled with four feet of mud, and 2902 Hopeton, which suffered extensive damage from mud.

Houses at 2749 Ridge Pine, 5610 Pine Cone, 5771 Pine Cone, 5519 Pine Cone, and 5444 Pine Cone had front yards washed away and replaced with mud.

Swimming pools at homes were turned into mud sites.

The Marwan Abourass family at 2870 Pinelawn were pinned inside their home by mud.

"It could have been a lot worse," said Abourass. "I've seen what some of the other homes look like." He said that the mud remained outside of his home except for a basement room, which had four inches of mud on the floor.

Sheriff's Department units using loudspeakers, told residents to evacuate their homes around 2 a.m., but many stayed.

"Whenever we have had floods in the past, my husband joins other men in the neighborhood to help keep the debris basin clear," said Lorene Trim, who lives at 3005 Hopeton Road. "So that is what he did and we are staying."

Mr. and Mrs. Gunhild Jacobson, 5400 Pine Cone Road, said: "The worst of it has happened, nothing more can happen, so why leave?"

In the early morning light, residents walked the streets of Pine Cone, surveying the damage of their homes and the homes of neighbors.

Bob Genofile, peered disbelievingly at the wreckage of his home, and declined comment. His eyes were stained red by

tears.

A neighbor, G. Jacobson, had played host to the Genofile family for the nights.

"Their kids, Scott and Kim, were looking out the window and they saw the waters when they were coming," said Jacobson. He said the youths were pinned, momentarily, in a front room but managed to get free and go to the parent's bedroom, where all four fled the house."

"It was really something," said Mrs. G. Jacobson.

Up the street, Dave English, a resident of La Crescenta Ave., was helping to free automobiles surrounded by rocks and boulders.

"I came around and saw that help was needed so I decided to pitch in," he said.

All along the street, residents and city and county workers, bleary-eyed from being awake all night, were helping out.

While gas company employees had repaired leaks in two lines, restoring gas to the area residents, the lack of water and power brought discomfort to the cold and hungry.

"I never thought this would happen," Mary Ann Knoell said in disbelief.

Rudy Rico, construction supervisor for the Los Angeles County Flood Control District, said it could be a long time before the area was back to normal.

"We are talking about a cleanup that will take months," he said. "It will be a while before it is all the way it was before."

Power Lost To Sewage Plant and Reservoirs

Crescenta Valley County Water District crews were working around the clock yesterday.

Particularly hard-hit was the Pinecrest Sewer Reclamation Plant at the foot of Pine Glen Road. Mud and debris both from Goss Canyon and Shields Canyon filled the flood control channel and poured out on to Pineridge Road.

The reclamation plant is sited below the road there, and the huge vats quickly filled with mud. A spokesman for the CVCWD said he was hopeful sewer services would be restored by some time today.

In the meantime, the district was treating the sewage with chlorine before allowing it to go into the wash and debris basin.

Rumble of Mud and Rocks Warns Residents

By BEVERLY PLACE

Staff Writer

From Ocean View Boulevard on the east to Lowell Avenue on the west, the upper La Crescenta area residents heard the rumble of rocks and boulders being carried swiftly by mud-filled water pouring from San Gabriel Mountain canyon mouths early Friday.

People spoke variously of 1:30 a.m., 2 a.m. and 2:30 a.m.—but many were unsure of the time because power was gone and clocks stopped. But, no doubt, it all happened when the heaviest part of the storm hit at 2 a.m.

Some three inches of rain fell in an eight-hour period beginning at 10 p.m., according to Marcus Lytle.

It was this rumble that awakened the Bob Genofile family. Their beautiful home of many years at 2824 Markridge Road, at the foot of Pine Cone Road, received the main force of the furious debris-laden flood waters pouring over the top of a debris basin high above.

Eighteen-year-old Kim Genofile stood barefoot on the deck next to the mud-filled playroom overlooking what had been the pool area. Now it was a tangled morass of tree limbs, boulders, and cars embedded in mud.

She pointed to the front bedroom on the right—that's where she had been sleeping when the flood hit the house. She and her brother, Scott, 16, ran to the master bedroom of their parent's on the back of the home.

They closed the door and scrambled onto the bed. But soon the flow of mud forced the door open, and in the meantime quickly had surrounded the house, allowing no escape from the room.

As the mud and water came into the room, the Genofile family soon found themselves being elevated nearer and nearer the ceiling as the room filled.

Across the street, neighbor Ralph Tetreault heard the flood and saw the Genofile house inundated. He called the county fire department for help.

It was the firemen who arrived and evacuated the Genofiles just in time.

As Jackie Genofile said early Friday morning in answer to a concerned neighbor, "Oh, we're fine, we're alive aren't we...and that's all that matters."

Neighbors and friends were on hand carrying out a few personal belongings they could get to. Kim said her mother had just had the living room re-decorated.

Now it appeared to be a total loss. Kim said, "That's my car there—the one nearest to us. It was parked in the driveway. But look at those other two cars over there—how did they get past my car?" she wondered.

It seemed to be the little things that counted—like the fact they had saved their dogs, but were worried about their cats.

It was a scene of complete destruction—Bob, who is a general contractor hesitated to say whether any part of the house could be saved. One could only admire the bravery of those people.

But the same was true across the foothills area as neighbors and friends joined in digging out those less fortunate.

Pine Cone Road and its satellite streets were hardest hit with several homes damaged by the onslaught, swimming pools filled with mud, precious household items ruined. But miraculously, no injuries were reported.

Up near the top of Pine Cone, at 5610, Joan Kim was rolling up lovely Oriental scroll wall-hangings. It was her front yard that was undermined, where the gas main was severed that caused the eventual evacuation of 100 homes in the Pinecrest area.

A concrete light standard lay buried in mud, broken in several pieces nearby. A fire hydrant was washed from its stand, gushing water tossing it through the Kim's front window. The family escaped through the back sliding glass door. County firemen and fire crews were trying to dig out her garage. The Kims had lived in the house since July.

All the way down Pine Cone utilities companies, U.S. Forestry Service personnel, County Flood Control workers, bulldozers scooping mud into huge dump trucks, were working.

Many homes showed mud marks half-way up the walls.

Bob Coffman was working in the mud that filled his backyard and pushed against the house. A neighbor said his ill wife had been evacuated by paramedics.

Knut Kiepinski and friend John Fry were digging out the former's van in the driveway. Next to the house was a car, tossed down from the next driveway.

And on the east side of Pinecrest, homes at the foot of Pineglen Road and Pineridge Road and on down Rosemont also had been hard-hit when mud and debris from Goss Canyon and the upper

mountain sides filled the flood control wash, forcing the deluge on to the homes.

Dennis and Anneliese Taylor's home at 5311 Pineridge was a shambles, the entry way to the atrium was 4 feet above the mud. Lovely paintings still hung, mud-spattered, on the papered walls. Friends were helping carry out the mud from around a beautiful glass-doored china cupboard.

Women friends were trying to save the furniture—wiping the mud from the water-soaked overstuffed pieces. They Taylors had evacuated the house to go down to Rosemont Junior High where they were told an evacuation center had been established.

Although the doors were open there, there was no electricity. A neighbor near the school took them in.

Dr. Calvin J. Powell at 5404 Pineglen had completely lost his pool and plantings as had the house next door. Michael Mancuso's home had suffered backyard damage. He said the flood control channel in Goss Canyon should have been cleaned out after the last flash flood, but wasn't.

Over at the top of Ocean View Boulevard, Joy Ingelson's house had been hard-hit at 2101 Earnslow. The house backs up to the mountain and a flood-control basin at the mouth of the canyon.

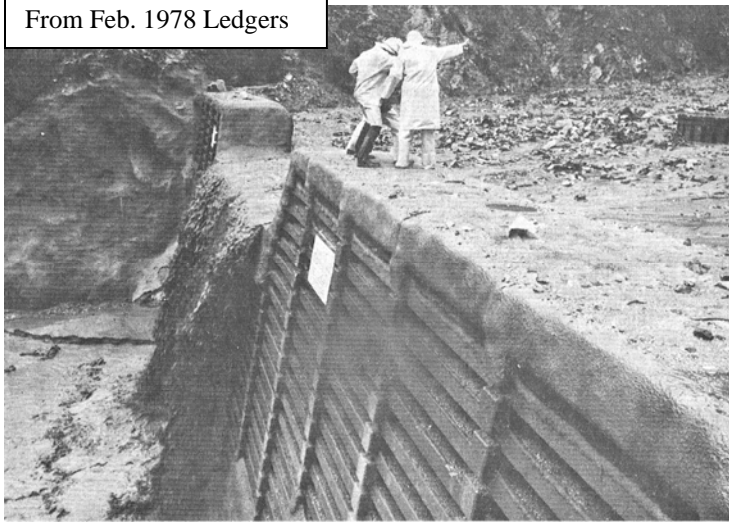
Her house had been inundated with mud and water. Her three young sons were helping her as were neighbors. "I don't know what we are going to do now," she said, holding her bandaged arm on which she had had surgery the day before. "I'm divorced and had the house up for sale—now what do we have," she said.

Up on Derwood, Bill and Robin Geer's home had been hit with flooding waters and muck for the third time in 11 years. He said new flood control equipment hadn't seemed to help much.

His pool was completely filled with only the ladder visible. Eight inches of water and mud stood in the house and all landscaping had disappeared. Friends were sandbagging the canyon, fearful of additional rain.

Other streets that carried mud on Friday morning were Dunsmore and Lowell with some driveways and yards holding debris on the low side of the streets.

Some homes on El Lado in Whiting Woods had mud in their pools and backyards as did those on Valane in Oakmont Woods.

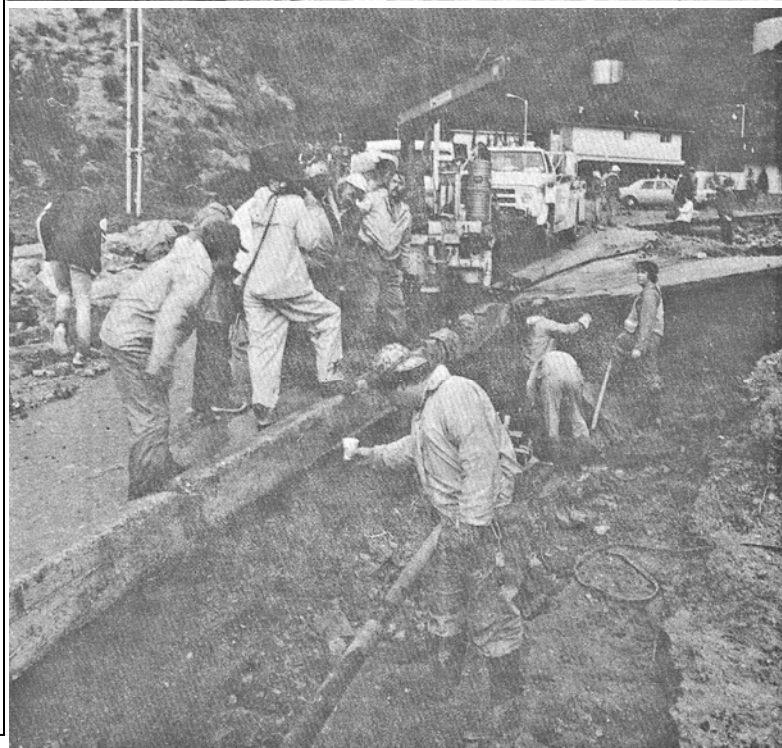


Shields Basin Filled Again—Los Angeles Flood Control will be hauling mud and debris out of the Shields Basin again, as heavy rains Saturday left crews no alternative but to stand back and hope a repeat of the Feb. 10 disaster did not occur.

A Massive Cleanup Operation was underway Friday morning following a night of flooding after heavy rains. The water washed mud, huge boulders and sand down Pine Cone Road, south of Shields Debris Basin in La Crescenta. Despite the damage, there were no injuries reported there.

Two Leaking Gas Mains were the object of concern for officials following the devastating flood overflow from Shields Canyon Debris Basin at 1:30 a.m. Friday morning. But gas company workers repaired the leaks by Friday afternoon. The gas main is on the upper portion of Pine Cone. In the background is Shields Canyon, from which the flood originated.

Rains, Flooding Leaves Many Residents Wading in Muck—The effect of three inches of rainfall in an eight-hour period is reflected in the destruction to property and the faces of these victims. The rumble of boulders caught in the current wakened residents of the foothill area early Friday morning in time to see their homes and property ruined. Pine Cone Road and adjacent streets were hardest hit by the coursing water. Several autos were destroyed by the racing waters and foundations in some homes were undermined. County Firemen, other authorities, and volunteers were digging out homes and autos past dawn while bulldozers were loading huge dump trucks with silt and mud.



Nearly 300 Seek Refuge at CV High Evacuation Center

By BEVERLY PLACE
Staff Writer

Crescenta Valley High School's boy's gym became the evacuation center for about 100 families, mostly from the Pinecrest area of upper La Crescenta, after a gas main was undermined by flood waters on Pine Cone Road about 2:30 a.m.

As gas spewed into the air, the residents said they were told to evacuate the area by loudspeakers on patrolling Sheriff's cars.

The Glendale-Crescenta Valley Chapter of the American Red Cross was alerted at 3 p.m. to open the evacuation center. Principal Bill Thomas was there to open the doors.

And the Red Cross volunteers were there in force—Bob Mockabee, the chapter director; Pauline Burke, R.N., and three other nurses; shelter managers Don Smith and Bob Guay; F. Burr Abner was registering the evacuees as they streamed in—and many more.

Some 274 people were housed in the gym during the night. Countless pets were tied to railings outside the entrance.

Lisa Tuellar and her mother had flown down from Utah Thursday night. She was to be a contestant in the Miss U.S.A. Drill Team competition Friday in Santa Monica. But she didn't make it.

They were guests of Sally Harrick, who lives on Ridgepine, and they were all evacuated. Sally's husband, Jim Harrick, is an assistant basketball coach at UCLA and was in San Francisco for the Bruin-Bay Area games this weekend.

Peggy McCall had filled her Datsun with Mrs. Harrick and family and guests, 10 in all, plus two dogs, to bring them down to the evacuation center.

A lot of people like Frank and Marta Izo of Hopeton, with Jeff, 2, in his sleepers; Mr. and Mrs. Michael Meinardus of Starfall Drive; Dottie Shephard; Leslie Garland, also of Hopeton, really didn't know how much damage the mud, rocks and swiftly moving water might have done to their homes.

They told the Richard Lowes at the corner of Pine Cone and Hopeton who had a huge boulder go through the window of the bedroom where their two sons were sleeping. All got out safely.

They told of the power going off at about 2 a.m., and that it was difficult to find a way out of the area with so many streets impassable.

Peter and Virginia Adomopoulos were there with their family. He said, "I live on Hopeton, I hope that means my house will be there when we go back."

At about 8 a.m., Sheriff's Sgt. Jim Vandepas came into the gym, water streaming from his yellow slicker. He tried to explain to the evacuees what had happened and was happening. He said the evacuation of the whole area was because of the gas main leak.

He said the flash flood had been caused by the debris basin filling at the top of Pine Cone Road, forcing water, mud and debris over the top. He said the water had now subsided, the dam was okay and the gas leak fixed.

"You are free to go back to your homes now, but you may have to re-evacuate if we get more heavy rain," the Sergeant warned. He also said it may be difficult to get back to homes until the roads are cleared.

As Vandepas turned to leave, another deputy came up to give him a message. "Hey, everyone, wait a minute," he said. "You should not go home yet as the county engineer wants to check the dam to be sure it's completely safe."

But by then most people started getting their belongings from the gym floor and started filtering out.

Bill and Margaret Hall lingered a while—almost as if they were afraid to know what might have happened to their home at 5438 Pine Cone Road.

Margaret was walking around, furiously knitting on a red afghan. She said three of their cars had washed down Pine Cone and were now in the Bob Genofiles—their home on Markridge at the foot of Pine Cone took the brunt of the flood. Everyone was concerned about them and their safety.

And all the while in the gym, as the evacuees stood in small groups comparing experiences, there was the thud, thud, thud of bar bells dropping to the floor from the weight room next door, where CVHS gymnasts were working out.

The floor shook underfoot and made on think of the earthquake—another disaster that had hit the area seven years previously—to the very day when the storm started Thursday night.

In Aftermath, Neighbors Search for Neighbors, Pets, Belongings

By BOB McKEE
Ledger West Bureau Chief

Neighbors looking for neighbors slogged through mud deep enough for almost anyone to be frightened of it in the cold, black night that seemed to envelope the foothills of Tujunga.

Most, not visibly shaken by what they had just survived, seemed to be seeking a link with their immediate past, a time in their lives they seemed determined to cling to in the wake of adversity.

It wasn't quite 2 a.m. and people were out and about. The glow of flashlights waving in the darkness seemed more like the glitter of distant fireflies than some battery-powered bit of genius from the 20th Century.

Nature had dealt them a devastating blow, a right hand punch below the belt that may take a lifetime to recover from.

Most had lost something personal, a cat, a car, two cars, a new lawn, a house. But personal loss wasn't a feeling they shared at that moment. They needed each other. They wanted each other. They looked for each other.

Mrs. Frank Davidson, a Wentworth Street resident of Tujunga, stood on the curb near her home and talked with friends and neighbors about what each had shared just 30 minutes earlier.

They had lived through the destruction and aftermath flooding of the Zachau Debris Basin perched at the base of Seven Hills Estates.

A 30-foot wall of water, followed by tons of mud and rocks, had passed by her home. So had the neighbor's cars and trucks.

"You could feel it, hear it roaring like high wind," she said. "I came to the front of the house and saw cars just swirling down the street outside. I just had a new lawn put in," she noted.

Stopping to think about the near-tragedy she added, "It was really terrifying. The Nash house was roof-deep in mud."

Barbara and Jim Maaske, Mrs. Davidson's neighbors, said they were both in the bedroom and didn't see anything. "But we lost tow cars according to our neighbors," he quipped.

Agnes Dixon, a resident living a block higher up the road, said that when the flood began it "roared like jets."

She said she knew she was at a high enough elevation and indicated she didn't worry about the flood. But she did think about

(continued...)

Storm Clouds Seeded Prior to Flood

By DAVE LINDORFF

(continued...)

her stranded neighbors enough to slosh through the foot-deep goo armed only with an umbrella and a flashlight.

Mrs. Dixon said the earth rumbled for about a half-hour and at least 12 cars "slushed down the street in the water and debris."

She concluded it was funniest noise she'd ever heard and she commented that the sky to the east was red. "I don't know why," she added as she headed back up the steep driveway to her home and comfort.

Mrs. Fred Nash, being helped by Bruce Kemp and other friends, may have suffered the most as a result of the storm.

Her home was indeed "roof high" in mud at the height of the storm. She said she awoke to discover dead-bolt locks recently installed because of past burglaries wouldn't allow her to leave.

She said she struggled to find another way out and the two of them finally made it through the upper portion of a dutch-door in the kitchen.

Mrs. Nash said after getting to the backyard her husband collapsed and was taken to a neighbor's home for rest. He had suffered a recent heart attack, she added.

Once to safety, Mrs. Nash said she thought of her mother alone in the house next door. Her mother was okay, her kids were called and they were told everything was all right, and the heartache began to set in.

Bill Nohles, Sue Carey and Crissie Nohles, all in their late teens or early 20s, huddled together at the side of Sunland Boulevard just west of Fenwick Street in Sunland.

The storm had knocked out four trees in Bill's yard a little farther down the road. Even a heavy-duty mailbox was a storm statistic.

All wondered what was exploding in front of their houses. Going to the street they saw a stalled Cadillac and its driver desperately trying to start it. Another bang. It wasn't going to start.

A little farther down the road near Johanna Avenue in Shadow Hills, LAPD Officers Bill Figueroa and Orlando Rothermund stood near their washed out black and white.

"We saw a wall of water on our right," said Figueroa, "and we tried to get out of the way but couldn't." The mud was about three feet deep, he added, and he tried to free the car from the front until he saw the pavement disappearing.

He got back in the car and waited for a tow truck. "I've never seen anything like it in my life," he said. "Just tell the Captain I didn't wreck the car. It was an act of God."

The county of Los Angeles has been "seeding" storm clouds to increase rainfall for the past several weeks, right up to the eve of last Thursday's disastrous storm, which left at least 11 dead.

Officials of the county Flood Control District, the agency which has managed the operation, confirmed Monday that storm clouds were seeded with silver iodide—a rain inducing chemical—on eight separate occasions, beginning Jan. 14, in an effort to increase rainfall by more than 10 percent.

Seeding operations continued, even after officials of the State Department of Water Resources declared the drought to be officially over on Jan. 16.

The most recent cloud-seeding effort took place for six hours on Feb. 9, the day the most serious storm began, which dumped 3.53 inches of rain throughout much of the county, causing tens of millions of dollars of damage.

According to Arthur E. Bruington, chief engineer of the Flood Control District, the cloud-seeding operation has been limited to a 200 square mile area of the San Gabriel Mountains above the San Gabriel Dam.

However, an official with the State Department of Water Resources, cast doubt on the ability of rain makers to isolate the effects of their actions.

Bill Clark, spokesman for the department's drought center (now known as the flood control center) reported Monday that the state had just awarded its own \$290,000 contract for a cloud-seeding project last month.

He conceded that no cloud seeding had taken place under that contract because of "heavy rains" in Northern California. Targeted areas for the seeding were near the massive Shasta and Orville Dams, and he said seeding efforts had been called off because those reservoirs were reaching the flood stage.

He added that last September a state cloud-seeding project was started and then abruptly called off, after the rain began falling in the wrong area. He said officials halted the project to avoid potential lawsuits.

Bruington said the purpose of the seeding is to increase runoff into the dam, which can then be released gradually into

spreading grounds where the water can seep into the water table.

According to Bruington, the cloud seeding which has been underway for a number of years has increased rainfall in the San Gabriel Canyon watershed "by about 10 percent on an annual basis." He added, "We haven't been doing any seeding since the situation got out of hand."

Flood Control officials claim the seeding is isolated geographically. One spokesman, Hank Martin, said, "The only area we impact is the San Gabriel Dam. We have them (the rain-making machines) set to avoid the foothills and the western end of the mountains."

He claimed that the chemical which is produced by burning silver iodide in special "black boxes" so that the chemical is raised into the cloud layer on mountain updrafts, "is only effective for about an hour after we stop running the machines."

He added, however, that knowledge of the effects of cloud seeding is still limited. "I'm not sure what the effect is on a given storm," he said. "There are so many factors involved, I don't think anybody knows."

Feb. 9, the last day of county cloud seeding, storm winds were reportedly blowing at hurricane force. Oscar Nichols, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service, said Monday, "Silver iodide dispersion would presumably follow the wind until it dissolves or falls as rain."

He noted that the San Gabriel Canyon watershed is adjacent to the Tujunga Canyon watershed where recent flood damage was most severe. Asked whether the cloud seeding could have increased rainfall over the Tujunga area, he said, "I couldn't say. It's interesting, but you'd need more information."

During a tour of flood damage in the Tujunga wash area Monday by Bruington and County Supervisor Kenneth Hahn, the flood control engineer acknowledged that rainfall in the area had been unusually high.

Hahn, an outspoken opponent of county rain-making efforts, voted against the current Flood Control District contract with the Palm Springs firm Krick and Associates. That contract was approved in early January on a second vote, after first being defeated.

"It's just voodoo," Hahn said Monday during his tour of the Tujunga flood damage. "It's all mystics. They (rainmakers in general) take all the credit when it works and ignore it when it doesn't."

Massive Clean Up Effort Continues

By LOREN LEDIN
Staff Writer

Beleaguered Southern Californians continued Thursday to shake off what may have been the most destructive storm ever to strike the Southland.

Residents in four Southern California counties—Los Angeles, Ventura, Riverside and Orange—dug out homes, streets and cars from the mud, rocks and debris that was loosened by the nearly four inches of rain that inundated Southern And Central California Thursday and Friday.

In the Foothills, clear skies brought respite to a region battered by death and damage from Lowell Avenue in Tujunga to the mountains above La Canada Flintridge.

The search continues yesterday in the mud-clogged Angeles National Forest for 10 persons swept away by flood waters Friday from their homes in the Hidden Springs community above La Canada. The body of a 34-year-old Glendale College instructor, Bonnie Koploy, was discovered in Big Tujunga Sunday.

In La Crescenta, County Flood Control workers succeeded in clearing the Shields Debris Basin to one quarter capacity, officials reported. It had been the Shields Basin that overflowed early Friday morning and sent a wall of water, mud and boulders down Pine Cone Road.

In the wake of flooding disasters, Gov. Edmund G. Brown Jr. declared a state of emergency Monday in the counties of Los Angeles, Ventura, Orange, Riverside, Santa Barbara, Kern, and Tulare where preliminary estimates placed the damage at \$54 million. The action freed low-interest loans for the repair of public works.

The bulk of the damage had occurred in Los Angeles County, where at least 125 homes sustained heavy damage in last week's downpour.

Meanwhile, the National Weather Service reported that "slight showers" could displace Tuesday's sunny weather. The service reported that subsequent rainfall Sunday and Monday had brought the Southland to a seasonal total of 35 inches since Jan. 1. The total approaches the record year of 1969 when 38.6 inches fell, the most since 1915.

The Sheriff's Department released the names of 10 persons missing since their homes were washed away in Hidden Springs Friday. They are: Lela Drake,

Gabe Hinterberg, Fred Hinterberg, George Scribner, Deloris Smith, Liza Smith, Amy Smith, Jamie Mixon, Bronwyn Mixon, and Bill Hodges.

Missing in the Big Tujunga area were Ruth Cordrey and Leland F. vonWogan.

At the same time, a Sheriff's spokesman could only list as "presently uncalculable" the amount of damage suffered by homes in foothill neighborhoods. Reports are at least 15 homes incurred extensive damage in Sunland and Tujunga. At least 40 homes will require a major cleanup.

The Riverhood Ranch housing complex in the mountains west of Sunland remained cut off by the Big Tujunga River. Big Tujunga Canyon Road was expected to be closed for at least one year, the County Road Department reported.

La Tuna Canyon Road is expected to be shut down for at least two weeks.

Capt. Tony Skultety of the Los Angeles County Fire Department in La Crescenta estimated that 12 homes in the neighborhood ravaged by the Shields Debris Basin runoff will require major cleanup. He said from 3 to 5 homes were damaged extensively.

However, home owners in the area said that as many as 30 homes suffered key damage. At least two homes along the Pickens Canyon Debris Basin were damaged severely in last week's storm.

Skultety said that water and electricity had been restored to all occupied homes in the La Crescenta area. He said ample fire protection also was available in the event of an emergency.

Residents in the Pinecrest region, urged to evacuate their homes during Sunday's rainfall, were cheered by news that the debris level in Shields Debris Basin had been substantially reduced.

Bill Hardy of the County Flood Control District said the basin, which had received "primary attention" in cleanup procedures was cleared to less than one fourth full by Tuesday morning.

"It is ready for the next rainfall," he said. "It looks pretty good."

The County Flood Control District has run up a \$5 million bill in removing debris from the latest storm, one source said.

Henry Acosta, superintendent for the Flood Control District in the La Crescenta cleanup, said other debris basins remain in good condition.

"There has been some erosion to the check dams in the Pickens Canyon Debris Basin but there is no concern at this time," said Acosta.

Acosta said county crews numbering 150 employees have been working around the clock since Saturday to clear drains, basins and streets.

"We are in good shape to handle everything we have to do now," he said. "But, we hope nothing else comes up."

Gov. Brown's declaration of a state of emergency freed low-interest loans for public works projects in the seven-county disaster area. But Brown has received no response yet to his request to President Carter that loans be made available at special prices to homeowners.

State Senator Newt Russell (R-Glendale) and Robert Pratt, administrative assistant to Supervisor Baxter Ward, said state and county government was virtually powerless to aid homeowners.

"There is not much we can do," said Pratt. "The whole thing is to have the area declared a Federal disaster area so that the government can step in and provide loans."

He added: "We really can't go in and clean the houses." Said Russell, "Basically, all the state can do is go in and provide a conduit for the press to provide information to the public."

Dick Lowe, 2902 Hopeton Road in La Crescenta, said fellow residents in the Pinecrest area have been unable to get in contact with county agencies on what to do about flood damage.

Pratt said a meeting, Wednesday at 7:30 p.m. at Monte Vista Elementary School, 2620 Orange Ave. in La Crescenta, would answer questions.

Present will be Pratt, and representatives from the county road department, disaster department, flood control district and the district attorney's office.

"Most of the questions from homeowners is 'what do we do now?'" said Pratt. "We will be there to answer that."



BONNIE KOPLOY
...memorialized

College Teacher Dies in Big Tujunga Flood

The body of Bonnie Koploy, 34, chairman of the Biology Division at Glendale Community College, was found Sunday at Delta Flats, two miles downstream from where she slipped and fell into Big Tujunga Creek Friday.

Rites for Miss Koploy will be held Friday, 11 a.m. at Oakdale Memorial Park, 1401 S. Grand, Glendora. Visitation hours have been set for 6-9 p.m. Thursday.

A memorial in the prominent biologist's name has been established by the local Small Wilderness Area Preservation (SWAP) chapter. Donations may be sent to SWAP.

Miss Koploy made a strong presentation before both the Glendale Planning Commission and City Council last year as a representative of SWAP, pleading for preservation of open space in the Verdugo and San Rafael mountains.

She spoke on the flora and fauna of the area and said that many special plants, animals and birds indigent to the area would be lost with further development in the area.

On Friday, Miss Koploy with Pearl Dieble, both of Sunland, decided to hike in to a cabin in the Vogel Flats area of upper Big Tujunga Canyon. Miss Dieble had already crossed the stream once and then

returned to the other side to carry across more supplies. Several people had crossed the stream which by then had subsided considerably, Miss Dieble said.

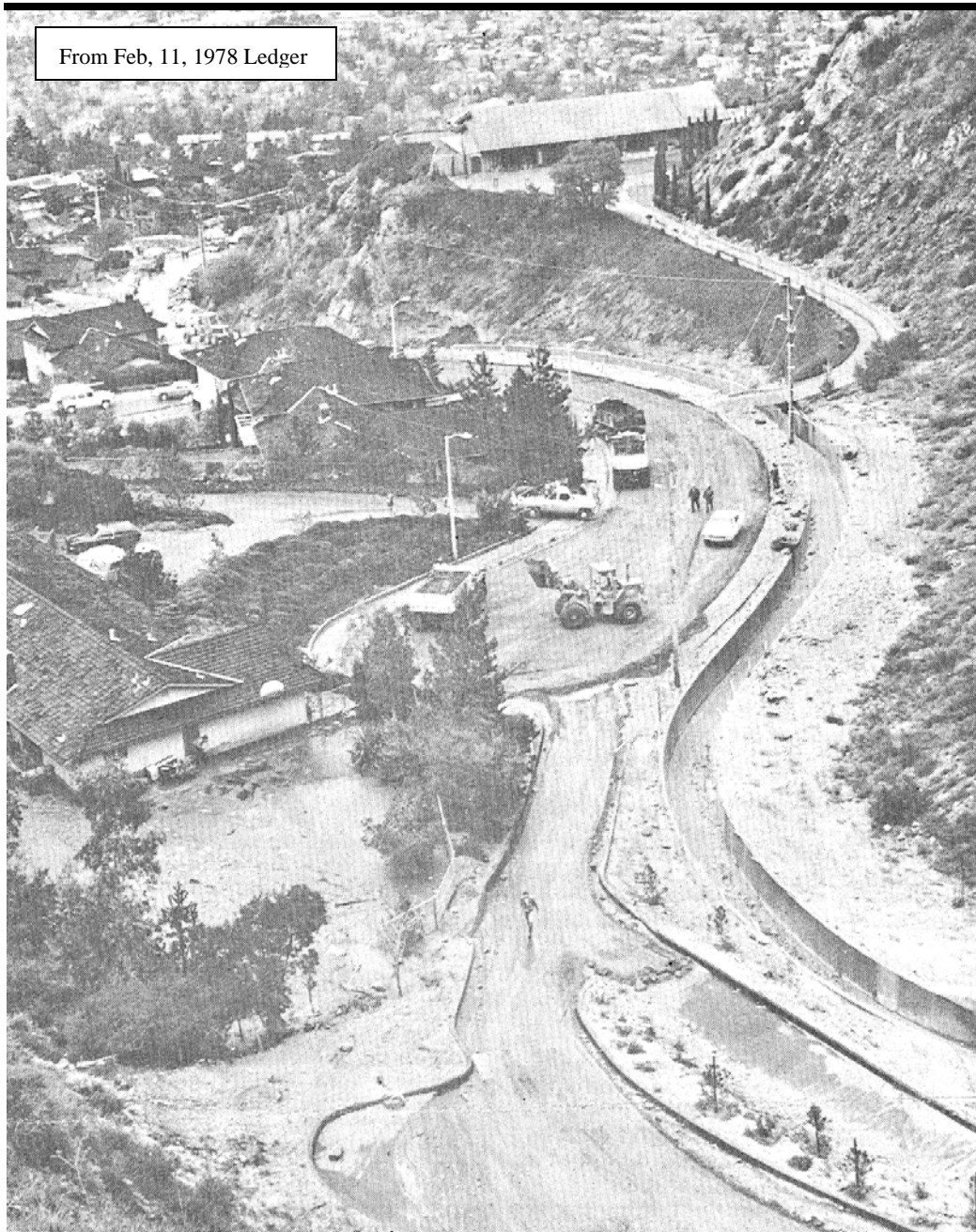
Somehow Miss Koploy lost her footing and both were swept downstream. Miss Dieble managed to hold on to a bush in the stream and was rescued two hours later. Miss Dieble said they were not crossing a bridge nor was there a sudden rush of water. "It was just simply an accident."

Miss Koploy was a native of Minnesota and had both bachelor and master's degrees from CSU Los Angeles in zoology, geology and biology.

She joined the Glendale College faculty in 1970. She had been on a sabbatical leave this school year on a research project with Dr. Paul Martin, in the Laboratory of Paleoenvironmental Studies at the University of Arizona. She was planning to continue her studies at UCLA toward a doctorate. Her special field of study was the eco-systems of the Southwest with emphasis on the fragile environment of the desert.

A CSI professor had written about Miss Koploy: "She was the most broadly-trained biology student in ecology and environmental problems I have known."

From Feb. 11, 1978 Ledger



From a hillside of Shields Canyon this shows mud and debris overflowed the dam at the mouth of the canyon, boulders filled the channel to the right, forcing a flash flood down Pine Cone Road. Homes all along here received damage, swimming pools were filled, parked cars were carried down to Markridge Road—all attesting to the strength of the flow. Water and power were still out of service in half of Pinecrest last night.



Historical Society of the Crescenta Valley
c/o 2717 Altura Ave.
La Crescenta, CA 91214

Historical Society of the Crescenta Valley

Presents:

The Pinecrest Flood of 1978

Monday, October 19th, 7:00 PM

At the **Center for Spiritual Living**

(Formerly known as the La Crescenta Church of Religious Science)
Located on the corner of Dunsmore and Santa Carlotta

Plus...
Ghost Stories!
Movie in the Park!
(see inside)

Plus...
**Tour of Historic
Alex Theater!**
(see inside)

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We're always interested...

We love to hear your recollections about Crescenta Valley from times past. Share your stories with us, please! Let us share your memories with our members.

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Some of the Pinecrest flood damage.
Photo-Danette Erickson

Travel back in time to...1978

Our October Newsletter will
feature articles and ads from
1978 Ledgers

(beginning with page 5)