

The Baldy Eagle

November//December 2003

The Newsletter of the Mt Baldy Group, Angeles Chapter
Sierra Club, PO Box 906, Claremont CA 91711

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Visit our webpage: <http://angeles.sierraclub.org/mtbaldy/>

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SIERRA CLUB
CALIFORNIA

In December we are dark. Happy Holidays. See you on January 27, 2004!

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 2003

7:30 pm, Harvey Mudd College *Fourth Tuesday*
Jacobs Classroom B-134

The Speed of Light from Mt Wilson to Lookout Mountain

In the years between 1922 and 1926, Albert Michelson measured the speed of light with far more accuracy than had ever been done before. Light flashed from Mt Wilson nearly 22 miles to Lookout Mountain where a mirror reflected the light back to Mt Wilson. Michelson was able to measure the time that elapsed from the moment the light left Mt Wilson to the instant that it returned. But this would not tell the speed of light unless one knew very accurately the distance between the source of light on Mt Wilson, and the mirror that reflected it on Lookout Mountain.

The distance was measured by the US Coast and Geodetic Survey with remarkable accuracy — a probable error for the nearly 22 mile distance of less than one inch. Many *Baseline Roads* along the foothills of the San Gabriels were named because they provided the baseline for the survey.

MICHAEL KEENAN amateur astronomer, is trying to get official recognition of the site on Lookout Mountain where this experiment took place. He will give us an illustrated talk on November 25.

Use the parking lot entered from Foothill Blvd, east of the traffic signal at Dartmouth Avenue. Jacobs B-134 is in the basement of the catacombs below the HMC Science Buildings which are located at the northwest corner of the Harvey Mudd campus. Enter on the west side of the patio through the center door on the campus side of the Olin Building. Go downstairs, turn right at the bottom of the stairs, go to end of corridor and turn left. B-134 is a long way down the corridor on the right.

For people with disabilities, an elevator is available on the first floor of the Olin Building. Turn left away from the stairs. Go down to the basement in the elevator, turn left, and left again, and right, then left again at the end of the corridor. Again, B-134 is located a long way down this corridor on the right.

This Month, the Baldy Eagle Is Mailed to All Our Members

Ordinarily, the *Baldy Eagle* is distributed on a subscription basis. But once a year we send it out to all our members. There are two important reasons to do this: (1) to distribute the ballots for our group elections, and (2) to solicit subscriptions for our Group's newsletter.

Please use the enclosed ballot to vote for the members of our Group's Management Committee. **(We apologize to any of our members who have asked that we send them no mailings. Sierra Club regulations require us to send a ballot to every one of our members.)** Return your ballot to our Post Office box by Monday, December 1. The ballot determines who will be on the Management Committee in 2004.

Next year, we hope that your name will be on our ballot. In the meantime, there are many opportunities for environmental and political action, outdoor activities, and contributions to the Group. We have a public meeting on the fourth Tuesday of every month (except August and December). We welcome you on the second Tuesday of each odd numbered month to prepare the *Baldy Eagle* for the post office. Call 909-621-7148 for more information.

The newsletter, the *Baldy Eagle*, and our website (<http://angeles.sierraclub.org/mtbaldy/>) are the glue that holds the Mt Baldy Group together. They are our only way to reach our members. We wish we could mail it out regularly to every one, but we don't have the money to do this. We must depend on subscriptions and donations from our members to support the Group and its newsletter.

When you subscribe, you will receive up to date news of coming activities of the Group, including area outings, as well as articles about past trips, local and environmental news and issues. The subscription is \$10 a year (6 issues) — additional donations are always very welcome.

I hope to see you at future meetings and outings.
Robin Ives, Chair

***Mt Baldy Group recycles aluminum cans.
Bring them to the meeting.
Support our Group!***

Sheep's Clothing

by Bill Berkowitz, a long time political observer and columnist

For folks who think that groups like the Sierra Club have too much influence over environmental policy and that President George W. Bush is getting a bad rap on his environmental record, a new organization has emerged to set the record straight. This new group may sound green, but don't be fooled by their "sensible" anti-environmentalism

Partnership for the West (PFTW) was formally unveiled on the Capitol steps in late October, and aims to exercise growing influence over green legislation in Washington. The group plans to work on "restoring a common sense balance to economic growth and conservation in the West" — sounds nice, until you see who's behind it. Claiming to be a grassroots lobby group, PFTW actually represents a kinder, gentler and more politically savvy brand of anti-environmentalism. And as such, we can look forward to PFTW and its corporate backers to be pushing for a "balance" that may weight short-term bank accounts more heavily than long-term environmental impacts.

The new organization wants to provide "a counterbalance to what it views as a disproportionate influence of environmental groups like the Sierra Club," according to Donna Kemp Spangler of the Utah-based *Deseret Morning News*. They'll do this by lobbying in Congress and "pushing an agenda of increased access to public lands for recreation and oil and gas development." The group's members number over a hundred, and include large interests in fossil fuel, logging and mining industries. PFTW eventually hopes to attract 100,000 members and raise \$5 million for lobbying Congress.

Partnership for the West grew out of a summit in Denver, Colorado, attended by elected officials, corporate representatives and long-standing anti-environmental organizations like the American Land Rights Association, the Blue Ribbon Coalition, the Mountain States Legal Foundation, and People for the USA. Its president, Jim Sims, is the former communications director for the National Energy Policy Task Force — also known as Cheney's secret panel — and helped craft the administration's energy policy. Sims wears other hats, too: he heads the Western Business Roundtable, a trade association comprising western CEOs and business execs, and sits on the board for the Center for the New American Century, a Denver think tank supporting various right-wing causes including reforming the endangered species act.

Sims doesn't try to hide his scorn for green activists. "While they are small in number, these [radical environmentalist] fringe groups are well-funded, operate in sophisticated networks, and are solely dedicated to producing conflict and delay," he told *Heartland Institute's Environment & Climate News* recently. And speaking for the WBR, he commented to *The Denver Post* that "environmental extremists" are dead set against common-sense efforts at better government. Sims accused "the radical enviro crowd" of trying to "gum up the works as much as possible."

PFTW may tout itself as a new group, but the same four people — Sims and three colleagues — also run WBR as well

as Policy Communications, a well-established and well-connected public relations firm with offices in Colorado and Washington, D.C. Policy Communications boasts a strong history of developing regulatory policies and lobbying aggressively for their clients. And that client list reads like a who's who of the extraction industry including corporations like Western Gas Resources, Forest Oil, Prima Energy, Xcel Energy, Inc, Pfizer, Inc, The Dow Chemical Company and Unocal.

For a quick look at what may be in store from PFTW, we can turn to Policy Communications' recent PR campaign, called Take Pride in America. A loose affiliation of groups representing the interests of motorized recreation lobbied to replace paid employees with 'volunteers' who could construct projects on public lands. Scott Silver, who heads the environmental group Wild Wilderness, called it "a classic example of a 'privatization through volunteerism' campaign" pushed hard by Interior Secretary Gale Norton and President Bush. It represents a win-win-win situation for the administration, he said: Federal employees are eliminated; control of public lands is shifted to special interests; and third, wild lands will be so heavily impacted that protection will seem pointless, and they can become a source of revenue for logging, mining, grazing and energy extraction.

Although PFTW itself hasn't announced the specifics of its agenda, Sims says the group has already set public policy goals. Not surprisingly, these outline the same basic approach as its sister organizations, such as the continuation of the multiple-use of public lands, continued energy development in the West and regulatory reform, specifically focusing on the Endangered Species Act and National Environmental Policy Act.

Silver thinks this "grassroots" effort smells a lot more like well-groomed astro-turf. "These people are paid lobbyists and public relations consultants serving the needs of every imaginable sort of polluter, developer, resource extractor or despoiler of the environment," he says. Silver and other environmentalists say wealthy industry-sponsored groups like PFTW are co-opting buzzwords like "collaborative partnerships" and "sensible growth" to counter green voices and promote destructive, but lucrative, practices.

Certainly economic growth is important, and everyone would like to see growth managed in an environmentally responsible way. But Partnership for the West, whose message reads more like the decades-old playbooks of right-wing think tanks like the Heritage Foundation and the American Enterprise Institute, is hardly as environmentally dedicated as it claims. But that doesn't mean it can't sell its product: its agenda is already being repackaged by the professional spinmeisters (like PFTW staff itself) at Policy Communications. We can only hope the spin and the money won't create a winning formula for the twenty-first century anti-environmental movement.

For more information, contact
<http://www.tompaine.com/feature2.cfm/ID/9286>

Fires Trump Urban Sprawl

by Joe Rodriguez, *San Jose Mercury News*, October 30, 2003

We were flying at 10,000 feet, approaching the San Bernardino mountains, when a huge plume of smoke appeared on the right side of the airliner. The pilot steered the plane around the smoky thunderhead, giving us a spectacular view of nature's fury and man's malevolence. "They say an arsonist started this fire," the woman in the seat in front of me said. Yes, that was the official suspicion, a madman who probably knew he needed only one match to unleash hell in the dry, windy season of the Santa Ana winds.

"That's where I'm staying this weekend, right over there, in Rancho Cucamonga," said the man in the seat next to mine. Cucamonga, the suburb with the sing-song name that rockers Frank Zappa and the Grateful Dead and swing bands of the 1940s put to music, was covered in ashes. Seconds later we could smell smoke in the cabin. The plane began to shake. Scientists say that big fires create their own weather. I guess that includes turbulence.

By Monday morning, 10 fires from northern Los Angeles to San Diego had burned about 277,000 acres, destroyed 850 homes and killed 13 people. We shouldn't blame arsonists for most of them.

Autumn wildfires in California, like Midwestern floods in spring, happen like clockwork. October comes around and the west wind reverses itself. The deserts in and around the Great Basin in Nevada send their boiling air toward the Pacific Ocean and through lands where it hasn't rained for months. We call them Santa Ana winds, after the Southern California town made famous by them. The fires in Southern California reminded me of the urban wildfire in 1991 that killed 25 people and destroyed 3,000 homes in the overdeveloped hills above Oakland and Berkeley. San Jose, where I live, and some other Bay Area cities have restricted hillside development for other reasons—landslides, earthquakes and to provide open space—with another happy result in that we have less firefighting to do. That's not the case in Southern California, where the steep terrain has been increasingly opened to the development of condos, luxury apartments and monster houses.

Why buy in the flats when you can have your dream house, ultimate privacy, a wonderful view and a new freeway down below? And just in case something goes wrong, as the real estate guy said, a fire truck or paramedic van can reach you in no time. If only that were true.

While local officials and developers were subdividing the hills and mountains, California voters were slaughtering the tax base that helps fund firefighting and rescue efforts. Only 7,000 firefighters were available for the current fire in Southern California. By Monday, officials were asking for 6,000 more from out of state.

Urban sprawl has met the Santa Ana. The wind usually prevails. I was lucky to find a flight home. The fires had closed the airport for several hours, forcing the cancellation or delay of dozens of flights to and from Southern California. One frustrated

passenger waiting for a flight at San Jose's airport asked a newspaper reporter: "How can this break down so badly, with all the technology?"

The answer is obvious: Technology hasn't invented an airliner that can fly safely through fire and smoke, and technology can't reverse the wind or save us from our own stupidity.

jrodriguez@mercurynews.com. Copyright 2003

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Henil (Heh-neel) — Goldenbush

A California explosion from March to January

by Mark F. Acuña

Henil, used primarily as a medicinal plant, covers southern California from Spring to Winter in shrubs of golden blossoms. The first to open is *Haplopappus* (or *Ericameria*) *linearifolius* blooming from March to May painting the Santa Monicas a deep yellow. *Pinifolius* joins the golden mass in April and again in September, finally fading out in January. *Parishii* can be found in the southern slopes of the San Gabriels from July to October, and *Haplopappus* (*Ericameria*) *palmeri* joins the parade from August to December. So this stout erect shrub does more than just about any other shrub to bring color and vibrancy to the Los Angeles basin Chaparral, woodland, and foothill areas. In one species or another Goldenbush can be found from March to January.

The Tongva, and the Chumash and Cahuilla as well followed the golden trail in and out of Chaparral, dry slopes, Creosote Bush Scrub, Pinyon-Juniper Woodlands, Oak Woodlands, and even Catalina Island (known to the Tongva as Pimu). And what medicinal treasure this yellow shrub brought.

The roots of all the Los Angeles basin Henil were boiled into a thick brew for colds. An infusion of flowers, twigs, and leaves was also made for diarrhea and a mild version for simple stomach troubles. And for those suffering from sore throats in late Autumn and through Winter, the leaves were soaked in hot water (not boiled or brewed for drinking) and the wonderful vapors were inhaled for an almost instant relief. Steamed leaves were also inhaled for severe headaches.

The leaves were also tied on feet and arms and hot stones were then pressed into the leaves to relieve swelling and pain. To prevent infection of cuts, a wash of Henil leaves was applied as well as hot stones being pressed into the leaves plastered on cuts.

The seeds were collected and added to the "pinole" mixture, that ubiquitous seed cake made from countless flowers.

So are the wonders of simple but powerful Henil, known to the botanical world as *Haplopappus* (or *Ericameria* depending on your source) in the sunflower family. The golden bush of our Chaparral.

Here is the statement the Sierra Club posted on its website (10/30/03 1:51 pm). Feel free to circulate. Please let us know of media inquiries and clips. Contact: Annie Strickler, (202) 675-2384 or <Annie.Strickler@sierraclub.org>

Sierra Club Statement on Southern California Wildfires



The Sierra Club expresses deep concern and sympathy for the families who have lost loved ones and who have been put in harm's way by the recent fires in Southern California and to the firefighters courageously working to protect homes and lives.

In the wake of this tragedy, there have been some people willing to place blame on environmental groups. There is no need to sensationalize this tragedy for political gain. Americans deserve better. The Sierra Club has long supported responsible fuel reduction around communities and fully supports any wildfire policy that makes community protection its top priority.

Experts agree that focusing on the area immediately around homes should be the first priority of any wildfire legislation, and the situation so many are facing in California today reinforces this need. The Senate has approved legislation, based on the Bush Administration's "Healthy Forests Initiative" that falls short of this goal by failing to guarantee resources will be directed to the removal of small trees around homes and instead allows more logging far in the back-country.

The Administration's bill and current Senate legislation would not improve the situation in Southern California. The legislation does not address fire prevention on non-federal land, which is where most of these fires are burning. In addition, the landscape in Southern California is primarily covered by chaparral and other types of brush and grass while the President's proposal and pending legislation in Congress focuses on areas with valuable timber. In this case, the desire by the Bush administration and others in Congress to protect special timber interests is compromising America's ability to deliver real relief to communities in need.

Finally, neither the Senate bill nor the House bill provides the level of resources needed for communities with high fire risk in California and across the West. Simply put, the pot of money is too small and no reallocation funds will fix that. In some of the areas in Southern California, local residents and local government officials have been asking for financial assistance yet have never received enough to protect their communities adequately. California's 17 national forests have to split a mere \$46 million in annual fuel-reduction funds, a fraction of what is needed.

There is a better way. We can all agree that removing brush and small trees immediately around homes and communities will help save homes and lives, and we must dedicate the resources need to do this most important work first. Firewise and Forest Service experts have shown that this can be accomplished. Now the Congress and the Bush Administration need the will to protect communities, not the timber industry.

Regarding claims that conservation groups are responsible for the current wildfires:

National Forests:

Los Padres, Cleveland, Angeles, and San Bernardino.

There were NO appeals on any fuels projects for the last three years (through 2000). There was one appeal on the San Bernardino National Forest in 1999, the Bee Fire Salvage, which was appealed by Forest Guardians and San Bernardino Mountains. Group.

This was the only appeal for all years listed (1997-2003) and this appeal was for a post-fire salvage, not hazardous fuels reduction. <http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/projects/index.shtml>

According to an October 24 General Accounting Office report (GAO-04-02):

Ninety-seven percent of the 818 fuel reduction projects proposed by the Forest Service during FY 2001 and 2002 went forward without litigation. The study also revealed that 95 percent of these 818 fuel reduction projects were ready for implementation within the standard 90-day public review period.

Wilderness Travel Course (WTC)

The Angeles Chapter conducts an annual Wilderness Travel Course to teach trip participants the basic skills needed to safely enjoy backcountry travel. The course starts in January, and includes ten evening sessions (physical conditioning, equipment, navigation with map and compass, travel over rock and snow, mountaineering medicine, food planning and preparation, and winter camping) and four outings culminating in a winter backpack/snow camp. Details and enrollment information are announced in the WTC application brochure available in local mountaineering stores or by sending a business size self-addressed stamped envelope to WTC registrar,
K C Reid
259 Shawan Ln
La Habra Heights CA 90631.

Consult their website at
www.angeles.sierraclub.org/wtc



SIERRA CLUB ACTIVITIES

Mt Baldy Group, PO Box 906, Claremont 91711 — 909-621-7148; fax 909-624-7983, email: ivesico@earthlink.net
Email Eagle news to <avtrix@earthlink.net>

The general public is welcome on almost all outings, Sierra Club membership not required, but is certainly encouraged. See Angeles Chapter Schedule of Activities for more activities in Los Angeles and Orange Counties. Call leader for info
mi rt = miles round trip, SASE = self-addressed, stamped (37¢) envelope
Sierra Club encourages ridesharing. Participants make their own arrangements and should reimburse driver.

'03 MT BALDY MGMT COMM *voting
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MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

7:30 pm, 264 E Green St, Claremont
Call 621-7148 for info.

2ND TUE: EAGLE MAILING

7:30 pm, 264 E Green St, Claremont
odd months: Jan, Mar, May, Jul, Sep, Nov.
Come and help!

4TH TUE: MONTHLY PROGRAM:

See pg 1, 7:30 pm (dark Aug, Dec)
Harvey Mudd College

Sat, Nov 15 Inspiration Pt. 12 mi rt, 2800' gain, moderate hike in San Gabriels front range—from top of Lake in Altadena, up old Lowe railway bed to Inspiration Point. Return via Castle Cyn. Meet 8:30 am north end of Lake Ave, Altadena. Bring lugsoles, water, lunch. Leaders: Nancy Silbermann (626-577-4050), Ginny Heringer

Sun, Dec 7 Eaton Saddle to Red Rock via West Fork: Moderate 5 mi, 1500' loss/900' gain hike down seldom-used trail through forest to San Gabriel River West Fork, up it to Red Rock. Short car shuttle. Meet 9 am on Angeles Crest Hwy (Hwy 2), just north Foothill Fwy (I-210, park on Angeles Crest Hwy). Bring water, lunch, lugsoles. Rain/heavy snow cancels. Ldrs: David Czamanske, Elizabeth Pomeroy (626-791-7660)

Sat, Dec 13 Potato Mtn: Join us for easy paced hike, 4 mi rt, 1200' gain on good road above Claremont. Meet 8 am at Pomona First Federal Bank and Trust parking lot, NE corner Indian Hill/Foothill Fwy. Exit Fwy 210 at Towne, south to Foothill, East to Indian Hill. Bring water, snack, boots, jacket. Rain cancels. Leaders: Sally Wagner, Sophie Radowick (909-626-5658).

Sat, Jan 10 Bonelli Park: Easy paced, 4-6 mi rt, 300'-600' gain hike. Meet 8 am Brackett Field Parking Lot, La Verne. From San Bernardino Fwy, (I-10), go north 1 mile on Fairplex to end, left at McKinley Ave, go to parking lot. Bring water, boots, jacket. Rain cancels. Leaders: Sally Wagner, Sophie Radowick (909-626-5658)

Sat, Jan 17 Puddingstone Hills: Morning conditioning hike, 4-6 mi rt, 300'-600' gain, easy pace. Meet 9 am Brackett Field Airport Admin Bldg parking lot, La Verne (See Jan 10). Ldrs: Marian Nichols (909-981-7619), Flora Johnson.

Sat, Jan 31 Newport Back Bay Bird Tour: Now is time of year to see the birds on 7 mi, 500' gain hike around Newport Back Bay. Visit new interpretive center after hike. Meet 8:30 am in parking lot, SW corner University and Irvine, Newport Beach. Bring water, good hiking/walking shoes, snack. Rain cancels. Ldr: Ron Schrantz (714-995-8240), Asst: Bruce Hemphill

Sun, Feb 1 Chino Hills State Park: Now is the time of year to visit this local park on an 8 mi, 1000' gain hike. We will hike from Park headquarters through the hills to see the flora and fauna. Meet 8 am, Park/Ride side Tustin Ave, just south of Lincoln Ave in Orange. Bring 2 qts water, lugsoles, lunch. Rain cancels. Leader: Ron Schrantz (714-995-8240). Asst: Bruce Hemphill

Sun, Feb 8 Chilao to Devils Cyn, San Gabriel Wilderness: 7 mi rt, 1500' loss/gain. Moderate pace, shaded steep slopes, chaparral, spruce, pine into Devils Cyn. Remember the 1500' gain on way out. No tigers. Meet 8 am at La Canada Rideshare pt (see Dec 7). Bring lug soles, water. Snow/rain cancels. Leaders: Renee Thorne 562-421-5499), Keith Bohl, Duane Gates.

Sat-Mon Feb 14-16 Camera Comm East Mojave Carcamp: Staying at scenic Mid Hills Campground, we will visit and photograph Hole-in-the-Wall, Kelso Dunes, volcanic cinder cones, Cima Dome, Joshua Tree forests, desert vistas, historic buildings. Send 2 SASE, home/work phones with \$10 payable Camera Comm to Leader: Wesley Peck, 3615 Gondar Ave, Long Beach CA 90808. Asst: Neil Davidson.

Sat, Feb 21 Echo Mtn: Join us for moderately paced, 5 mi rt, 1400' gain hike, no tigers! Meet 8 am, north end of Lake Ave, Altadena. Rain cancels. Leaders: Sally Wagner (909-860-4396), Frank Long.



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BALDY EAGLE, VOL XXXIII, No 6 — November/December 2003
 November 25, 2003 — *The Speed of Light from Mt Wilson to Lookout Mountain* - by Michael Keenan
 December, 2003 — Happy Holidays - see you January 2004

Check your expiration date below! Renew your Baldy Eagle—keep it flying to your mailbox!

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BALDY GROUP RECEIVES LITTLE OR NO FINANCIAL HELP from either the Angeles Chapter or the national Sierra Club. Though we are fortunate in having excellent volunteer help, the printer's press and the post office do not function without money!

Please renew promptly so you won't lose a single issue. Additional donations are gratefully received to further our activities, but are not tax deductible. Call 909-621-7148 for more details.