



# Hills For Everyone

Friends of the Puente-Chino Hills Wildlife Corridor

Newsletter No. 10

Winter 2004



## Communities Unite to Save Hills

By Claire Schlotterbeck

In an unprecedented spirit of co-operation, the cities of Brea, La Habra, La Habra Heights, and Whittier have allocated \$500,000 to hire the successful public relations firm of Waters & Faubel to educate the residents about the opportunity and process of preserving the hills. Waters & Faubel led the successful campaign against the El Toro Airport. The Hacienda Heights Improvement Association and Rowland Heights Community Coordinating Council have also donated funds. The Aera project on the hills above Brea between the 57 freeway and Harbor Blvd. is the focus of the PR firm's effort.

funding approved has taken two months and the fine tuning of the agreement between the cities still must occur. Aera admitted that its PR firm has been working for two years thus inadvertently demonstrating that the cities are already late in entering the debate.



### WORD GAMES

In another display of audacity, Aera's Project Manager, George Basye had the brass to ask that the cities pledge "honesty" in the education campaign. This request comes from a firm that touts its "wildlife corridor" on the one hand and on the other omits the fact that its densest housing and commercial development is planned for the most critical juncture for wildlife movement, under the Tonner Canyon bridge of the 57 freeway.

Aera doesn't disclose that its conceptual "wildlife corridor" aligns not with an actual wildlife movement area but rather with the undevelopable Whittier-Elsinore Fault (since state law prohibits development of houses within a certain distance of fault lines). Aera also claims environmental sensitivity even though the bulk of the

### ACTION STEPS

**ADVERTISE** your desire to save the hills. Send a Self Addressed Stamped Envelope to Hills For Everyone, PO Box 9835, Brea, CA 92822. On a Post-It Note tell us how many decals you want and if you would be willing to distribute them to others.



**HOST** a gathering to spread information on how we can save the hills. We will bring our PowerPoint presentation and entertain the troops.



**CIRCULATE** petitions downloaded from our website and send them to us. Periodically we send the signed petitions to the County Supervisors.

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## COMMUNITIES UNITE

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development lies in the heart of Significant Ecological Area #15.

Aera advertises that half of its acreage will remain as open space. But in a crafty deception Aera leaves out the fact that the open space is either acreage for a golf course, road medians, fragmented islands of habitat or degraded former oil fields. It is not the kind of land wildlife need for long term survival unless they like to graze in the middle of the road or play 18 holes now and then.

In community meetings Aera's story changes depending on what community it is in. Fortunately, concerned citizens are working together tracking Aera's deceptive practices.

## MOVING TARGET

Aera's latest attempt to tranquilize residents on the west in La Habra and La Habra Heights suggests that there will no longer be a road across the hills. Instead Aera says that only 150 houses will empty on to Harbor Blvd. Urban planning like this is nonsensical and dangerous. If this were allowed, the rest of the traffic from a majority of the houses would have to enter and exit from the east, near Brea and Diamond Bar by the 57 freeway. In the event of a Santa Ana wind-driven fire, Aera would be requiring substantially all of the residents to flee toward the flames to reach either exit.

State funding still exists from numerous recent park bond acts to buy this land. State officials have been receptive toward acquisition

of the property for open space. The unity of the cities and vocal support of citizens through letter writing and meeting attendance can move funding approval forward. Aera has stated publicly many times that it is willing to sell the property if the price is right. Thus begins a negotiation. The Aera property can be acquired and preserved if we stay united.

In 1962 Rachel Carson asked, "Have we fallen into a mesmerized state that makes us accept as inevitable that which is inferior or detrimental, as though having lost the will or the vision to demand that which is good?" Just over 40 years later, the unity of the cities against the destructive Aera project is a clear indication that the will and the vision to demand that which is good is alive and well in our communities.

## In Memory of Dr. Jill Kowalik



*"Today we mourn her. Tomorrow and tomorrow we shall miss her."*

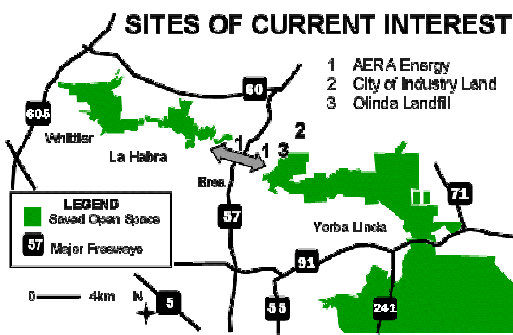
On October 30th, we lost the incomparable Dr. Jill Kowalik to cancer. We cannot overestimate the contribution she made to our region. With her husband, Bill, she co-produced the film "Saving Open Space" which was seen on many public access channels and is still

being used in university and high school classes. As Vice President of our Board she brought unrelenting energy to projects. She edited everything that went public; she picked up the phone to raise money or to ask for help. Jill's inspiration would blossom with every setback.

In 1989 Jill's tumor was misdiagnosed as benign since it didn't

show up on the mammogram so it went untreated for two years. Jill spread the word that ten percent of all breast cancers aren't calcified and don't show up on mammograms. **Please tell your loved ones.**

In lieu of flowers, over 80 friends and family have donated \$7600 to help save the hills Jill loved. Visit our website to learn about this remarkable lady.



## SO HOW IS LAND SAVED AS OPEN SPACE?

First, there needs to be a funding source for the purchase. Four major park bond acts recently passed by voters still have funding available. In addition, \$10 million is specifically allocated for this region by Los Angeles County's Prop A that passed in 1996.

Second, there needs to be a willing seller. Though governments have the power to acquire land through eminent domain most bond acts require that money be allocated only for projects with willing sellers. Aera Energy has indicated it is willing to sell if the price is right.

So how do we find out what the right price is? Government is not allowed to pay more than fair market value for land; otherwise it is a gift of public funds. So the land needs to be appraised and this is where it gets complicated. A vital part of negotiation is a realistic examination of what property is really worth and not what the owner would like to think it is worth. The landowner may have an unrealistic expectation of value based on emotion or on pipe dreams or how much money they promised their superiors they could make.

The restraints on a development (topography, access, seismic, environmental, political, etc.) are real factors that will determine the fair market value. Also, any appraiser will factor in the time (cost) to develop, as the net present value (e.g., if it is zoned as agriculture) is much lower than the eventual build out value (e.g., if it gets zoned for housing).

Basically it will come down to a  
CONTINUED IN NEXT COLUMN...

# UPLIFTING UPDATES

## GREAT EARTH WALK MAY 1, 2004

This spring, thousands of people throughout California will gather to walk designated trails to raise awareness of open space and to fundraise at the same time. We will host two separate walks in our local hills. Anyone can join the event through walking, sponsoring a walker, or making a special pledge. Get your friends to sponsor your walk in support of Hills For Everyone. Stay tuned for more information. If you wish to help, join in or can suggest routes with adequate parking, please contact us. We are looking for an easy 5k or 3 mile route, preferably a loop trail.



SAVE THE DATE  
MAY 1, 2004  
*Walk for the Hills*



business decision by the landowner. How much will delays cost when lawsuits are filed to challenge approvals? What will the economic or political climate be then? How will a high profile contentious battle affect our corporate image?

The cities have chosen to work toward a negotiated purchase price because money is available now and may not be available down the road if other high priority projects in the state reach agreement and use up the bond money. To date every parcel (nearly 60 transactions) in the Corridor has been purchased from a willing seller. It may take them a while to wake up to the real value of their land but they eventually chose "money in hand" over the risks associated with the approval process especially with an activated public.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Shell Oil owns a 51% interest in Aera Energy. Shell reaped **\$9.4 billion** in profits in 2002.

## BONNIE RAITT CONCERT: A SMASH HIT

Our first ever fundraiser with a STAR was a great success. We raised over \$10,000 in the fight to save the hills and supporters were treated to Bonnie Raitt's graciousness to boot. Since it was the last night of a year and a half tour, she was full of song and emotion. Near the end of her performance, she mentioned our efforts and urged the audience to stop by our table in the foyer to learn more. We extend our thanks to Bonnie Raitt, Tom Campbell and the Guacamole Fund for its partnership in this effort and to the hillside supporters and Bonnie Raitt fans who bought tickets.



HFE Executive Director Claire Schlotterbeck, BR, & HFE Board Member Glenn Parker



Whittier Councilman Allan Zolnekoff & BR



Lien Henderson, BR, & Whittier Elementary School Board Member Ken Henderson

# BOTHERSOME BULLETINS

## CITY OF INDUSTRY UP TO NO GOOD ... YET AGAIN

Two months ago the State Supreme Court refused conservationists' appeal of Industry's purchase of 2/3 of the Firestone Boy Scout Reservation. Industry told the Courts it bought the land for open space so no Environmental Impact Report was needed. But its true intentions may be coming into focus. In October Brea residents were paid \$65 to give their opinion in focus groups about the desirability of a new road from the 57 freeway east to the Olinda Landfill through Tonner Canyon. The road would supposedly take trash trucks off Imperial Highway and make life

better for Brea residents. The real reason for the road is more sinister.

When Industry bought the Scout Reservation, the only access granted through lower Tonner Canyon (owned by Brea Cañon Oil) was for Scout purposes. Hence

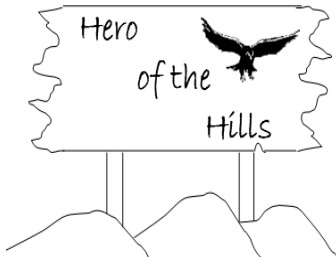


Industry needs better access to its land. If the County of Orange can be convinced to use its condemnation powers to get a road to the landfill, it will have created access to the Industry land. This paves the

way for a road to Chino Hills and the Inland Empire. Indeed, pollsters asked the focus groups if they supported that too.

In two different waves, pollsters called Brea residents. First, they called with a push poll—a poll designed to get the “right” answer by providing misleading information. In the second wave, they asked residents if they supported a road in Tonner to the dump. If you said no, they hung up. If you said yes, they asked if you would testify, write letters to officials and if they could use your name in publications.

We don't know for sure who is funding this polling. We do know that only Aera, Industry, and Diamond Bar (who wants to funnel traffic into Brea) have anything to gain from such a road.



### GEARY HUND

This Chino Hills State Park (CHSP) Resource Ecologist extraordinaire retired after 25 years. As champion of Coal Canyon, he taught the State Resources Agency the importance of connecting protected lands together. Now nearly all acquisitions must consider this issue. For his effort, he won the prestigious Drury Award for Professional Excellence. Geary took his talents to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.



Geary Hund (left) & Gary Watts (District Superintendent)

## HILLS FOR EVERYONE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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## MORE ACTIVITY IN TONNER CANYON

On Dec. 28, 2003 near the site of the second of three dams proposed by Industry, a 3.5 magnitude earthquake took place — a useful reminder of why we need to stop these dam proposals.



## FIRST TIME RECIPIENTS

If you are receiving this newsletter for the first time you either donated funds, signed a petition to help save the hills, asked for help against a proposed development, or asked to be added to our mailing list. **If you wish to be removed:** call 714-687-1555 or email [info@hillsforeveryone.org](mailto:info@hillsforeveryone.org) and give us your name and address.

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