



## Bloomin' Barbara

Without a botany degree or funding, Barbara Levering of Crestline gave nature an identity.

If you hike with Barbara Levering, you may not go far, but you'll intimately know the ground you've covered. Especially the wildflowers. And with the help of a new field guide created by Levering and 40 volunteer artists, you can call 110 flowers by name.

*Wildflowers of the San Bernardino Mountains* is the first book of its kind for its region.

"I grew up here and my mother always had pressed flower books. She labeled them by name and location, so I knew where to find them," says Levering. "The challenge was getting the artist in contact with the flower when it was blooming."

Some volunteers photographed the flowers. Others drew field sketches when possible.

"We looked out for each other and called when we saw flowers in bloom," says artist Julia Spelman, who drew five of the flowers, including the fragrant Spanish broom. "It's much easier to draw from the real flower."

Some species eluded definition, including a light blue flower that puzzled Levering. She took her drawings, press-

ings and samples of it to Brad Henderson, the project's consulting botanist, for review. Henderson examined it under a microscope and discovered it was the same genus of baby blue eyes already catalogued by the volunteers.

"Yet it looked totally different," says Levering. "So I put it in the book to explain how some things look different than you would expect."

Although there are more than 1,600 known flower species in the San Bernardino Mountains and 600 drawings stored in Levering's computer, the group selected only the 110 most common plants.

"Barbara wanted to include things that people would have a good chance of seeing and not just plants found in rare niches," says Henderson.

Henderson reviewed and edited the guide's content. The final product, he says, is a great introduction to the area's mountain flora.

Proceeds from the guide benefit the San Bernardino Land Trust. To obtain a copy, contact the Land Trust at P.O. Box 376, Twin Peaks, CA 92391.

— Koren Wetmore

## CRIME BEAT

### Girl Trouble

A woman who flew to the Inland Empire to have sex with a Moreno Valley girl was arrested at Ontario International Airport as she exited the plane. Authorities were notified about the e-mail messages sent between the 46-year-old North Carolina woman and the 16-year-old girl. The two met in an Internet chat room several months ago. The woman was booked on suspicion of attempted oral copulation and attempted sexual penetration with an object. Her bail was set at \$200,000.

### Check Mate

A Chino man who went to the bank to stop payment on stolen checks ironically overheard the thief trying to cash one of the checks. As he stood in line, the man heard the thief try to convince the teller that the check was his. When the man got a closer look at the check he realized it was his and pinned the thief to the floor until authorities intervened.

### Jacked Up

A would-be carjacker shot himself in the head as he tried to pull his gun from a shoulder holster. The man, who later died, was trying to elude police when he ordered a woman to get out of her car in the Club Metro parking lot shortly after the Rubidoux club closed. Police were investigating a fight that broke out in the parking lot and when they ordered a group of men to the ground, the man ran and tried to force the woman out of her car. When she refused, the man ducked behind the open driver's door and pulled out his gun, which accidentally fired.

### 'Act' of Violence

Police say that a Wildomar woman, who claimed she was kidnapped, raped and locked in her trunk, actually staged the whole thing. The 36-year-old woman said she was abducted in Murrieta outside a drug store, then driven to a San Diego motel where she was raped and locked in the trunk of her car. A passer-by who heard banging from inside the trunk notified police. Police began comparing notes and found discrepancies in her story. They also say the scratch marks on her neck were self-inflicted. Police say they don't know what her motive was.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY TONY WETMORE