

VICTORY RANCH

18080 Gilman Springs Road
Moreno Valley, CA 92555



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WINTER CAMP

The theme for our teen Winter Camp this year is **Bonded**, taken from Romans 6:18 where we as believers are called to be "Bondservants of Righteousness." Young people in grades 6 through 12 are invited to participate in this exciting, fast-paced winter retreat. Registration will start at 9:00 a.m. on Wednesday, December 27. The retreat will conclude with lunch on Friday, December 29 with camper pick-up at 1:00 p.m.



The retreat price, what to bring, and how to sign up, along with all the other pertinent information about Victory Ranch's Winter Camp, can be found on our website at www.vranch.com.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Fall Ladies' Retreat.....October 6-7
Fall Men's Retreat.....October 20-21
Round-up.....November 4
Winter Camp.....December 27-29
Spring Ladies' Retreat.....March 8-9
Spring Men's Retreat.....March 22-23

Visit www.vranch.org for more information!



- **October 8 @ 8:00pm**
First Baptist Church, Wilmington
- **November 12 @ 3:00pm**
First Baptist Church of Waleria, Torrance
- **December 3 @ 3:00pm**
South Vermont Ave. Baptist Church, Gardena

VICTORY RANCH

Newsletter

FALL 2023



From the Director's Desk:
By Paul Gayot

Friday afternoon of July 14, during Junior Camp, a plume of smoke was noticed several miles to our west. Then the sheriff's department closed our road. A few hours later, a fleet of giant airplanes began a two-hour siege against the Rabbit Fire; however, at dark, they quit flying. I was contacted by CalFire to discuss the possibility of an evacuation but was then told we were fine. Following evening Chapel and a fireless campfire time in the dining room, the campers went off to bed. I took the tractor and began clearing some of the brush that was growing close to equipment in the back of the camp. Close to midnight, we were contacted again. The sheriff's deputies explained the fire was advancing a little faster than CalFire had anticipated and told us we needed to evacuate the camp.

The campers were told to pack their stuff and move to the Chapel lawn. Once each cabin was accounted for, they were sent to the dairy across the street and then to Grace Fellowship Bible Church in Hemet, where their parents picked them up. Volunteer staff moved their fifth-wheel trailers, and the Ranch's portable equipment was moved to the dairy. Once everyone and everything was evacuated, I spent the rest of the night on the tractor widening firebreaks. At daybreak, there were ten engine companies stationed around the camp. Due to an inversion layer, the smoke stayed close to the ground. Heading off to the spring that morning gave me an eerie feeling as I moved away from camp and toward the burning hills. I was able to bury the control box for the spring and create a better clearing around the rear water tank, always keeping an eye on an escape route should the fire begin moving faster.



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The fire reached the western side of the Ranch and was extinguished. Most of the fire engines left. Around noon, the fire from the north hit the creek bed by the spring and surged toward the camp, consuming the dry brush in its path. A lone helicopter would race back and forth across the street making water drops. I moved to the dairy, watching the thick dark smoke billowing toward the sky.

Praise the Lord, all Ranch property was spared! Firefighters returned to spend the next five nights watching the Ranch. One firefighter told me there was a one in a million chance of anything igniting at the Ranch at that point, but they stood by anyway. Unfortunately, CalFire did not lift the evacuation orders until noon on Tuesday the 18th, ruining any chance of us holding our Senior High week of camp.

Once the evacuation orders were lifted, we began the task of contacting parents and counselors to see if we could offer a combined Teen Camp the following week. Some counselors had used their vacation time the week before and were unable to attend, but most had understanding bosses. Our speaker, Frank Figueroa with Reasons for Hope, was here for both weeks, so we had a speaker. The worship teams from Senior High and Middle School weeks combined to lead our worship. Volunteers came to clean cabins and buildings that still had belongings inside from the rapid evacuation. More volunteers showed up to rake leaves and clean the grounds. After several days of work, the Ranch was ready for campers again. Our recreation staff staged the game equipment late in the week. On Monday, July 24, we kicked off our Teen Week of camp with 6 middle school cabins and 8 senior high cabins for a total of 108 campers.

(continued inside)



DIRECTOR'S DESK CONTINUED

Whenever a camper makes a decision for Christ, we have that camper and their counselor fill out a decision card that is then mailed to his or her pastor. We send the camper some literature and a book from the Regular Baptist Press called *Basic Bible Truths*. Sometimes I wonder if anyone is actually reading the information we send them. Several weeks ago, we received a nice letter from a middle school camper thanking us for sending the information and telling us that she plans to read it each night before she goes to bed. Praise the Lord for this young lady and her desire to grow in the things of the Lord! Please keep each of our campers in prayer, that they would grow in the things of the Lord and that they would apply the biblical truths they heard at camp to their everyday lives.

Despite the summer not going as we had planned, God was watching over us and protected this property and the campers. All was not lost as we were able to offer a combined week of camp. God enabled many of the staff and counselors to rearrange their schedules. Decisions were made for Christ. There is so much for which to be thankful!

TRACTOR SAGA

On July 31, the tractor that I used all night on the firebreaks during the Rabbit Fire several weeks before "spontaneously combusted." Praise the Lord, it happened during the daylight, and my son, John Paul, saw the smoke. He raced up to the shop and emptied five fire extinguishers onto the tractor. The air cleaner canister was still smoldering when the fire department arrived. The wiring and hoses were compromised or melted, the radiator shroud and starter had components melt, the solder on the radiator melted, etc.

I priced used tractors, and similar ones were selling for \$9,000-\$15,000. Several days later, God brought to mind someone I had met over ten years ago. It turns out John worked for CASE for many years, and he currently has his own business (JBE Equipment Repair) repairing tractors and trucks. He agreed to come out and look at the tractor. After I had the starter rebuilt, he came out and worked on the tractor and got the engine to run. He ordered the parts we would need to replace, built our own wiring harness, and got the tractor operable and running again for less than \$5,000. Praise the Lord!

RECENT STAFF CHANGES

In addition to being a homeschool mom, Tiffany Farr had worked in the mortgage industry for many years. Tiffany's husband Tim grew up attending camp at Camp Victory/Victory Ranch, and their son Jeremy has attended this camp for the past few years and worked on W.E.S.T. Week staff. Quite often, Tiffany and the family would come out and help Laraine in the kitchen. When Laraine stepped down as Food Services Director in May, Tiffany told me that the mortgage industry had dried up and she was interested in the Food Service Director position. Tiffany took over the position in June in a seamless transition, with our guests experiencing the same great food they have been accustomed to through the years. Praise the Lord for His provision to fill this position so quickly.



In the 1990s, Seth Gott worked for the Ranch as a wrangler and in maintenance and grounds. After marrying Holly, the two moved to Nebraska, where Seth has spent the past 20 years in law enforcement. Their children have occasionally attended camp through the years, and his son Silas even served as head wrangler this past summer. Seth's wife, Holly, has also served as a counselor the past couple of years. We welcome Seth back to the Ranch, along with their children (Zach, Hannah, Havilah, Gideon, Titus, and Hachilah), as he serves in the Maintenance Foreman position.



NEW CABIN PROJECT

After unearthing all the septic tanks and having them certified, we were told by the county that we would need to abandon the system at Maverick and redesign it. The gentleman who agreed to design the new system, however, has never given us plans for the new system nor will he return calls or emails. Our builder is quite upset as this means they will have to find a new sub-contractor and possibly start over. God knows, so please pray that His will be done in this situation.

FALL RETREATS

The **Fall Ladies' Retreat** on **October 6-7** is being hosted by Western Avenue Baptist Church in Brawley. The WABC ladies have been working hard to make this a great retreat. **Jamaica Groover Skelton** will be the speaker. Jamaica is originally from Sacramento, California but has resided in Los Angeles for over 20 years. She is currently teaching at The Master's University. She received her master's degree in biblical counseling from The Master's University in 2013 and serves as an Administrative Assistant for the Biblical Counseling Graduate department, an Adjunct Professor, a Women's Advisor, and a Biblical Counselor for One Eighty Counseling Ministries under Dr. Stuart Scott's leadership. She has been an ACBC-certified counselor since 2013 and serves in the counseling ministry at Grace Community Church, where she is also a member. Her background is in fashion design and music. The theme for the retreat is "*Fall into God's Peace*." Participants may arrive on Thursday evening before the retreat. There will be a light continental breakfast served Friday morning. Registration opens at 9:00 a.m. on Friday. Activities include archery, crafts, the game room, target range, the silent auction, and more.



The **Fall Men's Retreat** will be held on **October 20-21**. **Dr. Linn Carothers** has been "through the fire" the past year and a half as his wife Carol has battled cancer. When I asked him if he was willing to speak, he responded that the Ranch has "been through the fire" with the Rabbit Fire and evacuation. However, he agreed to speak and picked "*Out of the Fire: from Grief to Glory*" as his theme. Linn and Carol have four grown sons. They have served as camp speakers, Awana missionaries, missionaries with Slavic Gospel Association, and pastor and wife at Bible Baptist of Oakview. Linn is a ventriloquist, plays the piano, and has even been a paramedic. Linn has taught at Los Angeles Baptist College, the Master's College, and Cal State Northridge and is currently a professor at California Baptist University. Linn even spent a few years working as a plasma physicist. We will be having the usual sports competitions at the retreat. Men are welcome to come up Thursday night, but registration opens Friday at 5:00 p.m. and the first meal will be dinner at 6:30 p.m. on Friday evening. The retreat will conclude with a steak dinner Saturday evening at 5:00 p.m.

The cost for the ladies is \$85 and \$90 for the men. Registration forms can be found on our website. Don't miss out. Sign up today.

ROUND-UP

Regular Baptist Round-up, the annual meeting for our association of churches, will be held at Victory Ranch on **Saturday, November 4**. Please plan to attend as this day is not only an avenue to rub shoulders with people from other churches, but also a day of fun and excitement for the whole family. Plan to arrive around 9:30. Our time of worship will start at 10:00. Nursery will be provided during the speaking session, as well as programs for children grades K-6th. **Bruce McClain**, state representative for the CARBC, will be speaking in the main session. Following lunch, horse rides, archery, firetruck rides, etc., will be available in the afternoon. At 3:30, guests can make their own ice cream sundae before heading home. This event is free; however, an offering will be taken to offset the cost of the food and an honorarium for the speaker. Please RSVP at your church or call the Ranch directly so we'll know how many guests to prepare for.

SING SCHEDULE

On **October 8**, we will join **First Baptist Church of Wilmington** for a Sing at **8:00 p.m.** At 9:00 p.m. we will have refreshments in their fellowship hall. On **November 12**, we will be at **First Baptist Church of Waleria in Torrance** for their **3:00 p.m.** Sing followed by refreshments. On **December 3**, we will be at **South Vermont Avenue Baptist Church in Gardena** for a **3:00 p.m.** Sing. There will be a time of refreshments afterward. Mark your calendar and plan to join us.



DO YOU HAVE HIDDEN MUSICAL TALENT?

On July 3, 2022, Ryan Burris asked Paul Cayot to do a trombone duet. In August, Paul invited Abe Ortiz to join them in a trombone trio. Gradually, others from various churches have joined the group, with as many as seven members at some rehearsals. The group rehearses every Thursday night from 7:00-9:00 p.m. at First Baptist Church of El Monte and then presents several numbers at the monthly Singspirations. The music is fairly simple (so far). We would love to have more people! If you used to play a band/orchestra instrument, dust off your instrument and come join us. If you used to play, but no longer have an instrument, we may be able to help. Recently a band donated a number of used instruments to Abe. For anyone ready for the challenge and ready to practice, Abe is willing to loan you an instrument so you can join our group. For more details, reach out to the Ranch with your contact information.