



# BRENTWOOD NEWS

Community Matters!

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## WENDY ROSEN: BRENTWOOD'S 4'10" WARRIOR

*By Michael Allen*

At only 4' 10", Wendy Rosen often feels like David taking on Goliath. As president of the Upper Mandeville Canyon Homeowners Association for the past three years, the diminutive dynamo led the fight against additional speed bumps and a proposed residential development in her neighborhood; both times she won. Where does Wendy get her activist spirit? "I think I came out of the womb with a sense of justice," she laughs. Her husband, Tom Freeman, adds, "When Wendy sees something that is not right, she acts. And she can't help herself. She has to act."

Wendy jumped into action this summer when a friend called her about a gate that was being built on Canyonback Road by the Crown Homeowners Association. If completed, the gate would prevent joggers, hikers, dog walkers and commuters from accessing a fire trail that leads to the Santa Monica Mountains parkland. When Wendy and Tom attended a Brentwood Community Council meeting in July, they were incensed by the Crown Homeowners' apparent lack of concern for the public's access to the trail. "Their sense of entitlement to this gate and their sense of ownership to this street was unbelievable," Wendy recalls.

The Crown Homeowners claimed they were simply trying to reduce crime and traffic with the gate, but Wendy was skeptical because that area was not known for crime. She suspected the wealthy residents were actually trying to increase the value of their properties by creating a gated community and locking out the public.

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WENDY ROSEN: BRENTWOOD'S 4'10" WARRIOR Continued

Wendy quickly contacted her homeowner's association and several local officials. "You (start) showing up at hearings and participating with your representatives. And they get to know you. Then you know who to

serve as the gatekeeper and allow the public onto Canyonback Road from sunrise to sunset.

Wendy and her fellow advocates nixed the idea of a private security



Wendy Rosen at the site of the proposed gate

call," she says. While Wendy burned up the phone lines, Tom was hard at work at his law firm, Bird, Marella, Boxer & Wolpert, researching the issue. He wrote a 12 page letter outlining the legal objections to Los Angeles City Attorney Rocky Delgadillo. The Brentwood couple then contacted the Center for Law in the Public Interest, which led to more groups joining the fight. Soon there were 16 organizations on board and the Canyon Back Alliance was formed.

Councilwoman Cindy Miscikowski who lives in a gated Brentwood community, brought the opposing sides together in her office and proposed a compromise: a guard, hired by the Crown Homeowners, would

force controlling the use of public land. Soon, stories about the gate controversy appeared in the L.A. Times, Los Angeles Daily Journal and on KABC news. "For me (the media coverage) was completely overwhelming," says Wendy, "but there's not going to be any change in the decisions of the officials unless there's pressure." Apparently, that pressure reached a critical point in early August when City Attorney Rocky Delgadillo halted the gate's construction pending public hearings.

While this issue is far from over, Wendy offers a tongue-in-cheek warning to future foes: "We are hyper-focused people. We have a lot of time to dedicate to these kinds of things, so watch out!"