



Guest Forum

The Times Are A-Changin'

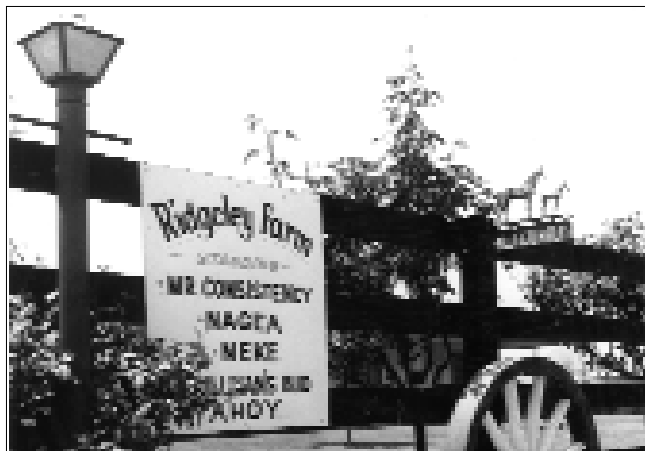
by **PAT THOMPSON**

In 1962, my late husband Jim and I moved into the town of Hemet in the San Jacinto Valley as part owners and managers of Ridgeley Farm. Through the 60's and 70's the valley was basically agriculture—alfalfa fields, apricot and olive trees, as well as watermelon and potato fields. Thoroughbred farms were too numerous to name them all, but amongst them were

one who had a problem knew that help was only a telephone call away. The valley was, and still is, incredibly beautiful, surrounded by mountains and with temperatures in the summer in the low 100's, but with a cooling breeze in the evenings. Traffic was almost nonexistent and it was not unusual to see horseback riders going down the streets or mares being led down the roads to be bred to stallions at other farms.

community. Movie theaters and fast food restaurants have been built throughout the city. Where there was little traffic we now have people who live in the valley and commute to Riverside, San Diego and Orange Counties.

Land prices have skyrocketed which is probably the only plus in this whole scenario. But for those of us like Marianne Millard of Here Tis Ranch, Judd Morse, and Gary and Marlene Howard



Ridgeley Farm



Hemacinto Stables



Rancho de Esperanza



Walnut Wood Farm

Hemacinto Stable, a thriving full-service operation run by Lev Fanning, Ballenger Ranch, Hemet Stock Farm, Moon Ranch, Rancho de Esperanza and Walnut Wood Farm, to name a few. With the exception of Ridgeley Farm, the above farms are now gone, some of whom have been replaced by large tract homes.

Neighbors knew each other. Doors and gates were never locked and any-

Hemet has grown from 9,000 people to well over 60,000 and predictions are that it will hit 100,000 in the next few years. The olive groves and alfalfa fields have been replaced with walled-in tract homes, two large high schools and innumerable grade schools. Originally, the valley was geared to senior citizens, but it has since become a family-oriented com-

of Hideaway Farms, raising and working with horses is our way of life. It is sad to see land, that with water poured on to it would grow anything, turned into concrete slabs and houses. However, there are a few of us left here for the long haul, so hope springs eternal.

Pat Thompson's Ridgeley Farm in Hemet was California's 2002 TOBA (Thoroughbred Owners and Breeders Association) Breeder of the Year.