



Rancho Simi Trail Blazers



THE WOOD RANCH

The Wood Ranch was heavily used by the Chumash Indians. One site, now buried to protect it from vandalism, was occupied seasonally for over 4,000 years. Another site is thought to have been used several thousand years ago. Some very significant ceremonial sites have been identified on the old ranch.

During the Mexican period of settlement, the area where the golf course is today was known as Cañada Verde, i.e., "green canyon." Later Anglo-American settlers referred to the area as "the Verde." The bottomland was green throughout the year because of the high water table. Mt. McCoy was then known as Verde Hill. Long Canyon is shown on the Stow and Power survey of 1887-1888 as Cañada de la Leha. Leha does not seem to have any meaning in Spanish and may, therefore, be an error in printing. Leña, for example, would render the phrase as "firewood canyon" - a name that would fit oak canyon as a source of fuelwood.

An old Indian trail seems to have run along the western margins of the Wood Ranch extending through the saddle southwestward into what is now the City of Thousand Oaks. That trail was

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DECEMBER TRAIL WORK PARTY

Six Trailblazers were joined by a Boy Scout leader and his son for our party on the Chumash Trail. The Scouts were present to learn about trail work. At some time in the future, certain Boy Scouts troops will take part in a "Adopt a Trail" program and help maintain Rancho Simi Recreation and Park trails on a regular basis.

Work was concentrated on the lower half of the trail and consisted of topping brush, clearing water bars and filling in and smoothing the trail. We worked from 8:00 - 11:30 and as usual, met at Chuy's after finishing. Many thanks to the following workers:

Arlene Altshuler, Bill Cespedes, Martin DeGoey, John Downey, Chuck Portoghesi, John Sabol, Scout Leader Donald Jenkins and his son Ryan Jenkins.

CHANGE IN WORK PARTY DATE:

The next work party will be held on the Hummingbird Trail on the January 22, the Fourth Saturday of January and we will work from 8:00 AM to 12:00 Noon. Hope to see you there. Meanwhile, please perform your favorite rain dance as we desperately need rain to wet down this trail. The soil on some parts of the Hummingbird is the consistency of talcum powder.

Work Parties Vice Chair
John Sabol

THE PARK DISTRICT NEEDS HELP!

In January 2000 a ballot will go out to all property owners in the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District asking recipients to form an assessment district to help pay for parks and park services. About seven years ago, the state took property tax monies from the District and diverted them to other programs. That was done as an alternative to raising state taxes. The result is that our Park District has lost approximately \$1,000,000 dollars per year, approximately 22% of its budget, in taxes. The more concrete result is that there simply is not enough money to maintain the parks that we have and to run park programs. Even if developer fees are available to build new parks, there will not be enough money to maintain them. The District's water bill, for example, is approximately \$600,000 per year.

Some of those lost revenues would have gone to maintaining and building new trails.

The quality of life in Simi Valley and elsewhere in the district is in part measured by its 41 park facilities and the pro-

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apparently referred to by the Indians as the Simi' Trail because it was the route between the Conejo Valley and the Chumash village of Simi'. It continued to be used as a route during the Spanish and Mexican periods and was referred to as the "Simi Road" during the early Anglo-American Period. The 1861 federal survey of El Rancho Simi shows the "Conejo and Simi Road in Puento." In other words, the Conejo and Simi Road was present in the pass described above.

C. B. McCoy acquired Wood Ranch, which comprised more than 4,000 acres and included the area now occupied by Mt. McCoy and the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, from the Simi Land and Water Company. Eventually it passed into the hands of the Wood family, which named it "Rancho Madera" (madera means, "wood" in Spanish). Later, it simply was referred to as the Wood Ranch. The names Long, Sycamore and Oak canyons seem simply to be descriptive and appear on the U.S. Geological Survey maps. Montgomery Canyon is certainly named for the Montgomery family, which owned the Montgomery Ranch to the north and east of the eastern portion of Wood Ranch.

Mike Kuhn



Corriganville Loop Hike: left to right John Downey, Joanne Proffit, Bill Cespedes, John Sabol, Bob Altieri, Arlene Altshuler, Marty Richards, Gene Clark, Cathy Verga and Dodie.



Lang Ranch Exploratory Hike: left to right - Joanne Proffit, Mary Ann Campbell, Phil Ankom, Richard Tribble, Sabrina Tribble, Chuck Portoghesi, Margarita Marsh, Arlene Altshuler, John Sabol, Tom Frye, Bill Cespedes and John Downey.



grams that have gone with them. If the parks become frayed around the edges and the grass becomes brown during the summer and fall months, our quality of life and our pride in our community will suffer. People often complain that there isn't enough to do in Simi Valley for kids. Well, the park district, with its numerous sports programs, parks, and after school programs are one of the only games in town.

The proposed assessment district will cost the average homeowner approximately \$2.00 per month or \$24 per year. That seems like a small price to pay for our parks.

The District is limited by law to only being able to furnish factual information relating to the proposed assessment district. So, the Rancho Simi Foundation need volunteers to help for a limited time only on a campaign to get people to send in their ballots and to vote for the assessment district. There are numerous ways that people can help. Some people will post signs. Some people are needed to place door-knob fliers. Others are needed to call people. Money is also needed to pay for printing costs.

The ballots will be mailed out in January and must be returned within 45 days in order to be counted. To form the assessment district, the vote must be at least 50% + 1 of the ballots cast.

If you are willing to help for the short time that help is needed,

WINTER SOLSTICE AT BURRO FLATS

On December 18, 1999, I had the privilege of visiting a world class rock art panel in the Burro Flats area of the Boeing/Rocketdyne Santa Susana Field Laboratory site in the Simi Hills. The occasion was observations by Dr. Ed Krupp, Director of Griffith Observatory and a prominent archaeoastronomer, relating to changes in sunrise light and shadow effects during the winter solstice, i.e., the shortest daylight period of the year, wrought by the January 17, 1994, Northridge Earthquake. Dr. Krupp also videotaped the winter solstice event (no matter that it wasn't yet December 22nd - not much change occurs over a period of about a week anyway) and a program before the pictograph panel. I, five Rockwell security folks and a number of archaeologists and archaeoastronomers were there as observers. Among them were the archaeologists who first suggested that the site might be related to solesstial events. Thanks primarily to Dr. Krupp's lively script and the discussion among the scholars that were present; I gained a number of fresh insights about the Chumash use of the site.

The most significant among these is the nature of the Chumash observance of the winter solstice. It is clear from sites like this one that observance on the precise date of the winter solstice probably was not the objective of the Chumash. The site is simply not an accurate predictor of the "date"

of the solar event. Indeed, the fixation on the precise date is our own - the Chumash probably didn't have that hang-up. The Chumash were probably more concerned that ceremonies be performed in association with the low sun maximum.

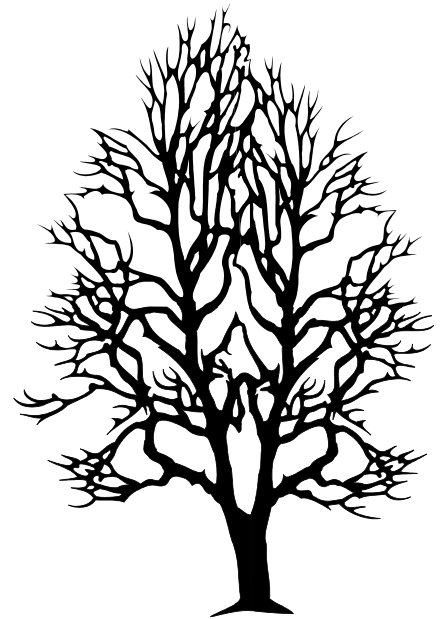
A second conclusion that can be drawn from the site is that those ceremonies may possibly have been public events. While the site is isolated high in the hills, the large number of apparently non-ceremonial bedrock mortars that would have been used for food preparation suggests the presence of substantial numbers of people for ceremonies at the various loci in the area. The "ceremonial center" itself is complex. While many features suggest a winter solstice connection, other ceremonies, such as the observance of the summer solstice, i.e., the longest daylight day of the year, were certainly observed there. It is possible that there may have been a small number of members of the 'antap cult present throughout the year in order to provide both public and private ceremonies to the Chumash people.

The visit, which lasted about four and a half hours, had its lighter moments. One scholar came in a magnificent long black leather coat - the kind that most of us only admire, but can't afford unless we sell the family sedan. At one point, I observed the gentleman shoving his way through a dense patch of leafless poison oak. When I pointed out the nature of his encounter to him, he asked what he should do. I of-

fered to provide a solvent that would remove the oil from his skin, however, I simply was at a loss to tell him how to treat his coat. The coat may prove to be a source of constant irritation!

At one point in Dr. Krupp's presentation he marveled at the juxtaposition of this very impressive Chumash celestial observatory with the Rocketdyne complex, which has been so central to our advances during this century, at the end of this millennium, towards the exploration of our own solar system. Hardware built or designed at that facility has visited every planet and every moon in our solar system, except Pluto and its moon. Perhaps there is something about the site that has caused man throughout the ages to reach for the heavens.

Mike Kuhn





JANUARY

2000



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 Latigo Canyon Hike Meet at 8 am Read schedule
2 Rocky Peak Trail Hike Meet at 4 pm Read schedule	3	4 Happy Birthday Lyman Hays	5	6 Chumash Trail Hike Meet at 6 PM Read schedule	7	8 Happy Birthday Wayne Dunn Saddle Creek Trail Hike Meet at 8 am Read Sched-
9 Happy Birthday Roxanne McCarthy Rocky Peak Trail Hike Meet at 4 pm Read schedule	10	11	12	13 Chumash Trail Hike Meet at 6 PM Read schedule	14 Happy Birthday Jason Franklin	15 La Jolla Valley Trail Hike Meet at 8 am Read schedule
16 Happy Birthday Ursula Christie Robert Blomquist Rocky Peak Trail Hike Meet at 4 pm	17	18	19 RSTB Club Meeting at 7 PM Community Center B-1 Room 1692 Sycamore	20 Chumash Trail Hike Meet at 6 PM Read schedule	21	22 Hummingbird Creek Trail Work Party 8am to noon See Schedule
23 Rocky Peak Trail Hike Meet at 4 pm Read schedule	24 Happy Birthday Moon Gersdorff	25	26 Happy Birthday Evelyn Bandel	27 Chumash Trail Hike Meet at 6 PM Read schedule	28 Happy Birthday Sue Means	29 Circle X Ranch Trail Hike Meet at 8 am See schedule
30 Rocky Peak Trail Hike Meet at 4 pm Read schedule	31					

