



# Rancho Simi Trail Blazers



## THE PLAGUE

The "Black Death" is universally recognized as one of the plagues which over and over again ravaged the world, killing in Europe alone during a 15-year period during the 1300s about one quarter of the human population (about 25 million). As a result, we tend to get rather alarmed to find out that it is now a permanent part of our Santa Barbara and Ventura County experience, with about half of the reported cases in California over the years being contracted in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada.

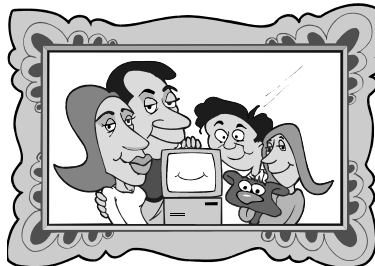
The disease is a bacteria, which is transmitted by fleas. Throughout most of the world, black and Norwegian (brown) rats have carried it. In the United States our black and brown rat populations are plague free. Rather, the plague has settled into our wild rodent populations - primarily among ground squirrel.

There are three forms of the plague in human populations. The most common is bubonic plague, which is the mildest form. It is characterized by swollen lymph glands (buboes) in the groin, neck and armpits. Septicemia plague invades the bloodstream and causes septicemia

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Eve Durham with Sugar Pine Cone  
On Edison Lake Backpack Trip.



**WELCOME NEW MEMBER**

**Victoria Turley-Lee  
Martin De Goey  
Marcie Kraft  
Steve Schmidt**

**The October  
RSTB CLUB MEETING**  
\*\*\*\*\*  
**The scheduled Membership Meeting will be held at 7:00 P.M. Wednesday, Oct. 20th. In the B-1 Room, 1692 Sycamore Drive in the Community Center**

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## September 19th Work Party The Hummingbird Trail

We met at 7:00 AM at the lower trailhead. Mike Kuhn, Arlene Altshuler, and I loaded tools and workers into our vehicles and we drove to the upper Rocky Peak Trailhead. We unlocked the gate and drove to the upper Hummingbird trailhead.

Working down the trail filling in ruts, blocking off short cuts, we selected a destroyed area about half a mile down that was in very bad shape. Trails were running every which way over the hillside. John Sabol plotted a new course and directed John Downey, Chuck Portoghesi, Gary Cremeans, Martin DeGoey, Louise Pomes, Bill Cespedes, Arlene and myself in making a big improvement.

The ground is very dry and dusty. At this time of year moving a lot of dirt can be an exercise in futility until we get some rain to pack it down and stabilize the soil. Hopefully the rain we got the following Tuesday will pack the newly placed dirt and protect the trail from being broken down.

On another note, be sure and check out the poem written by my long time family friend and

(blood poisoning). The most dangerous form is pneumonic plague, which occurs when the bacteria invade the respiratory system. Without treatment, pneumonic plague kills within two to four days. Pneumonic plague can be spread by the victim's cough. In all forms, people get sick within two to six days.

You can get sick by being bitten by an infected flea or by handling an infected animal. When camping, you should avoid all contact with chipmunks, squirrels or other wild animals. Do not feed them. Do not camp, rest, or sleep near animal burrows. Protect your pets, thereby protecting yourself, with flea powder, drops or collars, or leave your pets at home. See your doctor if you become ill within a week of your visit to the out-of-doors. Do not touch sick or dead animals, and notify authorities when they are encountered near a camp.

All of this being said, those mountain trails and campsites are probably the safest places to be. You stand a greater chance of being killed or injured in the city or on your way to or from camping or hiking than you do from contracting the plague, being bitten by a rattlesnake or eaten by a bear or mountain lion. So relax. Have we talked about rabies yet?

Mike Kuhn



### ECHOES OF THE PAST

Every moment has its time. Stuck in time and in space, we look out onto our visual landscape, and we see that place in that moment. There is no beginning, and there is no end. That is the way that we view the unfamiliar. During the Fall 1998 I visited Eureka, California, with my wife. After a week of sunshine and seeing the term "fog city" on many signs, she queried, "Does it get foggy here?" Her scope of experience in that place was limited. What she knew about Eureka was limited to that scant extent in time.

When we view a familiar landscape, no matter how big or how small, we see more than what is there. The familiar clouds our cognitive senses. We see the past as well as the moment. In our kitchen, we see the moment. The dishes need to be put away, the newspapers taken out, and we note for the one hundredth time that the latch on one of the cabinet doors needs to be fixed or replaced. But we don't know how to fix it or if that specific latch is still available. Our mind is flooded with past memories. That mini-landscape is not static. It is a compilation of both the present and the past. The same is true of all landscapes, and that may account for why people become very attached to places. It is in part why people come to love places and why my wife and I will probably remain in Simi Valley when we retire from the work force.

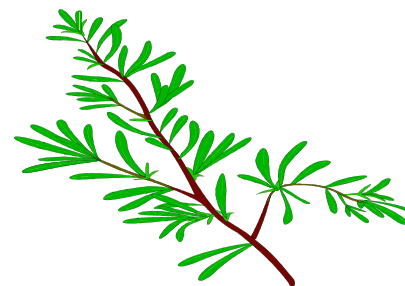
To best appreciate Simi Valley, you must be aware of the past - both its history and pre-history. For the

### ANOTHER ENDANGERED PLANT SPECIES FOUND IN SIMI VALLEY

From 1947 to the early 1980s the Braunton's milk vetch (*Astragalus brauntonii*) went unreported. The plant is a fire-follower. The recorded sighting in 1947 was at the Silvernale Ranch, which was on Burro Flats at the top of the Simi Hills south of the Metrolink Station - the site of the present day Boeing/Rocketdyne Santa Susana Field Laboratory. Since that facility has one of the best fire suppression systems anywhere, it is unlikely that the plant exists there today. Until recently, the 1947 sighting was the last in the Simi Valley area.

Mary Ann Campbell, an active Rancho Simi Trail Blazer, has recently reported three locales within the Bridle Path Homeowners' Association open space area. Where observed, it is located within the area that is kept graded for trails - which simulates the kind of disturbance you get following a fire. As a Federal Endangered Species (1997), it is nice to know there is still some growing in the Simi Valley area. Thanks Mary Ann.

Mike Kuhn



## **PUBLIC OPEN SPACE LAND IN THE SIMI VALLEY AREA**

Not too many years ago there was no public natural open space areas in the Simi Valley area.

When I got telephone calls from people asking where they could go hike around Simi Valley, I sent them to the City of Thousand Oak. Things change. There is a nation-wide trend to the acquisition of public open space and the development of multipurpose recreation trails. In Simi Valley, there is the Chumash Natural Park (51.8 acres), other open space within the Indian Hills development (75 acres), Challenger Park (139.78 acres), Corriganville Park (over 200 acres), Marr Ranch (102.5 acres), the Runkle Ranch (formerly owned by Bob Hope - 4,369 acres), the Mt. McCoy uplands (160 acres and soon to be 200 acres), and Canyon View open space in Wood Ranch (400 acres). It seems that we're not doing too badly.

## **CAN-CAN-CAN**

It seems like we receive aluminum cans from the same people all the time.

We need some "new blood". It may not seem like much of a fundraiser but it can really add up. Enough to off-set some of the News Letter cost.

Please call Marty at 805-526-4414 to pick up your aluminum cans.

Thanks

Ways & Means Committee

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more you know, the more you see; the past is in part mystery and wonder. There is its dynamic geological past - always changing and evolving, usually slowly but sometimes catastrophically.

There is its natural history. To understand the present, you must understand its past. The first human residents were what we refer to as "Indians." They came with a culture and that culture evolved over time. Other people came and went. Some left an imprint on the land. Others did not. We have been left with archaeological deposits from their lives. Many of their place names - from their last cultural existence - are still with us whether or not we recognize what is before us. "Simi" was the name of the Chumash village at the western end of the valley. "Tapo" was the name of the large village in Tapo Canyon. The names of most of the canyons and places that have come down to us from the Spanish were derived from the Chumash Indian names for those places. Even some of our transportation routes, especially during the Spanish/Mexican and early Anglo-American periods, started out as Indian trails. The Spanish/Mexican period of settlement too left its imprint on the land. The most unequivocal place name of Spanish origin is Santa Susana.

Our perception of and attachment to place may be why some residents of our fair valley resist change. It may be an attachment to the past, a longing to not lose the present and a feeling that somehow those echoes of the past are somehow tied in with our own

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backpacking buddy, Joe Mangia. He raised his family in Reseda and after retiring moved back to his hometown, Columbus, Ohio. He flew out to make the Graveyard Lakes trip with us. He's talking about coming out every year!

See you in October on the Chumash trail. Be sure and check the calendar.

Safe and happy hiking

Bob Altieri

## ***"A Back Pack Trip"***

*I flew to California to pack in  
with a friend,  
I thought the mountains were  
just around each bend.  
As we left Simi Valley and  
rode 7 hours in the car,  
I realized Lake Edison was  
really pretty far.  
We got to the mountain and  
as we started to troop,  
I knew the other nine were  
quite a tough group.  
I got in line as we went up the  
trail,  
And did my best no to drag  
my tail.  
As we got up higher up to  
9,000 feet,  
The beauty of the Sierra's  
was quite a treat.  
As we went up higher, it was  
tough not to fall behind,  
But to my surprise, I was  
really feeling fine.  
So I say to the other six guys  
and those three gals,  
I think packing in kinda  
made us pals.*

*Joe*



# OCTOBER



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2 Cold Creek Preserve Hike Meet at 8 am Read Schedule
3 Happy Birthday Jim Zuber  Rocky Peak Hike Meet at 5 p Read Schedule	4 Happy Birthday Marty Richards	5	6	7 Happy Birthday Bob Goodrich Chumash Trail Hike 6 pm Read Schedule	8	9 Newton Canyon Hike Meet at 8 am Read Schedule
10 Rocky Peak Hike Meet at 5 p Read Schedule	11	12	13	14 Chumash Trail Hike 6 pm Read Schedule	15 Happy Birthday Bill Funk	16 Chumash Trail Work Party 8 am to noon Read Schedule
17 Happy Birthday Darene Fowlks  Rocky Peak Hike Meet at 5 p Read Schedule	18 Happy Birthday Morgan & Bailey Clark	19	20	21 Happy Birthday Brian E. McKee Chumash Trail Hike 6 pm Read Schedule	22 Happy Birthday Gail Hartung & Margarita Marsh	23 Los Robles Hike Meet at 8 am Read Schedule
24 Rocky Peak Hike Meet at 5 p Read Schedule	25	26 Happy Birthday Lisa Klockentenger	27	28 Chumash Trail Hike 6 pm Read Schedule	29 Happy Birthday Joe Bremer	30 Happy Camp Upper Trail Hike Meet at 8:30am Read sched-
31 Clocks Back 1 Hour  Rocky Peak Hike Meet at 5 p Read Schedule						



