



Rancho Simi Trail Blazers

A Division of the Rancho Simi Foundation



A WALK IN THE WOODS

John Sabol was kind enough to give me a copy of *A Walk in the Woods*, by Bill Bryson. In 1996 Mr. Bryson, accompanied by a friend, set out to walk the Appalachian Trail – a trek of 2160 miles through deep woods. Those who finish the trek as one more or less continuous hike usually require about eight months to do it. I'll save you the math; that is averaging nine miles per day. The experience takes one into an entirely different world with different frames of reference. In any case, from Chapter 6:

“Distance changes utterly when you take the world on foot. A mile becomes a long way, two miles literally considerable, ten miles whopping, fifty miles at the very limits of conception. The world, you realize, is enormous in a way that only you and a small community of fellow hikers know. Planetary scale is your little secret.

Life takes on a neat simplicity, too. Time ceases to have any meaning. When it is dark, you go to bed, and when it is light again you get up, and everything in between is just in between. It's quite wonderful, really.

You have no engagements, commitments, obligations, or duties; no special ambitions and only the smallest, least complicated of wants; you exist in a tranquil tedium, serenely beyond the reach of exasperation, ‘far removed from the seats of strife’, as the early explorer and botanist William Bartram put it. All that is required of you is a willingness to trudge.

There is no point in hurrying because you are not actually going anywhere. However far or long you plod, you are always in the same place: in the woods. It's where you were yesterday, where you will be



Cheri Brisard

tomorrow. The woods is one boundless singularity. Every bend in the path presents a prospect indistinguishable from every other, every glimpse into the trees the same tangled mass. For all you know, your route could describe a very large, pointless circle. In a way, it would hardly matter.

At times, you become almost certain that you slabbbed this hillside three days ago, crossed this stream yesterday, clambered over this fallen tree at least twice today already. But most of the time you just don't think. No point. Instead, you exist in a kind of mobile Zen mode, your brain like a balloon tethered with string, accompanying but not actually part of the body below. Walking for hours and miles becomes as automatic, as unremarkable, as breathing. At the end of the day you don't think, ‘Hey, I did sixteen miles today’, any more than you think, ‘Hey, I took eight-thousand breaths today’. It's just what you do.

And so we walked, hour upon hour, over rollercoaster hills along knife-edge ridges and over grassy balds, through depthless ranks of oak, ash, chinquapin, and pine...”

The only point of course to walking the Appalachian, the John Muir or the Pacific Crest trail is to do it. Perhaps you would also reach some new level in the human spirit that you can take with you. In any case, as hikers, we may glean some small bit of this renewal and elevation of spirit – in our case on a biweekly or weekly basis.

Mike Kuhn

SUNDAY EVENING HIKE TIME CHANGE

It's that time again. You know... Daylight Savings Time has ended and it's time to move the Sunday Evening Hike back one hour. So...

Starting in November, and through the month of March, the **Sunday Evening Hike** will start at **4pm**. Don't forget to mark your calendar!

Arlene Altshuler



HOLIDAY POTLUCK

Last year's party was so much fun, we're doing it again!

This year, the
**Rancho Simi Trail Blazers
Holiday Potluck Party**

will be held on
Wednesday, December 15th

at
Al and Marty Richards' home.

Please call Marty at
(805) 526-4414

to discuss what you should bring.

RSTB CLUB MEETING

This month's club meeting will be held at the Community Center

Room B-1
1692 Sycamore Drive
at 7:00 PM

on
Wednesday November 17, 2004

TREE PLANTING IN CORRIGANVILLE

On a bright and sunny Saturday in October, the 9th to be exact, more than 200 volunteers descended on Corriganville Park. The mission: to plant oak trees and elderberry bushes in the areas that burned last fall.

Mission accomplished. The final tally was 195 oak seedlings (1'-2') and 35 elderberry starters were planted. Members of the TreePeople helped to coordinate the efforts of the volunteers, with members of the Rancho Simi Trail Blazers providing their valuable expertise.



Tom from the TreePeople showing volunteers how to properly plant trees. Photo by John Sabol.



Jodene Downey builds a wire cage for an oak tree. Photo by John Sabol.

Trail Blazer Arlene Altshuler helped oversee a large group of adults and scouts in their planting efforts. Meanwhile John Sabol cut countless sections of chicken wire to be used for underground gopher cages that will protect the root structure for the next few years. Other Trail Blazers including **Jodene Downey** (left), Alan Cueba, and Carol Tucker helped with digging, planting, and watering.

In addition to the Rancho Simi Trail Blazers and the TreePeople, there were members of the Kiwanis Club of Simi Valley,

Key Club, many Girl Scout troops (#36, 118, 208, 233, 545, 662, 683, 768), Brownie Troop 484, Cub Scout Pack (#3604, 3690), Busy Hands Garden Club, and park district volunteers Marcie Kraft and Denise Ludwig.

The day was a huge success and the volunteer efforts should produce new trees and plants in the park for many years to come. Thanks to the rains that fell a week after the planting, group members did not need to return immediately to do watering. However, over the next year, volunteer groups who would like to help ensure the success of the trees and plants may offer to organize a watering day. For more information on coordinating a watering effort, contact Colleen at (805) 584-4453 or by e-mail at colleen@rsrpd.us.



ROADS OF EASTERN SIMI*

Kashiwey, the “pass” in Ventureno Chumash, was crossed by a trail which seems to have taken the same route as the later Stagecoach Road. It climbed up *Des Ravina* from where the western portal of the railroad tunnel is today to present day Lilac Lane and then down Devil’s Slide on the eastern side of the pass into what is now called Chatsworth Park. Devil’s Slide itself seems to have gotten its name from a Fernandeno Indian shrine along the trail. The trail was simply the shortest route between the two valleys. The entire trip across the pass from one valley to the other could easily be done in 45 minutes on foot. Not much of a barrier for the ancient traveler.

By the late-1700s, the Spanish had established the El Camino Real, or King’s Highway, through Simi Valley using the old Indian trail over the pass. A letter from Father Jose Senan to Governor Jose Arrillaga, dated April 27, 1804, states “.....The distance between Mission San Fernando and Mission Buenaventura, by way of Santa Susana (presumably the pass, since there was no settlement of Santa Susana at that time) and Simi, is reckoned to be 22 leagues”. Charles Outland concluded that no wheeled vehicle crossed the pass until the stage route was finished in 1861. Any *carreta* trips during Spanish days must have used the Santa Clara River Valley and San Fernando Pass. Just what he based that conclusion on is not known, however, it can be surmised to be based on the steepness of Devil’s Slide.

With the secularization of the missions, San Fernando Mission became a parish church. The main focus of travel then was

* Most of the details contained herein were compiled by City Historian Patricia Havens.

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between Los Angeles and Santa Barbara. So the main Mexican route shifted to what we now think of as the "101 corridor". However, Santa Susana Pass continued to be used as the shortest route between San Fernando and San Buenaventura.

The Coast Stage Line ran through Simi Valley (exiting Simi to the west via Tierra Rejada Valley) from September 1861 through 1875. The stage line followed the old Indian trail and the later El Camino Real. Improvements must have been made to the route in order to accommodate wheeled vehicles. However, the direct and steep route over Devil's Slide rendered the route extremely hazardous for wheeled vehicles. Certainly, the pass road and Devil's Slide in particular must have been an adventure that wore thin on the nerves of the stage line company, drivers and passengers alike.

Stagecoaches were equipped with chains draped over the back sides of the rear wheels so that the stagecoaches could not roll backwards without the chains binding on the wheels. In order to descend Devil's Slide, a beam was tied through the rear wheels of the stagecoach and the coach was then dragged down the hill over the solid rock road. Every hundred feet or so, the beam had to be repositioned so flat spots did not develop on the steel rims. Vaqueros with ropes helped pull the coach up the hill. Passengers, of course, if they had any sense, walked both ways. The stagecoach road reached Simi Valley just west of the western orifice of the railroad tunnel and approximately 1,500 feet east of where Larry's Station, or the "Mountain Station", was located - "Lawrence Howard, Host". Mr. Howard died in 1874.

The difficulty of getting over the old pass road and the expense of maintaining the road resulted in the stage route being relocated through the Conejo Valley in 1875. From that point until 1894 the old stage road was used and little maintained - much to everyone's consternation. (There was no public mechanism to maintain roads at that time in California.) It is likely that there was more than one route up from Chatsworth by that time. However, it would still have been one lane wide, if you could call it that, unmentioned and hazardous.

Citizens continuously complained about how difficult it was to get in and out of Simi Valley. A distinct swell of public pressure began once the valley started to experience the influx of settlers from the Midwest during the boom of the late 1880s and early 1890s. One quote from March 17, 1893, "We people of this valley are a long-suffering, much abused people in the road question. The Santa Susana Pass is about impassable . . . Dear Supervisors, won't you come to the rescue? We are not heathens, we have a vote, and we should like to see our fellow man once in a while". Then on April 14, 1893 - "It is almost impossible for a Simi person to get out of this valley . . . by the Santa Susana Pass and we think the time is ripe for something to be done. This portion of the county is filling up rapidly. We expect to poll 100 votes next election, and we are entitled to a little consideration". Public roads were

just coming about, and there was no mechanism to pay for maintaining public roads or building them. Los Angeles County let a bid to relocate the portion of the pass road under their jurisdiction to the north and to improve it so that freight wagons could avoid Devil's Slide. For Simi Valley residents, delivering crops to the railroad in the Chatsworth area was critical to the economic health of the farm community. In January 1894 a bid for \$728 to build the connection between the old Stagecoach Road in Ventura County and the western terminus of the Los Angeles County road segment was accepted, and grading began later that same month. By 1894 grain was being hauled by wagon to Chatsworth over the pass to the railroad. Other products mentioned were honey, stock, wheat and barley.

The Los Angeles County portion of that road can be seen from the freeway on the south side of the canyon south of the freeway. The 1894 segment connected up near the present Rocky Peak Interchange and extended westerly to the Stagecoach Road at the present day intersection of Lilac Lane and the Santa Susana Pass road. At that time *Des Ravina* was still used to get into Simi Valley from there. C.B. McCoy reaped his first harvest of 2,000 acres of grain and was able to ship his harvest to the railroad in Chatsworth over the new road rather than hauling his crop to Port Hueneme. This road became known as the "Freight Road".

By 1898 construction had begun on an improved Ventura County section of the road, which was completed in 1899. That segment stayed out of *Des Ravina* on the hill to the south. It is the road that can be seen, in the form of dimensioned stone embankments on the hill south of the railroad and the Corriganville parking lot.

As traffic increased and automobiles entered the picture, a demand for a wider and improved route developed. The route became a state highway, and by 1916, what we now call the "Old Pass Road" was completed from Topanga Boulevard to present day Kuehner Drive. That road served the residents of this valley and many other travelers well as a state highway (State Route 118).

At some point, the route between Ventura and Los Angeles through Simi Valley became known as Los Angeles Avenue - a name that remains today on many of the east-west segments.

With the rapid suburban growth of the early 1960s, the pass road became inadequate to carry people to and from work in Los Angeles County. To overcome the bottleneck presented by the pass road, the first freeway segment of the new State Route 118 was completed between Topanga Canyon Road and Yosemite Avenue during the late 1960s. Eventually, the freeway was connected to other freeways at both ends, but we still worry about traffic.

Mike Kuhn



RSTB Calendar November 2004



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2 Long Canyon 6:30pm hike See Schedule <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;">DON'T FORGET TO VOTE!</div>	3 <i>Happy Birthday Don Hunt</i>	4 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	5	6 Mishe Mokwa 8am hike See Schedule
7 Rocky Peak 4pm hike See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday Joe Ferrall</i>	8	9 Long Canyon 6:30pm hike See Schedule	10	11 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	12 <i>Happy Birthday Heidi Portoghesi</i>	13 Happy Camp 8am hike See Schedule
14 Rocky Peak 4pm hike See Schedule	15 <i>Happy Birthday Jim Keppler</i>	16 Long Canyon 6:30pm hike See Schedule	17 RSTB Meeting See Page 1	18 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	19 <i>Happy Birthday Randy Klockenteger</i>	20 Chumash Trail 8am Work Party See Schedule
21 Rocky Peak 4pm hike See Schedule	22	23 Long Canyon 6:30pm hike See Schedule	24 <i>Happy Birthday Arlene Altshuler</i>	25 Happy Thanksgiving!! No Hike	26 <i>Happy Birthday Isabel Johnson</i>	27 Los Robles 8am hike See Schedule
28 Rocky Peak 4pm hike See Schedule	29	30 Long Canyon 6:30pm hike See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday Evelyn McClave Mallory Ham</i>				



Rancho Simi Trail Blazers

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Hiking Schedule



- November 2 Tuesday Evening Hike**
Meet at 6:30pm in Long Canyon parking lot. Directions: Take First Street South. Continue when the road's name changes to Long Canyon Road. The parking lot is at the intersection of Long Canyon Road and Wood Ranch Pkwy. **(Moderate 3 MRT)**
- November 4 Thursday Evening Hike**
Meet at 6pm at Chumash trailhead. Directions - take 118 Fwy to Yosemite exit. Go north on Yosemite, turn right on Flanagan Dr. Trailhead is at the end of Flanagan Dr. **(Strenuous, 5 MRT)**
- November 6 Circle X Ranch - Mishe Mokwa Trail to Sandstone Peak**
Moderate 7 MRT hike with 1500' elevation gain/loss. See a wide variety of vegetation, spectacular rock formations, and the highest peak in the Santa Monica Mountains. This hike is not within the jurisdiction of the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District. Meet 8am near Donut Delite at the corner of Madera and Royal. Bring 2 qts. of water and lunch, wear boots.
- November 7 Sunday Evening Hike**
Meet **4pm** at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. **(Strenuous, 5 MRT)**
- November 9 Tuesday Evening Hike**
Meet at 6:30pm in Long Canyon parking lot. Directions: Take First Street South. Continue when the road's name changes to Long Canyon Road. The parking lot is at the intersection of Long Canyon Road and Wood Ranch Pkwy. **(Moderate 3 MRT)**
- November 11 Thursday Evening Hike**
Meet at 6pm at Chumash trailhead. Directions - take 118 Fwy to Yosemite exit. Go north on Yosemite, turn right on Flanagan Dr. Trailhead is at the end of Flanagan Dr. **(Strenuous, 5 MRT)**
- November 13 Happy Camp Upper Trail**
Moderate to strenuous 10 MRT hike with elevation gain/loss of 1300'. See panoramic views of Simi Valley and Moorpark to the Channel Islands. Bring lunch, 2 - 3 qts of water, binoculars/camera, wear boots. Directions - from Moorpark, take Route 23 north towards Fillmore) to Broadway. Turn right on Broadway, parking lot is at the end of the road (about .3 miles). Meet 8am at Happy Camp parking lot on Broadway.
- November 14 Sunday Evening Hike**
Meet **4pm** at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. **(Strenuous, 5 MRT)**
- November 16 Tuesday Evening Hike**
Meet at 6:30pm in Long Canyon parking lot. Directions: Take First Street South. Continue when the road's name changes to Long Canyon Road. The parking lot is at the intersection of Long Canyon Road and Wood Ranch Pkwy. **(Moderate 3 MRT)**
- November 18 Thursday Evening Hike**
Meet at 6pm at Chumash trailhead. Directions - take 118 Fwy to Yosemite exit. Go north on Yosemite, turn right on Flanagan Dr. Trailhead is at the end of Flanagan Dr. **(Strenuous, 5 MRT)**
- November 20 Chumash Trail Work Party**
Help maintain one of the most traversed trails in Simi Valley. Directions - take 118 Fwy to Yosemite exit. Go north on Yosemite, turn right on Flanagan. Trailhead is at the end of Flanagan. We will be working from 8am – noon. Tools will be provided. Bring 2 - 3 quarts of water, hat, sunscreen, and gloves to work on the trail.
- November 21 Sunday Evening Hike**
Meet **4pm** at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. **(Strenuous, 5 MRT)**
- November 23 Tuesday Evening Hike**
Meet at 6:30pm in Long Canyon parking lot. Directions: Take First Street South. Continue when the road's name changes to Long Canyon Road. The parking lot is at the intersection of Long Canyon Road and Wood Ranch Pkwy. **(Moderate 3 MRT)**
- November 25 Happy Thanksgiving!! No Hike**
- November 27 Los Robles Trail**
Leader's choice. Moderate 4 - 8 MRT. This hike is not within the jurisdiction of the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park district. Bring snack and 2 - 3 qts of water, wear boots. Meet 8am near Donut Delite at the corner of Madera and Royal.
- November 28 Sunday Evening Hike**
Meet **4pm** at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. **(Strenuous, 5 MRT)**
- November 30 Tuesday Evening Hike**
Meet at 6:30pm in Long Canyon parking lot. Directions: Take First Street South. Continue when the road's name changes to Long Canyon Road. The parking lot is at the intersection of Long Canyon Road and Wood Ranch Pkwy. **(Moderate 3 MRT)**

For more information on hikes/work parties, contact the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District at 805-584-4400.

Special Note: - On all hikes and work parties, bring water and wear lug-soled boots. Hikes will be cancelled if it rains. <http://rstb.topcities.com>

RANCHO SIMI TRAIL BLAZERS

A Division of the Rancho Simi Foundation

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MEMBERSHIP

Please enroll me as a New () or Renewing () member of the Rancho Simi Trail Blazers for the annual donation fee of:

Single.....\$10

Family..... \$15

Name(s) _____ Birth Mo. ____ Day ____

Address _____

Email Address _____ Phone wk/hm _____

How did you find out about the RSTB _____

Please make out tax deductible member dues check for the year to:

“Rancho Simi Foundation” mail it to “RSTB, P.O. Box 630445, Simi Valley, Ca 93063

Please list any extra names and birthdays of more than one member (Month & Day Only)



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