



Rancho Simi Trail Blazers

A Division of the Rancho Simi Foundation



MISSION SQUIRREL SHOOTERS

[from Travis Hudson (ed.), *Breath of the Sun* (1980), pp. 15-16]

Fernando Librado noted that one of the jobs at the Mission San Buenaventura was that of squirrel shooter. He related that "Some of the roof beams at the Mission were of cedar, while others were of red pine. All of these and the crossbeams for the roof were tied with rawhide. Ground squirrels got to breeding there, and it got so that there were a lot of them on the Mission's tile roof. [I suspect that the concern was that the squirrel were eating the rawhide that the beams were tied with.] So Fray Alejandro [Branchi, present there 1849-1851], who originally came from Chile, ordered two Indians, Ivon Jose, and Ramaldo [Winai?], to stand in front of the Mission and shoot the squirrels when they made their appearance on the roof.

Ivon Jose, who was still middle-aged by this time, and Ramaldo, were noted archers here in Ventura. Jose's quiver was undecorated and made of buckskin. The Indians then would never make a quiver from a raccoon skin, but rather preferred that of fox. It was an old saying of the Indians that the ideas of the raccoon were not as progressive as those of the fox, for the coon was too much of a thief. [The reference probably related to beliefs that the behavior of certain animals is a supernatural characteristic, which may be inherent in objects made from parts of the animal. Fernando's statement also reflects a ranking of animals in terms of a code of morality.]

Anyway, Ivon and Ramaldo killed the squirrels in this manner: whenever a squirrel came out on the roof, Ivon would say *hi hi* and then shoot. The animal would drop to the ground with an arrow in it."

Mike Kuhn

HOLIDAY POTLUCK

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

will be held on
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 14th

from 6:30pm

at

Al and Marty Richards' home.

Please call Marty at

(805) 526-4414

for directions to their home, and to
discuss what you should bring.

*** WANTED ***

Our group needs a few volunteers. If you are interested in either of these positions, please contact Mike Kuhn.

Newsletter Editor

Someone is needed to take over the newsletter. Training is available.

Publicity Chair

We need someone to get publicity out on Trail Blazer events. Contact Mike Kuhn if you are interested.

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

December 20, 2006



Welcome!

RICH SEIBERT

UPCOMING EVENTS

DECEMBER 16th

North Ridge Trail Work Party – See page 5 for more information.

MARCH 1st – 4th

Death Valley Hiking & Camping Trip

MARCH 17th, 1pm

Mountain Lion Foundation presents "On the Edge" - Free admission. More details coming soon.

APRIL 7th

Wildflower Walk – Antelope Valley

More information on these events can be found at

<http://simitrailblazers.com>

To make reservations, please email Mark Gilmore at

markinthepark@sbcglobal.net.

RSTB LOGO T-SHIRTS

Are your old logo T-shirts worn out?

We still have short sleeve, long sleeve, and sweat shirts in assorted sizes and colors. Prices are:

short sleeve \$12
long sleeve \$14
sweat shirt \$18



Please call Marty if you'd like to place an order: 805-526-4414.

NOVEMBER WORK PARTY

Three Trail Blazers and seven students from California State University Channel Islands turned out on Saturday, November 18th to work on the Upper Stagecoach Trail. Mike Kuhn was not able to lead the work party due to another commitment so I was elected.

We started work at the trailhead on Lilac Lane. We didn't do any tread work but concentrated on clearing brush and weeds from the trail. This was my first work party since I broke my arm in Yosemite National Park in May. My arm is healed enough that I am able to do light work. So I helped by raking up and carrying off the cut brush from the other workers.

It was a very hot day with no breeze. The students did a great job and we finished all but 100 yards of the trail. Mark Scheele and I met on the following Wednesday and finished clearing the remaining section.

Many thanks to the following workers:

Trail Blazers Alan Cueba, John Sabol and Mark Scheele. CSUCI students Justin Hilf, Christina Houston, Lauren Julian, Heather Leohner, Lindsay McCarthy, Ashley Morrison and Alexis Tormis.

John Sabol



Left to right: Alan Cueba, Lindsay McCarthy, Heather Leohner, Mark Scheele, Lauren Julian, Ashley Morrison, Justin Hilf, Christina Houston, and Alexis Tormis.

Photo by John Sabol

ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEM OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN

Most American Indian groups suffered three environmental problems, which they did not overcome and which resulted in a shortened life expectancy. These problems were life in a smoke-filled environment, failure to develop any sort of a biological waste management strategy, and the inclusion of rock debris, i.e., grit, in their diet.

All American Indian groups used wood for fuel – to heat and to cook. For those who had architecture, such as the Chumash *ap*, the plains Indian's tepee, and the Ancestral Puebloan's pithouse and cliff dwelling, fire was brought into the home, and all individuals spent long hours each day in smoke-filled environments. Their lungs were blackened and their lives seriously shortened.

With few exceptions, American Indian groups disposed of their body waste in and immediately around their homes and camps. Their homes and camps, or towns, became smelly places, replete with biological vermin. For the Chumash, this meant that they would burn and abandon their villages every few years in order to start afresh. Intestinal parasites were a constant problem and other infectious organisms acquired through the fecal-oral route also functioned to shorten life expectancy.

Most American Indian groups employed some form of manos and metates, i.e., grinding slabs, and/or mortars and pestles to grind hard seeds, such as corn and other grass seeds, and/or to crush soft seeds, such as acorns and pine nuts, and tubers. The resulting grit in their diets caused their teeth to be worn down to the gum lines by the time they were 20-25 years old – depending on which type of stone was used and the hardness of the individual's tooth enamel. Our teeth typically have ridges and exhibit modest wear. The teeth of American Indians soon were worn flat. Once worn down to the gum lines, the gums became abraded. Systemic infections soon followed, which often led to deaths. Tooth abscesses were a common cause of death among our own population up until the 1940s and the onset of better dental hygiene and, later, the development of antibiotics.

As a result of these environmental problems approximately 30 percent of children died during their first year and life expectancy in general, depending upon which group is being considered, was the late-30s or early 40s. Some individuals did live to be old – even by our standards – but very few.

Mike Kuhn

DID YOU KNOW ???

The name “Sespe”, as in “the Sespe”, comes from the Ventureño Chumash word *seqpe*, which means “kneecap”.

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. The observations were related 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 and guests. Among them were the archaeologists who first suggested that the site might be related to celestial 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, or perhaps they were Fernandinos, use of the site.

The most significant among these is the nature of the Native American's 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. 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 Indians probably didn't have that hang-up. They probably were 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. The site is isolated high in the hills. There are a large number of apparently non-ceremonial bedrock mortars that would have been used for food preparation. This 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.

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 offered 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 Native American 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



*Cheeseboro Canyon Hike, left to right: Carol Tucker, Arlene Altshuler, Margarita Marsh, Doug Marsh, Claudia, Mona Steffen, Roger Steffen, Alan Cueba, and Rafael Zepeda.
Photo by Mark Gilmore*



Carol Tucker, at the Mt. Antonio Summit (10,064')

←



→
Mt. San Antonio Ski Hut



RSTB Calendar December 2006



| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|---|---|--|--|---|-----------|--|
| | | | | | 1 | 2 Sisar Canyon See Schedule |
| 3 Rocky Peak 4pm hike See Schedule | 4 <i>Happy Birthday</i> Linda Travis | 5 Long Canyon 6:30pm hike See Schedule | 6 | 7 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule | 8 | 9 Malibu Creek State Park See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> Judy Garris |
| 10 Rocky Peak 4pm hike See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> Robert Galletly | 11 <i>Happy Birthday</i> Rae Knapp | 12 Long Canyon 6:30pm hike See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> James Hays | 13 <i>Happy Birthday</i> Richard Carroll Gary Valle Bill Cespedes | 14 NO HIKE Holiday Party See Page 1 | 15 | 16 North Ridge Trail Work Party See Schedule |
| 17 Rocky Peak 4pm hike See Schedule | 18 | 19 Long Canyon 6:30pm hike See Schedule | 20 RSTB Meeting See Page 1 | 21 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> Tom Travis | 22 | 23 Devil's Canyon See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> Linda O'Connor |
| 24 NO HIKE CHRISTMAS EVE | 25 | 26 Long Canyon 6:30pm hike See Schedule | 27 | 28 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule | 29 | 30 Happy Camp Upper Trail See Schedule |
| 31 NO HIKE NEW YEAR'S EVE | | | | | | |



Rancho Simi Trail Blazers

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Hiking Schedule



REGULARLY SCHEDULED HIKES

(Rain cancels – No hikes on holidays)

Sunday Evening - Rocky Peak

Meet 4pm at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. (Strenuous, 4.8 MRT)

Tuesday Evening - Long Canyon

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, 3.0 MRT)

Thursday Evening - The Chumash Trail

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, 5.2 MRT)

DECEMBER HIKES

December 2nd - Sisar Canyon to White Ledge**

9 MRT - Moderate (2000' elevation gain) Follow a creek up to the California Bay Laurel trees of the White Ledge campsite in the Topatopa Mountains. Bring 1 to 2 quarts of water, water purifier, layered clothing, and lunch. Wear boots. Meet at 8 AM near Donut Delite at the corner of Madera and Royal.

December 9th - Malibu Creek State Park**

Moderate 6-8 MRT (600' elevation gain) Hike to the old M*A*S*H site. Countless movies have been filmed in this park. There are several options on the way, depending on the desires of the group. We'll see Century Lake and the Rock Pool. Meet at 8 AM near Donut Delite at the corner of Madera and Royal. Bring 2 - 3 quarts of water and a snack. Wear boots.

December 16th - Work Party – North Ridge Trail

Meet at 8AM at corner of Yosemite and Flanagan, parking on Flanagan. We will be working from 8 AM until Noon. Tools will be provided. Bring 2 - 3 quarts of water, hat, sunscreen, and gloves to work on the trail.

December 23rd - Devil's Canyon**

5 MRT - Easy (500' elevation gain) Follow a stream north of Chatsworth and see marine geology & sandstone Caves, in a wooded canyon. Meet at 8 AM near Donut Delite at the corner of Madera and Royal. Bring 2 - 3 quarts of water and a snack. Wear boots.

December 30th - Happy Camp Upper Trail**

10 MRT - Moderate to Strenuous (elevation gain & loss 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 at 8 AM at Happy Camp parking lot on Broadway. For anyone who might decide to meet us at the trailhead, please that there is a \$3.00 parking fee at the trailhead.

** Not within the jurisdiction of the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District.

 No dogs allowed on trail(s).

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.

<http://www.simitrailblazers.com>

RANCHO SIMI TRAIL BLAZERS

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| | | | |
|------------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|
| Executive Chair: | Mike Kuhn | HM (805) 583-2345 | hannahmike@adelphia.net |
| Treasurer: | Peter Ely | HM (805) 523-1409 | |
| Park District Liaison: | Colleen Janssen | WK (805) 584-4453 | volunteers@rsrpd.us |
| Work Parties Chair: | | *** OPEN *** | |
| Hiking Chair: | Mark Gilmore | HM (805) 529-5581 | markinthepark@sbcglobal.net |
| Vice Hiking Chair: | John Sabol | HM (805) 583-2541 | jtsabol@sbcglobal.net |
| Website: | Mark Gilmore | HM (805) 529-5581 | markinthepark@sbcglobal.net |
| Ways & Means Chair: | Marty Richards | HM (805) 526-4414 | |
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| Newsletter Editor: | Arlene Altshuler | HM (805) 581-9735 | arlene.altshuler@mindbox.com |

-----cut out and return with your payment-----

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 93063-0399

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



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