



# Rancho Simi Trail Blazers

*A Division of the Rancho Simi Foundation*



## FEBRUARY TRAIL WORK PARTY

The next Trail Blazers work party will be held **February 21, 2004** again on the upper section of the **Chumash Trail**.

Meet at the trailhead on Flanagan Drive at **8:00 AM**. Please be on time as we will be carpooling up the Rocky Peak Fire Road to access the upper trailhead.

Planned work includes clearing numerous slides across the trail as well as replacing a small retaining wall whose timbers were burned.

We will work from 8:00 AM to 12:00 Noon. Hope to see you there.

Work Parties Chair  
John Sabol



## 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.

## Fog Bows

Nearly everyone has seen a rainbow during or just after a rain. But there is another kind of rainbow that can be observed where there is fog. Fog bows, sometimes called white rainbows, fog dogs or cloud bows, are an almost colorless rainbow formed when sunlight illuminates a patch of fog. They are more rare than rainbows and are mostly seen as an arc of dense fog along the edge of a fog patch. They are generally white and about twice as wide as a normal rainbow.

A rainbow is caused by sunlight entering a spherical rain drop, then being refracted and reflected, before emerging back towards the sun. A ray that strikes the middle of the drop will bounce directly backwards, but rays entering from off-center directions will be scattered and bounce off in a direction different from which they entered thus causing bands of colors.

A fog bow is caused by a process similar to that causing a rainbow. The physics is similar in that the bow is caused by sunlight refracting inside water droplets. But because fog is composed of very small water droplets, the fog bow has little or no colors. When water droplets are smaller than about 50 microns (approximately 0.002 inches), the rainbow angles of the different spectral colors are so small that the colors

overlap, and you get more of a hazy white bow instead of the colorful rainbow.

Since the reflection is mostly back toward the source of light, the source must be relatively low in the sky and more or less at your back to observe rainbows and fog bows. You tend to see rain and fog bows in the morning and afternoon/evening hours.

But fog bows can also be seen at night under the right conditions. For example, you may see ghostly arches over a dark section of a foggy road when you stand with a streetlight to your back.

John Sabol



### 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 February 18, 2004**

### VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Volunteers are needed in Corriganville, to take school children on docent hikes during the week. No prior training is necessary. We will train you.

Learn about the history of Corriganville and native plants and animals, and pass this knowledge on to others.

For more information or to become a volunteer, please contact Colleen Janssen at 805-584-4453.

## JANUARY TRAIL WORK PARTY

Our plan to access the upper Chumash trailhead by way of the Rocky Peak fire road failed, as we couldn't get through the gate. The gate locks are placed in a "Daisy Chain" arrangement where each lock is fastened through the hasp of the locks on each side of it. This arrangement allows any individual lock to open the gate. However, someone had bypassed the Park District Lock by leaving it out of the chain.

We then drove back to the Chumash lower trailhead. Instead of the planned walk down 1/2 mile of trail to the work site we were forced to push a wheelbarrow with tools up 2 miles of trail. And wouldn't you know it; the wind was howling. One of the gusts actually tipped the wheelbarrow over while I was pushing it.

We were only able to accomplish half of our planned work. Two heavy timbers, metal stakes and sledge, needed to replace a retaining wall whose timbers had burned, had to be left behind.

However we did accomplish a major effort to repair a damaged section of trail. The section we worked on had a collapsed outer trail edge, forcing hikers to walk on a rock slab with a steep side slope and forcing a large upward step at the end of the section. We built a rock retaining wall on the outer trail edge and filled the area between the rock wall and the sloped slab with rock and dirt. The end result was a ramp with no sideslope and no step.

Many thanks to the following workers who did a great job:

Arlene Altshuler, Martin DeGoey, Louise Pomes, Chuck Portoghesi, Linda Travis, Tom Travis, Mark Scheele and John Sabol.

Work Parties Chair  
John Sabol



*Chumash Trail work party, left to right: Martin DeGoey, Mark Scheele, Arlene Altshuler, Linda Travis, Louise Pomes, Tom Travis, and Chuck Portoghesi.*



## PLANT COMMUNITIES IN SIMI VALLEY

Wildland vegetation in Simi Valley can be classified into a number of "plant communities." Each community is made up of different plants, which can normally be found together. While any one plant type may be found in more than one plant community (or association), the presence of a number of different plants together and the absence of some other species permits us to characterize the grouping as a specific plant "community." While this system of broadly describing plant communities works pretty well, it is simply a classification scheme, which allows us to generalize about the nature of the vegetation in any one place or given plot of ground. There are a number of different classification schemes, which, of course, differ. For any local area, there are recognized subtypes within any plant community. Transitional situations occur where, for example, both chaparral and coastal sage scrub species are equally represented, so it becomes harder to characterize the locale as a single plant community. Be this as it may, the concept of a plant community is generally very useful in characterizing the vegetation in any area.

Plant communities change somewhat throughout the year. During the winter, spring and early summer many annual plants are present. These plants cannot be observed, other than in a desiccated condition, during the late-summer and fall periods. Even perennial plants may die back during the late summer and fall periods, but resprout from the same root mass during the wet season.

For simplicity purposes, I would like to list just five (5) plant communities. They are: 1) Coastal Sage Scrub; 2) Chaparral; 3) Oak Woodlands; 4) Grasslands; and 5) Riparian and Wetlands. The plants in those communities are listed more exhaustively in the appendix (pages 489-492) of *Simi Valley: A Journey Through Time* (1997). (If you haven't purchased a copy, they can be obtained at the Strathearn Historical Park on Strathearn Place.) A wonderful source for identification of local plants is Milt McAuley's *Wildflowers of the Santa Monica Mountains* (1979). Milt's book can be purchased at many locations, one of which is the National Park Service's office in the old Thousand Oaks City Hall near the Oaks Mall.

Mike Kuhn



## FORMATION OF THE SIMI LAND AND WATER COMPANY

The Simi Land and Water Company was formed in August 1887. According to Janet Cameron, based on information provided to her by Bud Taylor, the purchase price for the land was \$550,000 in the form of a stack of greenbacks more than a foot high which were tied with a string. The Stow and Fower survey of Simi Valley, dated 1887-88, was prepared so that parcels, large and small could be offered for sale. Those property lines largely laid the backbone road system we know today – except for the freeway.

Mike Kuhn

## THE RAILROAD AND THE ARROYO SIMI

Railroads require a nearly constant low grade. In mountainous and hilly parts of the country that means that the tracks must follow and sometimes conflict with stream courses. Streams must be bridged or their courses altered in order to minimize the number of bridges that are required. The land must be drained and costs must be minimized. Drainage infrastructure and transportation corridors must be planned in concert in order to achieve that goal. A fascinating example exists in Simi Valley.

The Arroyo Simi is the main drainage facility in Simi Valley. Where it runs northwesterly past the Metrolink Station it must go around a point of hills before turning to the southwest. No problem – here the arroyo is pressed against the southern side of the valley. However, the geometry of the arroyo eventually led to a transportation quagmire. When Los Angeles Avenue was built, it ran east-west along “section” lines. However, it had to deviate to the north to avoid two crossings of the arroyo. It still had to bridge the Arroyo Las Llajas, which had a confluence with the Arroyo Simi just below the point of the hill.

When the railroad came through in 1904 it had to cross the Arroyo Simi twice within a few hundred feet – yes, two bridges. In order to avoid a third bridge within a few hundred feet, the Arroyo Las Llajas was diverted easterly to a new confluence with the Arroyo Simi between the two railroad bridges south of Los Angeles Avenue – pretty neat!

Eventually, during the late-1970s, the end of the hill was somewhat shortened to allow the now channelized Arroyo Simi to remain south of the railroad bridges. The Las Llajas Flood Control Channel was constructed due south from its natural north-south alignment in order to effect a more hydraulically efficient confluence with the Arroyo Simi. The two railroad bridges remain, although now buried, and they still support the railroad.

Now comes the fun part. Much of the east-central portion of the City – generally around Stearns Street, was developed, before the City was incorporated, without storm drains. As a result, the area south of Los Angeles Avenue and west of Stearns Street flooded periodically, and there was a potential for much wider flooding. When the Indian Hills subdivision came along in the late-1970s, the Stearns Street Drain Assessment District was formed in order to finance a storm drain system for that east-central part of the City, otherwise the Indian Hills development would simply have exacerbated a bad situation. That storm drain was built south in Stearns Street to a point a little south of Leeds Street, and then was constructed diagonally to the southwest across what is now the Rancho Santa Susana Community Park. Access under the railroad to the Arroyo Simi was taken by building the storm drain under one of the now buried railroad bridges. That was a rather elegant engineering solution, which saved our citizens a great deal of money while not molesting the railroad. Engineers are required if you are going to build a City.

Mike Kuhn



### CHUMASH PRACTICE WHEN ONE DIED

All cultures have specific practices when someone dies. In simple terms, when someone dies in our culture, there is a viewing, then a funeral service, then another ceremony at the graveside. Then people gather at the home of the deceased. What follows is a window on what the Ventureño Chumash did, at a personal level, when someone died. This appears in Fernando Librado’s *Breath of the Sun*, page 76.

*“The last time I saw an old Indian die here in Ventura, it was the death of Salvador, a very old man who had been in charge of the Mission looms. He was survived by his wife. The same afternoon, people began to congregate about the front of the house. The doorway of the house faced south.*

*All those who came brought with them a dish of food, such as corn, beans, chia, and so on, and these were taken by the old woman. She would stand and throw all the food, taking it from her left and throwing it, pinchwise with the palm of her hand downward, to the four directions. The people stood around and cried. When she completed a basket of food, she would return the basket to the owner. This throwing ceremony was repeated in the afternoons for three days. On the third day, however, the baskets of the dead man were burned.*

*I asked one of the people why this throwing ceremony was done. She said that they did this for three days because they believed in a malignant spirit. She also said that if a dog came and picked up any of the food they had thrown to the four directions, and died later, it was evidence that somebody had been there and had thrown some poison.”*

Fernando provided his information to John Peabody Harrington sometime after 1900. However, he was clearly describing an event that had occurred years before. It appears to be significant that the door of the house faced the south. Perhaps this tells us something about when doors were placed in Indian homes. Food may have been offered to placate the “malignant spirits.” We also learn that men, not just women, own baskets - and those baskets were destroyed when the person died. Finally, any death brought suspicion that that some bad person may have poisoned the person who had died.

However, all in all, the ceremony seems like a very nice way to effect closure on a person’s death.

Mike Kuhn



# February

## 2004



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>1</b> <b>Rocky Peak</b> <b>4pm hike</b> <b>See Schedule</b> <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Caroline Carroll</i>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> <b>Chumash Trail</b> <b>6pm hike</b> <b>See Schedule</b>	<b>6</b> <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Phil Pratt</i>	<b>7</b> <b>Ahmanson Ranch</b> <b>See Schedule</b>
<b>8</b> <b>Rocky Peak</b> <b>4pm hike</b> <b>See Schedule</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b> <b>Chumash Trail</b> <b>6pm hike</b> <b>See Schedule</b>	<b>13</b> <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Chuck Portoghesi</i>	<b>14</b> <b>Happy Camp</b> <b>See Schedule</b> <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Jim Lightfoot</i> <i>Doug Marsh</i>
<b>15</b> <b>Rocky Peak</b> <b>4pm hike</b> <b>See Schedule</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b> <b>RSTB Meeting</b> <b>See Page 1</b>	<b>19</b> <b>Chumash Trail</b> <b>6pm hike</b> <b>See Schedule</b>	<b>20</b> <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Steve Schmidt</i> <i>Mary Ann Campbell</i>	<b>21</b> <b>Chumash Trail</b> <b>Work Party</b> <b>See Schedule</b>
<b>22</b> <b>Rocky Peak</b> <b>4pm hike</b> <b>See Schedule</b> <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Lorraine Ferrall</i>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Connie Ankrom</i>	<b>25</b> <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>David Seifert</i>	<b>26</b> <b>Chumash Trail</b> <b>6pm hike</b> <b>See Schedule</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> <b>Michael D. Antonovich Regional Park</b> <b>See Schedule</b>
<b>29</b> <b>Rocky Peak</b> <b>4pm hike</b> <b>See Schedule</b>						



# Rancho Simi Trail Blazers

## Hiking Schedule



- February 1 Sunday Evening Hike**  
Meet 4pm at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. (Strenuous, 5 MRT)
- February 5 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. (moderate, 5 MRT)
- February 7 Ahmanson Ranch Exploratory Hike**  
Explore the new Ahmanson Ranch area. 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. Wear boots, bring bug juice, snack, and 2 - 3 quarts of water.
- February 8 Sunday Evening Hike**  
Meet 4pm at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. (Strenuous, 5 MRT)
- February 12 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. (moderate, 5 MRT)
- February 14 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 **8:30am** at Happy Camp parking lot on Broadway.
- February 15 Sunday Evening Hike**  
Meet 4pm at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. (Strenuous, 5 MRT)
- February 19 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. (moderate, 5 MRT)
- February 21 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.
- February 22 Sunday Evening Hike**  
Meet 4pm at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. (Strenuous, 5 MRT)
- February 26 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. (moderate, 5 MRT)
- February 28 Michael D. Antonovich Regional Park**  
Explore the Jouquin Ranch area. 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. Wear boots, bring bug juice, snack, and 2 - 3 quarts of water.
- February 29 Sunday Evening Hike**  
Meet 4pm at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. (Strenuous, 5 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.

**RANCHO SIMI TRAIL BLAZERS**

EXECUTIVE CHAIR:	MIKE KUHN	HM (805) 583-2345
TREASURER:	PETER ELY	HM (805) 523-1409
SECRETARY:	DAVID WAGNER	HM (805) 577-5931
PARK DISTRICT LIAISON:	COLLEEN JANSSEN	WK (805) 584-4453
WORK PARTIES CHAIR:	JOHN SABOL	HM (805) 583-2541
HIKING CHAIR & WEBSITE:	ARLENE ALTSHULER	HM (805) 581-9735
WAYS & MEANS CHAIR:	MARTY RICHARDS	HM (805) 526-4414
PUBLICITY CHAIR:	URSULA CHRISTIE	HM (805) 527-5338
NEWSLETTER EDITOR:	ARLENE ALTSHULER	HM (805) 581-9735

-----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

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



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