



# Rancho Simi Trail Blazers



## JUAN JOSE FUSTERO: LAST OF THE PIRUS

Juan Jose Fustero was born in 1841 near a sweathouse at the mouth of Holzer Canyon about two miles south of present day Lake Piru. Juan, by the tradition of the time, was the last full blooded Piru (*pi'rukvit*) Indian. The Indians of the village of Piru (listed as *pi'iruk* by Harrington - the final *k* is half silent) were Tataviam - also called Alliklik by the Chumash (*Serreno* by the Spanish), part of the Indians of Shoshonian stock that migrated from the Great Basin and Mojave Desert beginning approximately 1,200 years ago, displacing the Chumash Indians in the process. The name *pi'iruk*, like most Tataviam names in the area, including *kamulus* (*camulo* to the Spanish) was of Chumash origin. The name refers to "tules."

The Tataviam were much influenced by the Chumash - adopting many Chumash names and customs. For example, the Tataviam had practiced cremations, but adopted burials under the influence of the Chumash. The Tataviam also adopted the Chumash calendar. They had kept no calendar for more than a year at a time. So, nobody knew how old they were. Their calendar was limited to the phases of the moon and was not adjusted to the seasons, i.e., the winter or summer solstices.

At the age of 32, Juan Jose sought U.S. citizenship in court in Ventura County. Needing a last name (The Tataviam focused only on their first names.), the judge ascertained that Juan, like his father, was a maker of saddle trees, so he assigned the last name of *fustor* to Juan to reflect his trade. Juan's father, also named Juan Jose, died some years later without a last name. To younger Juan's dying day, he did not consider a last name necessary.

Cont. on page 2 Col.1

## PARK DISTRICT ASSESSMENT DRIVE

A word of acknowledgement and thank to those Rancho Simi Trail Blazers who helped with the Park District Assessment ballot measure. Members of whom I am aware that helped include (I'm sure that I have failed to mention one or more persons - please forgive the omission.): Marcie Kraft (the chairperson), Don Hunt, Tom Frye, Don Alexander, Jeane whittle, and Gary Cremeans. Ballots will be counted the night of March 9.

## RSTB CLUB MEETING

The monthly club meeting will be held at the Community Center In the B-1 Room 1692 Sycamore At 7:00 PM On Wednesday March 15th.



## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

**Kerry Iverson  
Robert Foster**

## FEBRUARY TRAIL WORK PARTIES

Due to the Boy Scout Adopt a Trail effort, two work parties were again held this month. Eleven scouts and 2 leaders from Boy Scout Troop 682 were directed by John Downey and worked on the Upper Stagecoach Trail. Lopping and minor trail tread work was performed. Trash on the trail was also removed.

Special thanks to work party leader John Downey, Scout leaders Houston Keathley and Craig Oakford and scouts Michael Hammon, Anthony Harper, Jesse Jenkins, Michael Lindberg, Justin Matheson, Jeremy Mortensen, Michael Oakford, Stephen Sass, Dean Smutny, Darin Turpin and Brent Whitney.

On the Chumash Trail, work was concentrated on the center portion of the trail near Hamilton Saddle and consisted of berm work and filling in and smoothing the trail surface. In addition, a large tall rock jutting up in the center of the trail has been a hazard and was removed. We worked from 8:00-12:00 and as usual, met at Chuy's after finishing. Many thanks to the following workers:

Arlene Altshuler, Gary Cremeans, Martin DeGoey, Tom Frye, Michael Kuhn, Kris Miner, Don Ploski, Chris Ploski, Chuck Portoghesi and John Sabol.

Also, a special thanks to two mountain bikers who frequent the trail, Fred Ansaldi of CORBA and his friend Gary. Earlier in the week, working by themselves, they did a great job moving dirt and fill-

Cont. on page 2 Col. 3

Juan enjoyed a relatively simple life in Piru Canyon. He seems to have garnered the respect of his Anglo-American neighbors as one of the best lasso and saddle tree makers, horsemen and ropers in Ventura County and as the last of the *Pi'irukvit*. Juan's father had sold much of his portion of Piru Canyon when Juan was sixteen for the price of 40 horses cut from the herd of Don Ygnacio del Valle at Rancho Camulos. Don Ygnacio had originally paid \$4,000 for his three square leagues of Piru Canyon. However, he found much of the canyon occupied by Piru Indians, who he induced to move further up the canyon beyond the grasslands needed for his livestock.

Juan became as famous for his gold as for his horsemanship. Periodically he would take the train into Los Angeles, where he would sell a polk of gold dust and an arm load of *reatas* (lassos) fashioned from the native grasses of Piru Canyon. Most of the money was used in the bars of Los Angeles, but he would return each time with enough money to pay his grocery tab to L.B. Mayfield in the community of Piru. Juan and his family would then survive on the new tab until he again traveled to Los Angeles. Grocer Mayfield, eventually adopted the habit of borrowing \$50 from Juan every so often, so that when Juan would return from Los Angeles he would find five ten dollar gold pieces stacked on the counter at the Mayfield store to pay for the groceries he needed. Obviously, Juan trusted grocer Mayfield.

Juan Fustero married twice and his eight children were part Piru and part Temecula.

Many individuals tried to find the source of Juan's gold. But the secret died with him in 1921 at the age of 80. Like his father and several of his children, he was buried under what is now Lake Piru - the last of the *pi'irukvit*.

Mike Kuhn

ing in three areas on the upper Chumash that had severely protruding rocks. Thanks guys!

To facilitate the Boy Scouts "Adopt a Trail" effort and eliminate the difficulty of providing leaders and tools for multiple work parties, a trail maintenance schedule for the entire year has been made up. The schedule will be distributed to the scout troops and posted in the Simi Valley and Oak Park trail kiosks. It is hoped the scouts can attend the scheduled Rancho Simi Trailblazer work parties until such time they feel comfortable they have learned the basic maintenance techniques and can perform trail work on their own.

The next work party will be held March 18 on the Hummingbird Trail and we will work from 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM. Hope to see you there.

Work Parties Chair  
John Sabol

### CLASS ON HIKING IN SIMI VALLEY

The Trail Blazers will offer a class on Hiking in Simi Valley beginning on Tuesday April 4 and 11 from 7:00-9:00 p.m. in the Multi-purpose Room at the Park District headquarters at 1692 Sycamore Drive. Saturday hikes are also offered on April 8 and 15. The classes will cover basic hiking techniques and equipment; trail etiquette, local trails, introduction to published literature, how to use maps, trail hazards, maintenance and construction. Saturday hikes will be on the Mt. McCoy and the Hummingbird trails. The cost is \$15. Signup is through the Park District. Call Mike Kuhn (805) 583-2345 for information.

### GEOLOGY OF THE CANYON VIEW TRAIL

The Canyon View Trail extends along the top of the ridge south of Long Canyon Village in Wood Ranch. The trail head is located on the northern side of Long Canyon road a few hundred feet east of Wood Ranch Parkway. The entire trail is underlain by the Las Lajas Formation, an Eocene Epoch marine formation that was deposited between 54 and 50 million years ago in a warm ocean. At the time, the earth was going through the last true greenhouse effect. The polar areas were ice free and warm currents bathed the continental margins.

Where the trail begins east of the intersection of Wood Ranch Parkway and Long Canyon Road, a low pass into Long Canyon is formed by the presence of gray silty claystone and siltstone. This material weathers into high clay soils - so don't go hiking after a rain or when the ground is very wet. The mud- and siltstone abruptly transitions into a tan sandstone, which was deposited in shallow water as storm-influenced sands. The sandstone forms picturesque outcroppings. The sandstone is bounded on the north by mud- and siltstone that was deposited in deep water. The top of the ridge directly north of Long Canyon is defined by another stratum of shallow marine sandstone. This sandstone is well drained and easy to walk on even when wet. The sandstone is more resistant to weathering and erosion than the siltstone. As a result, it is responsible for the presence of the high ridge between Long Canyon and Simi Valley.

All of the bedrock units dip by 35-42 degrees to the north-northwest. Because the siltstone and mudstone is structurally weak and poorly drained, the north side of the ridge is given to some instability. Approximately 1,000 feet west of where First Street enters Long Canyon, there is a large old, perhaps tens of thousands of years old, landslide that can be seen if you know what to look for.

## PICTOGRAPHS OF RIDERS ON HORSEBACK

An unusual Chumash pictograph site in the Santa Monica Mountains is focused on four riders on horses and/or mules. I recently visited the site and had an opportunity to photograph the site. It is formally known as LAn-717 and is one of the most interesting and brightest rock art sites in the mountain range.

An academic analysis of the site by Gregory A. Reinhardt, entitled "Pictographs with a Historic Component: LAn-717, A Los Angeles County Rock Art Site," appears in *Messages from the Past: Studies in California Rock Art*, Monograph XX, Institute of Archaeology, University of California, Los Angeles, n.d.

The panel is done nearly entirely in red pigment. The riders are arranged in a line - one after the other as though they represent a particular group of equestrians and a particular event. Because of the consistency of style that is shared by each image, it obvious that all four figures were painted by the same individual. The horses are accurately depicted, as are the riders in relationship to the horses. The artist, then, would appear to be an eye witness - not someone simply depicting an event passed by word of mouth from one person to another. At least three groups of ritualistic figures seem to face the equestrians from below - in awe of what they see. The panel is focused on the riders as though their passage represents a major event in the life of the Chumash observers. The panel, at least most of it, was certainly composed during the historic period. The composition may celebrate the first encounter with people of western European culture and the horse or mule. So, who do the equestrians represent?

Most likely the rock art panel depicts one of the Portola expeditions, i.e., of 1769 or 1770. Portola's first expedition left San Diego in early summer of 1769 to meet with the packetboat San Antonio at Monterey Bay. The land force, which included Fray Junipera Serra, passed north of the rock art site on August 10,

1769, and sent scouts south to explore for a possible coastal route to Monterey.

Portola missed the San Antonio, which did land at Point Conception about 125 miles west of the Malibu on its return voyage. They inquired about the Portola expedition and were informed through gestures about how the expedition had passed through the area on horseback going north and then about their return. The Indians acted out the scene by sitting astride water casks, which had been brought ashore, and made appropriate gestures to indicate horsemen.

Juan Rodriques Cabrillo had traveled up and down the coast by ship in 1542-43 as well as Viscaino in 1602. Both sailed in open, undecked vessels. There is no record to indicate that they had any horses or mules.

The Anza expedition came through southern California in 1774. However, Anza traveled well north of the Santa Monica Mountains.

Another explanation is that the pictograph panel was painted during the mission period as magic against the Spanish/Mexican intruders. If this were the case, one might expect more than just four riders and many other motifs of Spanish/Mexican life. The four riders, as previously stated, seem to depict an event. However, it is still possible that a group of formerly friendly Chumash Indians returned to this old place of "power" to call upon adverse power to rid the land of the now unwanted invaders by controlling their spirits.

Finally, one is tempted to refer to the equestrians as the "four horsemen of the Apocalypse," a story that could have been relayed by priests in the missions. This seems unlikely since the biblical horsemen carried a bow, a pair of balance scales, and a sword. Only one equestrian at LAn-717 seems to be carrying anything. We are, of course, always quick to put things in our own frame of reference.

So, my money is on the depiction of the Portola expedition. How could the Indi-

ans know that the event would lead to the utter destruction of their culture and the death of 75-80% of their population within three to four decades. A universe collapsed and another took its place. How sad for us all.

Mike Kuhn



Cont. from page 2 col. 3

As the Simi Hills are uplifted by compressional forces associated with the collision of the North American and the North Pacific plates, Oak Creek has maintained a water gap through the high ridge by the process of water erosion that has kept up with the effects of uplift. The results is a "water gap" similar to that formed where Malibu Creek cuts completely through the Santa Monica Mountains.

The Canyon View Trail awaits you.

Mike Kuhn





# MARCH

2000



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			<b>1</b>	<b>2</b> Chumash Hike starting at 4 pm & 6 pm See sched-	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> China Flat Hike Meet at Trailhead At 8:30am Read sched- ule
<b>5</b> Rocky Peak Trail Hike Meet at 4 PM See schedule	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> Happy Birth- day <b>Colleen Janssen</b>	<b>9</b> Chumash Hike starting at 4 pm & 6 pm See sched-	<b>10</b> Happy Birth- day <b>Tom McCarthy</b>	<b>11</b> Happy Camp Hike Upper Trail 8:30 AM Read sched- ule
<b>12</b> Rocky Peak Trail Hike Meet at 4 PM See schedule	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> Happy Birth- day <b>David Law- son</b>	<b>15</b> RSTB CLUB MEETING Community Center 1692 Syca- more At 7:00 PM Happy Birth-	<b>16</b> Chumash Hike starting at 4 pm & 6 pm See schedule	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b> Hummingbird Trail Work Party 8 AM to Noon See Schedule
<b>19</b> Rocky Peak Trail Hike Meet at 4 PM See schedule Happy Birth- day <b>Victoria</b>	<b>20</b> 1st.day of Spring	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b> Chumash Hike starting at 4 pm & 6 pm See schedule	<b>24</b> <b>St. Pat- rick's Day</b>	<b>25</b> Sage Ranch Hike Easy to moder- ate Meet at 8 AM See Schedule
<b>26</b> Rocky Peak Trail Hike Meet at 4 PM See schedule	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> Happy Birth- day <b>Pete Means</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b> Chumash Hike starting at 4 pm & 6 pm See schedule	<b>31</b>	



