



# Rancho Simi Trail Blazers



## MARCH WORK PARTY

The next Trail Blazers work party will be held on Saturday, **March 15**, again on the **Chumash Trail**.

We will drive up the Rocky Peak Fire Road to access the upper trailhead to continue repair of the upper portion of the trail.

Meet at the trailhead at the end of Flanagan Drive in Simi Valley at **8:00 AM**. We will work from 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM. Hope to see you there.



Work Parties Chair

## FEBRUARY WORK PARTY

Ten Rancho Simi Trail Blazers turned out to work on the Chumash Trail for the February work party. Since the ground was still damp from the rains, we concentrated on pulling in berms and fixing erosion damage. It was very pleasant to dig in soft wet dirt (and not choke on dust). Two major drainages were improved on separate sections of the trail. Several large rocks sticking up in the trail were also dug up and removed near the trail's 1-3/4 mile mark.

We worked from 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM and an impressive amount of work was done. Many thanks to the following workers:

Bob Altieri, Arlene Altshuler, Bill Cespedes, Martin DeGoy, Tom Frye, Mike Kuhn, Louise Pomes, Chuck Portoghesi, John Sabol and Mark Scheele.

Work Parties Chair

## ADVENTURE PASS EXTENSION FOR ANGELES NAT'L FOREST

If you have a 2003 Adventure Pass, the expiration will be extended for 3 months to compensate users for the period of time that Forest closures were in effect due to extreme fire danger. Information can be found on the Angeles National Forest website:

<http://www.r5.fs.fed.us/angeles/visitor/adventurepass/adventurepass.html>

**Note** that this extension applies **ONLY**



## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

**Myrna Steinman  
Mark, Song, and Jennifer Scheele**

## RSTB CLUB MEETING

The monthly club meeting will be held at the  
Community Center  
Room B-1  
1692 Sycamore Drive  
At 7:00 PM  
On

## 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 Jans-



## 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



## THE BARK THAT GUARDS THE TREE

A very short story from Fernando Librado's *Breath of the Sun*, page 111:

Chico Pescador, a Chumash Indian, was said never to have taken a bath. He was once asked why he never washed his face. He replied, "I do not wash my face because it is the bark that guards the tree."

## EGG CAVE AND SHAMAN CAVE

One day in 2002 two spelunkers, deep in a high desert canyon, spotted what they hoped was the entrance to a cave high on the southern canyon wall. Climbing to the mouth of the cave, they discovered that it extended back about 50 feet. Where the cave floor alluvial fill met the roof at the back of the cave, they pulled away some dirt to see if the cave opened up. In doing so, they uncovered a fragment of Native American Indian basketry. At that point, they left the cave and notified appropriate authorities about their find in what is now called "Egg Cave."

Whether they noticed or not, another cave entrance is located on the opposite side of the canyon at approximately the same elevation. At one time, these two caves were part of one single cave formed in the limestone when it was located at a much lower elevation and when the water table in the area was above the level of the cave. The mountains were elevated so quickly that no speleothems, i.e., secondary mineral deposits that form in wet caves above the water table, formed. The walls of the caves are relatively smooth. As the mountains were formed, the canyon was eroded, separating the two segments of the cave.

During January 2003 I had the privilege to visit the site of the caves. I made the climb to Egg Cave. The cave floor had probably been looted many years ago. One small section of the cave floor had been dug to a depth of about 25 centimeters. However, that was the only evidence of digging. The cave walls have dozens of cave paintings on them. Many of them rendered in red pigment and probably very old. The youngest paintings were done in black pigment and include one man on a horse and one horse, mule or donkey. Most of the pictographs are covered with scratches – a common type of Indian petroglyph.

Why did the Indians visit such a remote site? There are at least three explanations for this – all of which may have been the

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motives for visitation at various times. The first is that the canyon is rich in plant resources – so this was part of their supermarket. These high canyons were much better watered than the bajada/alluvial fan surfaces at the bases of the mountains. The cave would have represented a good place to spend the night. The cave is warmer in the winter and freer of wind than the outside and presents a flat floor. The cave is easily heated with a fire. Indeed, the ceiling of the cave is covered with soot. In summer, the cave is much cooler than the air outside.

The second possible reason is that it served as a "shaman" cave. The spiritual/ritual/medical authorities of a group are now generally referred to as shaman. The presence of cave paintings and the absence of food preparation and hunting paraphernalia would suggest a shaman cave, visited only infrequently for religious purposes.

The third possible reason for the Indian use of the cave may have been as a refuge from our own army. Back in the 1870s the U.S. Army mounted an expedition to kill Indians. That force, which was relatively unsuccessful, passed by the mouth of the canyon where the caves are located. At a nearby spring, they found that the Indians had been growing corn by irrigation, but no Indians were to be found. On the top of a high ridge in the range to the south, a substantial Indian campsite with historical items has been found. That site is inaccessible by horseback but has a great view of the approach used by the army. The presence in the cave of a pictograph of a man on horseback lends some support for this hypothesis. The head of the horseman



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## SIMI VALLEY DURING THE LATE-1870s

One of the first books written about Simi Valley is by Robert E. Harrington. His book, *Early Days of Simi Valley* (1961) was published when Mr. Harrington had been a 53 year resident of the valley. On page 16, he describes Ignatius Philbrook, who came to Simi in 1878 with his family and settled on a "bee ranch" in a canyon about one mile west of the Strathearn place. His daughter, eleven years old at the time, later in life provided the following description of Simi Valley:

"At that time the only residents of the Simi Valley were Charles Hoar, his nephew, Charles Wise, the Barnetts living near the center of the valley, Pete or Captain Will Brown, living in the old De la Guerra Adobe ...and our family of ten. The nearest school was at Conejo, twelve miles away and the nearest Post Office was at Newberry Park. We children brought the mail in a barley sack once a week, going over on horseback. Mr Hoar took much reading matter and very kindly passed it over to us to read. He was a recluse, only leaving his ranch a few times a year. We took his mail to him, usually in the later afternoon or evening, but never saw him, leaving the bag on his door step and hurrying away. We also delivered Captain Brown's mail and F. A. Snyder's (who lived with the Browns in the old adobe ranch house) ....."

While the Pilbrooks lived west of Simi, they had to go to Hueneme to shop. They went by horse and wagon,



*Wild Hyacinth (Dichelostemma capitatum ssp. Pauciflorum)*

## PLANT WATER-SAVING ADAPTATIONS

Since water is the key to life for plants, how do chaparral plants survive in the long arid period of our hot summer months? The answer is to conserve any available moisture through the use of one or more water-saving adaptations.

In plants, nearly 99% of the water taken in by roots is released by the plant into the air in a process known as transpiration. This loss is mainly through pores in the bottom surface of their leaves called stomata (singular stoma). It stands to reason then, if plants can develop ways to reduce this moisture loss they have a much better chance of survival during drought conditions.

The main factors affecting transpiration are temperature, humidity and wind. High temperature, low humidity and wind all increase water loss.

There are various adaptive mechanisms plants use to survive and most use more than one method. The main adaptations are listed below:

**Small Narrow Leaves** reduce the number of stomata and provide relatively little leaf surface for water to escape. Chamise and California Buckwheat are examples.

**Thick Cuticles** (the protective outer coating of a leaf) insure water does not escape through the leaf cell walls. Also employed are waxy or sticky coatings on the leaf surface. Coast Live Oak leaves are thick and waxy and Bush Monkey Flower leaves are sticky.

**Stomata that close** during dark non-photosynthetic periods. They also close if the leaf temperature exceeds 30-35 Deg. C. Most chaparral plants have this capacity.

**Light Coloration** of the leaves. A light colored leaf reflects more sunlight, reduces the temperature of the leaf and thus water loss. The Chalk Live-Forever is a good example.

**Hairs on leaf** protect the leaf surface from wind action and thus reduce the rate of transpiration. White Sage is an example.

**Leaf movement** (phototropism) – Leaves turn and bend in a way that always present their edges to the direction of the sun and thus offer very little area to be heated. Hoary-Leaved Ceanothus leaves, all aligned, can be seen tracking the sun on many of our trails during the hot summer months

**Thick fleshy leaves** - Store water in times of plenty for later use. Cacti and Live-Forevers are examples.

**Drought deciduous** - Some plants shed all or part of their foliage when water is scarce and enter a period of dormancy. When winter rains fall they “come back to life” and produce new foliage. Giant Coreopsis is fully drought deciduous while Bush Monkey Flower is partially drought deciduous.

**No leaves** – The body and/or stems are green and perform photosynthesis. This adaptation presents less surface area to both sunlight and wind. Again cacti are

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Certainly the cave is inaccessible by horseback and would have been secure simply because of its remoteness. Here, during a time when our government actively hunted Indian men, women and children, with a take-no-prisoners mandate, a drama may have unfolded in the demise and subjugation of the American Indians.

Shaman Cave on the northern side of the Canyon also contains some pictographs. I did not visit the cave because it looked to be harder to get to and I was tired. Those who did, indicated that it very interesting because it is several hundred feet long, with two radical turns. The back end of the cave is totally dark and silent – perhaps a very special place for a shaman.



*Bush Sunflower (Encelia Californica)*



*On the China Flat Trail (left to right): Mike Kuhn, Arlene Altshuler, and Carol Tucker*



# March

2003



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						<b>1</b> Secret Trail to Red Rock Cyn See Schedule
<b>2</b> Rocky Peak 4pm hike See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> Martin DeGoey	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> Hummingbird Creek Flower Walk See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> Colleen Janssen
<b>9</b> Rocky Peak 4pm hike See Schedule	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b> Chumash Trail Work Party See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> Gary Hartung
<b>16</b> Rocky Peak 4pm hike See Schedule	<b>17</b> <i>Happy Birthday</i> Rick Johnson	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b> RSTB Meeting See Page 1	<b>20</b> Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b> Serrano Valley Loop See Schedule
<b>23</b> Rocky Peak 4pm hike See Schedule	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> Diana Peebles	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b> Botany Foray in Sespe Burn Area See Schedule
<b>30</b> Rocky Peak 4pm hike See Schedule	<b>31</b>					



# Rancho Simi Trail Blazers

## Hiking Schedule



- March 1 Secret Trail to Red Rock Canyon**  
Moderate hike, approximately 5 miles one way, with a stop on Calabasas Peak. 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 -3 qts. of
- March 2 Sunday Evening Hike**  
Meet 4pm at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. (Strenuous, 5 MRT)
- March 6 Thursday Evening Hike**  
Meet at 6pm at Chumash trailhead. Directions - take 118 Fwy to Yosemite exit. Go north on Yosemite, turn right on Flanagan
- March 8 Hummingbird Creek Flower Walk**  
Check out the native wildflowers blooming this time of year. Meet at **9am** at Hummingbird Creek trailhead. Directions - 118
- March 9 Sunday Evening Hike**  
Meet 4pm at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. (Strenuous, 5 MRT)
- March 13 Thursday Evening Hike**  
Meet at 6pm at Chumash trailhead. Directions - take 118 Fwy to Yosemite exit. Go north on Yosemite, turn right on Flanagan
- March 15 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 pro-
- March 16 Sunday Evening Hike**  
Meet 4pm at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. (Strenuous, 5 MRT)
- March 20 Thursday Evening Hike**  
Meet at 6pm at Chumash trailhead. Directions - take 118 Fwy to Yosemite exit. Go north on Yosemite, turn right on Flanagan
- March 22 Serrano Valley Loop**  
Moderate to strenuous 8 1/2 MRT with 1100' elevation gain and loss. 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 - 3 qts. water and
- March 23 Sunday Evening Hike**  
Meet 4pm at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. (Strenuous, 5 MRT)
- March 27 Thursday Evening Hike**  
Meet at 6pm at Chumash trailhead. Directions - take 118 Fwy to Yosemite exit. Go north on Yosemite, turn right on Flanagan
- March 29 Botany Foray in Sespe Burn Area**  
This hike is not within the jurisdiction of the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District. Meet at the Wheeler Gorge "Ranger Station" at **9am** on State Route 33 (about 10 minutes North of Ojai). Bring lunch, water, sturdy hiking shoes/boots, hat, and your hand lens. We will go off the trail into burned chaparral, so expect to get charcoal on your clothes. This foray is cosponsored by the Los Padres Forest Association and CNPS. No Adventure Pass required since it is the last Saturday of the month.
- March 30 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, WK (805)583-6776
TREASURER:	PETER ELY	HM (805) 523-1409
SECRETARY:	STEFANI HOWARD	HM (818) 885-0407
PARK DISTRICT LIAISON:	COLLEEN JANSSEN	WK (805) 584-4453
WORK PARTIES CHAIR:	JOHN SABOL	HM (805) 583-2541
WORK PARTIES VICE CHAIR:	BOB ALTIERI	HM (805) 526-6749
HIKING CHAIR:	ARLENE ALTSHULER	HM (805) 581-9735
WAYS & MEANS CHAIR:	MARTY RICHARDS	HM (805) 526-4414
WAYS & MEANS VICE CHAIR:	CONNIE ANKROM	HM (805) 526-2747
COMMUNICATION / PUB.CHAIR:	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 630399, Simi Valley, Ca 93063-0399

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



U.S. Postage

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