



# Rancho Simi Trail Blazers

A Division of the Rancho Simi Foundation



## DISCOVERING THE BEAUTY AND HISTORY OF DESCANSO GARDENS

In the Simi Valley Library on Sunday, **March 13<sup>th</sup>** at **2pm**, master gardener and docent Bill Taylor will give an illustrated talk about the treasures of Descanso Gardens in La Cañada. Bill Taylor is an expert in camellias and native plants, and will be sharing his knowledge with participants through a slide show and follow-up question and answer session.

The talk is sponsored by the Simi Valley Friends of the Library and the National League of American Pen Women – Simi Valley Branch. Suggested donation is \$5 for adults and \$3 for seniors & students. Proceeds will benefit the Simi Valley Library. Contact 805-581-1906 or AlexisInCA@aol.com for more information.

## LIVING WITH MOUNTAIN LIONS

On Saturday, **March 19<sup>th</sup>** at **2pm**, in the Multi-purpose Room at the Community Center, there will be a talk on "Living with Mountain Lions".

## 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.



## WORK PARTY CHAIR NEEDED

The Rancho Simi Trail Blazers need a Work Party leader. Duties involve planning and leading one trail work party a month including picking up and returning needed tools from our tool shed at the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District Sycamore Drive maintenance yard.

No experience is necessary. We have several knowledgeable, experienced work party leaders who will provide training and work along with you until you are comfortable with the duties.



## NEW WEB SITE

We have a new web site! Mark Gilmore has graciously taken over the care and updating of our RSTB website. The new address is:

<http://www.simitrailblazers.com>

Mark has added a News section, a newsletter archive, a Contacts page, and a place for pictures from our members. When you get a chance, check it out!!

## 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  
**March 16, 2005**

## DREAM HELPERS AMONG THE CHUMASH

The Chumash sought and acquired dream helpers (*atishwin*). Dream helpers provided a bond with the supernatural. Indians generally sought to acquire more than one dream helper in order to acquire as much power as possible.

Dream helpers were sought by both shamans and non-shamans. They were acquired sometimes by children in unsolicited dreams and by adults in association with the use of hallucinatory agents – either Jimson weed (*Datura wrightii*) or the swallowing of red ants. Dream helpers conveyed good fortune, good health and long life.

Shamanistic dream helpers among the Chumash seemed to be restricted to coyote, bear, rattlesnake, thunder, skunk and seal. Among lay persons they were eagle, hawk, peregrine falcon (for owners of plank canoes), falcon, hummingbird, fire, whirlwind and butterfly. (source: Applegate, 1978)

Each dream helper conveyed certain types of power. For example, bear would grant strength and courage, while hummingbird would grant courage, agility and speed. During the mission/rancho period, vaqueros would seek hummingbird as a dream helper, and use them as talismans (e.g., sewn into saddles).

Mike Kuhn



## THE REVEREND STEPHEN BOWERS PIONEER CALIFORNIA ARCHAEOLOGIST

Arlene Benson, an archaeologist, was a long-term resident of Simi Valley. Her masters thesis was on the field notes of the Rev. Stephen Bowers, a Methodist minister and an early archaeologist who excavated throughout the Chumash Indian area from 1875 through 1889. In 1997 she published *The Noontide Sun: The Field Journals of the Reverend Stephen Bowers, Pioneer California Archaeologist*, Ballena Press Anthropological Papers No. 44.

The Rev. Bowers' work was largely financed by the Smithsonian Institute and the U.S. Department of Interior, under John Wesley Powell. His intent was to salvage the best Chumash artifacts for our national museum before private collectors and foreign archaeologists could get to them. In the end, much of what he collected was traded to foreign museums for materials from those countries. Besides artifacts, human skulls were of great interest to science at the time. While the Rev. Bowers' work did not involve modern field methods, (it generally can be characterized more as the robbing of historic period graves) it must be remembered that the field of archaeology and the methodology we now know did not exist in the 1870s. Indeed, an educated person of the time would not have recognized the word "archaeologist". So, the Rev. Bowers was a pioneer in his profession.

His field notes, letters and unpublished manuscripts were copied by the Rev. Arthur Harrington from materials in the possession of De Moss Bowers on behalf of his uncle, John Peabody Harrington, the now famous linguist, archaeologist and anthropologist, who single handily collected more information about North American Indians than all of the other anthropologists of his time. His brother and Art Harrington's father was Robert Harrington, a prominent pioneer farmer in Simi Valley. Art Harrington served the local Methodist community until his retirement. His daughter and her family still live in the Robert Harrington house on Wilson Road, just off of Harrington Road.

Rev. Bowers was deeply puzzled by what had happened to the Chumash Indians. He recognized that the ship logs of Juan Rodriques Cabrillo, who explored the coast in 1542, left the impression that the Santa Barbara Channel Islands and the Santa Barbara and Ventura county coasts were densely populated. Cabrillo and subsequent explorers describe coastal area that literally swarmed with Indians. He never came up with a satisfactory answer to his question.

What Rev. Bowers could not have known and what has only recently become understood in science is that the Indians of the new world lacked the immunity system to combat the effects of eastern hemisphere diseases. An infection as innocent as the common cold would impact an Indian more seriously than the person of European or of part European descent from which they contracted the disease. By the time the next two or three Indians had contracted the common cold, it became a killer disease – more deadly with each subsequent

infection. More serious ailments, such as smallpox, diphtheria, measles, and influenza carried an even higher mortality.

The reason for this high mortality is now understood. The effect, throughout both north and south Americas was 75-80 percent mortality after the first sustained contact with persons of western culture. This same effect is still seen when the tribes of the Amazon River Basin are contacted and exposed to eastern hemisphere diseases. The inevitable result of the contact of people from the eastern hemisphere with the peoples of the Americas was the near extermination of those people. This holocaust, which devastated the indigenous peoples of the new world, would have happened even if the old world peoples had been content to only establish trade relations with the peoples of the new world. To a large extent it probably was the single most important factor that enabled the success of the invasion and conquest of the new world.

In his own words:

*What has become of this once populous race? In Cabrillo's day they swarmed in multiplied thousands on the islands south of Santa Barbara Channel and on the shore of the mainland. Intermediate voyagers confirm Cabrillo's statement. Their numerous village sites tell the same story. But now not one is left to tell the story of existence. The whole have melted away before the light of another civilization, as the snow melts before the noon-tide sun.*

March 1878

The Rev. Bowers interviewed an old Indian, named *Omset*, who had been removed from Santa Rosa Island some 60 years before. *Omset* told him that the Indians on Santa Rosa Island were called *Chumas*. Bowers' use of the name Chumash in his publications seemed to have resulted in the name being applied by others to the peoples of the entire linguistic group.

Mike Kuhn



### ORIGIN OF NAME TOPATOPA

There is a Topatopa Mountain and a Topatopa creek northeast of the upper Ojai. Early in the efforts to save the California condor from extinction, a condor egg was taken from a ledge on the northern face of Topatopa Mountain. The resulting hatchling was named Topatopa – a name of Chumash Indian origin. Applegate (1974) gives the Ventureño Chumash name as *sitoptopo*, which means "the carrizo patch". The name is now reflected in the name of the mountain, the creek and a really big bird.

Mike Kuhn

## BEARS AROUND US

In the 30 years that I have lived in Simi Valley, I can think of only two occasions when a black bear has shown up within the City. The first time was during the late 1970s or early 1980s. That bear was first spotted at the Simi Valley Landfill early in the morning, worrying some garbage. Later in the day it was spotted by an elderly resident who lived on what is now the northwestern corner of Alamo Street and Jasmine Glen. According to her, the bear appeared to be headed towards Atherwood Elementary School, so she ran it up a deodar cedar in her front yard - with a broom. (The tree was later removed due to the widening of Alamo Street.) Fortunately the bear knew, as all bears know, that it was supposed to flee a white haired grandmother with a broom. The second occasion was in 2003 when bear tracks were observed in Corriganville. Since the bear did not show up in anyone's garbage can, it must have been in transit. One bear that year is known to have spent much of the year in the Simi Hills.

Over the years an occasional bear has shown up in Granada Hills, Thousand Oaks or Camarillo, usually deep into the urban area, and had to be relocated to gentler climes or put down. I believe it was in 1997 that a bear wandered through the lobby of a hotel or motel in Camarillo. It didn't want a room with a view, rather, one with a den! In 2004, a bear was observed by police officers entering a residential garage. After evacuating the residents of the home, the bear was found asleep, curled up next to the water heater. Both bears were given a free ride back to the high country.

During April of 1997 John Downey and I observed (and photographed) bear tracks in upper Happy Camp Canyon. In 1998, Jim Riley observed bear tracks in the same area. In 2001, Jim Keppler reported seeing really large bear tracks on the Brown's Canyon trail below the Rocky Peak Trail on several occasions. In spite of a hot summer in 1998, the bears seem to have stayed in the hills and foregone the pleasures of the urban environment. It's possible that the effects of that El Niño year with its 37+ inches of rain had enabled our furry friend to remain in the hills. During the October 2003 brush fire a bear died in Happy Camp Canyon. However, there still seem to be several resident bears in the Santa Susana Mountains. It would be interesting indeed if black bears are establishing a more permanent presence in them thar hills.

Mike Kuhn

## THOSE AMAZING EXPLORERS

When we go backpacking, we bring with us everything we will need, except water for the entire trip. The early Spanish explorers of California were not able to bring enough food for themselves and the livestock. These expeditions lasted for as long as eight months, during which time the Spanish and their livestock sometimes experienced food shortages.

Portola, was looking for Monterey Bay. Monterey Bay had been visited by Spanish sea captain Sebastian Vizcaino in

1602. Vizcaino described Monterey Bay as "...noble harbor...the best port that could be desired, for besides being sheltered from all the winds, it has many pines for masts and yards, and live oaks and white oaks, and water in great quantity, all near the shore." Portola set out in 1769 to find Monterey Bay. When he arrived, he found a stormy sea. Not recognizing it, he proceeded north. Discovering San Francisco Bay, Portola glumly rejected it, for it did not correspond to Vizcaino's description of Monterey Bay and was an impediment to further search. The expedition returned to San Diego, after eating twelve of its mules. Portola's second expedition, begun in 1770, included only twelve men, although he had sent a ship ahead to Monterey. This time he recognized Monterey for the port described by Vizcaino.

Juan Bautista de Anza set out in 1775 with thirty-four families and soldiers to establish a presidio and a mission on San Francisco Bay. Because the Indians of coastal California set fire to their environs each year as part of their land husbandry, each expedition experienced times when there was not enough grass, dry or green, for their livestock. One description from the Pedro Fages diary of the Portola expedition discusses their concern that their horses and other livestock might starve to death in the Point Conception area since all the grass and brush had been burned. They eventually found a depression into which the fire had not burned - which provided relief for their livestock.

Human food also came into short supply. You can carry dried beans, wheat flour and grain, as well as dried corn and pork bellies and dried meat. In general, they were reluctant to slaughter any of their livestock although they did on each expedition. After the first few months, they had to live off the land, including being dependent on the good will of the resident Indians they encountered. Gifts of grass seeds, acorns and pine nuts were common. Along the coast, they must certainly have been provided with some marine resources. However, the sizes of the parties would have taxed the resources of the Indians. While the Indians were no doubt fascinated by the explorers, both the local Indians and the Spaniards (They were accompanied by Indians from northern Mexico.) were anxious to have them move on. Often the Spanish had to trade to acquire food. Eventually, on its way back to San Diego, the de Anza expedition ran out of trade goods and resorted to trading pieces of broken pottery. Such hard times are described in the diaries of the expedition and examples of the traded pottery shards have been found in a village midden in the Lake Sherwood area. Those shards are evidence of tough times for the remaining members of the expedition.

These were bold adventurers. They sojourned into the unknown - possibly hostile territory where they could not rule out organized resistance to their passage. In addition, at some point on each trip, they had to be concerned about from where their next meal was to come. Both the first Portola expedition and the de Anza expedition included women and children. They were a tough breed - borne of the frontier.

Mike Kuhn



# RSTB Calendar

## March 2005



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		<b>1</b> <b>Long Canyon</b> <b>6:30pm hike</b> <b>See Schedule</b>	<b>2</b> <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Martin DeGoey</i>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> <b>Malibu Creek State Park</b> <b>See Schedule</b>
<b>6</b> <b>Rocky Peak</b> <b>4pm hike</b> <b>See Schedule</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> <b>Long Canyon</b> <b>6:30pm hike</b> <b>See Schedule</b> <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Colleen Janssen</i>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b> <b>Chumash Trail</b> <b>6pm hike</b> <b>See Schedule</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b> <b>Mishe Mokwa</b> <b>See Schedule</b>
<b>13</b> <b>Rocky Peak</b> <b>4pm hike</b> <b>See Schedule</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b> <b>Long Canyon</b> <b>6:30pm hike</b> <b>See Schedule</b>	<b>16</b> <b>RSTB Meeting</b> <b>See Page 1</b>	<b>17</b> <b>Chumash Trail</b> <b>6pm hike</b> <b>See Schedule</b> <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Rick Johnson</i>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b> <b>Hummingbird Creek Work Party</b> <b>See Schedule</b>
<b>20</b> <b>Rocky Peak</b> <b>4pm hike</b> <b>See Schedule</b> <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Jimmy Eselin</i>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b> <b>Long Canyon</b> <b>6:30pm hike</b> <b>See Schedule</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> <b>Chumash Trail</b> <b>6pm hike</b> <b>See Schedule</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b> <b>Los Robles</b> <b>See Schedule</b>
<b>27</b> <b>Rocky Peak</b> <b>4pm hike</b> <b>See Schedule</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b> <b>Long Canyon</b> <b>6:30pm hike</b> <b>See Schedule</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b> <b>Chumash Trail</b> <b>6pm hike</b> <b>See Schedule</b>		



# Rancho Simi Trail Blazers

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## Hiking Schedule



- March 1 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**)
- March 3 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**)
- March 5 Malibu Creek State Park – M\*A\*S\*H\* Site**  
Moderate 6-8 MRT hike with 600' elevation gain/loss, ending at the old M\*A\*S\*H site. Countless movies have been filmed in this park. Several options on the way depending on the desires of the group: Century Lake and the Rock Pool. Partial loop also possible. 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 water and snack, wear boots.
- March 6 Sunday Evening Hike**  
Meet **4pm** at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. (**Strenuous, 5 MRT**)
- March 8 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**)
- March 10 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**)
- March 12 Circle X Ranch - Sandstone Peak to Mishe Mokwa Trail**  
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 -3 qts. of water and snack, wear boots.
- March 13 Sunday Evening Hike**  
Meet **4pm** at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. (**Strenuous, 5 MRT**)
- March 15 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**)
- March 17 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**)
- March 19 Hummingbird Creek Work Party**  
Help maintain one of Simi Valley's more scenic trails. Directions - 118 Fwy to Kuehner exit. Meet north of freeway on Kuehner. 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.
- March 20 Sunday Evening Hike**  
Meet **4pm** at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. (**Strenuous, 5 MRT**)
- March 22 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**)
- March 24 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**)
- March 26 Los Robles**  
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.
- March 27 Sunday Evening Hike**  
Meet **4pm** at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. (**Strenuous, 5 MRT**)
- March 29 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**)
- March 31 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**)

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://www.simitrailblazers.com>

**RANCHO SIMI TRAIL BLAZERS**

*A Division of the Rancho Simi Foundation*

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:	Arlene Altshuler	HM (805) 581-9735	arlene.altshuler@mindbox.com
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Ways & Means Chair:	Marty Richards	HM (805) 526-4414	
Publicity Chair:	Judi Sevcik	HM (805) 581-4340	judisevcik@earthlink.net
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

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



U.S. Postage

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