



# Rancho Simi Trail Blazers



## CALIFORNIA TRAIL DAYS 2003

This years' California Trail Days (April 26 and 27) will be held on the **Chumash Trail** and will include a work party on Saturday and a hike on Sunday. One of the Rancho Simi Recreation and Parks District's most used trails, the Chumash traverses a variety of scenic terrain from the northern end of Flanigan Drive up to its intersection with the Rocky Peak Fire Road, a distance of 2.5 miles.

There will be a **trail work party** on **Saturday, April 26 from 8:00 AM to 2:00 PM**. The project will include fixing rain erosion trail damage and cutting back brush overhanging the trail. Bring 3 quarts water, a snack, sturdy boots/shoes, gloves, hat and sunscreen. Tools will be provided, but you are welcome to bring your own.

On **Sunday, April 27 a hike** will be held on the trail at **9:00 AM**. Interested hikers can learn a little about the flora, animals and insects found in the area of this trail. Others can just enjoy a hike.

Meet at the Chumash trailhead at the end



## 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

## SPRING BACKPACKING TRIP

This spring's backpacking trip will be to **Bear Creek**, from Friday **May 16<sup>th</sup>** – Sunday **May 18<sup>th</sup>**. Those people who would like to go, please RSVP Arlene at 805-581-9735.



## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Judy Garris

## TRAIL CLOSURE

The "Wildlife Corridor Trail" (a "Use trail" and not an official trail) in Simi Valley, that connects Corriganville and the Rocky Peak Fire Road, has been completely closed to all, hikers, bikers and equestrians.

The trail is posted "Closed for Revegetation" at both ends. Jodi Thomas, the SSMC Ranger has been out warning people and will be ticketing anyone on

## 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

## 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:

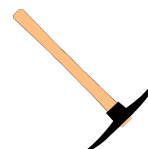
- short sleeve \$12
- long sleeve \$14
- sweat shirt \$18

Please call Marty if you'd like to place

## MARCH WORK PARTY

No Trail Blazer work party was held on the scheduled 15 March date, due to heavy rain. However a work party from CORBA (Concerned Off Road Bicyclists Association) was held on Saturday, 22 March on the Hummingbird Trail. Al Bandell and myself joined 8 CORBA people led by Rich Pinder. Work concentrated on fixing trail cut areas. A remediation technique CORBA has had some success with is digging up compacted dirt in the trail cut areas to promote growth. Also placing rocks on the trail as we have done in the past in an attempt to make the trail cut areas look more natural. We also cleaned out and renewed "rolling dip" water drainages.

The next Trail Blazers work party will be held on Saturday, April 26, in conjunction with California Trail Days on the upper Chumash Trail. We will drive up the Rocky Peak Fire Road to access the top trailhead to continue repair of the upper portion of the trail. Meet at the trailhead at the end of Flanigan Drive in Simi Valley at 8:00 AM. We will work from 8:00 AM to 2:00 PM. Hope to see you there.



## ECHOES OF THE PAST

Throughout history, wherever one culture has appeared to supersede another in a dramatic and rapid fashion, some elements of the older culture have remained as an echo of the past. No better example of the persistence of cultural flotsam can be found than the European settlement experience in the new world. In California today, the thread of continuity with the culture that inhabited Simi Valley for many thousands of years before the coming of settlers from Mexico, would seem to be practically non-existent. We think that the settlement of the central and southern coastal portions of California by citizens of New Spain resulted in the complete annihilation of the presence and cultural remnants of the Chumash people. That there is a Spanish vestige is very clear from the names of streets, places and cities. In Simi Valley we have Santa Susana Pass and Mountains, Tierra Rejada Road, the Arroyo Simi, Brea Canyon, Alamos Canyon, Chivo Canyon, Las Lajas Canyon, and the Tripas. We are, of course, at least one culture removed from the valley's Chumash heritage.

The Spanish, like the later Anglo-Americans, viewed their own cultures as superior to those that came before and generally overwhelmed most vestiges of past cultures. The Spanish were viewed by the Chumash, at least initially, with awe, as possessing great supernatural power, and as having spectacular material things, including domesticated animals, metal, glass objects, writing and food crops. Indeed, the Chumash generally blamed their own medical practitioners for the high rate of death that accompanied the first few years of settlement. Many Chumash shaman were killed by their own people. Most Chumash strove to assimilate to the extent possible and become an accepted part of Hispanic culture. A large percentage of those individuals who migrated from Mexico were mestizos, mulattos and Indians. Many settlers of purely Spanish descent married Indian women and some local Indians were recipients of Spanish and Mexican land grants.

The Anglo-American invasion more

closely resembled a classic barbarian invasion. Indians had lower status than slaves. On the frontier, at least some elements in our settlement of the Americas advocated and practiced the physical annihilation of Indians. Among the Anglo-American settlers, the Chumash hid, effectively becoming Mexicans. So afraid were they of the public exposure of their Chumash heritage, that their children were usually unaware of it. They were romanticized once they were gone, but seriously discriminated against when they were here. To the Anglo-Americans, the Mexican settlers at least were bearers of European culture. Their way of life also was romanticized. However, they were a conquered people - fundamentally different than "Americans." With this background, we should be surprised if any of the Chumash past filtered down to us.

When I first moved here, I was aware that the name "Simi" came to us from the name of the Spanish and later Mexican rancho and that the name came to the rancho from the name of the historic Chumash village, which was located somewhere at the western end of Simi Valley. Later, I addressed the question of what Chumash place names had been recorded in anthropological notes and found that some of those names are still present on the land in their Spanish and, sometimes in their Chumash forms. "Tierra Rejada" and "Tapo" are examples of that. Finally, I found that there were never more than a few Spanish/Mexican settlers in Simi Valley at any one time during the rancho period. Then who were the shepherders, the vaqueros and the laborers? The answer is simple and obvious. The Chumash filled those roles. While most, as high as 80-90 percent, had succumbed to European diseases, those that remained learned Spanish and acculturated, and were essentially assimilated into California's society. Since this was the case, perhaps there is something to learn of the Chumash people as reflected in Spanish names on the land, both past and present, and of how they looked at the land. With this thesis, I have continued the odyssey that had already begun before the intellectual

## YUCCA

The yucca that we have on the hills around Simi Valley is treasured by all for its magnificent two meter high white flower stalk in the late spring and early summer.



*Yucca Whipplei*

These flower stalks are the largest flower stalks of any native plant in the area and are things of rare beauty. In botanical circles the plant is known as *Yucca whipplei* ssp. *intermedia*. Other common names are "Our Lord's Candle" and "Spanish Dagger."

This plant was so important to the Chumash Indians who lived in the area that they named their premier village after the plant. Their name for the plant and the village was "ta'apu." The village was located up Tapo Canyon near Tapo Canyon Regional Park. The name "Tapo" is derived from the name of the village. The trails to Ta'apu from both the Santa Clara River Valley on the northern slopes of the Santa Susana Mountains and from Simi Valley were both named for their destinations - the village of Ta'apu. They both come down to us as "Tapo Canyon."

The plant was important to the Chumash because food and fiber could be obtained from it at any time. Today, we admire the beauty of the blooms and avoid the spines at the ends of the

**Red Maids**  
(*Calandrinia ciliata*)  
can be seen blooming  
from February thru  
May



## THE MEANING OF ROCK ART

Archaeologist Dr. David S. Whitley is a leading authority on Native American rock art. He lives in Fillmore and his business, W and S Consultants, which he shares with his partner Joe Simon, is based in Simi Valley. Dr. Whitley has concluded that rock art was done by shamans, i.e., medicine men, at the conclusions of shamans' visions. Like our own dreams, the visions of shamans were quickly forgotten because of the production of enzymes in the brain which destroy our short term memories of visions and other dreams. Consequently, shaman recorded their visions so they would not forget them. At the same time, those images and symbols on stone were indications to others of the power of that shaman.

Some symbols are entoptic designs. For example, when experiencing great pain or receive a blow to the head, you may see "stars." Similar images occur with some migraine headaches. During hallucinations while on drugs, edges of objects may seem to be outlined by bright points of lights. These universal patterns seem to appear in American Indian and other rock art. Those entoptic designs are common to all cultures - we all have the same biochemical reaction to stress.

Other images are symbolic or may represent metaphors that are unique to that culture. Wavy lines often symbolize rattlesnakes. In the Great Basin of the United States, big horned sheep are part of a metaphor relating to the activities of the rain-making shaman. There is no ethnographic evidence that they are related to hunting magic.

For the Chumash area, without good ethnographic information, we may never be able to "read" the rock art. Even when we think we know, we will probably be wrong most of the time. It is likely that even contemporaries of the makers of rock art did not know. Nonetheless, pondering the imponderable gives meaning to life and is part of the human experience and destiny. Our thanks to David Whitley and other rock art specialists for shedding some light on the meaning of American Indian rock art.



**Star Lily**  
(*Zygadenus fremontii*)



**Wild Rose**  
(*Rosa Californica*)

## SPRING WILDFLOWERS



**Johnny-Jump-Up**  
(*Viola pedunculata*)



**Sticky Monkey Flower**  
(*Mimulus aurantiacus*)



**Stinging Lupine**  
(*Lupinus hirsutissimus*)  
And  
**Common Fiddleneck**  
(*Amsinckia menziesii*  
Var. *intermedia*)

## CHUMASH NATURAL PARK

The Chumash Indians settled where there was water. Seasonal camps also required a nearby source of water. One apparently long occupied site complex was what we long referred to as the "Indian Hills Caves." Now it is the "Chumash Natural Park" and is owned by the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District. It has long been an oasis in a sometimes desperately arid environment. Why has there always been water there?

The caves and the geological formations to the east and the west consist of the Santa Susana Formation. Like the Chatsworth Formation, the Santa Susana Formation was deposited largely as "turbidites." That is, they represent near shore deposits which collapsed into deep marine canyons in the form of very large turbidity currents. The caves themselves consist of sandstone strata, which dip to the west by 20-30 degrees. West of the sandstone is very dark gray, crumbly siltstone with ellipsoidal fractures. As the siltstone weathers, when exposed to air, it ravel and breaks down into clay.

The siltstone has a very high capacity

to hold water. The formation is full of water and only drains to the east through low points in the sandstone strata. The sandstone acts as an aquatard, or barrier to the movement of groundwater. One of the two low points in the sandstone ridge has not dried up in the many years that I have observed the area prior to the construction of the Indian Hills Ridge homes. That dependable supply of water along with the presence of caves made it a very attractive place for the Chumash. Their use of the site is reflected in the name of the developments, i.e., Indian Hills and Indian Hills Ridge, and the name of the park.

Development of the Indian Hills Ridge project required dewatering of the formation using a Japanese nylon wicking system, the installation of permanent sub-drains, and the temporary surcharging of graded material over the site, some 30 feet in depth, in order to squeeze water out of the formation. Those sub-drains, plus runoff into the storm drains, have increased the flow of water and have extended the riparian wetlands on the Mt. Sinai property to the southeast.

Visit the Chumash Park but watch out for



# April

2003



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	4 <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Louise Pomes</i>	5 Grotto Trail See Schedule
6 Rocky Peak 4pm hike See Schedule	7	8	9	10 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	11	12 Antelope Valley See Schedule
13 Rocky Peak 4pm hike See Schedule	14	15 <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>John Sabol</i>	16 RSTB Meeting See Page 1	17 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	18	19 La Jolla Valley See Schedule
20 Easter No Hike	21	22	23	24 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	25	26 California Trail Days - Chumash Trail Work Party See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Gary Cremeans</i>
27 California Trail Days - Chumash Trail 9am hike See Schedule	28	29	30			



# *Rancho Simi Trail Blazers*

## *Hiking Schedule*



- April 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
- April 5 Circle-X Ranch Grotto Trail**  
Moderate, approx. 5 MRT hike. Traverse the Canyon View trail to the west fork of the Arroyo Sequit, down to "The Grotto". 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 snack, and a pair of shoes/sandals that you don't mind getting wet.
- April 6 Sunday Evening Hike**  
Meet 4pm at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. (Strenuous, 5 MRT)
- April 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
- April 12 Antelope Valley**  
It's flower season again, and we'll be driving out to Antelope Valley to check out the local plant life and beautiful scenery. This is not within the jurisdiction of the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District. Meet 8am near Donut Delite at the corner
- April 13 Sunday Evening Hike**  
Meet 4pm at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. (Strenuous, 5 MRT)
- April 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
- April 19 La Jolla Valley Loop from Ray Miller Trailhead**  
Moderate 6 1/2 MRT hike with 1000' elevation gain/loss. We will start and finish at the Ray Miller Trailhead. This hike is not within the jurisdiction of the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District. Meet 8am near Donut Delite at the corner of
- April 20 Easter - No Hike**
- April 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
- April 26 California Trail Days - 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 - 2pm. Tools will be
- April 27 California Trail Days - Chumash Trail**  
Meet at 9am at Chumash trailhead. Directions - take 118 Fwy to Yosemite exit. Go north on Yosemite, turn right on Flanagan

**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://rstb.homestead.com>

**RANCHO SIMI TRAIL BLAZERS**

EXECUTIVE CHAIR:	MIKE KUHN	HM (805) 583-2345, WK (805)583-6776
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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
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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)



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