



Rancho Simi Trail Blazers



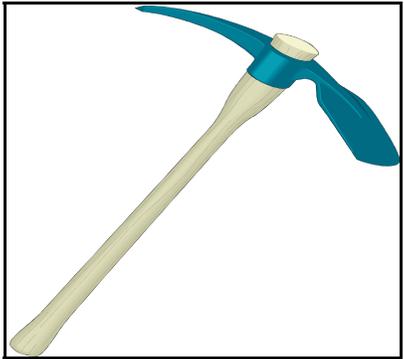
CHUMASH BURIALS ACCORDING TO FAGES

Pedro Fages was second in command during the 1769 Portola expedition from San Diego to occupy Monterey. This was the first land expedition through this part of California, so his observations come at a time when Chumash culture was unaffected by the Catholic Church and Spanish culture. Fages leaves us with an eye witness account of Chumash burial practices. In his own words, in translation from the Spanish:

When an Indian dies, they carry the body to the adulatory, or place near the village dedicated to their idols. There they celebrate the mortuary ceremony, and watch all the following night. Some of them gathered about a huge fire until day-break; then come all the rest (men and women), and four of them begin the ceremony. One Indian, smoking tobacco in a large stone pipe, goes first; being followed by the other three. All passing three times around the body. But each time he passes the head, his companions lift the skin with which the deceased is covered, that the priest may blow upon it three mouthfuls of smoke. On arriving at the feet, they all four together stop to sing I know not what manner of laudation. Then come the near and remote relatives of the deceased, each one giving the chief celebrant a string of beads (shell money), something over a span in length.

Cont. on page 2 Col.1

1st. Backpack Trip of the year
Hiking Chair
Arlene Altshuler is scheduling
A backpack over the May 19th-
May 21st.
Call her for Information
805-581-9735



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
MAY 17th.

APRIL TRAIL WORK PARTY

A new trail was started by the Rancho Simi Trailblazers in conjunction with California Trail Days. The trail, named the "North Ridge Trail", was cut on the western face of the hill on the northeast corner of Flanagan Drive and Yosemite Avenue. John Downey did a great job with his brush cutter in carving a path through the tall grass along the desired trail route. His effort made the job of grubbing out the trail bed a great deal easier. A forest of mustard, both new growth and old dried stems had to be cut through by hand. We worked from 8:00 AM-2:00 PM and had great working weather with cool temperatures and an overcast sky all morning

The Park District has already cut a trail path from the intersection of Geronimo Avenue and Broken Arrow

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WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Marilyn Mansell
Barbara Boys
Beverly Wood
Paula Wedgeworth

Then immediately there is raised a sorrowful outcry and lamentation from all the mourners. When this sort of solemn response is ended, the four ministers take up the body, and all the Indians follow them, singing, to the cemetery which they have prepared for the purpose, where it is given sepulture; with the body are buried some little things made by the deceased person; some other objects are deposited round about the spot where the body rests, and over it, thrust into the earth, is raised a spear or very long rod, painted in various colors. At the foot of this rod are left a few relics, which naturally represent the ability and kind of occupation that the man had while he was living. If the deceased is a woman, they leave strung on the rod some of the boxes and baskets that she was accustomed to weave.

In some respects, it is remarkable that members of the Portola Expedition witnessed any burials. However, the text suggests that burials of both men and women were observed and that the ceremony was much the same for each.

Burials were important religious ceremonies for the Chumash - even more so than they are in our own society. Even though the Indians were experiencing the most important historical event in their own history, this first encounter with men from a totally alien culture - men with horses, with swords and other metal objects, woven cloth and firearms - the dead still had to be attended to and could not wait.

Mike Kuhn



THE CANYON VIEW TRAIL

The Canyon View Trail extends for 2.35 miles along the top of the ridge south of Long Canyon Village in Wood Ranch. The trailhead is located on the northern side of Long Canyon Road a few hundred feet east of Wood Ranch Parkway. The trail ends where it joins the eastern end of Long Canyon Road. The trail enjoys magnificent vistas of both Simi Valley and Wood Ranch. It was cut by New Urban West, the developer of Long Canyon Village, in 1999 using, in part, an old fire-break that ran along the top of the ridge. A loop route may be created by returning along Long Canyon Road, approximately another 1.25 miles.

We recommend that you bring at least one pint of water (more during warm weather), a snack, sunscreen, a hat, dark glasses and hiking shoes. Dress for the weather.

Mike Kuhn

Street, in the Indian Hills Ridge housing tract, through the level meadow area to the top of the hill. We hope to complete the remaining portion between the two sections next month. A further extension of the trail is planned that will start in the meadow and traverse north and east down to Evening Sky Drive in the Silverthorn housing tract at the north end of Yosemite Avenue. This trail work will be undertaken on National Trail Days, June 3.

We were also visited by a reporter and photographer and a very nice article appeared in the "Our Times" Section of the Ventura County Edition of the Los Angeles Times on Tuesday April 25, 2000.

Everyone did a great job and I was amazed at how much work was accomplished with relatively few people. Many thanks to the following workers:

Arlene Altshuler, Gary Cremeans, John Downey, Tom Frye, Michael Kuhn, Christe Myers, Chuck Portoghesi, Marty Richards and John Sabol.

WORK PARTY CHANGE: The scheduled China Flat Trail work in Oak Park has been canceled. The May work party will again be on the North Ridge Trail. We will work from 7:00 AM to 11:00 AM. Hope to see you there.

Work Parties Chair

John Sabol



Unknown location: left to right – Jim Vandenberg, Bill Cespedes, Arlene Altshuler, Chuck Portoghesi, Ellen ??, Donna Driver, John Sabol, Carol Tucker, and John Downey.



Corriganville Loop Hike: left to right – Joanne Proffit, John Downey, Bill Cespedes, John Sabol, Bob Altieri, Arlene Altshuler, Marty Richards, Gene Clark, Cathy Verga and Dodie.



SNAKE STANDING

On November 28th hike to Rocky Peak, Arlene Altshuler, our trusted hike leader, acquired another story to tell on herself - but I'll write about it while it's still fresh in my mind. That way the details won't grow through exaggeration over time. The tale itself is interesting enough. As you read it, imagine that it is happening to you - you're worst nightmare!

As we do every week, we start the hike by picking up some of the trash near the trailhead. I watched Arlene begin to bend over to pick up a piece of wrapped candy, but, to my alarm, I saw that stretched out about an inch in front of her boots was a

rattlesnake! Not a large one - only about 11 or 12 inches long. I yelled at Arlene to STOP, which, to my relief, she did. Then to my horror, you see, I am fond of Arlene, she turned, moved her feet, planting one foot squarely on the middle of the snake. The rattlesnake was not amused. I lunged toward Arlene, grabbed her by one arm and jerked her violently away.

Arlene had no idea what was going on. I am not usually a violent person. She was not traumatized but was very concerned that she might have injured the snake. Fortunately, it was and remained very torpid from the cold weather. We warned everyone coming down the trail to watch out for the snake. After all, being stepped on twice in one day would be two time too many.

What this incident should teach us is that you may encounter rattlesnakes any time of the year - even in cold weather. And....when picking up anything off of the ground, you must not remain so focused that you fail to scan the

CALIFORNIA LAUREL

The California laurel (bay tree) (*Umbellularia californica*) is the sole native representative of the laurel family (*Lauraceae*) in this neck of the woods. Exotic tropical representatives include avocados and camphors. The tree is evergreen and pungently aromatic. It grows 30-40 feet high in deep canyons and shaded areas and requires abundant water. One in my backyard has grown to about 20 feet over the last ten years.

The Chumash Indians used its crushed and rolled up leaves as a nasal decongestant. Today, it is a wonderful addition to Italian cooking, camper's stew, and that pot roast. Locally, it is present above the caves on the middle portion of the Hummingbird Trail and near the "rock house" on the Rock Peak Fire Road. It is also present in some obscure areas in Santa Susana Knolls Park.



May

2000



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4 Chumash Trail Hike Meet at 6pm See schedule	5 Happy Birthday Hannah Kuhn & Robert Lisenby	6 Los Robles Trail Hike Meet at 7am Read schedule
7 Rocky Peak Trail Hike Meet at 5pm Read schedule	8	9	10 Happy Birthday Jim Vandenberg	11 Happy Birthday Jan Richard Torkelson Chumash Trail Hike Meet at 6pm See schedule	12	13 Happy Birthday Lorrie Stelzer North Ridge Trail Work Party Meet at 7am See schedule
14 Rocky Peak Trail Hike Meet at 5pm Read schedule	15	16	17 RSTB Meeting At Community Center, 7 PM 1692 Sycamore B-1 Room	18 Chumash Trail Hike Meet at 6pm See schedule	19	20 Happy Birthday Sue Rasmussen
				3 Day Backpacking Trip May 19th.,20th.,& 21th. For more information Call 805-581-9735		
21 Returning From Backpack	22	23	24	25 Chumash Trail Hike Meet at 6pm See schedule	26 Happy Birthday Matt Feehan	27 Happy Birthday Linda Spears Palo Comado Canyon hike Meet at 7am Read schedule
28 Rocky Peak Trail Hike Meet at 5pm Read schedule	29	30	31			

