



Rancho Simi Trail Blazers

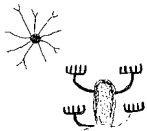


CHUMASH AND THE SUN

Over the years I have been told about a Chumash rock shelter with art in it with a rather vague description of where the site is. I looked for it a couple of times, but was unable to find it. Well, someone finally offered to show it to me.

Now, I've always been a bit skeptical when someone offers to lead me to a rock art site, especially in my own back yard. Those sojourns usually reveal art (?) made with acrylic paints. In this case, the offer was from a trusted friend – so I went. Guess what – it is the real thing.

The rock art motifs closely parallel those at the well known world class site a few miles away in the Simi Hills. One is even tempted to suggest that it might have been by either the same shaman or shamans that made portions of the other panel or by shamans who were familiar with the other panel. The paintings certainly represent religious practices and cannot be attributed to idle sketches of a bored Indian.



One figure is an anthropomorphic figure in three colors, i.e., red, white and black. It is a dance figure, probably representing a solar shaman. The legs and arms are turned upward towards the heavens and the feet and hands are rake-like. Above the figure is a simply made solar like image with rays radiating from a central point. Although

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APRIL WORK PARTY

Seven Rancho Simi Trail Blazers turned out to work on the Chumash Trail for California Trail Days. We again drove up the Rocky Peak Fire Road to access the upper trailhead. All worked as a team on a single bad section of trail located at the 2-1/4 mile mark. Bare rock slabs with a steep side slope and large steps formed a treacherous passage. We first cut away the high points on the hard rock slabs with strenuous pick-mattock work to minimize the amount of fill needed. Large rocks jutting up at the outside edge of the trail had to be moved. Then loads of rocks were used to fill and level the areas between the slabs. Finally, wheelbarrows of dirt were pored over the top to finish the tread. The final result exceeded our expectations. A smooth trail now exists where the previously unsafe passage had been. Before and after pictures were also taken to document the repair. We worked from 8:00 AM to 1:30 PM and met at Chuy's on our way home. Many thanks to the following workers who did a very impressive job:

Bob Altieri, Arlene Altshuler, Bill Cespedes, Gary Cremeans, Mike Kuhn, Chuck Portoghesi, and John Sabol.



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
Wednesday, May 15th.

JUNE WORK PARTY

There will be no work party in May. The next Trail Blazers work party will be held in conjunction with **NATIONAL TRAIL DAY** on **Saturday, June 1**, again on the **Chumash Trail**. This work party will continue repair of 2 more sections on 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 a total of 6 hours, from 8:00 AM to 2:00 PM. Hope to see you there.

Work Parties Chair

VENTURENOS

The Fernandenos referred to the Ventureno Chumash as the "*kwikwinavitam*." The term refers to the practice of using clay to wash one's hair. It is unlikely that this term was used by the Chumash.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The park district has a booth at the Street Fair being held on May 11th. Volunteers are needed to help pass out brochures, maps, coloring books, and information to people who visit the park district booth.

If you would like to volunteer for any of these shifts:

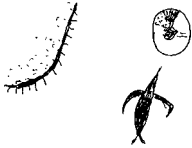
- 8am - 10am
- 9:45am - Noon
- 11:45am - 2pm
- 1:45pm - 4pm
- 3:45pm - 5:45pm

please contact **Colleen Janssen**:

Voice: 805:584-4453

Cont. from Page 1 Col. 1

faint, at least some of the rays terminate as "v" shapes. This figure is like the image of God, i.e., the sun, that was drawn by Fernando Librado, a Chumash Indian, for John P. Harrington, a well known anthropologist.



Another panel includes a black figure that appears to represent "swordfish." Swordfish was the antithesis of the sun. The swordfish lived in quartz crystal hut, i.e., *ap*, at the bottom of the sea, while the sun lived in quartz crystal hut in the sky. Swordfish is often associated with solstice celebrations. Directly over swordfish is the faint remains of a polychromatic disk, which may represent the sun. Up and to the left of swordfish is the remains of part of a red arc that seems to have short rays emanating from it.



A third panel includes five concentric circles with rays emanating from the outer circle. Below and to the right is an anthropomorphic figure, apparently a person, with arms and legs. The only elaboration on the figure is a circular appendage between the legs. What that appendage represents is not clear. The famous rock art panel in the Simi Hills includes several five ringed concentric circles. It is generally thought they may represent the five levels of the universe, which the Chumash believed in. This motif, with its radiating rays, probably is tied into the sun in some way.

Faint remains of other pigments are present. A large section of the center of the

Cont. in Col. 2

Cont. from Col. 1

rock shelter has spalled off due to salt wedging of sand grains. No doubt the rock art was more extensive when originally done.

The soil in front of the rock shelter is dark with decomposed organic material and wood ash. This dark soil is the "midden" left by the Indians. Exposed at the surface is a mixture of rock fragments, i.e., "debitage", from tool making and fire cracked rocks as well as pieces of bottle glass, rusty nails, and pieces of milled wood, etc. – just about every bit of trash one would expect in an older residential area. Indeed, we have left far more trash during our brief period of occupation than the Indians did during the previous 10,000 years or more.

Vandalism is minimal, but there is some. The rock face has been impacted by many paint balls, so that vandalism is recent. Otherwise, the neighbors have not molested the site even though many peo-

SPANISH TRAILS

Early Spanish travelers were probably guided by Indians. Certainly, they traveled routes already established by the Indians. We know that the El Camino Real, or King's Highway, ran through Simi Valley, and El Rancho Simi was a resting stop for travelers. Alfred Robinson, in "Life in California" describes a night spent at the Simi Adobe on his way to the Pueblo de Los Angeles in the 1830s. There probably were at least three routes over the pass from the San Fernando Valley side. The route over the pass was probably the old Indian trail, which later became the "stagecoach trail". Historian Charles F. Outland was of the opinion that no wheeled vehicle crossed Santa Susana Pass until the event of the stage route in 1861. There simply was no mechanism established to improve the trail for use by wagons.

In an 1834 report to Mexico on the precinct of the Presidio of Santa Barbara, it

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is reported that besides the route to the east, that there are three routes to the west - Quimisa Road, Tierra Rejada Road and the Simi Road. The Quimisa Road ran west out of Simi along the Arroyo Simi. That route had originally been the trail to the Chumash village of *Quimisac*, which was northwest of Moorpark College. A Quimisa Road now runs from Los Angeles Avenue into Oak Park. The road west through the Tierra Rejada Valley was the one used by the El Camino Real. The Simi Road ran through the western portion of present day Wood Ranch to the Conejo Valley. It was originally the Indian trail from the Conejo to the Indian village of *Simi*'.

There also seems to have been an early Spanish trail which came over the hills from the top of Woolsey Canyon down to the hanging valley on the northern edge of the Sage Ranch and hence down the eastern fork of Meier Canyon. There is still remnant Spanish graffiti along the route.

A route up Tapo Canyon to the de la Guerra adobe and from there over the hills to the Camulos area in the Santa Clara Valley was also used. That route too had been an Indian trail. A route also existed from Tapo Canyon through the present day Lost Canyons golf courses and extending from the mouth of Dry Canyon just north of the Simi Valley Hospital to the Simi Adobe.

Finally, the Dominguez Trail, which swung north from the village of Ta'apu (the source of the name "Tapo" and in Gillibrand Canyon) over the head of Las Lajas Canyon through Brown's Canyon into the San Fernando Valley was also used.



PLACE NAMES REFLECT CULTURE

The name "Whiteface" refers to a prominent landform feature on the northern side of Simi Valley. Pat Havens, our City Historian, has indicated that she remembers an aunt referring to Whiteface as "Ostrich Tip," presumably because it reminded someone of how the end of an ostrich plume appears. This name raises the issue on how place names reflect the culture of origin and how that culture viewed its environment.



The probable Chumash name for Whiteface was something like Sandal Escarpment - which reflected the need to wear sandals if you were going to go over or down the escarpment. That is a very utilitarian view and reflects the intimate relationship that the Indians had with the land. That name continued into the Spanish, Mexican and American periods because the Chumash were the sheep herders and the vaqueros and thereby maintained that intimate relationship with place.

Eventually the relevance of the name was lost on the American farmers who settled here.

"Ostrich Tip", if it indeed was commonly used, reflected the Victorian and post-Victorian period when ostrich feathers decorated parlors and women's hats. As an analogy, it is understandable and relevant to the time. Soon, however, ostrich feathers fell out of fashion, which left a void as far as a name for that oh so prominent landform.

Who first called the landform "Whiteface" and when they did it is now forgotten. The name seems to reflect an intimate attachment to a distant feature on the land, an icon as it were. At the same time, it does not

Cont. in Col. 2



Hidden Pond Hike, from left to right: Brian McKee, Tom Frye, Margarita Marsh, John Sabol, Carol Tucker, Chuck Portoghesi, and Bill Cespedes.

Cont. from Col. 1

People do often ask me how they can get there, because they want go there. The answer, of course, is that it's private property.

Someday soon, the "Rim of the Valley" trail, which would run along the top of Whiteface, will become a reality, and those with adventurous hearts and the will to make it happen, will become more familiar with the landform by visiting its summit.



THE CLAMPET FIRE OF 1970

November 1970 witnessed one of the worst wildland fires in the history of our area. The hills on three sides of the valley were engulfed in flames at the same time. Many structures around the valley, especially in outlying areas, had to be sacrificed in order to prevent fires from raging through tract homes on the valley floor, feeding on wooden roofs. One of the

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Cont. from Col. 2

Strathearn homes was lost. A portion of the Corriganville movie sets was consumed, as were many structures and other improvements on the Douglas-Welfare (now the Mt. Sinai) property. Residents were terrified. Fire resources were stretched thin. Their simply was not enough equipment to go around.

At the height of the conflagration, after many calls for help from residents on the historic Hummingbird Ranch, which is located in the hills northeast of the northern end of Kuehner Drive, one fireman, Jim Arons, was sent to the ranch with a pickup truck and a fire extinguisher. (I think the "fire extinguisher" in this story is a reflection of black humor.) He set several backfires, which were successful in preventing the loss of any structures. In some cases, too little may not be too little.

Today the ranch, i.e., the Hummingbird's Nest, is better supplied with water and has its own fire engine.





May

2002



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	3 Bear Creek Backpacking Trip	4 Bear Creek Backpacking Trip
5 Bear Creek Backpacking Trip <i>Happy Birthday Robert Lisenby Hannah Kuhn</i>	6	7	8	9 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	10 <i>Happy Birthday Jim Vandenberg</i>	11 Mt. McCoy Hike 8:30am See Schedule
12 Rocky Peak 5pm hike See Schedule	13	14	15 RSTB Meeting See Page 1	16 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	17	18 Corriganville Hike 8:30am See Schedule
19 Rocky Peak 5pm hike See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday Kathy Weiner</i>	20	21	22	23 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	24	25 Solstice Canyon See Schedule
26 Rocky Peak 5pm hike See Schedule	27	28	29	30 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday Gary Geise</i>	31	



Rancho Simi Trail Blazers

Hiking Schedule



- May 2 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. (moderate, 5 MRT)
- May 3 - 5 Bear Creek Backpacking Trip**
This backpacking trip is not within the jurisdiction of the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District. For more information,
- May 9 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. (moderate, 5 MRT)
- May 11 Mt. McCoy Flower Hike**
Leisurely flower walk. Easy to moderate 2 1/2 MRT flower hike. Meet 8:30am at KMart parking lot on corner of Los Angeles and Madera, to car pool to the trail head. Bring 1 – 2 quarts of water, hat, sunscreen, wear boots.
- May 12 Sunday Evening Hike**
Meet 5pm at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. (Strenuous, 5 MRT)
- May 16 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. (moderate, 5 MRT)
- May 18 Corriganville Flower Hike**
Leisurely flower walk. See what's blooming in Corriganville. Meet 8:30am, in Corriganville parking lot. Directions: Take 118 Fwy to Keuhner. Go south on Keuhner, to Smith Rd. Turn left on Smith Road, and follow it to the end. The parking lot is at the end of the road. Bring 1 – 2 quarts of water, hat, and sunscreen.
- May 19 Sunday Evening Hike**
Meet 5pm at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. (Strenuous, 5 MRT)
- May 23 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. (moderate, 5 MRT)
- May 25 Solstice Canyon**
Part easy, part steep 6 MRT with 600' elevation gain/loss with a great view of Point Dume and the ocean from the ridge of the canyon. This hike is not within the jurisdiction of the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park district. Bring snack and 2 - 3 qts of water, bug juice. Wear boots. Meet 8am near Donut Delite at the corner of Madera and Royal.
- May 26 Sunday Evening Hike**
Meet 5pm at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. (Strenuous, 5 MRT)
- May 30 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. (moderate, 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:	KRISTA SMITH	HM (805) 404-2352
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 Sept.-2001/Sept.-2002 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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