



Rancho Simi Trail Blazers

A Division of the Rancho Simi Foundation



**Claudia Cassidy
Goldie Parazoo
Lisa Zimblar**



APRIL WORK PARTY NEWS

The April Work Party was held on the Lower Stagecoach Trail, on April 12th, 2008. Trails were cleared and repaired. Many thanks to Bill Cespedes, Mike Kuhn and John Sabol for their efforts.

It would be great to have more people join us for the work parties. The work is quite rewarding.



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.

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 **May 21st, 2008**

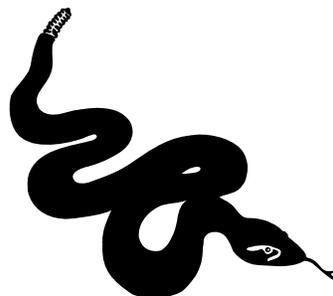
WHY SNAKES DEVELOPED RATTLES

Rattlesnakes belong to the family Viperidae, or vipers, the most advanced family of reptiles in the world. On the high plains of North America, at the dawn of the Pliocene epoch between 4 and 12 million years ago, rattlesnakes differentiated from their more generally adapted viperid ancestors.

During the early stages of rattlesnake evolution the interior grasslands were crowded with vast herds of ancient horses, camels and numerous species of bison and pronghorn antelope that moved together in animal rivers across the prairie. At this time most vipers and many species of nonpoisonous snakes vibrated the tips of their tails to produce a rattle against dry leaves to avoid being stepped on.

Rattlesnakes, which evolved in this sea of cloven hooves, improved this protective technique by developing resonators on the ends of their tails to amplify this vibratory noise.

John Sabol



UPCOMING EVENTS

May 3rd, 2008:
Wildwood Park – Santa Rosa Trail
Please see the website for more info.

May 3rd, 2008:
Mountain Lion Presentation
Pls. see the website for more info.

May 10th, 2008:
Sulphur Mountain
Please see the website for more info.

May 17th, 2008:
Work Party: Lower Section of the Lower Stagecoach Trail
Please see the web site for more info.

May 24th, 2008:
Ahmanson Ranch – Lasky Mesa
Please see the website for more info.

May 28th - June 1st, 2008:
RESERVATIONS CLOSED
Yosemite Hiking & Camping Trip (Trailblazer Members Only)
Please see the website for more info.

More information on these events can be found at

<http://simitrailblazers.com>

To make reservations, please email Mark Gilmore at markinthepark@sbcglobal.net



CASA VIEJA

The first adobe in Simi Valley seems to have been located south of the Arroyo Simi and southeast of the intersection of Royal Avenue and Erringer Road, about where the Scott/Cameron house is today. "*Casa Vieja*", or "old house", is shown on a *diseno*, i.e., map or drawing, from 1842. The *diseno* implies that the adobe was still there in 1842. Its name also implies that it predated the "*Simi*", or "Pico", adobe, which is also shown on the *diseno*. The Simi adobe is located within the present day Strathearn Historical Park. The Simi adobe is known to have served as the headquarters of the rancho from shortly after 1800 until the 1840s, when the headquarters was moved into Tapo (now Gillibrand) Canyon by the new owner of the rancho, Jose de la Guerra. So, where was *Casa Vieja* and why was the rancho headquarters moved?

Pat Havens believes that *Casa Vieja* was located near the old John C. Scott home. (The home was later occupied by Douglas and Janet Scott Cameron and is now occupied by Don and Marilyn Cameron.) When I walked the area during the late-1970s in association with a proposal to divide the land, I was puzzled to find some evidence of the use of the immediate area by the Chumash Indians. Had the adobe been located nearby, it certainly would have employed Chumash laborers, and those Indians would have continued to use stone tools. Pat Havens suspects that an old olive tree on the property may date from either the late-18th or the early-19th Century. Joe Simon, a prominent archaeologist who lives in Simi Valley, later examined the area around the Cameron home and concluded that there is evidence of early Spanish occupation based upon fragments of pottery known to have been made in El Pueblo de los Angeles.

As reported in *Simi Valley: A Journey Through Time* (page 61), Mrs. H. J. Crinklaw gave a talk in 1923 to the Simi Valley Women's Club. She recalled traveling through Simi Valley in 1873 while on a trip from Camarillo to San Fernando. She stated that there were only "two adobes" in the valley. Those adobes were certainly the Simi Adobe and *Casa Vieja*. They were the only adobes that

would have been seen by a traveler along the track through the valley. (At the time there was also an adobe on the Hummingbird's Nest Ranch [the Juan Pucillo Adobe] and another in what is now called Gillibrand Canyon [the Jose de la Guerra Adobe]). By implication, it would seem that *Casa Vieja* was still standing in good order and probably still occupied in 1873.

When an adobe was built, a trench, about two feet deep, was dug for the foundation. The trench about two feet wide and two feet deep would have been filled with rock of five to eight inches in diameter. The soil walls would have supported the rock foundation horizontally. The adobe bricks would have been lain atop of the rock foundation. According to Don Cameron, he does not remember encountering or seeing any adobe wall foundations on the Cameron estate.

According to Mrs. Havens, Janet Cameron, who authored a book of history about Simi Valley, frequently told members of the newly formed Simi Valley Historical Society that she wanted the remnants of "the first farm building built in Simi Valley" preserved. That structure stood one to two hundred feet east of the Scott/Cameron House. It was torn down by Dale Miller, who built a new home where it had stood. Don Cameron described the remains of the house as being something like 12 feet by 16 feet – about the size of an old single car garage. It had a wooden floor lain on redwood supports directly on the soil, with board and batten walls and a shake roof. He said that it was pretty flimsy – like most of the late-19th and early 20th Century farm homes that were built in the valley. Mrs. Havens reports that... "It didn't 'amount to much', and after Janet Cameron's death those remnants of the structure were taken down without much ado." Mrs. Havens went on to say that what Mrs. Cameron wanted to memorialize was a structure that had been occupied by several families before her father had purchased the property. By then no one remembered or knew the historic origins of the house. There is no indication that that home had been built directly on the site of *Casa Vieja*. However, it is likely that remnants of the adobe, or at least its foundation, were still visible nearby.

Don Cameron relates that the family lore was that the Scott/Cameron House was built directly atop the site of an earlier structure. Since the foundation of an adobe has not been found in the immediate area given the concentration of Spanish era pottery sherds and Chumash artifacts near the Scott/Cameron House, it seems likely that the Scott/Cameron House was built atop the old adobe site.

As the first adobe, it certainly was built for and by, using Indian labor, members of the Pico family. Then why did the family move their rancho headquarters to a new location? When the Spanish first settled the Simi Valley area during the last decade 18th Century, the floor of the valley west of about Stearns Street was generally treeless except for willows along the Arroyo Simi and a few large sycamore trees in or near the Rancho Simi Community Park. The willows probably extended as far upstream as between Erringer Road and Sycamore Drive. A ranch house in the vicinity of *Casa Vieja* could have enjoyed a hand-dug well and a cistern. Livestock would have been watered locally in the Arroyo Simi from groundwater seeping out of the banks of the Arroyo as a result of high water table conditions.

It is possible that either one of two conditions could have resulted in the abandonment of *Casa Vieja* as the rancho headquarters. First of all, the local fuel wood supply, which was confined to the Arroyo Simi, would have been quickly exhausted within a few years - resulting in further and further sojourns for fuel. Secondly, it is possible that several years of severe drought saw the drying up of the Arroyo Simi in the vicinity of *Casa Vieja* as a general lowering of the water table occurred. This may have caused a drying of their well and possibly of the Arroyo Simi. We also know that in later years residents of the Simi adobe were forced to seek drinking water at some distance from the adobe during the drought of the first half of the 1860s.

Mike Kuhn 4/20/07

DEATH VALLEY 2008





RSTB Calendar May 2008



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Julie Szende</i>	2 <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Sudershan Nunna</i>	3 Wildwood Park – Santa Rosa Trail Mountain Lion Presentation See Schedule
4 Rocky Peak 5pm hike See Schedule	5  <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Robert D. Lisenby</i> <i>Hannah Kuhn</i>	6 Long Canyon 6:30pm hike See Schedule	7	8 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Melanie Ashen</i>	9	10 Sulphur Mountain See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Jim Vandenberg</i>
11 Rocky Peak 5pm hike See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Fran Atkins</i>	12 <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Nancy Lawson</i> <i>Carcione</i>	13 Long Canyon 6:30pm hike See Schedule	14	15 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	16	17 Work Party Lower section of the Lower Stagecoach Trail See Schedule
18 Rocky Peak 5pm hike See Schedule	19 <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Kief Adler</i>	20 Long Canyon 6:30pm hike See Schedule	21 RSTB Meeting See Page 1	22 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	23 <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Luke Michaelson</i>	24 Ahmanson Ranch – Lasky Mesa See Schedule
25 Rocky Peak 5pm hike See Schedule	26 	27 Long Canyon 6:30pm hike See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Alisha Michaelson</i> <i>Alan Cueba</i>	28 Yosemite Hiking & Camping Trip	29 Yosemite Hiking & Camping Trip (No Thursday Hike) <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Phyllis Tewfik</i>	30 Yosemite Hiking & Camping Trip <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Bonnie Bouley</i>	31 Yosemite Hiking & Camping Trip (No Saturday Hike)



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Hiking Schedule



REGULARLY SCHEDULED HIKES

(Rain cancels – No hikes on holidays)

Sunday Evening - Rocky Peak

Meet 4 pm at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. (Strenuous, 4.8 MRT)
(Meet at 5pm during daylight savings time)

Tuesday Evening - Long Canyon

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, 3.0 MRT)

Thursday Evening - The Chumash Trail

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, 5.2 MRT)

MAY HIKES

May 3rd Wildwood Park - Santa Rosa Trail*

5 MRT - Moderate (500' elevation gain/loss). Nice views of Santa Rosa Valley and the Topatopa mountains. Meet 8 AM near Donut Delite at the corner of Madera and Royal. Bring 2 quarts of water, a snack, and wear boots.

May 3rd Mountain Lion Presentation

1 PM - [Rancho Santa Susanna Community Center](#) - 5005 Los Angeles Avenue #C, Simi Valley

Do you want to get up close to a mountain lion and other wild animals you might encounter on the rural/urban fringe? This program is a **live animal** presentation on wildlife/human conflict occurring on the urban edges. The program will discuss each animal's biology and needs, and possible resolutions to the conflicts in urban backyards. Please see the RSTB website to view the Park District flier.

May 10th Sulphur Mountain*

6 to 10 MRT - Moderate to strenuous. This is a beautiful area in the mountains between Ventura and Ojai. Meet at 8 AM near Donut Delite at the corner of Madera and Royal. Wear boots, bring bug juice, snack and 2 - 3 quarts of water.

May 17th Work Party - Lower section of the Lower Stagecoach Trail. Meet at the eastern end of the Corriganville Parking lot at 8:00 AM. Bring 2-3 quarts water, a snack, sturdy boots/shoes, gloves, hat, sunglasses and sunscreen. Tools will be provided.

May 24th Ahmanson Ranch - Lasky Mesa*

9.5 MRT - Easy (500' elevation gain)

The first part of our hike takes you through gently rolling hills dotted with huge, spectacular oak trees. After a loop around Lasky Mesa, the hike heads northwest to Las Virgenes Canyon where a small creek nurtures a more densely covered area along the banks of the stream. Please see the RSTB website for more information about this hike. Meet at 8 AM near Donut Delite at the corner of Madera and Royal. Bring 2 to 3 quarts of water and a snack. Wear boots.

May 28th - June 1st Yosemite Hiking & Camping Trip*



RESERVATIONS CLOSED

This very special event is limited to Trailblazer members only. This trip is for the entire family. We will be tent camping at the [Wawona Campground](#). Please note this is the weekend after Memorial Day; see the RSTB website for details.

* Not within the jurisdiction of the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District.



No dogs allowed on trail(s).

For 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.

<http://www.simitrailblazers.com>

RANCHO SIMI TRAIL BLAZERS

A Division of the Rancho Simi Foundation

Executive Chair:	Mike Kuhn	HM (805) 583-2345	hannahmike@roadrunner.com
Treasurer:	Peter Ely		
Park District Liaison:	Colleen Janssen	WK (805) 584-4453	volunteers@rsrpd.us
Work Parties Chair:		*** OPEN ***	
Hiking Chair:	Mark Gilmore	HM (805) 529-5581	markinthepark@sbcglobal.net
Vice Hiking Chair:	John Sabol	HM (805) 583-2541	jtsabol@sbcglobal.net
Website:	Mark Gilmore	HM (805) 529-5581	markinthepark@sbcglobal.net
Ways & Means Chair:	Marty Richards	HM (805) 526-4414	
Publicity Chair:	Carrie McCline		
Newsletter Editor:	Linda Travis		lindactravis@sbcglobal.net

-----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 _____

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

Address _____

Email Address _____ Phone wk/hm _____

Would you like to receive periodic email announcements about club activities? Yes () No ()

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 93063-0399



U.S. Postage

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