



Rancho Simi Trail Blazers



Volume 5 Issue 5

May 1999

ROCKY POINT

As you go south on Kuehner Drive, past Katherine Road, there is a large prominent rock on the right hand side. Many times in the past I have noticed a series of well cut foot holds going up the northern face at an angle. I have wondered who put them there and when. (The reason why is obvious - to get to the top!)

Jan Hinkston's 1974 interview with Joseph W. Bannon answers that question. Joe Bannon's family ran the quarry in what is now the Santa Susana (Knolls) Park for the Southern Pacific Railroad and had a 10-year lease on the Dillon Quarry east of Kuehner Drive and north of the railroad.

Joe relates that the family that lived on Smith Road, the Welches (Pat Havens, the City Historian, has indicated that a family named "Whelchel" lived on Smith Road and probably the name of the family of Joe Bannon's memory), had a son named Lloyd, who used to run around with Joe's older brother Larry. They used to get into mischief. Indeed, they were good at it. One day, probably sometime after 1910, the boys decided that they wanted to get to the top of that large rock. So they got hammers and chisels and proceed to cut foot holds as far up the rock as was necessary to gain access to the top. Getting up proved to be easy, but getting down proved to be a problem. When trying to back down the rock, you can't see the foot holds. Since they angled up the rock face, they are difficult to locate. Eventually, they saw Joe's brother Jim and hollered their hearts out. Jim went back to the quarry and got a rope, a hammer and a star drill. He climbed up, drilled a hole, left the drill in place, tied the rope to the drill and everyone made it down safely. As the eldest brother, Jim whaled the daylight out of Larry. Both Lloyd and Larry, according to Joe, carved

Welcome New Members



**Belle Longstreth
Tom & Roxanne McCarthy
Lindsay & Dusty McCarthy
Ellen Repar
Mario Rovere
Jim Vandenberg
J.W.Proffit
Russ, Nona, Amy Young
Helen Dennert
Moon Gersdorff**

CLUB MEETING

The scheduled May Membership Meeting will be at 1692 Sycamore Drive in the Community Center, (B-1) Room at 7 :00 PM on Wednesday, May 19th

WHERE IS H'I'M AND WHAT DOES IT MEAN

A January 25, 1999, letter from Chester King to Sybil Scotford contains some possible new insights relating to the place names h'i'm and hi'im. These names are recording in the early Twentieth Century notes of the prominent anthropologist/linguist John Peabody Harrington. Harrington's linguistic notes must be presumed to be precise. Chester King is an archaeologist who lives in Los Angeles County and does a great deal of work within the area that was formerly occupied by the Chumash Indians. His academic and practical knowledge about things Chumash is widely respected by other anthropologists. When Chester King speaks, his contemporaries give thoughtful consideration to what he has to say.

His letter addresses the possible connect between the Ventureño Chumash word for "storage basket," i.e., h'i'm, and the large sandstone outcropping on the western side of Kuehner Drive south of the Arroyo Simi. (The form "h" is used throughout in this text as Dr. King uses it. Harrington often used "q" as an alternative sound. The use of alternative notations is common in Harrington's notes.) Extracted from his letter in his own words:

"Probably [*Harrington's*] the most accurate and knowledgeable (sic) Chumash consultant was Fernando [Librado]. Fernando told Harrington that a Fernandeno Indian told him that Santa Susana is called hi'im, mystery." Fernando said there was a

their name on the rock while they were up there.

On April 3, 1999, I visited the rock in order to photograph the footholds. While there, a young man of about 19 and his two young sisters started up the north face of the rock. The young man scrambled to the top. His youngest sister only made it up about 10 feet. The older sister made it up about 20 feet. I had to talk both the older sister and the young man down the rock face by calmly directing them where to put their feet to find the footholds. They couldn't find the footholds on their own. The way down is complicated because in order to find the next foothold you must somehow cross your right leg over your left leg, far to the left, and reach down about a foot and a half. This maneuver requires you to lower your body beyond the point where you think you can sustain yourself on the rock. This leap of faith can only be directed by someone on the ground and requires steady nerves. Prior to getting my directions, the young man had slipped about three feet down the rock face before attaining a handhold. How often this same drama has played out over the years since 1910 is anyone's guess.

Well, it's nice to know by whom and when those hand foot holds were carved into the rock. I suppose after nearly 90 years the drill hole is still up there and perhaps Larry Bannon's and Lloyd Welch's names are there too - testimony to a minor drama so very long ago. Just as the Wright brothers should be celebrated as the first men to land safely, Larry's and Lloyd's goal, during the planning stage, should have been to get down from the rock.

Like all of us, we set new goals with each new step.

Mike Kuhn

California Trail Days – April 24/25 China Flat Trail – Agoura Hills

On Sunday April 18th Mike Kuhn, John Sabol, Arlene Altshuler and I scouted the hillside and flagged a new trail route diagonally, incorporating switch-back locations, to intersect at the top with the existing trail which was incredibly steep and badly eroded. Continuing on to the next steep, eroded section we flagged a lateral route around the hill, across the streambed and intersected the original trail coming up from King James Court. I returned Monday and Tuesday mornings to cut brush along the flags to make our work progress a little faster come the weekend.

We met Saturday at 7:30 A. M. at the Donut Delight and carpoled to the Lindero Canyon Road trailhead. Fortunately, the hot temperatures forecast for the weekend didn't happen and it was a cool cloudy morning. Lisa brought along six pairs of very bright yellow and black leather work gloves for those who forgot theirs. Johns Downey and Sabol, Marty Richards, Lisa Klockenteger, Bill Cespedes, Gary Cremeans, and I fought the brush and the rottenly stubborn stumps all the way to top of the hill. We were joined by Louise Pomes and Mike Kuhn. Earlier Mike had led a hiking class on the Hummingbird trail.

By noon we were bushed but kept on working. By 1:30 P.M. we had had enough. The trail was now cleared of brush, nicely contoured, very usable and the first dangerous section bypassed. Some mighty tired 'Blazers tromped back to the cars.

A reporter and photographer came up as we worked, took photos and interviewed workers. A nice story and photos were on the front page of the Sunday Daily News, Simi Valley edition.

goldmine there, south of track and west of tunnel. Harrington was greatly pleased to find that another consultant Jose Juan Olivas apparently knows hi'im, which he pronounces h'i'm. It is in the hills between the cienagas of Simi (volunteered) and the Tierra Rajada. He says something about there being a rock shaped like a h'i'm [storage basket] there. Another time he said that it is a hill atresado [standing out] below Simi.

Fernando Librado was much more accurate in locating places than Jose Juan Olivas. Rocks in the Santa Susana area are also shaped more like a storage basket than rocks in the west end of the Simi Valley. In his placename list, Richard Appellate describes hi'im as a place in Santa Susana, in Simi Valley (Appellate 1975:29)

The word h'i'm means storage basket in Ventureño Chumash. The name given by Fernando was hi'im and apparently does not mean storage basket. Fernando apparently told Harrington it was a mystery which may have meant that it was something he did not want to explain. He placed the "mystery" rock west of the railroad tunnel between the Simi and San Fernando Valleys and equated it with the train station town of Santa Susana. This would be consistent with the location of the large rock ... The rock may be a place of special significance in local tradition."

This jumble of information is confusing. Fernando sometimes seems to have held back information from Harrington. There seemed to have been things that he did not want Harrington to know or simply that he did not want to explain - things that might involve some form of



May



1999

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

						1 Upper Santa Ynez Canyon Hike Meet at 8 am Read schedule
2 Happy Birthday Jeane Haining ROCKY PEAK 5 PM Hike See Schedule	3	4	5 Happy Birthday Hannah Kuhn	6 Happy Birthday David Melone Susan Wiltsey Chumash Trail Hike	7	8 Ferndale Hike Santa Paula Meet at 8 am See schedule
9 ROCKY PEAK 5 PM Hike See Schedule	10 Happy Birthday Jim Vandenberg	11	12	13 Happy Birthday Lorrie Stelzer Chumash Trail Hike	14	15 Chumash Trail Work Party 8:30am to noon See schedule
16 ROCKY PEAK 5 PM Hike See Schedule	17	18	19 RSTB Club Meeting 7:00 PM See Page 1	20 Happy Birthday Sue Rasmussen Chumash Trail Hike	21 Bear Trap Backpack See Schedule	22 Bear Trap Backpack See Schedule
23 3rd. Day of Bear Trap Backpack	24	25	26 Happy Birthday Lynn Garci & Matt Feehan	27 Happy Birthday Michael Davis Chumash Trail Hike	28	29 Decker School Road to Nicholas Flat Meet at 8 am See schedule
30 ROCKY PEAK 5 PM Hike See Schedule	31					

RANCHO SIMI TRAIL BLAZERS

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Please enroll me as a New () or Renewing () member of the Rancho Simi Trail Blazers for the annual donation fee of:

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How did you find out about the RSTB _____

Please make out tax deductible member dues check for the year 10-98/10-99 to:

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taboo. Fernando told Harrington that a Fernand o Indian told him that Santa Susana is called *hi'im*. The pronunciation of a Chumash name by a Fernand o Indian is suspect. Harrington's notes from the Fernand o are full of mispronunciations of Chumash word. On the other hand, Fernando seems to have had a great deal of information about the 'antap cult, whose members spoke a secret variation of the Chumash languages. It is possible that the difference in pronunciation is due to this reason. It is not clear that Fernando provided any location for the place other than between "Simi" and the San Fernando Valley. Jose, his other informant, provided a location in the hills now occupied by the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library. (The *cieneegas* were ponds or wetlands at the western end of the valley.) His pronunciation is that of the word for a storage basket. There are no storage basket shaped rocks in the hills around Mt. McCoy and further west. Confusion over place names is inevitable when dealing with recollections of individuals whose culture was destroyed over 100 years before they were interviewed. Fernando, for example, never lived in the Simi Valley area. His familiarity with the prehistoric geography of Simi Valley is questionable.

While all of this is very confusing, one must acknowledge that the rock on the western side of Kuehner Drive is shaped like an inverted "storage" basket. There are abundant archaeological sites in the general area. The rock certainly would have been a prominent landmark for the Indians, just as it is today, when exiting and entering the valley. The memory of this name, from all of the hundreds of forgotten placenames from the area, suggests that the significance of

"*H'i'm*" was more than just as a landform. Fernando's use of the word "mystery" suggests to Dr. David Whitley, a leader in the interpretation of rock art, that what Fernando did not want to explain was that *H'i'm* was a sacred rock art site. While the rock on the western side of Kuehner Drive and the nearby rocks do not now contain any prehistoric rock art, rock art may have been present in the past and since having given way to weathering or vandalism. Dr. King's contribution that the meaning of *h'i'm* as "storage basket" is significant. That placename is connected with Simi Valley, and we now can be reasonably certain of its meaning. In addition, the large rock outcropping on the western side of Kuehner Drive would seem to be a likely candidate for "*H'i'm*." In any case, we may now have less of a "mystery" on our hands.

Mike Kuhn

SUCCESSFUL RUMMAGE SALE

I want to thank all of our volunteers who gave up their Saturday to help us have a successful Rummage Sale last month. We made enough to pay for new tools and gear we may need for our trail day events this year. Thanks to all who participated!! We also want to thank **Donut Depot** and **Chesapeake Bagel Bakery** for their contributions of Bagels and Donuts. Also **Ralph's grocery store** gave us a \$15 gift certificate which took care of all our drinks and sundries needed for the days event.

Marty Richards

Ways & Means Committee Chair

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Sunday morning was a repeat. Mike, Lisa, Arlene, Bill, John Sabol, and I carpooled to the trail head. We went to the upper section, noticing from the footprints that the trail we built on Saturday was already receiving considerable use. A nice feeling. The entry section of the new route was dangerously close to a steep gully and a reroute was agreed upon. The temperature was warmer, the work considerable, and with fewer people who were still tired and stiff from the previous days efforts, we struggled to complete the upper section, but alas, noon came to quickly (or blessedly soon!) and we had to stop. This section still has to be completed across the streambed, about 80 – 100 yards before we reach the original trail. It is passable but not contoured and the stumps have not been removed.

WORK PARTIES CHAIR:
BOB ALTIERIMarty Richards, Lisa Klockenteger,
and Tom Frye at Rummage sale.