



Rancho Simi Trail Blazers



PARK BOARD OKAYS DOWNEY BENCH

On May 9 the Board of Directors of the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District okayed the placement of a bench, with a plaque, in the memory of Byers John Downey, on the ridge south of Mt. McCoy near the top of the Mt. McCoy Trail. John died in an accidental fall while hiking on August 10, 2001. The bench will be dedicated on Sunday, August 11 of this year.



LONG CANYON PARKLAND DEDICATION

On Saturday, May 18, the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy dedicated 1000 acres of new parkland to the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District. The land is located south of Long Canyon in the Wood Ranch development and includes the Long Canyon Trail. The land was acquired by the Santa Monica Conservancy from New Urban West, the developer of Long Canyon. Some of the new parkland was previously earmarked for estate lots, so there is now more public open space than previously planned. The dedication ensures all of the trail connections with the Conejo Valley, Simi Peak and China Flat, Chesbro Canyon, and all the way to the Pacific Ocean.

25 years ago there was no public open space in the hills around Simi Valley. Outdoor recreational opportunities have come a long way since then.

JULY BACKPACKING TRIP

We are planning an overnight backpacking trip to **Sheep Camp** on **July 13th - 14th**. Those who would like to go, please contact me for more information.

WILDFLOWER SLIDE SHOW

There may not be many wildflowers this year, but we have built up quite a slide collection over the years.

We'll be showing these wildflower slides at our June and July meetings.

Come see what will bloom, if given enough water.



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Sam and Phyllis Tewfik
Robin Stone

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, June 19th.

JUNE WORK PARTY

The next Trail Blazers work party will be held in conjunction with **NATIONAL TRAILS DAY** on **Saturday, June 1**, again on the **Chumash Trail**. This work party will continue the 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
John Sabol

VOLUNTEERS WANTED

We can use some new hike leaders. Any volunteers? Some of our old standbys are getting burnt out. Please contact either Mike Kuhn, John Sabol or Arlene Altshuler.

DINKEY LAKES BASIN BACKPACKING TRIP

We are planning a four (4) day backpacking trip into the Dinkey Lakes Basin in late August. Dinkey Lakes Basin is located east of Fresno and south of Shaver Lake in the southern Sierra Nevada. The trailhead starts at about 8400 feet. Three (3) miles later and about 800 feet elevation gain you get to First Dinkey Lake. Our intent is to spend two nights there, or some other nearby lake, and to range out on day hikes to some of the other 11 lakes within easy hiking distance. The air is thin, the scenery is most pleasing and it is easy to get to. We will discuss specific dates at our next meeting.

**PEDRO FAGES' COMMENTS
FROM THE PORTOLA
EXPEDITION ON THE CHUMASH**

The following extracts from a work by Pedro Fages on the 1769 expedition of Gaspar de Portola are offered here as one of the first direct observations of the Chumash people. These observations are virtually the only accounts of the Chumash before the overwhelming hand of western civilization had come to bear.

Nearly all of the information we have about the Chumash was recorded nearly 100 years and several complete generations after the nearly complete destruction of their culture had occurred. We are indeed fortunate that a so experienced and keen observer recorded detailed observations, no matter how limited. We are also fortunate that his observations were tempered by time and a growing appreciation of his subjects.

Fages did not dismiss the Chumash as primitive heathens unworthy of consideration. Fages was second in command, after Portola, of the 1769 and 1770 expeditions to Monterey. Fages was eventually promoted to the rank of lieutenant colonel in the Spanish army and served as governor of California from 1782-1791. He is generally considered to have been the best of the Spanish governors. Fages, of course, was an untrained observer, and his views are biased by the prevailing sentiments of the time. These excerpts are taken from a translation by Herbert Ingram Priestley, published the Ballena Press in 1972. Excerpts from his comments on the natural and the political history of the area from Canada de Santa Clara, i.e., the Santa Clara River Valley, to La Carpenteria, i.e., the City of Carpenteria, are as follows:

"The Indians of all these villages are of good disposition and average figure; they are inclined to work, and much more to self-interest. They show with great covetousness a certain inclination to traffic and barter, and it may be said in a way that they are the Chinese of California.....They receive the Spaniards well, and make them welcome; but they are very warlike among themselves,

Cont. in Col. 2

Cont. from Col. 1

living at almost incessant war, village against village....The men go clothed with a large cloak made of skins of cony, i.e., squirrel, hare, fox or sea otter; the garment reaches to the waist, the captain, i.e., chief, only being allowed to wear it reaching to the ankle, without other mark of distinction. The women wear skirts, made and fitted uncouthly of antelope hide (probably deer), either colored or white, which do not extend below the knees. Most of them are decorated with various trinkets chosen from the smaller sea shells and stones of various colors. They wear the hair tightly bound and gathered at the back, forming a short, heavy queue, with a very handsome adornment of shells; they also wear collars and bracelets of snail shells and little sea shells. The few men who desire to cut their beards accomplish it, not without great pain....Those who like to wear the hair short, do so by burning it close to their pates - an uncomfortable and fatiguing operation..."

Besides giving a good description of how the Chumash appeared and dressed, the foregoing excerpt seems to indicate that at least some Chumash men had beards. This assertion is supported by other sources. There is also an indication that they were involved in nearly constant warfare.

"They are idolaters like the rest. Their idols are placed near the village, with some here and there about the fields, to protect, they say, the seeds and crops. Their idols are nothing but sticks, or stone figurines painted with colors and surmounted with plumage. Their ordinary height is three hands, and they place them in the cleanest, most highly embellished place they can find, whither they go frequently to worship them and offer their food, and whatever they have."

Fages' reference to crops may reflect the bias of a representative of an agrarian society or it may represent a recognition of some form of proto-agriculture being practiced by the Chumash involving the

Cont. in Col. 3

Cont. from Col. 2

tending and sowing of native grass seed. 'Shrines' appear to have been ubiquitous, and he implies that they involved functions other than astronomical events. Sometime in the mid-1980s, a painted stone that was found on top of a hill in the Sunset Hills area of the City of Thousand Oaks was brought to my attention. It may be an example of the type of painted stone described by Fages.

"Although in this district the captains commonly enjoy the privilege of taking two or three wives, and putting them away at will, the ordinary men have only one, and may abandon her only in case of adultery. The Indians of either sex who wish to marry a second time, may do so only with another widow or widower."



THE GOOD OLD DAYS

Memories of what this valley was like just 20-30 years ago sometime come to me at the oddest times. In those earlier years, the land west of Kuehner Drive and south of Los Angeles Avenue was covered with coast goldfields (*Lasthenia californica*). Not every year of course. But many years. I can remember looking forward to seeing them. A landscape architect friend once suggested to me that perhaps the land should not be allowed to develop into tract homes so that we could always enjoy the splash of color. This of course was not practical. But I do miss that corner in the spring.

*California Trail Days Pictures
Chumash Work Party in April*



Chuck Portoghesi and others, working on the Chumash Trail



Chumash Trail - Before



Chumash Trail - After



Bear Creek Backpacking Trip (left to right): Tony Conti, Carol Tucker, Terry Conrad, Arlene Altshuler, John Sabol, Margarita Marsh, Bob Altieri, Doug Temple, and Tom Frye. Mike Kuhn took the picture; Gary Cremeans and Phil Ankrom showed up later that evening.

THE PASS

Cont. from Col. 2

The pass between Simi Valley and the San Fernando Valley was called “kashiwey” by the Chumash Indians in the area. The meaning of the word was given as “the pass” by John Peabody Harrington’s informants. This naming pattern seems typical of the Chumash. Unlike ourselves, they did not name places after people or “saints.” Once a person had died, their name was not used again, and they were no longer spoken of. Names of places were very common and utilitarian. One village (Simi) in the area was named for a type of cloud and the other (*Ta’apu*) for a plant. Tierra Rejada valley was “cracked earth.”

sheepherders and the vaqueros - were Chumash Indians. They were bilingual. The names of places remained, even if only in Spanish translations of the Chumash.

The U.S. Surveyor General’s 1861 plat of Rancho Simi lists two names in the Santa Susana Pass area. One name is *Bajos de Santa Susanna*, which means Santa Susana Pass. The other is *Puerta Suela*, which means - yes, you guessed it - the pass. In effect, two names were common at the time. One was the name given by the Spanish and the other was the Spanish translation of the Chumash name.

This of course is not surprising. Many of those Chumash names in Spanish or English (from the Spanish) translation are still with us, as are purely Spanish names. We live in Simi Valley, we know Tapo Canyon and Tierra Rejada Valley. We visit San Diego, La Jolla, Los Angeles, San Gabriel, San Bernardino, Paso Robles, San Luis Obispo and San Jose. Names are often not forgotten, even with the passing of the cultures that spawned them. This is historic inertia. We are one with the past, even if it is someone else’s.

The Chumash were still on the land. Indeed, the great majority of those who lived in Simi Valley - the laborers, the

Cont. in Col. 3





June

2002



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 Nat'l Trails Day Work Party See Schedule
2 Rocky Peak 5pm hike See Schedule	3	4	5	6 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	7	8 Switzer Falls See Schedule
9 Rocky Peak 5pm hike See Schedule	10	11	12	13 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday Carol Tucker</i>	14	15 Sisar Canyon See Schedule
16 Rocky Peak 5pm hike See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday Aji John</i>	17	18 <i>Happy Birthday Maria Henriquez Belinda Cespedes</i>	19 RSTB Meeting See Page 1	20 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	21 <i>Happy Birthday Phil Ankrom</i>	22 Mishe Mokwa See Schedule
23 Rocky Peak 5pm hike See Schedule	24	25	26	27 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	28	29 Secret Trail See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday Al Bandel</i>
30 Rocky Peak 5pm hike See Schedule						



Rancho Simi Trail Blazers

Hiking Schedule



- June 1 National Trails Day Work Party - Chumash Trail**
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 provided. Bring 2 - 3 quarts of water, hat, sunscreen, and gloves to work on the trail.
- June 2 Sunday Evening Hike**
Meet 5pm at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. (Strenuous, 5 MRT)
- June 6 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)
- June 8 Switzer Falls - Angeles Forest Hike**
Easy to Moderate, 4 - 10 MRT, 600' - 1500' elevation gain/loss, depending on how far we go. This hike is not within the jurisdiction of the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District. Bring lunch and 2 - 3 quarts of water, wear boots. Meet 8am near Donut Delite at the corner of Madera and Royal.
- June 9 Sunday Evening Hike**
Meet 5pm at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. (Strenuous, 5 MRT)
- June 13 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)
- June 15 Sisar Canyon to White Ledge**
Moderate 9 MRT, with 2000' elevation gain. Follow a creek up to the California Bay Laurel trees of the White Ledge campsite in the Topatopa Mountains. This hike is not within the jurisdiction of the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District. Bring at least 2 qts. of water, layered clothing, and lunch. Wear boots. Meet 8am near Donut Delite at the corner of Madera and Royal.
- June 16 Sunday Evening Hike**
Meet 5pm at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. (Strenuous, 5 MRT)
- June 20 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)
- June 22 Mishe Mokwa Trail to Sandstone Peak**
Moderate 8 MRT hike with 1500' elevation gain/loss, with a detour to Tri-Peaks. See a wide variety of vegetation, spectacular rock formations, and the highest peak in the Santa Monica Mountains. 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 at least 2 qts. of water and lunch, wear boots.
- June 23 Sunday Evening Hike**
Meet 5pm at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. (Strenuous, 5 MRT)
- June 27 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)
- June 29 Secret Trail to Red Rock Canyon Shuttle**
Moderate hike, approximately 5 miles one way, with a stop on Calabasas Peak. 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. of water and snack, bug juice.
- June 30 Sunday Evening Hike**
Meet 5pm at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. (Strenuous, 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
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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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