



Rancho Simi Trail Blazers

A Division of the Rancho Simi Foundation



Judy Cohen



HELP WANTED: NEWSLETTER EDITOR

We are looking for someone to fill the RSTB Newsletter Editor position, starting with the September issue. The content of the newsletter is provided by others and needs to be ready for production, by the 25th of each month (this would mean the new Editor would actually be starting in August). If you are handy with computers and would like to take on a new labor of love, the RSTB Club can sure use you!! Please contact Mike Kuhn at (805)-583-2345 or at hannahmike@roadrunner.com



RSTB CLUB MEETING

This month's club meeting will be held at the Community Center

Room B-1

1692 Sycamore Drive

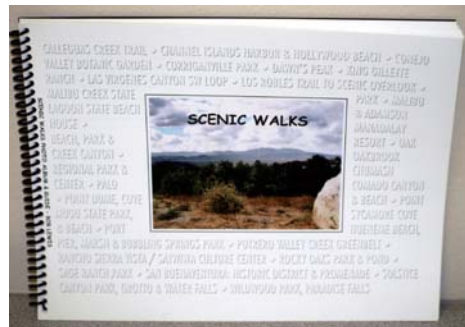
at 7:00 PM

on

August 20th, 2008

PROGRAM FOR AUGUST 20TH MONTHLY MEETING

At this month's meeting (Park District Headquarters, 1692 Sycamore Drive, 7 PM), **Mr. Bob Lewis** will present his new book about 24 trails within Ventura County and the Simi Valley area. The book includes information and resources on hiking trails, trail hazards and trees of the area. His book, entitled "**Scenic Walks Photo Album and Guide**", will be available for purchase at the meeting. Come and meet the author!



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



UPCOMING EVENTS

August 2nd, 2008:

Ray Miller/La Jolla Valley Loop

Please see the website for more info.

August 8th-10th, 2008:

Big Bear Weekend

RESERVATIONS REQUIRED

Please see the website for more info.

August 16th, 2008:

Carpinteria Bluffs

Please see the website for more info.

August 23rd, 2008:

Sycamore Canyon Shuttle

RESERVATIONS REQUIRED

Please see the website for more info.

August 30th, 2008:

Upper Zuma Canyon

Please see the website for more info.

September 6th, 2008:

Bicycle Ride - Ojai Valley Trail - Ventura River (17 MRT)

What? Trailblazers on bicycles?

Please see the website for more info.

September 9th-14th, 2008:

Zion National Park & Camping Trip

RESERVATIONS CLOSE ON

SEPTEMBER 3rd. Pls. 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



CHUMASH USE OF WILD GOURDS

While hiking, I often get questions about if the Chumash used specific plant species and what they used them for. The information I present here is derived from Jan Timbrook's book, *Chumash Ethnobotany*, Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History (2007). The information is derived from recollections of Chumash informants around 1900. In most cases the informants had no experience with the use of the plants but were relying on memories of what they saw or were told by others – such as by their “grandmother.” It is advisable that one not experiment with any native plant based on this information since the informant may have gotten it wrong and may not have included information about dosages or how to use it.

The wild gourd (*Cucurbita foetidissima*), or what the Spanish called *calabazilla*, *chili coyote*, *chilecayote*, and what the Chumash called *mo'okh*, grows as a ground-running vine in the spring and produces baseball to softball shaped melon. The melons turn from green to bright yellow, as they mature. In general, all parts of the plant have a mellifluous odor. A related species in the Mojave Desert is referred to by the Mojave Indians as “coyote melons.” I once asked a Mojave why they called it that. He responded “that only a coyote would eat it.”

The Chumash sliced and scraped the root of the plant to use as soap. It is strong and cleans well but is very irritating to the

skin. If cloths washed with it were not thoroughly rinsed, the wearer would break out in sores or swelling. Wild gourds were used as soap less than were some other plants.

Wild gourds were used for medicinal uses. The tendrils were crushed and put into water, or the roots were crushed and boiled and the resulting liquid was swallowed as a purgative. The Chumash made containers, drinking cups, dippers and rattles out of gourds. Gourd rattles were important parts of the bear disguise used by “bear shaman.” The shaman hollowed out two gourds, which were worn, connected by a string, around the neck hanging down at chest level. When the “bear” ran, it is said to have sounded like a bear snorting with every step.

Mike Kuhn
7-15-08



CANADA DE SOMIS

The 1887-88 Stow and Power "Map of the Lands of Rancho Simi" exhibits the name "*Canada de Somis*" for what we now know as Happy Camp Canyon. Happy Camp Canyon is located west of Moorpark College. The name "Somis" is what we now call the small settlement just south of State Route 118 near the intersection with the road to Camarillo. "Somis" is derived from the name of the Indian village of "*Somna*," which means "big *barranca*." A *barranca* is an entrenched stream course, which is deeper than it is wide at the top of the entrenchment. The description aptly fits Calleguas Creek (the Arroyo Simi) where it descends down out of the Little Simi Valley onto the Oxnard Plain.

Happy Camp Canyon is a valley - not a *barranca*. So why the reference to Somis? The canyon appears to be so named because the trail to *Somna* ran down it. This is another instance where a trail was named for the place that it went to.

Mike Kuhn
5-31-04



AMOLE OR SOAP PLANT

The *amole*, or soap plant (*Chlorogalum pomeridianum*), is very common in the hills around Simi Valley. Indeed, it has a wide geographical distribution in California, Oregon and Nevada. A *Liliaceae* (lily family), it is characterized by a three to six inch long bulb, which is heavily sheathed in a brown fibrous husk. Most of the year the bulb remains dormant. The fibrous top is often exposed in trails. The leaves are eight to 24 inches long, with wavy edges arising from the bulb. The stalk appears in the spring. It is erect, free-branching, and from two to six feet tall. The flowers are widely spaced on the branches, white, with what appears to be six narrow petals (actually three petal and three sepals). The flowers open during cloudy days and in the evening from 6:00 p.m. to midnight.

The Indians, and later the settlers, used the bulbs as soap. The bulbs were crushed and rubbed on the hands or on clothing in water, to make a lather. It was considered an excellent shampoo. The Indians baked the bulbs in a roasting pit, usually over night. The cooking eliminated the soapy taste and, oh yes, the toxins in the pulp. The bulbs were dried and stored. The harsh outer husks were made into brushes by the Indians. Early settlers reportedly used the husks to stuff mattresses. While young, the leaves reportedly were eaten raw, and the dry leaves were used by the Indians to wrap acorn meal in making bread. The cooked juice was used as a glue, to treat new bows, and to create green tattoos. Large quantities of crushed bulbs were thrown into dammed pools in streams to stupefy fish - another good reason to cook the bulbs before eating.

All of this aside, these plants are rich additions to the Ventura Coast Sage Scrub vegetation association. Since there is now so many of us and we are so hard on our environment, the amole is best left alone.

Mike Kuhn
10-29-04



June 28th 2008 - San Buenaventura State Beach to the Ventura River Estuary

It wasn't easy to pin down today's hike. We were on the beach, the pier, bicycle paths, railroad tracks, city streets, and a campground. We were even lost for a moment and got carried away on the bike path up to Carpenteria. Our actual mileage was probably between 8 and 9 miles. It was one of those perfect days when the ocean kept us nice and cool, in contrast to the uncomfortable temperatures inland. Trails over water? They call 'em piers!



July 10th - 13th 2008 - Onion Valley Backpack Trip

The Rancho Simi Trail Blazers ventured into the high country for a backpacking trip in the Onion Valley Lake Basin (July 10-13). The first evening was spent at the trailhead campground at 9,200 feet elevation. The next day was spent climbing to Flower Lake at 10,800 feet. On the third day, most of the group climbed over Kearsarge Pass and into the Kearsarge Lakes Basin - going over 12,000 feet in elevation. In between, numerous alpine and subalpine lakes were visited along with spectacular glacial carved landscapes. About 4 p.m. the last afternoon, severe electrical storms hit the area with rain and hail - keeping us in our tents from 4:30 p.m. to about 5:45 a.m.

Last summer the Trail Blazers attempted the same trip only to be ordered out by U.S. Forest Service personnel due to lightning-set fires. This year when attempting to leave for home we discovered that in certain places the road out had been covered by rocks and mud flows (the rocks from glacial moraine deposits being eroded and the mudslides from erosion of the burn area from last year's fire). When we got down to the community of Independence, northbound traffic was at a standstill because of the flashflood that had gone through the community the night before. Everyone made it home okay and had a good time, in spite of the thin air and the severe mosquito problem in camp. Participants were Les Wilson (Group Leader), Roger Steffen, Mary Ann Campbell, Betty Cameron, Mike Kuhn, Ursula Christie, and Effie Stantz.





RSTB Calendar August 2008



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 	2 Ray Miller/ La Jolla Valley Loop See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday, Elfriede Cespedes</i>
3 Rocky Peak 5pm hike See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday, Linda Barry</i>	4 <i>Happy Birthday, Betty Cameron</i>	5 Long Canyon 6:30 pm hike See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday, Chelsea Carroll</i>	6	7 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	8 Big Bear Weekend <i>Happy Birthday, Lisa Zimbler</i>	9 Big Bear Weekend (No Hike)
10 Big Bear Weekend (No Hike)	11	12 Long Canyon 6:30pm hike See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday, Kevin Gallagher</i>	13	14 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	15	16 Carpinteria Bluffs See Schedule
17 Rocky Peak 5pm hike See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday, Kendall Winfield Halle Michaelson</i>	18	19 Long Canyon 6:30pm hike See Schedule	20 RSTB Meeting See Page 1 <i>Happy Birthday, Tom Frye Mark Scheele</i>	21 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday, Al Richards</i>	22	23 Sycamore Canyon Shuttle See Schedule
24 Rocky Peak 5pm hike See Schedule	25	26 Long Canyon 6:30pm hike See Schedule	27	28 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	29	30 Upper Zuma Canyon See Schedule
31 Rocky Peak 5pm hike See Schedule						



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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)

AUGUST HIKES

August 2nd *Ray Miller / La Jolla Valley Loop**



6.5 MRT - Moderate. (1000' elevation gain)

We will start and finish at the Ray Miller Trailhead. Meet at 8 AM near Donut Delite at the corner of Madera and Royal. Bring 2 -3 quarts of water, a snack and bug juice. Wear Boots.

August 8th - 10th *Big Bear Weekend**

This very special event is limited to Trailblazer members only. Hiking at its best in the mountains above Big Bear Lake. Space is limited, so please email Mark to make reservations. We will be sharing a member's luxury condo in Big Bear Lake. Planned hikes are the [Pine Knot Trail](#), [Gray's Peak](#) and maybe a hike up the [Cougar Crest Trail](#) and then on to Bertha Peak. For more Big Bear area information, please surf on over to <http://www.bigbear.com>.

August 16th *Carpinteria Bluffs**

5 MRT - Easy A beautiful walk overlooking the ocean along the bluffs above Carpinteria. Meet at 8 AM, near Donut Delite on the corner of Madera and Royal. Bring 1 to 2 quarts of water and lunch.

August 23rd *Sycamore Canyon Shuttle**



8 Miles - Moderate one way (1200' elevation loss)

This eight mile, one-way shuttle hike to the ocean is all down hill. When we get to the beach, we'll have lunch. We'll plan the logistics of the shuttle once the event draws near. You can find more information about this hike by going to the RSTB website. You must send email to Mark to reserve your space on the shuttle. **Reservations must be made and confirmed no later than August 20th.** Meet at 8 AM near Donut Delite at the corner of Madera and Royal. Bring 2 -3 quarts of water, and a snack. Wear Boots.

August 30th *Upper Zuma Canyon**

5 MRT - Moderate Hike down into Upper Zuma Canyon. 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.

* 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:		*** OPEN ***	

-----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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