



Rancho Simi Trail Blazers



YUCCA

The yucca that we have on the hills around Simi Valley is treasured by all for its magnificent two-meter high white flower stalks in the late spring and early summer. These flower stalks are the largest flower stalks of any native plant in the area and are things of rare beauty. In botanical circles the plant is known as *Yucca whipplei* ssp. *intermedia*. Other common names are "Our Lord's Candle" and "Spanish Dagger."

This plant was so important to the Chumash Indians who lived in the area that they named their premier village after the plant. Their name for the plant and the village was "ta'apu." The village was located up Tapo Canyon near Tapo Canyon Regional Park. The name "Tapo" is derived from the name of the village. The trails to Ta'apu from both the Santa Clara Valley on the northern slopes of the Santa Susana Mountains and from Simi Valley were both named for their destinations - the village of Ta'apu. They both come down to us as "Tapo Canyon."

The plant was important to the Chumash because food and fiber could be obtained from it during

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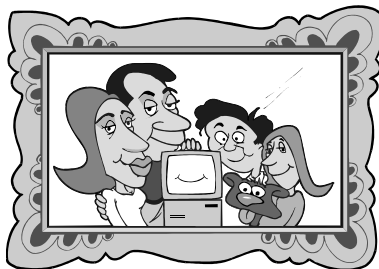


At the June Park District Board Meeting the entire board was very impressed with the work the RSTB has done and enjoyed reviewing our recent brochures for the various trails in Simi Valley. The board was so impressed they decided to have some of the members come out and join us on National Trail Days.

Great Going to all our volunteers!

AUGUST RSTB CLUB MEETING

The scheduled Membership Meeting will be held at 7:00 P.M. Wednesday, Aug. 18th. In the B-1 Room, 1692 Sycamore Drive in the Community Center



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

**Jan Richard & Karla Kay Torkelson
&
George Hebner**

MOUNT PINOS - SHEEP CAMP BACKPACK

An enjoyable overnight backpack trip was held in the Las Paredes National Forest on July 10-11. The nine backpackers who participated were: Arlene Altshuler, Phil Ankrom, Bob Altieri and his granddaughter Jenna, Gene Clark, Gary Cremeans, John Downey, Mike Kuhn and John Sabol. We met at 7:00 AM Saturday and after a slow start, our three vehicles headed up I-5 to Frazier Park. Rejoining at a Jack-in-the-Box, we took a short break and headed up to Mount Pinos.

After a winding drive up, we entered a large paved parking lot. As this weekend was one with a new moon, the area was half full of astronomers and their telescopes (Mt. Pinos is a favored viewing location with high altitude clarity and far from the glare of city lights). Since all our vehicles were 4-wheel drives, we started up the 2 mile dirt road to the viewing area at the top. Driving only 100 yards, however, we encountered a locked gate.

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TARANTULAS

These creatures are the terror of the night. If you don't think so, just imagine waking up with one of these giant spiders crawling on your face. Fortunately, when we encounter them on the trail, they generally don't move very quickly. (Although, they can move quickly.) They do carry a venom. However, the poison is very mild, and you really have to threaten them to get bitten.

They sometimes seem so gentle that some people like to handle them. However, there are little hairs covered with barbs on the end of their abdomen. When you molest tarantulas, they can rub those tiny hairs off onto your fingers. Those fingers then go into your eyes, where those tiny hairs can be transferred into your eyeballs. The hairs are very irritating and generally stay in there for about a year. Some tropical tarantulas, which end up in pet stores here about, are more poisonous and have even more irritating hairs than our local species. So, as cute and cuddly as one person in 10,000 thinks they are, they are best left alone.

Mike



Returning to the parking lot, we all got our gear together and instead of a 3-mile hike, headed out for a somewhat longer 5-mile pack into camp. The morning was clear and cool as we made our way up the road to the 8831 foot peak and then down switch backs through Indian paintbrush, small wildflowers, snow plants and Jeffrey Pines towards Sawmill Mountain. Then some climbing until the 4 1/2 mile point where we dropped down into the Sheep Camp Campground.

The first of the three campground areas was occupied by a Boy Scout group so we settled into the second campground. Everyone setup their tents and then sat around enjoying the scenery.

Gary went exploring the third campground and as he reached down to pick up what looked like some discarded rope he jumped back, suddenly realizing he was reaching for a rattlesnake. Of course we all had to go down and see it. What was probably a Southern Pacific Rattlesnake, 4-5 feet long, was coiled in 2 layers and had pressed itself into the dirt until the top of its back was level with the ground. We could see another depression about a yard away where it had previously lain. It probably did this to conserve body heat. We were concerned others might camp there but no one did. We didn't disturb the snake and checked on it numerous times until we left. It was still there Sunday morning, it hadn't moved and no, it wasn't dead.

After viewing the snake, most people relaxed and Mike even took a nap. Phil filtered water for us with an extra supply for later. John Downy had packed in a collapsible saw and it really came in handy as we cut up deadwood for the evening fire.

Gary wanted to do a day hike up to Mount Abel (6 miles round trip) but couldn't get anybody interested. I was a little tired but went along so he wouldn't be alone. It was a great hike with roller coaster ups and downs and one really steep section at the top.

We returned to camp just in time to help with fixing dinner. Arlene had all the fixings for our community dinner of burritos and organized us in fixing the meal. Everyone made a burrito or two, their own favorite way. Food on a backpack always tastes especially good.

After dinner we did the dishes and as the temperature cooled we all sat around the campfire and had a good time, even enjoying marshmallows and popcorn. Then with a last look at the starry sky we doused the fire with water and turned in to our sleeping bags.

I think Phil and Bob were the first to rise, at about 0520 if I remember right. They got the fire going and soon everyone was up and had the stoves heating water for cereal and coffee. The morning was beautiful and after a leisurely breakfast we took down tents, packed gear and prepared to leave. Again the campfire was doused and the camp was policed. We packed out all our trash and some left by previous campers.

We left in groups of 2 and 3 and made our way up the trail and out of the canyon. The hike through the switchbacks near the top of Mt. Pinos was the toughest part of the trip out. As the group re-assembled at the top we could see thunderhead clouds forming to the west. We took several group pictures, then continued the last 2 miles to our vehicles.

We drove out of the parking lot, now mostly devoid of astronomers and headed down the mountain. Setting in the Jack-in-the-Box in Frazier Park, you could see lightning flashing through huge thunderheads over the area we had been in only hours earlier. We had gotten out ahead of the storm and everyone had a great time. You should have been with us !!!

John Sabol

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the year at any time. The new flower buds of the plant could be roasted and eaten. Before flowering, the stalk could be split open and the pulpy insides eaten raw. The flowers could be eaten raw. The young green fruit could also be eaten raw. When it was older, the seeds could be removed and the fruit boiled, made into a paste, dried and stored for use during the winter when other food resources were scarce. The dried seed could be stored for years, ground into flour and cooked as a mush. The bulbous base of the leaves, after the leaves were removed, were baked in a Dutch oven in the ground. The brown pasty interior was eaten or could be dried for later use. The green leaves were soaked for days in water in order to rot the pulp from the fiber. The fiber was then dried and made into rope and cordage. The dried leaves were also pounded with a wooden club to release the fiber. Yucca cordage was used to sew together strips of rabbit fur to make blankets.

Today, we admire the beauty of the blooms and avoid the spines at the ends of the leaves. The Chumash and other Indians saw the plant in a whole different light.

Mike

Kuhn

GRAVEYARD LAKES BACKPACKING TRIP

The Rancho Simi Trail Blazers will take a four day backpacking trip, August 20-23 from Thomas A. Edison Lake (east of Fresno) to Lower Graveyard Lake (assuming that we can get wilderness permits). The first day will extend into the John Muir Wilderness to Graveyard Meadows (5 miles- 8,800 feet). The second day will be to Lower Graveyard Lake (4.5 miles - 9,900+ feet). The third day will be a layover day and the last day we will hike the 9.5 miles out.

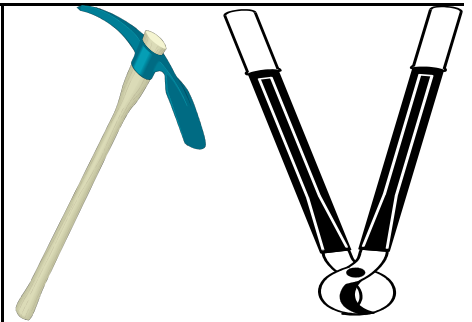
If you are interested in attending, Please contact Arlene Altshuler at (805) 581-9735

Friends of Long Canyon

Many thanks to the Friends of Long Canyon for the \$1,000 check presented at the June Park District Board Meeting. Friends of Long Canyon Co-presidents Debbie Thomas and Carol Fineberg presented the check to RSTB Lisa Klockentger and Colleen Janssen. Each of the five trails will have its own brochure. The trails are Mt. McCoy, Chumash, Hummingbird, Stagecoach and Rocky Peak. **Canyon View Trail** brochure is in development.

AT & T Wireless Service

At the same Park District Meeting, Mike Malott, Simi Valley Store Manager presented eight cellular phones & chargers plus service for the units. They will be carried by the **Volunteer Trail Safety Service** on the trails for use in the event of an injury, illness, fires or other emergency situations.



Work party on the Hummingbird Trail – July 16

We had a nice turnout this month. John Downey and Phil Ankrom used weed whips and Don Steeley raked the cuttings to clear the brush on the first section from the true trailhead down to the creek crossing. Arlene Altshuler, John Sabol, Todd Clark, Bill Cespedes, Louise Pomes, Tom Frye, Mike Kuhn, and I worked our way up the trail towards Rocky Peak Road, stopping to clear brush overhanging the trail, blocking off shortcuts at the switchbacks, and repairing the trail. We celebrated a job well done afterwards at Chuy's.

Jim Keppler has bought us four pair of sturdy loppers, an Abney surveyor's tool to measure trail rate of rise, and additional equipment for the weed whip. They will all be put to good use.

ALERT – August work party will be held on the second Saturday, the 14th.

(The annual backpack trip is scheduled for the following weekend.) We'll meet at the Mount McCoy trailhead at the end of Washburn Street at 7 AM or, if you really need it, some will be at the Donut Shop a little earlier.

Bob Altieri
Work Parties Chair



AUGUST



| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|---|---|--|--|--|--|---|
| 1 Hummingbird Trail Hike 5:00 PM Read Schedule | 2 Happy Birthday Elfriede Cespedes | 3 | 4 | 5 6:00 pm Chumash Trail Hike See Schedule | 6 | 7 China Flat Trail to Simi Peak Read Schedule Meet at 7:30am |
| 8 Hummingbird Trail Hike 5:00 PM Read Schedule | 9 | 10 Happy Birthday Bob Altieri | 11 | 12 6:00 pm Chumash Trail Hike See Schedule | 13 | 14 Mt. McCoy Work Party 7am to 11am Read schedule |
| 15 Hummingbird Trail Hike 5:00 PM Read Sched- ule | 16 Happy Birthday Diana Elsey | 17 | 18 RSTB Club Meeting at 7 PM See page 1 Happy Birthday James Langford | 19 6:00 pm Chumash Trail Hike See Schedule | 20 4 day Backpacking Trip Read Schedule Happy Birthday Lisa Judd (Clark) & Tom Frye | 21 4 day Backpacking Trip Read Schedule Happy Birthday Al Richards |
| 22 4 day Backpacking Trip Read schedule | 23 End 4 day Backpacking Trip Read schedule | 24 | 25 | 26 6:00 pm Chumash Trail Hike See Schedule Happy Birthday Laura Altieri | 27 | 28 Solstice Canyon Hike Meet at 7am Read schedule |
| 29 Hummingbird Trail Hike 5:00 PM Read Schedule | 30 | 31 Happy Birthday Catherine Verga & Jack Archibald | | | | |

RANCHO SIMI TRAIL BLAZERS

| | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------------|
| EXECUTIVE CHAIR: | MIKE KUHN | HM (805) 583-2345 WK (805)583-6776 |
| TREASURER: | BILL FUNK | HM (805) 527-9339 |
| COMMUN./ PUB.VICE CHAIR: | JODY JUNOR | HM (818) 841-8717 |
| PARK DISTRICT LIAISON: | COLLEEN JANSSEN | OFFICE (805) 584-4400 |
| WORK PARTIES CHAIR: | BOB ALTIERI | HM (805) 526-6749 |
| WORK PARTIES VICE CHAIR: | JOHN SABOL | HM (805) 583-2541 |
| HIKING CHAIR: | ARLENE ALTSHULER | HM (805) 581-9735 |
| HIKING VICE CHAIR: | LISA KLOCKENTEGGER | HM (805) 520-1470 |
| WAYS & MEANS CHAIR: | MARTY RICHARDS | HM (805) 526-4414 |
| WAYS & MEANS VICE CHAIR: | CONNIE ANKROM | HM (805)526-2747 |
| OUTDOOR EDUCATION CHAIR: | JIM RILEY | HM (805) 522-4268 |
| COMMUNICATION / PUB.CHAIR: | BYERS (JOHN) DOWNEY | HM (805) 526-8588 |

-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)_____ Address _____

_____ Birth Mo._____ Day_____ Phone wk/hm_____

How did you find out about the RSTB_____

Please make out tax deductible member dues check for the year 10-98/10-99 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 (Day & Month Only)

Check out our Web Site at ...<http://home.pacbell.net/chaiyah/rstb.html>



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