



# Rancho Simi Trail Blazers



## 2003 COASTAL CLEAN UP DAY HELP CLEAN THE ARROYO SIMI

The Trail Blazers will be supporting Inland Waterway Cleanup in conjunction with Coastal Cleanup Day. Join us Saturday, September 20 from 9:00 a.m. to Noon.

Come and support Simi Valley's Inland Waterway Cleanup. Join the fun and make a difference!

Simi Valley's Inland Waterway Cleanup site is Rancho Simi Community Park at the corner of Royal Avenue and Erringer Road. Meet at the northeast corner of the park near where the Arroyo passes under Erringer Road.

Directions: From the 118 Freeway, exit at Erringer Road; go south to just past the arroyo bridge and turn right into the parking lot. If the Erringer lot is full, continue south, turn right on Royal Ave. and turn right into a larger parking lot.

Be sure to wear gloves, long pants, old shoes, sunscreen and a hat. For more information call the City of Simi Valley at 583-6462.

Work Parties Chair  
John Sabol

### 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



### WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Kelli and Mallory Ham  
D.C. Tucker  
Tom Siebert  
Bonnie Moyer

### TRAIL NEWS

There was no work party in August.

Work on a new multi-use trail out of Coyote Hills Park has begun. Back on April 29, Jim Keppler (Senior Maintenance Supervisor for the Rancho Simi Recreation and Parks District) and I flagged the route using an inclinometer.

On August 4,5 and 6, Jim and I led a CCC crew in clearing brush from the trail path. The trail starts at the western end of the park, climbs up and crosses two canyons and ties in to the Wood Ranch Trail. The actual cutting of the trail will be performed in October with the RSRPD's Sweko Trail Tractor.

Work Parties  
Chair

### HIKING NEWS

#### Saturday Morning Hike Time Change

Starting in September, we will be meeting at Donut Delite at 8AM for our Saturday morning hikes.

#### Sunday Morning Hike Offered

There will be a Sunday morning hike on September 14th at 9AM. Please see the hiking schedule for more information.

#### Docent Training in Corriganville

We will be training docents for Corriganville on Sept. 14 at 4PM, and Sept. 27 at 3PM. If you are interested in becoming a docent, please contact either Arlene or Mike.

### RSTB CLUB MEETING

This month's club meeting will be held at the home of

**Marty and Al Richards**  
2086 Elmdale Avenue

At  
7:00 PM  
On

**Wednesday, September 17,  
2003**

Elmdale is located about a third of a mile west of Sycamore Drive between Cochran Street on the north and E. Brower Street on the south.

If coming from the east on Cochran Street, Elmdale is immediately west of the "Cochran Dip."

Marty and Al's home is located on the

H'I'M

A January 25, 1999 letter from Chester King to Sybil Scotford contains some possible insights relating to the place names *h'i'm* and *hi'im*. These names are recorded 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 connection between the Ventureno 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 it is used by Dr. King. 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 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 cienegas 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 *atrevesado* [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 Applegate describes *hi'im* as a place in Santa Susana, in Simi Valley (Applegate 1975:29).

The word *h'i'm* means storage basket in Ventureno 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 taboo.

Fernando told Harrington that a Fernandeno Indian told him that Santa Susana is called *hi'im*. The pronunciation of a Chumash name by a Fernandeno Indian is suspect. Harrington's notes from the Fernandeno are full of mispronunciations of Chumash words. 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 a 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 *cienegas* 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 has since 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

## THE NORTHERN CHANNEL ISLANDS AND THE COLUMBIAN MAMMOTH

A colleague recently told me about a program she had seen on television about Columbian mammoths on the islands of the Santa Barbara Channel. At their peak, the mammoths had evolved to become much smaller than their ancestors. (Island fauna often evolve to smaller sizes, while some plants evolve on islands to become gigantic.) The Columbian mammoth on the mainland grew to be 10-13 feet high at the shoulders, while the pigmy mammoths on the island ended their reign at about five feet at the shoulders. Yes, much smaller but still a thousand pounds or more.

During the ice ages, sea level locally was about 380 feet lower than it is today. The Channel Islands were much larger and the open ocean between the island mass and the Santa Barbara coast was four to five miles at its closest. Modern elephants have been known to swim as much as 30 miles in the open ocean. Certainly, Columbian mammoths, perhaps washed to sea during heavy winter storms, swam to the island mass. That event may have occurred over and over again over a period of hundreds of thousands of years. The confined environment of an island took its natural island course. The mammoths grew smaller and smaller in spite of the occasional genetic infusion from a new refugee from the mainland. Now comes the mystery.

At some time in the past the last of the pigmy Columbian mammoths died off. Did the arrival of man have anything to do with the demise of the mammoths? That same questions arises with the various elephants and the mastodon on the mainland. We know that the mammoth and early man coexisted for some time in North America. There have long been claims of great antiquity for man on Santa Cruz and Santa Rosa Islands. Unfortunately, at the time that those claims were made, most scholars believed that man had only been in the new world for 3,000 years. Now, every serious scholar accepts an antiquity of 13,000+ years.

Recently, a skeleton of a woman, who

was excavated during the 1930s, was dated using carbon-14 analysis. The date seems to be firmly established at 13,000 years. If this one skeleton is 13,000 years old, we can only say that that is the minimum antiquity of man on the Channel Island mass. So, the question arises, did early man and the pigmy Columbian mammoth coexist on the islands? Researchers have firmly established that when the mammoth first arrived, it was the really big variety. However, they still do not have mammoth remains that are younger than 13,000 years. Neither do they have any evidence of mammoth kills complete with butchering marks on bones. More digging will undoubtedly resolve this issue.

Since mammoths may have occupied the island mass for hundreds of thousands of years or more, nearly all of the mammoth remains on the islands must pre-date man in the new world. Pleistocene man on the island mass would primarily have occupied the shoreline of the ocean, adjacent to a fresh water supply, because of its marine resources. That shoreline is now hundreds of feet under the ocean and far out to sea. So the most logical place to look for evidence is also far out at sea under deep waters. We will have to depend on inland kill sites or perhaps a nice piece of carved ivory or an ivory tool – wouldn't that be nifty!

If man had arrived while the little Columbian mammoth still roamed the island mass, they would have been an easy target for hunters. The mammoths would have had no fear of man. Even if they had feared man, there would have been no place to hide. These early hunters would have hunted in groups, using spears to thrust into the sides of the mammoths. It is quite possible that the entire stock of pigmy mammoths would have been killed off within one of two years – their bones to disintegrate within a few years of exposure to the sun and other elements. Elephants produce few offspring during their reproductive lives. So they are very subject to extermination. Their relatives in Africa and Asia evolved in the presence of man and learned to fear them – so they have survived in spite of



*There are still a few flowers out there, if you look hard enough.*

*Above: California Fuchsia (Epilobium californica)*

*Right: Climbing Penstemon (Keckiella)*



## THE RED AND BLUE BEDS OF THE SESPE FORMATION

The Sespe Formation comprise the near hills north of Simi Valley westerly from Tapo Canyon towards Moorpark. It consists primarily of poorly hardened sandstone with occasional red and blue beds.

The formation was deposited in a tropical forest environment between 40 and 24 million years ago. If you are on the 118 Freeway heading east past Alamos Canyon the very thick red beds that you see were deposited during the Oligocene Epoch about 25 million years ago, geographically about 210 miles southwest of the southern tip of Baja California. They have traveled north northwest to their present location by plate tectonics at a rate of approximately 2.5 inches per year – about the rate that your fingernails grow. Humbling isn't it.

The red and blue beds are clay-rich and result from flooding of rivers. When the flood waters would go over the banks, i. e., natural levees, the fine sediments would settle out last. Those flood waters would drown many rodents in their burrows and some larger mammals. These "overbank" deposits and the lighter colored strata just below them tend to be relatively rich in vertebrate fossils. The Sespe Formation has yielded approx