



Rancho Simi Trail Blazers

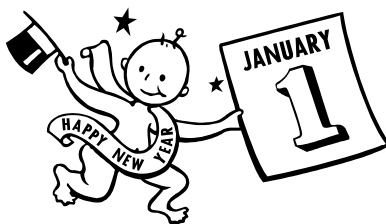


ON THE NEW YEAR

Year 2001, the first of the 21st Century, has passed and 2002 is upon us. 2001 has left us with many memories - the untimely death of John Downey, a dear friend, and the death of Tonja Cole, a consummate volunteer. The Trail Blazers cut a new public trail corridor in Oak Park, we led more than 100 public hikes, innumerable nature walks for small and some large groups, conducted spring wildflower walks, participated in California Trails Days and National Trail Day, had monthly trail building and maintenance work parties, had Saturday club hikes, usually out of the area, had two backpacking trips - one to Cedar Creek and the other out of Kennedy Meadows in the Sierra Nevada, and of course our annual holiday party.

The new year will bring a similar host of projects and hikes. There will be new faces and many of the old faces. More and more people will discover the trails and use them. Hiking keeps you physically fit and mentally active and is a joy year around! And the use of the trails is free. California Trails Days are on April 20 and 21 and National Trail Day is on June 1. Start thinking about good projects for each of those events. If you have any suggestions for Saturday hikes, let Arlene Altshuler know. Where do you want to go backpacking this year? For practical reasons, the Spring is reserved for Ventura County

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Cont. from Col. 1

We are always looking for people who are willing to get involved and take on one of the many positions we have. Some people are doing more than one job at the present time. New blood and new ideas are usually good for any organization. Come to our monthly meetings - that's where most of the decisions are made. We need your input. If you have something to contribute to the Newsletter, don't be shy. Year 2002 can be better than last year.

Mike Kuhn, Executive Chair

JANUARY WORK PARTY

Our next work party will be held on **Saturday 19 January, 2002** on the **Lower Stage Coach Trail** out of Corriganville in Simi Valley. The effort will consist of lopping as well as trail tread work.

Corriganville is located at the east end of Smith Road off of the south end of Kuehner Drive. Meet in the parking lot at 8:00 AM. We will work from 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM. Hope to see you there.

Work Parties Chair
John Sabol

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

PALEONTOLOGY AT ITS BEST

Many years ago I was called out to a construction site on Easy Street by a conscientious builder, who wanted to do the right thing and to comply with one of the conditions of approval on his project. That condition required that he stop work if he uncovered something of archaeological significance and notify the City. He said that they had discovered bones on the site, so he had sent the workers home and called the City.

When I arrived at the site, no one was there, but I immediately spotted the "bones." As I carefully exposed the skull, I heard a voice over my shoulder - "What is it - a dinosaur?" (This really meant - What is it?) My response was, "A large California mule." Indeed, it may have been one of the same mules, working that same ground, you see in historic pictures displayed in restaurants

DECEMBER WORK PARTY

Eight workers turned out for the December work party on the Hummingbird Trail. We had pleasant cool weather and got a lot accomplished. Several dangerously eroded areas were repaired and the three "Sumac Forest" areas were cut back to widen the trail. Trail cutting continues to be a big problem on the Hummingbird. The group did an outstanding job in blocking many of these trail cuts. We worked from 8:00 AM to 12:30 PM and met at Chuy's afterwards. Many thanks to the following workers:

Arlene Altshuler, Phil Ankrom, Bill Cespedes, Martin DeGoey, Mike Kuhn, Louise Pomes, T J. Riggs and John Sabol.

Work Parties Chair



OUR HOLIDAY DINNER PARTY

Thanks again to Al and Marty Richards for opening their beautiful home for another holiday event.



HISTORIC INERTIA AND HISTORIC FRICTION

What will Simi Valley look like in 500 years? Certainly, somewhat different. There will be bigger trees. However, the City will look surprisingly familiar because most of the present property lines will still be there. As the City's residential areas were laid out, "local streets" were generally created with 36 feet of pavement on 56 foot rights of way - that included curbs, gutter, parkways and sidewalks. That was enough room for cars to be parked on both sides of the streets with automobiles moving in two directions at 25-35 miles per hour. Collector streets," with higher traffic volumes, have 40 feet of pavement. Arterial streets are wider, and there are some variations on these standard "street plates."

So, the automobile is well accommodated. But, what will we have or need in another 500 years? Whatever it is, we will pretty much have what we have now. That is "historic inertia." If you look at many European cities that are 500 or more years old, most of the inner city streets are little more than alleyways. That is "historic friction." They're stuck with what they have just as we will be 500 years from now.

Our zoning ordinance has a standard of a 20 foot rear yard in residential areas. Some variations are allowed - but infrequently. We want back yards. We say it's so the kids have a protected environment in which to play, we want our barbecues and room for a pool and that patio cover - a little private outdoor space. However, the origin of the 20 foot minimum rear yard requirement in zoning codes was so that there could be a respectable olfactory separation between the home and the outhouse. The



December Holiday Party at Al & Marty Richard's House

THE HIDDEN CHUMASH

For many decades there were few people who knew that one or more of their direct ancestors were Chumash Indians and even fewer people who would admit it. The Chumash hid from the rest of society and did their best to integrate into that society. Many groups did not have citizenship in our society and others were second class citizens. Indeed, the schools were segregated in Simi Valley until the 1940s. To be an American Indian in Anglo-American society was the lowest possible rung on the social ladder. In this day, when it is socially acceptable to acknowledge your American Indian ancestry, the legacy of the treatment of Indians until relatively recently has generally been forgotten by the Anglo-American society. The terms "half breed" and "quarter breed" have largely been forgotten, at least in this part of the country. As evidence of the treatment of the Chumash people I offer one story.

Juanita - she was quite well known in the Santa Barbara/Santa Ynez area before her death some years ago - told me that when she was a child, she thought she was a "Mexican." Then what her parents already knew, that is that they were part Chumash Indian, became known in the Santa Ynez community. At that time, Juanita and her siblings attended the one room Santa Ynez

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longer permitted to use the outhouse and could not drink out of the drinking fountain. They were to get any drinking water out of the horse trough. Once they turned 10 years of age, people, including a police officer, came from the Indian school in Riverside, California, and forcibly removed the child from the home to be raised largely in that school. The curriculum at the school was very limited for girls, largely confined to things like sewing, cooking and other domestic skills. Juanita was describing an experience from about 1920. The depth of the pain and anger was apparent in her

WHEAT FLOWER CAKES BAKED IN COALS

One of John Peabody Harrington's Chumash informants described how wheat cakes were made in the rescoldo (coals of the fire). Balls of wheat meal were made into cakes about five inches in diameter and two inches thick. They were then buried in the hot ashes of the fire to bake rather than being cooked on a *comal* (steatite frying pan). They were called "*ikujash*."

Certainly, wheat flour had replaced acorn and *islay* (holly-leaf cherry) flour. However, the method of cook-

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SIMI ADOBE

The first adobe in Simi Valley was built around 1796 about a mile downstream from the confluence of the Arroyo Simi and the Arroyo del Tapo well south of the Arroyo Simi. The site is thought to have been on the Janet Scott Cameron estate east of the intersection of Erringer Road with Royal Avenue. At that location groundwater first maintained the Arroyo Simi as a perennial stream, except during the driest years, and the site was well upstream from distributaries of the Arroyo Simi and the present day Erringer Drain, which would have threatened periodic flooding. Sometime after the beginning of the 19th Century the rancho headquarters was moved to the site of the present day Peter B. Strathearn Historical Park - perhaps because of more dependable water and firewood supplies and to be close to the historic village of *Simi*?. The first adobe may have continued to be occupied for several decades because it is shown on a *deseno* (map showing the extent of the rancho) during the 1840s.

The Simi Adobe was then occupied more or less continuously until 1841, when it was temporarily abandoned. It was partially destroyed in 1820 by an attack by marauding *Kumia* (*Kimeyaay*) Indians from Baja California but was quickly rebuilt and occupied by the Pico family. Evidence of that or later fires is abundant on site in the form of baked clay, with willow branch or bulrush impressions, from the burning of the wattle and daub roof.

Alfred Robinson, a Yankee trader, reported in his book, *Life in California*, stopping at the adobe in 1829 late at night on his way to the Pueblo of Los Angeles, sleeping on the grounds and leaving at first light the next morning without disturbing the residents.

Throughout the rancho period a sheep camp had been maintained near the site of the historic village of *Ta'apu* up Tapo Canyon. About 1830 an adobe, with the same basic floor plan as the Simi Adobe, was erected where the pre-

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O'Melveny Park Hike, left to right: Arlene Altshuler, Phil Pratt, Margarita Marsh, Chuck Portoghesi, Cindy Claffey, and Mary Falkenstein.

Cont. from Col. 1

sent day ruins of a later adobe stand in the Tapo Canyon Regional Park. In 1832 Don Jose de la Guerra purchased Rancho Simi for \$1,019. The Tapo became the rancho headquarters by 1841 and the Simi Adobe was abandoned. However, in 1858 Francisco de la Guerra is shown as living in the Simi Adobe. (Francisco was the son of Don Jose de la Guerra.) That year there is thought to have been another fire at the adobe.

In 1861 the adobe became a stop on the stagecoach line. That station was apparently run by a de la Guerra. It was referred to as the *Noriega* station, which was Jose de la Guerra's wife's maiden name. A son of Jose de la Guerra is still shown as living in the adobe in 1864.

In 1865 the rancho was sold to Thomas Scott, the President of the Pennsylvania Railroad. Subsequently a Basque shepherding family occupied the adobe. Then, in the late 1880s the property was acquired by the Strathearn family, which added a New England farm house to the southern end of the adobe and used the old adobe as a dining room and kitchen.

Another fire destroyed a portion of the adobe about 1916. When the adobe

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was rebuilt, the northern portion of the old adobe was left off. The foundation stones are still visible.

Back in the late 1970s or early 1980s I was invited to investigate the attic of the adobe and document what I found. The attic was floored and there was evidence that it had been used as sleeping quarters prior to the addition of the Strathearn home to its southern end. There had been an exterior staircase leading to a doorway under the hip roof. The rough cut rafters contained nails, indicating, I believe, that blankets had been hung to divide that space into separate sleeping quarters. There was evidence of a stove vent fire at sometime in the past. The Strathearn children had some memory of that event.

The Simi Adobe is now part of a State historical landmark. It was associated with the historic village of *Simi* and the Spanish/Mexican rancho period and the period of Anglo-American agricultural settlement. The adobe is the oldest structure in the valley and dates back to a



A TRIP TO SAN NICOLAS ISLAND

Fernando Librado, John Peabody Harrington's Chumash informant, recalled a time when three tomols (plank canoes) let out from someplace and headed for San Nicolas Island. Two of the canoes and their crews were lost.

This event probably occurred before 1836, when all of the Indians, with one exception, were removed from the island. The southern shore of Santa Cruz Island was the normal jumping off point for trips to San Nicolas Island, and the



January

2002



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 <i>New Year's Day</i>	2	3 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	4	5 China Flat Trail See Schedule
6 Rocky Peak 4pm hike See Schedule	7	8 <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Wayne Dunn</i>	9	10 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	11	12 Latigo Canyon See Schedule
13 Rocky Peak 4pm hike See Schedule	14 <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Nicholas Cigan</i>	15	16 RSTB Meeting See Page 1	17 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	18	19 Lower Stage- coach Trail Work Party See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Mary Falkenstein</i> <i>Mark Zorick</i>
20 Rocky Peak 4pm hike See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Paige Nielson</i> <i>Sandy Sumpter</i>	21	22	23	24 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	25	26 Happy Camp See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> <i>Evelyn Bandel</i>
27 Rocky Peak 4pm hike See Schedule	28	29	30	31 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule		



Rancho Simi Trail Blazers

Hiking Schedule



- January 3 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)
- January 5 China Flat Trail to Simi Peak**
Strenuous, approx. 6 MRT with 1000' elevation gain. Bring two quarts of water and a snack, wear boots. Directions: take 101 Fwy to Lindero Canyon. Follow Lindero Canyon to King James Court. Park on Lindero Canyon, near the arroyo, just east of King James Court. Meet at 8:30am near the arroyo/trailhead.
- January 6 Sunday Evening Hike**
Meet 4pm at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. (Strenuous, 5 MRT)
- January 10 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)
- January 12 Latigo Canyon to Castro Peak**
Strenuous 7 MRT hike with beautiful scenery. This hike is not within the jurisdiction of the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park district. Bring snack and 2 - 3 qts of water, bug juice. Wear boots. Meet 8am near Donut Delite at the corner of Madera and Royal.
- January 13 Sunday Evening Hike**
Meet 4pm at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. (Strenuous, 5 MRT)
- January 17 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)
- January 19 Lower Stagecoach Trail Work Party**
This work party's efforts will consist of lopping as well as trail tread work on the lower Stagecoach trail out of Corriganville. Directions - take 118 Fwy to Keuhner. Go south on Keuhner, to Smith Rd. Turn left onto Smith Road. The parking lot is at the end of the road. We will be working from 8am - noon. Tools will be provided. Bring 2 - 3 quarts of water, hat, sunscreen, and gloves to work on the trail.
- January 20 Sunday Evening Hike**
Meet 4pm at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. (Strenuous, 5 MRT)
- January 24 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)
- January 26 Happy Camp**
See panoramic views of Simi Valley, Moorpark, and the Channel Islands. Join the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy on an 8 MRT hike, with a 1300' elevation gain/loss. Bring lunch, binoculars, and 2 - 3 quarts of water. Wear boots and hat. Meet at **9:15am** at the trailhead. Directions: Take route 23 in Moorpark, towards Fillmore to Broadway. Turn right on Broadway, parking lot is at the end of the road (approx. .4 miles).
- January 27 Sunday Evening Hike**
Meet 4pm at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. (Strenuous, 5 MRT)
- January 31 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)

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
PARK DISTRICT LIAISON:	COLLEEN JANSSEN	WK (805) 584-4453
WORK PARTIES CHAIR:	JOHN SABOL	HM (805) 583-2541
WORK PARTIES VICE CHAIR:	BOB ALTIERI	HM (805) 526-6749
HIKING CHAIR:	ARLENE ALTSHULER	HM (805) 581-9735
WAYS & MEANS CHAIR:	MARTY RICHARDS	HM (805) 526-4414
WAYS & MEANS VICE CHAIR:	CONNIE ANKROM	HM (805) 526-2747
OUTDOOR EDUCATION CHAIR:	OPEN	
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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