



Rancho Simi Trail Blazers

A Division of the Rancho Simi Foundation



**WELCOME
NEW MEMBER**
Rex Jarrett and Lise Eskridge
William R. James

Volunteers Needed!!
 If anyone is interested in volunteering for the **work parties chair** or the **Publicity chair** contact Mike Kuhn at: mike.kuhn@simitrailblazers.com

Our December work party was conducted on the Mt. McCoy Trail on December 20. Trail trimming, reconstruction of water bars and the building of rock outer edge supports for broken down portions of the trail, as well as litter pickup was completed. Soil moisture conditions were nearly ideal. Thanks so much to John Sabol, Martin DeGoey, Alan Cueba, Bart Hibbs, Deidre Robert, Lise Eskridge, Rex Jerritt, and Mike Kuhn for a job well done.



CASA VIEJA

The first adobe in Simi Valley seems to have been located south of the Arroyo Simi and southeast of the intersection of Royal Avenue and Erringer Road, about where the Scott/Cameron house is today. "Casa Vieja," or "old house," is shown on a *diseño*, i.e., map or drawing, from 1842. The *diseño* implies that the adobe was still there in
(Continued on next page)



Weekly hikes!!
 **Has anyone ever told you to take hike?**
Did you know that in Simi Valley you can take many hikes with the Rancho Simi Trail Blazers and explore the beauty of Simi Valley and other beautiful locations? We have so much fun taking photos, talking and just viewing the beautiful scenery like the photo above.
Hikes are every Sunday, Tuesday, Thursday, and most Saturdays

RSTB LOGO T-SHIRTS
Sporting the beautiful RSTB logo, these are great shirts! Please call Mike Kuhn if you'd like to order at 805-583-2345.
short sleeve \$12
long sleeve \$14
sweat shirt \$18


Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District events can be viewed at <http://www.rsprd.org> to see what is happening next!

RSTB CLUB MEETING
This month's RSTB meeting will be at: Sycamore Drive Community Center 1692 Sycamore Drive – Room B-1
Wednesday: January 21, 2014 5:30PM (NOTE: Early Start Time)
Everyone Welcome to attend!

** Not within the jurisdiction of the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District.*

Upcoming Events

January 3rd Big Sky Loop
4.5 Mile Loop - Easy to Moderate (815' of elevation gain/loss) **8AM**

January 10th Cheeseboro Canyon - Palo Comado Canyon Counter-clockwise Loop* 10.3-mile loop - Moderate-to-strenuous (1,200' elevation gain/loss) or 5.5-mile loop - Easy-to-moderate (800' elevation gain/loss) **8AM**

January 17th Work Party 8AM

January 21st Club Meeting
The Sycamore Drive Community Center - 1692 Sycamore Drive - Room B-1
Everyone Welcome to attend!
(NOTE: Early Start Time) 5:30PM

January 24th Simi Peak from the Long Canyon trailhead via the Albertson Motorway and China Flat* 9 MRT - Moderate-to-strenuous (1,900' elevation gain/loss) **8AM**

January 31st Los Robles Trail and Triunfo Canyon Trail Shuttle Hike* 10.7 Miles One Way - Moderate to Strenuous (2,100' elevation gain) **8AM**

Due to unforeseen circumstances, all activities are subject to change without notice. Please see www.simitrailblazers.com/activities for event details and the most up-to-date schedule.

(Continued from page one)

1842. Its name also implies that it predated the "Simi," or "Pico," adobe, which is also shown on the *diseño*. The Simi adobe is located within the present day Strathearn Historical Park. The Simi adobe is known to have served as the headquarters of the rancho from shortly after 1800 until the 1840s, when the headquarters was moved into Tapo (now Gillibrand) Canyon by the new owner of the rancho, Jose de la Guerra. So, where was *Casa Vieja* and why was the rancho headquarters moved?

Pat Havens believes that *Casa Vieja* was located near the old John C. Scott home. (The home was later occupied by Douglas and Janet Scott Cameron and is now occupied by Don and Marilyn Cameron.) When I walked the area during the late-1970s in association with a proposal to divide the land, I was puzzled to find some evidence of the use of the immediate area by the Chumash Indians. Had the adobe been located nearby, it certainly would have employed Chumash laborers, and those Indians would have continued to use stone tools. Pat Havens suspects that an old olive tree on the property may date from either the late-18th or the early-19th century. Joe Simon, a prominent archaeologist who lives in Simi Valley, later examined the area around the Cameron home and concluded that there is evidence of early Spanish occupation based upon fragments of pottery known to have been made in *El Pueblo de Los Angeles*.

As reported in *Simi Valley: A Journey Through Time* (page 61), Mrs. H. J. Crinklaw gave a talk in 1923 to the Simi Valley Women's Club. She recalled traveling through Simi Valley in 1873 while on a trip from Camarillo to San Fernando. She stated that there were only "two adobes" in the valley. Those adobes were certainly the Simi Adobe and *Casa Vieja*. They were the only adobes that would have been seen by a traveler along the track through the valley. (At the time there

was also an adobe on the Hummingbird's Nest Ranch [the Juan Pucillo Adobe] and another in what is now called Gillibrand Canyon [the Jose de la Guerra Adobe]). By implication, it would seem that *Casa Vieja* was still standing in good order and probably still occupied in 1873.

When an adobe was built, a trench, about two feet deep, was dug for the foundation. The trench about two feet wide would have been filled with rock of five to eight inches in diameter. The soil walls would have supported the rock foundation horizontally. The adobe bricks would have been lain atop of the rock foundation. According to Don Cameron, he does not remember encountering or seeing any adobe wall foundations on the Cameron estate. However, this would be expected because the adobe walls would have been reduced by raindrop erosion to a slightly raised surface of "adobe melt."

According to Mrs. Havens, Janet Cameron, who authored a book of history about Simi Valley, frequently told members of the newly formed Simi Valley Historical Society that she wanted the remnants of "the first farm building built in Simi Valley" preserved. That structure stood one to two hundred feet east of the Scott/Cameron House. It was torn down by Dale Miller, who built a new home where it had stood. Don Cameron described the remains of the house as being something like 12 feet by 16 feet – about the size of an old single car garage. It had a wooden floor lain on redwood supports directly on the soil, with board and batten walls and a shake roof. He said that it was pretty flimsy – like most of the late-19th and early 20th centuries farm homes that were built in the valley. Mrs. Havens reports that... "It didn't 'amount to much', and after Janet Cameron's death those remnants of the structure were taken down without much ado." Mrs. Havens went on to say that what Mrs. Cameron wanted to memorialize was a structure that had been occupied by several families before her father had purchased the Don Cameron

property. By then no one remembered or knew the historic origins of the house. There is no indication that that home had been built directly on the site of *Casa Vieja*. However, it is likely that remnants of the adobe, or at least its foundation, were still visible nearby.

Don Cameron relates that the family lore was that the Scott/Cameron House was built directly atop the site of an earlier structure. Since the foundation of an adobe has not been found in the immediate area and given the concentration of Spanish era pottery shards and Chumash artifacts near the Scott/Cameron House, it seems likely that the Scott/Cameron House was built atop the old adobe site. Since the foundation of the Scott/Cameron House includes large stream cobbles, it is just possible that the some or all of the foundation stones of the adobe were incorporated into the foundation of the Scott/Cameron House, including the walls of the basement. Why take numerous wagon trips to and from the Arroyo Simi for river rocks when you could mine them on site?

As the first adobe, it certainly was built for and by, using Indian labor, members of the Pico family. Then why did the family move their rancho headquarters to a new location?

When the Spanish first settled the Simi Valley area during the last decade 18th Century, the floor of the valley west of about Stearns Street was generally treeless except for willows along the Arroyo Simi and a few large sycamore trees in or near the Rancho Simi Community Park. The willows probably extended as far upstream as between Erringer Road and Sycamore Drive. A ranch house in the vicinity of *Casa Vieja* could have enjoyed a hand-dug well and a cistern. Livestock would have been watered locally in the Arroyo Simi from groundwater seeping out of the banks of the Arroyo as a result of high water table conditions.

Stay tuned for the February edition of the conclusion of CASA VIEJA...

November 23rd - Placerita Canyon - Los Pinetos Trail - Wilson Saddle Loop Hike Corridor - Cache In Trash Out Event



Seven Trail Blazers met at the Stearns St. Park & Ride at 8 AM, and carpoled to Placerita Canyon County Park to begin our hike. It was a pleasantly cool, calm and clear morning, just perfect for hiking. Shortly before the junction of the Placerita Canyon Trail, and the Walker Ranch Group Campground, a meetup member, who was running late, caught up with the group. The effects of a three year drought were in evidence. The creek was bone dry and there were no wildflowers to be seen. The Los Pinetos Trail was quite a workout, gaining about 1,300' in just under two miles. Reaching the top of Wilson Saddle, the group was ready to rest and enjoy some trail snacks. After a short hike down Wilson Canyon Road, we reached the firebreak trail, that seemed to drop off abruptly like a cliff. Views are expansive from most of the trail from this point on, so it helped to take our minds off the steepness of the trail. After arriving back at our cars, some of our group took the short Oak of the Golden Dream trail. In 1842, near this oak, gold was first discovered in California by Francisco Lopez y Arbello. It was a good workout and a perfect hike, having completed 7.75 miles, with just over 2,000' of total elevation gain.

November 29th - Chivo Canyon, Tapo Canyon Overlook, Eastern Ridge, Cliff Trail

18 hikers met on a mild Saturday morning in Simi Valley near the mouth of Chivo Canyon in the Marr Ranch Open Space in northeast Simi Valley. Our hike began along Trail #22 (as shown on the RSRPD "Park Facilities Directory Map of Simi Valley and Oak Park") as it headed up Chivo Canyon. At 0.7 mile we turned left (west) on Trail #23 and followed it through a side canyon as it climbed westward to an overlook that revealed Tapo Canyon. Returning (via a loop) to Chivo Canyon we continued north to the beginning/end of the abandoned Marr Ranch Road and followed the "Buckhorn Trail" portion of it to top of the ridge on the east side of Chivo Canyon where we had a sweeping

nearly 360-degree view of the entire area. While enjoying a cool breeze, we continued south along the ridge on the Marr Ranch Road until we reached "Four Points," where we continued south on an unnamed trail along the cliffs overlooking Chivo Canyon until the trail (an old road) dropped steeply to Cottonwood Drive. We returned a short distance to our vehicles having completed a very pleasant 7-mile hike with a total gain/loss of at least 1,500'.

December 5th - Christmas Holiday Party Potluck



Ursula graciously opened up her beautiful home and hosted our annual Christmas Holiday party again this year. We all enjoyed the wide variety of scrumptious food, and great conversation. 28 Trail Blazers

were in attendance this year. I great time was had by all. Now it's time to do our best and hike off all the calories from the tasty deserts.

December 6th - Happy Camp Canyon, Middle Range Fire Road Loop



13 hikers met in the dirt parking lot at the east end of Broadway Road north of Moorpark on a clear sunny morning. We followed a well-maintained trail beside the Rustic Canyon golf course a little over a mile to the entrance to Happy

Camp Canyon, "a lush riparian oak woodland with an intermittent stream," spotting a coyote and a roadrunner along the way. Although continuing drought has eliminated "lush" and "stream," recent rain had left its mark in the form of intermittent puddles and short muddy stretches of trail. Passing the junction with the west end of the Middle Range Fire Road, we followed an old ranch road eastward as it rose 600' gradually in the canyon bottom between Oak Ridge and Big Mountain. At 4.8 miles we took a break in an oak grove with picnic tables and hitching rails. We then climbed steeply for 0.5 mile up Big Mountain to the Middle Range Fire Road via an abandoned, partially eroded dirt connector road. Once we reached the ridge (and recovered from the steep climb) we took in the views to the south and west which were unfortunately rather hazy. After hiking westward (spotting many deer tracks and some bear tracks) and descending to the entrance to Happy Camp Canyon, we made our way back to the parking lot, having completed an 11-mile hike with 1,500' of elevation gain/loss on a nice day for hiking.



RSTB Calendar January



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 Chumash Trail 6PM Happy New Year 2015  See Schedule	2	3 Big Sky Loop 8AM See Schedule
4 Rocky Peak Fire Road 4PM See Schedule	5	6 Mt. McCoy Trail 6PM See Schedule	7	8 Chumash Trail 6PM See Schedule	9 <i>Happy Birthday</i> Ian Koltenuk	10 Cheeseboro Canyon Counterclock- wise Loop* 8AM See Schedule
11 Rocky Peak Fire Road 4PM See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> Jim Lightfoot	12	13 Mt. McCoy Trail 6PM See Schedule	14	15 Chumash Trail 6PM See Schedule	16	17 Work Party - North Ridge Trail 8AM See Schedule
18 Rocky Peak Fire Road 4PM See Schedule	19  <i>Happy Birthday</i> Floyd Martin Steve Fowler	20 Mt. McCoy Trail 6PM See Schedule	21 Club Meeting 5:30PM (NOTE: Early Start Time) See Schedule <i>Everyone Welcome to attend!</i>	22 Chumash Trail 6PM See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> John Quinn	23	24 Simi Peak from the Long Canyon trailhead 8AM See Schedule
25 Rocky Peak Fire Road 4PM See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> Carol Loessin-Maggart	26	27 Mt. McCoy Trail 6PM See Schedule	28	29 Chumash Trail 6PM See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> Emma Prentke	30 <i>Happy Birthday</i> Daniel DeGoe	31 Los Robles Trail and Triunfo Canyon Trail Shuttle Hike* 8AM See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> Aileen Vandenberg Bill Grant Kerrie Stiles Mi Kim

SANTA ANA WILDFIRE THREAT INDEX - Provides a 6 day forecast of Santa Ana Winds Wildfire Threats on a color coded map <http://psgeodata.fs.fed.us/sawti/>

CALIFORNIA FIRE WEATHER MAP - Provides actual Red Flag Warnings and Fire Weather Watches http://www.fire.ca.gov/communications/communications_firesafety_redflagwarning.php (Scroll down to map)



Due to unforeseen circumstances, all activities are subject to change without notice. Please see www.simitrailblazers.com/activities/ for event details and the most up-to-date schedule.



REGULARLY SCHEDULED HIKES (Rain cancels – No hikes on holidays)

Sunday Evening - Rocky Peak Fire Road

Meet at **4PM** at the Rocky Peak Fire Road trailhead. Take the Rocky Peak exit on the 118 Freeway and head north over the freeway. Park at the trailhead or across the bridge on the Santa Susana Pass Road. (Strenuous - 4.8 MRT - 1,200' elevation gain)

Tuesday Evening - Mt. McCoy Trail

Meet at **6PM** in the parking lot, located to the south of Donut Delite, located near the NE corner of Madera and Royal. (Moderate - 4.0 MRT - 675' elevation gain)

Thursday Evening - Chumash Trail

Meet at **6PM** at Chumash trailhead. Directions: Take the 118 Freeway to Yosemite exit. Go north on Yosemite and turn right on Flanagan Dr. The trailhead is at the end of Flanagan Drive. (Moderate to Strenuous - 5.4 MRT - 1300' total elevation gain.)

JANUARY HIKES AND ACTIVITIES

January 3rd Big Sky Loop

4.5 Mile Loop - Easy to Moderate (815' of elevation gain/loss) This hike follows a trail that loops around the Big Sky housing development north of Highway 118. The return portion of the loop winds along the oak-lined stream that runs through the development. Meet at **8AM**. Bring 2 to 3 quarts of water and lunch/snacks. Wear boots. **DIRECTIONS TO THE TRAILHEAD:** Take Hwy 118 to the Erringer Road exit. Head north 0.2 mile on Erringer Road (passing Alamo Street) to Big Sky Place (just before the entrance to the Big Sky housing development). Turn right on Big Sky Place, park on the left (west) side of the street close to its junction with Erringer Road.

January 10th Cheeseboro Canyon - Palo Comado Canyon Counterclockwise Loop*

10.3-mile loop - Moderate-to-strenuous (1,200' elevation gain/loss) or 5.5-mile loop - Easy-to-moderate (800' elevation gain/loss) Meet at **8AM** near Donut Delite at the corner of Madera and Royal. Bring 2 to 3 quarts of water, lunch and sunscreen. Wear boots. **NOTE:** Hikers desiring the shorter option can use the Ranch Center Connector Road as a shortcut between the two canyons.

January 17th Work Party - North Ridge Trail

Meeting time is **8AM**. The event will end at noon. All tools will be provided. We will be removing rocks, doing some lopping to increase trail clearance and some trail trimming. Bring your own water, snacks, gloves, hat, and wear sunscreen. Boots are recommended. Meet at the intersection of Yosemite Avenue and Flannigan Drive. Park on the north side of Flannigan Drive.

January 21st Club Planning Meeting - Everyone Welcome to attend! (NOTE: Early Start Time)

5:30PM - The Sycamore Drive Community Center - 1692 Sycamore Drive - Room B-1

January 24th Simi Peak from the Long Canyon trailhead via the Albertson Motorway and

China Flat 9 MRT - Moderate-to-strenuous (1,900' elevation gain/loss)

Directions to the trailhead: Take 118 Freeway to First Street exit. Take First Street south (it becomes Long Canyon Rd) approx. 4 miles, until it intersects Wood Ranch Parkway. Meet at **8AM** in the parking lot just west of the intersection of Long Canyon Rd and Wood Ranch Parkway. Bring 2 - 3 quarts of water and lunch. Wear boots.

January 31st Los Robles Trail and Triunfo Canyon Trail Shuttle Hike*

10.7 Miles One Way - Moderate to Strenuous (2,100' elevation gain)

The Los Robles Trail is located in the southern portion of the Conejo Open Space. Meet at **8AM** near Donut Delite at the corner of Madera and Royal. Bring 2 to 3 quarts of water, lunch and sunscreen. Wear boots.



No dogs allowed on trail(s). For additional 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.

Full descriptions of these hikes and activities are available at <http://www.simitrailblazers.com/activities/index.html>

RANCHO SIMI TRAIL BLAZERS

A Division of the Rancho Simi Foundation

Executive Chair:	Mike Kuhn	HM (805) 583-2345	hannahmike@me.com
Treasurer:	Santiago Homsí		
Park District Liaison:	Jeannie Liss	WK (805) 584-4453	volunteers@rsrpd.us
Work Parties Chair:	VOLUNTEER NEEDED		Contact Mike Kuhn at: 805-583-2345
Hiking Chair:	Mark Gilmore	HM (805) 529-5581	markinthepark@sbcglobal.net
Vice Hiking Chair:	Les Wilson	HM (805) 522-2642	les.wilson@roadrunner.com
Website:	Mark Gilmore	HM (805) 529-5581	markinthepark@sbcglobal.net
Ways & Means Chair:	Marty Richards	HM (805) 526-4414	mlrrdh@yahoo.com
Publicity Chair:	VOLUNTEER NEEDED		Contact Mike Kuhn at: 805-583-2345
Newsletter Editor:	Linda Mann		linda.martins.mann@simitrailblazers.com

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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 _____ Birth Month _____ Day _____

Family memberships: Please list names and birthdays of additional family members (Month & Day Only)

Phone (provide up to two numbers): work/home/cell _____

How do you want to receive the Newsletter? Check all that apply.

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How did you find out about the RSTB? _____

Please make out tax deductible member dues check for the year to:

Rancho Simi Foundation and mail it to RSTB, P.O. Box 630445, Simi Valley, CA 93063-0399



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