



# Rancho Simi Trail Blazers

A Division of the Rancho Simi Foundation



## CURING AND TAPO BRANDY

Between 1912 and 1915, John P. Harrington, an anthropologist and linguist with the American Bureau of Ethnology of the Smithsonian Institute, intensely interviewed Fernando Librado, *Kitsepawit*, a Chumash Indian. Fernando had been born sometime between 1804 and 1820. In any event, he had vivid memories of life during the Mission, Mexican and Anglo-American periods of settlement in Santa Barbara and Ventura counties. His words have been transcribed by Travis Hudson from Harrington's notes and are herein excerpted from *Breath of the Sun*. These stories provide valuable insights into Indian life during these periods as well as into the "old ways." The words in parentheses are offered to explain the text.

"...L.A.M. Ortega was working at the County Clerk's office in Santa Barbara, and he felt a pain in his chest. He went to our (Chumash Indian) doctors and several people, and all of them had given up the attempt to cure him. Ortega had even seen Dr. Brinkerhoff, having ridden around in the doctor's wagon with him. Jose Garcia was the one, however, who effected a cure.

(continued in column 2)

(continued from column 1)

He got a half gallon of brandy from Tapo, and he put dried leaves of Yerba Santa in it and set it outdoors over night, and in a cool place indoors during the day. (*Yerba Santa, or holy herb, was used for a variety of medical applications.*) Each morning, for several days, Jose would rub this balsam on Ortega's chest and also gave him a small cup of it to drink. After a time Ortega noticed his pain was gone, and it has not returned to this day." (p. 57)

Grapes, for wine and brandy, were grown in Tapo Canyon from the Mission period onward, and the resulting spirits were transported throughout the region. Here we see a Chumash doctor using a traditional herbal cure with something (brandy) from the new culture.

Mike Kuhn



### DID YOU KNOW... ???

The name "**Hueneme**" comes from the Ventureño Chumash word

*wen-mu* → *wnemu*

which means "sleeping place".

Mike Kuhn

### 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.

### 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  
**October 18, 2006**



Barbara & Alan Hoff

### UPCOMING EVENTS

#### OCTOBER 21<sup>st</sup>

#### Lower Stagecoach Trail Work Party

Meet in Corriganville parking lot at 8am. 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.

#### NOVEMBER 4<sup>th</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup>

#### Mt. San Antonio Ski Hut

6 MRT - Strenuous overnighter - (2,200' elevation gain) - The Hut is at the base of Mt. San Antonio (Mt. Baldy) at 8,200', a 3 mile hike from the trailhead. You will need to bring food, a sleeping bag, good boots and 2 - 3 quarts of water. We will cook our food on the hut's wood burning stove.

Space is limited. The cost is \$10 if you are a Sierra Club Member, and \$15 for non-members. **To reserve your place, send email to Mark Gilmore.** We'll meet at 8 AM, near Donut Delite on the corner of Madera and Royal. We'll cancel if there is bad weather, so please be prepared for a substitute hike.

More information on these events can be found at

<http://simitrailblazers.com>

To make reservations, please email Mark Gilmore at

[markinthepark@sbcglobal.net](mailto:markinthepark@sbcglobal.net).

## MAN'S IMPACT ON ECOSYSTEMS

I yearn for a glimpse of what the plant and animal communities in Simi Valley were like when the Indians were the only human inhabitants of the area - a time before European colonization brought forth a whole series of ecological changes to our area. Native perennial grasses were largely replaced by exotic annual grasses, including wild oats, foxtail barley, red and ripgut bromes, and soft chess. Horehound, various Mediterranean mustards, thistles - the latest being yellow star thistle, wild radish, tree tobacco (from Brazil), tumbleweeds (Russian thistle), California (Peruvian pepper) trees, giant reed, castor bean, and hundreds of weedy species that are largely confined to urban and agricultural ecosystems, now are parts of our new world. Animal invaders include the Virginia opossums, English sparrows (actually a North African bower finch), starlings, and hundreds of insects and other invertebrates. New invaders are arriving all the time. These changes are occurring everywhere - not just in Simi Valley. To a certain extent, we are developing a global ecosystem where once there was great complexity. While this assertion is somewhat overstated, the reality bodes profound changes and great loss of biodiversity in the world. All of this is wrought by the hand of man.

Eastern hemispheric man's move into the "New World" resulted in a 70-80% die-off of the human population that was here. That die-off was a tragic result of global travel in that American Indians did not have the ability to cope with eastern hemispheric diseases.

For most of human history, man has moved plants and animals around with them. Domesticated plants and animals moved with colonization and even a reverse flow of useful plants and animals was introduced to homelands where a benefit to local economies or ways of life could be seen. Tobacco, corn, potatoes, tomatoes, rubber trees, sunflowers and turkeys are examples of New World plants and animals that have had a global impact.

Nineteenth Century "acclimatization societies" strove to populate America and Australia with European plants, birds and mammals. Most of these plants, birds, and mammals quickly died off. About 10% settled in quite nicely, and about 10% of those spread wildly. Perhaps the best known of the latter 10% is the introduction of rabbits into Australia, where they proceeded to have a destructive impact on native vegetation and the grazing economy. Only the accidental release of the European rabbit calicivirus disease in 1995 has at last resolved the scourge of the bunnies.

In Florida, one in every three or four plants is now a non-native species. Three exotic fig trees have been grown in Florida for over a hundred years. Only during the last 20 years or so have they begun to spread wildly into natural areas. The explanation is the arrival of the fig wasp that pollinates them. The Brazilian pepper was grown in south Florida for many decades as an ornamental, just as it is here. Then suddenly during the 1940s and 1950s, for no known reason, they spread into the wild.

In South Africa, ecologists anticipate the arrival of *Varroa*, a mite that parasitizes honeybees. It has already swept through Europe and North America, where it badly damaged commercial bee keeping and has ravaged wild bee colonies. In South Africa, between 50% and 80%, depending on the ecosystem, of native flower species are pollinated by bees. The effect on ecosystems may be devastating.

One researcher has found that the greater the number of species there is in an ecosystem, the greater will be the number of exotic species that will be established. The same circumstances that favor a wealth of native species will favor a higher number of exotic species. Approximately 40 percent of the plant species present in North America, are present in California. Ours is the most species diverse region in North America.

Sometimes biological controls can be found. The tumbleweed arrived in southern California and much of the west during the 1880s. It had been introduced into central Canada with Russian red wheat. It was then carried by livestock, in their feces, via the railroad. Its effect was devastating. It choked out crops and then stacked up against fences, where it eventually burned - destroying wooden fence posts. Laws were passed making it a misdemeanor to have tumbleweeds on your property. Nothing worked. When I first visited Wood Ranch during the mid-1970s, it was difficult during August to walk over level land because of the harsh nature of standing tumbleweeds, which covered the fields. Then in the early 1980s a seed-eating weevil was introduced from the steppes of Russia. Now, tumbleweeds have been effectively controlled.

Many introduced plants have been successful here because they have no known natural enemies. Our native insects and other animals don't recognize them as food. The giant reed (*Arundo donax*) is a good example of this. It creates an ecological desert in our stream courses. Nothing eats it and nothing lives in it.

Sometimes natural enemies do arrive and those enemies threaten the continued existence of that particular plant species because there are no known biological controls of the introduced species. The red gum lerps psyllid made its way to southern California in 1998 and by the summer of 2000 was destroying red gum eucalyptus trees. Dire predictions that most red gum trees would succumb to this insect within two to three years may or may not prove to be true. For now, there is no known biological control in this state.

Assuming that frenetic international trafficking of biological components goes on for the next few century or two, this recombination ecology will result in a relatively small number of immensely successful species dominating nature everywhere. What have we wrought?

Mike Kuhn

## EARLY DAYS ON THE SIMI

(Summarized from Janet Cameron, pages 181- in *History of Ventura County, State of California*, Edwin M. Sheridan)  
(Editor Emeritus) (1940)

During the 1960s, a syndicate, founded by Thomas Scott of the Pennsylvania Railroad, acquired all of the land of El Rancho Simi, except for 1,400 acres in the Tapo. David Perkins and General Miles, John Erringer and a Mr. Greene were associates in land purchase. After 1865 Thomas Bard acted as the General Manager of the land. Once it was determined that oil was not present in great quantities, Thomas Scott withdrew, Greene and Erringer were given the hills south of the valley (2,780 acres), and Bard retained the remaining 96,000 acres.

From 1861 through 1875 a stage ran from Los Angeles through Simi Valley and on to Santa Barbara. Mr. Larry Howard maintained a "Mountain Station" at the foot of the grade on the Simi Valley side to service travelers, until his death in 1874. Mr. Howard was one of the first Anglo-American settlers in the valley. A family named Penlan lived near the station. Their son, according to Janet Cameron, was the first "white" child born in Simi Valley. In 1866 the Taylor family, including their four year old child, Bud, arrived in Simi Valley, remaining a short while. Bud Taylor returned to Simi Valley in 1874 and spent the rest of his life here, raising bees, grain and some cattle and horses. About that time, the Barnetts settled on the old Scott place near the northeastern corner of the intersection of Erringer Road and Royal Avenue – the general site of the first Spanish-era settlement, i.e., *Casa Vieja*, in the valley. In 1874 Steve Easley came, joining Bud Taylor. Ten years later, he sent for his family, and they settled in Sycamore Canyon (now Meier Canyon – south of the southern end of Tapo Canyon Road). Also in 1874 Bates, Brown and Company leased the western half of Simi Valley and moved into the Simi Adobe, where the Strathearn Historical Park is today.

Charles Emerson Hoar came in 1871 (according to Janet Cameron) or about 1872 (according to Patricia Havens, *Simi Valley: A Journey Through Time*, 1997). According to Mrs. Cameron, who knew him well, he was a brilliant man. He was the nephew of Massachusetts Senator Hoar and son of a President of Harvard University. His mother was an Emerson of the prominent Concord family and a cousin of Ralph Waldo Emerson. Charles graduated first in his class from Harvard during the 1860s. After a short stint as a railroad lawyer on the mid-western frontier, he moved to Simi Valley and became its first gentleman farmer. Mr. Hoar was offered Simi Valley for \$1.00 per acre. He and Bates, Brown and Company agreed to take it, but in the end Bates, Brown and Company could not come up with their share of the money, so the sale did not go through. Mr. Hoar then leased everything east of Arroyo del Tapo and moved onto the Hummingbird's Nest. Mr. Hoar

moved into an adobe on the Hummingbird which was occupied by Juan Percillo and his wife, later building a small home nearby. Juan Percillo and his family stayed on to work for Mr. Hoar. A Mr. Saviers leased everything north of "Simi Creek" west of Arroyo del Tapo, and a Mr. Barnett leased everything south of Mr. Saviers' lease. In 1884 and 1885 Mr. Hoar purchased the Hummingbird's Nest property, along with several other parcels in the valley – in part in consideration for the termination of his lease on the 13,000-acre east end. Mr. Hoar planted numerous fruit trees on the Hummingbird, which became a show place for prospective buyers of land in Simi Valley during the late-1880s. Mr. Hoar, according to Janet Cameron, "...was very generous and shared what he had with his neighbors."

Mr. Brown moved to Ventura in 1883, after which the Philbrooks lived in the Simi Adobe until 1885. After that a French family named Herrega moved into the adobe. The Herregas established the first school in Simi Valley. (The school was taught in French.)

Early farmers rented land from Thomas Bard. They paid Mr. Bard one sixth of their crops. No leases were ever signed, nor did Mr. Bard ever question his take of the harvest.

Harvesting of the grain crops was done through Chinese contractors, who would also haul the grain to the threshers. The grain was then hauled to Port Hueneme by eight-horse drawn wagons – a two-day trip.

Men and women worked hard. Occasionally farm families were invited to a dance or barbecue at the De la Guerras on the Tapo or to the hacienda of another Spanish/Mexican family.

When a young man wanted to marry, he borrowed a modest sum and rode a horse to Ventura with his fiancée, where they obtained a license, found a justice of the peace, got married - returning to Simi Valley in time for work the next morning.

According to Janet Cameron, Mr. Taylor said that there was little quarreling between settlers because they lived too far apart and worked too hard. Life had passed from the hands of the Chumash Indians; the Mission system was long gone; and the Spanish/Mexican period of settlement was slipping away. In some sense, it was still life on the frontier. There were no railroad or public roads. Law was present in Ventura – a hard day's travel from Simi Valley. Little could these early settlers imagine what the late 20<sup>th</sup> early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries would bring.

Mike Kuhn



# RSTB Calendar

## October 2006



| Sun   | Mon       | Tue   | Wed  | Thu  | Fri   | Sat   |
|---|-----------|---|--|--|---|---|
| <b>1</b><br><b>Rocky Peak</b><br><b>5pm hike</b><br><b>See Schedule</b>   | <b>2</b>  | <b>3</b><br><b>Long Canyon</b><br><b>6:30pm hike</b><br><b>See Schedule</b><br><i>Happy Birthday</i><br><i>Alyssa Mummert</i> | <b>4</b><br><i>Happy Birthday</i><br><i>Marty Richards</i> | <b>5</b><br><b>Chumash Trail</b><br><b>6pm hike</b><br><b>See Schedule</b>   | <b>6</b><br><i>Happy Birthday</i><br><i>Donna Cavaliere</i> | <b>7</b><br><b>Saddle Peak Trail</b><br><b>See Schedule</b>   |
| <b>8</b><br><b>Rocky Peak</b><br><b>5pm hike</b><br><b>See Schedule</b>   | <b>9</b>  | <b>10</b><br><b>Long Canyon</b><br><b>6:30pm hike</b><br><b>See Schedule</b>  | <b>11</b>  | <b>12</b><br><b>Chumash Trail</b><br><b>6pm hike</b><br><b>See Schedule</b>  | <b>13</b><br><i>Happy Birthday</i><br><i>Bev Frye</i>       | <b>14</b><br><b>Santa Cruz Island</b><br><b>See Schedule</b>  |
| <b>15</b><br><b>Rocky Peak</b><br><b>5pm hike</b><br><b>See Schedule</b>  | <b>16</b> | <b>17</b><br><b>Long Canyon</b><br><b>6:30pm hike</b><br><b>See Schedule</b>  | <b>18</b><br><b>RSTB Meeting</b><br><b>See Page 1</b>      | <b>19</b><br><b>Chumash Trail</b><br><b>6pm hike</b><br><b>See Schedule</b>  | <b>20</b>   | <b>21</b><br><b>Lower Stagecoach Trail</b><br><b>Work Party</b><br><b>See Schedule</b><br><i>Happy Birthday</i><br><i>Brian McKee</i> |
| <b>22</b><br><b>Rocky Peak</b><br><b>5pm hike</b><br><b>See Schedule</b><br><i>Happy Birthday</i><br><i>Margarita Marsh</i>                   | <b>23</b> | <b>24</b><br><b>Long Canyon</b><br><b>6:30pm hike</b><br><b>See Schedule</b>  | <b>25</b>  | <b>26</b><br><b>Chumash Trail</b><br><b>6pm hike</b><br><b>See Schedule</b><br><i>Happy Birthday</i><br><i>Lisa Klockenteger</i><br><i>Yasa Rasakhoo</i> | <b>27</b>   | <b>28</b><br><b>Sam Merrill Trail</b><br><b>See Schedule</b><br><i>Happy Birthday</i><br><i>Mark Gilmore</i><br><i>Mike O'Connor</i>  |
| <b>29</b><br><b>Rocky Peak</b><br><b>5pm hike</b><br><b>See Schedule</b><br><i>Happy Birthday</i><br><i>Tracy Frank</i><br><i>Paul Nemeth</i> | <b>30</b> | <b>31</b><br><b>Long Canyon</b><br><b>6:30pm hike</b><br><b>See Schedule</b><br><br><i>Happy Halloween!</i>                   |  |  |   |   |



# Rancho Simi Trail Blazers

A Division of the Rancho Simi Foundation

## Hiking Schedule



### REGULARLY SCHEDULED HIKES

*(Rain cancels – No hikes on holidays)*

#### Sunday Evening - Rocky Peak

Meet 5pm at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. (Strenuous, 4.8 MRT)

#### 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)

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### OCTOBER HIKES

#### October 7th - Saddle Peak Trail\*\*

10 MRT - Moderate to Strenuous (1600' elevation gain/loss)

Hike a segment of the backbone trail between Las Virgenes and Stunt Road. Meet 8 AM near Donut Delite at the corner of Madera and Royal. Bring 2 to 3 quarts of water and lunch. Wear boots.

#### October 14th - Santa Cruz Island - Scorpion Anchorage to Smuggler's Cove\*\*

**RESERVATIONS FULL** [There is a waiting list in case of a cancellation]

#### October 21st - Work Party - Lower Stagecoach Trail

**Directions:** Take Kuehner south, turn left onto Smith Rd, and follow it to the end of the street. Parking lot is on the left. Meet in Corriganville parking lot at 8am. 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.


#### October 28th - Echo Mountain via the Sam Merrill Trail\*\*

5 MRT - Moderate to Strenuous (1,400' elevation gain)

Professor Thaddeus S. C. Lowe's mountain railway and resort was Southern California's must-visit attraction, drawing more than three million visitors from 1896 to 1936. Echo Mountain (3207'), known as "The White City," was the heart of the resort with its elegant Echo Mountain House hotel, chalet, observatory, and small zoo. It has all since vanished, but this fascinating hike takes you to the ruins of this official historic landmark. Meet at 8 AM, near Donut Delite on the corner of Madera and Royal. Bring 2 to 3 quarts of water and lunch. Wear sturdy boots.

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

 No dogs allowed on trail(s).

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.

<http://www.simitrailblazers.com>

**RANCHO SIMI TRAIL BLAZERS**

*A Division of the Rancho Simi Foundation*

|                        |                  |                   |                              |
|------------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|
| Executive Chair:       | Mike Kuhn        | HM (805) 583-2345 | hannahmike@adelphia.net      |
| Treasurer:             | Peter Ely        | HM (805) 523-1409 |                              |
| 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        |
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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

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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

Please list any extra names and birthdays of more than one member (Month & Day Only)



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