



Rancho Simi Trail Blazers



BACKPACKING TRIP

We've scheduled a backpacking trip for **May 17th - 19th**, but have not set the destination yet. I will be presenting suggestions at the February meeting. If you have a favorite in mind, please let me know.



CHUMASH RELIGIOUS IDOLS

Pedro Fages was second in command during the 1769 Spanish expedition to Monterey under Gaspar de Portola. He later served as governor of Alta California. The following description comes from his travel through Chumash territory in the Santa Clara River Valley and westward to the area of Santa Barbara. It provides a brief view of religious idols that were observed around Chumash settlements and conveys a somewhat different impression of one aspect of Chumash life than is generally provided in modern accounts. As far as I have been able to tell, it is the only account that refers to painted stones as shrines. This account is the earliest description that we have the inland Chumash area..

It is not hard to imagine the zeal which the first padres put into suppressing the creation and worshipping of "idols." Other forms of religious practice, such as the vestiges of pagan beliefs in our own culture, were more subtle, so were less a focus of religious suppression. By the time that ethnologists and archaeologist started sys-

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Chumash culture, such practices as the manufacturing and the honoring of idols were long gone and nearly forgotten.

It must also be recalled that what the Spanish described was filtered through the cultural bias of their own cultural milieu. Now from page 32 of *A Historical, Political, and Natural Description of California* (1775), translated by Herbert Ingrams Priestley:

"They are idolators like the rest. Their idols are placed near the village, with some here and there about the fields, to protect, they say, the seeds and crops. These idols are nothing but sticks, or stone figurines painted with colors and surmounted with plumage. Their ordinary height is three hands, and they place them in the cleanest, most highly embellished place they can find, whither they go frequently to worship them and offer their food, and whatever they have."

These references to "shrines," to painted rocks, to fields, seeds and crops are intriguing. One painted rock has been found locally on top of a small hill. That rock may be the only example of what was being described by Pedro Fages in the anthropological literature for the Chumash.

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
Wednesday, February 20th.

FEBRUARY WORK PARTY

Our next work party will be held on **Saturday February 16** on the Chumash Trail. This work party will concentrate on the central portion of the trail and will focus on pulling in high berms along the route. Some lopping will also be required. Meet at the trailhead at the end of Flanagan Drive in Simi Valley at 8:00 AM. We will work from 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM. Hope to see you there.

Work Parties Chair

JANUARY WORK PARTY

Twelve Rancho Simi Trail Blazers turned out to work on the Lower Stagecoach Trail out of Corriganville. We lopped brush, filled in ruts, repaired rain-damaged trail sections and repaired switchbacks. A major effort involved a spot with tree limbs very low over the trail. The cause of the blockage was a Laurel Sumac with multiple 4 to 5 inch diameter trunks that had collapsed onto another Laurel Sumac, bending the second tree down over the trail. We had to pull down as well as cut some of the branches as several were tightly wedged. The trail is now clear for equestrians. Several short sections of rock retaining wall also had to be built to reinforce 2 switchback turns and widen a narrow point along the trail. We worked from 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM and as usual met at Chuy's on our way home. Many thanks to the following workers who all did a super job:

Bob Altieri, Jack Archibald, Arlene Altshuler, Bill Cespedes, Martin DeGoey, Tom Frye, Brian McKee, Louise Pomes, Chuck Portoghesi, Marty Richards, John Sabol and Don Steely.

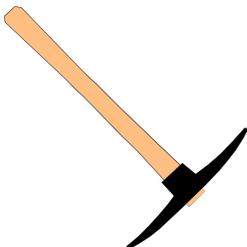
Work Parties Chair

GETTING OLDER AND THE JOYS OF LIFE

I had a new passport picture taken recently – my passport will expire next month. So, I had the opportunity to look at precisely the same pose, the same hair style and the same expression taken by the same camera just ten years apart. Looks like the same fella, but the skin tone and hair are grayer, and the left eyelid droops even more than it did ten years ago. Yes, there was the proof staring back at me. I have aged.

I still have my first passport (1963). I am a young whippersnapper in that picture – pinstriped suit and all. My expression is that of youth, more all knowing than the last two pictures. Life is sobering. You trade firmity for time. My journey through life is still underway, I know where I've been and have a pretty good idea where I'm going. No more career choices. I enjoy a wide circle of friends – past and present colleagues, community members, the people you run into here and there and still keep in touch with and Rancho Simi Trail Blazers. So, life is good – even if I am getting grayer, slower and less all knowing. In fact - I think I left all knowing **way back**.

I spent most of Christmas day working on a trail alone in the mountains. It was perfectly clear and the weather was cool and the soil good for grooming. The winter sun yielded constantly changing vistas. It was quiet away from the City. Every now and again one or more hikers or mountain bike riders would come by. We chatted, I handed out some trail brochures and a couple of Trail Blazer newsletters, and they all thanked me for the good work I was doing. I felt good about being there and doing what I was doing – something for others. The sunset was marvelous as I walked out of the mountains. Yes, life is good.



GUARDIAN AVENUE

How did Guardian Avenue come about? Back in the 1980s the Brandeis-Bardin Institute decided to develop some of their property on a land lease basis. It turned out that there was little market for business park land leases. So the property was sold after a tentative tract map and specific plan were approved. Guardian Avenue started out as Brandeis Avenue, but that was changed at the request of the first industrial firm that moved in and built a building - Guardian Products. Well, any business must respond to economic realities, and Guardian Products soon moved production to Mexico and another firm moved into the building they vacated. The street name will probably remain even though Guardian Products, as a Simi Valley business, will soon be forgotten by most people.

The location of Guardian Avenue is dictated by the presence of a very large Calleguas Municipal Water District water line that predated the street by several decades. A significant portion of the domestic water supply for southern Ventura County is carried by the line and the via Bard Reservoir. So, that's why the street is where it is.



A MASTODON SLEPT HERE

Up until about 10,000-11,000 years ago Simi Valley, like the rest of North America, shared a rich Pleistocene fauna. These were the critters of story books – the stuff of the Page Museum of the La Brea Tar Pits. There were dire wolves, gigantic short-faced bears, American lions, saber-tooth cats, western horses, tapirs, peccaries, camels (big ones in this case), giant bisons (*Bison antiquus*), imperial mammoths, mastodons, giant ground sloths, small ground sloths, and many other now extinct critters. Perhaps changes in climate, but, more likely, the advent of the American Indian and the spear thrower vanquished these animals from the earth, only to be known from

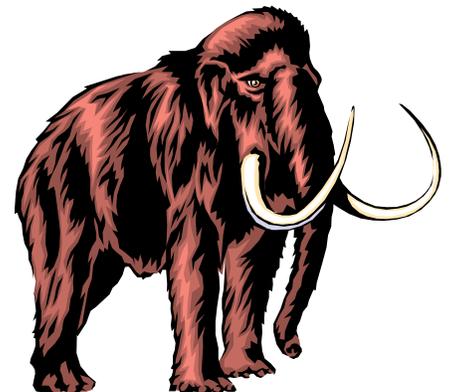
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We think we know this land and certainly are a part of this place now, but our view is only a snippet of time and even that changes. Sure, we know the Indians were here, and the peoples up from Mexico, and the farmers and herders and all of that, but we forget that there was a time before people, when the hills probably looked very similar to the way they do today and when the strange menagerie of animals roamed this place.

Well, during the first week of the new year (2002) a mastodon was unearthed in Sand Canyon about a half mile north of the northern end of Erringer Road. It is thought to have died and then been buried and incorporated into a landslide. A momentous find! There have only been parts of a few found in California and most have included only a few bones.

Mastodons were not true elephants, although they looked like a long low version of elephants. The mastodon family (*Mammutidae*) first lived in North Africa about 40 million years ago and reached America about 15 million years ago. They had tusks and individual somewhat conical teeth. They stood 6-10 feet at the shoulders and were up to 15 feet long. In general, they were squat compared to modern elephants. We know from frozen specimens that they had reddish brown hair.

Well, our mastodon has now been carted off to the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History for cleaning, stabilization of the bones and study. One day we may find out what



FUNNIES FROM THE WEB: FOREST SERVICE FEEDBACK

These are (supposedly) actual comments left on Forest Service registration sheets and comment cards by backpackers completing wilderness camping trips:

- A small deer came into my camp and stole my bag of pickles. Is there a way I can get reimbursed? Please call.
- Escalators would help on steep uphill sections.
- Instead of a permit system or regulations, the Forest Service needs to reduce worldwide population growth to limit the number of visitors to wilderness.
- Trails need to be wider so people can walk while holding hands.
- Ban walking sticks in wilderness. Hikers that use walking sticks are more likely to chase animals.
- All the mile markers are missing this year.
- Found a smoldering cigarette left by a horse.
- Trails need to be reconstructed. Please avoid building trails that go uphill.
- Too many bugs and leeches and spiders and spider webs. Please spray the wilderness to rid the area of these pests.
- Please pave the trails so they can be plowed of snow in the winter.
- Chairlifts need to be in some places so that we can get to wonderful views without having to hike to them.
- The coyotes made too much noise last night and kept me awake. Please eradicate these annoying animals.
- Reflectors need to be placed on trees every 50 feet so people can hike at night with flashlights.
- Need more signs to keep area pristine.
- A McDonald's would be nice at the

**KEEP AREA
PRISTINE**

EQUESTRIANS IN ROCK ART

An unusual Chumash pictograph site in the Santa Monica Mountains is focused on four riders on horses and/or mules. During 2000 I photographed the site. It is formally known as LAN-717 and is one of the most interesting and brightest rock art sites in the mountain range.

An academic analysis of the site by Gregory A. Reinhardt, entitled "Pictographs with a Historic Component: LAN-717, A Los Angeles County Rock Art Site," appears in *Messages from the Past: Studies in California Rock Art*, Monograph XX, Institute of Archaeology, University of California, Los Angeles, n.d.

The panel is done nearly entirely in red pigment. The riders are arranged in a line - one after the other as though they represent a particular group of equestrians and a particular event. Because of the consistency of style that is shared by each image, it obvious that all four figures were painted by the same individual. The horses are accurately depicted, as are the riders in relationship to the horses. The artist, then, would appear to be an eye witness - not someone simply depicting an event passed by word of mouth from one person to another. At least three groups of ritualistic figures seem to face the equestrians from below - in awe of what they see. The panel is focused on the riders as though their passage represents a major event in the life of the Chumash observers. The panel, at least most of it, was certainly composed during the historic period. The composition may celebrate the first encounter with people of western European culture and the horse or mule. So, who do the equestrians represent?

Most likely the rock art panel depicts one of the Portola expeditions, i.e., of 1769 or 1770. Portola's first expedition left San Diego in early summer of 1769 to meet with the packet boat San Antonio at Monterey Bay. The land force, which included Fray Junipera Serra, passed north of the rock art site on August 10, 1769, and sent scouts south to explore for a possible coastal route to Monterey.

Portola missed the San Antonio, which did land at Point Conception about 125 miles west of the Malibu on its return voyage. They inquired about the Portola expedition and were informed through gestures about how the expedition had passed through the area on horseback going north and then about their return. The Indians acted out the scene by sitting astride water casks, which had been brought ashore, and made appropriate gestures to indicate horsemen.

Juan Rodriques Cabrillo had travelled up and down the coast by ship in 1542-43 as well as Viscaino in 1602. Both sailed in open, undecked vessels. There is no record to indicate that they had any horses or mules.

The Anza expedition came through southern California in 1774. However, Anza traveled well north of the Santa Monica Mountains.

Another explanation is that the pictograph panel was painted during the mission period as magic against the Spanish/Mexican intruders. If this were the case, one might expect more than just four riders and many other motifs of Spanish/Mexican life. The four riders, as previously stated, seem to depict an event. However, it is still possible that a group of formerly friendly Chumash Indians returned to this old place of "power" to call upon adverse power to rid the land of the now unwanted invaders by controlling their spirits.

Finally, one is tempted to refer to the equestrians as the "four horsemen of the Apocalypse," a story that could have been relayed by priests in the missions. This seems unlikely since the biblical horsemen carried a bow, a pair of balance scales, and a sword. Only one equestrian at LAN-717 seems to be carrying anything. We are, of course, always quick to put things in our own frame of reference.

So, my money is on the depiction of the Portola expedition. How could the Indians know that the event would lead to the utter destruction of their culture and the death of 75-80% of their population



February

2002



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2 Eagle Spring Loop See Schedule
3 Rocky Peak 4pm hike See Schedule	4	5	6 Happy Birthday Phil Pratt	7 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	8	9 Placerita Canyon See Schedule
10 Rocky Peak 4pm hike See Schedule Happy Birthday Heather Brewer	11	12	13 Happy Birthday Chuck Portoghesi	14 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule Happy Birthday Margarita Marsh	15	16 Chumash Trail Work Party See Schedule Happy Birthday Darold Farr
17 Rocky Peak 4pm hike See Schedule	18	19	20 RSTB Meeting See Page 1 Happy Birthday Steve Schmidt	21 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule Happy Birthday Carrie Brewer	22 Happy Birthday Dan McDougall	23 Zuma Canyon See Schedule
24 Rocky Peak 4pm hike See Schedule Happy Birthday Connie Ankrom	25 Happy Birthday David Seifert	26	27	28 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule		



Rancho Simi Trail Blazers

Hiking Schedule



- February 2 Eagle Spring Loop**
Strenuous 7 1/2 MRT hike with 800' elevation gain/loss. We'll be hiking from Trippet Ranch, up to Eagle Rock, down to Eagle Spring, returning to Trippet Ranch and the Dead Horse trailhead via the Musch Ranch Trail. This hike is not within the jurisdiction of the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District. Meet 7am near Donut Delite at the corner of Madera and Royal. Bring 2 - 3 qts. of water and lunch, wear boots.
- February 3 Sunday Evening Hike**
Meet 4pm at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. (Strenuous, 5 MRT)
- February 7 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)
- February 9 Placerita Canyon - Los Pinetos Trail**
Strenuous 8 MRT hike with 1800' elevation gain/loss and great views from the top of the canyon. This hike is not within the jurisdiction of the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park district. Bring lunch and 2 - 3 qts of water, bug juice and/or bug screen. Wear boots. Meet 8am near Donut Delite at the corner of Madera and Royal.
- February 10 Sunday Evening Hike**
Meet 4pm at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. (Strenuous, 5 MRT)
- February 14 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)
- February 16 Chumash Trail Work Party**
Help maintain one of the most traversed trails in Simi Valley. Directions - take 118 Fwy to Yosemite exit. Go north on Yosemite, turn right on Flanagan. Trailhead is at the end of Flanagan. 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.
- February 17 Sunday Evening Hike**
Meet 4pm at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. (Strenuous, 5 MRT)
- February 21 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)
- February 23 Zuma Canyon**
Moderate 5 MRT hike down into Zuma Canyon. This hike is not within the jurisdiction of the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park district. Meet 8am near Donut Delite at the corner of Madera and Royal. Bring 2 - 3 qts. water and snack. Wear boots.
- February 24 Sunday Evening Hike**
Meet 4pm at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. (Strenuous, 5 MRT)
- February 28 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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