



Rancho Simi Trail Blazers

A Division of the Rancho Simi Foundation



Local Organization Donates Proceeds from Celtic Run to Simi Trail Blazers!

Long-time Trail Blazer members Randy and Sarita Shoemaker, owners of 805 Boot Camp, recently made a generous donation to the Trail Blazers.



The Shoemakers are the organizers of the local trail race called the Celtic Climb (formerly called the Love Run) and donated proceeds from the run to support the Trail Blazers and the Rancho Simi Recreation Parks Department. To see great pictures and to learn more about the event, go to the web page at www.805bootcamp.com/Celtic_Climb.html Thanks to the Shoemakers and 805 Boot Camp for their generosity and support!

RSTB CLUB MEETING

This month's club meeting will be at:
Sycamore Drive Community Center
1692 Sycamore Drive - Room B-1
April 20, 2011
7:00PM

California Trails Day Project

Hosted by Rancho Simi Trail Blazers
Help rehabilitate the North Ridge Trail in Simi Valley

Saturday, April 16, 2011
8:00 am - 12:00 pm

Tools provided for volunteers who sign up in advance
Details and volunteer sign up information.
www.simitrailblazers.com



Welcome, New Members!
Sally & Bill Grant



Upcoming Events

April 2nd - Wildflower Walk - Antelope Valley*

April 9th - Reyes Peak & Chorro Grande Shuttle*
8 miles- Moderate (900' elevation gain; 3,500' elevation loss)

April 16th - California Trails Day - North Ridge Trail
Registration Info - See pg. 5

April 20th - Club Meeting

April 23rd - Sulphur Mountain Road Recreation Trail Shuttle*
10 miles - Moderate (2,200' elevation loss)

April 30th - Towsley Canyon Loop*
6.5 MRT - Moderate (1670' elevation gain)

More information about these events can be found on Page 5 and on the Activities page at <http://simitrailblazers.com>

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



DEVIL'S SLIDE

In December of 1974, Jan Hinkston interviewed Mr. Joseph W. Bannon in Jamestown, California. Mr. Bannon's parents had operated a stone quarry near the foot of Devil's Slide on the Chatsworth side of the Santa Susana Pass for many years and had worked the old Dillon quarry north of the railroad and a few hundred feet east of Kuehner Drive in Simi Valley. The stone from that quarry was used in the construction of the old hotel in Santa Susana. During the Sylmar Earthquake that hotel was destroyed. The Bannons also operated the quarry where the baseball diamond is in the Santa Susana Park for the Southern Pacific Railroad Company. The interview shed some interesting light on several issues, one of which were his comments on stagecoaches on the Devil's Slide.

Devil's Slide was the most difficult portion of the old stagecoach route over Santa Susana Pass. According to Charles Outland, prior to its completion in 1861, it is likely that no wheeled vehicles had ever negotiated the pass. The stage line operated until 1875 over the pass. However, the route was continuously used until 1894, when the freight road was opened. Devil's Slide is a section of about one half mile or so that runs from the present day Chatsworth Park to the Lilac Lane area near the Ventura County line. The grade is very steep, and Devil's Slide provided the most memorable part of everyone's stagecoaching experience.

Mr. Bannon indicated that in his youth, "they" ran a few stages over the slide as a novelty. When asked if he took the ride, he indicated that he didn't - it was bad enough just walking it. Here is what else he had to say in his own words: "Going up they had big chains on them. They drug along back of the wheels so if they had to stop to rest the team or anything, the wheels would roll back against that and help

hold the thing because the brakes wouldn't do it. Then going down...they did what they called "wolf walking". They either chained the wheel to the brake rod or they would put a timber through between the spokes under the bed of the stage and through the spokes of the wheel on the other side and then turn it up to where it would lock against the stage and every hundred yards they would have to stop and change the position of that so it didn't wear the tire."

Mike Kuhn
11-12-04



CORN LILY (VERATRUM CALIFORNICUM)

At one of our club meetings the question arose as to the name of a plant shown in one of the Sierra backpacking pictures. The common name now in use is "corn lily" (*Veratrum californicum*). The plant is common to wet meadows of the Sierra Nevada below about 11,000 feet and some other areas such as the north Coast Ranges, much of the coniferous forest areas west of the Rocky Mountains and even some isolated mountain areas of Baja California. I indicated that the plant is edible. After the meeting Jim Riley correctly questioned me about the matter indicating his understanding that the plant is poisonous.

More than five decades ago I went through Survival School out of Stead Air Force Base. (I was an Explorer Scout at the time.) During our nine day survival outing we were told that the plant was edible.

As a consequence, I consumed several pounds of the boiled plant a day (the inner stems of young plants) and have eaten the plant on a number of occasions since. (This could explain a lot!). A Flora of California (Munz)

lists the genus *Veratrum* as poisonous to stock. The new Jepson Manual, indicates that the species californicum is poisonous to livestock and humans. Corn lily contains a toxin (2-deoxyjervine) that damages fetal sheep brain if the plant is eaten by a pregnant ewe at a critical point in the fetus's development.

This damage to the fetal brain prevents a normal birth and causes birth defects. Its effect on humans is unclear, although some Indian women used a tea made from the plant to prevent pregnancies. It is possible that some parts of the plant contain more toxins (and other alkaloids) than other parts. Cooking may also alter affect the toxins. I do know that neither I nor any of my survival school teammates suffered any ill effects that we were aware of after eating prodigious amounts day after day. (We were hungry.) In any case, the plant is best left alone.

The plant is sometimes called "skunk cabbage". According to the Jepson Manual, that name is incorrectly applied.

Mike Kuhn
(Date unknown)



March 5th 2011 - Sandstone Peak Loop (via the Mishe Mokwa Trail)



15 hikers (+ Heidi, a cute dog) met at the carpool point near the intersection of Royal Avenue and Madera Road on a pleasant morning and then traveled to the Mishe Mokwa trailhead at Triunfo Pass (2,100') in the Santa Monica Mountains via Hwy 23, Hwy 101, Hwy 23 (again), Mulholland Hwy, and Little Sycamore Canyon Road. The counterclockwise loop hike began on the Mishe Mokwa Trail (the name is from the Chippewa Indian legend of the mother bear, Mishe-Mokwa, and her two cubs who swim Lake Michigan for safety after a raging fire destroys their forest home in Wisconsin). The trail climbed quickly and then leveled out for a while before descending into Carlisle Canyon, providing excellent views of the reddish-colored Echo Cliffs (a long stretch of sheer vertical sandstone rock faces) against the green side of Boney Mountain and Balanced Rock, a huge house-sized boulder precariously balancing atop a smaller boulder. Two seasonal streams fed by recent rains provided a soothing accompaniment to the hike. We took a break at Split Rock where there's a thick mini-grove of shade trees overhanging a large broken boulder (Split Rock) and one deteriorating picnic table. We attempted to follow a rugged side trail to Balanced Rock, but being unsure of the route we eventually decided



to try again next time. As we resumed our hike, the trail climbed southward to a junction with the Backbone Trail (BBT) on a mesa affording great views

various peaks surrounding the area. We took the left (east) fork and continued along the BBT taking the short spur trail to Inspiration Point (~2,800') and a little later the spur trail to Sandstone Peak (3,111'), aka Mt. Allen, the highest peak in the Santa Monica Mountains. The peak is just a hunk of grayish-white rock, but it provides a stunning 360-degree view (depending on the air quality) of the ocean, the mountains, and the Oxnard Plain. Visibility was only fair on this day, but the temperature was perfect for mountain hiking. Returning to the BBT we continued eastward to a junction with a short connector trail which led us again to the Mishe Mokwa Trail; we descended to the parking lot having completed a refreshing 6.3-mile hike with ~1,500' of elevation gain.

March 19th 2011 - Work Party - Chumash Trail



The March 19 work party was done on the middle section of the Chumash Trail. Participants included 10 students from Santa Susana High School. They were: Xiao Peng, Sohil Bammi, Michael Gulino, Kathy Nguyen, Katei Ebert, Musrat Lasne, Apurva Govande, Nina Vo, Dannie Yuan, and Raahima Shoab. Trail Blazers included Bart Hibbs, Richard Bradley, Martin DeGoey, Alan Cueba, John Sabol, and Mike Kuhn. Thanks so much for your time and effort in improving and maintaining our trail.





RSTB Calendar April 2011



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2 Wildflower Walk Antelope Valley* 8 AM See Schedule
3 Rocky Peak Fire Road 5 PM See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> Mike McCrary	4	5 Las Llajas Canyon 6:30 PM See Schedule	6	7 Chumash Trail 6 PM See Schedule	8 <i>Happy Birthday</i> Louise Pomes	9 Reyes Peak & Chorro Grande Shuttle* 8 AM <i>Happy Birthday</i> Alex Margolin
10 Rocky Peak Fire Road 5 PM See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> Allison Cameron	11	12 Las Llajas Canyon 6:30 PM See Schedule	13	14 Chumash Trail 6 PM See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> Clifford Cameron	15 <i>Happy Birthday</i> John Sabol John D'Amico	16 Work Party North Ridge Trail 8 AM Registration Requested See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> Melanie Gnad
17 Rocky Peak Fire Road 5 PM See Schedule	18	19 Las Llajas Canyon 6:30 PM See Schedule	20 Club Meeting 7 PM See Page 1 for details	21 Chumash Trail 6 PM See Schedule	22	23 Sulphur Mountain Road Recreation Trail Shuttle* 8 AM See Schedule
24 Rocky Peak Fire Road 5 PM See Schedule 	25 <i>Happy Birthday</i> Cody Frank	26 Las Llajas Canyon 6:30 PM See Schedule	27 <i>Happy Birthday</i> Adelina Friedeborn	28 Chumash Trail 6 PM See Schedule	29	30 Towsley Canyon Loop* 8 AM See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> Sharon Hamilton



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Hiking Schedule



REGULARLY SCHEDULED HIKES

(Rain cancels – No hikes on holidays)

Sunday Evening - Rocky Peak Fire Road

Meet at **5 PM** at the Rocky Peak Fire Road trailhead. Take the Rocky Peak exit from the 118 Freeway. Meet at the north end of the bridge; don't park on the bridge. (Moderate to strenuous, depending on distance hiked. 4.8 MRT)

Tuesday Evening - Las Lajas Canyon

Meet at **6:30 PM** at the Evening Sky Drive trailhead. Directions: Take Hwy 118 to the Yosemite Ave exit; head north past McDonalds and the stop sign at Alamo Street; continue 0.85 mile north on Yosemite Ave to the stop sign at Evening Sky Drive; turn right (east) and drive 0.5 mile to the trailhead; park on either side of the street. (Easy-to-moderate depending on distance hiked, 3¾ MRT)

Thursday Evening - The Chumash Trail

Meet at **6 PM** at the 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 to strenuous, depending on distance hiked. 5.2 MRT)

APRIL HIKES AND ACTIVITIES

April 2nd - Wildflower Walk - Antelope Valley*

It's flower season again, and we'll be driving out to the Antelope Valley California Poppy Reserve SNR (State National Reserve) to check out the plant life and beautiful scenery. This will be an ALL-DAY event. Meet at the **118 & Stearns St. Park & Ride at 8AM**. Bring your camera, water and lunch. For more information about the Poppy Reserve, please see this website: http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=627. Note: A high-clearance vehicle is required to drive on the roads inside the reserve.

April 9th - Reyes Peak & Chorro Grande Shuttle*

8 miles one-way - Moderate (900' elevation gain and 3,500' elevation loss). We will hike from the east end of Pine Mountain Road to Reyes Peak and back, then hike to the top of the Chorro Grande Trail and descend it one-way to Hwy 33 northwest of Ojai. The first two miles are through a pine forest, passing the Chorro Spring campground at 1 mile. There are spectacular views to the south. Bring 2-3 quarts of water and lunch. Wear boots. Meet at **8AM** near Donut Delite at the corner of Madera Rd and Royal Ave.

April 16th - Work Party

North Ridge Trail – California Trail Days Project **NOTE: REGISTRATION REQUESTED**

Meet **8AM** at the North Ridge trailhead, on the northeast corner of Yosemite Avenue and Flanagan Drive. The plan is to repair erosion, cut back brush, and generally groom the trail. If you would like to join us, register by clicking on the California Trail Days link on the homepage at <http://simitrailblazers.com>, or go directly to this link: <http://simitrailblazers.com/activities/CTD/index.html>. Bring a hat, gloves, 2 quarts of water, and a snack, if desired. Tools will be provided.

April 23rd - Sulphur Mountain Road Recreation Trail Shuttle*

10 mile one-way shuttle - Moderate (2,200' elevation loss) This old county dirt road follows the 2,600-foot Sulphur Mountain ridgeline from Highway 33 in Casitas Springs to Highway 150 in the upper Ojai. For details, see www.simitrailblazers.com/activities/. Meet at **8AM** near Donut Delite at the corner of Madera and Royal. Bring 2 - 4 quarts of water and lunch. Wear boots.

April 30th - Towsley Canyon Loop*

6.5 MRT - Moderate (1670' elevation gain)

Incredible show of wildflowers, spectacular geological formations, rugged mountain views, tar pits, canyon narrows, frothy streambeds and more. Meet at **8AM at the 118 & Stearns St. Park & Ride**. Bring your camera, water and lunch. Wear boots. For more information, please check out website www.lamountains.com/parks.asp?parkid=10.

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



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. <http://www.simitrailblazers.com>

RANCHO SIMI TRAIL BLAZERS

A Division of the Rancho Simi Foundation

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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

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

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