



Rancho Simi Trail Blazers

A Division of the Rancho Simi Foundation



MAY WORK PARTY

Three Rancho Simi Trail Blazers turned out to do exotic plant removal in Corriganville Park for California Trail Days. 21 adult leaders of the Boy Scouts of America aided us. The BSA leaders were attending a two-day Out Door Education assembly in the park. The leaders wanted to do a community service project and our plant removal work was close to their campsites.

We started the day with a safety lecture, followed by cutting down dozens of Tree of Heaven saplings that grow near the creek just beyond the East End of the parking lot. These leaders went to work like a well-oiled machine. In 40 minutes they had the trees cut down, branches cut off and stacked ready for green waste pickup.

We then continued on to a patch of Giant Reed at the southeast end of the park. In another 15 minutes the majority of the Arundo had been cut and stacked.

Many thanks to the following workers:

Arlene Altshuler, Alan Cueba, John Sabol and BSA Outdoor Education Coordinator James Bartholomew and his group of BSA leaders.

JUNE WORK PARTY

The next work party will be Saturday June 16, on the upper section of the Chumash Trail. Meet at the Chumash trailhead on Flanagan Drive at 8:00 AM.

John Sabol



LAURIE PRINCE

CASTAC VALLEY AND LAKE

Southeast of the historic Fort Tejon is Castac Lake. Both Fort Tejon and Castac Lake are located in Castac Valley. The names "Castac" and Castaic" derive from the Chumash Indian village of *kastiq*. That village was located adjacent to the present lake. The name means "the eye, the face", or more specifically, it derives from *ka-s-tiq*, which means "it is its eye, face".

When first encountered by the Spanish, the current lake basin was a salt-grass flat. Since that time the Tejon Ranch operation has maintained a lake in the basin. The trail to the village of *kastiq* from the south was called the *kastiq* trail. As a result, the name became displaced to the southern end of the trail – to the Castaic area.

So Castac derives its name from the name of the Chumash Indian village, and Castaic derive their names from that of the trail to the village. (The source for the meaning of the name *kastiq* comes from Applegate [1974], pages 196 and 203.)

Mike Kuhn

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
June 20, 2007

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.



UPCOMING EVENTS

JUNE 16th

Work Party – Upper Chumash Trail
 Please see the schedule for more information.

JULY 6th – 9th

Onion Valley Backpack Trip
 Trailblazer members only. Please see the web site for more information.

AUGUST 16th – 19th

Dinkey Lakes Backpack Trip
 Trailblazer members only. Please see the web site for more information.

More information on these events can be found at
<http://simitrailblazers.com>

To make reservations, please email Mark Gilmore at
markinthepark@sbcglobal.net

TELEPHONES COME TO SIMI

Another excerpt from R.E. Harrington's *Early Days of Simi Valley* (1961), page 25:

"...In the year 1909 my father [i.e., R.A. Harrington] helped to start a local farm telephone company. I believe there were about four lines...There were several parties on each line. I remember our ring was two longs and one short ring. There were about twelve on our party line. 4 by 4 redwood lumber was used for posts and they were put too far apart so that when the east wind blew the wires were almost sure to get crossed. The central was in Mrs. Printz's colony house, the same house that the Post Office was in, and her three daughters helped her with both jobs."

These early telephone services came with problems. You picked up your telephone to make a call. If someone was on the line, you were supposed to hang up and try later. Some individuals would start dialing [rotary phones], thus interrupting the call in progress. Many were tempted to listen in on the conversations of others – and did. As today, some individuals liked to spend prolonged periods talking to friends – which meant that none of the other party line members could make or receive calls. Of course, it was possible to simply interrupt and let the talkers know that you had an emergency – social or otherwise. It is said that everyone "knew" everyone else's business. I can remember that where I lived in northern California we had four-party lines as late as the late-1940s and two-party lines into the 1950s. The party-line system drove my mother up the wall. Of course, her phone calls were always important. We children were admonished to make our calls short, because someone else might need to use the phone.

The Printz Colony House, like the others, was prefabricated in Chicago and then dismantled and shipped to California by rail. They were then carried by ship to Port Hueneme and brought up to Simi by wagon, where they were reassembled. The Printz Colony House is one of two remaining and is still located in Old Town Simi at its original location. As indicated by Mr. Harrington, it served as the first post office in Simi and the first telephone exchange in the valley. John Peabody Harrington, the now famous anthropologist, and R.E. Harrington's brother, was called to the Printz Colony House to receive the telephone call from the American Bureau of Ethnology offering him the position that he held for more than 50 years. That telephone call resulted in the preservation of much of what we know about north American Indians culture today – and it passed through the Printz Colony House.

Mike Kuhn



*California Newt found on the Danielson Memorial Hike
Photo by John Sabol*

ENVIRONMENTAL ALTERATION BY ANCESTRAL PUEBLOANS

On a trip to the Chimney Rock Archaeological Area in southwestern Colorado I was struck by what may have been environmental alteration by the Ancestral Puebloans. The Chimney Rock complex was occupied from about 1050 A.D. to 1125 A.D. The area is dominated by yellow pine forest with piñon pine/juniper forest along the stream bottomlands. What is interesting is that the piñon/juniper plant community seems to extend up slope to the highest archaeological settlement areas while surrounding areas of similar exposure, i.e., south facing slopes, and at the same elevations are dominated by yellow pine forests. Even distant islands of piñon/juniper forests that I could see, seemed to coincide with mapped Ancestral Puebloan settlements.

All Ancestral Puebloan structures were dependent upon long straight timbers for roofs and wall and roof supports. Neither piñon pine nor juniper trees can provide the needed long and straight support members. What is likely is that over the years of building and occupation, the nearest yellow pines in the area were cut down and used for building material. This practice resulted in nearly all of the yellow pine trees within 75-100 yards of the settlements being cut down.

At the same time, nuts of the piñon pine and the berries of the juniper trees were being harvested as food from the stream bottoms. Inevitably, some nuts and berries were dropped in the settlement while being transported and processed. In this way, it is possible that in and around each settlement a yellow pine forest was replaced by a piñon pine/juniper plant association.

While the yellow pine forest would normally shade out piñon pine and juniper trees, the logging of the yellow pines provided an opportunity for the piñon/juniper invasion of the disturbed and newly treeless environment. What is surprising is that this pattern is still discernible 900 years later. Or is it my imagination.

Mike Kuhn

TIBURCIO VASQUEZ AND LARRY'S MOUNTAIN STATION

The early days of Anglo-American settlement in Simi Valley were marked by an isolated existence with few other settlers, no post office, doctor, school, church, store, bank and only primitive lines of communication with the outside world. The first Anglo-American settlers came in the early 1870s. Mrs. Eva Crinklaw in 1929 recalled traveling through the valley in 1873. She indicated that the only trees were the oak forest at the eastern end of the valley and four old sycamore trees in the middle. (This recollection was from a traveler – not a resident. However, it may be a fairly apt description of the lack of trees on the valley floor.) She described the valley as “a vast sheep ranch”. Sheep have a way of creating rather bleak vistas. Added to this hard-scrabble life was the fear of bandits and horse thieves.

One description of a presumed near encounter with the bandit Tiburcio Vasquez and his merry men comes down to us from Mrs. D.D. DeNure. Her account appeared in “Legends and Lore of Long Ago” (1929), which was published by the Club Women of Ventura County. The tale is quoted in *Simi Valley: A Journey Through Time* (1997). The text is by Mrs. Patricia Havens, our City Historian. (If you don't own a copy of this wonderful volume, it is available at Borders Bookstore on Tapo Canyon Road, and at the Strathearn Historic Park. The book contains a photograph of Vasquez.) Vasquez now takes on the mantle of a Robin Hood type of character. He is described as “darkly handsome, whimsical, irresistible, and chivalrous towards women.” In reality, he terrorized everyone from San Francisco to San Diego over a 20-year career as an outlaw. Mothers invoked his name with their children as we still do with the mental image of the “big bad wolf”.

Mrs. DeNure and her family had just resettled at Hueneme, when she got word that her mother, who lived in Downey, was ill. Mrs. DeNure resolved to rush to her mother's side. Transportation was provided by an itinerant Methodist preacher, a Rev. Leach, who was going that way. The latest Vasquez raid had occurred at a ranch that was along their route, but Mrs. DeNure was determined to go anyway.

The first night they planned to stay at Larry Howard's Mountain Station at the western approach to the track over Santa Susana Pass. Larry Howard is remembered as a “jovial young Irishman”. As she recounts, she had stayed at Larry's Mountain Station before. Since they arrived late, they dared not attempt the traverse of the pass road, which was barely a one-wagon track, in the dark. Even during the daylight, it was an “E-ticket” ride. During the dark of night, it would be especially hazardous. While Larry Howard had always been especially hospitable with food and lodging, this night he said that his station would be fully engaged and they must, therefore, continue on. Mrs. DeNure pleaded that she and her baby were exhausted. Larry, however, was unyielding.

Finally, he agreed that they could camp in the yard and dug up some quilts and blanket.

“Toward midnight there was a loud clatter of hoofs on the lonely road, and a great band of horsemen galloped into the yard. With a mighty creaking of leather, clinking of spurs, laughter, oaths, and jests, they dismounted, tied their horses, and swarmed into the inn. Instantly it blazed with lights. More buzz of voices, the scraping of chairs, the clink of dishes, as Larry scurried about to serve midnight meat and drink at the long table. So this was why there was not room for us at Larry's. The inn had been commandeered by Vasquez”.

Stricken with the fear that they would be discovered and at any moment suffer who knows what at the hands of Vasquez and his party, the Rev. Leach and Mrs. DeNure hurriedly packed the wagon and hitched the horse to the wagon and, as silently as possible, rolled out of camp and over the pass. The hazard of attempting a crossing of the pass in the dark became secondary to the desire to avoid an encounter with the Vasquez gang!

Larry Howard had no choice about playing host to the Vasquez gang. There were no telephones, and any civil authorities were in Los Angeles and Ventura. Besides, any affective challenges of the Vasquez gang under these circumstances would have required a large well-armed posse or the U. S. Army.

The site of Larry's Mountain Station is located just west of the foot of the old freight road under eight to ten feet of water tunnel cuttings. Larry Howard died as a young man – however, not from being a bad host.

Mike Kuhn



Danielson Memorial Hike, left to right: Sam Billiot, Bill Cespedes, Margarita Marsh, Doug Marsh, and Rafael Zepeda.

Photo by John Sabol



RSTB Calendar

June 2007



| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|---|-----|---|--|---|---|---|
| | | | | 31 Yosemite Car Camping Trip See Schedule | 1 Yosemite Car Camping Trip See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> Madeline Hartley | 2 Yosemite Car Camping Trip See Schedule |
| 3 Yosemite Car Camping Trip See Schedule | | 5 Long Canyon 6:30pm hike See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> Robert Knapp | | 7 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule | | 9 Romero Canyon See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> Kurt Dahlgren |
| 10 Rocky Peak 5pm hike See Schedule | | 12 Long Canyon 6:30pm hike See Schedule | 13 <i>Happy Birthday</i> Carol Tucker | 14 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> Laurie Shonafelt | 15 Age 50+ Nature Talk Walking Tour See Schedule | 16 Upper Chumash Trail Work Party See Schedule |
| 17 Rocky Peak 5pm hike See Schedule | | 19 Long Canyon 6:30pm hike See Schedule | 20 RSTB Meeting See Page 1 | 21 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> Phil Ankrom | | 23 Sheep Camp See Schedule |
| 24 Rocky Peak 5pm hike See Schedule <i>Happy Birthday</i> Alan Hoff | | 26 Long Canyon 6:30pm hike See Schedule | | 28 Yosemite Hiking & Camping Trip | | 30 Trail Canyon – Tom Lucas Camp See Schedule |



Rancho Simi Trail Blazers

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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)

JUNE HIKES

May 31st - June 3rd - Yosemite Hiking & Camping Trip** - (Continued from May)

June 9th - Romero Canyon - Santa Barbara**

10.2 MRT figure eight loop - Moderate to Strenuous (2,275' elevation gain)

Beautiful and shady canyon with a small creek. Great views of the Channel Islands, Santa Barbara and the coast from Point Mugu to Goleta. Meet at 8 AM near Donut Delite at the corner of Madera and Royal. Bring 3 - 4 quarts of water, a snack and bug juice. Wear sturdy boots.

June 15th - Age 50 + Nature Talk Walking Tour - 9 AM - Chumash Trail

Discussion will be on plants, animals, and geology of Simi Valley. For location map call 50+ program coordinators at (805) 583-6059. You must register for this activity with the **Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District**. Your instructor is Mike Kuhn. Registration is free.

June 16th - Work Party - Chumash Upper Trail

Meet at the Chumash trailhead on Flanagan Drive at 8:00 AM. We will either carpool up the Rocky Peak Fire Road to access the upper trailhead, or walk up from the lower trailhead. Tools will be provided. Bring 2 - 3 quarts of water, hat, sunscreen, and gloves to work on the trail.

June 20th - Club Meeting

7 PM - The Community Center - 1692 Sycamore Drive - Room B-1

June 23rd - Sheep Camp Day Hike**

10.5 MRT - Moderate to Strenuous (elevation change from 8900' to 8250')

Great panoramic views from the Condor Observation Point, and beautiful scenery hiking through Jeffery Pines. Bring 2 to 3 quarts of water (and/or a water filter), and lunch. Wear boots. Meet at 8 AM near Donut Delite at the corner of Madera and Royal. An **Adventure Pass** is required at the trailhead parking lot. The drive is 1 1/2 hours each way.

June 30th - Trail Canyon - Tom Lucas Camp**

7 MRT - Moderate (1400' elevation gain)

Hikers on this San Gabriel Mountains hike are treated to a most beautiful waterfall. Be sure and bring some bug juice! An **Adventure Pass** is required at the trailhead parking lot. The drive is 1 1/2 hours each way. Meet at 8 AM near Donut Delight at the corner of Madera and Royal. Bring 2-4 quarts of water and lunch. Wear boots.

** 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>

LANCHO SIMI TRAIL BLAZERS

A Division of the Rancho Simi Foundation

| | | | |
|------------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|
| Executive Chair: | Mike Kuhn | HM (805) 583-2345 | hannahmike@roadrunner.com |
| Treasurer: | Peter Ely | HM (805) 523-1409 | |
| Park District Liaison: | Colleen Janssen | WK (805) 584-4453 | volunteers@rsrpd.us |
| Work Parties Chair: | | *** OPEN *** | |
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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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How did you find out about the RSTB _____

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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