



## Santa Susana Mountain Park Association

# APRIL 1997

A Non-Profit Organization, Inc'd. 1971

Volume 27, Number 3

### **OUR PAST & OUR FUTURE**

April's exciting General Meeting will begin at:

**7:00 p.m. Monday, April 7, 1997 Glendale Federal Bank, Community Room, 21821 Devonshire Street, Chatsworth (one block east of Topanga Canyon Blvd.).** Our program will begin at 7:30 with our first program presenter, Robert Pense, an archaeologist and a retired educator from Pierce College, who will speak on the Kaseway Indian Village dig, the Kuehner Drive Reservoir, Hummingbird Ranch and other research. This will be a great chance to gain knowledge of the science of archaeology and the insights from our esteemed guest. Knowing about our past is the best way to plan our future.

Our second special guest will be Joann Kerbavaz from San Diego, an agent for California Dept. of Parks and Recreation, who will be attending our meeting for the first time. Joann has been assigned to evaluate our park for permanent status. We will make some time available for her to speak and answer questions. She is soliciting our information and opinions, and answering our questions, on topics such as a name for our park, the goals for usage, its future expansion, etc.

**You won't want to miss this one!**

### **Jeff Johnston & the By-Laws Committee** (It's not a Rock Group)

As the By-Laws of SSMPA are not reflective of some of what our organization is now doing, and to prevent a recurrence of the animus of last month's meeting, a By-Laws Committee has been created by the President. Initially, Al Knight agreed to chair the committee, but unfortunately Al has found himself unable to serve. We are fortunate that Jeff Johnston has agreed to chair the Committee. Other volunteers from March's General Meeting are Dorian Keyser, Nancy Razanski, Bette Butler, Glenn Bailey, and Ted Dent. Other interested parties are welcome. The Committee requests input from all members on how the Association can best serve our goals and objectives. Please call one of our officers with your best ideas or drop a note to P.O. Box 4831, Chatsworth CA 91313-4831.

**We need your ideas!**

### **Quote for April**

*by Henry David Thoreau*

We can never have enough of nature... We need to witness our own limits transgressed, and some life pasturing freely where we never wander.

## FROM THE ARCHIVES

by Albert Knight, Vice-President, SSMPA; 3-18-97;

Sure, I've wanted to scream in frustration...a few times... in the process of helping to straighten out the SSMPA-FPSSM archives. And then, I would find a gem, sit down and read it, and promise myself that I would finish the rest of the boxes of material before the year 2000 (or so).

Let me tell you what my favorite find, so far, has been. It is a one page letter from Mr. Bob Edward to Mrs. Jan Hinkston. Edberg's letter is a copy of a translation (by Paul D. Nattan and published by the Ventura County Historical Society in 1962) from The Letters of Jose Senan, Order of Franciscan Missionaries. Friar Senan served for many years (1796-1823) at Mission San Buenaventura. One of Senan's interests was to determine what the shortest route between Mission San Buenaventura and Mission San Fernando was. I was delighted to read that in a letter from Senan to Governor Jose Joaquin de Arrillaga, dated April 27, 1804, Senan says:

*The distance between Mission San Fernando and Mission San Buenaventura by way of Santa Susana and Simi, is reckoned to be 22 leagues. We two Fathers of this Mission have traveled this same road to Camulus, and to the best of our knowledge and belief, the distance is the same as that to Simi. Even if it should be a trifle less, the difference would be counterbalanced -- or perhaps overbalanced -- by the fact that the road to Camulus is very bad. The opposite is true of the road to Simi, except for the Santa Susana grade, which is only a short stretch.*

This clear reference to "the Santa Susana grade, which is only a short stretch" obviously refers to the old Kasi'wey trail between the Simi and San Fernando Valleys. Much of this old route is preserved today in the State of California's Santa Susana Project area. This wonderful cultural resource continues to exist and be accessible to the public today, largely thanks to the preservation efforts, over the last quarter century, by the SSMPA and the FPSSM. I like to think that Senan would be pleased to know that the old Indian trails that he identified, and that he and his contemporaries no doubt used repeatedly, are still being utilized today.

## Reservoir's New Name Adds Nature Preserve

(from the Los Angeles Times, March 4, 1997 by Dade Hayes)

The Chatsworth Reservoir is now the Chatsworth Nature Preserve/Reservoir, according to City Councilman Hal Bernson. The move to change the name, initiated in December by Bernson to emphasize the area's value as a wildlife refuge, is effective immediately following recent approval of the city Department of Water and Power Commissioners. The City Council endorsed the name in January, but change required the DWP's final approval. The city-owned reservoir opened in 1913 but was closed for water storage in 1969 due to earthquake concerns. (ed. note: not quite accurate, drained in 1969 to increase storage and never refilled.) Bernson, whose district includes the reservoir, said the new name reflects the area's zoning status. "In an effort to assure the future of the reservoir as a park and nature preserve, free of any residential or commercial development, the name should be changed," Bernson wrote in December. Bernson's motion also lauded the space as "an important natural preserve for the residents of the San Fernando Valley. It provides the residents a place to experience and to observe nature in all its beauty. Furthermore, it is the home to a large population of natural flora and fauna, much of it indigenous to the Southwest. It is consistently used as an educational experience for Los Angeles schoolchildren. Environmental organizations frequent the preserve to conduct research and educate the public." (ed. note: We can be proud of all those individuals and groups who gave so much of their time and effort to achieve this milestone, despite such great odds. SSMPA has always been a supporter of this type of action and this area.)

**Our** apologies to those members who came to March's general meeting to hear Paula Elefante speak. We have received a gracious note from Ms. Elefante apologizing for not making it to the meeting because of a family emergency. We will attempt to reschedule her to speak to us at her earliest convenience.

# Stagecoach Trail Hikes

SSMPA hikes are conducted every Sunday, October - June (except fifth Sundays of the month & rain-outs are occasionally a problem) from the parking lot of Chatsworth Park South Recreation Building, which is located at the western terminus of Devonshire Street, about one mile west of Topanga Canyon Boulevard.

Hikers meet at 9:00 a.m. with the hike leader for the 4 mile (700 ft. gain) loop up the Stagecoach Trail, which is in the hills west of the park. Hikers are advised to bring water and a snack in hiker's back pack or hip pack. Lug sole shoes or sturdy, closed shoes are advised as is the wearing of a hat. All hike leaders are knowledgeable and experienced.

Barbara Coffman is the hike leader for the first Sundays of the month; Judy Garris on the second Sundays; Lindsay Wilhelm on the third Sundays; and Lee Baum on the fourth Sundays.

## Hikes Leaders, Train Now!

Every Sunday (except July-Sept. and fifth Sundays of the month) hike leaders take groups of approximately ten to thirty interested individuals, families, and groups on hikes on the Stagecoach Trail. The need for additional hike leaders to be trained is always there. If you would like to become one of the few, the proud, the hike leader, please call Barbara Coffman at 818-347-5603.

We're user-friendly!

## VISITORS CENTER

The Visitor Center is open to everyone, Sundays from noon until 3:00 p.m., October through June. The purpose of the Visitor Center is to help educate, inform, and inspire the public as to the special historical significance and the natural beauty of the area. The Visitor Center's Docents' duties include answering questions from the public, encouraging visitors to sign the guest list, and maintaining and securing the room. The Inspired Docents for the Visitors Center are:

- 1st Sunday of the Month Gretha Davis;
- 2nd Sunday of the Month Rodney Harding;
- 3rd Sunday of the Month Catherine Roy;
- 4th Sunday of the Month Irene Tonius;
- 5th Sunday of the Month Linda Stone;

For information, call Gretha at 818-340-4011

## Santa Susana Docents

The Santa Susana Docents provide Nature/History walks at Chatsworth Park South for elementary school children. On the walk, the children tour five stations, including a small display of local artifacts at the Visitors Center. This program has been very well received by hundreds of children, and hundreds more children could learn about the Santa Susana Mountains and the Simi Hills if ... if... we had a couple of more docents.

If you have a need to help others, have a couple of hours free on a regular basis, and want some really good times, this may be your great opportunity knocking. For more information on becoming a docent and joining the fun, sharing your love of nature with children, please call Pat at 818-998-5224 or Jan at 818-993-0508.



## Other Simi Hill/ Santa Susana Mountains Hikes

The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (SMMC) and Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority offer hikes on an irregular basis at Rocky Peak Park (SR118 at Chatsworth/Simi Valley border); Sage Ranch (118 or 101 to Topanga Canyon Blvd., West on Roscoe or Plummer to Valley Circle to Woolsey Canyon Road (Rocketdyne Road) to Black Canyon Road); Santa Clarita Woodlands/ Mentryville (I-5, Lyons, west to Pico Canyon, left at Y to end of road), and Towsley Canyon Park (I-5, Calgrove, west on The Old Road to Ed Davis Park, 1/2 mile to parking area by kiosk). These hikes are free. Please call Nancy at 310-589-3200, extension 126 for additional information and requirements.

**There are many hikes scheduled this month!**

## *SSMPA Executive Board*

Doreen Rusen, President (818-360-0894); Albert Knight, Vice President (818-252-3466); Theodore Dent, Secretary (818-882-4664); Susan Gerke, Treasurer (818-704-9304); Janice Hinkston, Founder (818-884-9610); Members-at-Large: Pauline Aue; (818-341-5872); Barbara Coffman (818-347-5603); Judy Garris (818-340-0469); Jeff Johnston (805-522-8662); Lindsay Wilhelm (818-348-9682)

## **Ever Heard of the Land & Water Conservation Fund?**

*by George Riipi*

Well, if not, you are not alone -- virtually no one knows that the Fund exists. It is virtually a secret. The Land and Water Conservation Fund is a federal law passed by Congress in 1964. The money in the Fund comes from royalties from oil and gas leases off the shores of the United States. In the past few years, the Fund has had \$900 million each and every year to spend on purchasing wild land in order to preserve the land in its natural state. That is the entire purpose of the Fund -- to buy land to preserve it. Unfortunately, more than 2/3 of the money in the past few years has been diverted to the the General Fund by Congress. One important way of correcting this terrible situation is by writing our United States Senators (Diane Feinstein and Barbara Boxer) at U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510, and tell them that you want all of the \$900 million spent for its mandated purpose to buy land in order to preserve it.

## **Report from Devil Canyon**

*by Judy Garris*

Twenty-one participants attended the March Explorer hike into Devil Canyon. We stream-hopped repeatedly between the cool canyon walls, often pausing to admire the intricately carved erosion or the Chalk Dudleya nestling out of reach on both sides. The path sometimes detoured around fallen trees as the canyon gradually widened, and we ascended about the stream into narrow oak woodlands. Poison oak threatened on all sides, but we were rewarded by vistas of bright green 'lawns' that the winter rains have nurtured between the oaks. We hiked back into grazing areas to visit the cows, but didn't see any this time. Instead, a palate of pink prickly phlox and purple lupines delighted our eyes, and yellow wallflowers smiled up at us with shiny petals.

## **Invitation to Explore - Sunday, April 27, 1997**

In this series of monthly hikes, we explore the beautiful, lush canyons of the Santa Susana Mountains. We will visit the narrow wildlife corridors that connect the Santa Susannas to the Santa Monica Mountains and explore the trails to the Rim of the Valley. This month, we will hike along a stream under the cool, shady trees of Mormon Canyon. For the hikers who braved the narrow paths of poison oak on our March hike, this canyon will be fun. It has wide paths and very little poison oak. Bring lunch, water, and sturdy shoes. Meet at 9:00 a.m. at Chatsworth Park South, in the rear parking lot, or at 9:30 a.m. under the 118 Freeway at Desoto Avenue for carpooling to the trailhead. Leaders Judy Garris and Rosemarie White. Call 818-340-0469 for more information.

## Phone List

California Parks & Recreation (general information) ----- 818-880-0350  
California Parks & Recreation EMERGENCY DISPATCH ---818-880-0365  
California State Parks Foundation ----- 415-258-9975  
Friends of California Parks (Laura Svendsgaard) ----- 800-300-7501  
Los Angeles City Councilman Hal Bernson (NR. office) ---- 818-886-5210  
Los Angeles City Park Headquarters (general information) --- 213-665-5188  
Los Angeles City Park Headquarters (Ranger dispatch) ----- 213-913-4147  
Congressman Howard P. "Buck" McKeon (S.F.V.) ----- 818-885-1032  
Congressman Howard P. "Buck" McKeon (San Clarita) ----- 805-254-2111  
Governor Pete Wilson ----- 213-897-0322  
State Senator Cathie Wright ----- 800-458-8500  
State Assemblyman Tom McClintock ----- 818-368-3838  
Frank M. Buda, Attorney At Law----- 818-999-9871  
William S. Abbey, Deputy Attorney Gen'l., State of CA ---- 213-897-2604  
Southern California Edison (general information) ----- 800-655-4555

## SSMPA Facts & Figures

Percent of waking hours an average child watches television each week:

25%

Percent of children who report TV viewing as their usual activity between school and dinner:

80%

Percent of our communities' children who will probably never forget a docent-led hike:

>99%

## Maps Available

For a map of the Rim of the Valley and public parkland, call the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy at 310-589-3200.

May Hikes! On May 3, Bob Muntz will conduct a Nature Hike. On May 4, Al Knight and Barbara Coffman will hold an Archaeology Hike.

## Address List

Donald W. Murphy, Director, Department of Parks and Recreation; Box 942896; Sacramento CA 94296-0001  
Governor Pete Wilson, State Capitol, Sacramento CA 95814  
Senator Cathie Wright (or your Senator), State Senate, Sacramento CA 95814  
Assembly Tom McClintock (or your assemblyperson), State Assembly, Sacramento, CA 95814

# SANTA SUSANA MOUNTAIN PARK ASSOCIATION

*We Invite You To Join/Renew/Rejoin S.S.M.P.A.*

Investing in the future of our communities and its resources is probably one of the best expenditures of our time and efforts. Please return this cutoff with your contributions. Please mail checks payable to SSMPA. and mail to:

**SSMPA, P.O. Box 4831, Chatsworth, CA 91313-4831**

\_\_\_\_\_ Senior or Student (\$5.00) \_\_\_\_\_ Individual (\$10.00) \_\_\_\_\_ Family (\$15.00)

\_\_\_\_\_ Business or Organization (\$25.00) \_\_\_\_\_ Life Member (\$100.00)

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY/STATE/ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

CALENDAR

**APRIL**

1997

April 6 (Sunday) Hike with Barbara Coffman; meet at Chatsworth Park South - 9:00 a.m.

April 7 (Monday) General Membership Meeting (see article on page one)

April 13 (Sunday) Hike with Judy Garris; meet at Chatsworth Park South - 9:00 a.m.

April 20 (Sunday) Hike with Lindsay Wilhelm; meet at Chatsworth Park South - 9:00 a.m.

April 21 (Monday) Exec. Board Meeting - Glendale Federal Bank - 7:00 p.m.

April 27 (Sunday) Hike with Lee Baum; meet at Chatsworth Park South - 9:00 a.m.

**LANDS COMMITTEE - Al Knight, Dorian Keyser, Judy Garris, Al Gooley, Susan Gerke -- and YOU?**

We have established a "Lands Committee" to work for acquisitions of open spaces and parklands in the Santa Susanas, Simi Hills, and Chatsworth. Our immediate goal is to influence public agencies to utilize funds from LA County 1996 Proposition A and LA City Proposition K to purchase lands in the Santa Susanas, Simi Hills, and Chatsworth for parks and open spaces while money from these sources is still available. Our long term goals are to create a knowledgeable team who have become very familiar with the intimate details of properties in the above areas and to work for their acquisition by public agencies. We will create a data bank of documents, maps, photographs, and evaluation of potential acquisitions. Some of the criteria that we will use are: preventing trash dumps in Devil and Browns Canyons; preserving wildlife corridors and eliminating bottle necks; determining wildlife habitats; water resources such as springs; ecological significance; biological, archeological, and geographical resources; historical significance; trails; preserving viewscapes; size of property and the cost to acquire it; if the owner is a willing seller; topography, etc.

All of those who are interested in helping should contact one of the above.

*Poem for April*

The Wilderness by *Gerard Manley Hopkins*

What would the world be, once bereft  
Of wet and wildness? Let them be left,  
O let them be left, wildness and wet;  
Long live the weeds and the wilderness yet.

**NOTICE!**

This newsletter, like SSMPA and the world, provides something for everyone. For those people who feel a need to find others' mistakes, the editor has kindly provided some. And this being April 1st, the editor wants to tell you that the word "gullible" is not in the dictionary. Look it up.

Fdn. for the Preservation of the Santa Susana Mtns.  
Box 4831  
Chatsworth, CA 91313-4831

Non-Profit Organization

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