



# Santa Susana Mountain Park Association

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## **Park Designation! We Can See It Now!** by Nancy Razanski, President, FPSSM

On December 31, 1997, I was pleased to receive in my mail the important State Parks and Recreation hearing notice, which pertains to our Santa Susana Mountain Park Project's upgrade in status to either a state park or a state historic park. Furthermore, at this time, an official name will be given to our new park.

This joyous event will take place on :  
Tuesday, January 27, 1998  
8:30 a.m.  
Valencia Hilton Gardens Inn  
27710 , The Old Road,  
Valencia, CA.

A tour of our property will occur on the previous day, Monday, January 26. All the good rain we've been recently getting will make our hills nice and green for this important occasion.

Copies of the Resource Summaries are locally available for review at the Dept. of Parks and Recreation Angeles District at 1925 Las Virgenes Road, Calabasas, and also at the Topanga Sector at 1501 Will Rogers State Park Road in Pacific Palisades.

Oral and written statements will be presented at this public hearing. For further information, contact: Lorraine Lima at 916-653-0524 or the Dept. of Parks and Recreation, P.O. Box 942896, Sacramento CA 94296-0001.

## **General Membership Meeting**

The General Membership Meetings are held on the third Monday of the month at 7:00 p.m. at Glendale Federal Bank's Community Room, 21821 Devonshire Street, Chatsworth (one block east of Topanga Canyon Boulevard).

Our next two meetings will be held on January 19, 1998 and February 19, 1998. Meeting notification cards will be mailed to members informing them of the details of the meeting. Please come early. Our program starts promptly at 7:30 p.m. At the last two meetings, all of the chairs were occupied by 7:30.

## **NOTICE!**

Members are needed now to run for the Executive Board of the SSMPA. The election will be held at the April 1998 General Membership Meeting. The officers of the Association are President, Vice-President, Recording Secretary, Corresponding Secretary, and Treasurer, plus five Members-At-Large. Term of office is one year. The responsibilities include attendance at two meetings per month, for approximately two hours, each. Benefits include the chance to be involved in the trusteeship of our heritage. Call Nomination Chair Al Knight for more information at 818-252-3466.

## **SSMPA CANDIDATES STATEMENT FORM**

by - Albert Knight - 1998 Nominations Committee Chairperson

In order to introduce and/or present our 1998 candidates to the SSMPA General Membership, the SSMPA Nominations Committee requests that all candidates (not including candidates nominated from the floor on the night of the actual elections) file a CANDIDATE STATEMENT.

The CANDIDATE STATEMENT can be as brief, or as lengthy, as the candidate, or the person(s) nominating the candidate, wish.

The CANDIDATE STATEMENT should include (at least) the following information:

- 1) The name of the candidate.
- 2) Brief statements on any SSMPA activities that the candidate has participated in (Board of Directors, Committees, Documents, regular attendance and familiarity with issues of concern, etc.).
- 3) Brief personal biographical or background information (incl. involvement with other environmental groups and/or organizations, educational level, personal interests, etc.).
- 4) Some sort of a statement directed towards the SSMPA voters: Just why should we vote for you, and not for another candidate?

As stated above, the CANDIDATES STATEMENT can be filed with any member of the Nominations Committee (i. e. Al Knight, Ted Dent, Pauline Aue, Barbara Coffman and Susan Gerke) any time up to and including the night of the elections (at the March General Meeting). However, please note that the Nominations Committee intends to publish (in the SSMPA Newsletter), or other wise make available to the general membership, copies of all CANDIDATES STATEMENTS. In order to due this in good time, it is highly suggested that CANDIDATES STATEMENTS be provided to the Nominations Committee NO LATER than 1 February 1998. Inquiries and questions concerning this process may be addressed to any member of the Nominations Committee, either in writing or by phone.

## **Annual Election of FPSSM Officers**

The Foundation for the Preservation of the Santa Susana Mountains will hold its annual election for Board of Directors at its Tuesday, February 24, 1998 meeting at 7:30 p.m. in the Santa Susana Visitor Center. The tentative slate is as follows:

### **President**

Nancy Razanski

### **Vice President**

Janet Lazik

### **Recording Secretary**

Gretha Davis

### **Treasurer**

Pauline Aue

### **Corresponding Secretary**

Lisa Nicholson

### **SFV Area Chair**

Judy Garris

### **Simi Valley Area Chair**

Pearl Turbush

### **Santa Clarita Area Chair**

George Riippi

### **Members-At-Large**

Joe Meagher, Lindsay Wilhelm

Nominations will also be taken from the floor. Also, anyone wishing to serve in an above office please call Nancy Razanski at 818-341-3512.

## **Archives**

Much of SSMPA's archives are available at:

CSUN Urban Archives Center  
Oviatt Library, Room 4  
18111 Nordhoff Street  
Northridge CA 91330-8326,  
or by phone: Robert Marshall,  
Archivist at 818-677-2832.

## FROM THE ARCHIVES

by Albert Knight

Most residents of Southern California have heard of, have seen, and/or have had the opportunity to visit Vasquez Rocks- a Los Angeles County Park. Vasquez Rocks is located in central Los Angeles County, north of the Antelope Valley Freeway (much of the park can be seen from the freeway). The ancient rock formations and the modern park are named for a somewhat unsavory person - one Tiburcio Vasquez- a "Highway man" (as they used to be known), who became infamous during the early years of the American Period in California. Vasquez and his gang were known to use the rock formations as one of their hideouts....hence the name. However, during the 1860s and 1870s, Vasquez and his men also frequented the Santa Susana Pass area....both to prey on the passing stagecoaches and other travelers, and as a place for their rest and recreation.

A short article entitled "A Brief History of Simi Valley", by Janet Cameron, retells a story about Mr. Vasquez. The story comes down to us from a Mrs. D. D. DeNure, who was a little girl in 1874, the year the events in the story take place. Mrs. DeNure told the story to Mr. Bud Taylor (in 1927) and Mr. Taylor passed the story on to Mrs. Cameron. The scene of the action was Larry's Station- a stage-stop at the foot of the Simi Valley side of the Old Stagecoach Road. Here is the tale- I have changed the wording and punctuation only a little....to make the reading a bit easier.

"Dusk had fallen when we reached Larry's, the stage coach station of Santa Susana. The little house nestled cozily against the mountain, great oaks spreading their branches over it. Nearby were the rambling white washed barns, for here the stages changed to fresh horses. How restful, how welcoming it looked- all green and white in the twilight.

Larry was a jovial young Irishman. He always welcomed us hospitably when we halted here over night. But tonight Larry did not welcome us. The place, he told us, was engaged. Desperately we pleaded with him. Larry was sympathetic, embarrassed, but unyielding. When we refused to follow his advice and journey on, he hunted up some extra blankets for us, and there was nothing to do but pitch our camp in the inn-yard.

Toward midnight there was a loud clatter of hoofs in the lonely road, and a great band of horsemen galloped into the yard. With a mighty creaking of leather, clinking of spurs, laughter, oaths, jests, they dismounted, tied their horses and swarmed into the inn. Instantly it was ablaze with light. More buzzes of voices as Larry scurried about to serve meat and drink at the long table.

So this was why there was no room for us at Larry's.... Vasquez and his men had commandeered the inn!!! Quickly we arose and with a whip urged the old horse over the rocky trail.....up, up, the steep grade we careened..... But we escaped Vasquez....."

As we can tell from the telling, Santa Susana Pass was another "Vasquez Rocks"!!!

### **Wear Some Pride!**

Have you been wishing you could find (and buy) our very special T-shirt which features Chumash rock art? These are attractive black shirts with red artwork, and we just received new shipment in a variety of adult sizes. You can buy as many as you like at our general meetings. (Or call Susan at 818-704-9304.) All proceeds go for the preservation of the Santa Susanas

### **Web Sites**

Santa Susana Mountain Park Association

<http://home.LACN.org/LACN/ssmpa/>

Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy

<http://www.ceres.ca.gov/smmc>

## **Visitors Center**

The Visitors Center is open to everyone on Sundays from noon until 3:00 p.m., October through June. The purpose of the Visitors Center is to help educate, inform, and inspire the public as to the special historical significance and the natural beauty of the area. The Visitors Center Docents' duties include answering questions from the public, encouraging visitors to sign the guest book, and maintaining and securing the room. The following inspired docents now lead our program: 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 on how you can make an impact on others, call Gretha at 818-340-4011.

## **ARE YOU A MEMBER OF THE SIERRA CLUB?**

The Santa Susana Mountain Park Association (SSMPA) works closely with the Sierra Club in the joint goals of preserving parks and open spaces. The Santa Susana Mountain Task Force (SSMTF) is the liaison between these two organizations. The task force meets once or twice a year as needed and lists hikes for SSMPA in the Sierra Clubs activities Schedule. Members of the task force voice the concerns of Santa Susana Mountain Park Association at important Sierra Club meetings. Presently the SSMTF has only a few members. If you are a Sierra Club member and are interested in preserving the open spaces of the Santa Susanas, we need you. Your commitment can be as little as attending yearly meetings or if you can contribute more time, attending occasional Sierra Club committee meetings. With more visibility and exposure, a stronger voice may help to preserve our open space. ("Where are the Santa Susanas?" I often hear.). Please give us a call and attend our membership potluck. Contact Dorian Keyser at 818-345-3795 or Judy Garris at 818-340-0469.

## **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 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 your great opportunity knocking. For more information on becoming a docent and joining the fun of sharing your love of nature with children, please call Pat at 818-998-5224 or Jan at 818-993-0508.

## **Check Out Our Web Page!**

Recently, our Corresponding Secretary, Pat Levin, and our Recording Secretary, Ted Dent, (and other officers) met with Barry Tavlin of L.A. Bridge (an Internet Service provider) and discussed the possibilities of SSMPA getting a presence on the Web. Barry offered us the opportunity of participating in a free "Web Raising". Pat & Theodore spent two days at Puente Learning Center in Boyle Heights learning how to create a Home Page. The training was hosted by Los Angeles. Culture Net (LACN), a part of the Getty Center. LACN also agreed to host our site! So you can check out our Web site (in progress) at:

<http://home.LACN.org/LACN/ssmpa/>

## **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 four-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.

## **Other Santa Susana Mountain/Simi Hills Hikes**

The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy and Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority offer hikes on an irregular basis at Rocky Peak Park (SR 118 at Chatsworth Simi Valley line); Sage Ranch (SR 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 the kiosk). These hikes are free. Please call Nancy at 310-589-3200, ext. 126 for additional information and requirements. There are many hikes scheduled every month.

## **More Hikes**

Rancho Simi Trail Blazers offers a comprehensive hike schedule, including strenuous five-mile hikes on Sunday evenings at 5:00 from Rocky Peak trailhead. For information call, Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District at 805-584-4400.

## **Invitation to Explore**

Santa Susana Mountains Task Force (SSMTF) and SSMPA conduct hikes In the Santa Susana Mountains and the Simi Hills. The Invitation to Explore series this month on January 25th will take us through Mormon Canyon to Limekiln Canyon. Join us at 9:00 a.m. at the north end of Tampa Blvd. We will make a car shuttle to the trailhead in Brown's Canyon. This is an easy social paced walk to see the streams, wildlife and flora between the winter rainstorms. The 4 1/2-mile hike will be lead by Judy Garris with Rosemarie White assisting. Bring snack and water. Rain date will be the following Sunday. Call 818-346-7654 or 818-769-1521 for more information.

On Sunday, February 22, we will hike Hummingbird Creek. Meet at Kuehner Drive, north of the 118 Freeway in Simi Valley at 9 a.m.

[You will soon be able to also check our Web site for a listing of hikes and other activities.]

## SSMPA Executive Board

Pauline Aue	Member-At-Large	818-341-5872
Barbara Coffman	Member-At-Large	818-347-5603
Theodore Dent	Recording Secretary	818-882-4664
Judy Garris	Member-At-Large	818-346-7654
Susan Gerke	Treasurer	818-704-9304
Jeff Johnston	Member-At-Large	805-522-8662
Albert Knight	Vice President	818-252-3466
Patricia Levin	Corresponding Secretary	818-998-5224
Doreen Rusen	President	818-360-0894
Lindsay Wilhelm	Member-At-Large	818-348-9682



## Phone List

*man*  
Assemblywoman Tom McClintock - 818-368-3838  
California State Parks Department (general information) - 818-880-0350  
California State Parks Foundation - 415-258-9975  
Congressman Howard P. "Buck" McKeon (San Fernando Valley) - 818-885-1032  
Congressman Howard P. "Buck" McKeon (San Clarita) - 805-254-2111  
Frank M. Buda, Attorney At Law - 818-999-9871  
Friends of California Parks (Laura Svendsgaard) - 800-300-7501  
Governor Pete Wilson - 213-897-0322  
Los Angeles City Park Headquarters (general information) - 213-665-5188  
Los Angeles City Park Headquarters (Ranger dispatch) - 213-913-4147  
Southern California Edison (general information) - 800-655-4555  
State Senator Cathie Wright - 800-458-8500  
William S. Abbey, Deputy Attorney General - 213-897-2604

## Address List

Department of Parks and Recreation, Box 942896, Sacramento CA 94296-0001  
Pete Wilson, State Capitol, Sacramento, CA 95814  
Cathie Wright (or your Senator), State Senate, Sacramento CA 95814  
Tom McClintock (or your Assemblyperson), State Assembly, Sacramento CA 95814

## Hike 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 these fine individuals, please call Barbara Coffman at 818-347-5603. Your heart will thank you.

## Devil Canyon

by Judy Garris

On Sunday, December 21st, nine students of Van Nuys High School and two of their parents hiked with an SSMPA/SSMTF hike leader and learned the secrets between the Santa Susana Mountains- the canyons and their importance in the movement of wildlife through the choke-points. We hiked Devil Canyon up to the dam and the turnoff to Ybarra Canyon.

The year round stream after rising from the rains had receded leaving etched patterns in the sand blurring and altering our trail. We cross clear deep pools with muddy banks and navigate the storm debris of broken tree limbs. The gooseberries are not yet blooming in the cool canyon bottom. The poison oak was removed from the trail edges early last summer and on the only plant we saw, the leaves were barely budding on the deep orange switches.

## CALENDAR

January 18 (Sun.) Weekly Hike; meet at Chatsworth Park South - 9:00 a.m.  
January 19 (Mon.) General Membership Meeting, Glendale Fed. - 7:00 p.m.  
January 25 (Sun.) Weekly Hike; meet at Chatsworth Park South - 9:00 a.m.  
February 1 (Sun.) Weekly Hike; meet at Chatsworth Park South - 9:00 a.m.  
February 2 (Mon.) Executive Board Meeting, Visitors Center, Chats.Pk.S.  
February 4 (Wed.) Deadline for articles for the February Newsletter  
February 8 (Sun.) Weekly Hike; meet at Chatsworth Park South - 9:00 a.m.  
February 15 (Sun.) Weekly Hike; meet at Chatsworth Park South - 9:00 a.m.  
February 16 (Mon.) General Membership Meeting, Glendale Fed. - 7:00 p.m.



## 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 to help ensure our futures. Please make checks payable to SSMPA and send to 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: \_\_\_\_\_

SPECIAL INTEREST/EXPERTISE: \_\_\_\_\_

## THE OLD STAGECOACH TRAIL FACT SHEET, Part 1

by Albert Knight, Vice-President SSMPA

Some of the most important historic sites in Southern California can be found in and near the community of Chatsworth-in the northwestern-most part of the City of Los Angeles, California. Chatsworth is the location of the State of California Department of Parks and Recreation Santa Susana Mountain Project. The project area hosts important prehistoric and historic archaeological sites, parts of the important Santa Susana Mountains/Simi Hills wildlife corridor, and thousands of acres of beautiful Chatsworth Formation sandstone outcrops. Much of the adjacent open space is owned by the City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks, for a total open space/public park acreage of well over a mile square. The best known historic feature in the SSM Project area is the Cuesta Vieja - for a time the route of "The Great Southern Overland Mail of Butterfield and Company" stage, which (in our area) connected the San Fernando Valley (i. e. Los Angeles and points east and south) and the Simi Valley (i. e. Ventura, Santa Barbara and points north). This ancient foot, horse, and then stage route generally followed the old Kasi'wey Indian trail between the two valleys. Part of the San Fernando Valley side of the route was so steep that passengers had to get out and walk, and an extra team of horses was needed to pull the stage up the last half-mile. This steepest section is still called the "Devil's Slide", and those who have walked it know why! During the Civil War, it was part of the main north-south route in southwestern California. Today the Old Stagecoach Road (El Camino de Santa Susana y Simi) is a modern hiking trail and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and as a Los Angeles City Cultural/Historical Monument (#92).

(Part 2, next month)

Foundation for the Preservation of the  
Santa Susana Mountains  
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Chatsworth CA 91313-4831

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