

Santa Susana Mountain Park Association

Volume 30, Issue 19

A Non-Profit 501(c)(4) Organization
Incorporated August 31, 1971

April 2002 Newsletter

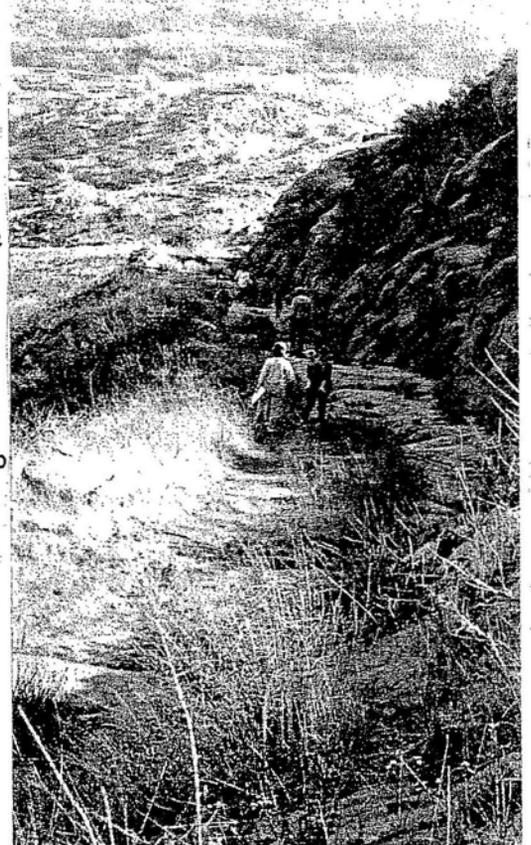
Devil's Slide

In December of 1974, Jan Hinkston interviewed Joseph W. Bannon in Jamestown, CA. Mr. Bannon's parents had operated a stone quarry near the foot of Devil's Slide on the Chatsworth side for many years, had worked the old Dillon Quarry north of the railroad and a few hundred feet east of Kuehner Drive (the stone for the old hotel in Santa Susana that was destroyed by the 1971 Sylmar earthquake came from the Dillon quarry and was delivered by the Bannons), and operated the quarry where the baseball diamond is in the Santa Susana Knolls Park for the Southern Pacific Railroad Co. The interview sheds some interesting light on several issues, one of which are his comments on stagecoaches on the Devil's Slide. Mike Kuhn of Simi Valley contributed this interview:

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 Santa Susana Pass. However, the route was continuously used until 1894, then 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." ★



Devil's Slide - looking east toward Chatsworth

General Membership Meeting

Monday, April 15, 2002

Come to the general meeting and discover what the evening will bring forward to increase our knowledge and entertain us, too!

SSMPA General Membership Program meetings take place every 3rd Monday of the months during the months of September through November and January through May. Program meetings begin at 7:15 p.m. and generally conclude by 9:00 p.m. The venue is the Rockpointe Clubhouse, 22300 Devonshire, Chatsworth, on the south side, 1 block before entering Chatsworth Park South.

Members are invited to attend General Membership Program meetings and Board of Directors meetings. Board of Directors meetings take place at the Chatsworth Park South Visitors Center on the first Monday of the month. Refreshments are served at program meetings. ♠

We Get Letters.....

To the SSMPA Board of Directors:

As a member of SSMPA I receive monthly newsletters, which are thoroughly enjoyed and appreciated.

I hike the Stagecoach Trail every week and also the surrounding areas, but I'm distressed at the proliferation of Latin gang "13" graffiti on boulders, rocks and trees, and never an article in our newsletters about this terrible problem.

State park action is slow in coming. A graffiti removal outfit must be contracted for regularly scheduled removal.

Our beautiful park is being destroyed as we look for other park acquisitions to donate money to.

JTS

Chatsworth

P.S. I am sure there are other members who pick up trash and remove some graffiti, but the problem is now out of hand.

Editor's Note: This is a challenging problem in our parks. I made a zillion phone calls to find the best referral numbers to (1) report this crime and (2) request graffiti removal. Here's what I found:

If you see taggers in action, call (877) ASK-LAPD to have an officer dispatched. To report graffiti and request removal, call the West Valley Alliance, (818) 227-9722, a City-funded operation that responds quickly to remove graffiti west of the 405 Fwy. Operation Clean Sweep at (800) 611-2489 said their turn-around time is 2-3 days to remove graffiti in a city park. They will ask for the location (which is tricky when you're dealing with boulders without street names), so pinpoint and report the place as best you can. If you do not see results within 3 days of your call, follow up by contacting the LA Park Ranger's office at (323) 913-4688 between 6:30 am and 3:30 pm. Also, the Graffiti Hot line at (800) 675-4357 will refer you to the correct jurisdiction and provide you with that phone number.

To report graffiti in the Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park, one can call the State Park Ranger Dispatch at (909) 443-2940, but I was told the ranger on duty would probably not be able to get to our park in a reasonable time. Due to staffing considerations, no graffiti removal program has been set up for the State Park. I was told that they would like to see volunteers create a graffiti-busters program. Any volunteers? Call (818) 704-9304.

You may have noticed that the graffiti is disappearing from Stoney Point (thank you, West Valley Alliance!). This work is being done with dry ice and sand blasting. On April 27th, "Beautification Day", through a Global Outreach with the LA Church of Christ, West Valley Alliance, and county and city workers, graffiti will be similarly removed from Chatsworth Park North, Limekiln Canyon and more from Stoney Point. Also, Metrolink will have workers removing graffiti from the railroad tunnel above Chatsworth Park South. There will be more of these "Beautification Days" in the future, as the rest of Chatsworth Park South is sorely in need of help. ☺

Dear Editor:

I recently read my March 2002 SSMPA newsletter, and especially enjoyed re-reading "Reflections of Jan Hinkston, Founder of the SSMPA." I am one of the many people who miss Jan and her enthusiasm, and it felt good to "hear her voice" again, even if it was only in writing.

I wish to comment on one particular statement that Jan made in the LA Times interview: "Chatsworth has a village site and they destroyed two-thirds of it when they put that 118 Freeway in. They destroyed it without even investigating what was there, and that is a crime." To begin with, Chatsworth is blessed because it has two of the last extant Native American villages in the San Fernando Valley. One, the lesser known, is located in Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park. A Native American village site, early historic remains, a Civil War era road, turn of the 19th-20th Century sites, and a fabulous natural environment all exist in close proximity to each other. The site(s) that Jan refers to is (are) mostly south of the 118 Freeway and east of Topanga Cyn. Blvd. Although there are, or were, dozens of sites in the area, almost all are in some way related to a permanent village site that was centered in what is now the Chatsworth Academy, and the immediately adjacent neighborhood. Many other sites are situated around the mounts of Devil's Cyn. and Brown's Cyn., which flow southward and into the valley, just to the east of the Academy). Although it is true that a large part of the outskirts of the village area was destroyed when the 118 Freeway was built, the most important parts of the village were either entirely untouched (by the Freeway), or were at least examined and recorded by archaeologists, before construction began.

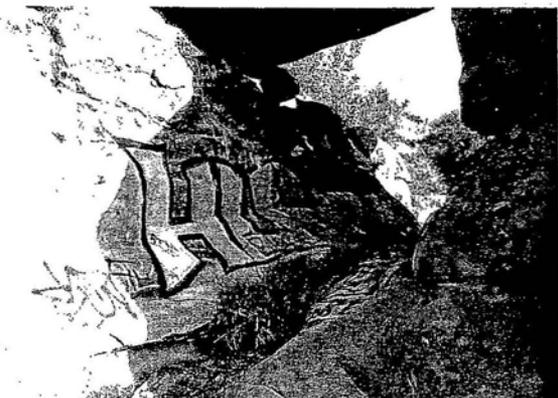
However, the most important part of the village was south of the freeway (the village was called Momonga). The main components of the village itself were archaeologically tested before the expansion of Chatsworth Academy (during the '70s). After being sampled, the site, the most of which was left untouched, was capped with clean fill soil. Bedrock mortar outcrops, and what was once one of the most important pictograph sites in the San Fernando Valley, were incorporated into the landscaping and all new buildings were built on the clean fill soil. Unfortunately, some of the most interesting parts of the village complex, the Mourning Ceremony component (a very important religious site), and the cemetery component, were destroyed when the local neighborhood, just south of the main part of the academy, was built (but only after thorough archaeological excavation).

Today, numerous, mostly small archaeological sites are still found both north and south of the 118 Freeway, and isolated artifacts are still occasionally found throughout "upland" Chatsworth.

Best regards,

Albert Knight, Archeologist

Board of Directors, SFV Historical Society



Eagles Nest

The public hearing to determine the fate of the Eagles Nest project is scheduled (again) for **Thursday, April 18th, 4:30 p.m. at the Airtel Plaza Hotel, 7277 Valjean Avenue, Van Nuys, CA** (directions: take Sherman Way to Van Nuys Airport, turn north on Valjean, look for hotel on the left). Interested parties are strongly urged to attend this important hearing. Decision makers, to help make their judgment call, now have the 1986 EIR on the adjacent 90-acre Tone Yee property AND an Addendum dated February 2002, because this property requires the same primary access as the Eagles Nest development, namely, the extension of Andora Avenue. Call (818) 704-9304 for further information.

Deer Lake Ranch

The office of our LA County Supervisor Mike Antonovich has been paying a lot of attention to monitoring the progression of this development project, working closely with the developer to use caution in proceeding with preliminary work and to inform nearby residents of any activities, such as when equipment is brought in or soil tests are done in the area. A meeting was set up for Monday, April 1st between the developer and residents and Chatsworth groups to give an update on the changes that the developer made in the plan since the public hearing before the County Commission.

Needed: more study of the EIR for inconsistencies and inaccuracies, more letters about: the exclusion of certain wildlife from the EIR: fox, owls, mountain lions, egrets, the rare tarantula; use of land for profit; density still being too high for area; need for equestrian properties instead, bad plan to allow urban runoff into creekbed, etc. Contact Anna Cox at (818) 882-2924.

A public hearing was held on April 10th. The County Commissioners took a field trip to view the property and adjoining areas on April 5th.

Ahmanson Ranch

The recently released Ahmanson Ranch Supplemental EIR is available online from the County of Ventura at http://www.ventura.org/vcrma/planning/Ahmanson_eir/ahmanson_eir.htm. Supporters of saving Ahmanson Ranch can review the SEIR and submit their comments to be part of the public record. Comments should be sent to dennis.hawkins@mail.co.ventura.ca.us, or <mailto:dennis.hawkins@mail.co.ventura.ca.us>.

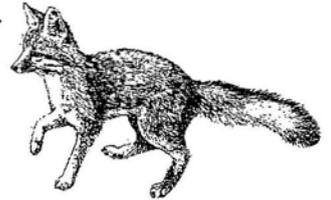
Opponents of the project state Washington Mutual is spending big money to lobby the regulatory groups that will review the SEIR. The frog and flower have survived in this area precisely because it is undeveloped. The odds are against the long-term survival of these species if the development proceeds. Regarding traffic, opponents make these claims: The SEIR has ignored the traffic impacts of the Ahmanson Ranch development. Victory Blvd. will be connected to Thousand Oaks Blvd. Surface street traffic in the west San Fernando Valley will be worse than now. Widening the 101 Freeway will be extremely difficult as there is no additional right of way. The best solution is for Washington Mutual to give up this project and make the land available for purchase as a State or National Park.

Former SSMPA Board member, Theodore Dent adds:

The area now known as Ahmanson was developed over thousands of eons. Washington Mutual's plans require the movement of people from adequate housing to slightly better housing to make billions of dollars for WaMu's investors. This is not reason enough to destroy the natural space so sparse but necessary for an acceptable quality of life for the people in the San Fernando Valley and surrounding areas. The ramifications of crowding more people into an already highly compacted area would be a downturn in the quality of life for everybody.

Washington Mutual can show its greed by continuing to promote this highly controversial plan. They can show their humanity by providing homes for the homeless and nearly homeless by upgrading existing inadequate housing in areas where housing has already displaced natural space. Surely, a trade of open space for substandard housing can be developed and completed so everybody wins.

This is logical.



VISIT "EARTH FESTIVAL 2002"

This largest-ever Earth Day celebration in 2002 in the Los Angeles area will be held at beautiful Lake Balboa in the heart of the San Fernando Valley on Earth Day weekend, Sat. Apr. 4 and Sun. Apr. 5 11 am to 6 pm. It's being produced by Whole Foods Market, Whole Earth Productions, the International Earth Day Network, The Environmental Media Association, Earth Communications Office, LA Weekly, KPCC Public Radio, LA DWP, private partners and others.

The theme, "Protect Our Home - Protect Our Future," is the overarching message informing us that there are specific actions that we can take today to help improve the local and global environment. Those actions include: 1) Choose Organic Products; 2) Sign Up for Clean Power; 3) Drive Cleaner Mileage Smart Cars; 4) Use Compact Fluorescent Bulbs; and 5) Join an Environmental Group.

The event will be an informative, admission-free two-day festival featuring diverse music, arts and healthy food and drink. It will focus on themes of environmental responsibility and sustainability, global awareness, and community involvement. World-class musical talent including Richard Thompson, Michael Franti, & Michelle Shocked will perform. Hands on activities for children and adults, informative workshops, advanced environmental technology demonstrations, and much more will be presented. Approximately 30,000 are expected over the weekend. Jean-Michel Cousteau will be a keynote speaker.

Location: Lake Balboa, 6300 Balboa Boulevard, Van Nuys, 1 mile North of the Ventura Freeway, 1 mile west of the San Diego Freeway. Take the 101 to the Balboa Blvd exit heading North, go one block past Burbank to the entrance of the park. For more information, visit <http://www.wholeearthfestival.net> or call 310.455.0156.

Annual Election for SSMPA Board of Directors

The Board of Directors held a meeting at the March 18th program meeting and scheduled the annual election for the SSMPA Board of Directors to take place at the May 20th membership meeting. This will allow us time to fill our slate of candidates for our 10-member Board of Directors and to send out ballots so that members can vote by mail if they desire. So far, the following persons have become candidates:

Jan Miller for President

Diana Dixon Davis for Treasurer

Susan Gerke for Member-at-Large

Sandra Johnson for Member-at-Large

Dorian Keyser for Vice President

Patty Miller for Recording Secretary

Judy Garris for Member-at-Large

Holly Huff for Member-at-Large

There are openings for two additional candidates for our board. Please contact Dorian Keyser at (818) 345-3795 or Judy Garris at (818) 346-7654 if you are interested in becoming a candidate, or if you have a recommendation for a possible candidate.

Volunteer Opportunities!

Do you enjoy working with displays and exhibits? Join us for our spring spruce-up of our Visitors Center at Chatsworth Park South for our event on April 28th - In Honor of the Oak. Also, we could use some temporary filing assistance. Call Judy @ (818) 346-7654 for more info.

Do You Have a Computer to Donate?

We need a computer in order to continue creating the SSMPA newsletter. If anyone knows of someone who is planning to replace their system and would like to donate their old, in-good-working-order computer to SSMPA, please ask them to leave a message at (818) 704-9304.

If a computer is not found this way, the cost of a new or used computer will be submitted at the next Board meeting for review. Note: per our by-laws, purchases that exceed \$250 will be brought before the general membership for approval.

Submitted by Dorian Keyser, SSMPA Vice President



IN HONOR OF THE OAK TREE

A Special Event

The Santa Susana Mountain Park Association is going to have a very special and grand Open House at our Visitors Center on Sunday, April 28th at Chatsworth Park South from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. In celebration of Earth Day, we decided to take the opportunity to also celebrate one of our prized resources in the Valley: **The Oak Tree!**

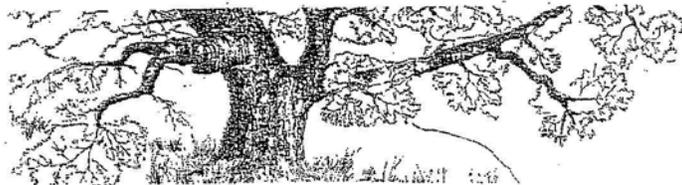
Come see the special oak tree exhibits we've prepared. We'll also be giving a hands-on demonstration of acorn grinding and methods of preparation. You will even have a chance to taste some acorn bread!

The Visitors Center exhibits will be refreshed and interesting. Our famous rock art T-shirts and special books on oak trees will be available for a donation, and there will be some baby oak trees to take home and plant.

At 10:00 that morning, the Chatsworth Historical Society's Garden Festival opens at the Minnie Palmer Acre in the park. Enjoy the festival, then walk over to the Visitors Center in the Recreation Building, located at the far end of the driveway, next to the parking lot.

Join us for fun and a learning experience for all ages!

Directions: From Topanga Canyon Blvd., turn west on Devonshire, drive to the end, then into Chatsworth Park South.



Foundation for the Preservation of the Santa Susana Mountains (FPSSM)

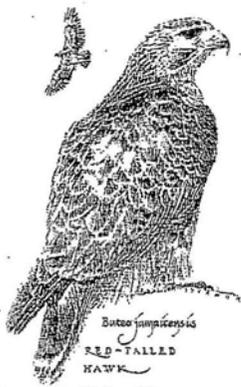
We proudly present our new Board for 2002-2003:

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. President: | Pearl Turbush | 7. Simi Valley Area Chair: | Janet Lazik |
| 2. Vice President: | Nancy Razanski | 8. Santa Clarita Area Chair: | George Riippi |
| 3. Recording Secretary: | Gretha Davis | 9. Member-at-Large: | Andrea De Young |
| 4. Treasurer: | Chuck Turbush | 10. Member-at-Large: | Hal Lovett |
| 5. Corresponding Secretary: | Cheryl Rietveld | 11. Founder: | Janice Ruth Hinkston |
| 6. SFV Area Chair: | Jon Lauritzen | | |

The FPSSM is pleased to have nominated Pearl Turbush as its candidate for Citizen of the Year at the Chatsworth Community Coordinating Council Banquet which will take place on May 17, 2002. We also elected Cheryl Rietveld to receive a Community Service award. Both members will receive a free dinner, courtesy of the FPSSM, as a token of our esteem for their fine volunteer efforts on behalf of the FPSSM and its goals and activities.

The FPSSM serves as a booster club for the Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park by pledging a minimum of \$500 per year to our park through contingency fund grants to our Angeles District California Dept. of Parks and Recreation. We also support efforts to preserve our wildlife corridor and for getting a culvert built under Topanga Canyon Blvd. to serve as a safe crossing for wildlife, equestrians and pedestrians. Donations to the FPSSM are tax deductible. Checks can be addressed to: **Foundation for the Preservation of the Santa Susana Mountains, P.O. Box 4831, Chatsworth, CA 91313-4831.**

*Submitted by Nancy Razanski, Vice President
Tel. No. (818) 341-3512*



UPCOMING HIKES

Hikers: Wear lugsoles & hat. Bring water, sunscreen and snack or lunch. Serious rain cancels.

Sierra Club Hikes

Sat. 4/20 Dayton Canyon Hike: Easy-paced 3 mi, 400' gain hike to rock shelter overlooking Chatsworth Nature Preserve. Meet 9 am at gate. From Topanga Cyn Blvd, turn west onto Roscoe, proceed to Valley Circle Blvd, cross intersection and park. Do not park in front of gate. Ldrs: Judy Garris (818) 346-7654, Bob Galletly (818) 885-1920.

Sun. 4/21 Stagecoach Trail Hike: Interpretative hike into history in our Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park. Meet at 9 am for a 4 mi (700' gain) loop up the Stagecoach Trail. From Topanga Cyn Blvd, turn west on Devonshire and drive into Chatsworth Pk South to the 2nd parking lot by the Rec Bldg. Ldr: Lee Baum (818) 341-1850.

Weds. 4/24 Mission Peak Moonlight Conditioning Hike: Moderate 5 mi, 1200' gain to view lights of San Fernando Valley. Meet 7 pm at trailhead (take 405 Fwy to 118 Fwy, west to Balboa, north 2 mi to Sesnon, west 1 mi to Neon Way, right to end of street). Leaders: Casey Bialas (661) 251-4619, Henry Schultz (661) 284-5613.

Thurs. 4/25 Rocky Peak Hike: Moderate paced 7 mi, 1200' gain. Meet 8:30 am at trailhead (follow 118 Fwy 1 mi west of Topanga Cyn Blvd exit, take Rocky Peak offramp and park on either side of overpass. Ldrs: Ants and Virve Leps (818) 993-7689.

Sat. 5/11 Mormon Canyon: Easy to moderate paced 5 mi, 650' gain. Meet at 8:30 am at north end of Tampa Ave (at Sesnon Blvd in Porter Ranch for rideshare into Brown's Cyn). Ldrs: Judy Garris (818) 346-7654, Bob Galletly (818) 885-1920.

Rancho Simi Trail Blazers Hikes

Every Thursday Chumash Trail: Moderate paced 5 mi, approximately 1000' gain. Meet at 6 pm at 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.

Every Sunday Rocky Peak Trail: Strenuous, 5 mi, approximately 1000' gain. Meet at 5 pm at trailhead. Directions - take 118 Fwy to Rocky Peak exit. Trailhead is North of Fwy.

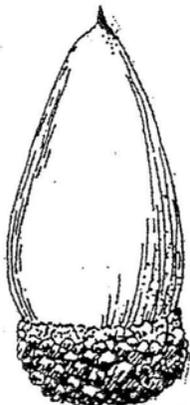
For more information on hikes contact the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District at (805) 584-4400.

Thank you for renewing your membership to SSMPA: Jeffrey Burkhart, Kimberly Sodek, Robert Lisenby, Diane & David Schwartz, Anna Combs, Georganna Beuerman, George Banks, Wendy Brunell, Rhonda Scott, Pat Jump, Don & Evelyn Heim, Henry & Maryanne Lonnie, William & Cheryl Rietveld and Sandra Johnson. Welcome to our new members: Virginia Redler, Dr. Charles Litman, Deborah Ash, Greg Dubiel, Alisa & Todd Jardine, Jeff & Grace Taylor, the Stone family, Deborah Ash and Tony Paciolla.



SANTA SUSANA MOUNTAIN PARK ASSOCIATION

WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN / RENEW / REJOIN S.S.M.P.A. (Please circle one.)



valley oak

Investing in the future of our communities and its resources is probably one of the best expenditures of our time and efforts. Return this cutoff with your contributions to help ensure our futures. Please make checks payable to SSMPA and send 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: _____ Fax: _____

City/State/Zip Code: _____ Email: _____

Special Interest/Expertise: _____

The purposes of the Santa Susana Mountain Park Association are the protection, preservation, restoration, and enhancement of the Santa Susana Mountains and Simi Hills as open space lands and wildlife corridors linking the Los Padres National Forest and San Gabriel Mountains, including the Angeles National Forest, to the Santa Monica Mountains; as habitats for plants and animals native to the Santa Susana Mountains and the Simi Hills; as locales of unique geologic formations; as sites of ethnological, archaeological and historical interests; to provide passive recreational opportunities and environmental education opportunities; and, to support the acquisition of new public parks, open space and conservation easements, the expansion of existing parks, participate in the planning of park infrastructure and programs, and support said programs. To find out how you can volunteer for SSMPA, call Judy Garris, President, at 818-346-7654 or Susan Gerke, Newsletter Editor, at 818-704-9304.

 **Mark your calendar**  

SSMPA BOARD MEETINGS

@ Chatsworth Park South Visitors Center:

Monday, May 6, 2002, 7:30 p.m.

Monday, June 3, 2002, 7:30 p.m.

SSMPA PROGRAM MEETINGS

@ Rockpointe Clubhouse:

Monday, April 15, 2002, 7:15 p.m.

Monday, May 20, 2002, 7:15 p.m.

About this newsletter: If you have comments or would like to submit an article for publication in this newsletter, write to SSMPA, Attn: Newsletter Editor, P.O. Box 4831, Chatsworth, CA 91313-4831.

Susan Gerke, Editor

Please note the renewal date on your label and send in your dues  if you wish to continue your SSMPA membership and receive the newsletter. If you are current with your dues, kindly disregard this notice. If you are a Life Member, we thank you and invite your continued support with periodic donations to help meet our production and mailing expenses.



Santa Susana Mountain Park Association &
Foundation for the Preservation of the Santa Susana Mountains
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