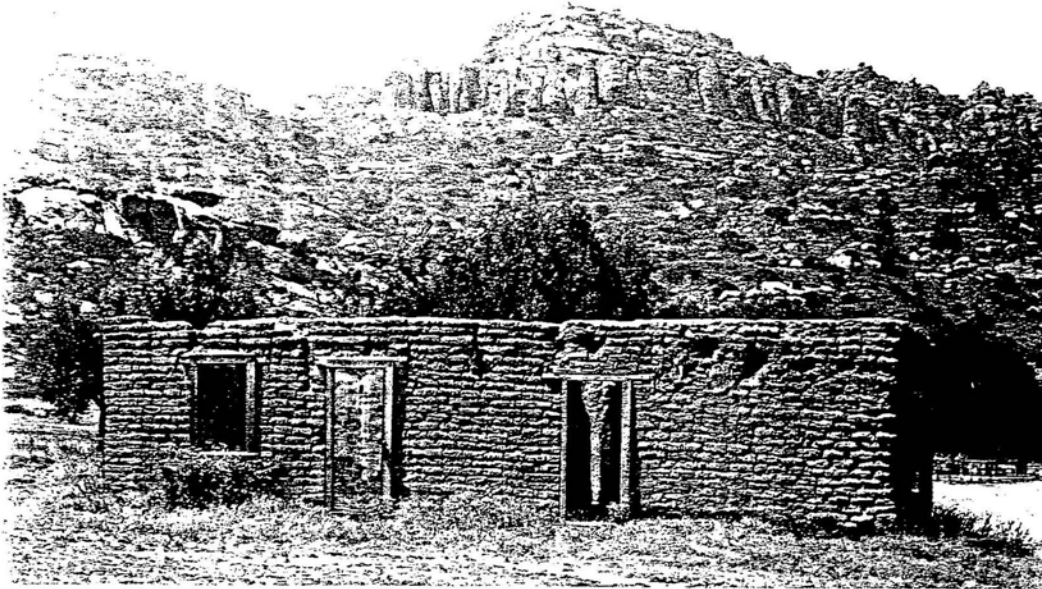


## March 2006 Newsletter



These adobe ruins once stood near the Chatsworth Reservoir area and perhaps are similar to the de la Ossa relay station.

### The de la Ossa Relay Station

Hunt through most early Los Angeles history books and chances are the name de la Ossa will not be found. Yet this family was one of the first to settle in the San Fernando Valley, to run a stagecoach stop at "El Cino" (Encino), and later run a relay station in Chatsworth between 1867-1877. Vincente de la Ossa's wife, Rita, survived her husband by more than 50 years and ran the Encino stop after his death. The de la Ossa family, a part of it at least, is reported to have moved to the Chatsworth area near the Devil's Slide in what is now the Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park, where they ran a stage relay station for stage coach travel. The Daughters of the American Revolution in their local history, record the family as the earliest settlers in the western part of the valley.

Part of the mystery surrounding the de la Ossa family in Chatsworth comes from historical records of the period which go no further than establishing a "Mountain Station" in the vicinity. There is no clear proof yet that the de la Ossa family - namely Rita and adopted daughter Mary Aiken - were at the station referred to as the "Mountain Station" in Quinn's Historical & Biographical Record, 1907, and Bancroft's Guide for Travelers by Rail, Stage, and Steam Navigation, 1869-1874." From some existing records, the "Mountain Station" might have been "Larry's Station", located on the Simi side, which operated during 1868 and later. However, there is other evidence that the "Mountain Station" was the de la Ossa relay station on the Chatsworth side below the Devil's Slide. Florence Webster, a local historian and authoress, many years ago conducted a taped interview with the late Mary Aiken, when Mary was 87 years of age. Ysidora Lechliden, one of the offspring of Vincente and Rita de la Ossa, was present at that interview. Both of them heard the story

[continued on next page]

#### **SSMPA General Membership Meeting Monday, March 20, 2006**

Virginia Watson, a 50-year resident of Chatsworth, is one of the founders of the Chatsworth Historical Society. She has amassed a substantial collection of slides covering many decades of history and will be giving us a wonderful show! Here is a sampling: pictures of the castle in England that inspired the name of Chatsworth, early Native Americans and pioneers such as the Johnson and the Hill families, the early village, and all the way up to Chatsworth's 100th birthday party! We feel honored to have Virginia share her knowledge with us. Please plan to come, and invite your friends, too.

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



Rita de la Ossa

[continued from previous page]

of "La Cuesta" (roughly translated, "the hill"), the relay station at the base of the Devil's Slide, where Mary and her adopted mother Rita de la Ossa lived and kept the station. Minnie Palmer, one of the last living pioneers of Chatsworth, recalls playing in the Devil's Slide area as a child. She also believes the relay station -- or a station where horses were changed after coming down the steep Devil's Slide grade -- was there.

Considering the foreboding Devil's Slide as well as the treacherous west side of the Santa Susana Pass, it is feasible that a well-equipped station existed on both sides for passengers and repairs.

Two foundations presently remain on the site, one of them up on a slope, and another a little bit to the southeast. The SSMPA believes the upper foundation with a large cistern near at hand is the de la Ossa relay station site. Clinkers, the remains of burned coal, have been uncovered at this upper site, suggesting that a forge was there. However, as the Bannon quarry and household later used that site, further investigation would be needed to determine the foundation's true origin.



### Candidate for Ventura County Supervisor Seat Tours Local Neighborhood

James Dantona, candidate for Ventura County Supervisor, and Gary Selvaggio, California Neighborhood Union, met with interested residents of Box Canyon and Chatsworth Lake Manor on Sunday, February 19<sup>th</sup>, to view land alterations in and around those areas. Mr. Dantona is running for the seat currently held by Ms. Judy Mikels. Mr. Selvaggio belongs to a group known as CalUnion, which is actively supporting Mr. Dantona's election effort. CalUnion is also actively supporting Linda Parks' re-election campaign.



### Chatsworth Trails Park

On Sunday, February 26<sup>th</sup>, **Save Chatsworth, Inc.** hosted a walk-through of the 13-acre Conservancy park that has been unofficially named "Chatsworth Trails Park". About 20 community members took a tour of the park area, listening to a presentation of the preliminary plans and ideas for restoration of the park's accessible areas, and then gave their own input and advice. In advance of this field trip, native landscape design professional Madena Asbell of L.A. Native Design toured the site and marked examples of native plants to leave alone, and weeds and invasive non-natives which could be removed.

The project plan is to maintain a natural park area used primarily by hikers and equestrians, and the initial work will consist of trash removal and some weed and brush clearance, in preparation for planting of additional California native plants next fall and winter.

The first work weekend took place Saturday & Sunday, March 11-12. The next one will be Saturday & Sunday, April 8-9.

*Editor's Note: This is a great opportunity for neighbors and friends to come together and enjoy each other's company, and do a good thing for the community at the same time! For more information regarding this worthy project, contact Vanessa Watters at (818) 341-4554.*

### Over the Hedge

An upcoming Dreamworks film is all about animals (possum, raccoon, skunk) who discover that a housing development is being built over the hedge -- and fight for their families and lives. Bruce Willis, Garry Shandling and Wanda Sykes do the voices. Watch for this animated feature film that is about wildlife corridors and preserving habitat.

Check out the trailer at this website:  
[http://www.apple.com/trailers/dreamworks/overthehedge/oth\\_lrg.html](http://www.apple.com/trailers/dreamworks/overthehedge/oth_lrg.html)



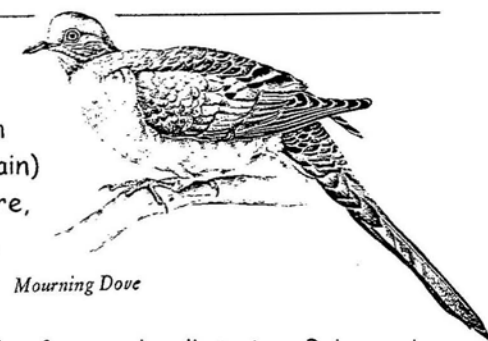
## HIKES

**Sun., 3/19: Stagecoach Trail - 9:00 a.m.** Interpretative hike into history in our Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park. Meet at 9:00 am for a 4 mi (700' gain) loop up the Stage Coach Trail. From Topanga Canyon Blvd., turn W on Devonshire, drive into Chatsworth Park S to the 2nd parking lot. Wear long pants, lugsoles, bring water & snack. Rain cancels. Ldr: Lee Baum (818) 341-1850.

**Tues., 3/28: Top of Reseda - 8:30 a.m.** Moderate 4-6 mi easy pace.

Take 101 Fwy, exit Reseda Blvd., S to top. Pay \$3 fee or park below white line for free and walk to top. Bring water, lunch, lugsoles, hat, sunscreen. Rain cancels. Ldrs: Pixie Klemic & Steve Rudolph. Asst: Ramona Dunn.

**Thurs., 4/6: Ahmanson Ranch - 8:00 a.m.** Moderate hike, 8 mi, 800' gain. Enjoy regrowth after fire in newly acquired Santa Monica Mtns Conservancy land of oaks and rolling hills. Meet at Victory Blvd. trailhead (from 101 Fwy W, exit Valley Circle Blvd N 2 mi, L(W) on Ventura Blvd. 1/2 mi to end, street side parking or \$3 to park in lot). Bring 2 qts. water, lunch, lugsoles, hat, sunscreen. Rain cancels. Ldr: Nancy Krupa. Assts: Lee Baum, Pixie Klemic.



Mourning Dove

All participants on Sierra Club outings are required to sign a standard liability waiver. You can read the liability waiver before you chose to participate on an outing at: <http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/chapter/forms/>, or contact Outings Dept. at (415) 977-5528 for a printed version.

Foundation for the Preservation of the Santa Susana Mountains  
**Help Save Our Local Natural Areas**

on

**Saturday, April 29, 2006**

at

**Casa de Carlos**

**20549 Devonshire St. (corner of Mason)  
(818) 993-1534**



- Join us at Casa de Carlos from 5:30-6:30 p.m. for a "Meet & Greet" social hour
- Buy your own drinks
- Stay for a wonderful Mexican buffet dinner, including dessert, at \$18.95 per adult, \$8.50 for children under 10 years old. Dinner starts at 6:30 p.m.
- Casa de Carlos will give a percentage to FPSSM

If you have any questions, please call:

- Pearl Turbush, President of FPSSM (661) 242-5506
- Nancy Razanski, Vice President of FPSSM (818) 341-3512

**RSVP by April 15, 2006**  
**Make checks payable to FPSSM**  
**Mail to P.O. Box 4831, Chatsworth, CA 91313-4831**

***Thank you, Casa de Carlos, for your generous support!***

FPSSM is a 501(c)(3) organization. If you are unable to attend this fundraising event and would like to give a tax-deductible donation, we would greatly appreciate it!

**Thank you for renewing your SSMPA**

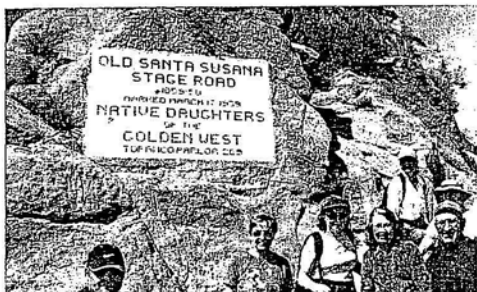
**membership:** Carl Wilkening, Josh Einhorn, Mo Shannon & Family, Ed Embree, Barbara Lilley, Willis & Melba Simms, Leon & Shirley Brown.

**Welcome new members:** Norma & Edgar Garbert.

**Thank you for your generous donation:** Linda & Andre Vander Valk.

**SSMPA BOARD OF DIRECTORS - 2005**

Jan Miller, President  
Teena Takata, Vice President  
Diana Dixon-Davis, Treasurer  
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Susan Gerke, Corresponding Secretary  
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Todd Doherty, Member at Large  
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Warren Stone, Member at Large



**Santa Susana Mountain Park Association**

invites you to **JOIN / RENEW** (circle one).

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 contribution lend your support. Make your check payable to SSMPA and send to SSMPA, P.O. Box 4831, Chatsworth, CA 91313-4831.

- Senior or Student ((\$10.00)     Individual (\$15.00)     Family (\$20.00)  
 Life Member (\$150.00)     Business / Organization (\$30.00)

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Street Address:** \_\_\_\_\_ **E-mail:** \_\_\_\_\_

**City / State / Zip:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Special Interest / Expertise:** \_\_\_\_\_

# LOCAL EVENTS

**Tuesday, March 21, 2006 7 p.m. THEODORE PAYNE: HOW HE SAVED AND IS STILL SAVING OUR CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANTS.**

Elizabeth Pomeroy of the Sierra Club will present this program to explain how the work of Theodore Payne (1872-1963), a pioneer in preserving native California plants, is being carried on today. Monthly Sierra Club meeting. Reseda Park Rec Hall, 18411 Victory Blvd.

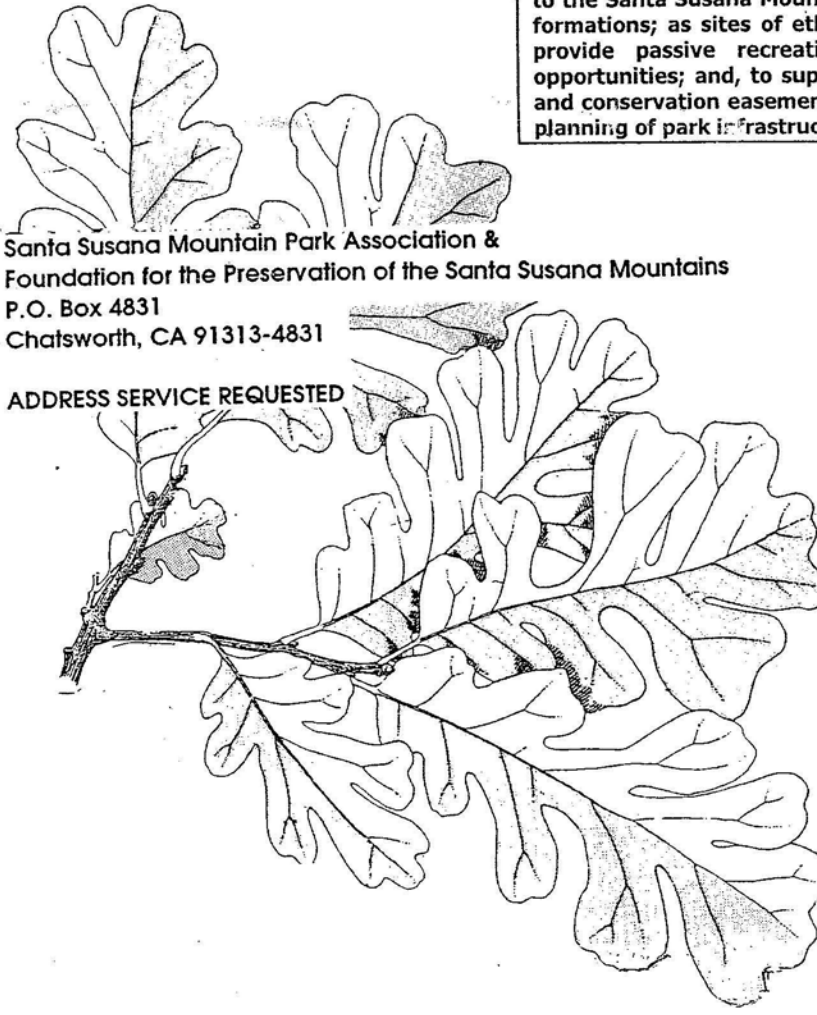
**Sunday, April 2, 2006 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. CELEBRATION IN HONOR OF EARTH DAY in the CHATSWORTH NATURE PRESERVE**

Take a docent-led tour around the ecology lake to view native plants and various species of birds that inhabit the area. Picnic under 500 year-old oak trees and hear the history of the decommissioned Reservoir of 1919, which is now reclaimed by Mother Nature. Bring blankets to sit on, snacks and water. Sun-block is recommended. Please be aware that everything needs to be packed out so that the area is protected for the beings who live there. Walk-in entrance gate on Valley Circle; From 101 Freeway west, take Topanga Blvd. N. to Plummer and turn W, 1 mile to gate. Parking is on south side of street. For more information, contact Rosemarie White at (818) 769-1521.

**Saturday, April 8, 2006 10 a.m. "MONTANA JIM" COLE**, and the Los Angeles Zoo Conservation Staff team up with the National Sierra Club and Angeles Chapter Endangered Species and Wildlife Committee to present an exciting **RECOUNTING OF THE LIVES OF GRIZZLIES**, with Jim autographing his new book of photos from Montana and Wyoming. Conservation experts from the zoo will explain how endangered species are saved through new technology and scientific procedures, and we will get a chance to meet them all! See the new auditorium and plaza, where information tables are set up and exciting conversations take place! Location: The new auditorium of the Los Angeles Zoo, on Zoo Drive in Griffith Park. For information and reservations, call Rosemarie White at (818) 769-1521. This event is free.

**Sunday, April 23rd 9:30 AM to 4:00 PM PIERCE COLLEGE ANNUAL FARMWALK.** Featuring lots of animals, sheep shearing, wool spinning, a Clydesdale horse, live music, cow milking, petting zoo, live bee displays, exotic animal shows, horse activities, hands-on activities, firefighters with their fire engines, BBQ @ reasonable prices, nature canyon walks, agriculture & animal science class information, etc. Fun for toddlers through active seniors. Only physical assistance dogs permitted due to livestock. Bring sunscreen, sunglasses, hats & cameras. Contact Vicki Michaelson @ (818) 710-4253. Pierce College, 6201 Winnetka, Woodland Hills, Victory/Mason entrance, free parking. \$5.00 donation per adult / Children under 12 play free! Website: PIERCECOLLEGE.EDU Scroll to 'NEWS @ PIERCE COLLEGE'.

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.



Santa Susana Mountain Park Association &  
Foundation for the Preservation of the Santa Susana Mountains  
P.O. Box 4831  
Chatsworth, CA 91313-4831

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