As I write on a fine Monday I can't help but feel smug about how lucky all of us are to live in Santa Barbara or Ventura County and to have literally hundreds of outings available on our own or through the Sierra Club.

My wife Janis and I began a long outdoor weekend on Friday by hiking the La Jolla Valley-Ray Miller Trail loop, which offers spectacular views of Boney Ridge, Sycamore Canyon and the Channel Islands. We timed it just right so that we could watch the sun go down behind the Channel Islands as we descended the Miller Trail.

On Saturday we walked miles along the Pacific Ocean at Ormond Beach.

Sunday, after a delicious breakfast of fish tacos at the Channel Islands Farmers Market, we took another leisurely walk along the ocean at Hollywood Beach.

On Monday I joined hiking buddy Catherine Rossbach, legendary outings leader John Wilson (aka Pinetar) and veteran hiking leader Philip Clarke for what Pinetar calls "a little stroll" (18 miles round-trip, 4854 feet of elevation gain from the trailhead) from Sisar Canyon out to the north face of Hines Peak. By the way, Hines Peak is named after a distant relative of our own Jim Hines, who writes our "Greetings, Friends" column every issue.

When we got there I stretched out to take a nap while Catherine, Phil and Pinetar headed for the summit, which requires traversing a narrow ridge with steep flanks and sometimes disconcertingly high winds, followed by a steep slope of talus and scree just below the summit. That final approach, still covered with ice and snow from recent cold weather, was dangerously slippery, so they decided to come down and return when the conditions were better.

Such common-sense decisions are never easy to make, but rash decisions often result in tragic outcomes. So despite mild disappointment, it mattered little this day. Here we were, in the Topa Topa Mountains, in January, at 6000 feet, on a bright and glorious sunny day with a breeze just brisk enough to keep all of us in our comfort zones. Besides, we can always come back in a month or two, because, like you, we are smart or lucky enough to be living in what my wife often calls "Paradise." With our Mediterranean climate, the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, State Parks, miles of Pacific Ocean beaches, the Channel Islands National Park and Los Padres National Forest in our backyard, we can be outside almost every day of the year.

See you on the trail.
The Sierra Club Board of Directors has approved the one-time use of civil disobedience for the first time in the organization’s 120-year history.

“We’ll be following in the hallowed footsteps of Thoreau, who first articulated the principles of civil disobedience 44 years before John Muir founded the Sierra Club,” said Michael Brune, Sierra Club Executive Director.

Recognizing the imminent danger posed by climate disruption—including record heat waves, drought, wildfires and the devastation of super-storm Sandy—the board has suspended a longstanding Club policy to allow, for one time, the organization to lead a group of environmental activists, civil rights leaders, visionaries, scientists, and other high-profile individuals in a peaceful protest in February against the effort to extract oil from dirty and dangerous tar sands.

The action will be by invitation only and is being co-sponsored by 350.org.

“For civil disobedience to be justified, something must be so wrong that it compels the strongest defendable protest,” Brune argued. “We are watching a global crisis unfold before our eyes, and to stand aside and let it happen—even though we know how to stop it—would be unconscionable. As the president said in his inaugural address, ‘to do so would betray our children and future generations.’ ”

“The Sierra Club has refused to stand by. We’ve worked hard and we have had great success—helping establish historic fuel economy standards for cars and trucks, stopping more than 170 coal plants from being built, securing the retirement of another 129 existing plants, and helping grow a clean energy economy.”

“But time is running out, and the stakes are enormous. We can’t afford to lose a single major battle. The burning of dirty tar sands crude is one of those major battles. That’s why the Sierra Club Board of Directors has for the first time endorsed an act of peaceful civil disobedience,” said Brune.

“The recent decision made by the Board is not one we take lightly,” said Allison Chin, Sierra Club President. “As a nation, we are beginning to achieve significant success in the fight against climate disruption. But allowing the production, transport, export and burning of the dirtiest oil on Earth now would be a giant leap backwards in that progress.”

“The Board is answering the urgency of this threat with our decision to engage, for one time, in civil disobedience.”

Your input needed for new Gaviota Coast plan

Devereaux Vista is one of Alan Freeman’s amazing water colors that he’s been compiling for years of Central Coast vistas. The Lompoc resident now has the best of his works in a 100-page book that also includes a few pen and ink drawings. You can contact Alan at 736-4549.

What’s going to happen to the Gaviota Coast? That’s the question that drives the draft Gaviota Coast Plan, now out for all to read and respond.

A series of meetings on different aspects – projects, parks, agriculture, access, etc. – starts Feb. 6 and may end on March 2. GavPAC is asking for public reaction, and may adjust the draft before a final is ultimately up for adoption by the Board of Supervisors.

You can access the plan at the Draft Gaviota Coast Plan Website.

The role of the GavPAC is to be receive community input, review and comment on planning issues in the Gaviota Coast Plan area, which will be used by County staff to draft the Gaviota Coast Plan,” according to the Long Range Planning Division on its website.

The tentative GavPAC schedule is below. Staff will email a flier to interested parties a week before each meeting; get on the list via its website by emailing hallen@co.santa-barbara.ca.us

~ Feb. 6, 6 p.m.: Vista de Las Cruces School Auditorium, 9467 San Julian Rd., Gaviota, 93117. Topics are visual and transportation, energy & infrastructure.
~ Feb. 13 6 p.m.: Vista de Las Cruces School Auditorium. Topics are land use, parks, recreation and trails.
~ Feb. 20, 6 p.m.: Vista de Las Cruces School Auditorium. Topics are land use, parks, recreation and trails.

Owen Bailey named EDC exec director

For a decade, Owen Bailey was an effective Sierra Club activist who helped defeat the LNG project off Ventura County’s shores, helped save the Del Monte Forest in Monterey County and had a national profile with his “green tips” videos.

Now he’s been appointed as the Executive Director of the Environmental Defense Center, replacing David Landecker who retired last August.

“Owen brings us a variety of critically important skills,” said Peter Schuyler, President of the Board of EDC. “He has spent his entire career at the intersection of environmental advocacy, community outreach and organizing, politics and fundraising.”

“He’s exactly the kind of person EDC needs,” commented Mike Stubblefield of the Los Padres Sierra Club, noting that EDC has had a close relationship with the chapter for many years in both Ventura and Santa Barbara counties.

“During the LNG fight, he was instrumental in organizing and integrating the Sierra Club with the community, which was continued on page 2
Jim Higman’s legacy lives on

Jim and Sue Higman have been a force for the environment and major Sierra Club activists for years, but on Dec. 20 Jim passed away at the age of 98.

In an earlier report featured in the Condor Call, Sue brought her trusty Sierra Club notebook to her father Art Batt found in a stream years ago. She recounted how she and Jim met at the Sierra Club and just as importantly said, “Don’t let the Sierra Club ever die out!”

Both of them shared a continuous demonstration of their deep love and support for the natural environment, their local community and the Sierra Club, which Jim’s family had been involved with since the beginning of the 20th century; according to an obituary in the Santa Barbara Independent.

“Jim and Sue’s life together was a continuous demonstration of their deep love and support for the natural environment, their local community and the Sierra Club which Jim’s family had been involved with since the beginning of the 20th century,” according to an obituary in the Santa Barbara Independent.

“Jim and Sue were inveterate backpackers, and never missed an opportunity to sleep out under the stars. Their unfailing and resolute support, inspirational, financial and organizational, assured the success of the many campaigns to acquire and protect the Wilcox Property, now the Douglas Family Preserve.

Jim and Sue were also honored by the Sierra Club Foundation for their outstanding philanthropy. The long-time members of the Santa Barbara Group created a generous endowment for the Club, which holds one of the largest Sierra Club cups, which her father Art Batt found in a stream years ago.

Jim was a machinist and engineer, and the location inspired him to stay and teach at UCSB. “I had a tough life in 1962, “I had a tough life in 1962, I had a tough life in 1962,” according to an obituary in the Santa Barbara Independent.

It wasn’t the butter Jack? Check out Jack’s backcountry ramblings and mushroom was harvested in our backcountry and, “when sautéed in Dubbed the Los Padres Tree Lobster by Jack Elliott, this Hericium...
A free public presentation about the connection between extending the human-caused global warming is co-sponsored by the Santa Barbara Group of the Sierra Club and the Humane Society of Santa Barbara on Monday, Feb. 28.

Last year was the hottest year on record in the U.S. Over 1000 counties in 32 states were declared disaster areas due to drought this summer. Wildfires raged across Colorado and other western states, and super-storm Sandy caused more than $60 billion dollars in damage to the East coast.

This presentation, entitled Climate Reality, will be led by Katie Davis, a local Sierra Club and Community Environmental Council Board member who recently trained with Vice President Al Gore as part of his grassroots Climate Leaders program.

We will walk in a fork in the road, and the consequences of our choices right now could not be greater. Come learn more about the local ramifications of climate change here in Santa Barbara and how we can come together to work out what may be the biggest challenge we face.

It begins at 7 p.m. on Monday, Feb. 28th, at the Faulkner Gallery in the Main Library, 40 E. Anapamu St., Santa Barbara. Please RSVP to sbantabaragroup@sierrac.org.

Members elect all Group candidates

There wasn’t any competition for the Executive Committees (ExCom) of the Santa Barbara, Arguello (North S’b County) nor Conejo (South Ventura County) Groups during the December balloting, nor was there any write-in-upsets.

Consequently, all the candidates who were on the ballots are now officers of those groups. For the record, they are:

Santa Barbara Group welcomed two new ExCom members, Jacky Lopez and Katie and Catherine Mullin while the other two were incumbents and the latter one was back: Angela Boyd and Jim Balter.

Arguello Group had three members on the ballots and two were incumbents without challengers: Ken Naylor, Dan Thompson, Barry Weaver and Jeff Weiss.

Conejo Group had three open positions for three candidates: Rick Koppel, Liz MacGovern and Ellen Sanders.

Don Baldwin portrays John Muir, born from his many adventures in Yosemite Valley as a youth, and later he became its resident reverend, all of which instilled in him a powerful respect for the man who helped create the Sierra Club. His daughters, Eve and Joy, were born while he was serving in Yosemite.

Now retired, he is considered one of the leading experts on John Muir who he started portraying five years ago, calling his show “John Muir – Alive.”

He accelerated his activism through letters, postcards, magazine articles and the personal touch of taking people out into the wilderness, which he believed was the best way to convince the public and politicians it was worth saving.

Out of that brilliant and simple idea was born the Sierra Club outings, recently called “Best on Earth” by National Geographic.

“I did nothing without others,” Muir modestly said, citing Sierra Club icons such as Galen Clark and his special friend Joseph LeConte, all of whom lobbied for wild lands and convinced President Abraham Lincoln to protect from development 230 million acres at Yosemite and elsewhere.

While that was a major victory, after Lincoln was assassinated, “unfortunately (Woodrow) Wilson got elected and (the damming of) Hetch Hetchy was given the go-ahead.”

As Muir, Baldwin recounted many famous anecdotes, such as lashing himself to a pine tree during a storm and spending a night in the Yosemite Valley with President Teddy Roosevelt “after we ditched the Secret Service.”

Baldwin’s portrayal got an enthusiastic ovation after capping off his one-man show with a delightful story about handing a seedling to a kid and asserting, “you’re holding forever in your hand.”

Baldwin came back in as himself and showed an 18 minute triptych slide show of Yosemite, accompanied by music and Muir’s own poetic words.

By John Hankins
John Muir and his words come alive for the hundreds of people who see Don Baldwin saunter on stage and clutch a walking stick to portray the Sierra Club icon.

He’s done it twice to a packed house at the Ojai Retreat, which also featured the PBS film, “John Muir in the New World,” in a separate event.

Baldwin had many adventures in Yosemite Valley as a youth, and later became its resident reverend, all of which instilled in him a powerful respect for the man who helped create the Sierra Club. His daughters, Eve and Joy, were born while he was serving in Yosemite.

Now retired, he is considered one of the leading experts on John Muir who he started portraying five years ago, calling his show “John Muir – Alive.”

Sporting a Scottish accent and a rough-hewn look, Baldwin told the man’s story as if he was reminiscing. In fact, virtually all of the words were from Muir’s writings.

“The first time I saw Mt. Shasta, my blood turned to wine and I’ve been intoxicated ever since,” Muir said.

It wasn’t always so for the young Muir, who was brought up in a strict religious household in Scotland. He was kept busy reading the bible and forbidden to explore the outdoors to any extent. His adventurous nature, though, crept through sometimes, notably when he climbed a tall castle wall on a dare. The world opened to him even further when his family decided to immigrate to America and his father got homestead land in Wisconsin.

“My father had this idea to conquer nature, to cut down trees, plow and be a farmer,” Muir said. He was separated from his parents after he won a prize for an invention and decided to go to college where he “wandered into the woods.”

After the Civil War, he worked in industry but was struck temporarily blind after an accident.

“This was hell for me, if I could not see God’s beautiful creations again,” he said. But when the bandages came off, the blindness was easing away. After that, he walked a thousand miles to the Gulf Coast and later took a ship from New York to San Francisco.

Muir was astounded when he first visited Yosemite Valley, and determined to find a way to stay there. He did, working as a sawyer, which gave him the means to build his own home right across a creek. He was moved
February 9

STEVENS PARK – JESUSITA TRAIL: Hike across meadow and up wooded area to an inspirational view of Santa Barbara. Moderate-strenuous 8 mi. Bring water and lunch. Meet behind B of A on upper State St. at Hope Ave. at 9am. TOWN 465-4212 (SB)

February 10

COLD SPRING TRAIL TO THE MONTECITO OVERLOOK: Experience the base of Santa Barbara’s Front Country hiking trails in an exhilarating three mile loop hike. In just three miles we will hike through the riparian woodland of Cold Spring Creek. After crossing the creek a couple of times we will ascend up into the scenic coastal sage scrub and then live oak woodlands before arriving at the Overlook and its magnificent view of Montecito, East Beach and much of Santa Barbara. On the return we will pass through briefly true chaparrel before descending back down to the trailhead at Cold Springs.

Check Conditions
Any number of components and/or roads in the Los Padres National Forest may be closed or harassed due to anacortes disease, poisons, due to protection of habitat, repair or adverse weather. Before you go into the local backcountry it’s a good idea to check conditions with rangers. Numbers to call (unless noted) are all area code 805.

Los Padres Forest Districts
Headquarters 984-4945
Ojai District 464-4336
Moss Pools (805)243-3723
Santa Barbara 967-3481
Santa Maria 920-8558

Forest Notes
For updated information, news releases, maps, and other new things, go to the Los Padres National Forest’s website: http://www.fs.fed.us/la/la

Other Areas
Santa Monica Mtn. Area 357-5051
Conoï Parks 381-2737
Sunn Valley 584-4400
Moorpark 990-1381
Channel Islands 968-7077

Local Hiking websites
There are a number of websites that give you information as varied as outings, trail profiles, with trail and trail with opportunities and much more. Here’s a few:
http://Los Padres.SierraClub.org
http://www.BigSurInfo.com
http://www.SantaBarbaraHikes.com
http://www.PFVoyager.org
http://www.VenturaCountyTrails.org
http://HiKes.VenturaCountyStar.com

Yosemite Valley is dusted with frost and enhanced by water and the color of the trees in this sylvan photo captured by Denise Dewire. See more of her excellent shots at www.Flickr.com and www.500px.com

February 13

SAN PAULA CANYON CLEANUP: Trash bags and tools provided by the USFS. Volunteers must wear closed shoes and be able to hike 4.5 miles on uneven terrain with several stream crossings. Rain cancels. Meet at the Ventura carpool lot (between Main and Santa Clara across from the Mission in Ventura) at 7:30am or at the entrance to Thomas Aquinas College at 8:30am. STEPHEN 794-1150 (SB)

February 17

SAN ANTONIO CREEK: Beginning at Tuckers Grove County Park, we will walk on a creek side trail that meets with Hwy 154. A short walk on this busy highway will lead us to a return to San Antonio Creek Road. Easy. 2 mi. at the end of this beautiful mountain Sugarloaf Peak. Bring shoes, drink water and a snack. Meet at the highway crossing and the parking lot (between Main and Santa Clara across from the Mission in Ventura) at 8:30am. TONY 455-4212 (SB)

February 25

MAYDAY MONDAY WALK: Meet at 8am at Mission Plaza to walk new trail to the cross (Ventura). For more info call PAT at 643-0270 (VEN)

March 1

OJAI VALLEY: KENNEDY RIDGE TRAIL IN VENTURA PRESERVE: Moderate 4-to-6 mile round-trip hike to the picnic table outlook point on the Ojai Valley Ridge Preserve. If group wants to, we will continue up another hike to the higher ridge after a rest at the picnic table. Meet at 9am at parking lot for the Oso Ridge picnic area (381-3712) in the Los Padres National Forest (Northend of Eastside Rd. at the end of Oso Ridge Road). Easy trail is suitable for backpacking with medium fitness. Bring lunch, hiking boots and water. Rewarding views from the top! Meet at 9am at parking lot for the Oso Ridge picnic area. This hike is suitable for all fitness levels. Bring lunch, water or a snack. Meet behind La Jolla Commons, 1000 N. La Jolla Commons Dr. RAIN CANCELS.

Local Hiking websites
To find more information about the Mayday hike, call LORA at 218-2015 (VEN)

LOCAL HIKES:
MOUNTAIN VIEW: A loop hike of about 1.5 miles with some elevation gain. Meet at trailhead behind Heritage Plaza Shopping Center in Ojai at 7:30am. TONY 455-4212 (SB)

February 20

GOLD BUTTE, NEVADA: CARC JUNIPER: Contact LORA for info. This is a challenging Butte hike. Bring lunch, water, hiking boots and appropriate clothing. Meet behind La Jolla Commons, 1000 N. La Jolla Commons Dr. RAIN CANCELS.

February 23

GIBRALTAR ROCK VIA RATTLESNAKE TRAIL: Hike up a wooded canyon with scenic views to Gibraltar Rock. Moderately strenuous 5.5 mi. Bring lunch and plenty of water. Meet beginning B of A on upper State St. at Hope Ave. at 9am. ROBERT 685-1283 (SB)

February 28

HOOD RIVER PATH TRAIL TO NORTHRIDGE PEAK: 4 to 5 mile hike with 2400 ft elevation gain. The hike starts from the Rose Valley Road right off of Highway 154, then follows a route to Northridge Ridge Trail. Both hikes will be strenuous and moderate level hike. Water, snack, poles, sunblock, sun hat and 100 ft. headlamp recommended. May stop for lunch after hike at local eatery. RAIN CANCELS. For more info call PAT at 643-0270 (VEN)

March 2

SAN YSIDRO FIVE TRAILS: Hike up a 2.5 mile loop to Hot Springs, down to Hot Springs and the bamboo tunnel of doom and then back down the Bud Girard and McMenenny trails. Bring Lunch and at least two liters of water. Strenuous 11 mi. Prepare for an all-day adventure. This hike is not suitable for beginners or people with heart conditions. Meet at 7:30am B of A on upper State St. at Hope Ave. at 9am. DIANE 455-6818 (VEN)

March 2-3 5 & 10: ON THE LEASH: DEATH VALLEY TRAIL: Meet at Shoshone, south of Death Valley Junction, at 7:00 a.m. February 13-15, on the beach near Hesperia Lakes (fee). Meet up Hot Springs at the entrance to the Death Valley National Park (east off Route 170). Visit the Mesquite Flats Sand Dunes. Monday outing includes camping in the park and a visit to the town of Stove Springs (fee). Tuesday trip details at desertreport.org (outings), or at the Death Valley Hiker web site (www.deserti.org) and to reserve a space. CAROL WILSON, desertreport@sierraclub.org

March 3

YELLOW PINE ROCK: BEACH WALK: We’ll start just south of Summerland and walk the beach to Santa Claus Lane Beach. Return via Padero Lane. Great views of the SB Channel and an all day adventure. This hike is not suitable for beginners or people with heart conditions. Meet at 7:00am B of A on upper State St. at Hope Ave. at 9am. DIANE 455-6818 (VEN)

For Cond. Notes, please see end of this issue.

Continued on page 5
GREETINGS FRIENDS

Gaviota coast is special

By Jim Hines

A wild and windswept land... mountain peaks with breathtaking views of land and sea...a rugged coastline and a protected marine sanctuary...a land of history. This is the special place known as the Gaviota Coast.

Named after the bird which still soars over the coast today, the 1770 Portola expedition called this land La Gaviota, the Spanish word for seagull.

The wildness of Gaviota allows us an escape from our busy urban world. Camping, hiking, biking and nature study abound in the land of Gaviota. You can experience a quiet beach walk at El Capitan State Beach, a bike ride on the bluffs overlooking the ocean at Refugio State Beach to a more strenuous hike up to the highest point above the coast, Gaviota Peak at 2500 foot elevation. Yes, the views are truly breathtaking, and what better completes a day hike to the top than a refreshing dip in the Crystal Hot Spring on the way back down.

The Santa Ynez mountain range towers above the Gaviota coast, much of it within the Los Padres National Forest. A land of diverse ecosystems, high mountains and protected watersheds for El Capitan, Gaviota and Refugio creeks flowing from the mountains to the sea, future congressional legislation could create the Condor Point National Scenic Area in the national forest overlooking Gaviota.

Clear days offer beautiful views of Santa Rosa and Santa Cruz islands offshore, part of Channel Islands National Park. The marine waters offshore of Gaviota are also protected as part of Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary, one of the most diverse ocean ecosystems on our planet.

Yes, as La Gaviota flies over this most beautiful and diverse land as it did when General Portola first saw the land over 200 years ago, we are all reminded that this special wild place deserves to be preserved and protected for future generations.

See you on the trail.

Editor’s note: A plan for the Gaviota Coast’s future is underway; see story on page 1. To keep up with what’s happening, go to: www.SaveNaples.org

Outings...from page 4

mrt. Meet 9am at the Bank of America parking lot, Hope & State St. 964-5411 (SB)

March 4

MONDAY MORNINg WALK: Meet at 9am at Mission Plaza to walk to Ventura Harbor on trail. For more info call PAT at 643-0270 (VEN)

March 7

Anacapa Island $54.00 Island Packers. For more info call PAT at 643-0270 (VEN)

March 9

ROCKY PINE RIDGE - SHORT ROUTE: From Camino Cielo, hike into this spectacular pine tree/rock region and skirt along the ridge line. Moderate hike with some rock hopping, 4-5 mrt. Bring water and meet behind B of A on upper State St. at Hope Ave. at 9am. ROBERT 885-1283 (SB)

March 10

PARMA PARK LOOP: A pleasant four mile morning hike through Santa Barbara’s largest and least used park. Dirt roads and paths, a little steep, sometimes steep. Bring water and a snack. Meet behind B of A on upper State St. at Hope Ave. at 9am. KEITH 965-9953 (SB)

March 11

MONDAY MORNINg WALK: Meet at 8:45am at Mission Plaza to carpool to Ojai to do Shelf Road. For more info call PAT at 643-0270 (VEN)

March 15-17

MOJAVE NATIONAL PRESERVE OUTING: Meet Friday, 1pm at Sunrise Rock primitive campground. Hike that afternoon to Teutonia Peak (4 mi r/t). Saturday hike to the Hole in the Wall Visitors Center and a 6 mile hike on the Barber Peak Loop Trail. Potluck dinner Sat. night. Sunday we will enjoy hiking the Kelso Dunes. For those wanting to stay another night we will camp at Granite Pass (primitive) and visit Amboy Crater. For details or to sign up contact CAROL WILLEY at desert145@verizon.net or 760-245-8734. (CNRCC Desert Committee)

March 16

COLD SPRING TRAIL TO GORILLA ROCK: Hike down to Forbush Flat onto an off-trail hike under strenuous conditions to rock formations in a remote canyon. Difficult/strenuous 8 mrt with some exposure. Rocks and steep. Rock scrambling, bush whacking involved. Wear long pants and shirt. The hike will begin headed down hill and end headed up hill. Prepare for an all-day adventure. Call hike leader for details. TONY 455-4212 (SB)

March 16-17

GHOST TRAILS, TOWN EXTRAVAGANZA: Come with us this St. Patrick’s Day weekend to

Join club’s adventures to islands

Join the Sierra Club for a 3-day, 3-island, live-aboard cruise to Channel Island National Park. This great adventure is offered on six dates this year: April 7-9, May 5-7, June 2-4, July 21-23, August 25-27 and September 15-17.

Hike wild, windswept trails bordered with blazing wildflowers. Kayak rugged coastlines. Marvel at pristine waters teeming with frolicking seals and sea lions and so much more. Or, just relax at sea.

All cruises depart from Santa Barbara aboard the 68’ twin diesel Truth.

The cost, $590, includes an assigned bunk, all meals plus the services of a ranger/naturalist who will travel with us to help lead hikes, point out items of interest, and present evening programs. To make a reservation send a $100 check, written to “Sierra Club” to lead Joan Jones Holtz, 11826 The Wye St., El Monte, CA 91732.

For more information call or e-mail the leader 626-443-0706; jdholtz@aol.com

Join the Club

Nap on the rocks

A hiker on one of Robert Bernstein’s adventures called the “Fire Trail Montecito Loop” kicks back on the rocks. The hike attracted locals and visitors from Minnesota and Tucson. (Photo by Robert Bernstein)
March appeal is coming soon

Soon you’ll be receiving a March Appeal letter from the Los Padres Sierra Club, asking you to support the incredible work our volunteers are doing in Santa Barbara and Ventura counties.

That includes hundreds of free guided hikes and other class activity keeping our air and water safe from threats like deforestation and pollution and unrestrained development.

We only ask once per year, unless there’s a special need, and we never ask for anything as the Sierra Club and our allies have a long history of accomplishing, which are chronicled in the Condor Call every other month.

We accomplish what we do on the less than one percent of the other side spends, but we can only do it thanks to your continued support. Please send your donation of $50. With your help we can win many more victories together here at home in the coming year.

To contribute, use the appeal letter sent to you in March, or simply send your contribution to the Los Padres Sierra Club, P.O. Box 31241, Santa Barbara, CA 93101-1241.

To support our effective action work (and to be able to make a cut to “Los Padres Sierra Club” and others), you can also do your giving via the web.

Go to “Sierra Club Foundation.”

Outings continued from page 5

March 18
MORNING MONDAY WALK: Meet at 8:30am at Mission Plaza to carpool to Ojai to do Cozy Dell Trail uphil. For more info call PAT at 218-2103 or LORA at 218-2105 (VEN).

March 20
DEATH VALLEY NATIONAL PARK SPRING WEEKEND: Visit the park for a spring season treat. There will be plenty of flowers when temperatures are cooler and wild life is likely to be blooming. We will explore areas both outside and inside the park with hikes planned to visit water falls and stunning desert canyons. We will also tour Scotty’s Castle. Hiking may be over rough and rocky. High clearance vehicles are recommended, but there will be car pooling options. We are staying in a developed private campground which includes flush toilets, showers, camp fire rings and picnic tables. Cost is $60 per person and includes 4 nights of camping and tour of Scotty’s Castle. $25 deposit required. Group size limited to 19 people. Contact leader for reservation information. Leader: RICH JURICICH, raj082806@pacbell.net, 916-452-2181 (CNRCC Wilderness Committee)

March 22
SULPHUR MOUNTAIN ROAD RECREATION TRAIL: 10 mile round-trip hike starting at the western end of Rose Valley turnoff and climbs steadily for 2000 foot ridge along Sulphur Mountain. Car shuttle is provided to Group limited to 25, including leaders. MUST CALL Phil or Lora by 8 pm Thursday, April 4th to secure a place. Weather permitting, the hike across the ridge offers gorgeous views of the Pacific Ocean, Channel Islands, Oxnard plains, Topa Topa Mountains and Ojai Valley. 1500 feet of gain loss on the west side near Casitas Springs Road. Please bring Venture to carpool to shuttle sites. Ten essentials, hiking boots and poles, surfhat, 3 quarts of water and snacks/lunch required. RAIN CANCELS. For more information, call CAROL W ILEY at 977-5527. (CNRCC Wilderness).

March 23
CHORNO GRANORde:

Glendora, 12 mile hike with 3200’ elev gain - experienced hikers only. The hike starts at 4000’ and climbs steadily for 6 miles to 7200’, ending up on the Pine Mountain Ridge near Reyes Campground. This hike’s goal is to bring lots of water, snack, lunch. There’s a good chance that there will be snow at the top, so bring a warm jacket, a hat, gloves and snowshoes. There will be 3000’ of Venture carpool lot (Seaward and Harbor between Chase Bank and Harborside) JIM 447-1874 / 644-6934 (SB).

March 24
UCSB LAGOON: Stroll for an hour along the beach and over the Bluffs at the University. Children welcome, bring water, slow pace, 3 miles or so. Meet behind B of A on upper State St. at Hope Ave. at 9am. KEITH 965-9953 (SB).

March 25
MORNING MONDAY WALK: Meet at 8:30am at Mission Plaza to carpool to Ojai to do Sulphur Mountain Trail uphil. For more info call PAT at 643-0270 (VEN).

March 29
- WILDERNESS C H E C K: LUGU MEADOW INVENTORY WITH NEEDLES BLML: Join our annual Sierra Club service trip with the Needles BLML Field Office to help wilderness managers document the wilderness characteristics of an area adjacent to wilderness that has been recently studied—exact location still to be determined. We enjoyed similar work last spring just west of the old Woman Mountains. Car camping with optional central camping areas on the ranch in the Ojai Valley. Contact VICKY HOOVER, vicky.hoover@sierramtb.org, or 415-977-5527. (CNRCC Wilderness Committee)

March 30
MORH MESA: Morning loop walk around this extensive coastal bluff. Children welcome. Slow paced 2-3 miles or so. Bring water and a snack. Meet behind B of A on upper State St. at Hope Ave. at 9am. VICKY 563-4850 (SB).

March 30 – MODERATELY EASY BACKPACK at White Sisar campground, up Sisar Road near Ojai. Saturday 2 1/2 mile pack into cool, shaded site. After lunch hike further up Sisar Canyon, farther into the backcountry to the top of the Bluff and Channel Islands. Return to camp for happy hour. Sunday pack out, perhaps looking for Easter eggs along the way. This trip is suitable for first time backpackers. For more information, call contact leader SALLY 888-7820. Raincancel. (SB).

ROMERO CANYON TO CAMINO CIELO: Walk all the way up Romero Canyon to its top. Great views of back country. Moderate-strenuous 9 mile hike with 3000’ of elevation gain loss. Bring Venture carpool lot (Seaward and Harbor between Chase Bank and Harborside) JIM 447-1874 / 644-6934 (SB).

April 1
CHORNO GRANORde:

LOS PADRES NATIONAL FOREST - 10.2 mile round-trip hike, and approximately 2500 feet of elevation gain loss. Moderate-strenuous guided hike in the Los Padres National Forest. We will start at Twin Forks, 0.8 miles north to Twin Forks Road along Sespe Creek. Meet at Twin Forks, 0.5 miles north on Hwy 33 to Oak Camp (1.7 miles), to Chorro Grande Picnic area. After lunch and water, meet behind B of A on upper State St. at Hope Ave. at 9am. PAUL 886-1121 (SB).

April 4

PINE MOUNTAIN LODGE TOUR:

Sespe Creek Wilderness Area. We will meet at 8am at carpool lot (Seaward and Harbor between Chase Bank and Harborside) JIM 447-1874 / 644-6934 (SB).

April 14

PINE MOUNTAIN LODGE:

Sespe Creek Wilderness Area. We will meet at 8am at carpool lot (Seaward and Harbor between Chase Bank and Harborside) JIM 447-1874 / 644-6934 (SB).

March 24
INSECT HIKE IN ALISO SPRING WILDERNESS:

EAVESDROPS: "John Muir is a most passionate lover of nature. Plants and flowers and fields and forests and mountains and mountains seem actually to haunt his imagination. He seems to revel in the freedom of the wild, a man of strong, earnest nature, and thoughtful, cleverly observing, an original mind."

- Joseph LeConte, in a letter about befriending John Muir, and both of them became instrumental in creating the Sierra Club.

It may look like Doc Caballero is lost, but he isn’t! Instead, the Doc is checking out new ways to map, as he’s been treading the local trails and shining a light on their features and providing anecdotes for years. He recently updated his “Mileage Hiking Maps” on CD, consisting of 158 detailed day hikes covering over 1000 miles of local trails. Call him for a copy (445-1060) and then “just click, print and hike.”

(Photos contributed)

| Hike length of Backbone

A rare opportunity for a guided hike beginning at the 4500’ Spring Fire gate in the Backside Trail across the Santa Monica Mountains is offered during the 13th annual Backside Trek beginning on May 4.

The seven-day hike with all meals, transportation to and from the hike, camping and tour of Scotty’s Castle, is recommended to include the first week of October in your schedule.

The yearly trek is sponsored by the Santa Monica Mountains Trails Council, a $350 fee covers meals, campsites, equipment transportation and insurance. For more information, call 679-2984, or visit backbonetrek2013@yahoo.com

The Backside Trek is 65 miles long and you can do it in all seven days during the annual trek beginning on May 4. (Photo by Dave Edwards)
Look out to Sierra Madres

By Craig R. Carey

One of the many attractions of the Condor Trail’s southern section is its proximity to Cuyama Peak, the 5883-foot promontory just north of the Dry Canyon section of the through-trail.

Cuyama Peak has in the last few decades been home to one of the few remaining lookout towers in the southern districts of the Los Padres National Forest. Sadly, the tower’s cabin has finally succumbed to age, collapsing in early 2012.

Built in 1934, the Cuyama Peak lookout featured an H-braced 20-foot tower with a 14’ x 14’ cab; in this regard it is nearly identical to the Thorn Point lookout. And like Thorn Point, the Cuyama Peak lookout was also accompanied by an Aircraft Warning Service cabin during the World War II years. (The Cuyama cabin has in recent years also collapsed after more than a half-century of wind and weather, leaving Thorn Point as one of the few pairs still standing.)

In the 1990s and 2000s, the Cuyama Peak lookout had been used as a vantage point for those studying the local condor population; its proximity to the Bitter Creek National Wildlife Refuge as well as the nearby Sierra Madre ridge makes it an opportune point from which to view the endangered birds.

But because Cuyama Peak is also accessible to automobile traffic, the immediate area was often (and remains) littered by the drititus of lax target shooters and people indifferent to the litter they leave behind. The danger of such micro-trash to condors is well documented, and the Los Padres ForestWatch organized a micro-trash clean-up here in 2008.

Now with the cab collapsed, the Cuyama Peak lookout’s deterioration is sure to only accelerate, and in time only the tower superstructure will remain, as at Nordhoff and Topatopa Peaks.

If you’ve not seen one of the historical lookouts in the Los Padres, go now … only a handful of the old guard remains.

Craig R. Carey is a frequent wanderer of the Los Padres backcountry and author of Hiking & Backpacking Santa Barbara and Ventura (Wilderness Press, 2012). You can read his idle musings at www.bryanconant.com

A Santa Barbara-area cartographer, backpacker, volunteer wilderness ranger and leader of the effort to establish the Condor Trail, Conant is that rare rumpuswearer who actually hikes the routes he’s plotting (something neither Trials Illustrated nor even the USGS can claim in these days of remote and data-based mapping).

Now with the dawn of the new year also comes a new map — one for those who explore the Los Padres will be eager to add to their cabinet.

In January, Bryan Conant released the 2012 edition of his Matilija and Dick Smith Wilderness map.

An ambitious update to his 2008 edition, this new map not only details the namesake wilderness areas, but also covers the Santa Barbara and Monteito frost country as well as the Santa Ynez Recreation Area, making it a hugely useful tool even to those who prefer the relaxing fern-clad routes along Romero or Cold Spring Canyons to the throm-choked and blood-letting trails in the Dick Smith.

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New features in updated map

Los Padres National Forest officials are conducting several prescribed burn projects over the next several months to eliminate piled brush on the Mt. Pinos Ranger District, notably adjacent to Pine Mountain Club, Frazier Park, and Lake of the Woods.

Prescribed burns are also happening on about 2,100 acres near Pine Canyon Road and Horseshoe Spring Campground on the Santa Lucia Ranger District, about 15 miles east of Santa Maria.

With federal maps riddled with errors and grossly outdated, Conant’s maps (also the adjoining San Rafael Wilderness) fill a notable gap in our region’s cartographic coverage.

When he started, “all the maps of the area were rather old and lacking many of the cartographic qualities that were common in most high-end hiking maps. I felt like our mountains were deserving of a new-look map,” Conant says. Pursuing the project enabled him to “dive into the backcountry with a purpose.”

The new map retails for $16.95 and is printed on water-resistant paper. Both of Conant’s maps are available at numerous outdoor outfitters and at www.bryanconant.com

DICK SMITH WILDERNESS

Civilization started on this planet about 10,000 years ago with five million Homo sapiens, about the number living in L.A. right now.

In 1800 we managed to reach our first billion. At the time I was born (1925) we reached our second billion. The number of Homo sapiens since then has soared to seven billion: 5,000,000,000,000 more people in just my lifetime.

This is called a Population Explosion and occurs in nature (lennings). The birth rate and death rate of a species should be equal. Excessive births over deaths results eventually in a Population Collapse. We are ripe.

We call ourselves Homo sapiens meaning “man wise” but I see little indication of this “wise” condition. To get the birth rate and death rate in balance we have to either lower our births or increase the deaths. I prefer the former as I see little indication of the latter.

The number of Homo sapiens living in L.A. right now.

The steep and narrow ridge often buffeted by high winds can stop some hikers from getting to the summit of Hines Peak in Ventura County. See story back page for an account of this “little area” of 18 miles round trip with a 4,834-foot height. (Photo by Catherine Rossbach)

Population taxes planet

In southern California the best public place to see a condor is from Cerro Noroeste Road between the Bitter Creek National Wildlife Refuge sign and the Los Padres National Forest sign in southern Kern County. You can access Cerro Noroeste Road from Highway 166, west of Maricopa. From the south exit I-5 at Frazier Park for a scenic drive down the mountains as the road name changes from Frazier Mountain Highway to Cuddy Valley Road to Mil Potroso Highway and then Cerro Noroeste Road.

California condors are at both Pinnacles National Park and in the Ventura Wilderness of the Los Padres National Forest in central California. Many people have seen the condors along Highway 1 in the Big Sur area south of Andrew Molera State Park and north of Julia Pfeiffer Burns State Park.

For details, tour and volunteer opportunities, contact www.FriendsOfCondors.org.

Condor recovery aired

Find out the latest news and interesting facts about the condor recovery program from an expert from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service who is coming to Ventura from Sacramento.

John McCammon is the former director of the Service and is now the condor Recovery Coordinator. The program is from 3-5 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 24 at the Foster Library in downtown Ventura.

The program is sponsored by Friends of California Condors Wild and Free, which also conducts tours and provides updated information; website is: www.FriendsOfCondors.org.

The Recovery Program is a complex partnership of public, private and non-profit groups, including the Service as leader along with zoos, tribes, universities and government agencies in California, Arizona, Utah, Oregon, Idaho and Mexico.

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By Mike Stubblefield  
Chapater Outings Chair

As I write on a fine Monday I can’t help but feel smug about how lucky all of us are to live in Santa Barbara or Ventura County and to have literally hundreds of outings available on our own or through the Sierra Club.

My wife Janis and I began a long outdoor weekend on Friday by hiking the La Jolla Valley-Ray Miller Trail loop, which offers spectacular views of Boney Ridge, Sycamore Canyon and the Channel Islands. We timed it just right so that we could watch the sun go down behind the Channel Islands as we descended the Miller Trail.

On Saturday we walked miles along the Pacific Ocean at Ormond Beach.

Sunday, after a delicious breakfast of fish tacos at the Channel Islands Farmers Market, we took another leisurely walk along the ocean at Hollywood Beach.

On Monday I joined hiking buddy Catherine Rossbach, legendary outings leader John Wilson (aka Pinetar) and veteran hiking leader Philip Clarke for what Pinetar calls “a little stroll” (18 miles round-trip, 4854 feet of elevation gain from the trailhead) from Sisar Canyon out to the north face of Hines Peak. By the way, Hines Peak is named after a distant relative of our own Jim Hines, who writes our “Greetings, Friends” column every issue.

When we got there I stretched out to take a nap while Catherine, Phil and Pinetar headed for the summit, which requires traversing a narrow ridge with steep flanks and sometimes disconcertingly high winds, followed by a steep slope of talus and scree just below the summit. That final approach, still covered with ice and snow from recent cold weather, was dangerously slippery, so they decided to come down and return when the conditions were better.

Such common-sense decisions are never easy to make, but rash decisions often result in tragic outcomes. So despite mild disappointment, it mattered little this day. Here we were, in the Topa Topa Mountains, in January, at 6000 feet, on a bright and glorious sunny day with a breeze just brisk enough to keep all of us in our comfort zones. Besides, we can always come back in a month or two, because, like you, we are smart or lucky enough to be living in what my wife often calls “Paradise.”

With our Mediterranean climate, the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, State Parks, miles of Pacific Ocean beaches, the Channel Islands National Park and Los Padres National Forest in our backyard, we can be outside almost every day of the year.

See you on the trail.