

COWBOY LAWYERS

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NEWSLETTER

Vol. 9, No. 2, July 2000

Editor: Sunny Miller

Riding At Vasquez Rocks – Not Always Uneventful

By Sunny Miller

OK. The Vasquez Rocks ride this year was uneventful. How uneventful was it? It was so uneventful I had to think up something else to write about. Here's the one paragraph I could scrape up.

Weather? Lovely blue skies. Food? Supplied by Rattlers' Barbecue from Santa Clarita and really good. New members? We presented buckle # 192 to Paul Kiesel and buckle # 169 to Mark Brubaker. Airborne cowboys? None, but the lady from CBS did end up on foot after her horse decided to crawl on his belly like a snake. Park Ranger? Friendly, helpful Mike Sharp wins the CLA award for Ranger of the Year.

Trail riding around Vasquez Rocks has not always been so uneventful. Back in April 1874, a notorious bandito named Tiburcio Vasquez, whose hideout was at Vasquez Rocks, found himself locked in a life and death battle for his freedom as a posse tracked him near Vasquez Rocks. Along for the ride with the posse was the San Francisco Chronicle's correspondent, George Beers. I thought I'd let you read another person's description of a couple of trail rides. (In hopes that mine might look good by comparison?) The following are excerpts from Beers' account, which, just like mine are, was based on first-hand observations and interviews. As you can

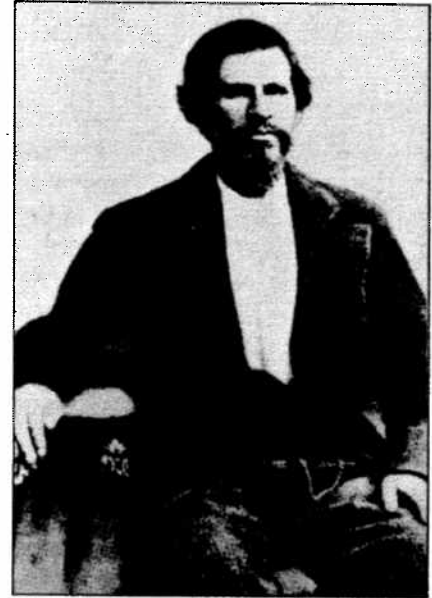
see, trail riding near Vasquez Rocks is not always uneventful. Beers just had more material to work with than you guys gave me this time. Some journalists have all the luck!

"Before the astonished bandits, only a mile and a half distant, lay their haven, the grand old canon; but between them and the refuge was many a 'great gulf fixed.' They looked to the right and to the left, but before them, sweeping in a steep slope down to the brink of the great canon, and extending on each hand to the wall of mountains . . . were acres and acres of dense manzanita chaparral – traversed by gulches so narrow that they looked to be but a few yards wide, yet were so deep that the tops of tall spruce and fir trees rose but few feet above their sides – so closely entwined that it did not seem possible that either horse or man could be forced through it. . . .

It was a fearful situation. An armed party, thirsting for their blood and for the price set upon their heads, pressing hotly on their rear – no food – no water – no guide – nothing but desperation. It might take them two days to find their way into the canon. In the meantime, the Tegunga, or the trails to Soledad, would be alive with myrmidons of the law, lying in wait.

[The banditos discover a steep, narrow gulch, and attempt to escape by dropping down into it, in hopes of crossing to the other side.]

All mounted, and Chavez [no, not the Honorable Victor, a fellow of an entirely different ilk] taking the lead, all followed down to the brink of the perilous descent. . . .



Tiburcio Vasquez

Without dismounting, Chavez spurred his unwilling horse past the bushes to the bare side of the steep gulch, and began the perilous descent, followed by Vasquez and the other three, who, however, chose to lead their animals.

He had descended safely for some fifty feet, and had reached a rocky precipice when he was compelled to force his horse upon a space of flat rock where his path would not be more than six to eight inches in width. In his impatience he drove the spurs into the horse's flanks so violently that the animal gave a sudden spring, missed its footing, and with a snort of terror slipped from the edge of the precipice, and striking from crag to crag, fell a mangled lifeless mass at the bottom of the gulch, a hundred feet below. Chavez had been on his guard, and the moment the horse made the spring and he saw

Continued on p.7

COWBOY LAWYERS

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Observations Of The Wild Turkeys Spotted At Cuyamaca

A turkey was chatting with a bull. "I would love to be able to get to the top of that tree," sighed the turkey, "but I don't have the energy."

"Well, why don't you nibble on some of my droppings?" replied the bull. "They're packed with nutrients." The turkey pecked at a lump of dung and found that it actually gave him enough strength to reach the first branch of the tree. The next day, after eating some more dung, he reached the second branch. Finally, after a few days, there he was, proudly perched at the top of the tree.

He was promptly spotted by a farmer, who shot him out of the tree and cooked him up for a fine meal.

The moral: Bullshit might get you to the top, but it won't keep you there.

Qualifying Rides

We've had lots of people qualify for membership in this august body on our last three rides. Here are their names:

Hidden Creek
Cornelia Heather

Vasquez Rocks
Dave Anderson
Don Beck
Barbara Beck
Tracy Sullivan

Cuyamaca
Merrienne Dean
Penny Farmer
Andy Kaplan
Bill Nimmo

Welcome to all you folks.

2000 Ride And Event Schedule

March 11

Hidden Creek Ranch,
Moorpark

April 29

Vasquez Rocks, Agua Dulce

May 26-29

Cuyamaca, San Diego County

July 14-16

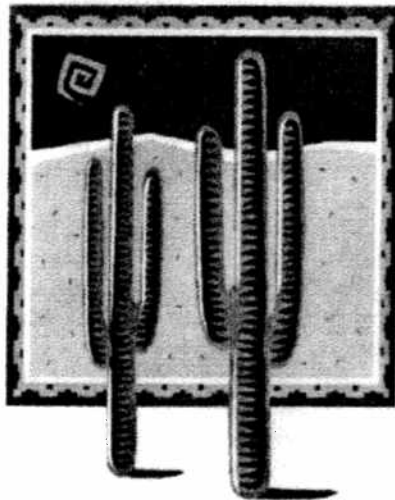
Bandito Flats, Angeles
National Forest

October 6-9

Point Reyes National Seashore,
Marin County

November 5 or 12

Palos Verdes Brunch Ride,
Palos Verdes Peninsula



Cowboy Lawyers Association

Established 1989
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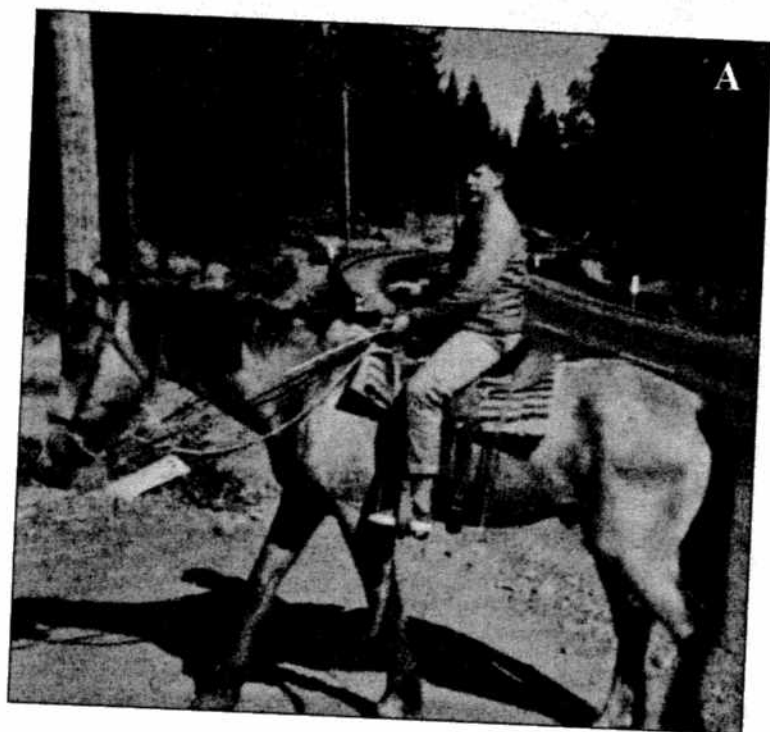
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1994 - Bob Luty
1995 - Tom Borsari
1996 - Scott Haith
1997 - Walter Leighton
1998 - Wikie Cheong
1999 - Mary M. Bennett

Name That Cowpoke

Do you recognize these CLA members?
See page 6 for their identities.



Cuyamaca 2000

By Mike Martindill

This was my third trip here with The Cowboy Lawyers and, by my reckoning, the Memorial Weekend Ride was a worthy successor to our previous visits.

Friday night we took a two-hour ride to Lake Cuyamaca. It was a beautiful pre-sunset trip infused with fauna, including song birds, woodpeckers, birds of prey, turkeys (the real ones), and deer, as well as flora, including Indian paint brush and other stuff the horses loved to eat.

Back at camp, and after relocating the many vehicles to accommodate the near-capacity gathering of cowboys, horses and rigs, we sat down for a great dinner of baby back ribs, fresh vegetables, etc. furnished by new caterer, Wagon Master of Temecula. Saturday morning saw the cowpokes arising as quickly as the sun over the eastern slope of the Cuyamacas. After breakfast and packing our lunches, we set out to revisit parts of the Lake, the old gold mine, and then on to Cold Springs Trail.

This trail has been closed our last couple of visits, and we were happy to finally be able to ride it. Lunch was at Cold Springs with plenty of water and tie-rails for the horses and lots of shade for us.

Out on the trail again, we continued south to a little used trail that cut up the ridge line and over to Upper Green Valley Trail, across to Stonewall Creek Road and back to camp at about the six-hour mark.

Hors d'oeuvres and drinks (see Hey! Barkeep!) were then the focus of our attention followed by dinner of ? gee, I don't remember (see Hey! Barkeep!). After dinner, Bud presented buckles to two new members, Charles (it's too early to build a campfire) Richmond and Barbara (I can't believe she said that - see below) Beck.

Around the campfire that night, we were joined by the Vulcan Mountain Boys playing guitar, banjo, and harmonica and singing country western and bluegrass all night long. A note-able addition to the fellas was Claudia Leighton's harmony on "Poncho and Lefty."

A not soon forgettable response by Barbara Beck to the seemingly innocent query by the band, "Any requests?" - of "TAKE IT OFF," left

the guys speechless and the gals diggin' for dollar bills.

Sunday morning's breakfast of sausage and pancakes was met enthusiastically by Walter Leighton's exclamation, "I LOVE PANCAKES."

We lit out like a house-a-fire for the Azalea Springs Trail after breakfast. Actually we moseyed out of camp, but our hearts were riding like the wind even if our butts weren't. Azalea Springs was a beautiful three-hour trek, much of it along a creek through a heavily wooded forest.

Back at camp for lunch and then out on the trail to Middle Peak. This was another three-hour loop through tall pines and cedars.

Sunday night's fare consisted of Santa Maria-style BBQ and the ramblings of Lee Graham and others at the Branding Fire.

Monday morning saw a group of diehards take one last ride.

Many thanks are in order and, without wanting to sound like an Oscar winner, I need to thank:

Gretchen Nelson. I can't believe she let the San Diego contingency be in charge!

The San Diegans. Dick Freeland and Penny Farmer for leading the Friday, Saturday and Sunday morning rides. Also to Dick for locating the caterers and bringing the beer.

Jennifer Betts for pre-riding the trails, riding radio Friday and Saturday, leading rides Sunday and for mapping out all the trails on poster board exhibits better than most of us use at trial.

Prospective member Merriane Dean and her guest Brenda Arvizu for pre-riding.

Terri Steward, for pre-riding and putting up with a mattress that lost more air at night than I do.

Bud Katzman, and not just because he's President, for bringing a great bar.

Ken Powell, Buckle #5 and Henry Lewin, Buckle #26, for adding a sense of history, if not style, to the camp.

Tamia Hope and Bill Thon for contributing that missing sense of style as the nearly undisputed champions of haberdash. The jury is still out as to whether Bill Daniels' black and red-flamed cowboy shirt counts when he is wearing tennies too!

Hope ya'll enjoyed the ride as much as the San Diegans did hosting it.

On to Bandido Flats!

Blame It On Patti

By Consensus

Patti Templeton canceled her much-anticipated appearance at the Cuyamaca ride at the last minute with the caveat from the Ride Committee: "Anything that goes wrong will be blamed on you!"

The first ride of the weekend on late Friday afternoon started out uneventfully. About one mile out, Deborah Cohan's horse went down like a sack of potatoes. Deborah successfully bailed while the horse proceeded to roll in the dirt. Finally upright, Deborah mounted and off we went. A bit further down the trail, her horse did it again and nearly at the end of the ride a third time. Doubtlessly, Patti was simultaneously attempting to teach Kres a new trick, "roll over and don't play dead."

150's horse "Stan," whom he had ridden throughout the pre-ride two weeks before, decided to be a rodeo star and threw three good bucks before 150 went airborne and landed with a resounding thud. Stan, not yet done, went up and down one more time landing on 150. Patti, knowing 150 was going to be at the back of all of the rides had mistakenly informed his horse that he was riding "in drag" rather than just drag. Can't say as we blame the horse, but we do somehow blame Patti.

Prospective member Penny Farmer's horse started acting kinda, well . . . itchy, at the end of our Saturday ride, and we determined that the horse was suffering from PMS. Blame it on Patti? 'Nuff said.

New San Diego member Bill "all my clients are absolutely innocent" Nimo's steed, Lemon Drop, was literally on his knees in his corral after our Saturday ride. Apparently Patti had given Bill riding lessons and told him that to maintain a good "seat," he had to ride like a sack of tire irons.

Bud's horse Travis got confused Sunday morning and instead of taking a dump, gave Bud one instead. Probably the result of potty training trauma from years ago. Any parallels here, Patti?

And finally Sunny Miller's mount, Flicka, was so slow . . . how slow was she? She was the exact opposite of Speedy Patti, who once drove off from a gas pump so quickly the nozzle and hose remained affixed to her vehicle and departed company with the pump.

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At The Branding Fire

As reported by 150

Beloved (or is it bedeviled) President, Bud Katzman, brought the official CLA branding iron to the Cuyamaca Ride.

Lee Graham became the branding iron brandisher and put the CLA mark on leather goods and wood mementos including Bud's "log."

While Lee was busy with his hands, mouths were running too. Here are some branding fire observations:

1. "People who ride Arabs are too poor to afford a horse and too proud to ride a cow."
2. "Why we would rather be cow boys:
 - a. The Lord's Prayer – 66 words
 - b. The Ten Commandments – 179 words
 - c. The Gettysburg Address – 286 words
 - d. The Declaration of Independence – 1300 words
 - e. U.S. Government regulations on the sale of cabbage – 26,911 words"
3. Rene and Molly's turkey jerky was "hot enough to burn dirt."
4. It was "great to have two asses on the ride (Merrienne and Brenda's mules) who weren't lawyers."
5. "The gals on this ride are so good lookin, it's enough to make even a good dog break his chain."
6. "Real cowboys don't just talk dirty, they smell bad."



Vasquez Rocks 2000

Hey! Barkeep!

By Golly They Were Good

After the failings of Patti (see related story under heading of "Blame It On Patti") to properly stock the bar at the V-6 ride last October, there was a concerted effort to make the Memorial Weekend bar indeed...memorable.

Ice cold beer and fine wines, staples at any Cowboy lawyers gathering, were overshadowed by the efforts of Jennifer Betts and Terri Steward, in preparing genuine mint juleps with real mint (and presumably real juleps too!). Many a cowboy and cowgirl stumbled to their olde Kentucky homes after only two or three!

Not to be outdone, the Martini crowd, obviously shaken by the mint juleps, stirred into action.

One major problem, i.e., Bud Katzman using his utility tool to remove olives from the jar, was quickly overcome by the substitution of an Italian veggie in the drinks.

The resulting pepperoncini marinis were a worthy sequel.

Thanks yous go to Brian "Iceman" Faulkner for the repeated trips to town for that necessary and scarce commodity-ice.

From The Case Files Of Barbara Beck

A cowboy walks into my office wanting to file for a divorce. The following exchange ensues:

- Barbara:* May I help you?
Cowboy: Yeah, I want to get one of those dayvorses.
- Barbara:* Well do you have any grounds?
Cowboy: Yeah, I got about 140 acres.
- Barbara:* No, you don't understand. Do you have a case?
Cowboy: No, I don't have a Case, but I got a John Deere.
- Barbara:* No, you still don't understand! I mean do you have a grudge?
Cowboy: Yeah I got a grudge! That's where I park my John Deere.
- Barbara:* No sir, I mean do you have a suit?
Cowboy: Yes, Maam, I got a suit! I wear it to church on Sundays.
- Barbara:* Well, sir, does your wife beat you up or anything?
Cowboy: Nope, we both get up about 4:30.
- Barbara:* Okay, let me put it this way . . . why do you want a divorce?
Cowboy: Well, I can never have a meaningful conversation with her.

Name That Cowpoke Answers

- A. Bill Daniels
- B. Scott Haith
- C. Al Margolis
- D. Margie Margolis
- E. Sunny Miller
- F. Jim Nichols

the danger was imminent he threw himself from the saddle, attempted to land on the narrow strip of rock, and did so, but could not keep his balance; but in the moment of falling into the frightful abyss his quick eye caught sight of a jagged rock jutting out into the chasm a few feet further on and twenty feet below; and gathering all his energies he made the daring leap and landed safely, and from there made his way, from point to point, to the bottom of the gulch where lay his dead horse.

[The other bandits join Chavez at the bottom of the canyon only to discover that there is no way to get the horses out. They abandon the horses there to starve and scramble up and out the other side on foot.] [A]fter toiling for half an hour down the bed of the stream, at length to their infinite relief, they found themselves in the Tegunga Canon, and about four miles from its mouth.

[Several days later, the posse, which has been searching "all through the Placeritas," arrives at the rim of the gulch.] The abandoned animals, half-famished in their dismal prison house of rock, heard the voices of the trail hunters on the cliff above, and their anxious neighing, sounding as from the bowels of the earth – echoing and re-echoing through the mountain gorges, thrilled the brave little party with the hope that they had at last discovered the hiding place of

the fugitive bandits.

Believing that "what man has done man can do," they instantly prepared for the descent.

Taking the lead, Sam Bryant rode his horse to the verge of the steep treacherous side of the gulch at a point a little below where Chavez had started, and began the diagonal descent, followed by the balance of the party. He had descended about one-third of the way when the earth gave way under the horse; the animal made a desperate effort to regain its feet, but without avail – and flying downward with the rushing avalanche of loose rocks and earth, fell lifeless to the bottom of the gulch. The brave and agile Texan, familiar from boyhood with scenes of peril and danger, never lost his presence of mind for a moment, but lifting his feet from the stirrups, and quick as lightning, placed them on the animal's back, sprang away out into the frightful chasm, and alighting in the branches of a tree top, which towered upwards from the bottom of the gulch nearly or quite one hundred feet. It was an appalling desperate leap, but the brave man landed safely, and made his desperate descent down the body of the tree, where he was soon joined by his companions, who led their horses down the perilous slope with-

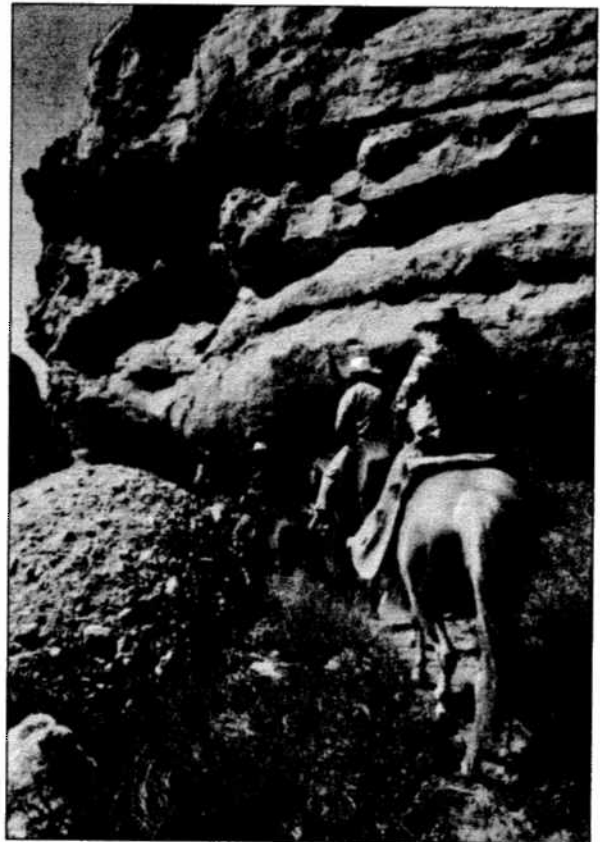
out accident. It being found impossible to extricate either their own horses or those of the bandits without making a trail up the opposite bank, one of the party was dispatched to Sutton's for the necessary tools, and the trail dug. On the 21st [of April 1874] they were got out with the loss of only one more horse, which slipped from the trail into the gulch, below the falls."

If you want to see more excerpts from George Beers' account of the hunt for Vasquez, or simply want to know how it ends, contact your editor and tell her so. The account is titled *Vasquez, Or The Hunted Bandits Of The San Joaquin, Containing Thrilling Scenes And Incidents Among The Outlaws And Desperadoes Of Southern California . . .* (Robert M. DeWitt, Publisher, New York, 1875).

Note to Cowboy Lawyers: The Hidden Creek ride was also uneventful. The barbecue tri tip, supplied by Dearthmore's, was great as usual. Unfortunately, there are no known historical accounts of bandito activity there that I can recite to amuse you.



Mark Brubaker and Paul Kiesel mistake their buckles for cookies



The posse closes in.



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IN THIS EDITION

Cuyamaca - 2000

**Vasquez Rocks - A Trail Ride
From 1874**

**Musings On Wild Turkeys,
Cowboy Dayvorges and Arabians**

Let's Play "Name That Cowpoke"

COWBOY LAWYERS ASSOCIATION
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