

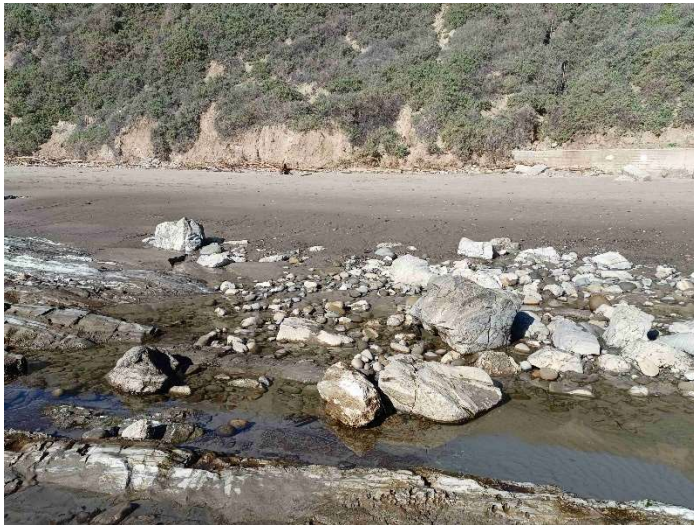
# FRIENDS OF BATES BEACH: OUR 2023 YEAR IN REVIEW

Compiled By Gary Mussell, Director, Friends of Bates Beach

It was a very active year at our adopted beach in Santa Barbara County, with some good news and some bad news. Let's review the year month-by-month:

## JANUARY

The large storm that hit the area between Christmas and New Year's brought mud and debris cascading down from the nearby hills and streets and made a mess of **Carpinteria's** streets and beaches. A second storm hit a week later and dropped over four inches of rain in 10 hours. The 101 Fwy between Ventura and Santa Barbara was closed for several days due to flooding and mudslides, and water at high tide carried into the city as far as the railroad tracks at First Street. The coastal hamlet of **La Conchita**, one mile from Bates, was evacuated for several days as a precaution. Many of the county's beaches lost so much sand that they practically disappeared at high tide. Bates Beach lost approximately 10 feet in height, uncovering long-forgotten rocks and concrete bric-brak.



Above: Uncovered rocks at the start of our designated area.

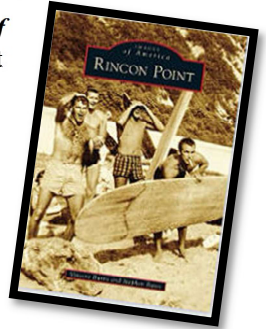
Residues of lumber, tree branches, mud, and other debris washed up and littered the entire beach during the entire 2023 season.

### Black's Beach

Two miles to the south in La Jolla, the rain storms caused an estimated 150,000 cubic yards of the cliff to collapse onto Black's Beach, just to the south of where its nude section began. Also in January, Robert Byl and Gary Mussell participated in a 3-hour online ZOOM meeting with about 80 other stakeholders to discuss revising and updating the Santa Barbara County Recreation and Parks Master Plan. FOBB wrote a letter to the principal planners recommending a permanent clothing-optional section of Bates to replace the current verbal agreement. We received a form letter that the Committee "will take our recommendations under consideration," meaning "no."

## FEBRUARY

In early February, the book "*Images of America: Rincon Point*" by Vincent Burns and Stephen Bates was published, providing a history of our beach area from a Chumash village to one of the premier surfing spots in the world. On page 124, Friends of Bates Beach gets a big mention and Mr. Bates said he appreciated our love for the beach.



Helen O'Neill, Assistant Director of FOBB attended a book signing on February 25 at the Museum of Ventura County auditorium.

## MARCH

Mid-month, heavy rains again pelted Southern California and brought more than five inches of rain to Carpinteria in six hours. It also brought heavy winds and a rare tornado that touched down about 3 miles northwest of Bates Beach. The storm also uprooted a tall eucalyptus tree on the bluffs above the Tar Pits, a mile north of our beach. Once again, the 101 freeway was closed near La Conchita due to a large mudslide. More wood debris washed up onto Bates as the beach again lost more of its sand.

Despite heavy rains during the morning and afternoon, we had an excellent turnout for our first dinner meeting of the year in Ventura. We had a record 16 for this location, including several first-timers.



Above: Helen O'Neill (left) and Greg Cooper (right) with their awards.

Gary presented the **2022 Best Friends of the Beach** certificates to **Helen O'Neill, Robert Byl, and Greg Cooper**. We presented a **flamingo beach towel** to Rosel Weedon who is our 500<sup>th</sup> member on Meetup.com. Gary announced the paid dues renewal process is going well with over 80% of the members who joined in January and February a year ago already renewing via PayPal. pay FOBB \$10/year to cover our expenses (this is separate from SCNA dues). FOBB added the option to pay membership using Zelle at the end of the month.

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## APRIL

### Sonya

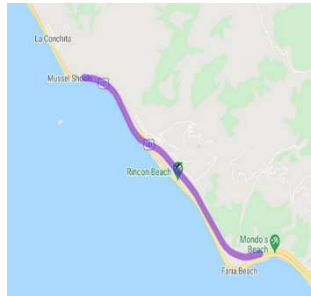


Longtime “Bates Beach Mom” Sonya Robinson suffered a major heart attack on April 7 at her home in Ventura. She remained in critical condition on a ventilator in the CCU at Community Memorial Hospital, Ventura, for several weeks. After she regained her strength she was fitted with a pacemaker.

She returned to the hospital in May with a leg infection, diagnosed as a residual effect of the treatment she received in April. She finally returned to us in time to attend the Western Gathering event in mid-June. Stay well, Sonya!

### Freeway and Road Construction

A year earlier, on April 22, 2022, Caltrans shut down 4.3 miles of the south-bound lanes of the 101 between Mussel Shoals and Faria Beach, bifurcating the southbound into two separate, K-rail-guarded lanes so they could repair the road’s sagging concrete.



Exactly one year later, to the day, Caltrans opened these southbound lanes and began construction on the northbound lanes. They again bifurcated the highway into two reverse-flow lanes causing major traffic jams throughout the summer months for anyone wanting to visit Bates from Ventura or Los Angeles. The road is expected to reopen in early 2024.

However, Caltrans has announced Phase 3 of the road reconstruction would begin after the new year, repaving the road that parallels the freeway between Ventura and Carpinteria alongside the beach and adding a bike lane. Phase 3 will not be completed for another 12 months.

## MAY

### Sand Measurement Project

FOBB members David Tiktin and John Parsons began participating in a program organized by UC Santa Barbara to measure the rate of sea rise at Bates Beach over time by measuring the change in the width of the beach each month. The project is supposed to last several years. More volunteers are needed.

### Tuesdays and Thursdays

The beach team’s plan to add beach picnic days on Tuesdays and Thursdays starting in May has to be postponed because of continued cool weather and the poor condition of the shoreline in our designated clothing-optional area (too many exposed rocks) as the seasonal return of the sand had not yet happened. These mid-week visits finally launched in mid-June, but the team decided to move farther west down the beach where a nice patch of sand had returned. The sand level at the start of our area remained up to 10 feet lower than normal the entire year.



*Back under consideration is a proposed hiking & bike trail on the south (ocean) side of the cliffs above Bates Beach.*

### Carpinteria City Council Reverses Rincon Trail Decision

On May 15, by a 3-1 vote, the Carpinteria City Council reversed its decision from a year ago and supported the controversial ocean-side path for the proposed Rincon Trail.

The path selected was considered by many interest groups, including the Friends of Bates Beach, to be the most dangerous of the four trail options because it will require over 100,000 cubic yards of dirt to be removed from the cliff above Bates Beach. Doing so, paraglider enthusiasts say, will destroy their ability to get enough wind updraft off the ocean to be able to soar safely into the air. FOBB leaders testified that terminating the trail in the parking lot at North Rincon Beach Park will make it unsafe for bicyclists to navigate around the cars pulling in and out of their parking spaces in the heavily used lot during the summer months.

In the end, the city staffers disagreed with the soaring community and assured the Council that they would work with the county to reconfigure the parking lot at a later date.

The bike trail will eventually connect the existing bike path in Ventura County to the one recently opened in Summerland, north of Carpinteria. The trail is part of the larger California Coast Trail system that will eventually run along all 1500 miles of the state.



*FOBB Director Gary Mussell (left) and Helen O’Neill (right) address the Carpinteria City Council at its May 15 hearing.*

## JUNE

### “Surf’s Up” Pool Party

The club hosted a “Surf’s Up” pool party in Camarillo on Saturday, June 10. Peter Connolly’s home has a large indoor pool was the perfect venue to battle the “June Gloom” weather outside. About 30 members attended. There was a great selection of potluck dishes supplementing the chicken bits, BBQ pork spare ribs, hamburgers, and freshly baked pizza.

### June 17 Beach Party And Cleanup Day

This was our first scheduled cleanup day of the season and our invitation to other local groups to join us yielded several new

helpers (some came as early as 10 am to help!). Since we kept our section of the beach pretty clean, this was an easy task, and we received many thanks from others on the beach as we hauled it up the ramp to the trash cans at the top.

By noon, the overcast “June Gloom” lifted, and it was sunny most of the afternoon. Again, we sat farther west than our normal spot because there were still rocks exposed where the sand left during the winter and had not yet fully returned. The sand levels are rising, slowly -very slowly- but surely.



### June 26 - World Naked Bike Ride

Over 400 riders participated this year, including a police escort, and it included many FOBB members. There were many smiles and just a few sneers as we rode the 7-mile course through downtown LA and we went past the Staples Center, Disney Concert Hall, LA City Hall, and Chinatown.



## JULY

### Our Carpinteria Parade Truck Receives Positive Crowd Applause

The Independence Day parade on July 1 in Carpinteria saw a slightly larger crowd than last year (estimated at around 7,000 people), and they gave our Friends of Bates Beach entry a very enthusiastic reception with many smiles and happy waves as we drove past. This was our 10th year of participation.

This year we replaced some of the older signs and the new ones, especially the “Feel the Freedom” sign across the front grill, received much attention.



*Helen and Gary wave to the crowd from the back of our decorated truck. More photos on page 2*

### Mid-Week Visits To Bates Gained More Visitors

With the weather clear and the water getting warmer, the number of people participating in our midweek picnic at the beach began to rise. July saw the average rise to over two dozen people with no hassle from the textile sunbathers or dog walkers sharing the beach.

### FOBB Member Walter Wallace Elected to AANR-West Board of Directors



July 29 - Water Wallace, a member of both Friends of Bates Beach and SCNA was elected to serve the next two years as a member of the AANR-West Board of Directors. The members and club representatives representing nudists in the 13 Western States meet every two years to discuss nudist issues of mutual concern.

The Regional Assembly meeting was held July 28-30 at De Anza Springs Nudist Park, about an hour's drive east of San Diego.

The seven-person Board makes policy decisions affecting all of the 8,000+ members from the 28 clubs and those “direct” members not affiliated with any specific club or resort.

## AUGUST

### Articles About Bates Beach Are in the Summer Issue of N Magazine

The summer issue of N Magazine (#42.4) features three different articles promoting Bates Beach.

The first one written by Gary Mussell, Director of Friends of Bates Beach, summarizes the history of how FOBB got permission to have a designated area for clothing-optional recreation and it provides summaries of the polling we did last year showing local community support for our efforts to make this permission permanent by amending the county nudity ordinance. The 3-page story contains photos of Bates, of our group at the beach, and a photo of us in the Carpinteria Independence Day parade.

The second article by Mark Storey, is a travel summary of naturist opportunities throughout Southern California. It highlights Bates, Arroyo Del Sol B&B, and several of the nearby landed parks and resorts.

A third article in the magazine by Dennis Crane, discusses NitOC, our sister club in Orange County, but it also contains photos and text about Bates Beach.

The magazine has an estimated circulation of around 30,000 worldwide and is mailed to all current members of The Nudist Society Foundation.

### **August 20 - Tropical Storm Hilary, Earthquake Postpone Beach Picnic**

A serious Tropical Storm Warning and a moderate earthquake on the same day? We were very glad we decided to postpone our scheduled 8/20 Bates picnic that day for an additional week.

The fast-moving Hurricane Hillary moved up the coast from the Baja but quickly dissipated from a “Category 4” storm to just a heavy rain by the time it reached Carpinteria. It dumped an inch onto the town in three hours, and many of our members to the south received as much as three inches with moderate flooding.

The storm caused the churning ocean to carry away an estimated two feet depth of sand from Bates and it etched some terraced sand steps parallel to the shore. Revealed again were some of the rocks that we saw last winter that were otherwise hidden beneath the sand beneath our feet. There was also some newly fallen rock from the cliff above.

Nobody reported any damage from it nor from the 5.1 earthquake that hit mid-afternoon of the same day. The epicenter was in Ojai, about 20 miles from Bates.



### **The August 27 Beach Picnic**

Our members and friends responded to the postponement by coming in large numbers the following Sunday. The weather was perfect, with temps in the high 70’s, bright sun, and a sea temp around 68 degrees. A few people reported getting tar on their feet, attributed to the ocean churning it up off the bottom during the recent storm. The tar was easily removed with a few drops of baby oil.



*Sunset at Bates. Photos submitted by Helen*



*FOBB Director Gary Mussell (left) and Nudist Podcaster Evan Nix (right)*

### **FOBB Director Interviewed on Nudist Podcast**

On August 25, the Director of Friends of Bates Beach, Gary Mussell, was interviewed for 40 minutes on the **Planet Nude** podcast, available online.

The popular podcast covers current topics of interest to the nudist community. Its owner and main interviewer is Evan Nix, who also serves as a director of the Western Nudist Research Library in Corona, CA.

The interview is available at <https://www.planetnude.co>.

During the interview, Mussell recalls his history at Elysium Institute in Topanga, CA, before it closed, and of the founding of the SCNA club in Los Angeles.

He then discusses why he thought so many nudist clubs and parks had closed during the past 20 years and what was the winning business model that kept the remaining clubs alive and thriving.

He also discusses the long-term effects that the Internet, social media, and cell phones have had on naturism/nudism during the past fifteen years and how the future of that movement may look in another fifty years including the ongoing effort to attract a younger generation to the beaches and parks.

### **August 26 - Carpinteria Skateboard Park Opens**

It has taken about ten long years of petitioning, fundraising, planning, and construction to get it done, but the young dreamers who wouldn’t say no finally got their way, as the long-anticipated Carpinteria Skateboard Park next to City Hall finally opened to the public on August 26.

Friends of Bates Beach purchased two \$100 sidewalk bricks for their fundraiser. Our bricks join about a hundred others that line the sidewalk surrounding the play area.

## **SEPTEMBER**

### **September 12 - Park Rangers Visit Bates**

On the afternoon of September 12, three park rangers drove down the Bates pedestrian ramp and drove across the sand to visit our designated area. Someone had called in a complaint and at their discretion law enforcement may respond. It doesn’t happen very often. No tickets were issued. The police report said everyone was polite and cooperative.



Some of our cleanup volunteers pose with their collected trash.

### September 23 - Beach Cleanup And Picnic

The annual California Beach Cleanup Day event began early – 9 AM! – as we counted 28 participants in the morning, the largest number of volunteers in many years. FOBB co-director Robert Bye managed the check-in table, had people sign a waiver form, and assigned groups of two or three to look for trash and recyclables along the 3.5 miles of beach, the hiking trail above, and the parking lot. In 2+ hours, these teams had collected 86 pounds of trash. Across California, it was reported over 25,570 volunteers had picked up 126,605 pounds of trash from its beaches, lakes, and river beds, and an additional 7,041 pounds of recyclable materials, for a total of 133,645 pounds or 67 tons.

## OCTOBER

### False Complaints Gets FOBB Booth Removed From Avocado Festival

By any measure, Friday, October 6, was a very successful day for Friends of Bates Beach at its Avocado Festival booth in Carpinteria. Our new location in the high-traffic area brought us many visitors, almost all supportive and enthusiastic about our being there, and we collected nearly 300 names and emails from our raffle.

We said hello to several members of the city council who came by the booth, and Supervisor William’s Field Deputy Spencer Brandt also dropped by to say he approved of the way we were running our booth.

But there are always a few complainers who ask out loud why we were allowed to be there. This is a normal occurrence and as a rule, we never engage with them as their minds are already made up. We didn’t expect a couple of them to take their anger to the next level.

At 7:30 AM the following morning. I was awoken by a phone call from the Festival director, Olivia Sorgman, that she had received two complaints that we were soliciting minors because we allowed them to spin our prize wheel. I told her we always asked everyone – all ages – who walked by to spin the wheel and win a small prize.

She said our booth was being removed from the show at that moment, our contents packed up and placed on the sidewalk, (see photo) and can we please come and pick them up? There was no discussion, no explanation allowed, we were just out.

This after five years of being in the Festival, always working our booth the same way, without any complaints.

Obviously, these two complainers saw what they wanted to see and heard what they wanted to hear, and they strongly disagreed with the subject of us promoting the nearby clothing-optional beach. Perhaps we were set up?

On October 15, I

wrote a strong but constructive letter to the Festival organizers that we are an ongoing part of the community, and we will find another way to get our positive message out to our friends in the local business community. I also demanded a refund of all booth fees (about \$800).

They ignored the letter. A second letter was sent by registered mail a month later, also demanding our refund and threatening legal action if we did not get it. On December 1, we received a check for \$700 with no apology.



### Avocado Festival Survey Showed Strong Support For Nude Recreation

Each year since 2017, we traditionally do an informal survey at our AvoFest booth of our visitors asking their opinion about having an official clothing-optional beach nearby and a second question about top freedom in general.

Although our booth was only up for one day and our total visitor count was about half its normal sample (154 votes this year compared to 234 votes in 2022), the results were much more positive this year:

Results of our two-question survey:

1. Santa Barbara County should designate a section of beach for **clothing-optional recreation**. The beach should have **proper signage** so people can decide whether to go there or not.

<b>I agree (Yes)</b>	<b>84%</b>
<b>I do not agree</b>	<b>8%</b>
<b>No opinion</b>	<b>8%</b>

2. Women should be allowed to be top-free wherever men are allowed to do so.

<b>I agree (Yes)</b>	<b>56%</b>
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The results showed a remarkable increase in the “Yes” vote after 5:30 PM, where the mostly younger “date night” crowd voted **93% “Yes”** for the clothing-optional beach and **70% Yes** on the Top Freedom question.

As always, these results will be forwarded to the Carpinteria City Council and the County Board of Supervisors to demonstrate our positive community support for our cause.

## DECEMBER

### A Happy And Merry Holiday Luncheon Party

The Simi Valley Cultural Center was the venue for the Holiday Party on Saturday, December 16.

Our catered buffet meal, again provided by The Green Acres Market, consisted of roast chicken and veggies, BBQ tri-tip, au gratin potatoes, BBQ beans, Caesar salad, and dinner rolls. Desserts included apple pie, white cake with cheesecake filling, and a couple of Heavenly Tuxedo chocolate cakes. Madeline brought her homemade showstopper, an individual Bavarian Cream Meringue filled with Amaretto Crème Brulé.

Presidential Certificates of Merit were given to the newsletter team, Gary Mussell, Cynthia Holbach, Mike Glinzak, Jim Rea, and Tim Doggett. The (in)famous Rubber Chicken Award was presented to member Theresa McCauley for her consistently excellent potluck contributions. The Volunteer of the Year award went to Harold Goldstein for his tireless work at the beach, at club parties, and at the AvoFest booth this year. Bob Morton was inducted into the Hall of Fame. Last but not least, Cynthia won the Ugly Sweater Contest.

To conclude, the White Elephant gift exchange provided several steals. "Gifts" included snuggle blankets, several; bottles of wine, books, a mini-waffle maker, Male/Female naked torso ornaments, skin care kits, a leather briefcase, a mankini candy thong, and a set of Dodger bobblehead dolls. Robert Bly received many laughs when he opened his gift, a rubber hand mitt with three-inch fingers for massaging and brushing one's scalp and hair. Perfect for Robert's shaved head!



The Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> beach outing was sunny and warm, although the water temperature was a brisk 62°F. Pictured above are Helen, Diane, and Mark enjoying the day. At left is Lynn with her ukelele, entertaining everyone. Below is the lovely sunset that evening from the cliff above the beach.

### End-of-Season Halloween Party Sees Large Turnout

The call went out to nudist witches and warlocks, ghosts and goblins, spooks, and spirits to assemble at Peter Connolly's hilltop retreat above Camarillo on Saturday, October 26 for the annual club Halloween Party.

This year's event brought a sunny afternoon and a quickly cooling evening for the three dozen attendees. This year's celebration potluck included themed dishes. Later in the evening, nudists "dressed" in their finest Halloween costumes, featuring a gamut of characters including Scott's Hard Salami, and Nathalie's Great Pumpkin. Robert got Honorable Mention dressed in the Emperor's New Clothes. Third place winners were Valentina and Tim as Senior Citizen Adam & Eve. Second place went to Sonya and Tony as the Pool Ghouls and first place to Steven for his great homemade costume of Namor from Wakanda Forever.

