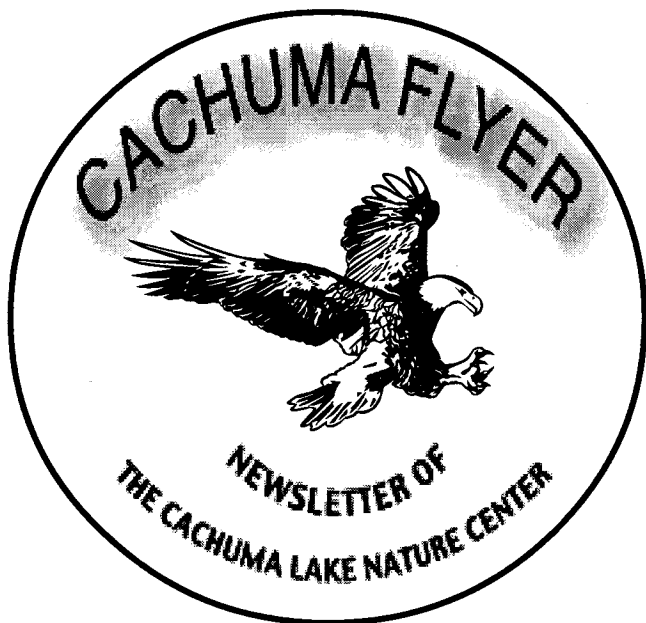




#64 JULY / AUGUST 2003

FEATURED THIS ISSUE:



BUGS 'N' BATS



WE'RE 15!



MEMORIAL
DAY



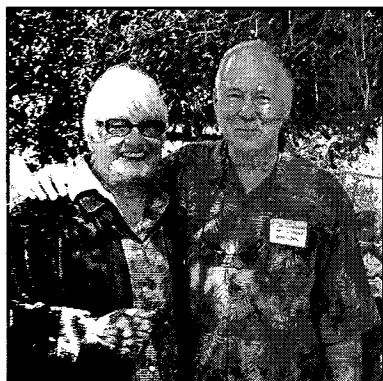
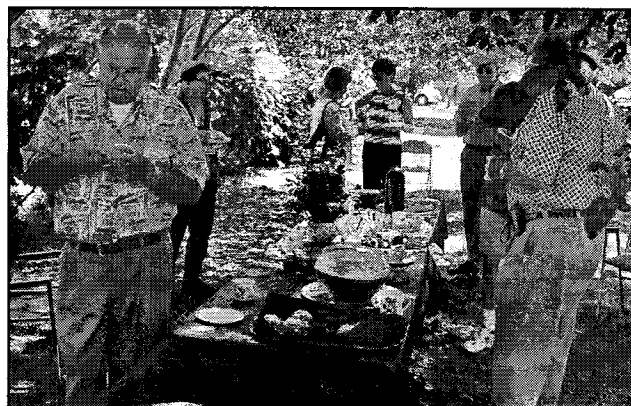
MORE!

CLASSY COFFEE LURES PROSPECTIVE DOCENTS

On June 26, a "Classy Coffee" was held at the Nature Center for the purpose of recruiting new volunteers. Approximately 20 people attended including the organizers, Barbara Gutmann and Linda Taylor. Nine from Santa Barbara and the Santa Ynez Valley were potential volunteers who came with docents or members of the board.



Neal Taylor demonstrated fly-tying and casting to entertain guests who were treated to an array of refreshments, coffee, tea and punch. Docent president Bill Hodges took all on a tour through the workshop. Hopefully, members of the organization have followed up the event by inviting their guests to our next docent meeting.



**CONGRATULATIONS
TO
OUR NEW RECRUITS!**

WE ARE 15!

"Dad, can I buy a car now?"

THE NATURE CENTER'S FIFTEENTH "BIRTHDAY"

A "birthday party" will be held on July 19, in honor of the fifteenth anniversary of the founding of the Nature Center. Decorated cakes and lemonade will be served on the lawn at the Center at 12:30. Susan Ham, who has organized children's activities for several years at the Trout Derby, will plan activities with the help of docents and naturalists. Invitations have been mailed to 75 teachers who have brought their classes to the Center in the last few years. Other publicity will be going to newspapers and flyers will be posted in the Park.

Hung above the entry kiosk is a banner which will remain throughout the summer urging visitors to come to the Center in celebration of the anniversary. A Fifteenth Anniversary fund raiser is in the planning stages for October. Currently being considered is a barbecue and barn dance to be held at the Recreation Hall at Cachuma.

THE HI DESERT MUSEUM

By Don Wimpres



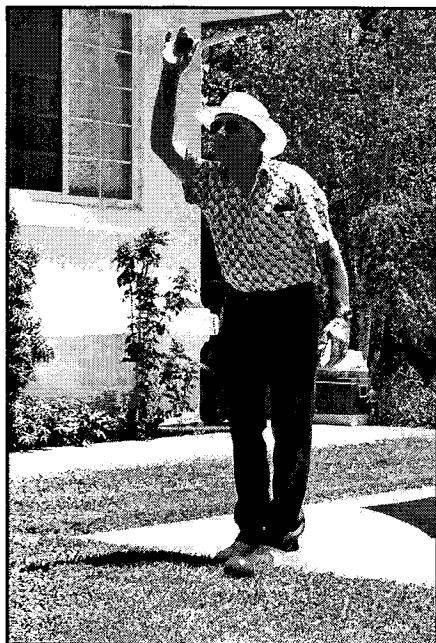
Betty and I have visited a lot of small museums throughout the Southwest, but probably the finest of them all is the Hi Desert Museum in Yucca Valley. Located about one block from the intersection of highways 62 and 247, it is open from 10:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. every day but Monday and major holidays. It is a "must see" for any nature-lover traveler through this area.

Many of the exhibits look professionally done, and I was surprised to find out that they were constructed by volunteers. They had one of the most extensive mineral collections I've ever seen outside a major museum, and were displayed in a most professional manner. There were a number of dioramas with various denizens of the desert, all most professional, but constructed by the volunteers. They had a small collection of various local wildlife in glass-fronted display cages built into one wall. There was also the "kid's room" with many things to keep younger children occupied as they constructed, manipulated, and studied. There was a unique "archaeological" box in which the budding archaeologist could uncover various artifacts, brushing away the overlying sand to reveal the secrets hidden beneath.

I would strongly recommend any of our group, if traveling through Yucca Valley, to take a little extra time to locate and visit this wonderful place. Located at the Community Center Complex, 57116 Twenty-nine Palms Highway

MEMORIAL DAY POTLUCK

Enough good food showed up at the CLNC Memorial Day Potluck to feed the Iraqi Kurds and the State of Florida, (Well, that's a little exaggerated - maybe just Dade County) and that's a lot of food! And quality too! Thanks to Patricia and Jerry Martin for opening their beautiful home and park-like grounds to us. It was a nice sunny day - the wine and click of the Bocce balls made one dream of the sun-kissed hills of Sicily - humph - one wakes up and goes back for more *Cicroni*. Dick and Daryl showed professional tossing skills in flinging (is the past tense of "fling" either "flung" or "flang"?). All went well until the shadows lengthened and the West Nile Mosquitoes started zeroing in on us of Royal blood. As titled, the day was one to remember.



• DICK SHOWS
CHAMPIONSHIP
FORM

A LITTLE MORE •
WINE PERHAPS?



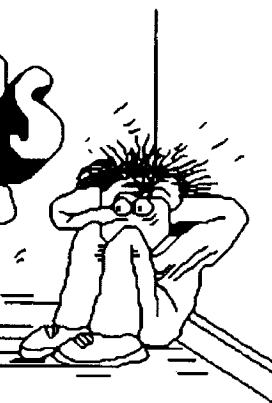
• IT DOESN'T GET
MUCH BETTER
THAN THIS!

I'M CLOSER •
THAN YOU!



We're trying something new this time: Electronic printing input. Why? Printing out the images on paper, then having the Xerox printer scan these masters means an extra step in the reproduction process. The goal is to produce better photos, and the paper masters have a limited dynamic range. It's been a tricky process to take color digital pictures and turn them into quality B+W printed halftones. Now, there will be no difference between what the computer monitor shows and what the printer input sees. Now, as in rocket launching, nothing ever goes as it's supposed to do; so if all you see is black smudges where the photos belong, have pity; we'll be back next time to try again!

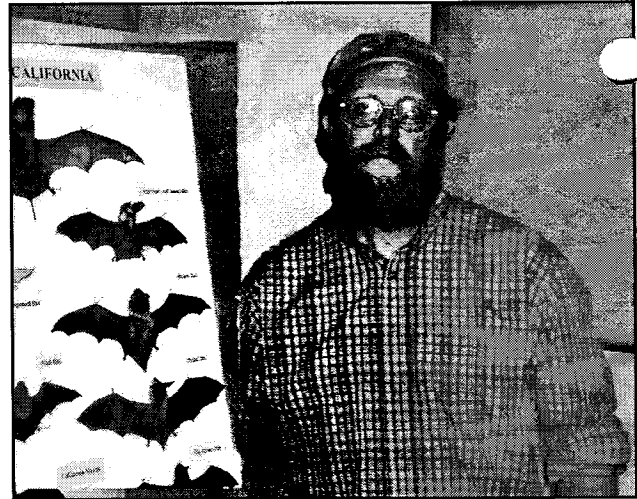
Editor's Corner



THE NATURE CENTER GOES "BATS"

The docents and friends were treated to a very interesting talk about a little known but substantial part of our animal population: bats. Mr. Paul Collins, Curator of Vertebrate Zoology, Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, related that bats are the only flying mammals and vary a great deal in size and food preferences. Bats are nocturnal, sleeping during daylight hours and feeding at night. They are sensitive about their habitat, seeking safety in crevices and hollows. Paul had several slides showing how bats squeeze into the narrowest of cracks or into tiny hollows. Of course, there are large caves holding many thousands, even millions, of bats. Bat species vary in size and hunting methods. Bats use a highly defined set of sonar to detect prey, usually insects. Some bats prefer to fly above vegetation seeking insects on leaves below them, while other bats have evolved in size and maneuverability to be able to fly in dense vegetation to access their prey. One important guideline established in the talk was the fact that being under bats for more than a short time is very unwise; they defecate freely, so before very long, one might resemble the Biblical Lot's Wife, but rather than a pillar of salt, one would quickly become a pillar of guano. This very interesting and informative talk made the 90 minutes pass quickly; after a short break, most of the audience followed Paul onto one of the trails to look for real-time bats. The group walked to the edge of Harvey's Cove to see the bats hunt over the water. Paul had an electronic device that translated the high-pitched bat sounds into a lower frequency that human ears could hear. It proved to be very effective; five different species were detected and observed.

The attendees numbered about 25, including some new docent trainees and also the public. Many thanks to Paul for a very enjoyable and informative presentation. Below are some "bat myths" found on a very comprehensive web site which presents a lot of information about bats: www.jaguarpaw.com/Bats.html



- Bats are not blind; they see quite well and rarely do they live in belfries, as birds commonly do.
- Bats are not designated rabies carriers. They contract and die from rabies much like humans, cats, and dogs do.
- The odds that a person will die of a bat-borne disease are far less than those of being killed by a dog, a bee sting, or of food poisoning at a church picnic.
- Bram Stoker was the first person to link the vampire myths of Hungarian and Rumanian peasants with a bat that fed on human blood in his 1897 classic novel, *Dracula*.
- Hollywood tattooed the *Dracula* myth on the modern psyche. The 1931 film, *Dracula*. Bela Lugosi portrays the elegant count as he stands in an open balcony door, spreads his cape and silently takes flight as a small bat against the full moon.
- Pictures of vicious looking bats are taken by photographers who know more about pterodactyls than they do about bats. In order to get a full frontal, they tease the bat or blow in its face until the bat looks into the camera. The result is a great "vicious" picture of a petrified bat. In truth bats are shy, gentle and intelligent animals.
- Some bats echo locate as if "shouting", operating at loud as 110 decibels or the loudness of a smoke alarm. Others echo locate by "whispering" at 60 decibels, the level of normal human conversation.

SUMMER SKY SIGHTS

By Helen Osenga

The planet Jupiter has been dominating our winter and spring night sky, but now it is starting to slide off into the sunset. It will still be visible very low in the west during the early evening until mid August. Meanwhile Mars will begin to replace Jupiter as the bright planet in our sky rising in the east southeast about 11:00 pm or so by the middle of July and at twilight in the middle of August. Mars will be the center of attention for astronomers this summer and fall as it passes close to earth. This will be its closest pass in about 60,000 years. Two summers ago Mars also made a close passage, but astronomers had disappointing telescopic views as there were violent dust storms on the planet for months. Hopefully this time will be more successful, although with spacecraft visiting Mars we now get much more detailed images than we could ever get from Earth.

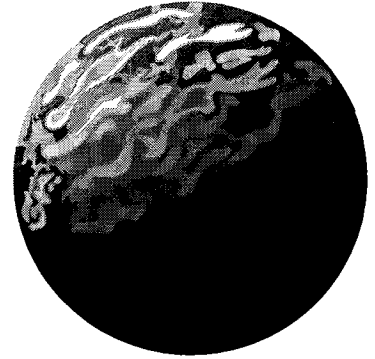
The Perseid Meteor Shower will be peaking on August 12; however, a bright moon will fill the sky and hide many of the meteors from view.

SEEN IN THE NATURE CENTER

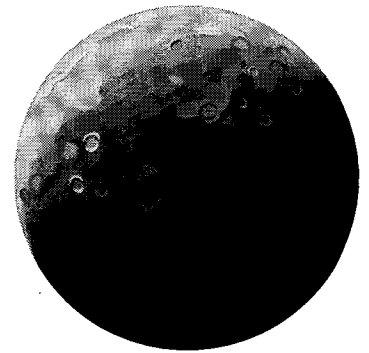


Neal Taylor draws on his extensive knowledge and story-telling gifts to inform and delight children of all ages. Your editor had the privilege to work with Neal in restoring and archiving a number of damaged 35mm slides that he had used in demonstrations for many years. It became evident that there's little he doesn't know about nature in general and fly fishing in particular. At the "Classy Coffee" event designed to attract new docents, it appeared to me that Neal stole the show with his fly tying and casting and probably attracted more new prospects than the delicious cakes. Anyway, here's to Neal: Hip, Hip, Hooray!

THE PLAYERS



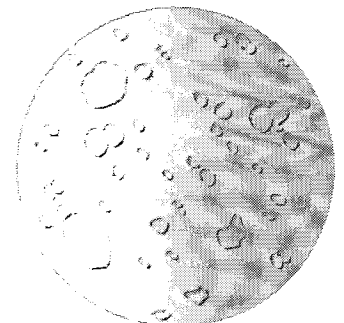
EARTH



MARS



JUPITER



MOON

BIG PARTY TO CONGRATULATE OUR NEW DOCENTS

PLEASE JOIN US ON SATURDAY, JULY 12, NOON TO 1 PM AFTER THE DOCENT MEETING
BRING YOUR BROWN BAG LUNCH AND WE'LL BRING THE CAKE!

YARD SALE AT THE NATURE CENTER

AUGUST 30

DONATE YOUR USED POSSESSIONS OR COME AND SHOP

FOR PICK-UP OF DONATIONS CALL 693-0691 TUESDAY THROUGH FRIDAY

THINGS TO PONDER WHEN TIRED OF THINKING ABOUT DEATH AND TAXES

- What is the speed of dark? • Did Washington just flash a quarter for his ID? • When you open a new bag of cotton balls, are you supposed to throw the top one away? • What happened to the first 6 "ups"? • Hermits have no peer pressure.
- If an orange is orange, why isn't a lime called a green or a lemon called a yellow? • I played a blank tape at full volume. The mime who lives next door complained. • How much deeper would the ocean be if sponges didn't live there? • It doesn't matter what temperature a room is, it's always room temperature. • I just got skylights put in my place; the people who live above me are furious. • I live on a one-way dead-end street. • Why does your nose run and your feet smell?

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- When I was in high school, I got in trouble with my girlfriend's Dad. He said, "I want my daughter back by 8:15" I said, "the middle of August? Cool!" • When your pet bird sees you reading the newspaper, does he wonder why you're just sitting there, staring at carpeting?



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EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

On May 31, Marion Schlinger, CLNC board member and entomologist, presented a training lecture for CLNC docents and volunteers. Following her slide presentation, she took attendees out into the field to find, catch and identify specimens.