

Cachuma Lake Nature Center Newsletter

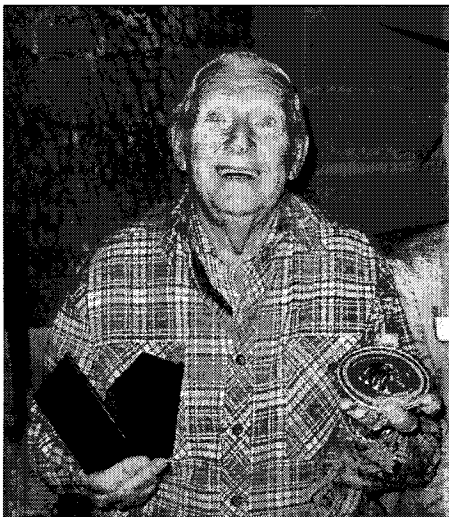
Issue 84

December 2006/January 2007



Cachuma Lake Nature Center Honors Volunteers

Dick Cofiell Docent extraordinaire was recently honored by Cachuma Lake Nature Center with the Ralph and Maggie Klages Award, which is given for extraordinary accomplishment, over a period of time, to further the goals of the Nature Center. It is the highest honor bestowed by the organization. Dick has served as president of the volunteer organization, acted as chair person of various committees, constructed exhibits, helped extensively with building maintenance, and been an outstandingly dependable hand during the Annual Trout Derby fund raiser. Currently he is in charge of a large project to build a handicapped accessible ramp to the Center's workshop.



Dick Cofiell rewarded for extraordinary service.

During the October 29, Recognition Event Roger Millikan was recognized as the Docent of the Year, for excellent leadership and organization of a series of Children's Photo Workshops at the Center. Roger also contributes consistently by providing photographs for publications and exhibits.

Helen Osenga was given a special award for extensive research to establish credit card use in the Center's gift shop and for training volunteers. Helen recorded 606 hours worked during the 2005-06 fiscal year.

Acknowledgement of other service to the Center went to Pat and Chuck McPartlin and Edgar

O'Campo, Santa Barbara, for many years of providing astronomy programs to Lake visitors. Greg Donovan of Ballard was singled out for service on the Board of Directors and extensive assistance with planning a native plant garden at the Center.

Anniversary pins were given to Fred Blaser 15 years; Barbara Gutmann and Tommie Miller 10 years; Dick Cofiell, Marilyn Whitfield and Jackie Fondren 5 years; Van Barr, Dianne Barr and Eileen Aylesworth 1 year.

A total of 4,948 hours were recorded by Nature Center volunteers.

Who Are Our Visitors?

Annie Ruano

Do you wonder who visits the Nature Center? Since July 1, we have had visitors from eighteen states and from the following countries: England, Scotland, Wales, Germany, Holland, Spain, Taiwan, Mexico, Brazil, Guatemala, and Sweden.

What do visitors think of the Center? Some of their remarks are

- Awesome
 - Fantastic
 - This place is fabulous
 - Terrific exhibits
 - Friendly docents
 - One of the best we've seen
 - Wonderful hands on exhibits
 - Thank you, nice people
- And on, and on....

PLEASE NOTE

Cachuma Lake Nature Center new mailing address
2265 Highway 154
Santa Barbara, CA 93105

P. S. This edition of the Newsletter was compiled by Patricia J. Martin. Hopefully our Editor Alan Schwartz's computer et al will be unglitched by the next edition. Happy Holidays ...pjm

Wily Coyote

Bob Runnels

Coyotes are one of the most primitive dogs, and are absolutely Native American animals. According to fossil remains, a close relative of the contemporary coyote existed here two to three million years ago. A division between wolves and coyotes occurred about one to two million years ago. As time passed, other animals came and went: mammoths, saber toothed cats, dire wolves and native horses, but the coyote remained basically the same--primitive but flexible, progressive and innovative.

Coyotes consume a great variety of foodstuff but they depend primarily on meat—rodents or rabbits, usually, but also woodchucks, weasels, opossums, otters, snakes, frogs, berries, acorns, other fruit, onions, watermelons, fish, corn, bobcats, domestic cats and dogs, and even carrion.

They are clever and adapt their hunting technique to varied situations. Sometimes they will pretend not to see prey while they trot through a herd or flock. They use stealth, or charge and pounce. In Death Valley they trot along the shoulder of the road until a vehicle stops and then go around the vehicle, waiting for a handout—beggar coyotes.

Contacts between western trappers, pioneers and cattlemen were peaceful; some of the coyote's ways reminded these early folks of themselves. When sheep farming arrived, coyotes became enemy number one. In 1915, a federal campaign to control them began. A conservative estimate is that twenty million coyotes were "controlled." This program continues, but while it may have been successful in some areas, the coyotes have won. They adapted by returning to their home ranges, temporarily, until the exterminators left and pressure eased.

For many centuries coyotes were largely restricted to regions west of the Mississippi between central Mexico and southern Canada. By the early 1900's they extended their range to Costa Rica and Alaska. They followed miners to the Yukon in the 1890's and fed on dead horses, mules and cattle. During the past eighty years the major coyote movement has been toward the Atlantic coast. Settlers have cleared millions of acres attracting woodchucks and other favorite prey. Some coyotes invaded the southeast, advancing from Texas, Oklahoma and Kansas, and they moved into the Ohio Valley. Coyotes reached the Northeast by way of Minnesota, Ontario, Michigan and New York.

They are now found throughout New England and the Middle Atlantic states, except Delaware. Hawaii is the only other state without resident coyotes.

So, enjoy the barking, singing and howling because coyotes are here to stay.



Old Fashioned Fishing Day

Linda Taylor

It is a toss up to determine who is the most enthusiastic at the Kids' Old Fashioned Fishing Day—the kids? The parents? The volunteers? Much excitement was evident as approximately seventy-five children between the ages of five and fifteen years threw their lines into the Cachuma Lake swimming pool with hopes of catching large Rainbow Trout. *Every child caught at least two fish!*

Using old fashioned bamboo poles, bobbers and plastic worms the young anglers were assisted by twenty-seven volunteers who baited hooks, removed fish, tied on hooks, untangled lines, took photos, and sold doughnuts, coffee and fresh squeezed orange juice (thanks to Lynda Williams-Terres).

With an improved system of admitting children, the long lines of 2005 were eliminated. One heroic volunteer, Mike Buck, cleaned 87 fish for a donation to the Nature Center of a dollar a fish.

Although most helpers were adults, two young teens, Serena Bruhn and Jake Shipman, respectively greeted anglers and assisted by netting kids' catches.

This event is co-sponsored by the Nature Center and the Santa Barbara County Park Department which purchases the trout, drains and fills the pool, and supplies aerators to keep the fish healthy.

Your Contributions at Work

Susan Ham

Saturday, October 21st a much larger than expected crowd of kids and parents enjoyed CREEPY CREATURES day at the Nature Center. Guest expert Melinda Alvarado brought live bats; Alice Abela showed off her collection of tarantulas, lizards, snakes, toads, and scorpions. Gabrielle

Drozowski showed her now famous "Max," a Great Horned Owl, and a tiny blind screech owl. and Helen Osenga displayed bones and skulls of local mammals, birds and reptiles. Many photos were taken and everyone received lots of information and education.

A witch and volunteers did face painting and poured cups of "brew" (lemonade) from a "smoking" cauldron and handed out bags of popcorn. Enthusiasm for the program and learning about these creatures was so high that participants didn't want it to end.

Many thanks to all the Nature Center board members, volunteers, docents, Naturalists and our guest experts. Support for the program was a cooperative effort between the Park Naturalists and the Nature Center. And as they say on Public Television..."made possible by people like you." Thank you for your continued support of the Center and these outstanding activities.

The Winter Sky

Helen Osenga

Sometimes it is hard to tell when winter arrives in Southern California, however one look at the evening sky will announce its arrival. Winter is the time of year when all the brilliant stars are on display. Of course the most prominent display is put on by Orion, the hunter, and the accompanying constellations of Canis Major, Orion's big hunting dog; Canis Minor, Orion's little hunting dog; Gemini, the twins; Auriga, the chariot driver; Taurus, the bull; and the Pleiades, the Seven Sisters, a small cluster of stars in the body of the bull.

Face the east to find these constellations in the evening sky. The very bright blue-white star, Sirius, in the big dog and bright star Procyon in the little dog are just above the eastern horizon. Sirius, also known as the dog star, is to the right of Procyon. Sirius is the brightest star in our sky. It is bright for two reasons: it is fairly close to us at a distance of 9 light years and it is very hot. Following a big circle of bright stars we go to the left and higher to Pollux and Castor the heads of Gemini, the twins. Continue on around the circle up to Capella in Auriga, the chariot driver. Then you come on around to the right to Aldebaran, a bright reddish star (the eye of the bull), in the V shaped cluster marking the face of Taurus, the bull. Just above this you will notice a small cluster of stars known as the Pleiades or the

Seven Sisters. From Aldebaran continue the circle down to the bright star Rigel, the left knee of Orion, the hunter. Orion's belt is shown as three bright stars in a line oriented vertically to the eastern horizon. From Rigel come down to the left to Sirius to complete the circle.

During the end of December two bright planets will begin to appear in the evening sky. Venus will be hard to see at first low in the southwest shortly after sunset. Every week Venus will become more prominent as it climbs higher in the sky. Saturn will be rising in the eastern sky as early as 9 pm and by midnight it will be high in the southeastern sky. Jupiter will be visible in the early morning sky starting in mid December and on into January.

The peak viewing time for the Geminid meteor shower, Wednesday December 13, is from late evening on Wednesday until dawn on Thursday. You may see a meteor every minute or two. The waning third quarter moon will be rising around 1 or 2 am.

Sponsors for Zoo to You

If you have ever had the opportunity to attend a **Zoo To You** presentation and have the opportunity to interact with the different animals that come to visit, you may want to consider underwriting the cost (\$600) for our May 2007 event. To be a sponsor (for part or for whole) please contact Linda Taylor at the Nature Center.

Shopping Days Left

The Cachuma Lake Nature Center Gift Shop is stocked full of many wonderful items that will make great holiday gifts and stocking stuffers. Dazzling sun catchers, tinkling wind chimes, charming animal hand puppets and finger puppets, beautifully photographed bird magnets, attractive T-shirts and a great selection of nature books are only a few of the treasure trove of gifts ready for the giving. For your convenience MasterCard and Visa charge cards are now viable currency in the Gift Shop. Get your holiday gifts and support the Nature Center.



Cachuma Lake Nature Center
2265 Highway 154
Santa Barbara, CA 93105
(805) 693-0691
clnatctr@sbceo.org
Executive Director- Linda Taylor

Board of Directors
President - Patricia J. Martin
Vice President - Kirby Duncan
Secretary - Sandi Witcher
Treasurer - Paul Barrett
Directors -
Carol Smagala
Neal Taylor

Docent Officers
President - Sandi Witcher
Vice President - Brian Lincoln
Secretary - June Pusley
Treasurer - Bob Runnels

S. B. County Park Naturalist Office
- (805) 688-4515
Naturalist - Liz Mason Gaspar
Assistant Naturalists - Halli Pedersen,
Melissa Kelly

Coming Events
Volunteer Photo Workshop - Jan. 20
Kids & Big Buddies Birding Day -
February 11

Guided Nature Walk -
Sat. 10:00 - 11:30 am
Junior Rangers -
Sat. 12:30-1:30

Lake Cruises-
Eagle Cruises through February
Wed. thru Sun. - 10-12 noon
Fri. & Sat. 2-4 pm

Nature Center & Gift Shop
Thurs & Fri. 12 noon - 4 pm
Wed. & Sat. 10 am. - 4 pm
Sun. 11-2 pm

**For more details about the above
programs and special events see
"Calendar of Events" at
www.cachuma.com**

Memberships & Donations

Since October Newsletter

Richard and Diana Bison
Barbara & Jim Gutmann
Fritz & Hildegard Amacher
Antoinette and Shawn Addison
Eileen Avery
Jackie Fondren
Kim Albright
Mr. And Mrs. Bob Norris
Paul Roark
Mary Lloyd Mills (Major Donor)
Jerry and Patricia Martin
Nick Buckler
Sharon Trotter
Liz Mason-Gaspar
Zelda Hughes
JoAnne Treloar

CACHUMA LAKE NATURE CENTER, INC
2265 HIGHWAY 154
SANTA BARBARA, CA 93105