



#61 JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2003

FEATURED THIS ISSUE:



ZOO
TO
YOU

CHRISTMAS
PARTY PHOTOS



PEACOCKS
ENDANGERED



EAGLES!

LOW COST

~~CHEAP~~ HOUSING

MORE!

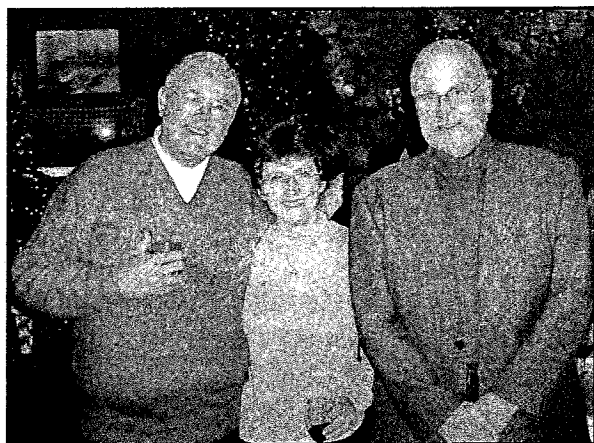
GOING
MY WAY?



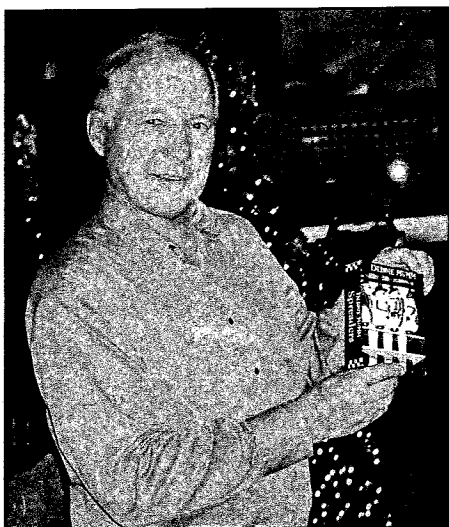
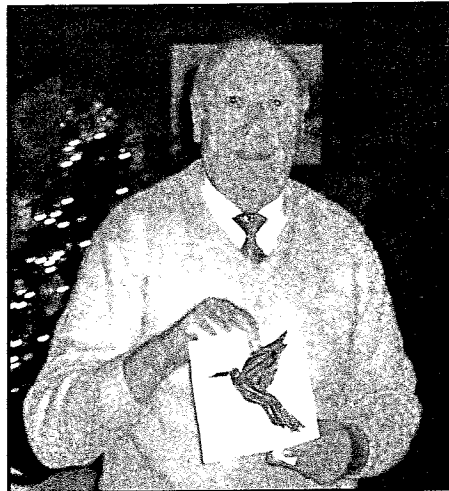
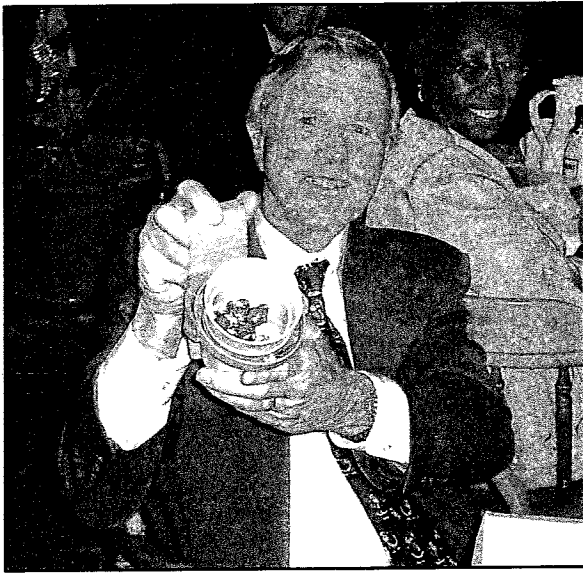
CACHUMA LAKE NATURE CENTER CHRISTMAS PARTY



And it was a swell party! Over 40 attendees, all enjoying good food and drink and exchanging white elephant presents in an atmosphere of general merriment. A plea; If you don't see yourself or your significant other in any of the photos, it's probably 'cause you were always lurking in dark places, or had your eyes tightly closed, or were in an unflattering pose, or most likely, the victim of a incompetent photographer. *Lo mucho siento, me amigos.*



MORE CHRISTMAS PARTY PHOTOS





EAGLE COUNTING

Braving the morning cold and patchy fog, a hardy group of 36 eagle counters were dispersed by Official Dispersers Halli Prior and Liz Mason to 16 points around the Lake to spot and track the stately birds. By noting the time and direction of flight when a bird is spotted by an observer, it is possible for Liz, the coordinator of the eagle counting effort, to piece together the gathered data and conservatively estimate how many bald eagles are in the Cachuma Lake area. The group of eagle spotters assembled in front of the Nature Center, rehashed the morning's efforts and enjoyed some light refreshments provided by the Trader Joe's store in Goleta. Our thanks to TJs, and to Helen Osenga for picking up all the goodies and preparing them for the tired and hungry eaglers.

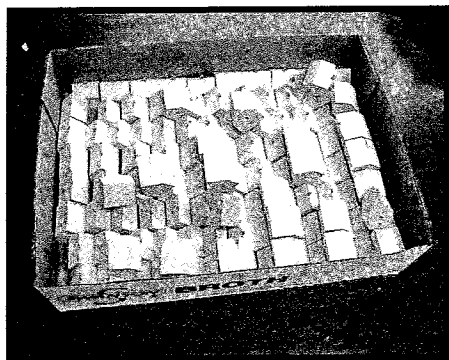


A "KING" EAGLE

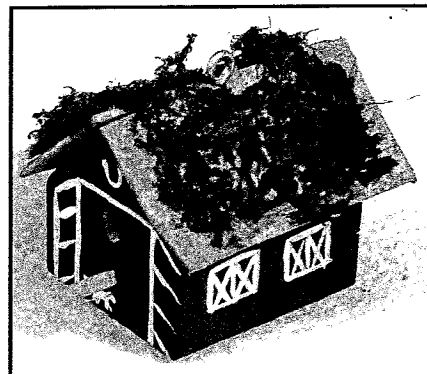


Loiterers hanging around the party (hoping to blend into the crowd to get a share of the donated goodies) think they heard Liz, after a quick look at the information just turned in by the spotters, tentively suggest the tracked eagles might number four immature birds and two adults. The birders seemed to agree with that preliminary analysis, although Liz will announce the official count in the next newsletter. Other birds also had been noted while the spotters kept vigil. Everyone seemed enthused about the success of the eagle count, which is part of a nation-wide effort. The results will be forwarded to federal and university monitors who then can combine the data from many venues to assess the recovery status of the species. The Annual Mid-Winter Bald Eagle Survey is coordinated in California by the Santa Cruz Predatory Bird Research Group, who have been doing it for 25 years. They have maps of the adventures of radio-tagged eagles on their website, <http://www.scpbrg.org>.

LOW COST HOUSING BUT... YOU GET WHAT YOU PAY FOR.



Another Levittown in the Making?



THE RESULTS OF
OUR EFFORTS



Maybe the Center could qualify for a government grant; all we'd have to do is title our request: Non-profit entity builds low-cost housing in a community with documented great need.

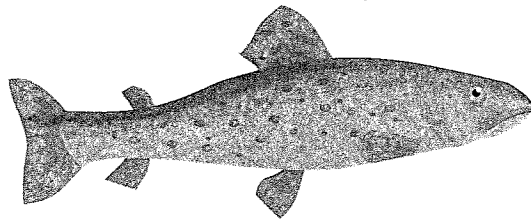
(Send us, oh, maybe \$2 million for feasibility studies)



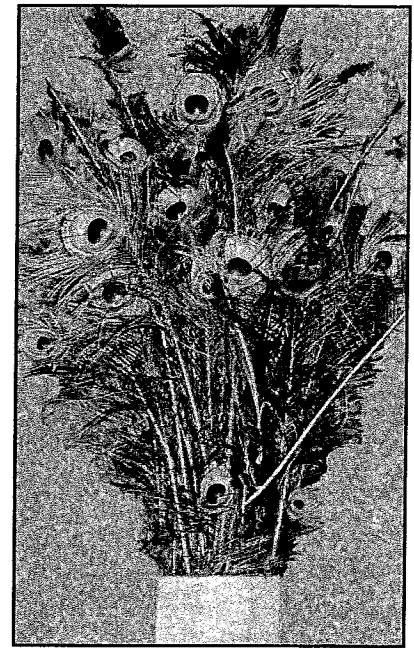
NO KITCHENS, NO BATHROOMS, NO BEDROOMS (But what did you expect for \$3.50?)

There is a very great need for low-cost housing; the Do-cent's responded by constructing and decorating many new houses. Suitable tenants are a problem however. Anything larger than an ant would be severely cramped. Not to worry, ants need love too, so get out the paint and brushes and join our creative crew in making a bunch of Christmas ornaments. The result was a wide range of tiny buildings, ranging from a church in upper Vermont to high-tech houses covered with computer-generated walls and roofs. The idea was to sell these in our Gift Store; an attractive display tree was used to show off our creations to the buying public. Unfortunately, ants have no cash or credit, so sales were slow. No matter, it was a lot of fun for all concerned.

DON'T FORGET! TROUT DERBY APRIL 5th AND 6th



It was quite a surprise when the white elephant gifts were opened during our Christmas party. It seemed that the women really wanted the combination wrench / screwdriver; it was pried out of Liz's grip more than once by other women. When questioned later, Liz claimed it was her desire to have simplified, basic and utilitarian things like the combination wrench set. I personally think it's a symbol of power; men lust after tools, even if they have something just like it home. After, you never know if your torque wrench might break, and it would be nice to have a spare. Well, I, I have never used it yet, but I gotta be ready! If I were younger and more on the ball (Reference: current IBM computer ad) I'd set up one of those fashion pushcarts just outside of Nordstroms, and fill it with tool reference items, like jewelled tool belts, color-coordinated pliers and screwdriver sets, and yes, combination wrench sets! A person would sell out daily! What an idea!

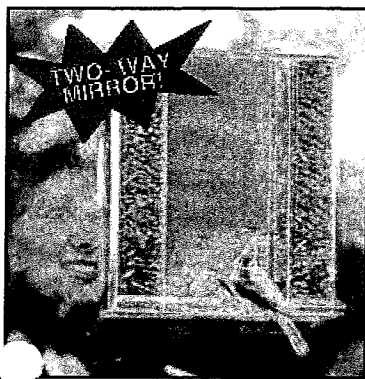


Black and white printing doesn't do justice to these beautiful feathers

Barbara Gutmann's sister, Nancy, visited the Center, and brought along some elegant peacock feathers.

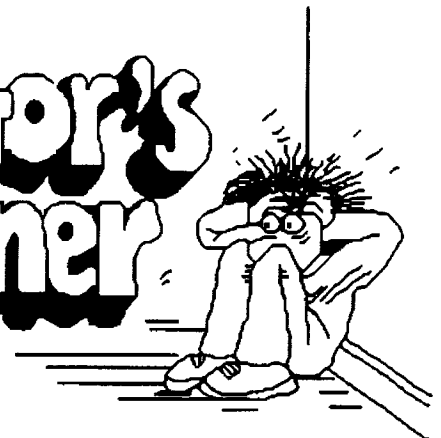
They have been a hit in the Gift Shop; many have been sold already. The only loser is the peacock.

Stop by the Shop and see how beautiful they are.



The picture shown here pops up in my e-mail in-basket two or three times a night; the pitch is to install the bird feeder and watch them eating, unaware that you're watching. Note, however, the expression on the woman's face; she's not looking at the birds, she's probably looking in her neighbor's windows, safe behind her mirrored glass. And her expression would indicate something exciting is happening next door. So be aware: Stay away from all mirrored windows!

Editor's Corner

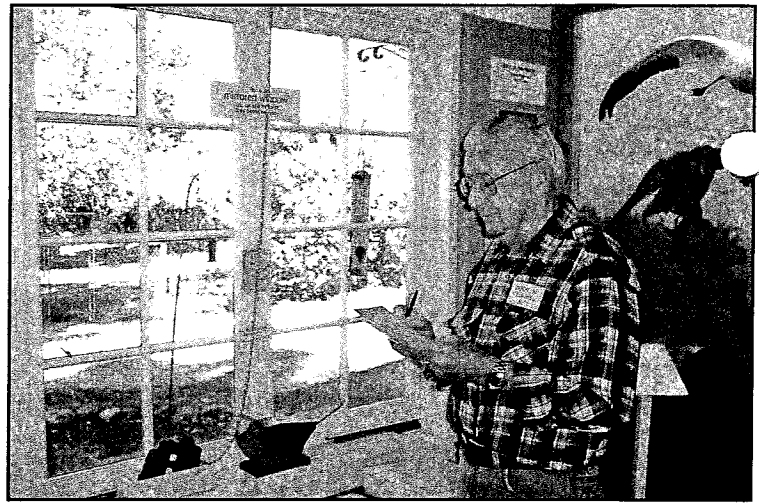


FEEDERWATCH 2002-2003

The Cachuma Lake Nature Center participates in the Project FeederWatch which is sponsored by the Cornell University Lab of Ornithology. This season begins the 16th season that Project Feeder watch has been in existence.

Project FeederWatch is a winter-long survey of birds that visit at backyards, nature centers, community areas, and other locales in North America. Those who participate in this project periodically count the highest number of each species they see at their feeders from November through April. FeederWatch helps scientists track broad scale movements of winter bird populations and long-term trends in bird distribution and abundance.

Project FeederWatch is operated by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology in partnership with the National Audubon Society, Bird Studies of Canada, and Canadian Nature Federation.



DICK KEEPS AN EYE ON FEATHERED VISITORS

One of the important functions at the Nature Center is bird study and observation, especially for visiting children. The Center has a large one-way mirror looking out on multiple feeders, the idea being that the feeding birds can't see any one who might be watching but can be seen from inside. The Center's one-way window is quite large, allowing multiple bird watchers access to the dozens of birds of many species that are normally present.

Anyone who has an interest in birds can participate. FeederWatch is conducted by people of all skill levels and backgrounds, including children, families, classrooms, retired persons, youth groups, nature centers, and bird clubs. We are registered again this year to participate in FeederWatch.

The task we have is to count birds that appear in our count site because of something that we provided (commercial or natural food, or water). For each species, we report only the highest number of individual birds that you saw in view at one time. By following a specific procedure, we are certain to avoid counting the same bird more than once. We report our bird counts to scientists at the Lab of Ornithology, either over the internet or on paper forms.

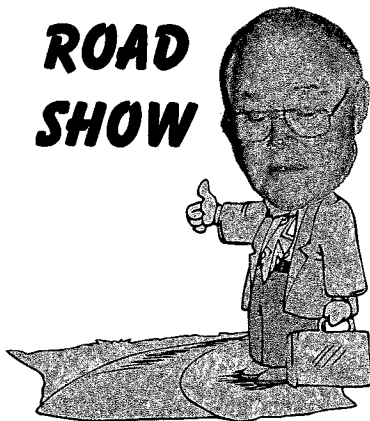
The FeederWatch area for Cachuma Lake Nature Center is basically the area you can see from the one-way window in the bird room. The FeederWatch area is defined as: from the building west to 6 ft. beyond the chain link fence; left from the window to the corner of the building (in front of the park bench); right to the chain link fence; the sky overhead and in the oak trees along the fence.

We have ten two-day FeederWatch periods from November through April which will be reported. We will watch on certain dates which are consecutive Wed. & Thurs. The FeederWatch counting method is designed to provide an index of abundance for each bird species. To ensure that the FeederWatch database can be used for scientific research, every FeederWatcher should count birds in the exact same way. The number that is reported to FeederWatch is the highest number of individuals of each species that were in view at one time.

FeederWatch is a marvelous opportunity to participate in a Nationwide endeavor. If you are interested in participating contact Helen Osenga for more information.

"The Roadshow" is a presentation which is intended to advertise the Nature Center with the goals of increasing attendance and volunteer participation. Neal Taylor uses his story-telling talent to give listeners a sense of the mission of the Center, the activities it provides and its needs, and to offer educational information about the Cachuma Lake Recreation Area.

ROAD SHOW



During 2002, Neal provided programming to the Kiwanis in Santa Maria, Santa Barbara, and Ventura; the Lions Club in Santa Maria; Rotary Club in Santa Maria, Ojai, Los Olivos, and Santa Barbara; docents of Santa Maria Museum of Natural History; and the men's club of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Goleta.

Although Neal offers to show slides, usually time is limited to twenty or thirty minutes and a "show and tell" period during which he discusses artifacts and other items from the Nature Center, stimulates interest in the talk. Brochures about the Nature Center and about Cachuma Lake Recreation Area are distributed. No direct appeal is made for volunteers or for Derby donations.

TWO RENEW ZOO TO YOU

Sponsors were lacking to again present the popular show Zoo To You that appeared at the Center last spring. Reservations had been made for a Cachuma Lake appearance this year, but funding had not been obtained. Usually some corporation or local business donates the cost (\$500), but things have been a little slow recently for charitable fund raising. (Maybe it's Enron's fault; most financial shortcomings are blamed on them nowadays). Anyway, at the Docents December 14 meeting, the grim alternative that the Center would have to pay the bill out of its treasury was sadly announced. Unable to endure such a thing, Your Editor, stirred from his torpor, shouted out that he would kick in half the cost, or \$250, if someone else would come up with the other \$250. Scarcely a millisecond later, another docent shouted out that she would accept the challenge, and Zoo To You was saved! For my part, the expense can be met with very little effort; I will drink cheaper wine (by the way, does any wine sell for less than Ripple?) and cut back on dating show girls. I also might cadge the left-overs from the pastries served at docent meetings.

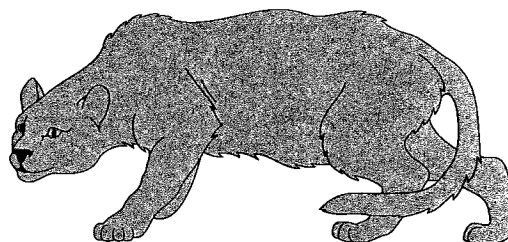
Washington Gazette

Whidbey Island, WA - May 10, 2001

FOWL PLAY

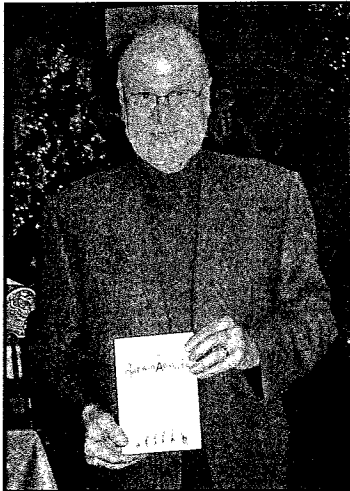
Sources stated yesterday that two bird nerd tourists were seen fleeing the scene of a Sandhill Crane nesting area at the Reifel Bird Sanctuary on Reifel Island, British Columbia. In an interview with Park Ranger Ida Warnedem, she reported that the two "fowl" birders were warned not to venture near the nests of the Cranes. Against better judgement of the Ranger, the birders craned their necks around a corner and were spotted by two nesting Cranes. Other guests at the sanctuary commented that they had never seen fowl run so quickly. Nose E. Onlooker had this to say, "you'da thought they (the fowl birders) were being chased by a herd of elephants at the speed with which they were fleeing the scene of the crime! These people are supposed to be smart! I heard that Hen Rutherford, identified a rare bird in Southern California last winter (2000). It is such a shame!" No Cranes were harmed in the incident. However, Park Officials stated that the birders, recently identified as Rooster and Hen Rutherford, by the Audubon Society's Head of the Most Wanted Birder Division, have been banned from the sanctuary for the rest of the mating and nesting season, and reportedly retreated to their "coupe".

- Submitted by Daryl Rutherford

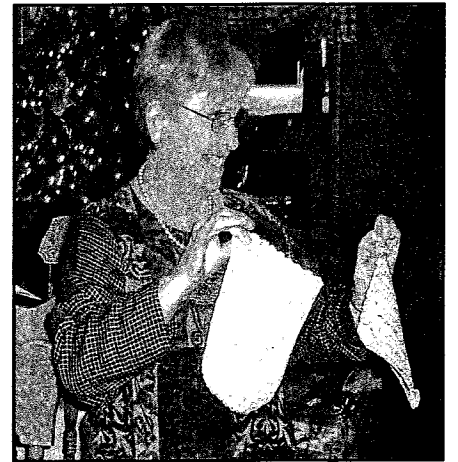


I'LL BE BACK!

EVEN MORE CHRISTMAS PARTY PHOTOS



MAC MAN
WILL STOP
ALL EVIL



CACHUMA LAKE NATURE CENTER
CACHUMA HC-58
SANTA BARBARA, CA 93105