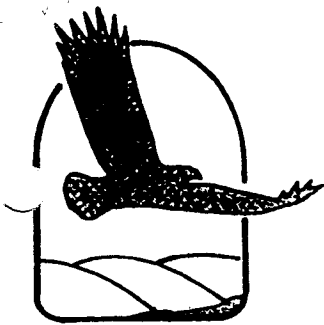




ISSUE NUMBER 52

CACHUMA FLYER

JULY/AUGUST 2001

LOOKING UP

WITH HELEN OSENGA

This summer's sky is dominated by the planet Mars. Look toward the south in the early evening and Mars will be the brightest object you'll see in the sky other than the moon. The red planet's rosy glow is joined to the right by the not quite as bright rosy glow of the star Antares, the heart of the Scorpion. Antares, the rival of Mars, is similar in color but dimmer. However, by the end of August Mars will have lost some of its brilliance as it increases its distance from earth. In June Mars came as close to us as 42 million miles, which is the closest in 13 years. Astronomers were excited and hoped to get good views of the planet through telescopes. However, one of Mar's famous dust storms has prevailed and mostly what is seen looks like a fuzzy orange tennis ball.

Getting back to Antares, look to the right and lower left for two fainter stars and again to the upper right for another trio of stars forming a vertical line known as the Head of the Scorpion. Follow the stars from the Head down through the Heart, Antares, as they form an "S" or fishhook shape looping to the left and ending in the two stars that form the stinger at the end of the Scorpion's tail. The Scorpion constellation is a favorite as it is one of the few that really look like what they are supposed to be.

To see more planets you will need to get up and out in the early dawn. Look eastward for the brilliant Venus with Jupiter close by in early August.

Dimmer yellow Saturn shines to their upper right.

(cont. p. 2)

BOBCATS

BY ANNIE RUANO

Bobcats are about 2 feet tall and weigh around 20 pounds. They're bigger than a house cat but are too small to prey on people. They are usually light brown to reddish brown. The babies are born with spots which fade as they grow up. Bobcats have a very short tail, 3 to 7 inches long. They keep their sharp claws inside their toes so they don't show in their foot prints.

Bobcats are curious like house cats but are shy and seldom come up to people and they don't make good house pets.

Bobcats are carnivores and have very sharp teeth. They live in woods and grassy areas. They are usually solitary and travel an area of 5 to 50 miles, are nocturnal and most of their prey are nocturnal animals. They also eat rabbits, rats, squirrels, ground birds, turkeys and even small or sick deer. Sometimes they will kill and eat chickens or lambs on a farm. They require about 3 lbs. of meat at a time so if they get a big animal, they will drag it to a safe place and cover it up, then return later to eat again and again.

Their eyesight and hearing is very good, and this helps them to be good hunters. The soft pads on their feet help them to sneak up on their prey. They put their back feet in the spot where their front feet have stepped, this way they don't make so much noise by snapping extra twigs as they stalk their prey. Bobcats can run up to 30 miles per hour, but would rather walk. They can climb and also swim but prefer not to.

(cont. p. 2)

IN MEMORIAM



GEORGE HUGHES

George Hughes, one of the original Docents of Cachuma Lake Nature Center, passed away on July 17, after a long illness. The part he played in the success of the Center was large: regular participation on Wednesday work days, providing "educational minutes" at the regular Docent meetings, writing his recollections of childhood experiences in the local area for the Cachuma Flyer, serving many times as an officer, including Docent President, and.....as the only reliable parliamentarian of the group!

George lived in the Goleta/Santa Barbara area his entire life, except while serving in the armed forces during World War II in the Pacific. A memorial celebration was held at Tucker's Grove Park which adjoins the farmland where he lived as a child.

Many children and teens are the better outdoors persons as a result of influence and teaching by George. He was involved most of his life with the 4-H program, continuing until very recently as a backpacking instructor. Indeed, bringing his 4-Hers to Cachuma to camp occasionally.

In addition to ranching, George worked for many years in the geology department at UCSB and was elected a Fellow of the Department of Geological Sciences this year. The honor was given for his work designing and building equipment for summer field classes and for research instrumentation, and in helping to organize many aspects of the Department and particularly summer field classes.

George leaves behind his wife Zelda, sons Richard and John and their wives, his daughter Kathy, and her husband, and seven grandchildren.

Linda Taylor

LOOKING UP (cont. p. 1)

The next Telescope viewing at Lake Cachuma will be the night of August 25. The Fireside Theater program begins at 8:00 pm with the telescope viewing beginning at 9:00 pm at the Dakota Plains area. Come join us for a great night of viewing the stars.

BOBCATS (cont. p. 1)

Bobcats live 10 -12 years. The young, usually 2 to 3 kittens, are born in the spring. When they are two months old they no longer require milk, so eat grown-up food. The young stay with their mother until the fall when they are half grown and weigh about 12 lbs. and are ready to be on their own.

Be sure to take a look at our new mounted Bobcat specimen in the animal room at the Nature Center. He (she?) is a beauty!!

CACHUMA LAKE NATURE CENTER

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The Nature Center can be reached at 805-693-0691, or clnatctr@sbceo.org.

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Retirement



Neal Taylor

A new era begins for Neal Taylor as the calendar turns on September 1. He is retiring from his job as Santa Barbara County Park Naturalist. He was hired in the early 1980's, first as a temporary employee, by then Park Department Director, Mike Pahos. In the early days, Neal rode through the Park on a bicycle pulling a small trailer loaded with a variety of articles that he used to provoke the interest of the campers in nature...animal pelts, bones, fossils, etc. At one time he had a live owl that had been found half drowned in the Lake. Now with his little (though noisy) John Deere he likes the easy access to visitors that these vehicles offer. During those years Neal did four evening programs each week during the summer: two fire-side theater programs a family movie night and a night hike each week.

When Mike Wylde, Park Supervisor, retired and moved out of the Ranch House where he was living, the new Park Supervisor, Ron Place, declined the opportunity to live there. Neal discussed use of some rooms for a nature center with Third District Park Commissioner Judy Johnson. She encouraged Neal to request the entire building from the Commission, to which they agreed, and Cachuma Lake Nature Center was conceived.

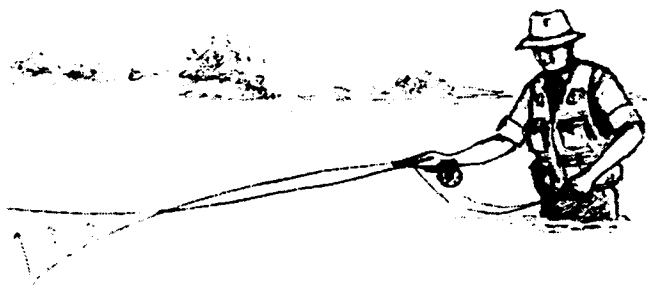
Neal's first love is fly fishing which he has taught at UCSB, Bakersfield College, Moorpark College, UC Irvine, UCLA, at Cachuma, and in week-long schools and weekend workshops in many western states. He will continue to teach locally and at UCLA.

At Fort Sam Houston and in Dayton, Ohio Neal served in the Air Force, working much of the time as a public relations officer. As a child in Summerland Neal and his brother had the great fortune to have a father who taught them skills and allowed them leeway for many adventures, particularly aboard a small sailboat which he helped them build. One of the classic tales of this era is that of Neal's spearing a whale with a homemade harpoon.....this may not have been the first fish he caught, but definitely it was the biggest!

In September Neal and his wife, Linda, will go to Scotland with her son and daughter-in-law. Highlight of the trip for him will be fishing in those famous Scottish trout streams. When he returns he expects to add a new dog, with which he can hunt, to their family.

The Nature Center is his pride and joy and he will not stray too far from it; he plans to continue involvement as a docent and/or board member. Neal says, "Cachuma has a special place in my heart. I sincerely hope that visitors will be careful in their use of the Park and will continue to take advantage of the growing programs and services offered by the Nature Center.

Linda Taylor





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



Valley Oak

PLANT OF THE MONTH

A LOST FRIEND



A huge Valley Oak (*Quercus lobata*) shaded the southwest corner of our Nature Center. It provided shade for the entire west side from the bench on the garden trail to the bird feeding station. It also provided a refuge for birds gathering to our feeders. Often it was populated with Band-tail Pigeons or various blackbirds and their ilk. The shy titmouse used its branches to make a secretive approach to the feeding station. It even harbored a family of raccoons in its hollowed trunk.

A few weeks ago a major branch, almost two feet in diameter, collapsed into the back yard. Then, just a short time ago, the branch reaching towards the Nature Center fell and tore off the back porch roof. Very soon the rest of the tree collapsed right down to the ground. The southwest corner of our compound is now bare and unshaded.

Why does a tree that looks as if it is in the prime of life suddenly collapse like that? All woody trees have dead wood in the center. The living part of a large trunk is only about three inches thick. Even on the giant redwood this is the case. Next time you see a display section of a redwood, notice the narrow yellow ring around the outside of the trunk just under the bark. This was the living wood when the tree was cut. In many trees, especially the redwoods, the dead wood in the center is not particularly subject to insects, fungi, and other tissue-destroying agents. Unfortunately, the Valley Oak is very susceptible to these diseases and the interiors are usually completely rotted out, helped by birds and mammals that use these easy diggings to make themselves a secure home. Thus a limb that may seem to be large and strong, can be just a hollow shell with little strength. The broad spread of the branches of the mature Valley Oak cause a big stress in these limbs and they break off quite regularly.

We're going to miss our old Valley Oak!

Don Wimpress