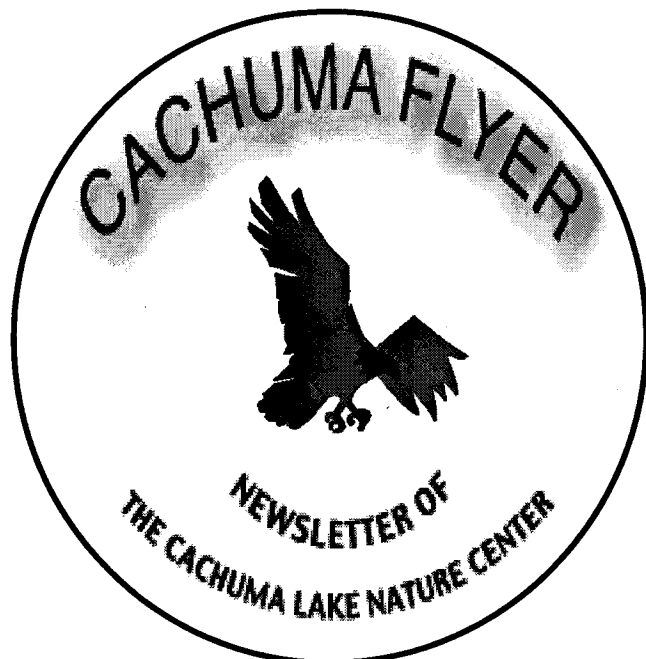




ANNUAL BALD EAGLE COUNT

BY LIZ MASON

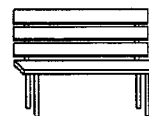
The annual mid-winter Bald Eagle count took place Saturday, January 10 at Cachuma Lake. This is a nation-wide count in its 26th year. Santa Barbara County Park Naturalists have been managing the count at Cachuma Lake since the early 1990s, with the involvement of the Cachuma Nature Center Docents and other volunteers from the birding community. Winter eagle counts have taken place at Cachuma since the early 1960s. Numbers of birds have ranged from zero to as many as 18 eagles in 1988 and 1989. In recent decades Cachuma Lake has been the only place in the county where Bald Eagles spend the winter and can be seen regularly. However, there are increasing reports of eagle sightings from ranches in the Santa Ynez Valley and at Zaca Lake. Cachuma Lake drew attention in 1989 when an adult pair of Bald Eagles established a nesting site near the lake. This was the first pair to re-establish a nesting site in Southern California after DDT was banned. This pair, dubbed locally as 'Harry and Harriet,' makes Cachuma its home year-round. Active nesting was confirmed for several consecutive years in the early 1990s. In succeeding years, adults and young have been seen in June and July, the time when young would fledge, indicating the likelihood of local nesting. Last year's 2003 California count total was 487 Bald Eagles, with 311 adults, 137 immatures, and 39 of undetermined age. These numbers are provided by the UC Santa Cruz Predatory Bird Research Group, who coordinate the California count and consolidate the data.

"The Park Department is very proud to contribute to this state and national census of Bald Eagles, and we couldn't carry it off without a team of dedicated volunteers from the Cachuma Nature Center Docents and the birding community," says Mitch Medeiros, Park Manager at Cachuma. Volunteers for the count gathered early in the morning, and Park Naturalists Liz Mason and Halli Prior dropped pairs of counters off at designated sites to count eagles 9 am to noon. Everyone gathered afterward at the Nature Center for a brown bag lunch and a preliminary count

FEATURED THIS ISSUE



COUNT ME
IF YOU CAN!



WET PAINT

THANK YOU
VERY MUCH



WRITING RINGS
AROUND SATURN



OUR
MAN
BILL

I'M MOVING IN
LIKE IT OR NOT!



total. Desserts were donated by Trader Joe's on Calle Real, and Helen Osenga and Annie Ruano set up the goodies for the volunteers. What was the total Bald Eagle Count? Good question. Five Bald Eagles have been seen during lake cruises conducted by Park Naturalists Liz Mason and Halli Prior, including the two resident adults and three migratory immature eagles. On count day, however, it appears that only two immature Bald Eagles and two Golden Eagles were in the mood to be seen. Liz Mason will study the count data and make a conservative official estimate of the number of Bald and Golden Eagles and Osprey. Last year's count included two adult and five immature Bald Eagles, one adult Golden Eagle, and about 25 Osprey. Oh yes, and one particular Osprey who was clutching a trout and being chased by a Bald Eagle.

WEBSITES OF INTEREST

<http://midwest.fws.gov/eagle/population/2000chtofprrs.html>

(www.scpbrg.org)



Dick Cofiell Photo

Marion and Linda at the Docents Christmas Party

AN INTERVIEW WITH BILL HODGES

BY LINDA TAYLOR

Bill Hodges has led the Docent organization as president for the last year with a twinkle in his eye. His good nature led to his election last March, after being involved with the group for only one year. Bill was born and raised on a farm in Cresco, Iowa, where his family raised hogs, soybeans, corn, oats, and hay, kept several cows, and chickens, to boot. After high school he managed the farm for a year before



Linda Taylor Photo

joining the Air Force. He attended radar school in Biloxi, Mississippi, for a year before being stationed at Ulm, Germany for the following three years, where he met his wife Rose. She had spent the previous eighteen months in England improving her English and learning other languages. They were married in Ulm and moved to Burbank, California, soon after his discharge from the Air Force. His job with RCA took him from Southern California to Baltimore, and

ultimately to Baudette, Minnesota, which finished him as far as RCA was concerned for that time period. He left the company, Minnesota, and the cold weather to return to So. Cal. After working in electronics for Bunker-Ramo and again, for RCA, he became bored and purchased a franchise for a Jewelart store which he and Rose operated on State Street in Santa Barbara, from 1971 to 1975. Then came a period of time in which both he and Rose obtained real estate licenses and dealt in real estate in Ventura. Ultimately, he returned to the electronics arena, working for AGM (Astro Geo Marine) in Santa Barbara making power supplies for Litton, first in the test department and later as a design engineer. He retired in 1997. Whew!

Retirement for Bill, however, is not disengagement. This active guy square dances with the Taws and Paws Club weekly, and round dances. He built his own computer and he is in the process of burning c.d.'s from Rose's collection of about a thousand records. (She also was a disc jockey.) They are theatre goers and enjoy season tickets at the Ensemble Theater. Bill says he has owned a motorcycle "forever," currently a Honda Goldwing 1500cc bike. (*Governor Arnold S. says, "Any guy who doesn't ride a Harley is a Girlie Man" - Ed.*) About twice a month he, and sometimes Rose, goes on a ride with a group of friends. Of course, the bike is his preferred method of transport to and from the Nature Center. About two years ago, Dick Cofiehl asked him to come to the Nature Center and "give him a hand" on a certain project. Bill has been involved ever since. His favorite projects involve "working with wood." He says, "it is a great group of docents and I'd like to do more, if I only had more time."

A note should be added here that Rose, not an "official" docent, helped with the Trout Derby, the birthday party last summer, Zoo to You, and the barn dance.

Bill and Rose have one son who lives near Denver in Morrison, Colorado, and two granddaughters.

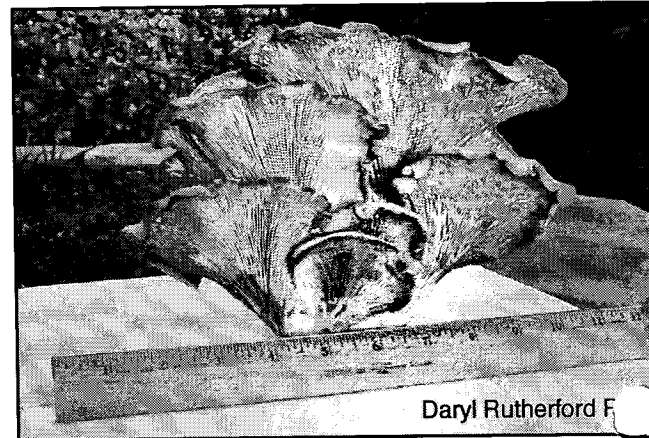
THE SHOP VISITOR

BY DARYL RUTHERFORD

The Cachuma Nature Center had a surprise visitor in the workshop Fall. On one of our Wednesday workdays we opened the door to the shop and found a fair-sized mushroom growing at the base of a door in the corner between the door and the door jamb. Mushroom commonly found in the outdoor environment at Lake Cachuma, but normally inside the buildings. We thought this was quite a novelty, decided not to scrape it off the door jamb and just continued to wait. This fungus was beginning to look rather grotesque, and we wondered how poisonous it might be. Hmmm.

Since it was such a beautiful specimen we decided to try and identify it. So off to the Nature Center Library shelf we went. Brian Lincoln searched through a book on mushrooms and could not find an exact replica, but decided the closest we could come was a White Chantrelle although we weren't positive about it. I decided the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History might be of help, so off to the Labor there to see if they knew what this was. Alas, they did not have a botanist and recommended a trip to the Botanic Garden. The Botanic Garden did not have a mushroom expert but they referred me to Barbara City College. After being referred to SBCC, I saw Dr. R. Cummings, a professor in the Biological Sciences department. He identified this mushroom as a beautiful specimen of an Oyster Mushroom (*Pleurotus ostreatus*), which was edible! It was one of the largest specimens of that species that he had ever seen. At the point across the flutes of this mushroom it was nearly 10 inches. The mushroom is being dried naturally in air in order to hopefully disperse spores somewhere in the Nature Center. Many mushrooms cannot be air dried without them deteriorating badly.

If you have a natural curiosity about mushrooms there is a website at the URL www.mykoweb.com, which is a website associated with the San Francisco Mycological Society. This website has been collecting photographs of many of the mushrooms of California, and adding information about the characteristics of them. The names of a lot of mushrooms are very descriptive and appropriately named; Lion's Mane, Teeth Fungi, Jelly Fungi, Puffballs, Bird's Nest Fungi, Stinkhorns, Cup Fungi, Club and Coral Fungi, Earth Tongue, and some pretty gross looking ones called Saddle Mushrooms. Disclaimer: There are many mushrooms that are extremely poisonous and affect the nervous system, causing death. Do not attempt to eat mushrooms unless you have considerable knowledge of mushrooms or have a mushroom expert with you.



Daryl Rutherford Photo

Monster Mushroom Autopsy Specs.

LOOKING UP BY HELEN OSENGA



SATURN

Saturn has been observed since early times, and it marked the outer boundary of the solar system before astronomers began using telescopes. When Galileo first trained his telescope on this planet in 1610, he was confused by its odd appearance. With the rings projecting out from two sides, he decided it looked like a planet with ears. Saturn remained "the ringed planet" until 1977 when faint rings were discovered around Uranus and soon thereafter around Jupiter and Neptune.

Saturn's rings, which are less than one kilometer thick, seem to be made up of bits of water ice and ice-covered rocky particles that range in size from one centimeter to several meters. The Cassini spacecraft which will arrive at Saturn July 1 of this year will hopefully provide us with more information on Saturn and its rings.

Saturn now has 31 known moons, with some of the recent discoveries being ice chunks about one mile across. They were discovered with a telescope in Hawaii that uses an adaptive-optics system that cancels out wiggles in the Earth's atmosphere. Saturn's biggest Moon, Titan, is larger than the planet Mercury. In December the Cassini spacecraft will drop a probe onto Titan.

Saturn can be viewed in the eastern evening sky during January and February in the constellation Gemini next to Orion.

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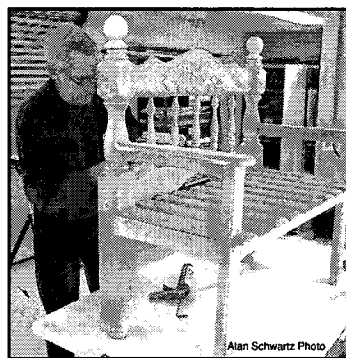
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FROM HEADBOARDS TO BENCHES



Bill Hodges saw the idea somewhere in his travels and started looking for bed headboards about four years ago. He found some as "give-a-ways" and others at low prices from thrift stores. Soon he had five benches built and placed around his house. After joining CLNC, Bill continued to find headboards.

but had no use for them. He suggested that "things for sale" could be made in the new shop by the shop volunteers as fund raisers, including benches. In their spare time, Bill, Paul Maxwell, and Dale Sorenson went to work on the first two. Before the dust settled, they were spoken for. There will be more fund raising items from the shop. Let Bill know if you see any free or low-priced headboards.

DONORS NEEDED FOR ZOO TO YOU

Pssst! Got any spare change, mister? Zoo to You is a popular animal show appealing to children of all ages. It draws large crowds every year. It costs \$500 to book it; your support would be a rewarding donation that merits your attention. Will you help bring the show to Cachuma again? Please call (805) 693-0691

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