



CACHUMA FLYER

CACHUMA LAKE NATURE CENTER NEWSLETTER

Issue 6: Spring, 1991

NEW DOCENT TRAINING CLASS BEGINS

Twenty potential docents have begun taking a new series of training classes, beginning on February 9. Members of the group have a wide range of backgrounds, interests and age groups. Representing a number of professional and technical fields, individuals already have expressed interest in building a snake exhibit, collecting oral histories, and building display boards. Included in the group is a core of young people from Lompoc and Santa Ynez; one of whom is Kevin Smith, son of George Smith, one of the most involved docents of the organization.

Trainees are Linda Andrews, Jennifer Alhart, Chris Beeckman, Fred Blaser, Marilyn Bonnucci, Steve Grimes, Steve Hotchkiss, Desiree Jantz, Maria Mamanta, Karen Metschuleit, Scott Perry, Linda Ofstead, Ben Ofstead, Toni Runnels, Bob Runnels, Bobby Harvey, Kevin Smith, Nick Todd, Jenny Topalski, Fran Todd, Janine Whyte, Patricia Wright, Emily Kehret, and Ronald Wright.

The towns of Santa Barbara, Santa Maria, Lompoc, Santa Ynez, Solvang, Studio City, and Buellton are represented.

New members of the organization are urged to express interest in possible projects and to participate in work sessions and business meetings, as they so desire.

OFFICERS ELECTED AT ANNUAL
MEETING

Connie Howerton of Santa Barbara was elected president of the Cachuma Lake Docent Organization at the annual meeting required in the by-laws on February 23. Connie is one of the original group of docents and volunteered at the Lake for various special events and as a helper to Neal Taylor, long before the docent organization existed. She has retired as a social worker supervisor from Child Protective Services; during World War II Connie was one of the first women pilots in the air force-- the Women's Airforce Service Pilots (WASPs).

Maggie Klages was re-elected vice-president of the organization. She is also a member of the first docent training class. A life-long Californian, she and her husband, Ralph, are interested in native plants and have landscaped their Santa Ynez Valley home with natives that they have raised from seeds or cuttings. Maggie is interested in archeology and is currently planning additional exhibits on the Chumash.

Newly-elected secretary-treasurer, Linda Taylor, has spent time over several years, birding at Lake Cachuma. Linda is a teacher of severely handicapped students for the Santa Barbara County Schools and married Neal Taylor in 1989 at Cachuma.

The following committees were agreed upon at the February meeting. Chairmen will be appointed by the new president immediately.

Exhibits
Hospitality
Building and grounds
Docent recruitment and training
Newsletter
Publicity
Historian

The Nature Center Master Plan developed by the Board of Directors task force committee was discussed. The board has requested a report on the docents' concept of the Nature Center in the future; however, members at the meeting agreed to submit only a brief outline of the organization's concept. In the opinion of those present, the time commitment and skills of available volunteer help will determine the success of any long term plan.

TRAINING SCHEDULE ADDITIONS

Don Wimpres will conduct an astronomy workshop on Thursday evening, April 18. All docents and trainees are invited to meet at 6:00 p.m. at the Nature Center for orientation, followed by a potluck dinner. After dark the group will have practice using the telescope. A weekday was chosen to avoid camper crowds.

BOB BRETHOUR, SIGN DONOR

Engraved plastic signs in the Nature Center have added a more professional touch to the exhibits on display. Bob Brethour of West Los Angeles is the volunteer creator and donor of these signs. Bob who is employed as the senior electrical engineer by the Papermate Division of the Gillette Company, camps frequently at Lake Cachuma with his wife Edie.

Through their visits three or four times a year over more than a ten year period, he became acquainted with Neal and thus, with the Nature Center.

Several years ago Bob developed sign making into a second business called Brethour Specialties, which makes primarily products for the electrical industry. After touring the Nature Center with Neal several months ago, he asked if he could help by making more permanent signs to replace the handmade signs that were there. Over many months now, information about plants, animals, birds and artifacts has been mailed to him and he has returned the finished signs within a few weeks.

Bob and Edie are interesting people. In 1972-'73 they sailed a 36 foot sailboat to New Zealand, covering 22,000 miles with their two sons in a year and a half. Bob said it was a well-planned trip; since they had no problems it wouldn't make much of a book! Camping has been a favorite pastime of the family; now after many trips with a tent, they recently sold the boat and bought a fifth wheel.

FISH HABITATS AT LAKE CACHUMA

As visitors walk around the edge of the lake in these days of low water level, a number of unusual structures may be seen now exposed which are usually well out of sight beneath the surface of the water. These are fish habitats, devices designed to offer protective cover for small fish during spawning season (February to May) when few natural plants grow in the Lake. (The oak trees which naturally grew on the slopes of the Santa Ynez River were cut down prior to the filling of the Lake, as tannic acid from the oaks was believed to taint the water. Stumps from these trees are now also visible.)

Blue dairy crates which were wired together in modules of eighteen crates by the Braille Institute of Santa Barbara form the "Taylor Habitat," designed by and named for Neal Taylor and now used widely in North America. Volunteers from local bass fishing clubs placed them in the Lake in the 1980's. The crates were purchased with state fish and game money and provide shelter for the small fry while large predator fish cannot swim through the openings in the crates. (cont'd)

HABITATS, cont'd.

The "Cachuma Habitat" is constructed from a frame of PVC twenty feet wide by ten feet deep by six feet high which supports a fence of International Orange Snow Fencing. Inside this area are suspended flat streamers of black plastic which not only provide cover for the fish, but also are surface on which algae grows to provide food for the youngsters.

Finally, the "Berkley Habitat" is composed of a marble disk which anchors streamers of green plastic cord in two to six foot lengths to the bottom of the Lake to simulate aquatic grasses.

People are asked to leave the structures as they are, as they will again one day provide the shelter needed to allow young fish to grow into larger ones, which are the reason why many people come to Cachuma to fish.

SPOTLIGHT ON THE DOCENTS: GEORGE HUGHES

George Hughes, who has just completed eighteen months as the president of the Docent organization, is a native of Goleta. George's father was a lemon rancher in the Goleta Valley and George also ranched for twenty-seven years.

George's initial contact with the Nature Center was through Neal, whom George has known for many years. The two men were 4-H leaders together in the 1960's. Out of that relationship grew a long friendship which centered around a mutual love for fishing and the out of doors.

Although he has raised three children and seen them through years of 4-H work, George presently is the 4-H leader of a youth group which often comes to Cachuma to camp and to assist with various projects in the Park. Including the years that he, himself, was a member, George figures his years associated with 4-H to number 48 or 49.

In 1987 George retired from the geology department at UCSB where he worked as an experimental machinist for 24 years, designing and building lab equipment. He also coordinated field camps. Although geology is his area of primary interest, George has a good knowledge of plants, animals and birds, as well as a good background in local history.

Presently George lives in Santa Barbara with his wife Zelda. George is also active in the Sister Cities Organization and has traveled to Japan twice to chaperone youth groups associated with 4-H and privately organized. He is a veteran of World War II in which he served as a medic.

He has contributed a great deal to the Nature Center in structural/mechanical advice and work and has frequently stood in for Neal on boat trips and hikes.

CURRENT PROJECTS: HELP NEEDED

A stream and pond with a circulating water supply is the current project of Don Wimpres. Situated behind the Nature Center, the stream and pond beds have been dug by work furlough people, under Neal's supervision.

The water pump has been donated and will be installed when plumbing is in place. The bottom of the pond will incorporate the use of many pounds of newspapers which will be used to form a papier mache layer over which plastic film will be laid. Sand, gravel, and rocks will be added to give the stream a natural look. All docents are requested to donate newspapers which may be stored in the garage of the Nature Center. Rocks to line the stream and pond have been moved to the yard by work furlough individuals.

The stream and pond ultimately will be the focus of a Chumash village re-creation and will be incorporated into the garden of California native plants, which has been partially planted.

Additional display boards to use on the walls of the Nature Center have been planned, using the design of Dean Dawson who supervised the construction of the initial boards. New docents, Fred Blaser, Ben Ofstead, and Scott Perry, and Maggie Klages have expressed interest in the project.

A booklet about Cachuma Lake, the Park, and the surrounding area is in progress. Don Wimpres is editing and coordinating the project. Docents contributing chapters are Linda Taylor, fishing, birds, park facilities; George Hughes, animals; Pat Foxen, geology; Janine Whyte (a new docent), post-Chumash history; Karen Osland, Chumash history; and Don Wimpres, dam construction, trails, and plants. With Board approval, the publication will be sold in the Park to generate funds for the Docent organization.

TRAINEES ' PROJECTS

Toni Runnels who has just joined the organization is a retired graphic artist. Pat Foxen, the designer of a wall exhibit illustrating the geology of the Cachuma area, has involved Toni to refine his illustration, showing the subsurface strata, as well as surface

features of the land, such as canyons, peaks, rivers, the dam, etc.

Scott Perry, a building contractor, and Nick Todd, a student, are both particularly interested in herpetology. They have joined forces to gather snakes, and design and build exhibit cases to exhibit them. As the

weather warms they will begin searching for kings, mountain kings, gophers, and, perhaps, a rattler. Also included in their plans are exhibits for spiders and lizards.

TRAINING SESSIONS, A Summary

Three sessions of the current docent training program have been held. All presenters are being paid a small honorarium and are from outside the docent organization.

Bruce Jones, the supervisor of Bradbury Dam, spoke at the first meeting.

Bradbury was the third dam to be built on the Santa Ynez River and was completed in 1953. It first filled in 1958, and water is currently at the lowest level it has been since that time. Water is carried through the Tecolote (owl) Tunnel to the western edge of Goleta.

A provision for discharge of water from behind the dam insures maintenance of well water in the Santa Ynez River area below the dam.

The pattern of rainfall we are experiencing this year, although sparse in the number of inches fallen, is typical of the Mediterranean Climate of the South Coast area: the rainy season is limited to a few months out of the year, concentrating heavy rainfall during a few hours.

Jim Blakley, local historian, spoke February 23, about individuals who were prominent in the area during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

With the development of the San Marcos Ranch as an adjunct to the Santa Barbara Mission, the first Spanish came into the Cachuma area to work with the Chumash who were employed at that Rancho.

Travel between Missions Santa Barbara, Santa Ines, and La Purisima, established the route over San Marcos Pass as an important roadway in the 1700's. Later it was used as a stage coach route for many years, as a road through the Gaviota area was not established for another century.

Several of the canyons near present-day Cachuma Park were the sites of homesteads; however, the difficulty of farming these areas limited population growth in the area.

Chinese nationals were brought into the area in the 1860's to work on the stage road over the Pass and to work the quicksilver mines in the Gibraltar area. Near the river off Paradise Road, "Chinese Camp" was established as a housing area for these workers.

Jim Boles, UCSB geology professor, discussed the geology of the area, on March 9. After giving a broad background on plate tectonics, he explained the implications of this

theory on local formations. Subduction of the Pacific Plate beneath the North American plate caused the vulcanism which created and continues to influence the building of the Sierra Nevadas and other mountain chains along the Pacific Coast. In our area the presence of many faults-- the Santa Ynez Fault and the Little Pine Faults in the Cachuma Watershed area-- are evidence of the continued movement of the crustal plates.

Dr. Boles emphasized the youth of the rocks around Cachuma, relative to the interior regions of the U.S. The almost vertical tilt of strata and obvious folding are visible on the far side of the lake. The white formation in the Lake area is Monterey shale. Composed primarily of primitive one-celled organisms called diatoms, it was deposited beneath a primeval sea.

Jim pointed out the fanglomerate formation

which is created by erosion of material from the Santa Ynez Fault on the mountains south of the Lake. Large boulders strewn in the Mohawk area of the Park and visible imbedded in sand or dirt in the road cuts, particularly between the Park entrance and the road to the dam, are actually debris swept down the mountainsides from the Fault above.

On March 23, the series will continue with Jan Timbrook from the museum of Natural History speaking on the Ethnography of the Chumash Indians. Karen Osland, docent, will conduct a workshop in the afternoon on cordage making.

Those attending this session are asked to bring a dish to share for a potluck lunch. Please bring your own plate, cup, silver, and beverage.

MESSAGE FROM NEW PRESIDENT

As the new president of Cachuma Lake Docents, I wish to thank George Hughes who guided us as President through our first two years of growing pains.

March '91 finds us well and thriving. We have begun our third training program with our largest class so far. The program, scheduled to run through June 1, is an excellent one with an enthusiastic group of participants.

With a supportive and hard-working Board of Directors, we look forward to a year of growth. There is much to be done--opening more rooms and adding displays. Everyone's expertise, energy and enthusiasm is needed to make the Nature Center all we have dreamed.

I welcome all ideas and help in the coming year.

...Connie Howerton, President.

FROM THE BOARD

With the new year comes a renewed commitment and revived energy among all Cachuma Lake Foundation (CLF) board members to help further the establishment of the Nature Center at Cachuma Lake which began among a special group of people--the Docents. We have seen the completion of many significant facility and site improvements that were accomplished by the dedication of many long-term CLF Docents.

Board members have been busy completing a draft Master Plan for the Nature Center, identifying potential sources for operating and expansion funds, promoting the Foundation's goals and the Nature Center's activities. The first CLF Annual Report was published at the beginning of the year and summarizes programs and financial activities of the previous year. Copies of the report are available from any Board Member or at the Center.

The Board extends a warm welcome to each and every one of the new people who are participating in the current training program. We look forward to their contributions to make the CLF Nature Center a vital resource for information about the Sant Ynez Valley Watershed.

CLF BOARD OF DIRECTORS, Peter Robertson, M.A., Chairman

Have you wondered just what the word docent means?

According to Webster's International Dictionary, it is derived from a Latin root, docere, which means to teach; a teacher, lecturer; a person who conducts guided groups through a museum or art gallery and discusses and comments on exhibits.

editors's note: in our case, the "museum" or "gallery" might be a trail through the woods or the surface of the Lake.