



CACHUMA FLYER

CACHUMA LAKE NATURE CENTER NEWSLETTER

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Don Wimpres, Editor

NEW OFFICERS

A new slate of Docent Organization Officers was seated during the February meeting:

Karen Osland - President
George Smith - Vice-president
Linda Taylor - Secretary
Kathy Badrak - Treasurer

Our last year's officers and crew did a great job; there really has been a lot of progress in the Nature Center during the last twelve months. We're all looking forward to working with the new team leaders toward even greater accomplishments this next season.

PARK STATUS

Everyone knows that the lake is now full and overflowing, and that it will probably overflow for several weeks. The grass is growing, and it will certainly be followed by a bountiful wildflower display. The Sweetwater Trail (the one from Harvey's Cove to the dam) is currently being reconditioned, and the Oak Canyon Nature Trail is next on the schedule (Let's hope that it will be in good shape by Easter Week). Park attendance is very high again and we're getting a lot of people thru the Nature Center. With such ideal park conditions we're expecting a tremendous flow of visitors this year.

DOCENT ACTIVITY

Docents are now operating in three 3-hr shifts to keep the Nature Center open from 10 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. every Saturday, and 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. (or later) every Sunday. Also, the Nature Center is open at times during the week to handle special groups. Docents are conducting boat tours and nature hikes throughout the week.

Fireside Theater and Astronomy Nights will start Easter Vacation and last through the summer.

Of course, there is always lots of behind-the-scenes work being done by Docents to build and maintain exhibits and to carry on the administrative functions of the Center.

TRAINING CLASSES

The fourth group of new Docent Trainees , along with most of the present Docents, met on February 27th for the first of five training classes. We had twelve trainees present, and we have three or four more good prospects that were unable to attend the first session. Four of the five classes have now been conducted, with some dropouts. Let's hope that the remainder will find the activiy rewarding and stay with us.

Training so far has been:

Class 1: The organization and physical structure of the Nature Center, the Docent Organization, and the Foundation.

Class 2: An introduction to the exhibits and the nature trails.

Class 3: An introduction to the lake, its origins and functions, and a trip to the dam and its facilities.

Class 4: An introduction to the park facilities and personnel. This included a walking tour thru the park.

Class 5 will deal with how to operate the Nature Center including the security system, the gift shop, and the docent facilities.

EXHIBITS

Linda Taylor, our Exhibits Chairperson, has been really busy getting the displays ready for the coming season. Several new exhibits have been added and more are in the works. The display areas are being rearranged somewhat to better consolidate similar subjects. The Fauna Room has been "modernized" by filling the center of the room with a large pair of transparent display cases, one on top of the other, to display our mounted birds in a protected environment.

The Dam Room has also had quite a facelift with the geology exhibit being reworked and some of the fauna displays moved to the Fauna Room.

The Flora Room is slowly evolving with new exhibits and it should be a fairly extensive display by the time of Easter Vacation.

Exhibits in the Chumash Room are being rearranged slightly to give the room a better appearance and to provide the area necessary to accommodate the large groups of kids that often assemble there.

An extra special exhibit is the one designed and installed by the Family School in Los Olivos. Students from that school have filled an entire room with interactive exhibits especially directed towards grade-school kids. It contains a taped story, "feel" and "uncover" boxes, a "choice" game that lets you match facts on a number of nature subjects, a do-it-yourself mitten-puppet theater full of wild creatures, Indian clothing to dress oneself, and a painted cave to crawl into. This is a must-see adventure.

The Foundation has recently approved the purchase of additional lighting fixtures which will be installed in three of the darker exhibit rooms. This will bring the lighting level of the entire facility up to where all of the exhibits can be easily viewed

COMPUTER USE

The computer is seeing increased usage as more of the docents, under the tutelage of Docent Kathy Badrak, are becoming familiar with the machine. Kathie has all of our financial records, including the Gift Shop, in the computer, and we are working on getting our documentation into it. Linda Taylor is becoming an A-one exhibit sign maker which has greatly enhanced the professional appearance of the Center.

COPY MACHINE

The latest piece of major equipment added to the Center has been a photocopy machine. This will save us from having to do a lot of sponging off the Park Office machine and getting our more extensive copying done outside. Some of the uses will be to print this Newsletter, make additional "printings" of the trail brochure, bird lists, plant lists, and other publications that we sell at the center.

DOCENT'S HANDBOOKS

Each Docent and Docent Trainee has been issued (or will be issued) a loose-leaf notebook which will contain all the information needed as available reference to be an effective Docent and to operate the Nature Center. It includes rules and regulations, maps, names of personnel, procedures for all usual activities, and instructions for operating facility equipments such as the security system, the audio-visual equipment, and the office equipment.

CALL FOR BOOKS

The Nature Center is in need of books pertaining to the natural history subjects and cultural history of the local area. If you have any ready-to-be-discarded books or magazines, please donate them to our Center.

Also, we could use any old National Geographics (or other "nature" magazines) that you might have to give. New docent Bobbie Harvey is well into the project of cataloging our present collection of several dozen National Geographics. We hope to expand this to include all of our magazine library.

CALL FOR CACHUMA FLYER INFO

If you have any articles you would like to put in the *Cachuma Flyer*, or any subjects or happenings that you think should be noted, please put same in my mailbox at the center - Ed.

FUTURE ACTIVITIES

Docent Educational Classes:

Instead of exposing all prospective docents to a wide range of cultural and natural classes during their training, this year we are planning a number of optional educational classes open to all docents, trainees, and volunteers. The first of these was a botanical class/walk conducted by Don Wimpress on Saturday, March 13th. Also scheduled are:

- Sat Apr 3 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Nature Center
"Reference Materials for Local Natural and Cultural Histories"
Instructors: Karen Osland and Kathy Badrak
This will describe what is available in the various local sources (libraries, etc.) and what materials are best suited for various levels of interest.
- Sun May 9 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Nature Center
"Insects"
Instructor: Avis Keedy
Avis will combine lecture and field work into this lesson on insects and their relationship with plants of the area.
- June (to be announced)
A trip to Vandenberg AFB to view the archaeological features.
Instructor: Karen Osland

**** DOCENT MEETING ****

Sat Apr 10 10 a.m. Docent Meeting
Followed by picnic lunch

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