



CACHUMA FLYER

CACHUMA LAKE NATURE CENTER NEWSLETTER

Issue No. 12; Summer 1993

Don Wimpres, Editor

CALENDAR FOR JULY-AUGUST-SEPTEMBER

Jul 17	Saturday	11:00 a.m.	Rock Painting Classes
Jul 25	Sunday	11:30 a.m.	Docent Exec. Bd. Mtg.
Jul 27	Tuesday	5:00 p.m.	Wreath-making Workshop
Aug 12	Thursday	1:00 p.m.	CLF Board Meeting
Aug 12	Thursday	8:30 p.m.	Catch a Falling Star Night (All night astronomy program for Perseid Meteor Shower)
Aug 21	Saturday	10:00 a.m.	Regular Monthly Docent Meeting (<u>Note change from usual date</u>)
Sep 4-6	Sat-Mon		Labor Day Weekend (Extended Nature Center hours)
Sep 5	Sunday	5:30 p.m.	Docent (and guests) pot-luck
Sep 11	Saturday	10:00 a.m.	Regular Monthly Docent Meeting

NEW DOCENTS

The spring training class produced eleven new docents which brings our current total to twenty-five docents. Several are already quite involved in our activities and this has been a great help to our formerly small docent group.

SUMMER NATURALISTS

Two Summer Naturalists have been hired to help Neal Taylor with the heavy workload brought on by the increased visitor population - the result of a full lake and good publicity. They are running boat tours, nature hikes, fireside theaters, and other activities.

One of the new naturalist is Jenna Dougherty who is studying biology at Westmont College where she is a senior. She is from Loveland,

Colorado, and wishes to teach high school biology when she graduates.

The other is Jennifer Jardeen, who is a graduate of Westmont College in biology, and wishes to continue her education at the University of Washington to get a masters degree in marine affairs and policies.

NEW DOCENT'S "GRADUATION" PROJECTS

This year we initiated a policy in which the docent trainee is required to complete some project of value to the Nature Center in lieu of the formerly-required 5-minute talk. This requirement was better-received than the talks, and each project completed adds to the value of the Center. Some members of the Spring Training Sessions have completed their projects while others are still working.

Linda Gordon conducted a very popular rock art painting class for the public over Memorial Day Weekend. Park visitors of all ages participated on both Saturday and Sunday of the holiday weekend. Using acrylic paints and smooth, rounded rocks from the ocean and riverbed, people chose a design from samples of Chumash patterns available to them on the work tables, or painted their own original designs. Approximately 175 people participated, and at times three generations of one family worked side by side on their projects.

A handsome, sturdy bike rack is now placed in the Visitor Center parking lot, thanks to the handiwork of Jerry Witcher. It holds several bicycles and is a long-needed addition for the convenience of cycle-mounted campers.

Bobby Harvey is well into her project of organizing and eventually cataloging articles in the Nature Center's large collection of National Geographic Magazines. She has listed those that are missing from the collection and will attempt to locate those issues. Ultimately she plans to obtain a catalog index of National Geographics for the past several years. This will greatly assist Docents in researching articles pertaining to our area.

Nine year-old Travis Gordon, our youngest docent, conducted walks for children over the May holiday weekend. Ryan Gordon is involved in making labels that describe the uses of native plants in our area. Beth Badrak is creating items from natural materials to sell in the Gift Shop.

New Docents are expected to complete a specific project and to give fifty hours of time during a twelve-month period to establish and maintain their Docent status.

EXHIBITS

Several new exhibits have been added as our museum continues to grow. Two more mounted birds have been added in the fauna room: A young Red-tail Hawk, with wings spread for flight, perched on a branch; and a Ferruginous Hawk, with wings and talons spread, just about to land on a prey. Scott Perry has installed an exhibit in the Dam Room that explains the difference between antlers and horns, with several mounted examples of each, and accompanied by pictures and descriptive

material.

Karen Metschuleit prepared an exhibit that describes mercury mining in the area. It has a map showing the locations of the mines, a history of local mining, samples of mercury ores, and an example of mercury in application in the form of a mercury switch.

Linda Taylor has added a display pertaining to the Chaparral Yucca (*Yucca whipplei*) in the Chumash Room. It includes, in addition to descriptive information, a potted yucca plant, samples of the woody flower stalk, a yucca-leaf fiber net, a yucca-leaf brush, and several pictures of the plant in bloom on the surrounding hillsides.

Kathy Badrak, who was a volunteer for many months before enrolling in the training sessions, assisted in planning and conducting five classes, some of which are described elsewhere in this issue, for continuing Docent education

GIFT SHOP EXPANSION

The Cachuma Lake Foundation has approved and funded a Docent proposal to move and expand the Gift Shop into what is presently the kitchen. This move will remove the present congestion from our entryway, provide for better security of the merchandise, and increase the display area. A small kitchen will be built in an unused bathroom next to the Docent's workroom. This will help consolidate the Docent's work areas and decrease docent traffic thru the museum areas.

SPECIAL CLASSES

Several special classes have been conducted to teach interested Docents more about the area:

Don Wimpres led interested Docents on a botany walk around the Oak Canyon Nature Trail.

Kathy Badrak presented several sessions on the use of the Nature Center's computer.

Karen Osland and Kathy Badrak presented a 3-hour course on "Reference Materials for Local Natural and Cultural Histories" which described what materials are available in local libraries, etc., and which are best suited for various levels of interest.

Avis Keedy spent a day with us in lecture and field work describing some of the local insects and their relationships with plants of the area.

Karen Osland led a trip to Vandenberg AFB to visit several archeological sites, places of historical interest, and an introduction to some of the plants of the area.

It is expected that additional classes will be held in the near future.

SPOTLIGHT ON A DOCENT: Fran Todd

by Linda Taylor

Fran is the creative and enthusiastic manager of the gift shop at the Nature Center. Through her efforts at choosing appealing jewelry, clothing, posters, and a wealth of other items, the Gift Shop has become the major source of income, except for grants for specific purposes, to the Cachuma Lake Foundation.

Fran became a Docent in 1991, along with her son, Nick, who continues to work as a Docent as well. Fran lives in Solvang with her husband, and although she is a medical transcriber by training, currently works for the Santa Ynez Board of Realtors. She has lived in this area for fifteen years, and in Santa Maria for the preceding eight years. She is a native of Pennsylvania, and came to San Gabriel, California, before she was married, to join her sister and her family.

Besides the Nature Center, Fran volunteered a great deal of time with the Humane Society at its inception. She has a Doberman Pinscher named "Quest" whom she has shown widely in the past. Fran says that she has always loved animals, and although she lived in an urban area as a child, learned to ride and had animals following her home incessantly. She is an avid reader, and in the minds of the Docents, a good baker.

Fran believes that becoming a Docent has given her a greater awareness of the beauty of the area through a deeper knowledge of its natural history. Her greatest wish for the Nature Center and Docent Organization is that more people become involved to assist on a weekly basis at the Center.

NEEDS AND WANTS

Reference books are badly needed for use in the Nature Center by Docents. If you have unneeded books regarding local flora, fauna, history, geology, etc., gifts of them would be welcomed and are considered a tax-deductible donation.

As you take your walks and hikes, either around town or on vacation, please keep an eye open for pods and seeds which can be used in our wreath-making projects. Please gather with our wreaths in mind.

THANKS

Thanks to Bob and Toni Runnels for donating and installing an American Flag and holder at the front entrance of the Nature Center.