



CACHUMA FLYER

CACHUMA LAKE NATURE CENTER NEWSLETTER

Issue No 24

Summer 1996

Donna Shorts, Editor

CALENDAR FOR JULY- AUGUST- SEPTEMBER

July 4th	Thurs.- Sunday	Docents are needed at Nature Center all four days
July 6	Sat. 4:30 p.m.	Potluck Barbeque for Docents, CLF and friends
July 13	Sat. 10:00 a.m.	Docents Regular Monthly Meeting
August 10	Sat. 10:00 a.m.	Docents Regular Monthly Meeting
Aug 31-Sept.2	Sat. - Monday	Labor Day Weekend- Docents are needed all days.
September 14	Sat. 10:00 a.m.	Docents Regular Monthly Meeting

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It's great to see the results of how far we have come since our first Docent Class in the Spring of 1988 and the opening of the first room of the Nature Center over the 1988 Labor Day week-end. We have expanded from one central room and later a small gift shop to five exhibit rooms and a bigger and better gift shop.

I know we never expected to compete with the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History or the Southwest Museum. But, did you know our homespun Nature Center has such a good reputation that other groups want to visit us to see how we do it in order to start a place of their own?

The comments we receive in person and in our visitor log also show that we must be doing something right. And no, we don't need a million dollar endowment to tear down the old and build a whole new facility. We are doing extremely well in the direction we are going.

At this point our short term goals would be: adding exhibits, changing some, refurbishing others and improving and updating what we already have. We would also work to add to our docent staff and with a goal of keeping the Center open longer hours.

Our long term goals would include having an audio-visual room and having the Chumash Village in back of the Center, when permitted.

We can all be proud of what we have accomplished to date. My thanks to all of you.

Connie Howerton

LOOKING BACK

TROUT DERBY

What a fantastic success the Trout Derby was. Everyone who worked on this fund raising project should be proud of the success. The talent, skill, energy and enthusiasm that this group showed were really impressive. It required a joint effort of the Board of Directors and the Nature Center Docents. They put in long, hard, hours of work. Special thanks and gratitude are extended to Kim Albright for spear-heading this event. Kim wants to thank everyone for the wonderful effort. She enjoyed working with such a happy and enthusiastic group and she plans to help with next year's Derby.

The Trout Derby raised approximately \$15,000 for the Nature Center. We also provided a fun-filled weekend of activities for all the visitors to the park. The Nature Center was open additional hours, Neal gave a fireside talk on "How to Catch a Winning Fish". There were Nature Walks and a Tracking Hike for kids, an Astronomy Night and a Bake Sale.

895 fishermen registered for the Derby. They caught 1000 fish, 21 of these were tagged. But, no one caught the \$25,000 fish. (It was caught later so we know it was really there.) \$3,300 in cash prizes were given out as well as \$4,700 worth of merchandise prizes.

The people who worked on The Derby did a very efficient job of registering fishermen, getting the boats launched, and keeping track of the fish that were caught (coping with 1000 trout was not an easy task), and any other of the many tasks that needed doing in order to run such an ambitious fund raiser.

After it was all over the exhausted workers went over to the Campground where some of them were camped and enjoyed an After-Derby Potluck. A fitting celebration after a JOB WELL DONE.

ALISO LOOP WILD FLOWER WALKS

On April 16th six Docents went for a Wildflower Walk in the rain. Don Wimpress led them on the Aliso Loop. Wildflower viewing was excellent despite the rain. A memorable event of the walk was siting a Great Horned Owl about twenty feet from the trail which just sat and stared at them as they walked by.

On May 8th There was a joint walk with the Botanic Garden Docents. The purpose was to increase interaction between the two groups. Jim Mann of the Botanic Garden was the leader of the walk with help from Don Wimpress.

IMPROMPTU POTLUCK MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND

On Sunday of the Memorial Day Weekend we had an impromptu Potluck. The short notice made it impossible for many of you to attend but those of us who could make it had such a good time socializing with the Docents, Foundation members and friends. The food was delicious, the conversations lively, entertaining, informative and just plain fun. We decided we need to get together more often just to get to know one another. So, I hope to see you all at the Potluck on the 4th of July Weekend.

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT THE NATURE CENTER

EXHIBIT COMMITTEE

A new rainfall graph has been placed in the "dam room". Linda had problems with a new glue (recommended by a sign maker) on this large piece of paper; however, the information is there and useable. She does not plan to do the graph over!

The Marina and Vista Point showcases have just been finished. Please check them out at your leisure.

AQUARIUM

The cooling system for the second aquarium has been installed and we now have a live trout exhibit. Charlie Jack and Fred Blaser had to construct an outdoor protective box for the refrigeration system so that the heat would not be injected into the aquarium room and overheat the Warm Water Fish Tank. The aquariums are now an impressive and popular exhibit.

YARD

Dale Findley has done an excellent job in improving the appearance of the yard around the Nature Center; in particular, the back yard. He has hoed out the weeds and trimmed the bushes. Also some attention to the watering has greened up the yard a bit.

GIFT SHOP

The Gift Shop has been reorganized to obtain better control, reporting, and lessen the work load. The inventory has been put into the computer and appropriate reports are printed with the minimum of input. Betty Wimpress has been named the Manager and is responsible for all operations.

The Gift Shop now has a separate checking account which has eliminated the confusion of transmitting the purchasing, receiving, and payment documents back and forth between the Foundation and the Docent Operators.

As far as the Docent operators are concerned, the operation is just like it was before except that a simplified sales record is used in place of the book of sales slips.

It is anticipated that these changes will result in a much more efficient operation.

NATURE CENTER OPERATION

Opening and hosting the Nature Center is the crux of our organization. In the past we have had difficulty in finding people to maintain an "open" schedule of two shifts Saturday and one Sunday. Every Docent should endeavor to put some time into this activity. It is suggested that hosts invite a friend to keep them company and to maybe get them interested in our Nature Center.

FOURTH OF JULY POTLUCK

On Saturday July 6th at 4:30 p.m. we will be having a Potluck Barbeque. Bring meat to barbeque, if you wish, and a dish to share. Please come and enjoy the company and outstanding food. These potlucks are a chance for the Docents, CLF members and friends to get to know one another. All Cachuma Lake lovers welcome.

CACHUMA LAKE FOUNDATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

During the last three months there have been several changes in the CLF Board. Three members have resigned and one new member has been added. Those resigning are:

DAVE SAUNDERS -Chairman of the Board for the past year.

Dave worked tirelessly on the Trout Derby. He has been very effective in bringing the Docents and the CLF Board closer together. He will continue to be active as a Docent.

NOREEN POND- corresponding secretary.

Noreen has been on the Board since it was founded in 1988. For most of this time she has acted as treasurer and "business manager" of the organization. She is leaving so she will have more time to spend with her husband. She will be available for advice. Noreen has contributed so much to Cachuma Lake over the years. She will be missed!

KIM ALBRIGHT- treasurer.

Kim will be leaving in July after she has closed the books for the fiscal year. She is going back to full-time work and has subsequently had to drop the many volunteer activities that she has participated in for years. As a member of the original Board she has been very active over the years. She did an exceptional job as Chairman of the Trout Derby. We will miss her!

NEW BOARD MEMBER

LORRAINE LAFARGUE has joined the CLF Board and will be taking over the position of Treasurer. She is Bill Wallace's Assistant. Lorraine is also a Docent Trainee and is working on computer inputting for the Gift Shop.

STUDENTS PROVE TO BE A BIG HELP

Visitors and volunteers to the Nature Center will notice a difference in household conditions at the Center this summer. Students from Kim Meyers' special day class at Santa Ynez Valley High School will be off for the summer and will not be providing housekeeping assistance.

Students have worked throughout the school year on a weekly basis under the direction and supervision of Karen Harris, teacher's assistant and CLF Docent. To give students an opportunity to learn light janitorial skills, and to function effectively in a new, job-like environment arrangements were made between the Foundation and the school to open the center to these young people. Students receive training and school credit, but are not paid for their service.

When school reopens in the fall, the program is expected to continue, possibly with additional students.

SUNDIAL

The Memorial Sundial, in honor of Donn Taylor, has been mounted on a sandstone rock which has been placed in the rear courtyard. A dripping water source is to be added to maintain a pool of water in the birdbath base of the sundial.

Your Most Frequent Yellow Visitor

Near the back of your birdbook is one of its most beautiful pages--the Goldfinches.

Three species of Goldfinches may be seen in this area. Lesser Goldfinch (*Carduelis psaltria*) has a greenish to black back and darker cap. American Goldfinches (*Carduelis tristis*) have a pronounced black cap which contrasts with a bright yellow back; they are often referred to as wild canaries because of their lovely color. These are the most often photographed of the three species and are seen from coast to coast.

Lawrence's Goldfinch (*Carduelis lawrencei*) is the least colorful of the three, showing a grey back and black face, with yellow primarily on undersides and wings. Lesser and American may be seen year around in Santa Barbara County. Lawrence's is not often seen locally.

These brilliant yellow birds are seed eaters of the dry chaparral, woodlands, and grassy fields. Often they are seen, and almost always pictured, with thistles. (The Latin name, *Carduelis*, means thistle eater. In Pennsylvania Dutch country the American Goldfinch is called *distelfink* or thistle finch.) Their diet consists primarily of the seeds of composite flowers, e.g., dandelions, sunflowers, thistles, etc.

Since these late nesters--in May, locally, but as late as July to September in other areas--feed young seeds to their offspring, they wait until flowers have bloomed and are turning to seed for abundant food for their brood. Nests are tightly woven cups of grass or plant fibers, lined with cotton or other plant fuzz and feathers. One source stated that the nest was so closely knitted that it would hold water--to the extent that young have drowned during heavy rains. While brooding the eggs, females will remain on the nest almost continuously and the male brings food to her.

Although they inhabit dry areas, these birds need water and will frequent artificial water sources such as dripping faucets and birdbaths, when available to drink and to bathe. They are also frequent visitors to feeders, where they prefer niger or black oil sunflower seeds. They may be seen in flocks of as many as 300!

LT/96



American Goldfinch