



# CACHUMA FLYER

CACHUMA LAKE NATURE CENTER NEWSLETTER

Issue No. 27

Winter 1998

## Officers Elected to Docent Board

President- Gearge Hughes  
Vice-President- Don Wimpress  
Secretary- Barbara Gutmann and Becky Deutsch  
Treasurer- George Smith

## Committee Chairpersons

CLF Liason - George Hughes  
Linda Taylor (Grants )  
Docent Training - George Smith  
Gift Shop - Betty Wimpress  
Exhibits - Linda Taylor  
Publicity - Ellen Lubic  
Newsletter - Donna Shorts  
Hospitality - Tommie Miller  
Historiann - Tommie Miller  
Timekeeper - Fred Blaser

### Attention!

**The Trout Derby has been rescheduled to  
May 16, and May 17.**

A large bass tournament was scheduled for the weekend we originally chose and registered with Department of Fish and Game ahead of us.

## Board Honors Outstanding Docent Service



Awards for outstanding service by Docents were given at the Annual October Barbeque given by the CLF Board. In 1991 recognition of Docents was initiated. *"The Ralph and Maggie Klages Award"* was established to honor "unsung heroes", as described in Board minutes from that era. Based on suggestions from both Board members and Docents Ralph Klages, a Founding Docent, was first honored with this award. In 1994 Don Wimpress was so honored.

Linda Taylor was given this award for the 1997 year for her contributions as Exhibit Chairperson, work on the Trout Derby, and Grant Proposal writing. This is not an annual award, but is given as individuals distinguish themselves with prodigious service.

Betty Wimpress was given the award of *Outstanding Docent* for development and operation of the gift shop. Jim Smith was honored with the *Docent Recognition Award* for countless hours spent remodeling and building exhibits.



In the past few years the Board has recognized all Docents who contribute a certain number of hours. This year the following Docents submitted time sheets **with over 225 hours** worked: Jim Smith, Don Wimpress, Betty Wimpress, George Smith, Charlie Jack, Tommie Miller, Barbara Gutmann, George Hughes, Connie Howereton, Donna Shorts, Fred Blaser, and Linda Taylor. In 1991 a single award, the *Docent Service Award* was given to George Smith for the most hours worked by a Docent.

Selections for awards are based on information from Docents and Board Members, as well as time sheets supplied by individual Docents.



## Nature Center Redecorated

If you haven't had a chance to visit the Nature Center recently you will be in for a big surprise. During the entire month of December the Center was closed to the public while the inside of the building was refurbished. Thanks to the generosity of the Santa Barbara Foundation and the Wood-Claeysen Foundation the interior was painted, wood floors were refinished and new carpet was laid. The results are spectacular.

The painting and the floors were done by professionals: Sagebrush Paint Company of Santa Ynez did the painting, Douglas Hardwood Floors refinished the wood floors, and Andros Floor Covering installed the carpet. We were able to hire men to move the very heavy exhibits. But, there was a terrific amount of work that had to be done by the Docents.

Charlie Jack managed the project from beginning to end and put in endless hours of work. Many other Docents toiled tirelessly. Before the painting could begin the walls had to be cleared. In order to make it easy to reassemble everything, photos were taken of the rooms and exhibits. The exhibits were then carefully placed in boxes and everything was stored out of the way. It did take a few conferences before the carpet was chosen.

Since we had done such a good job of organizing everything as we took it down, putting it back together was going to be a snap. Well.....that was not to be. Fine dust from sanding the floors was covering everything, things weren't where they were put and the photos, alas, didn't cover all we needed to know. So, with many frustrations, long hours and hard labor the Nature Center is now all back together and better than ever.

## Feederwatch

From November through March, Docents are participating in Project Feederwatch, a bird census program conducted annually by Cornell University. For two days, twice monthly during this period Docents will count the number of birds of each species seen in the area of our feeders and birdbath. The highest number of each species recorded at one time on count days will be forwarded to Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology at the end of Feederwatch season.

Data is collected at feeders all across the country and compiled to establish increases and decreases in certain species as well as changes in territory and migrational patterns. Data on types of food made available is also studied. A copy of an extensive report will be sent to the Center in a few months.

As of mid-January, the most interesting bird to be seen at our feeder is a Black-throated Sparrow. This bird is a desert species and has been seen sporadically at the Center feeder since the end of November. Spotting of this bird has been posted on a Santa Barbara birding web site and many birders have come to the Center specifically to see it.

Other birds recorded so far are Band-tailed Pigeon, Mourning Dove, Scrub Jay, Cowbird, Red-winged Blackbird, White Crowned Sparrow, House Sparrow, House Finch, Acorn Woodpecker, Oak Titmouse, (formerly Plain Titmouse), Dark-eyed Junco, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, White-breasted Nuthatch, Purple Finch, Lawrence's Goldfinch, and Yellow-rumped Warbler.

All Docents are encouraged to participate. Directions and record forms are in the workroom; the National Geographic Guide to North American Birds is available for consultation at the bird window.

Linda Taylor

## The 1998 Bald Eagle Count

On January 10, like every year around this time for the past nine years, Cachuma Nature Center Docents and other volunteers gathered in the morning to count eagles. These folks were real troopers. Everyone had prepared to sit for four hours in the rain--previous days had been drenchers. Rain was not our problem this day. Somewhere in the up directions, skies were crystal blue- but at our level the air was impenetrable with fog. We would not see eagles unless they flew under our noses.

With 10 feet of visibility, we headed out in two boats to put people in their places around the lake. It is a wonder we found everyone at the end of the survey --in that fog who knew where we were dropping them off?!

But the fog lifted by 9 a.m., every bird on the lake made a show that day, and every eagle stood to be counted. Each year Cachuma Lake counts eagles as part of the national effort conducted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Consistency of count method each year is very important so that we know we are comparing apples to apples. At 16 fixed points around the lake, observers in groups of two or three noted their eagle sightings from 8 a.m. to noon. Each sighting is annotated with time and direction of flight. Once back in the office, with all the survey data, we plot the sightings on one large map. It is not until then that patterns emerge, and numbers reveal themselves.

Records for Cachuma go back to 1989, when 18 bald eagles were counted including two adults. The highest count was the following, 1990, with 8 adults and 12 juveniles, or 20 birds. Two years later at the height of the drought, 1992, it dropped way down to just 8 birds. The count climbed to 14 in 1995, but then dropped again last year, with a pitiable count of 5 birds. It was an unforgettable count nonetheless.

Remember? The lot of us were lunching unenthusiastically at the Nature Center picnic tables; so few had seen eagles that folks seemed wearied. I believe that the next thing that happened is the reason why many were willing to help again this year! Two adult bald eagles flew across the sky in front of us, and a third sailed by a minute later. Alas! Everyone saw their bird, and I wouldn't need to sign an affidavit that eagles, indeed, resided at Cachuma.

This year was a stellar one for the count. Out of 16 fixed points, only three groups saw no eagles, and those who did saw them over and over. There were so many sightings that getting a fix on the numbers was tricky. We are pleased to report that even a cautious estimation of eagles gave the following:

Bald eagle adult	2
Bald Eagle juvenile	10
Golden eagle adult	1
Golden eagle juvenile	1
Osprey	29

Think about this. Estimations of eagle numbers in North America, not including Alaska, when Columbus hit land range from 25,000 and 75,000. At the height of their decimation in 1969, when DDT was banned, there were 425 breeding pairs. Now there are over 10,000 breeding pairs in the lower 48 states.

And Cachuma Lake is home to one of those pairs, and a rest over for restless juveniles.

Thanks again for all the effort that went into the count! We couldn't have done it without you.

Liz Mason