

Prez Sez

Our summer “high season” was very successful here at the park. Sales in the Visitor Center were at an all time high, thanks to the great selections made by Tami Rakstad-Schaner and the sales committee. The quality and selection of items is excellent and many visitors comment on them.

The CBTA Board made a good decision to select our summer intern through the Student Conservation Association (SCA). Our intern, Nicole Forthofer was a definite addition to the interpretive programs and was a delight for all of us who worked with her. We will continue to contract with SCA for next year.

Autumn is now here and we’re experiencing the wonderful showing of fall colors. We anticipate that construction of the new Interpretive Center will go out to bid before the end of 2008. Keep those fingers crossed!

Margaret Bell



Winter in the North Grove

Courtesy Dan Wendin

Membership/Raffle

Thank you Lisa Shinn, docents, volunteers, Arnold Angels, Sierra Nevada Logging Museum and all friends of the Park who donated endless hours counting and stuffing envelopes October 14 and 16....20,000 letters were sent out to our local community and friends beyond.

Our membership/fund raising drive included raffle tickets: Seven nights at the Palm Springs Marriott Resort generously donated by Mike and Paulette Meany; “A Day on the Bay” donated by Robert and Sylvia Edwards; and, as third prize, a one-year State Park Pass. These generous contributions made this event possible. The winning tickets will be drawn on Sunday, November 23, the last day of our Holiday Sale at the Visitor Center. You will have received this mailing prior to our newsletter.

Thank you for your continuing support of CBTA and the interpretive programs we support.

Charlotte Hunt

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Holiday Sale - November 21!!!!

This year's annual Docent Holiday Sale will take place on Friday, Nov. 21 from 11:00 am to 3:00 pm. Docents who shop that day will save 40% on most items and 30% off books. This is CBTA's way of saying "Thanks!!" for all you do for Calaveras Big Trees State Park.

The sale is open to the public on Saturday and Sunday Nov. 22 and 23, from 11:00 am to 3:00 pm. Docents who choose to shop those days will receive their standard 20% discount. Enjoy hot apple cider and homemade goodies, and get great deals on all your Holiday needs while supporting Calaveras Big Trees State Park.

A Santa's Express donation station will be in the Visitor Center during the sale, so please bring in your donations of non-perishable food items. Santa's Express makes holiday meals a reality for families who otherwise may not have one.

Tami Rakstad-Schaner

Visitor Center - What a Year

Reading the papers and watching the news we are inundated by how bad retail sales are doing almost everywhere.

Luckily our little Visitor Center at Calaveras Big Trees State Park seems to be an anomaly, because we are having our biggest year ever! Last year we broke all records in the history of CBTA and we didn't think we could do any better. Well we are and what a year it has been. Year to date we are having an increase in visitors who are spending more on average. That means more money for the interpretive programs here at the park!

If you haven't been to the Visitor Center in a while, please come in and check out all our new and different merchandise. The Sales committee and I are trying to get Green and buy American. Some of our new Green items include stainless steel water bottles, battery-less flashlights and blankets made from 100% recycled fibers. Our "Made in America" items include MarqArt wood boxes, Channel Craft games, Sugar Woodcrafts who make the cedar book marks among other things and much more. The Visitor Center is a great place to buy unique gifts at a one of a kind shop.

Tami Rakstad-Schaner

Family Day Success

Did you all have fun??? Well, I did. Once again Family Day was a great day!

Everything went really well this year. We had over 2,000 visitors in our Park for this event, with 145 docents and several Park staff working. With special thanks to all our volunteers, Park Hosts, Park Staff and Rangers, presenters and supporters, it is because of you that this day is a "wonder" full one for the communities of the Arnold area.

I'd like to thank all our presenters. They did a fabulous job of interpreting and sharing to the thousands of people all day: The Great Mother Lode Brass and Reed Band, Jim Mori and Glenna with Butterflies, Rich Jones the falconer, Mike Sutton - our reptile guy, Arts of Bear Valley, Earline and Stan Smith with Peppermint Creek Carriage Co., Nancy Longmore and Smokey, Ebbetts Pass Fire and their firetruck, Fred Velasquez with Miwok demonstrations, George Cook and all the Calaveras Fly Fishing Association crew, Mark and Bear Dyken - story tellers extraordinaire, Mike O'Neil, Frank Gault and Denise Combs of Star Gazers and with the sunscope, Holly Johnston - our local juggler and Katie Delgado our face painter.

We also receive donations and help from our local businesses and organizations that I would also like to recognize and thank: Ebbetts Pass Loyal Order of the Moose Lodge, Dennis Pinion, David Gayneaux, Gold Electric for helping with the banner, Mike Taylor, Northern California Power Association, Linkline Transport, Arnold Subway, Sierra Hills Market and Big Trees Market.

From bowling in the 1800s to looking at spots on the sun or from Miwok Culture to Pine Cone Pals. No matter how we all experienced the day, I saw lots of smiling faces and thousands of people together outdoors, away from computers and TVs, without any problems, sharing what our Park and nature provide. Thank you all. It was a great Family Day!

Jayne Henning Childress
CBTA Family Day Coordinator.

KI-O-TE By Verna Johnston

On occasional evenings throughout the year, those who leave their windows open get a chance to tune in on their own special “Music of the Night.” It comes as a chorus of howls, yips, and barks from the hills and open spaces – coyotes singing to the moon. Residents whose homes back up to the hills see and hear the animals regularly.

Coyote cries, unearthly as they are, lack the mournful haunting quality of the wolves that once shared much of California and the western United States. The wolves have been gone from the Golden State since the late 1800’s, gunned down, trapped and poisoned by ranchers and early settlers, while coyotes have persisted to become the most widespread predators in the nation, despite attempts to wipe them out. They are canny survivors – can live almost anywhere, in the wilderness, in swamps,

forests, deserts and coastal areas. They even get along on the outskirts of human habitation and have invaded cities like Los Angeles, Denver, Phoenix and New York, but their favorite habitat is grasslands.

A big reason for their success is their omnivorous diet – they are not choosy about what they eat, feeding on anything smaller than themselves. Rabbits, ground squirrels, mice and rats are favorites but their menu also includes lizards, snakes, poultry, fruits and berries, insects and even carrion. Quail, mourning doves, towhees and other birds that spend a lot of time on the ground need to keep a watchful eye on their surroundings.

Patient hunters that they are, coyotes will wait outside a hole, poised to pounce on an emerging rodent.

Sometimes they will do a little dance in short steps on the grassy thickets to startle a vole hiding there into running, revealing its position. Earth movements of pocket gophers pushing dirt out of their burrows rarely go unnoticed nor does a plant that suddenly starts to shake as it is pulled down into the underground. The coyote’s tannish gray coat blends into dry grasses to provide excellent camouflage. Its grace, erect pointed ears and slender muzzle resemble a German shepherd. Large coyotes have been known to mate with large dogs to produce a hybrid called a “coydog”. But dogs and cats are potential dinners for coyotes.

Native Americans lived close to the earth and the animals on it and they revered the coyote in their folklore. According to Zuni legend, the coyote taught men to hunt. The Sioux believed it taught humans about useful plants. The Indians of the Northwest credited the coyote with putting salmon in the river and teaching them how to build fish traps and salmon spears. Many stories depict the coyote as a trickster, and he is always a colorful character on the American scene.



Backyard Coyote - Courtesy Dan Wendin

In Memoriam

Janet Nixon
Jack Seth Kirkwood
Jessie Clark
Nell Cornell
Betty Bradley

Calaveras Big Trees Association
PO Box 1196
Arnold CA 95223-1196
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We're on the web: www.bigtrees.org

Our Mission : To assist and support the interpretation and environmental education programs at Calaveras Big Trees State Park

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Big Tree Bulletin

Editors: Dan and Ellie Wendin
Contributors: Jayne Henning Childress,
Charlotte Hunt,
Verna Johnston,
Tami Rakstad-Schaners
Circulation: Lisa Shinn
Mailing: Marilyn and Larry Larson

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The CBTA dues year is the calendar year (Life Members excepted). Expiration date appears on your mailing label.