From the President

In spite of all the uncertainty, we had a wonderful summer at the Park, with a record number of visitors as well as sales in the Visitor Center Gift Shop. We had standing room only at our junior ranger and cubs programs, impressive numbers for Family Day, and a full house for our John Muir Laws seminar in September. By the way, if you missed his wonderful presentation, you can see an encore on our website at www.bigtrees.org.

Our Association, in cooperation with the California State Parks Foundation, hosted an “I Love State Parks” weekend in August as part of our ongoing involvement in the campaign to keep state parks open. CBTA Board Member Bunny Firebaugh organized the two-day event. We filled banners with heart-shaped postcards signed by more than 900 people, which sent a visual message to state legislators holding hearings on park closures.

The Parks Foundation has kept the Governor’s feet to the fire by directing a grass roots campaign that has resulted in a public outcry over proposed park closures. It must be working -- Labor Day has come and gone, and state parks are still open. The Parks Foundation is working toward getting the State Park Access Pass on a future ballot. This plan would give stability to the state parks system. Although we remain open for now, the 2009 Budget Act calls for another $22 million in funding cuts for state parks next year.

Kudos to Marilyn Regan and Betty Woodward for their outstanding job in bringing us Family Day in August. And thanks to you, our members, park docents, park staff, administrative staff and supporters for making the day such a success. We couldn’t do it without you. Another wonderful day connecting kids to nature, nurturing a love and respect for it… enabling them to be the future protectors of our parks.

Marcy Crawford

We Have Survived! What’s Next?

Yes, due in part to the efforts of the members and volunteers of the Calaveras Big Trees Association (you!), our Park will remain open to provide recreation, education and a unique place in the Giant Sequoia forests of California for the citizens of this state, the nation and the world. Now it is time to begin planning for the future and to do that we need YOU TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP FOR 2010 (a big thanks to those of you who have already done so).

CBTA cannot continue to provide the Park with funds to continue its many educational and interpretive programs without the support of our members. Such programs as the recent seminar by John Muir Laws, Jr. Rangers and Cubs, campfire programs and Family Day will be just a memory.

The CBTA Board of Directors is currently working with our Park staff to determine how CBTA can provide any additional help to assure that the Park will not only be open in the future but will be an even better experience for our visitors. Specific actions and programs will be developed. However, the one essential strategy is to have a strong and committed membership and your renewal is key to achieving that goal.

On the back page of the Bulletin is a Membership Renewal Form. Please use this form and send your dues for 2010 to the address shown. The renewal form can also be found and printed from our website by clicking on “join CBTA.” If you missed your 2009 dues it would be greatly appreciated if you could include dues for 2009 also.

Have any friends enjoyed Big Trees State Park but haven’t joined CBTA? Make a copy of the renewal form for them also or let us know and we will send them a formal invitation to join.

Thank you for your previous support and we look forward to seeing you at the Park in the future.

John Woodward
Holiday Sale - November 20 - Save the Date

This year's annual CBTA Holiday Sale will take place on Friday, November 20 from 11:00 am - 3:00 pm. CBTA members, docents and state employees who shop that day will save 40% on most items and 30% on 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, November 21 and 22, from 11:00 am - 3:00 pm. CBTA members, docents and state employees who choose to shop those days will receive their standard discount.

Enjoy hot apple cider and homemade goodies, and get great deals on all your holiday needs while supporting the 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 that otherwise may not have one.

Bunny Firebaugh

Visitor Center - A magnet for Visitors!

Our little Visitor Center at Calaveras Big Trees State Park is like the little engine that could, because we are having another amazing year! Our sales continue to grow each year. Year-to-date we have seen an increase in park visitors coming into the Visitor Center. More visitors 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, buy American and include items for babies. Some of our new Green items include stainless steel water bottles and travel mugs, battery-less flashlights and blankets made from 100% recycled fibers. Our made in America items include MarqArt wood boxes, For Bear Feet socks, Sugar woodcrafts (who make the cedar book marks among other things) and much more! We have expanded our infant and toddler clothing to include long sleeve shirts. We also have board books and a great new item called Bug Jug Fill and Spill for six months plus, a must for hours of fun.

The Visitor Center is a great place to buy unique gifts at a one of a kind shop. Come and visit us at our Holiday sale and bring some non-perishable food for our Santa’s Express bin. Thanks for supporting Calaveras Big Trees State Park!

Tami Rakstad-Schaner

New Giant Sequoia Research

Recent observations of Giant Sequoia (Sequoiadendron giganteum) root systems in groves in the southern Sierra Nevada gives us some new and very different information about these marvelous trees. We have always heard that Giant Sequoia root systems are shallow and spreading in order to collect enough water and soil nutrients to support the growth of such large trees. Where they occur on gentle slopes with a close and consistent water source, this is generally true.

But in some cases, Giant Sequoias seem able to adapt their root systems to very different conditions. Scientists have made observations in groves where Giant Sequoias are growing on very steep slopes far from a water source. In those cases, it was noted that some trees were sending roots down from the main lateral roots 60 feet or more in search of water!

Wendy Harrison

Winter in the North Grove

Courtesy Dan Wendin
Family Day Success

On August 15, 2009, Calaveras Big Trees State Park saw a crowd of between 1500 and 1700 happy children and adults enjoying our annual Family Day. By all accounts the day was a huge success. There were carriage rides, delicious lunches, butterflies and raptors to see and hold. Reptiles, as usual, were a crowd pleaser with big groups handling the snakes all day. Even adults!

Two bands entertained during the day - Mother Lode Brass and Reed Band and Passin’ Thru. There was also a juggler wandering through the crowd and attracting audiences.

Several crafts and face painting were especially enjoyed by the children, as were the fire engines - you could actually spray the fire hose (but watch out for the birds in the trees).

This annual event is always a special treat and a “thank you” to the community that supports us during the year. See you next year!

Marilyn Regan
Family Day Chairperson

In Memoriam
Charles Gilmore
Rich Jimenez
Norm Ornellas
Bernice Goodell
Calaveras Big Trees Association
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Return Service Requested

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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2009-10 CBTA Officers/Board
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The Board meets monthly the last Wednesday at 1:00 pm.

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