

# BIG TREE

CALAVERAS BIG TREES ASSOCIATION • 209-797-3810

# BULLETIN

CALAVERAS BIG TREES STATE PARK • ARNOLD, CA



Volume 28, Number 2

Summer 2009

## From the President

I am honored by my election as president of Calaveras Big Trees Association. Big Trees Park is cherished by all of us and I am pleased to serve the association and the park.

Anne Saunders, who served as president from 2006-2008, stepped up as interim president earlier this year. Thank you, Anne, for your dedication to the park and CBTA. She will be a tough act to follow! Anne will continue as a board member and will serve as an advisor to me and the board this coming year.

The current economic turn-down has led to record numbers of people visiting our state parks as families cannot afford the vacations they may have taken in better times. As I write this letter the Governor is poised to sign a new California budget. Although we do not know the full ramifications, the California State Park Foundation estimates that 30 to 50 parks will still have to close. We do not know yet if we are one of them or what other effect it may have on us.

If these closures occur, affordable recreation for thousands of people will be lost. We are waiting and speculating whether or not we will have to close our gates after Labor Day or whether we can survive by using seasonal or weekday closures. In the meantime make your voice heard by visiting the Foundation website at [calparks.org](http://calparks.org) and see how you can help. We are all looking for creative solutions to keep our enduring giants open for the public. And, until we hear otherwise, we continue to move forward with our programs and plans.

Gary Olson, our new Supervising Ranger who joined us in May, previously served in Old Town, San Diego. The Board is looking forward to working with Gary particularly on our first joint project, Family Day, on August 15, 2009.

Our Web site [www.bigtrees.org](http://www.bigtrees.org) has become a first class site thanks to Jock Piel who continues to donate his time and talent. In addition to CBTA functions, Jock now posts all the daily Big Trees State Park activities.

Thanks to you, our members, staff and supporters we have continued to successfully raise funds through a number of different events, enabling the State to continue providing interpretation of human and natural history at the park.

Marcy Crawford

## Family Day - August 15 - 10:00 to 4:00

Another great fun-filled Family Day is being planned for August 15. Included in the day's activities will be a chance to pet/hold one of your favorite reptiles. There will be live raptors for the Junior Ranger program and Junior Cubs. The raptor programs start at 10 am, but the raptors will stay for another hour or so for further chances to see them and learn more.

For entertainment there will be cocked hat bowling, the Great Mother Lode Brass and Reed Band, fly fishing demonstrations, carriage rides for the whole family, face painting, a talk about butterflies and one about song birds, a roving juggler throughout the day, a visiting fire truck and the "Passin' Thru" band.

Crafts include making an origami critter, planting a sequoia tree and fashioning a nature bracelet. Also there will be a craft presented by the folks from "Arts of Bear Valley."

The Moose Club will be barbecuing burgers (meat and veggie) and hotdogs with all the trimmings. There will be ice cream for sale and baked goods donated by our wonderful docents.

Bring the family and meet Smokey the Bear and Sierra, the Big Trees chipmunk. Come and learn about Miwok culture or take a hike in the meadow or in the North Grove. Both hikes will be guided by one of our docents.

Sounds like lots of fun!

Marilyn Regan

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## Twisted Oak and CBTA

It was a wonderful twisted evening on May 24th for those attending a Roasted Rubber Chicken Roast with wine and all the trimmings at Twisted Oak Winery in Vallecito.

El Jefe Stai, the owner of the Winery, donated the proceeds from raffle items (three bottles of "The Spaniard", etc.) plus a percentage from the dinner proceeds to CBTA. It was a hardy group of CBTA volunteers who served up the wonderful dinner and sold raffle tickets: Linda Appleton, David and Susanne Bergum, Leah Brown, Marcy Crawford, Anne Saunders and Jim Walton. Our association is fortunate to have members that say "Yes" when asked and actually have fun working together.

Jeff and his wife Mary are members of CBTA and we extend our thanks to them for their generosity.

Charlotte Hunt

## Anne Saunders in Concert

A candlelit fireplace welcomed concert goers to the "sold out" performance June 7th at Jack Knight Hall. Anne Saunders presented us with an amazing afternoon of songs from Rodgers and Hart, Gershwin and Obradors, to name a few. She was accompanied by Sue Hart at keyboard, Keith Evans, bass guitar, and Jim Anderson on drums.

The concert was designed to lighten your heart and chase the blues away and by the crowd reaction it certainly did just that. A wine and hors d'oeuvre reception followed the concert.

This is the third concert that Anne has donated her talent to benefit the parks educational programs. Let's hope she has a fourth up her sleeve.

Charlotte Hunt

## S.H.A.R.E.S

CBTA is proud to announce our partnership with SaveMart Supermarkets and Lucky Stores and their S.H.A.R.E.S. program. When you use your S.H.A.R.E.S. card please present it before check out and the checker will swipe your card. S.H.A.R.E.S. will track the dollar amount spent by CBTA members and then, quarterly, will send CBTA a check for 3% of that amount. This ongoing FUNDRAISING program will help support our interpretative programs at the Park.

Cards are available at the Visitor Center or call 209-795-3840 to have a card sent to you. For questions regarding this program please call me at 209-795-6365.

SHOP HEARTY AND EAT WELL

## Theresa Gerdin, Student Intern

We are very fortunate to have another wonderful Student Intern helping out at the Park this summer, thanks to CBTA, which has funded the position each summer for close to twenty years. This has greatly added to our ability to serve our many visitors. This year, CBTA worked through the Student Conservation Association, which places students who are interested in natural resources work in positions world-wide.

Our new intern is Theresa Gerdin, soon to be a sophomore at Colorado State University in Fort Collins. Although Theresa doesn't know exactly what she wants to do as a profession, whatever it is will take her outdoors. She loves working with children and is a swimming and ski instructor in her home state. She is from a very outdoor-oriented family who spend much of their free time skiing, biking, rafting and backpacking.

At the Park this summer she is spending a lot of time working with children presenting Jr. Ranger and Cub Programs three to five days per week. She leads guided tours of the North Grove and provides information to visitors informally on hikes around the park. In addition she works in the Entrance Station on Fridays, and works with the Natural Resources Crew on Mondays. She is available to help out in the Visitor Center, and with other tasks as needed. Theresa has been a wonderful addition to our crew this summer and we truly appreciate her willingness to help and easy going manner.

Wendy Harrison



## Hike-A-Thon

CBTA sponsored its first Hike-A-Thon on Saturday, June 27. Participants had the choice of hiking the North Grove, Three Senses or South Grove Trails. Docents were on hand to register hikers and offer snacks and water as well as greet them along the trails at specific points. Unusually beautiful weather and generous pledges and donations by those taking part in this first Hike event added to a fun and worthwhile day in the park.

Bruce Thomsen

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## Welcome Gary Olson

Gary started as our new Supervising Ranger on May 11th.

He and his wife Valerie are excited to work in such a beautiful park, and look forward to meeting everyone. He had the opportunity to visit the Park on several occasions, to learn more about the area and to meet some of the staff and volunteers, and said with confidence that everyone they met were very professional, friendly and showed great enthusiasm.

His career with State Parks began approximately 10 years ago, in Los Angeles, working at Los Encinos State Historic Park as a visitor services park aid. He worked for several years as a maintenance park aid at Will Rogers, Los Encinos and Pio Pico State Parks. He graduated from Los Angeles Pierce College with an AA degree and California State University Northridge with a BS degree in recreation management. He moved to San Diego to work in Old Town San Diego SHP and several other parks in the area. He was promoted to Supervising Ranger at Old Town San Diego and San Pasqual Battlefield SHP and has been actively involved in almost every aspect of operations, interpretation, volunteers and planning.

He is seeking suggestions on how to improve areas that may have been neglected, issues that need to be resolved and ways to build upon the knowledge, interests and excitement of the volunteers, docents and staff. Call or write, or just stop by, to give him your thoughts.

## Visitors Center Activity

Sales at the Visitors Center have been fabulous this year with lots of visitors wanting to bring back a souvenir from the Park

There are many new faces at the Park this year; two are in the Visitors Center working for Calaveras Big Trees Association. Our new Bookkeeper is Debbie McGee; you might recognize her from past years, because she came in and helped out when Susan was on vacation. Our new Administration/Retail Assistant is Sue Hoffmann. She is a wiz on computers and Jeff Gordon #24 (Google it if it doesn't ring a bell). If you have a question about either she most likely will have an answer. Both are doing great in their jobs as well as getting to know the Park. Please stop by and say hi to Debbie and Sue.

Remember you can always visit and say hi to me.

Tami Rakstad-Schaner

## Fall 2009 Seminar Schedule

Saturday September 26, 2009 "Exploring & Sharing The Natural World With Others" John Muir Laws

Naturalist, educator and artist John (Jack) Muir Laws delights in exploring the natural world and sharing this love with others. For six years, John backpacked the Sierra Nevada to research and illustrate "The Laws Guide To The Sierra Nevada," a richly illustrated (2,710 original watercolor paintings), pocket-size field guide to over 1,700 species found in the Sierra Nevada. Laws will present an illustrated lecture about the natural history of the Sierra Nevada, and the process of creating a field guide. This engaging program will highlight some of the beautiful and amazing species in the Sierra and the relationships between them. Laws will also discuss some of the conservation challenges in the Sierra Nevada and what stewards of nature are doing to confront them. Jack has worked as an environmental educator for over 25 years in California, Wyoming and Alaska. He teaches classes on natural history, conservation biology, scientific illustration, and field sketching. He is trained as a wildlife biologist and is an associate of the California Academy of Science. He is currently coordinating efforts to create sixth through eighth grade curricula to help teachers convey a love of nature and an understanding of biodiversity to their students through field studies and nature sketching.

Saturday October 3, 2009 "Sierra Nevada Wildlife in Winter" Joe Medieros

For those of us furless anthropods who find winter harsh, cold and extra-challenging in the Sierra, there are thousands of native species in the Range of Light who experience it as simply another season. Join botanist/ecologist Joe Meiderios for a slide-illustrated lecture describing the many strategies that our fellow mortals utilize to make it through this cold and dark season. Joe has recently retired from Sierra College where he taught botany, ecology and natural history for 18 years. Before that he was Botanist at Modesto Junior College for 15 years and Director of the Great Valley Museum. He has studied alpine ecosystems throughout the Sierra as well as in Alaska, the European Alps, the Andes, in Australia and New Zealand, and in the East African volcanic regions. He is headed back "down under" to study the Australian alpine areas (Kosciusko region).

Both programs will be held at 10 a.m. in Jack Knight Hall at Calaveras Big Trees State Park. The Public is encouraged to attend so bring some of your friends. If you have questions about these seminars please call the Calaveras Big Trees Park at (209) 795-3840.

Steve Stocking

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We're on the web: [www.bigtrees.org](http://www.bigtrees.org)

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

Calaveras Big Trees Association  
**Membership/Renewal Form**  
PO Box 1196, Arnold, CA 95223-1196 • 209-795-3840

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
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City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of referring CBTA member \_\_\_\_\_

Please circle choice below and make payment to:  
Calaveras Big Trees Association (CBTA)  
PO Box 1196, Arnold, CA 95223-1196

Individual	\$15
Family	25
Organization/Business	100

\*Please advise of any change of address

## Big Tree Bulletin

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## 2009-10 CBTA Officers/Board

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Betty Ann Prescott, Anne Saunders,  
John Woodward

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

The Board meets monthly the last Wednesday at 1:00 pm.