Our mission..........To deliver high quality educational and interpretive programs at Calaveras Big Trees State Park

From CBTA’s President  
by Vida Kenk

This has been an amazing year! The number of Park visitors coming into the new Visitor Center is double what it has been in the past, and sales in the gift shop have reflected this increase. Another difference is that there used to be a distinct “high season” from Memorial Day to Labor Day, but this year the high season has extended into the fall.

This higher volume has necessitated hiring an additional CBTA staff person to handle weekends. Jill Ogburn is a welcome addition to our staff.

In order to understand our present situation and plan for the future, CBTA participated in an assessment process funded by the California State Parks Foundation and conducted by Randy Widera. The CBTA Board received his report and had a chance to discuss it with him at our monthly board meeting October 29th. Let me quote the first of the key findings of this report: “CBTA is an effective organization that has a good degree of complexity. Though relatively small in budget, CBTA has a diversity of operations and programs and many of the demands of much larger nonprofits. A highly effective board with an effective board structure is the driving force of your success.” The report repeatedly comments on the enthusiasm and dedication of the Board, staff and volunteers as our greatest strength. Many Park programs would not exist if it were not for YOU - CBTA members- especially those who also serve as State Park docents.

The report also noted areas where we can improve. Currently, the CBTA Board lacks members with expertise in marketing, fundraising and law. In addition, the organization needs to develop an employee handbook (now in process and will probably be completed by the time you read this), an endowment and a Fundraising Committee.

If you are interested in helping the Park by becoming a member of this “highly effective board”, please contact the chair of the Nominating Committee, Marcy Crawford, at marcypcrawford@aol.com. We need expertise in areas beyond those listed above, especially since several of our most experienced Board members will term out in 2016, and it would be good to have “apprentices” join the Board in the coming year to work with them before they leave. Most Board members chair a standing committee, but some do special projects.

The Board meets monthly on the last Wednesday of the month (except during the November and December holiday season, when alternate dates are chosen). Board meetings are open to the public, except when we hold closed sessions to deal with personnel matters.

Now that the new Visitor Center is built and is highly successful, CBTA needs to develop new goals and priorities. In order to accomplish that, we are having an all-day long term strategic planning session with representatives of the Department of Parks and Recreation in mid-November to develop a vision of what this Park should be in five to ten years and how we can work together in partnership to make that vision a reality. I will report on the results of this meeting in my next president’s letter.

Think snow!!!
Join the Fun at the Winter Wonderland Carnival!

CBTA’s 5th annual Winter Wonderland Carnival will celebrate winter on Sunday, December 28th, from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., regardless of the weather.

Activities will be centered around Jack Knight Hall. Come enjoy the horse-drawn wagons touring around the meadow, along with crafts, games, snow-shoeing and more. Hot chocolate, hot cider and cookies will be served.

TICKETS:
Advance tickets are $12.50 for adults and $8.50 for children 12 and under. Your ticket includes entrance into the Park if tickets are purchased online. Tickets are available online at www.bigrees.org.
Tickets at the door, if available, will be $15.00 for adults and $10.00 children 12 and under plus $10 Park entrance fee.
Winter Wonderland was a sell out for the last few years, so make sure you buy your tickets early.
Please call 209-795-1196 for more information.
Come and enjoy this delightful winter afternoon event on December 28th!

By Bunny Firebaugh
Let it Snow!

Yes it is that time of year where we all look forward to the winter season, holidays with the family, and spending time with close friends around a warm fire. Hopefully we will get rain and snow this year to help provide some relief to the drought conditions in California.

You have probably heard that we had a small fire in the Park on October 25 along the Railroad Grade in one of our resource thinning project areas. Thankfully we were able to contain the fire quickly to three acres. This was a great learning opportunity for many, but the main issue is that the drought has made the Park extremely flammable with the dry conditions. Whatever the cause, a fire could spread rapidly and threaten the giant sequoias. The Resource Program’s thinning projects are designed to help protect the groves from a devastating canopy fire by removing the ladder fuels, mid-level trees and brush that will allow the flames to reach the canopy. Breaking this fire ladder will keep the flames on the ground and reduce the intensity of the fire, allowing more trees to survive. In addition, removal of the excess growth will allow more ground water for the remaining trees, improving the health and resistance to pests and disease. The goal is to restore the health of the forest, protect the trees, and provide the public access to these magnificent areas. So please help educate the public about why we are thinning the trees and remind them that smoking is not allowed anywhere except in the paved parking lots or campsites.

I believe it is important to recognize the District staff and management for all the efforts that they have made in Sacramento to get funding and projects approved for our parks. If we look back at the projects, they include the new boardwalk across the meadow, the new Visitor Center and Education Center, new trail connections, a new dump station, relining the 100,000 gallon concrete water tank, a new roof on the old visitor center, and the most recent projects, replacing the bathroom in the main parking lot and replacement of the water tank at the residence area. The emphasis on repairing and replacing the aging infrastructure is evident, and while there is more needed, the list of what has been achieved by the District team is impressive in a very tough economy.

As we all get ready to celebrate the holiday season, the Park staff wants to recognize and thank all of you who help make this Park special and create a memorable experience for our visitors. Be safe, stay healthy and smile more often. People will wonder why you are so happy!

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**HOLIDAY SALE—SAVE THE DATE!**

This year’s annual CBTA Holiday Sale will take place on Friday, November 21st, 2014, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. in our new and improved Visitor Center. CBTA members, docents and State employees who shop that day will save 40% on most items and 30% off books.

The sale is open to the public on Saturday, November 22nd, and goes through November 30th, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. CBTA members, docents and State employees who choose to shop those days will receive their standard discount. This is CBTA’s way of saying “Thanks!!” for all you do for Calaveras Big Trees State Park.

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 that otherwise may not have one.
Toast Your Toes in the Warming Hut

by Cam Deen

Picture yourself in a boat on a river with marmalade eyes and tangerine skies. Oh, wait, that's not the Warming Hut, that's a flashback to the sixties! Speaking of the sixties, flashback to the 1960's and before, when the Park sported a warming hut and a ski/toboggan hill, complete with rope tow, located in the meadow adjacent to the campsites. Built in the 1930's by the Civilian Conservation Corp, the Warming Hut offered refreshments, a warm fire and good company to Park visitors during the winter. Dismantled in the 1970's, the Park was, shall we say, warming-hut-less for the next twenty-five years, or so.

Flash forward to 2002: A second generation Warming Hut was constructed, located at the end of the parking lot adjacent to the new Visitor Center. This Warming Hut is based on the plans of original warming hut, complete with a fire pit and a hand-forged hood just like the original. And just like the original, hospitality in the form of a warm fire, hot chocolate, hot cider, coffee, tea and good company are served up, free of charge. The refreshments are served courtesy of the Calaveras Big Trees Association, and donations are welcomed.

Our visitors come from around the world, and one can hear many languages being spoken as our guests warm themselves by the fire. Alas, the ski/toboggan hill and rope tow no longer exist. They have been replaced, however, by snowshoe hikes that embark from the Warming Hut every Saturday at 1:00 p.m. with snowshoes provided free of charge on a first come, first served basis, thanks to the Calaveras Big Trees Association.

The Warming Hut is open every weekend through March, weather cooperating, including the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays. Docents staff the Warming Hut, serve the refreshments and keep the fire stoked.

If you are interested being a Warming Hut volunteer, there will be a Warming Hut docent training at the Warming Hut from 10:00 a.m. to noon on November 13, 2014. For more information contact the Warming Hut coordinator, Cam Deen, at camerondeen1@gmail.com.

In closing, I want to give a shout-out to our previous Warming Hut coordinator, Bill Minkel. Under his leadership the Warming Hut has continued a tradition dating back to the 1930's of providing a very unique and positive experience for our visitors.

Time to Renew!

by Paul Prescott

It's that time of year again! We are asking you to renew your membership in CBTA. Your membership has helped to support the interpretive programs and activities at Calaveras Big Trees State Park all year. How has the money been spent? I'm glad you asked. Here's how:

- Two summer interns
- Park aides
- Five free seminars
- Scholarships to four students pursuing environmental or park work
- Four part-time employees who run the bookstore, the day-to-day face of CBTA
- The new video that shows in the theater

In May Calaveras Big Trees hosted one of the first celebrations of the State Parks 150th anniversary. In August CBTA sponsored another successful Family Day, as well as the Calamity at the Redwood Saloon. Soon the Warming Hut will be open, Jack Knight Hall will be in festive decoration and Winter Wonderland is just around the corner.

Calaveras Big Trees Association is committed to providing Park visitors with the best interpretive program possible. This has been done with support from all of you, and we hope you will consider renewing your membership for 2015. There are additional membership categories with various incentives, including a 20% discount at the CBTA gift shop.

You may fill out a brochure and mail it in, or renew online at http://bigtrees.org/get-involved/cbta-membership/

Thank you for your continued support.
Calamity at the Big Trees Saloon!

by Joan Allday

Saturday, August 30, was an evening of raucous good fun at the Big Trees Saloon. Guests were treated to visits from Black Bart, Jimmy Roleri, Windsor Kiefer and Augusta Louise Marie Trumbo-McClain (Huber-VonTrott). All were colorful, historical figures from Calaveras County.

Guests were entertained by the dancehall girls feuding with the society ladies and a hilarious fight that broke out between Windsor Kiefer and Jimmy Roleri. Poker playing became a popular activity, as was the wine, beer and sarsaparilla.

The snake oil salesman became the activity director and invited all guests into Jack Knight Hall for a delicious dinner of homemade stew, chili, corn bread and salad. The entire meal was lovingly prepared by our hard-working docents. Yummy desserts were served while guests enjoyed some entertainment by our rowdy saloon characters. The evening was certainly filled with calamity!

Welcome to New Members!

New Members July 2, 2014 – October 28, 2014

Brian Raley, Mission Viejo, CA
Don Post, Palo Alto, CA
Nancy Schroeder, Benicia, CA
Simone Bennett, Beaver Falls PA
Kristina Johnson, San Francisco, CA
Bob and Kathie Maxwell, Sioux Falls, SD
Lew and Lynn Dawson, Dana Point, CA
Catherine Hourcade, Stockton, CA
Ken Smole & Jane Conway, Mill Valley, CA
Marilyn Larson, Sunnyvale, CA
Frank Dority, Tustin, CA
Tricia Borges, Turlock, CA
DonnaLynn Warren, Egg Harbor Township, NJ
Dylan Cardiff, Oakland, CA
Our Business Partners

by George Leong

Does it seem that Arnold shows signs of economic growth? What’s going on? In the past issues of the CBTA newsletter, I have had the pleasure of bringing to you a little more insight on the various businesses that support the Park. In this installment, I would like to introduce you to the Greater Arnold Business Association (GABA).

GABA is not an individual business; rather, it is a non-profit organization like CBTA whose goal is to promote successful economic strategies, and in turn, jobs and goods and services in our community. Examples of their involvement in organizing and sponsoring area activities include the Fourth of July parade and the summer music series held in Cedar Center. GABA has become the pulse of the Arnold area.

Bob Doten, past-president of GABA, points out that 15 new businesses have opened in Arnold with more to come. He says that what we are seeing is the can-do spirit of those who have followed their dreams and created their own success.

In many of these new businesses, someone has found a need and filled it. Timeless Home Gallery is a retail showroom for a dozen artisans and craftspeople whose work would ordinarily be seen by few. Nearby in Cedar Center, Mara Rosenhart has opened Big Heart Fiber Arts with a shop and learning center for knitting, crochet, felting, weaving and spinning. Sid Marsh and Kate O’Keefe saw that visitors needed a place to get information about the Arnold area and opened the Ebbets Pass Visitors’ Center on Highway 4 along with Bear’s Lair for convenient lodging.

Successful businesses are expanding. Donny Kimber has taken his small produce business and nurtured it. Having outgrown the Arnold Pantry’s current location, he will soon be moving to the Hub at Cedar Center, expanding his business to include a retail store, restaurant and catering operation. Lloyd and Christy Bunch run the Red Apple store just up Highway 4 from Forest Meadows. They have watched their business grow each year since opening a little over five years ago. Inspired by many requests from Arnold residents, they will be opening a bakery and deli sandwich restaurant next spring at the location of the former Blue Frog in Arnold.

We’re all wondering how much the news of Bear Valley Mountain’s sale impacted businesses in Arnold. Steve Rinauro believes it has had an impact. He ran Mineral restaurant in Murphys, but as soon as his remodeling of a Cedar Center building is completed, he will open a farm-to-table vegetarian restaurant there.

Paul Bertini, president of GABA and a contractor, put this all into perspective. He said that business owners and homeowners alike are confident in the economy and are investing in their properties, as demonstrated by the volume of building permit approvals for the Arnold area. He concluded, “Our economic growth isn’t because of one specific reason; it’s that everything’s coming our way.”

GABA is at the heart of the resurgence of the Highway 4 corridor. With the new ownership at Bear Valley willing to invest in the ski area, we could very well see an economy that will grow by leaps and bounds. CBTA will certainly be a part of that growth.

For more information on GABA, visit their website at cometoarnold.com or on Facebook.

Our thanks to Bob Doten for providing information for this article.

Memorials
Camille Palmer
Family Day

by Steve Burg

Family Day is an eagerly-anticipated annual event at the Park. The main purpose of Family Day is to thank everyone in our community for their support by providing a variety of fun, family-friendly activities to do at the Park. This is the twenty-sixth year the event has occurred, and many local people look forward to attending every third weekend of August.

Family Day 2014 was estimated to be the highest attended Family Day yet. We had 550 vehicles register attendance with an estimated 1,980 people participating (550 vehicles x 3.6 average visitors per vehicle). We served 400 meals to guests and volunteers, sold 286 bottles of water, made $183 from our bake sale and generated a net of $874 from food sales. Whew!

We moved our exhibitors into the area adjacent to the Visitor Center with great success. Many of our regular attendees commented on how much better it was in this area, and our exhibitors all said they had much greater participation than in past years. Setup and breakdown went smoothly thanks to over eighty volunteers and many of the Park staff and event staffing.

After a number of years of partnering with CBTA, the Moose Lodge has advised us they will not be running the barbeque in 2015. We have approached other organizations and are in discussion about the barbeque for next year. There were some problems with our handling of the barbeque, but we will be making adjustments for next summer.

Most of our exhibitors have already indicated a desire to be back with us in 2015. The Family Day Committee will be working in upcoming months to assure great Family Day. Mark your calendar now for August 15, 2015. Come to enjoy Family Day next year!
CBTA Board of Directors:
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George Leong
Bunny Firebaugh
Bruce Tallakson
Marcy Crawford
Steve Stocking
Joan Allday
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Betty Watson

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Sue Hoffmann
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Jill Ogburn

Retail Manager
Administrative Officer
Bookkeeper
Retail Assistant

The Board meets monthly the last Wednesday at 1:00 p.m., and the meeting is open to the public. Please call the office at 795-1196 to confirm meeting date, time and place.

The CBTA dues year is the calendar year. You may renew your membership by mailing a check payable to CBTA or renew/donate through our website www.bigtrees.org. Your membership/donation is tax deductible to the extent allowable by law.

Visit us…………..
Web Site…….www.bigtrees.org
Facebook…..Calaveras Big Trees Association
Twitter……..CBTAssociation