From CBTA’s President  by Vida Kenk

We have accomplished a lot together in the past year. The most obvious is building the new Visitor Center, toward which CBTA contributed over half a million dollars. The official opening of this facility will be celebrated on Saturday, May 24, as part of the commemoration of the 150th anniversary of California State Parks. I’d like to review with you some of the other CBTA achievements during 2013.

Because of the new location, in November and December the Visitor Center welcomed about 70% of the people who came to the Park, compared to about 40% visitation in the old site. We recorded 75,910 total guests to the building by the end of the year. Sales exceeded our budget expectations by over $40,000.

Our major fundraising events in 2013 included a woodwind concert in May, the Mystery Dinner in September, Winter Wonderland in December and Summer Sweetness ice cream and popcorn sales on summer weekends. After expenses, these events raised nearly $8,700. Memberships in CBTA brought in $12,125. Various donations totaled about $14,130, including $4,484 in the collection boxes in the Warming Hut, which was more than double the cost of supplying free hot drinks to our 11,329 guests for the season through February.

For the year, CBTA contributed $77,220.33 to the State of California to support the delivery of high quality educational and interpretive programs at Calaveras Big Trees State Park. These monies were largely used for hiring two summer interns and seasonal park aides for the Visitor Center, as well providing funding for supplies for the docent volunteers. The summer interns are college students who gain experience in their chosen fields while conducting activities such as leading walking tours, campfire programs, and 117 sessions of Cubs and Junior Rangers, serving 1,581 children. Besides the contribution to the State, CBTA financed two college scholarships of $1000 each, in addition to the endowed Hewitt scholarship.

Besides raising money, CBTA sponsored activities, such as Family Day in August, the Warming Hut in winter and participation in local holiday parades. These efforts increased the visibility and enjoyment of the park. As a well-known credit card ad says, “these things are priceless.”

If you wish to know more details about organization finances, just call the CBTA office at 209-795-1196. Our books and our board meetings are open to members. If you have suggestions as to events and programs that CBTA should sponsor in 2014, I’d love to hear from you at cbtvc@goldrush.com. I look forward to more success working together in 2014.

Our mission........To deliver high quality educational and interpretive programs at Calaveras Big Trees State Park
New Visitor Center Now Open!

by Tami Rakstad-Schaner

Location, location, location. It really is about location! Since moving to our new location the new Visitor Center has doubled our sales and the number of people coming into the Visitor Center! And to think…this is our off-season! If you haven’t been into the new Visitor Center, you really need to come in. It is beautiful! When you walk in you get the feeling of the Ahwahnee Hotel, because of the spaciousness and the stone fireplace. Our new displays allow for better visibility and capacity to have more items on the floor for visitors to buy! People can relax in the lounge area around the fireplace and learn more about Calaveras Big Trees State Park by experiencing the wonderful new museum. So come and check us out. You will be happy you did!

Grand Opening!

by Vida Kenk

The official grand opening of our new buildings will occur on Saturday, May 24. An official ceremony, which will both celebrate the new facilities and commemorate the 150th anniversary of the founding of the California State Parks, will start at 11:00 a.m. in the main parking lot in front of the new Visitor Center. Distinguished guests participating in the ceremony include Major-General Anthony L. Jackson, the Director of the Department of Parks and Recreation. A day of festivities will immediately follow the ceremony, including special tours, games for children, display booths, commemorative stamp cancellation, a wild animal program and the opportunity to meet and talk with the Director. The campfire program that evening will highlight the history of the California State Park system.

Parking will be available across the highway from the Park, with a shuttle to bring visitors into the Park. Plan to come early and enjoy this very special day. Food will be available for purchase at the Park. We hope you will come and be part of this momentous occasion.

The evening before, CBTA is sponsoring an invitation-only event to honor the major donors to the fundraising drive that contributed half a million dollars to the building of the new center, followed at 8:30 p.m. by a public campfire presentation featuring a surprise guest from the past.
Celebrate Spring!  by Gary Olson

Welcome to another exciting year at Calaveras Big Trees! This year we are commemorating the 150th anniversary of the Yosemite Grant to the State of California. This was the first time in history that land was put aside for protection of an area based on its scenic value for the benefit of the people. That simple concept is what has developed into California State Parks and was the beginning of the National Park idea. Throughout the year the Department of Parks and Recreation and National Parks will be commemorating this achievement with events state-wide.

The Grand Opening of the Visitor Center is scheduled for Saturday May 24, 2014, and you are all invited. The day will feature a ribbon cutting ceremony, special guided hikes, live animal presentations, and much more. More details are to be released soon.

The new ADA accessible trail from the visitor center to the campfire center should begin in April or May, so anticipate a few detours in the coming months in directing the Park guests to the North Grove trailhead.

The North Grove fuel reduction thinning project is moving along nicely. You should be seeing a difference as you walk the trail, with more open viewing space to appreciate the trees. Look around and see if you notice an increase in bird activity. Spring has arrived early and the mating rituals have begun, with tapping from the woodpeckers filling the forest, trees budding, and flowers starting to bloom.

Get revitalized! Spend the day in nature and just experience your surroundings. Enjoy the sights, the sounds, the wind, the rustling of trees and the unusually warm temperatures.

Welcome to New Members!

November 2, 2013 – March 1, 2014
John Schafer – Trabuco Canyon, CA
Frankie Tate and Tim Peck – Livermore, CA
Theresa Robinson – Modesto, CA
Joe and Zoe Chiaramonte – Arnold, CA
Joel and Regina Earnest – Manhattan Beach, CA
Robert and Ellen Case – Concord, CA
Joe and Jaime Hendrickson – San Luis Obispo, CA
Ruby Madonia – Murphys, CA
John and Cynthia Gustafson – Tracy, CA
Bradley and Mariola Jones – Murphys, CA
Robert Thomas – Sacramento, CA

Twelfth Annual Welcome Back Brunch for New Members and Docents

It is time for our annual brunch in the Jack Knight Memorial Hall on April 12, 2014, at 11:00 a.m. CBTA will provide a delicious brunch for all the new members and docents. At this time you will have the opportunity to meet the rangers, Park staff, CBTA Board members and staff, new members and old friends. Also you will be able to find out about and sign up for all the programs that will be going on in the Park this year.

Please RSVP by April 1 to Bunny Firebaugh by email, lovetheforest@goldrush.com or by phone 209/795-4305.

We hope to see you there!
Dedicated Supporter of Big Trees

by Tom Jones

Emily May Hewitt was an educator, civic leader, and dedicated supporter of Calaveras Big Trees State Park. Emily was born in Bakersfield on February 4, 1925, and soon moved with her parents to Oakland. In 1945 Emily completed her AA degree at UC Berkeley. She met her future husband, Tom, at a dance in the East Bay. He and Emily were married in 1946. Tom graduated from the UC Berkeley School of Optometry in 1949, and they headed to the Central Valley to open an optometric practice, eventually settling in Oakdale. There they had their three children: Bret, Lauren and Garth.

Emily earned her BA in Education from CSU Stanislaus and her California teaching credentials in 1969. She immediately became a favorite substitute teacher in the Oakdale school system. In 1972 she turned her attention to civic duties and was elected to the Oakdale City Council. She is noted for establishing one of the nation’s first recycling centers with the assistance of local service clubs; subsequently she was elected Oakdale’s first female mayor.

Later Tom and Emily moved to Arnold so Tom could open a second optometric office. Both Emily and Tom became active docents and members of CBTA. She was also involved in Independence Hall Quilters and University Women. Emily wrote the first draft of the text used in the Five Senses Trail, worked endless hours in the old Visitor Center and helped in planning for the new center. As a docent she performed Lizzie Whiteside, an early owner of the old Big Trees Hotel. She led other memorable talks at the campfire programs and in nature walks. Always thirsty for knowledge, she was studying the fungi of the park at the time of her death.

Emily’s outreach always relied on fun. She cared enormously about children learning to love trees and their natural environment; if she could inspire love and curiosity, the children would learn the important details as they grew.

Emily wrote the Hill Street News column for The Calaveras Enterprise for several years. The column covered the events up the hill from Arnold area up to Big Trees. The Hill Street News was an avenue to spread news about what she found important and created cohesion among her up-the-hill community. Emily was also an especially creative person. She was pretty, petite, positive, energetic, compassionate and thoughtful. Emily died prematurely in an auto accident outside Modesto in June 1985.

The Hewitt family created the Emily M. Hewitt Scholarship Fund within the CBTA and continues to support its purpose of helping Northern California students attend college. Eligibility for application is extended to any student or graduate student enrolled full-time in an accredited California post-secondary educational institution whose educational career goals clearly coincide with Emily’s interest in communicating and interpreting nature’s wonder.

As Emily did, leaving a legacy to the Calaveras Big Trees Association is easier than you think. One of the easiest ways to make a gift is through your will. You can also leave a specific amount or a percentage of your estate or leave a remainder of your estate after you have provided for loved ones. Remember that all contributions made to the Park through CBTA stay in the Park. For more information regarding your estate planning objectives contact the CBTA office at cbtvc@goldrush.com, 209-795-1196 or email me directly at tmjones@goldrush.com.

This article was written with substantial assistance from Emily’s children, Bret, Lauren and Garth.
The fourth edition of *The Enduring Giants* is finally completed and available at the Bookstore in the new Visitor Center. The book, originally written in 1974 by Joseph H. Engbeck, Jr., had two subsequent printings with minor changes. After taking a good look at the most recent printing (1988) we realized that many things had changed, mainly new research on the giant sequoia.

With both financial and emotional support from CBTA, four of us - Margaret Bell, Nancy Muleady-Mecham, Mary Anne Carlton and I - began the rewrite. We contacted the State of California which held the copyright and was happy to have someone take on this project. Joseph Engbeck was contacted to see if he was interested in assisting with the rewrite; all he wanted to see was the final draft. So with everyone’s blessing and a lot of help from many friends and experts we began the rewrite. Much of the natural history section was rewritten as there had been new research on the trees since the original edition. We updated some of the cultural history section, added new graphics, updated the bibliography and developed a glossary. We were grateful to have the State’s photographer for a day, as he provided some really quality photos, including the cover. Fortunately historic photos were in the archives in the State Department of Parks and Recreation and the Park. Updating the plant and animal list became a challenge as we were just about to turn in the final draft when the new Jepson Manual was published (2013). Taxonomy had changed a lot. Who would have thought that the giant sequoia was classified into another family?

This book would never have been rewritten were it not for CBTA providing all of the funding, the work completed by CBTA staff members Tami Rakstad-Schaner and Sue Hoffmann, the support from the Board of Directors and particularly the work done by four CBTA presidents.

It is with much elation we announce the completion of *The Enduring Giants!* A book-signing has been scheduled during the Grand Opening during Memorial Day weekend. You can get your book signed the afternoon of May 24 after the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Visitor Center.

**Verna Johnston, CBTA Founder**

Verna Johnston, 95, a founding member of the Calaveras Big Trees Association and resident of Camp Connell, died in Carmel Valley on March 1st. Verna was a science educator, photographer and writer as well as a self-described lover of nature. She taught various biology courses at Delta College in Stockton for 37 years. While she was at Delta her first book, *Sierra Nevada*, was published, and she followed this with two more books from U.C. Press. These are *California Forests and Woodlands* and *Sierra Nevada: The Naturalist’s Companion* published in 1999. Her photos illustrate these books. The most recent is still available at the new Calaveras Big Trees State Park bookstore.

Verna also wrote over 100 articles and was a member of many environmental organizations. She donated books and photos to the Calaveras Big Trees Association and supported the Park in other ways as well. Her love for books and the out-of-doors led her to establish the Verna Johnson Nature Collection at the Arnold branch of the Calaveras County Library. Following her wishes, Verna’s ashes will be mixed with the earth of the Sierra Nevada, the place she called home.

**Memorials**

Joe Crawford

Verna R. Johnston

Max Rejkowski
Moving to a new community often means having to establish connections with local doctors, dentists, barbers, and so on. When I moved to Arnold, I needed to find a reliable, “painless” dentist. I asked my friends for suggestions and most suggested Dr. Timothy Magnuson, DDS. So I summoned up the courage to try him out. That was four years ago, and I’ve found he truly is a “painless” dentist! What struck me first was how modern and “techy” his office was. My old dentist’s office in Castro Valley was ancient by comparison. Being a tech-type person, I felt at home in his office. The offices are brightly lit and the staff very friendly and cheery. It turns out that Dr. Magnuson is a faithful business member of the CBTA, so I got the opportunity to find out more about him.

Dr. Timothy Magnuson grew up in southern California. He attended the dental school at the University of California, San Francisco. After graduating, he practiced in San Francisco for three years, and then moved to Anchorage, Alaska, where he spent the next five years. He then practiced in Weed, California, before coming to Arnold. That was thirty-three years ago. Asked why he settled in Arnold, he said that some friends suggested that Arnold would be a great place to practice.

In his off hours, he enjoys working around his home. He used to do a lot of skiing and hiking but a hip replacement has slowed him down. He is a member of the Greater Arnold Business Association (GABA) and actively participates in efforts to improve the business environment of Arnold.

As far as his practice is concerned, I asked him about his state-of-the-art office and his response was, “With health care and dentistry evolving and everything going more tech, if you don’t keep up with the changes, you’re living in the past.”

Asked why he is a member of the CBTA, he said, “I wanted to support the State Park system. I think it’s a great community activity and a great thing for the State of California.” He has visited the new Visitor Center and thinks it is well designed. He particularly thought that the short video on the park was well done and very informative.

So, if you are a patient of his, you can ask him about his time in Alaska during breaks when he doesn’t have his fingers in your mouth. If you’re looking for a “painless” dentist, give him a try.

Calaveras Big Trees State Park will once again have two Student Conservation Association (SCA) interns this summer. They were selected in January after being interviewed along with other prospective candidates. We feel certain that they will be wonderful additions to our Park team. Upon their arrival, they will quickly be swept up and become a part of the big celebration over Memorial Day weekend.

Emily Champigny, originally from Massachusetts, is a junior at Elmira College in New York. She is a biology major with plans to go on to graduate school. Her interest in trees and experience in working with children make her a perfect fit for our summer position.

Jenna Nelson-McMichael, also from Massachusetts, attends the University of Missouri in Columbia. She is a junior pursuing a major in fisheries and wildlife sciences with minors in biology and agriculture education. She has lots of environmental education experience at schools and summer camps.

The Daly/Ralston Fund and CBTA are once again providing the funding for these two positions. SCA provides the quality applicants from which we choose. It should be a great summer!

**Mark Your Calendar for CBTA Seminars**

**April 26—Birds of the Sierra Nevada** presented by Ed Pandilfino, author of *Birds of the Sierra Nevada* which contains excellent descriptions of each bird in the area, as well as wonderful illustrations. Mr. Pandilfino plans to take those interested out to watch our local birds in the Park before the program at 8 a.m.

**May 3—John Muir in the Big Trees** presented by Michael Wurtz, archivist of the John Muir Papers Collection at the University of the Pacific. He will speak about John Muir’s three visits to Calaveras Big Trees and his other visits to the sequoias of the Sierra.

All seminars will be held in Jack Knight Hall from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon.
Quilt Celebrates the Park!

by Bunny Firebaugh

In honor of California State Parks’ 150th anniversary, the Department of Parks and Recreation will be conducting an online quilt show starting in mid-April at the website www.150.parks.ca.gov/quilts. Several present and past docents who are members of the Independence Hall Quilters in Arnold are designing and making a quilt to commemorate Calaveras Big Trees State Park. Here is a listing of these creative quilters and the parts of the quilt that they are making:

- Joan Allday—Mammoth Grove Hotel
- Judy Allhizer—Big Trees Lodge, baskets
- Emilie Brown—labels
- Barbara Cleveland—Augustus T. Dowd
- Anita Fife—letters, hand quilting
- Bunny Firebaugh—camels, dogwood leaves
- Cathy Fitzpatrick—Sentinels and gazebo
- Candy Gutierrez—Discovery Tree foliage
- Joanne Padelford—Big Stump
- Carolyn Rector—Pioneer Cabin Tree
- Jodi Smith—Dogwood bracts
- Marcia Smith-Boll—basting
- Josie Tanis—White House
- Shirley Wurtz—Discovery Tree Trunk, John Muir and Mother of the Forest

Once the quilt is completed, a photo of it will be displayed online. The actual fabric quilt will be entered in state and local county fairs this year. It will be on view at the grand opening celebration on May 24 and will become a permanent legacy at our Park.

Exciting Fundraising Events Coming Soon

by Mara Naber

Save the dates for the upcoming events at Big Tree State Park. More information will be provided on all events at our website - http://bigtrees.org

May 4 at 4 p.m. we will host Mountain Melody choral group. This group of singers is well-known locally. They have an eclectic mix of music that is sure to please everyone. We will have snacks and cookies.

May 23-25 is our new Visitor Center donor appreciation event and Grand Opening. On Friday evening, the CBTA will host an invitation-only event for key donors in the classroom with tours of the Visitor Center.

May – Aug. - Summer Sweetness will start Memorial Day Weekend. This is one of our most popular fundraisers where we sell ice cream and popcorn to our visitors. Come to the Warming Hut for this event.

August 16 - Family Day. Sally Williams, Steve Burg and Betty Watson will be calling on you to volunteer for various tasks for that special weekend.

August 30 is our themed dinner. This year will have a western theme with gaming tables and high drama. More information will be on our website as we organize this event. Volunteers to help with planning are encouraged to call Mara Naber.

December – The date for our Winter Wonderland will be announced.

Stay tuned for more information on all these exciting events for this year.
CBTA Board of Directors:
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George Leong             Vice President
Bunny Firebaugh          Secretary
Bruce Tallakson          Treasurer
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Mara Naber               Fundraising
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Paul Prescott            Director

Big Tree Bulletin:
Claudia Beymer           Editor
Sue Hoffmann             Circulation/Mailing

CBTA Staff:
Tami Rakstad-Schaner    Retail Manager
Sue Hoffmann             Admin/Retail Assistant
Debbie McGee             Bookkeeper

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.

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