



Big Tree

BULLETIN

C A L A V E R A S B I G T R E E S A S S O C I A T I O N

From CBTA's President

by Marilyn Regan

As I sat down to write this column, the most pertinent news was that, of the 70 state parks that had been slated to close on July 1 of this year, 69 will remain open--at least temporarily. Individuals and businesses have stepped forward to ensure that our beloved parks are not lost. After all, that is how the whole thing started some 80 plus years ago. For us, it was the dedicated people who formed the Grove Association, forerunner of CBTA. We are pleased to be part of the on-going commitment to excellence in state parks.

As part of our commitment, our Association belongs to CALPA—California League of Park Associations. Each year, the league holds a conference where ideas, successes, failures and plans are shared. This May, Mara Naber (Chair of the Event Committee) and I attended the conference. It was 3 days full of valuable information, and I will try to give an idea of some of the topics that were covered.

New Solutions and Partnerships — With the imminent threat of park closures, this session focused on ways to avoid closures and on pending legislation to help solve the fiscal crisis facing state parks. One piece of information that was shared was that, if the governor does not get his tax increase passed in November, 20% of the ranger work force will be eliminated. This is on top of the already short-handed staff that we now have.

Fund and Friend Raising Tools — This topic demonstrated ways to develop community partnerships. A well-run coop will help develop,

manage and grow partnerships with external stakeholders. I am happy to say that our Association is actively working on this, with some partnerships already in place. Also, donor recognition should be a priority and making sure the donors know what they are funding. Finally, understand that events are hard work. (I think we already knew that one.)

Making Events Special — Think of fundraising as giving people an opportunity to keep the park open and its programs vibrant, rather than thinking of it as simply asking for money. Use social media to promote and highlight events. Check us out on Facebook and Twitter.

Using Social Media — The suggestion was made that we have a presence on Pinterest and Instagram in addition to Facebook and Twitter. This probably will require additional persons to keep these sites updated. Any member who would like to help on this project, please give a call to the office.

Effective Board Development — All board members need to have a compelling vision and passion and take their job seriously. Very important...there needs to be a level of trust between the Coop Board and the Department of Parks and Recreation. Additionally, the general plan for the coop and the DPR need to be compatible.

This is a very small sample of what was covered. It was all very worthwhile.

Now for thanks.....to Lauren Scott who spearheaded a very successful raffle and concert in June and to Bunny Firebaugh and Cathy Fitzpatrick for a fun and festive July "Ice Cream Social".

Park Update

by Gary Olson, Superintendent 1

The Heat is ON! With summer in full swing and the temperature rising, the Park is getting very busy with day use visitors and campers. Add all the construction projects in and it is very busy, so please be patient with everyone.

We have a New Sector Superintendent (Greg Martin) to replace Vince Sereno who recently retired. Greg will be attending meetings and other functions and he is looking forward to meeting everyone and working together to improve the Park.

- The bears have been visiting the campgrounds regularly, but it appears that our education campaign is working as the food rewards are down significantly from last year.
- The Visitor Center is beginning to take shape, with walls and roofing, with a building completion date in mid-December. Then the displays will be installed so we hope for a soft opening in early Summer of 2013.
- CCC crews are back in the Park working on the foot bridges in the North Grove campground areas and the river access trail at the bridge.
- Kiosk is under construction and should be done by early August.
- Road repairs are being made in the North Grove campground from the storm damage.
- Many campsites in North Grove have been repaired and upgraded for the Summer.
- A major thinning project is scheduled for the North Grove this year to restore the health of the forest and reduce the risk of fire.
- Interpretive staff and docents have been very busy with programs this summer adding to the visitor experience.

Thank you to everyone for helping with Park operations, interpretive programs, trail crews, stump volunteers, museum staff and volunteers, and everyone who helps make this a special place for our visitors.

Welcome to CBTA.....

General Membership:

Mary and Jerry Benson, Lufkin, TX
Jeannine Brustin, Arnold, CA
Keith and Vikki Constable, Modesto, CA
Marg Donnelly, Arnold, CA
Price Fessenden, Dorrington, CA
John and Christa Kell, Orinda, CA
Lisa Kilen, Sierra Madre, CA
Chuck Maxson, Arnold, CA

Deborah McCarthy, Stockton, CA
William Phillips, Carmichael, CA
Aaron Plunk, Valley Springs, CA
Robert Rogers, Sacramento, CA
Peter Schroeffer, Oakland, CA
Rob and Geri Sullivan, Camp Connell, CA
Harold Whipple, Sonora, CA
M. Gail Woznak, Murphys, CA

Business Membership:

Ebbetts Pass Lumber/ Ace Hardware,
Arnold, CA

Sierra Pacific Foundation, Redding, CA

Director Thomsen Retiring by Marcy Crawford

Bruce Thomsen worked for over 25 years with California State Parks as a ranger, administrative supervisor and interpreter at locations throughout the State. A graduate of Humboldt State University, he worked with various outdoor agencies, including the U.S. Forest Service and the California Conservation Corp before becoming a Park Ranger in 1979. In that capacity, he served Sacramento County, Big Sur and the Delta Districts and in 1988 he was the Regional Administrative Officer for the Inland Region before becoming a Regional Interpretive Specialist for nine districts in Central California.

Bruce came to Calaveras Big Trees in 1993 when he began working on the development of a new Visitor Center at Big Trees. He served as the district's representative to the Northern Service Center for the center's design. Bruce also served as the Calaveras Big Trees Association's CAL, which is the state's designation given to their liaison working directly with the Park Association.

When he retired in 2005, he became a member of the CBTA Board of Directors. He has served the last six years as a very valuable member of the Board, bringing his service to Big Trees to 19 years. He will be missed on the Board but he is not really gone. The Visitor Center is now under construction and Bruce will continue serving as Co-Project Manager on the New Visitor Center with John Woodward...bringing his service full circle.



Photos by Tami Rakstad-Schaner

We Won First Place by Marcy Crawford

Calaveras Big Trees Association won first place in the Auto Non-Vintage Division of the Arnold Independence Day Parade. The parade, sponsored by the Greater Arnold Business Association, is a highlight of local Fourth of July celebrations. Riding a quad, Ranger Jeff Davis, led the group. Bill Minkel, playing his horn and Dave Stanley's docent rake drill team, followed Jeff. Park Superintendent, Gary Olson, riding in his Park truck, brought up the rear.



Advice From the Earth.....

*Be well rounded.....think globally.....celebrate diversity.....
keep a positive attitude.....there's no place like home.*

Verna Johnston Prints

by Steve Stocking

Verna Johnston is a writer, photographer, and biologist presently living in a retirement community in the Carmel Valley. She taught biology at Delta College for 37 years before she retired in 1982 and moved to Camp Connell. Verna was one of the original members of the Calaveras Big Trees Association and donated to Park projects. Verna initially gave \$5,000 to the Calaveras County Library to purchase a collection of nature-related books. Later she contributed considerably more money by offering matching funds and her 85th birthday money gifts. The collection now contains over 500 books and 100 plus DVD's. The Verna Johnston Library is located in the Arnold Branch, but materials are available through all branches.

Verna's love of nature led her to establish a Mountain Biology course when she was at Delta and to become an author of three books related to the Sierra. *Sierra Nevada* (1970) was her first. It became popular based both on her research and writing skills. This was followed by *California and Woodlands* (1974) and *Sierra Nevada, the Naturalist's Companion* released by the University of California Press in 1998.

She became interested in photography and developed a scientific/artistic approach to the art form. Verna did her own photo development in the darkroom in her retirement home. To hone her skills, she took five workshops from Ansel Adams. Her photographs have been included in many magazines and exhibited at the Oakland Museum, U.O.P., The Ansel Adams Gallery in Yosemite and many others. Her photographs, slides and writings have been added to the Special Collections at the University of Pacific Library.

The photographs and books donated to CBTA will be displayed and for sale at CBTA seminars and other events. More information and a list of the items can be obtained from the CBTA office at (209) 795-3840 or from Steve Stocking at snlsox@earthlink.net.

June Raffle and Concert

by Lauren Scott

On the afternoon of June 16, Park supporters and concert goers came together at Jack Knight Hall to mingle, partake of fine wines and hors d'oeuvres and enjoy the rhythm of the Anne Saunder's Trio. The afternoon theme, *A Trip Down Memory Lane*, brought

together a collection of toe tapping hits that took many of us back to our youth.



Photo by Alan Beymer

In addition to great entertainment, the concert provided the venue for the "Coast to Calaveras" raffle drawing. Raffle chances to win amazing excursions went on sale the beginning of April and culminated only moments before the drawing on concert day. Congratulations to our three big winners. Erin Stuart Jennings, of San Francisco, has an upcoming adventure "On The Coast", Ann Robb, of Paso Robles, is off to a "Mountain Retreat" and Joyce Halley, of Cambria, will enjoy time close to nature "Among the Giants".

We are grateful to the sponsors of this event, Sierra Pacific Foundation and Ace Hardware, Arnold. Local donors for the raffle and event included The Black Bear Inn, O.A.R.S., Big Trees Market, Frog's Tooth Winery, Calaveras Big Trees State Park, Big Trees Market, Calaveras Spring Water, Colleen's at A Class Act and the Calaveras County wineries. Additional donors included Moonstone Landing, Cambria and the Hearst Castle State Park, San Simeon.

Thanks to chairperson Lauren Scott, co-chairs Sue Hoffmann and Jane Escola, event planners Cathy Fitzpatrick and Marcy Crawford, servers Betty Woodward and Max Fountain, chefs Carol Watson, Anita Fife and Cathy Enea. Each contributed their unique talents to help create this very successful event.

The thread that unites us all...the sponsors, donors, volunteers and guests...is our love for the Calaveras Big Trees State Park and our intention to support all efforts that will ensure that the beauty of this Park will be available for all to enjoy.

2012 Annual Meeting Recap by Marcy Crawford

Despite the unseasonably cool and cloudy weather, a crowd of Calaveras Big Trees Association members turned out for the Annual Meeting and picnic on June 23. In addition to enjoying a great potluck luncheon, the membership in attendance elected the Board of Directors, honored an outgoing Board Member, met the interns and congratulated the scholarship winners.

Elections: Directors Vida Kenk and George Leong introduced the five incumbents: Marcy Crawford, Bunny Firebaugh, Sanders Lamont, Steve Stocking and Bruce Tallakson and one new nominee on the ballot, Mara Naber. All candidates on the ballot were elected as Directors for a two-year term.

Presentations: Bruce Thomsen, Vice-President, who presided at the meeting, presented Marcy Crawford with a Dan Hukari print of the Pioneer's Cabin Tree from Bertha Underhill, Past President of the Greater Arnold Business Association. The presentation was for Marcy's contributions to GABA during this past year.

Marcy Crawford spoke of Bruce Thomsen's many contributions to CBTA and presented Bruce with a David Gayneaux painting of the North Grove in appreciation for his service to CBTA. Tami Rakstad-Schaner, Retail Manager of the Visitor Center Bookstore and Sue Hoffmann, Administrative Officer, presented Bruce with personalized M&M's as a personal tribute for all the M&M's he has supplied to the office for the last six years. Bunny Firebaugh presented Bruce with bear bells that he can tie on his hiking boots to let the bears know he is in the woods!

Interns: Peter Ralston, who established and funded the Daly/Ralston Intern Fund, introduced Clarice Baumgartner, who was invited back to Calaveras Big Trees to intern for a second year. Gary Olson, Park Superintendent, introduced new intern Ashley Zimmerman as well as Annalisa Christian who is a returning Park Aide.

Scholarships: Vida Kenk announced the three scholarship winners: Emily Hewitt Scholarship awarded to Molly Delandsheer from Humboldt State, CBTA Scholarship #1 awarded to Jessica Jordan from Humboldt State and CBTA Scholarship #2 awarded to William Maier, UC Berkeley.

CBTA Business: Bruce Tallakson, Treasurer, reported that CBTA is a financially strong organization and announced that reports are available for anyone

wanting more details. Tami Rakstad-Schaner, Retail Manager, reported that 2012 is looking to be the most successful year to date. Steve Stocking announced the display of Verna Johnston's photos and books in Jack Knight Hall.

CAL Report: Gary Olson, Park Superintendent, reported the walls are going up on the new Visitor Center. The Boardwalk in the meadow is now complete and the Entrance Station repairs had to be contracted out and should be operational soon.

CBTA Officers for 2012-2013: The Annual Meeting was adjourned and the Board of Directors went into Executive session to elect the Board officers. They are: Marilyn Regan, President, Vida Kenk, Vice-President, Sanders Lamont, Vice-President, Bunny Firebaugh, Secretary and Bruce Tallakson, Treasurer.

Season 2012 Interns

by Marilyn Regan

Please stop by the Visitor Center and welcome our interns. We are pleased to have two this year.

Ashley Zimmerman comes to us from Sacramento State where she is a Senior and will be graduating in December with a degree in Liberal Studies. She will then enter the credential program to become an elementary school teacher. She said that she took the initiative to send an e-mail to several park superintendents in California because she had wanted this kind of experience for several years. Gary responded and here she is. Welcome!!!

You may recognize a familiar face as Clarice Baumgartner was with us last summer. She comes to us through the Student Conservation Association. Clarice is majoring in Elementary Education at the University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire. She enjoyed her Summer here last year so much that she was eager to return. Welcome back, Clarice.

Scholarships

by Vida Kenk

The members of the CBTA Scholarship Committee were Marcy Crawford, Bunny Firebaugh, and Vida Kenk. The committee started with 52 applications, which were winnowed to 37 on the basis of whether they were appropriate to the goals of the scholarships. All three committee members read each of the 37 applications, rating them as WOW,

OK, or No Way. When we met to finalize the decision on May 10, nine applications had received WOW ratings from at least two members; these were examined and discussed in detail.

The Emily Hewitt Memorial Scholarship was first given in 1994 by the Hewitt family to honor the legacy of Emily May Scholz Hewitt (1925-85). She was Oakdale's first woman City Council Member, and in 1975 became the first woman Mayor of Oakdale. Besides serving her community, Emily Hewitt was a talented painter who used her skill and vision to express the beauty of nature. The Hewitt Scholarship honors her by sponsoring a student with a strong desire to share with the public a passion for nature.

This year's Hewitt Scholarship winner is Molly Delandsheer, a Senior at Humboldt State University, who is majoring in Environmental Management and Protection, with an emphasis on environmental education and interpretation. Last Summer, Ms. Delandsheer was an Interpretive Graphic Design Intern for Six Rivers National Forest. She is currently working on interpretive signs for an environmental education trail in Willits, CA. She finds that environmental interpretation satisfies both her scientific mind and her creative spirit.

Normally, the CBTA grants one scholarship annually, but because there were so many excellent candidates this year, the Association found funding for an additional scholarship. We wish to support students whose objectives are in keeping with our mission of providing high quality educational and interpretive programs. The committee particularly looked for applicants with specific plans for achieving clear goals, and who have demonstrated self-motivation and a determination to overcome obstacles.

Jessica Jordan is highly self-motivated, having received no family encouragement to go to college. For the past several years, she has been leading wilderness trips, some as long as two weeks, for at-risk youth. She returned to school in her mid-twenties and now is within two years of graduating from Humboldt with a degree in Wildlife Ecology. Her desire is to teach the upcoming generations about both the anthropogenic and intrinsic value of the natural world, since these youth will eventually be the stewards of our planet.

William Maier is a former Americorps member who received a Bronze Congressional Medal of Honor in Community Service. He was working as a Tahoe Forest Service "hotshot" in 2008 when he decided he

needed to go to college to be able to help develop healthy forests with wildfire risk. He started at Community College of San Francisco, then transferred to U.C. Berkeley, where he is majoring in Forestry and Natural Resources. His application included a thoughtful essay on the ecological role of natural disturbances.

As CBTA members, you can feel proud of your role in funding scholarships of \$1,000 each to these outstanding college students. Thank you.

Family Day

by Vaughn Smith/Scot Bishop

Plans for Family Day, to be held on August 18 this year, are progressing on schedule. We plan some new features, and, of course, all of the old favorites are back. We will be holding all of the scheduled events in the amphitheater behind Jack Knight Hall. All of the food will be available there also. The only thing lacking now is plenty of volunteers to help us out. This is the largest event we hold at the Park and we need you! Thank you to all who have signed up to help. If you haven't already done so, please sign up when you are in the Visitor Center or at the Docents' Meetings.

Advice from a TREE

**Stand Tall
and Proud**

**Sink Your
Roots into the
Earth**

**Be Content with
Your Natural
Beauty**

**Drink
Plenty of Water**

Enjoy the View!

Coyotes

Coyotes live in every state except Hawaii. They were originally animals of the prairie, but as their range has grown, they've moved into many other habitats. They now can be found in open woodlands, along forest edges and seacoasts and in deserts, mountains and farmlands. They even live near residential areas.

There is just one species of coyote, but they vary in size, coloration and behavior, depending on where they live. Coyotes in the Southwest tend to be smaller and lighter in color than in the Northeast. Their lighter coloration may help them blend in better with their surroundings and help them stay cool by reflecting more sunlight and their smaller size may also help them stay cooler.

Coyotes can run very fast but only for short distances. They have been clocked at speeds of more than 40 miles per hour but they typically amble along at 13 mph.

In the wild, some coyotes can live to the age of 11 years or more but the average lifespan is between five and six years. Captive coyotes, facing fewer risks, have lived longer than 15 years.

Coyotes have keen eyesight and a sharp sense of smell and hearing to aid them in hunting. Their hearing is so sharp that in winter they can hear mice moving through tunnels beneath the snow. Their hunting styles vary depending on what's on the menu. Since mice are small and aren't big enough to share, coyotes usually hunt for them alone. Jackrabbits are often hunted by pairs of coyotes, taking turns until their prey is exhausted. Capturing larger prey takes even greater effort and up to a dozen may work together as a pack to bring down deer, elk and pronghorn antelope.

Their scientific name, *Canis latrans*, means "barking dog" and they can make as many as 15 different calls from howls, yelps, yips, yaps, wails, screams, gurgles to laughter. All of these calls are used to communicate with one another and with other animals. For reasons that are less clear, coyotes also call at the passing of rainstorms and other weather changes. Whatever the reasons, their songs create a wild and beautiful music that carries across the landscape.

FUN FEATHERY FACTS

BALD EAGLES have over 7,000 feathers. If you weighed all the feathers and then the bones, the feathers would weigh more! They are also very good swimmers. If they can't lift their prey from the water, they will swim to shore with it.

What is the difference between a **BEAK** and a **BILL**? Not a thing....the words are synonymous. One important caveat though: If you tell the old joke about the duck going into the drugstore to buy some chapstick, and the cashier asks how he's going to pay for it and the duck says, "put it on my bill"..... well, that joke just does not work if you say "beak".

RED-TAILED HAWKS have a thrilling, raspy scream that sounds exactly like a raptor should sound. At least, that's what Hollywood directors seem to think. Whenever a hawk or eagle appears onscreen, no matter what species, the shrill cry on the soundtrack is almost always a Red-Tailed Hawk.

Why do **BABY BIRDS** leave the nest before they can fly? We tend to think of nests as safe, cozy little homes, but predators have a pretty easy time finding a nest full of loud, screaming baby birds so it is definitely to some birds' advantage to leave the nest as soon as they can.

ACORN WOODPECKERS have a very complicated social system. Family groups hold territories and young woodpeckers stay with their parents for several years and help the parents raise more young. They spend large amounts of time storing acorns. A single storage tree is called a granary tree and may have up to 50,000 holes in it, each filled with an acorn.

*In all things of nature there is something of the marvelous
~ Aristotle*

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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 is open to the public. Please call the office at 795-3840 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 in the envelope enclosed with your Winter Bulletin 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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