



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

"They stand like sentinels, enduring sun and snow, drought and deluge, marking time measured in centuries. Perhaps we marvel at groves of Giant Sequoias because they seem to be as old as the earth itself. Seasons come and go. Tourists stop to take their measure, then move on. But the mighty sequoia endures with quiet persistence and fortitude."

The above quote is from a recent communication from Yosemite Conservancy. Here is another worthwhile quote from The Nature Conservancy: "State parks amount to much more than the sum of their acreage—they are places we go to connect with the natural world, and with family and friends. An afternoon visit to a park can rejuvenate the soul. In the late afternoon the remaining light dims and casts shadows that dance among the trees".

These are lovely, poetic expressions of the value that state and national parks add to the experience of everyone who visits. But in addition to the beauty and inspiration that can be found in these special places, there is a value that we, Calaveras Big Trees Association, add to the experience. It lies in our support of the educational and interpretive programs at Big Trees Park. That is the "Value of Informal Science". Over the last decade, there have been a number of studies dealing with this value. The message of these studies is that organized informal science activities can play a powerful role in motivating student interest in science and technology and in developing an appreciation for the natural world.

We never know, for instance, what impact our Junior Ranger, Junior Cub, Creek Critters and school tour programs will have on future scientists and environmentalists. What we do know is that, if children are NOT exposed to this kind of "informal science", there will be no impact. There have been some recent reductions in these programs at Big Trees. That is why it is more important than ever that our Association is careful to adhere to the charter under which it was established—to provide funding for the educational and interpretive activities at the Park. We continue our mission "with quiet persistence and fortitude".

At our recent Board retreat we started looking ahead to where we want to be in the next 2 decades! Now that the new Visitor Center is becoming a reality, where should we focus our attention and our efforts? We are not alone in this. Save the Redwoods League has indicated that they want to work with us on some pilot programs in their "Redwood Parks Initiative". That could be very exciting. And, of course, all of you who are members are working with us when you join, send a contribution, and attend a fund-raising function. In that regard, I want to thank all of you who have already responded to our "first ever" annual fund-raising campaign. I have been very encouraged by the response. It is always wonderful to experience the support of our loyal members.

Some recognitions are in order. Thanks to Vaughn Smith and Scot Bishop for another wonderful Family Day. You probably didn't know that next year will be the 25th anniversary of Family Day—a tradition that

combines fun and informal science. Thanks also go to Bunny Firebaugh and Cathy Fitzpatrick who were responsible for organizing the very popular ice cream socials. They were a big hit and will be repeated.

Just because the Park visitation has slowed down somewhat at this time of year doesn't mean that the Association has slowed down. We have several exciting things planned for the fall and winter months, including another "Winter Wonderland". Be sure to check out our website "bigtrees.org" so you don't miss anything. See you at the Park.

Park Update

by Gary Olson, Superintendent 1

As the temperature begins to cool down, the Park staff are getting ready for the weather to turn Big Trees into a Winter Wonderland. We all love the summers, but winter changes the Park experience for not only the visitors, but for the staff and volunteers.

It is a thrill to be the first person out on the North Grove trail after a snow to break trail and experience the Park so quiet and peaceful. The snow covering the trees and plants, and few animal tracks in the snow lets you know you are not alone, yet the Park feels so clean, vibrant and alive. Tracks can be found in the meadow, a clear sign that coyotes, bobcats, deer, and other animals frequent the Park in winter.

The fire and the friendly volunteers staffing the warming hut welcome the cold visitors with hot cider or hot chocolate, a great conclusion to a snowshoe hike. Snowballs fly all around as the Park visitors, some who have never experienced snow, fling snowballs at each other, while slipping and falling on the ice. Staff and the volunteers bundle up for the cold temperatures, but we still have some visitors who show up wearing shorts, sandals, and no coats? Thank goodness for Tami, Jeannie, and the volunteers for the Visitor Center where they can buy some warm clothes and dry socks.

For the staff, the maintenance routine changes to plowing roads, shoveling sidewalks, removing down trees, and making sure the heaters are on in the few buildings operating through the winter. Pipes freeze, sewers still back up, and trash gets left everywhere, keeping staff busy. We still have projects to complete, repairs to be made, and the challenges of the weather, but somehow we make it through each winter.

Perhaps this year you can experience something new, like a full moon snowshoe hike, or lead a tour through the snow breaking trail as you go, cross country ski the Park road, or just hike to the overlook to enjoy the solitude. Whatever winter brings this year, I hope you take the time to enjoy the season, and stay safe and healthy, so you can spend time with your families and friends. Make the most of life, create new memories, keep it interesting, and thank you for supporting the Park. Remember, the memories you create this year will make great stories for years to come. See you in the snow!

Membership Renewal Time

by George Leong

Fall is upon us! Which means that before we know it Year 2012 will be gone. I hope that you have had a chance to visit Calaveras Big Trees State Park this year to enjoy the splendor of the Sequoias and the mild weather of the Sierra. A lot has happened this year. This past winter and early spring brought us snow, carriage rides through the snow, great snowshoe guided walks and the comfort of the warming hut. The spring saw the new \$2.6 million Visitor's Center taking shape. The summer exploded with great guided walks, fun Jr. Ranger activities, the Creek Critters Program, fun, informative campfires, fascinating looks into the night sky and educational seminars. All capped off by Family Day in August. Of course, none of this would have happened without all the great docents that volunteer their time to make Calaveras Big Trees State Park one of the great interpretive parks in the state. But these docents could not have done it without CBTA and your continued support through your membership. Your membership dues and donations help fund the materials needed to put on quality interpretive programs. While Calaveras Big Trees State Park is not on the closure list, there is an increasing burden on CBTA to fund more of the quality interpretive and educational programs that make this Park known world-wide. It has been said that Calaveras Big Trees State Park is the most iconic of the California State Parks. Help us continue that legacy. As 2012 comes to a close, please renew your membership in CBTA for the upcoming year 2013. You can renew online at www.bigtrees.org or by mailing in the Membership Application form included with this Bulletin. If you have any suggestions on how CBTA can improve your membership experience, feel free to contact me at geobear3695@comcast.net.

This 'n That

Quilts, Quilts, Quilts: Did you ever wonder who made the beautiful quilts that we raffle off every Family Day?

About ten years ago, a group of Independence Hall Quilters, who were also docents at Calaveras Big Trees State Park, decided to make a quilt to raise money for the Park's new Visitor Center. That group of women started an annual tradition that has continued to the present day.

Anita Fife, who has been involved in making the quilts since that very first one, was the sole designer and creator of this year's quilt. It was on display in the Visitor Center until Family Day when Kathy MacDonald Adams won it. Kathy was overjoyed to be the winner saying, "I looked at every inch of stitching and love what was put into this amazing work of art! This will be a family heirloom!".....another happy beginning for a lovely quilt.....by *Marcy Crawford*

Save This Date: This year's annual CBTA Holiday Sale will take place on Friday, November 16, 2012 from 11:00 am to 3:00 p.m. CBTA members, docents and state employees that shop that day will save 40% on most items and 30% off books.

The sale will be open to the public on Saturday, November 17 and goes through December 2, from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. CBTA members, docents and state employees that 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.....by *Tami Rakstad-Schaner*

A Special Way to Give: One of the things that we hear all the time at the Park is "We love this Park" or "We have been coming here since I was 3 years old". Calaveras Big Trees is special to many families, and, indeed, to generations of families.

Perhaps you are not aware of an opportunity to acknowledge this special place in a very special way. That would be to send a gift to CBTA in memory of a loved one.

Gifts of this kind are acknowledged in two ways. When the gift is received, Gay Jagels, one of our special volunteers, sends a thank you to both the donor and the family of the deceased. In addition, the gift is entered into our "Memorial Book" that is in the museum at the Visitor Center. Check it out the next time you are there. It is a beautiful book with a wooden cover. Each year has a page listing the memorial gifts that were received during that year. The names are beautifully done in calligraphy.

We also are happy to accept gifts in honor of a special occasion or event, like a birthday or a wedding. Recently, we had a wedding scheduled to take place at the Park and the couple had requested that, in lieu of presents, donations be made to CBTA.

So the next time you are looking for a special remembrance or gift idea, think about CBTA. Remember that these donations are completely tax-deductible and all the money stays in Big Trees Park.....by *Marilyn Regan*

Winter Open House at Jack Knight Hall: All docents are invited to help decorate Jack Knight Hall for the winter holiday season on November 19 at 10:00 a.m. This year, for the first time, we want to open the hall mid-day during the weekends for visitors to enjoy the decorations and a warm fire. So, in addition to the warming hut, we'll need volunteers to build a fire and supervise Jack Knight Hall this winter, beginning November 23, the day after Thanksgiving, until New Year's day. We will have several toy train sets to watch and perhaps a holiday cartoon to view. We will also be offering hot chocolate and cider.

The Events Committee is hoping that this winter offering will enhance our visitor's Park experience. We will need volunteer docents to open the Hall from noon to 2:00 p.m. during peak visitor hours. Set-up and clean-up should add a half hour before and after the duty.

Cathy Fitzpatrick is heading up this winter event. If you have ideas or decorations you would like to donate to Jack Knight Hall, let her know at fitzdeen@hotmail.com. Put "Winter in Jack Knight" in the subject line.....by *Cathy Fitzpatrick*

Third Annual Winter Wonderland

by Bunny Firebaugh

Calaveras Big Trees Association invites you to the Third Annual Winter Wonderland on Friday, December 28, from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., regardless of weather. Admission includes a scenic horse-drawn wagon ride around the meadow with historical narration by Calaveras Big Trees State Park docents. A welcoming fire will warm you as you enjoy holiday music while sipping hot cocoa, hot apple cider, or wine in the holiday decorated Jack Knight Hall. There will also be homemade cookies and crafts for kids of all ages.

Advance tickets are \$12.50 for adults and \$8.50 for children under 12. Tickets are available on line at winter2012.eventsbot.com. Tickets at the door if space is available will be \$15.00 for adults and \$10.00 for children. Tickets do not include the \$8.00 per car entry to Calaveras Big Trees State Park. Last year tickets sold out before the event so be sure to get your tickets early. For more information and any questions contact (209) 795-3840.



Photo by Tami Rakstad-Schaner from 2011 Event

*I m d r e a m i n g o f a w h i t e C h r i s t m a s
j u s t l i k e t h e o n e s I u s e d t o k n o w
w h e r e t h e t r e e t o p s g l i s t e n . . .*

*“White Christmas”, 1941
by Composer/Lyricist Irving Berlin*

Fundraising News

by Tom Jones

You received a letter in your mailbox from Calaveras Big Trees Association a couple of weeks ago. This is the first Annual Fundraiser created by your Board to enhance CBTA's efforts to raise funds for expanded educational and interpretive programs in the Park for the upcoming year and beyond. Along with the letter, Marilyn Regan included a "2012 Report to Members" outlining CBTA's activities and programs for which we thank you for your support.

As with many non-profits, the Board has decided to create an "Annual Giving" program. The response to the request you received has been encouraging, so much so that the Board plans on expanding programs and activities when the new Visitor Center is completed. ***Please remember that every dollar you give stays in our Park.***

Forthcoming issues of the Bulletin will inform you about your Association's work in developing easy ways for members to make contributions to the Park through this "Annual Giving" program.

Another program entitled "Planned Giving" will be developed to assist you in contributing through estate planning and endowments and will go into effect early next year. Details for this program opportunity will be accessible through CBTA's website and the Bulletin.

Christmas Gift Ideas

by Steve Stocking

Calaveras Big Trees Association continues to sell photos and books donated by Verna Johnston. Verna has been a long-time CBTA member and is the author of *Sierra Nevada a Natural History* and *California Forests and Woodlands*. She is also an accomplished photographer who took many of the photographs for her books and had others published widely. She has donated her remaining books and photos to be sold to help develop the new Visitor Center at the Park.

You may view the remaining prints in the auditorium of the Visitor Center. The books are also on display in the Visitor Center. The books sell for \$24.00 and \$31.00 and are autographed as are most of the prints which sell for \$65.00. Contact either Bunny Firebaugh or Steve Stocking for more information.

Water Bottles

by Sanders Lamont

A year ago, the Board of Directors of CBTA decided to try to eliminate plastic water bottles and educate the public on the problems they cause. The reasons behind this decision were simple:

Bottled water creates garbage (1.5 million tons per year) and the Park was getting a share so large it was straining the maintenance and volunteer ability to deal with it.

Bottled water requires 47 million gallons of fossil fuels to produce every year. Bottled water is no safer than tap water and 70% of all bottled water is essentially unregulated, whereas tap water must meet stringent requirements for purity. The water from the taps in the Park is mountain water, collected and treated and tested carefully before being put in the public systems.

Over 80% of all plastic bottles are thrown away.

Because of the slow decay rate, the plastic was dirtying the Park, demanding more and more time to manage and often ends up in waterways or the ocean where it kills wildlife. All of the plastic bottles ever manufactured still exist, somewhere, very few in a recycled form.

Bottled water is a bad buy, costing about 5 cents per ounce, whereas most public water costs about 1 cent per gallon.

The bottled water problem and the trash it created was degrading the Park visitor experience.

The Visitor Center began providing inexpensive reusable and safe water bottles and eliminated the sale of commercial water bottles in vending machines. The green bottles now on sale are BPA free - which means they are safe - completely reusable and at \$2.00 each are inexpensive. Future plans include creating more and better water "filling stations", modeled after a similar program in the National Parks. And....the drinking water is always free in the State Park.

In Memoriam

Norm Friborg

Family Day

by Scot Bishop

Family Day at Calaveras Big Trees State Park was held for the 24th year on Saturday, August 18, 2012. The event showcases the Park and is a thank you to those Park patrons who have enjoyed and supported it during the year. This year we had exhibits featuring MiWuk and other Indian artifacts and displays, Smokey the Bear and State Park Rangers made presentations and had their pictures taken with guests. Ebbetts Pass Fire and Emergency vehicles were on display, face painters displayed their skills and carriage rides were offered for a unique way to see the Park. We also had several different types of wildlife displays which included a complete snake and reptile display, birds of prey demonstration with an owl and falcon, animal presentations with a coyote, possum, turkey vulture and other wild things, and we closed with a butterfly exhibit and release.

Musical entertainment was also available with a brass band and a duo playing guitars and singing. To make sure all our guests had the energy to enjoy all the activities, we had food and beverages as well. All told, it was a very nice day in the Park. Those attending this event left the Park with a smile on their face and some very special memories.

Family Day is an annual event so mark your calendar now for next year's event which will be the third Saturday in August. There is something for everyone to see and enjoy regardless of age. This event is put on by CBTA and staffed and run by Park docents and other volunteers, along with Park staff who want to share the Big Trees experience with others.



Photos by Alan Beymer

Welcome to CBTA.....

Nancy Burton, Angels Camp, CA
Kathleen Dadley, Saramento, CA
Sally Galiste, Galt, CA
Barb and Tom Harris, Campbell, CA
Alan Leavitt, Arnold, CA

Conrad and Meredith Rond, Vallejo, CA
Richard Sanders, Menlo Park, CA
Ken and Mary Lou Schultz, Leucadia, CA
David Smith, Sacramento, CA

The Summer of 2012 has been a very busy one in our Park with numerous human and wildlife sightings.

Besides California, the U.S. human visitors have come from Kentucky, Michigan, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Utah, Alabama, New Hampshire, Washington D.C., New Mexico, Minnesota, Ohio, Nevada, Oregon, Georgia, Maryland, Washington, Montana, Oklahoma, Delaware, and The Marshall Islands. Our international visitors have come from New Zealand, United Kingdom, Belgium, Switzerland, Mexico, Norway, Denmark, Holland, Lithuania, Sweden, Korea, Ireland, Germany, Italy, Japan, and France.

Wildlife sightings have included well-behaved bears in the campgrounds and on the South Grove Trail, deer in the campgrounds and the North Grove Trail, mountain lion crossing the Parkway near the South Grove parking lot and along the Stanislaus River, Northern pygmy owl on Lava Bluffs Trail, river otter in the Stanislaus River, short tail weasel on the North Grove Trail, spotted owl near the Agassiz Tree on the South Grove Trail, bobcat crossing road near Oak Hollow Campground, and cattle with bells in the South Grove by the Big Trees Creek.

The Calaveras Big Trees Association mission is to deliver high quality education and interpretive programs for all of our visitors. Here are the top 8 ways you can help us fulfill our mission and reach our goals:

BECOME A MEMBER

RECRUIT A MEMBER

DONATE TO THE ASSOCIATION

LIKE US ON FACEBOOK

FOLLOW US ON TWITTER

PURCHASE MERCHANDISE FROM OUR BOOK STORE

RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

BECOME A DOCENT

FUN FEATHERY FACTS

BIRD phrases:

the birds and the bees
a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush
birds of a feather flock together
eat like a bird
kill two birds with one stone
a little bird told me

OWLS can't move their eyes but they can rotate their heads 270 degrees.

There are over 50 different species of **EAGLES** in the world but the **BALD EAGLE** is found only in North America.

The **BELTED KINGFISHER** is one of the few bird species in which the female is more brightly colored than the male.

DOWNY WOODPECKERS are frequent members of mixed species flocks in the winter. The advantage is having to spend less time watching out for predators and better luck finding food from having other birds around.

MOUNTAIN CHICKADEES are active and acrobatic, clinging to small limbs and twigs or hanging upside down from pine cones. A 1/2 ounce chickadee needs to eat about 10 calories per day to survive. That's equivalent to about 1/20 of an ounce of peanut butter.

Winter, a lingering season, is a time to gather golden moments, embark upon a sentimental journey, and enjoy every idle hour.....John Boswell

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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.

Visit us.....

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