



OAKLEAVES

A PUBLICATION OF THE LOS OSOS / MORRO BAY CHAPTER of SMALL WILDERNESS AREA PRESERVATION
P.O. BOX 6442, LOS OSOS, CALIFORNIA 93412-6442 ♦ (805) 528-0392 ♦ JUNE / JULY 2007

The Financial Future of SWAP: Shall We Increase Annual Dues?

By Ron Rasmussen, SWAP Chair.

At our recent retreat the financial future of SWAP was discussed in some detail. As we noted in the last Oakleaves, our current situation is good, but sources of income and “In-kind” labor that have been provided in the past may not be available in future years. For example, the Morro Bay National Estuary Program (MBNEP) has funded California Conservation Corps (CCC) work in the Elfin Forest from a source that will be exhausted in about 3 years. Over the past three years the value of this work has amounted to over \$30,000!! Over the same time period SWAP’s balance sheet shows a balance after expenses of approximately \$7,000. Obviously SWAP could not have performed the necessary restoration and maintenance as done by the CCC. If additional future income is not found SWAP will not be able to

Financial Future continued on page 2

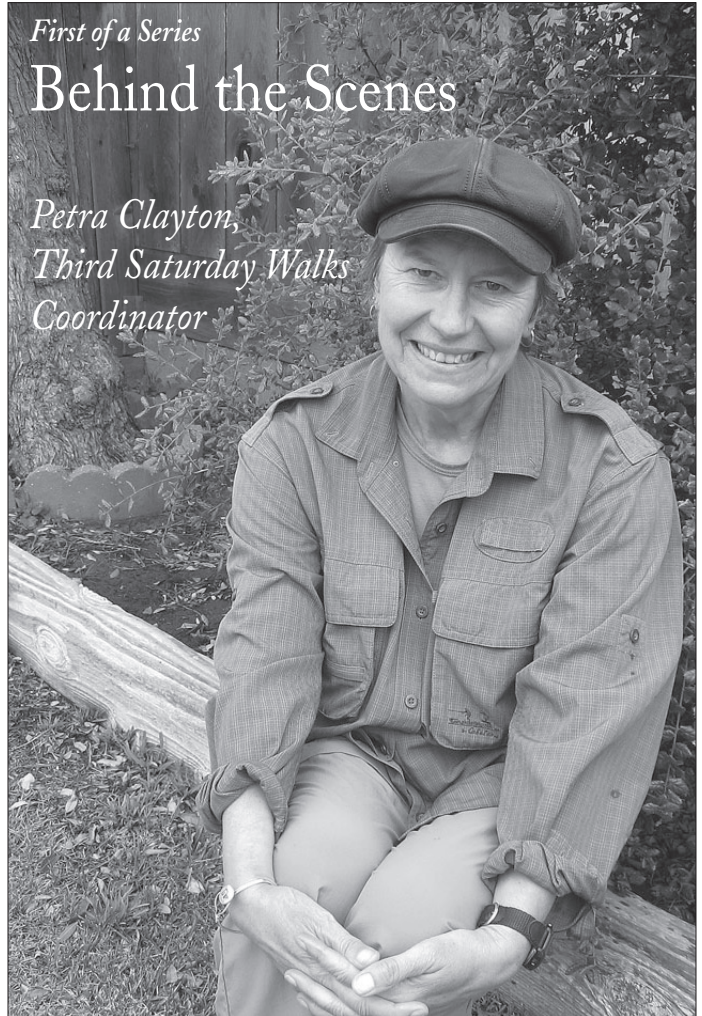
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First of a Series

Behind the Scenes

*Petra Clayton,
Third Saturday Walks
Coordinator*



By Yolanda Waddell

In January of 1993, Petra Clayton received a phone call asking her if she would be willing to schedule walk leaders for SWAP’s Third Saturday Walks in the Elfin Forest. We had noticed that she was a regular – and enthusiastic – walk participant. Much to our delight, she agreed to try it for awhile, taking over from Shanda Gibbs, our previous walks coordinator.

Fourteen years later, she is still at it, thinking up walk topics and contacting people who specialize in those topics. Each month of the year our walk topics are different, gener-

Behind the Scenes continued on page 2



SWAP BOARD OF DIRECTORS

*The Board of Directors
of the Los Osos/Morro Bay Chapter of
Small Wilderness Area Preservation (SWAP)
consists of the following members:*

Ron Rasmussen, Chair
Pete Sarafian, Vice Chair
Pat Akey, Treasurer
Yolanda Waddell, Secretary
Debbie Levi, Member at Large
Bob Meyer, Member at Large
Pat Murray, Member at Large

The SWAP Board of Directors meets monthly
on the 2nd Monday at 7 p.m. at
the Community Center of
Sea Oaks Mobile Home Park,
1675 Los Osos Valley Road.

The next meetings are
Monday, June 11
and Monday, July 9.

All Board meetings are open to the public.
To confirm the date, time and location
(which are subject to change),
phone 528-0392.



CONTACT SWAP

If you have questions about SWAP activities
or want to volunteer, please call 528-0392 and
leave a message. A recorded message will have
information about our 3rd Saturday Walks,
Work Saturdays, and other events. If you have
questions, concerns or comments about any
problems in the Elfin Forest, call or write:

Chuck Lowe,
SLO County Parks Supervising Ranger,
1087 Santa Rosa Street, SLO, CA 93408,
(805) 781-4417.

Owners of dogs off-leash can be cited. If you
witness dogs off-leash, vandalism or obvious
crimes, call the County Sheriff at 781-4550.

Behind the Scenes *continued from page 1*

ally scheduled to correspond to the season of the year. Petra figures that she has scheduled 171 walks to date. Not only does she schedule the walks, but she also sends a thank you note to each walk leader, using stationery that she makes herself, with her own photos attached to a note card. She keeps a record of what she writes so that she won't repeat herself when she thanks a walk leader for the second, third, or tenth time.

I asked Petra how she gets her ideas for walks, which have been as varied as a walk by Dr. Shirley Sparling on how to identify plants by their leaves, sketch walks by Barbara Renshaw, or summer solstice walks by Bob and Joan Field. She also found Bob Pavlik, a Cal Trans historian, who leads his popular "Literary Stroll" each year, reading selections from writings about nature. Petra replied that she is a scavenger, always looking at other groups' walk lists for topics and leaders. She reads newsletters and checks the web sites of the Dunes Center, Natural History Association, Morro Bay Bird Festival, County Parks, and the SLO Botanical Garden for ideas. What she wants is a walk that would interest her as a "consumer." She often has to make several phone calls and send a number of e-mails to find and confirm a walk leader for a particular topic and month.

Petra was recognized in 1996 as a SWAP Volunteer of the Year. Since that time, she has continued to operate "under the radar" of most SWAP members who read descriptions in each Oakleaves of the walks she has scheduled, but aren't aware of the person who does that. Petra doesn't mind. She gets her satisfaction from providing a way for people from all over the county, and tourists as well, to learn more about the Elfin Forest.

Financial Future *continued from page 1*

continue our work in the Elfin Forest at the present level.

The proposal to increase SWAP's annual dues was mentioned in the last *Oakleaves*. Currently, income from the \$12 basic dues is approximately \$2,600 per year. This amounts to about 18% of our total yearly expenses. The remainder of SWAP's income is from special contributions (any amount that members donate over the \$12 basic membership fee), sales of shirts, cards and calendars, and short-term grants. While annual dues have remained at \$12 for the past 15 years, expense items have continued to increase at a rate equal to or faster than inflation. Your SWAP board appreciates the generosity of the many members who donate much more than \$12 when they renew. However, we believe that a dues increase at this time is both reasonable and necessary to ensure continued support of our activities in the Elfin Forest. The tentative proposal is to increase regular dues to \$25 per year, with provision for seniors, students and those on fixed income to pay \$15 per year.

Before increasing our chapter dues, we feel it is necessary to hear from our membership. Send your comments by email to dues@elfin-forest.org or write to us at P.O. Box 6442, Los Osos CA 93412. Your comments are important. The Board of Directors will be considering the dues increase at their July 9th meeting and may make a final decision at that time.

Many Attend Mary Coffeen Memorial Walk

Text & Photos by Yolanda Waddell



Botanist Dirk Walters (center, with hat) conducted the Mary Coffeen Memorial Walk in the Elfin Forest at the end of March, for a gathering of about 40 of Mary's friends and fans.

Marcia Coffeen-McElroy, the daughter of naturalist Mary Coffeen, planned and organized a three-event memorial celebration for her mother who passed away at age 88 in October, 2006. The first event was a memorial walk in the Elfin Forest on Friday afternoon, March 30. After a reminiscence and prayer by Reverend Harriet B. Linville, Rector of St. Peter's By-The-Sea Episcopal Church, Dr. Dirk Walters, retired Cal Poly botanist, led the walk. Because he had been a friend of Mary's, he included many stories about her in his informative walk and talk about the native plants of the Elfin Forest.

Thirty-nine of Mary Coffeen's friends and relatives attended the memorial walk, which began at the Fairbanks Memorial on the boardwalk, north of 13th Street. Interestingly, that is about the number of people who used to attend Mary's very popular wildflower walks in the Elfin Forest during the 1990s. Thanks to Pat Akey for helping walk attendees to find parking places.

On Saturday morning, Marcia met friends and relatives at Shell Creek Road, east of Santa Margarita on Highway 56, in honor of Mary's annual

All in attendance agreed that they were the richer for having known Mary Coffeen, an energetic woman of many interests who shared her knowledge and talents freely with others.



Mary Coffeen's daughter Marcia Coffeen-McElroy (center) and long-time friends of Mary, Susan Litteral (left) and Linda Chipping (right) all feel that the Elfin Forest is a special place, as did Mary.

visits to her favorite wildflower field. That evening, there was a potluck dinner and celebration of Mary's life at the community room of St. Peter's By-The-Sea Episcopal Church in Morro Bay, which is located near the house that Mary owned and occupied for about 20 years.

All in attendance agreed that they were the richer for having known Mary Coffeen, an energetic woman of many interests who shared her knowledge and talents freely with others.

SWAP Needs Some Help

Here are some needs that have been mentioned by members of our SWAP Board. If you can help, or know someone who might help us with the following, please leave a message on our answering machine, 528-0392:

Web master: Bob Meyer needs help with designing pages and maintaining our web site (www.elfin-forest.org)

Refrigerator space to store seed: Bob and Sharon Meyer's refrigerator is used for this purpose, and they are running out of space.

Trail Keepers: In spite of not much rain, Elfin Forest plants are thriving and need to be cut back from the boardwalk and trails.

Sponsors who will make a donation to help defray the cost of printing our 2008 wall calendar.

Rediscovering a Ribes and Discovering another Galium (Bedstraw)

By Yolanda Waddell

SWAP Pocket Guide editor Bob Meyer was looking for interesting fungi in the Don Klopfer Grove, the large lower grove next to the bay during Dennis Sheridan's Fungus Foray walk in February. He noticed a gooseberry (*Ribes*) that isn't included in our Pocket Guide plant list. The flower has red sepals fading to green, and delicate pinkish white petals. It droops from the stem like a fuchsia-flowered gooseberry, but the plant has many more bristles on its stems.

Bob remembered that Barbara Renshaw had pointed out that gooseberry in the same grove on a previous walk. Barbara, who is an artist and well-informed naturalist, identified it as *Ribes menziesii*, Canyon gooseberry. On seeing the color photo that Bob had taken of the plant, botanist Dirk Walters confirmed that it is indeed "the elusive Canyon gooseberry, *Ribes menziesii*, that has been on previous Elfin Forest species lists." Sure enough, it is included in our 1997 Pocket Guide, but not in our current Guide that was published in 2005. Elusive is certainly a good adjective for this plant. It prefers deep shade, and therefore isn't seen anywhere near the boardwalk; and it definitely eluded the 2005 Pocket Guide writers.

Another recent discovery is a second species Bedstraw, an interesting plant that has fine hairs tipped with tiny hooks on stems and leaves. SWAP walk leader Les Bowker calls Bedstraw the "Velcro" plant because it will stick to fur or clothing.

Our current Pocket Guide lists only *Galium nuttallii*, Climbing bedstraw. This plant looks like a small dense vine, and can be seen growing among some of the shrubby plants along the boardwalk near the Rose Bowker Grove. From March through June, it has whitish-green flowers with four petals (see photo at right).

Having seen Climbing bedstraw in the Elfin Forest for many years, I was surprised during a First-Saturday work day in a grove at the west of the Forest, to notice a short, erect plant with narrow leaves in whorls of six or seven, tiny hooks on the stems and leaves, and small white to greenish flowers with four petals. In another part of the grove, the plant sprawled over the ground. It was another species of Bedstraw. Some checking revealed it to be *Galium aparine*, Goosegrass. Other common names are Cleavers, Clivers, Stickywilly, Stickyweed, Catchweed, or Coachweed, (See photo at right). At my request, our Oakleaves plant writer, Dr. Dirk Walters, will include an article about the two species of Bedstraw in a future issue. Watch for his descriptions of these similar, yet different plants.

At right:
Canyon gooseberry.
Photo by
Bob Meyer.

Below:
Climbing Bedstraw
(top) and
Goosegrass
(bottom).
Photos courtesy of
CalPhoto website.



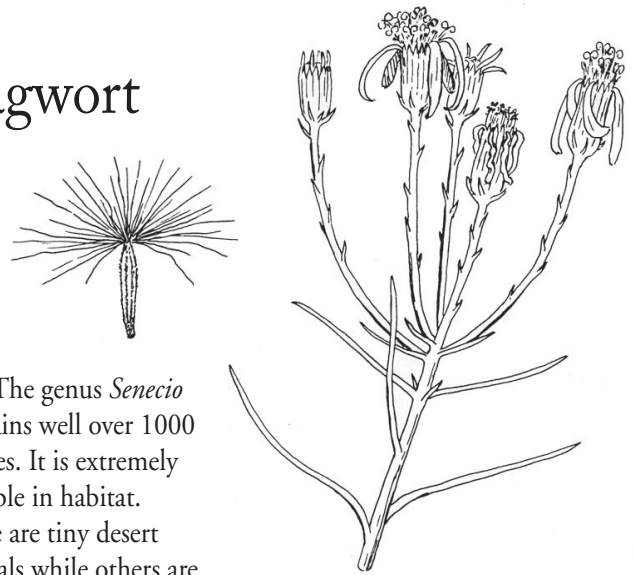
Blochman's Groundsel or Dune Ragwort

By Dirk Walters, Ph.D.; Drawing by Bonnie Walters

The plant for this issue of *Oak Leaves* is a plant that is listed as an herb in the Elfin Forest Pocket Guide. However, in order to identify it in most books, it must be declared a shrub. Is there a mistake somewhere? Well, maybe, or maybe not. The plant is really too herb-like to be a good shrub and too woody at the base to be an herb. So what is its growth form (habit)? Botanists use the term suffrutescent for a woody plant that puts up herbaceous shoots yearly.

The plant was drawn by Bonnie for the cover of the San Luis Obispo Chapter of the California Native Plant Society newsletter back in December 1989. It is *Senecio blochmaniae*. It is a rare plant whose northern range limit is probably the Elfin Forest. Dr. Hoover, in his County Flora, states that it used to be found in the Morro Bay and Cayucos dunes, but that it has probably been extirpated from there. It inhabits stabilized coastal dunes and sandy terraces around Los Osos and then from Pismo Beach south to Point Conception. To be truthful, I only remember seeing one plant near the Elfin Forest Boardwalk, but suspect it grows in groups of a few individuals that are widely scattered throughout the scrubby portion of the Elfin Forest.

This is a rare species found on the CNPS watch list (List 4) and probably would be considered more endangered were it not found on most of the public coastal lands of San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara Counties. A plant this localized often has no consistent common name. Just about every one of the few books that discusses the species uses a different common name for it. These include Coastal groundsel, Blochman's groundsel and Dune ragwort. Groundsel is the common name widely used for members of the genus *Senecio*.



The genus *Senecio* contains well over 1000 species. It is extremely variable in habitat.

Some are tiny desert annuals while others are

quite shrubby, and a few can reach the height of small trees. In Africa, some are succulents or strange African alpine forms. It is a member of the sunflower or lettuce family (*Asteraceae*). This means its tiny flowers are in heads. The name, *Senecio*, is Greek and translates as "old man". However, what's really being referred to is the copious pure white hairs that top the seed (pappus). This is supposed to resemble an old man's beard.

The specific epithet, *blochmaniae*, is named in honor of Ida May Blochman who made the original (type) collection for the species in the Santa Maria area in the 1890's. A life-long resident and historian of the Santa Maria area, Gaylord Jones, told the story that Ms. Blochman was a local school teacher who liked to botanize. He said that she made a number of collections that were sent to various experts around the state. Several of them ended up being considered new species. What happened to Mrs. Blochman? According to Gaylord, "she left teaching to marry a rich man from the Bay Area". The implication of his story was that she also stopped botanizing as well.

Elfin Forest Sightings

Pete Sarafian reports: "A rather surprised raccoon was scared out of a thicket under some pygmy oaks in the Elfin Forest one day in early April. The raccoon was a large adult, and it made quite a racket while shuffling away to escape the intrusion of a human. Raccoons tend to be nocturnal and not seen during the daytime. So it came as rather a shock to both of us when we encountered each other while I was busy looking for an invasive vine to remove. Raccoons are formidable opponents when cornered. I gave it a wide berth."

Also, Yolanda Waddell reports an April sighting of a beautiful display of hundreds of the early spring flower, Milk maids, in the far west end of the Don Klopfer Grove. The clusters of bright white blossoms, nodding at the tops of their two-foot-tall stems in the dim understory of the that large grove next to the bay, were a sight to behold. It will be well worth the trek down to the lower grove to see them next Spring.



Milk maids, Cardamine californica, can be found in the Don Klopfer Grove next to the Bay from January through April.

Photo by Yolanda Waddell.

Los Osos 4-H Club Helps SWAP

By Yolanda Waddell, Education Chair

In January, we received a phone call from Bill Henry, a Los Osos 4-H Club parent who leads the club's Outdoor Adventure Program. He explained that the club has several programs, and club members choose programs to be involved in. Participants in the Outdoor Adventure Program visit and learn about natural areas in San Luis Obispo county, and also do community service. Bill proposed that the group provide volunteer hours in the Elfin Forest, and asked that we give them a nature walk to help them be better acquainted with the plants, birds and habitats of the Forest.

Conservation Chair Pete Sarafian suggested that the 4-Hers could help to spread the remainder of a pile of wood chips that had been donated to SWAP for improvement of street-end entrances to the Elfin Forest. Education Chair Yolanda Waddell asked that some of the chips be used to cover a flat area inside the 11th Street entrance that has small bits of broken glass ground into the sandy soil. In earlier years, that spot had been used by weekend partiers who seemed to delight in breaking bottles after they were through drinking from them. Now the education committee would like to use it for school walk orientations.

Bill used his pickup truck to haul the chips from 15th Street to 11th Street. On a Saturday in March, SWAP Chair Ron Rasmussen and Education Chair Yolanda Waddell met Bill Henry, four Outdoor Adventure Program members and a 4-H dad to carry out the project. Within an hour, all of the chips were taken from the truck by bucket brigade and spread over the glass-infested area. Following that, Yolanda Waddell took the 4-H members on a nature walk through the Elfin Forest. Thanks to Bill Henry and the Los Osos 4-H Club members for filling a need for the SWAP Conservation and Education Committees.



*Enjoying the results of their project were: (front row) 4-H members Nalani Haueter, Erin Henry, Nico MacDougall and Luca MacDougall; (back row) SWAP Chair Ron Rasmussen, 4-H parent Neil MacDougall and group leader Bill Henry.
Photo by Yolanda Waddell.*

Tulare Students Visit Forest

By Yolanda Waddell; Photo by Jay Waddell

On Wednesday afternoon, March 28, two fifth grade classes totaling 60 children from Palo Verde Elementary School in Tulare, arrived at the Elfin Forest. They came in an 87-passenger school bus along with their teachers, Debbie Perez and Lucy Dominquez plus about 15 chaperones. Their visit to the Elfin Forest marked the end of a two-day field trip that included the tide pools north of Morro Bay and a tour of the Morro Bay Museum of Natural History.

SWAP school walk docents Les Bowker, Pete Sarafian, Yolanda Waddell and Jean Wheeler each guided fifteen students and their chaperones on a pre-planned tour of the Elfin Forest. Topics covered during the walk included an informal inventory of the animals, birds and insects of the Elfin Forest; plant adaptation; differences and similarities between Poison oak and Wild blackberry plants; animal tracks; the Dusky-footed woodrat and its nest; the Chumash shell middens; erosion and erosion control, volcanoes; and tides.

All of the docents commented on how interested and well-behaved the children were. In spite of being at the end of a trip that was filled with learning, they asked excellent questions and remembered the information that was given to them. It was a pleasure to introduce the Elfin Forest to children from the San Joaquin Valley, many of whom had never been to the coast or seen the ocean before.



A group of fifth graders from Palo Verde Elementary School, Tulare.

Weed Warriors Thump Thistles

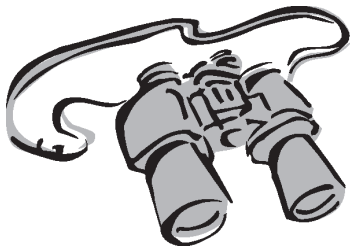
By Pete Sarafian, Conservation Chair

Once again the Wonderful, Weekend Weed Warriors rose to the occasion and chased down two weeds that needed to be throttled. The April work party searched and destroyed Italian thistle (*Carduus pycnocephalus*) and Cape ivy (*Delairea odorata*) in the extreme northern end of the Elfin Forest and in the extreme western tip as well. Both weeds pose a threat to the oak groves in the Forest and can destroy all of the native understory plants that dwell in the shade. The thistle has spread throughout much of the Los Osos Oaks Preserve State Park on the other side of town. There, the understory of the oaks is becoming a disaster area of invasives and little else.

Among the brave volunteers who were helping to keep the Elfin Forest preserved were Jay Bonestell, Dave Bowlus, Lannie Erickson, Rich Hansen, Prisila Johnson, Marty Levi, Bob and Sharon Meyer, Ron Rasmussen, Dar Reynolds, Charlie Sitton, and Norma Wightman. Your efforts are most appreciated. The Forest would be an invasive mess like many other areas of San Luis Obispo County if it were not for such volunteer hard labor.



Prisila Johnson (above left) and Rich Hansen (above right) joined the Weed Warriors in April to pull the evil Cape ivy out of trees and shrubs at the west end of the Elfin Forest. Cape ivy, an introduced plant from South Africa, is highly invasive and chokes off the growth of native plants and trees. Photos by Yolanda Waddell.



MBNEP's Spring Shorebird Count

By Annie Gillespie, MBNEP Volunteer Monitoring Coordinator

Clear and calm conditions aided the Morro Bay shorebird counting efforts of local birders who participated in the MBNEP Spring Shorebird Count Saturday, May 5, and made for a beautiful morning to be out and about in Morro Bay.

Notable sightings included: Red-throated Loon (in the area around grassy island), 27 Brant Geese near State Park Marina and 11 in the back bay, a Black Skimmer near State Park Marina, a White-faced Ibis in the back bay, and 3 Mute Swans in the salt marsh/Baywood area. A Peregrine Falcon was spotted over the sandspit and a male Northern Harrier was seen over the salt marsh.

Let's All Pull Together

I'm sure that you can't wait to start,
To begin to rip things apart.
It's that time of year,
So please have no fear,
Instead let's be brave of heart.
There is now plenty of weed,
To plunder before it makes seed.
Let's pull it all up,
And then lift a cup,
Of ale, whiskey, wine or else mead.
(Not in the Elfin Forest, of course.
SWAP only supplies water.)

Thanks for helping us,
Pete Sarafian

SWAP First Saturday Work Parties

SWAP First Saturday Work Parties are held at 9 a.m. to noon on the first Saturday of each month. Please dress for wind, fog or sun. Layers work well. Long pants and long shirt sleeves are good. Sturdy shoes are a must. Meet at the north end of 15th Street at the Elfin Forest entrance. Take care not to park in front of driveways or mailboxes. Call 528-0392.



Visitors to the SWAP booth on Earth Day pay close attention to booth worker Susan Chandler (in wheel chair) as she talks about the Elfin Forest and contents of the "mystery socks" on the table. Children (and adults) are invited to guess the contents of the sock-enclosed containers without looking. Photo by Yolanda Waddell

SWAP Booth Workers Mark Earth Day at Mission Plaza

SWAP Booth Coordinator Pat Murray, along with Ron Rasmussen and Pat Akey set up the SWAP booth with its yellow awning, photo displays and rack of T-shirts, at Mission Plaza in San Luis Obispo on Saturday, April 21. That was the date chosen by the San Luis Obispo County Earth Day Coalition to present an Earth Day Festival. Our booth was one of about sixty, and our workers not only shared information about SWAP and the Elfin Forest with many hundreds of visitors, but also had opportunities to inspect a row of "green" cars, learn about green building materials, receive free compact fluorescent lights, and hear lectures and music.

Helpers at our booth, in addition to Pat Murray (who stayed all day), Pat Akey and Ron Rasmussen (who also stayed all day) included Steve Cake, Susan Chandler, Debbie and Marty Levi, Yolanda Waddell and June Wright. At the end of a day filled with many opportunities to talk to people who hadn't heard about the Elfin Forest and to make some good merchandise sales, the booth and displays were taken down by the same crew that set them up, plus Yolanda Waddell. Ron and Pat loaded Bob Meyer's truck and Pat's car, and returned the booth and all its parts to SWAP storage, to wait for the next booth outreach opportunity. Bravo and thanks to our enthusiastic volunteers from Booth Coordinator Pat Murray.

Coming Up in the Elfin Forest

By Jean Wheeler

Many flowering shrubs and herbs are still in bloom. Black Sage still has some white to lavender blossoms while others are already dried to black pom-pom balls around the stems, giving the bush its name. Also white along the inland part of the boardwalk, are spikes of flowers on Chamise. Yellow Deerweed blooms through June and July into August. Blue flowers of Silver Bush Lupine close to the bay usually bloom into July, as do orange blossoms of the Sticky Monkey-flower farther inland. Among understory plants that bloom in early summer are yellow spikes of the succulent Coastal Dudleya and pink spikes of Hedge Nettle. Needing more space and sun are white Pearly Everlasting, and sky-blue Wooly Star.

The bay seems almost empty in contrast to winter's huge flotillas of ducks, geese, and shorebirds, but a closer look shows there are still a lot of water birds around. For many species of ducks and shorebirds, a few individuals remain all year even though most members of those species head north for the summer. Among waders, Willets and Killdeer remain very common. Also resident all year are Great Blue and Black-crowned Night Herons, along with many Snowy and Greater Egrets. Most of our raptor species are here all year, and likely to be actively hunting with fledglings to feed in June and July. Many chaparral and oak woodland birds are also busy here all year--including flycatchers, wrens, warblers, sparrows, black-birds, and finches.

Reptiles and arthropods are especially active in the warmth of summer. Western Fence Lizards dart along the boardwalk, and most of our dragonflies, damselflies, moths, and butterflies, are flying.

For detailed charts of colors, habitats, and peak seasons for hundreds of plants and animals, see our Pocket Guide, sold on page 11.



OAKLEAVES

is published six times per year beginning in February.

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layout is by Katy Budge.

Editing assistance by Pat Grimes.

Contributors to this issue:

Wendy Brown, Annie Gillespie, Bob Meyer, Pat Murray, Ron Rasmussen, Pete Sarafian, Yolanda Waddell, Dirk and Bonnie Walters, Jean Wheeler.

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If possible, all copy should be submitted by e-mail to:

ywaddell@kcbx.net AND jeanwheeler@charter.net.

WALKS in the ELFIN FOREST

Third Saturday Walks

June 16, 9:30 a.m. – Historical Plant Uses:

*Food, Medicine, or Poison?**

Join local naturalist Al Normandin as he identifies many native plants found within the Elfin Forest, focusing on whether they were used for food, medicine, or if they were avoided due to toxicity. He will discuss the nature of the foods that the Chumash and other indigenous peoples ate, the quality of their plant medicines, and the toxic plants that they avoided. You'll become more appreciative of the foods and medicines that our modern society offers, and understand their origins in native plants.

July 21, 9:30 a.m. – Archaeology Walk

Renowned archaeologist, Dr. John Parker, will tell us about long-ago inhabitants of the Elfin Forest and the Central Coast. Walking along the boardwalk, he'll take us back to the times of ancient people who preceded the Chumash and show us how archaeologists can determine changes in the ocean's level by studying human habitations. He'll provide examples of technology development through the ages and give us a word image of everyday life in the Elfin Forest during the time of the Chumash, including stories about Chumash money, economy and trade. This walk will reveal a complex world of the Elfin Forest's past inhabitants, one that we would never suspect while walking along the boardwalk today.

*August 18, 9:30 a.m. – Geology Walk**

Take a journey through time with Jeff Grover, Cuesta College Geology instructor. Jeff will focus on the geologic history of the Morro Bay area from the formation of the ancient morros, or Seven Sisters, to the recent development of the dunes which form the Elfin Forest. He may even give us a glimpse of what the Elfin Forest and Morro Bay will be like in the geologic future. Jeff brings rock samples and draws diagrams of local geologic action. Join us for a lively and informative walk and talk.

Walks in the Elfin Forest begin at 9:30 a.m. (unless otherwise noted). Park at the north end of 15th Street off Santa Ysabel in Los Osos and walk up the path at the end of the street to the boardwalk. The walk will begin at that point. Wear comfortable shoes, long sleeves and pants to avoid poison oak and mosquitoes. Please park carefully, avoiding driveways and mailboxes. Please leave pets at home. The easy paced walks last 1-1/2 to 2 hours. For more information call (805) 528-0392.

**This walk takes place entirely on the boardwalk.*

From Our Readers ... Peg Smith of Prather, California (in the Sierra foothills northeast of Fresno), sent the following note with her membership renewal: "The latest issue of Oakleaves is great--especially the article about TV's! I hope to make it to the coast for the butterfly walk in April."



April butterfly walk leader Pat Brown (standing, left) displayed part of her collection of butterfly identification and information books for walk participants. Her favorite: Southern California Butterflies by Fred Heath. Photo by Yolanda Waddell.

More Mutt Mitts



Dorothy Norwood, Mutt Mitt Committee Chair, left, was very happy to receive ten boxes of Mutt Mitts from Sandra Beebe.

Added to the Mutt Mitts still on hand from the "Mutt Mitt Manna" of 20 boxes given to us in 2006 through a grant from the MBNER, we will have a supply to last us through 2007.

SWAP thanks Sandra for writing the grant request and handling the ordering of the Mutt Mitts. The \$26,000 grant provided funds to keep 32 Mutt Mitt dispensers, including seven at Elfin Forest entrances, filled for three years. This is the second year.

Photo by Yolanda Waddell.

Please Report Elfin Forest Sightings

Have you observed any unusual birds in the Elfin Forest? Mammals? Reptiles? Amphibians? Insects? Interesting activities or footprints of wildlife in our Elfin forest? Unusual plants? Please report any interesting wildlife activity or plants that you see to Jean Wheeler at jeanwheeler@charter.net for inclusion in future Oakleaves issues under "Elfin Forest Sightings." You can also leave a message on SWAP's answering machine, 528-0392.

Local Developer Donates Labor

By Pete Sarafian, Conservation Chair

After seeing an article written by this author in the local weekly Bay News, real estate developer Jeff Edwards responded with an offer of assistance. *Asparagus asparagoides* (or so-called smilax, bridal creeper vine, or African bridal creeper) was the subject of the news article. This author noted that the vine was both in the pygmy oaks of the Elfin Forest and widespread around the Los Osos area. It was pointed out in the article that the vine was threatening to destroy the pygmy oak groves. Mr. Edwards had encountered the vine on some of his properties, and used manual labor to dig out the roots associated with the vines. He offered two of his workers to assist in the effort to eradicate the vine in the Elfin Forest.

This spring, two of Mr. Edwards' workers assisted the author in digging out the massive root system of the vine in several widely scattered infestations. It was a difficult task

requiring crawling through branches, brush and briars and coming face-to-face with poison oak. Although the infestations looked small above ground, an amazing mass of tuberous roots was extracted. In two days of effort, we removed some two hundred pounds or more of the invasive vine's root system. The roots filled several large garbage barrels. This was a good start to an effort that switched later to a more rapid spraying of herbicide in areas that were too extensively infested to dig without harming the trees overhead. Thanks to Jeff Edwards for his willingness to volunteer his workers to help the Elfin Forest. Special thanks go to his employees who were so capable at such hard labor.



Thank You to Our New and Renewing Members

Compiled by Wendy Brown, SWAP Database Coordinator

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**Thanks to those listed above who donated more than the \$12 membership dues. The additional donations will be used for special projects in the Elfin Forest. Thanks also to Terry Benko, owner of Los Osos Fitness Works, for donating to SWAP ten percent of the profits from Saturday smoothie sales from January 11 through the end of March.*



MURAL PRINTS

#3 below is a signed full-color print (mounted on black foam core as shown) of the mural by Barbara Rosenthal painted on the wall of the Rexall Drug Store in Los Osos.



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