



# OAK LEAVES

A PUBLICATION OF THE LOS OSOS / MORRO BAY CHAPTER OF SMALL WILDERNESS AREA PRESERVATION  
P.O. BOX 6442, LOS OSOS, CALIFORNIA 93412-6442 ❖ (805) 546-1199 ❖ DECEMBER 1999 / JANUARY 2000

## Emily Polk: Lest We Forget

By Sandra Beebe

I moved to this area in January of this year. Two of the places that immediately captivated me were Los Osos Oaks and Elfin Forest. Of course, Mrs. Polk's name came up when I talked to people about these areas. It was a most enjoyable experience to get to meet her and to find out the extent of her involvement in both these projects. Emerson must have been thinking of someone like Emily Polk when he said, "Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm."

Mrs. Polk welcomed me into her home and most graciously shared her life with me. She is a wonderful storyteller and even sang for me the charming folk song that was written about her drive to save the Los Osos Oaks and property at the east end of the Morro Bay Estuary (including the Elfin Forest) from developers. The next time I visit the Elfin Forest and look across the bay to the hills of the former Baptista Ranch, I will be saying a little thank you to her.

Mrs. Polk actually had the inspiration for SWAP before she knew what she wanted to save. The idea came to her one evening after she and her husband had moved to Los Osos. She wanted areas of any size to be saved including small ones; thus S for small. W for wilderness areas so that they would always be natural and wild and the P for preservation so that they would be kept as pristine as they had been in the past. Putting this together she came up with SWAP. Then she thought about families making sacrifices swapping various luxuries so that they and others could contribute to the acquisition of these areas.

She wasn't certain if she wanted to do all the work to bring her idea to fruition. She was already involved in many interesting

Emerson must have been thinking of someone like Emily Polk when he said, "Nothing great was ever achieved

## Annual Meeting & Walk

Saturday, December 18, 10 a.m. to Noon  
El Morro Church of the Nazarene, Los Osos

Featured Speaker: Pete Sarafian  
SWAP Conservation Committee Chair  
on Controlling Pest Plants in the Elfin Forest

## You're invited to SWAP's Annual Meeting and Walk

This year, the SWAP Board decided to combine our Annual Meeting with our Third Saturday walk on the recently completed Elfin Forest Boardwalk. The meeting will begin at 10:00 a.m. at the El Morro Church of the Nazarene, 1480 Santa Ysabel Ave. in Los Osos. At 11:00 a.m., the meeting venue will change to the Elfin Forest Boardwalk. Because of parking limitations on 16th Street where the Boardwalk begins, we will meet at the north end of 15th Street and walk up the trail to the Boardwalk. The walk will last for 1 to 1-1/2 hours (see "Third Saturday Walks" for description).

Pete Sarafian, SWAP Conservation Committee Chair, will be our featured speaker and walk leader. His talk, "Controlling Pest Plants in the Elfin Forest," includes dramatic examples of the invasive potential of plants such as Smilax and Cape Ivy. Pete recently attended the 1999 Symposium of the California Exotic Pest Plant Council, CalEPPC. (SWAP's Los Osos/Morro Bay Chapter is a member of CalEPPC). He will share with those attending the Annual Meeting what he learned about the urgent need to control invasive plants in the Elfin Forest ("If we wait any longer, there may be no Elfin Forest.")

The short business portion of the Annual Meeting will include an opportunity for all SWAP members present to vote on a change in the chapter bylaws. See the related article in this issue for details on the bylaw change.

Your membership and donations to SWAP have always been appreciated, but this time we need you in person. The future direction of SWAP's Los Osos/Morro Bay Chapter and the care of the Elfin Forest is being determined by too few people. SWAP needs greater participation from its members and the community. For more information, phone 528-4540.

*Emily Polk* continued on page 2

# Emily Polk continued from page 1

activities. Then one day while driving in Los Osos, she saw large yellow machines which had just removed an exquisite spreading live oak and many years of environmental history, and knew she must proceed. Much work was ahead of her. She had to learn all the ins and outs of starting an organization. She consulted with others who were doing similar work in California. The list included Margaret Wentworth Owings, Ansel Adams, Edgar Wayburn (President of the Sierra Club) and Mark Larkin. All agreed to be officers or board members in this new organization. In less than a week she had an incorporated charitable foundation with a full Board of Directors.

Quite by accident she discovered that the area that now is Los Osos Oaks was up for sale, and that the owner had a bid from a potential buyer who wanted to put in a mobile home park. She knew immediately that she had to save this grove of live Oaks and turn it into a park. The owner gave her two weeks to come up with \$160,000 in cash. With this, SWAP had its first project.

Emily and her husband explored the land. They brought in a photographer to document this ancient group of trees. A zoologist confirmed for them that this was indeed the last truly primeval oak forest ungrazed by domestic animals. The boggy ground was unsuitable for stock and only deer had grazed there. A botanist found a colony of rare lichens. A geologist confirmed that the trees were at least 400 years old. An anthropologist found evidence of past use by Chumash Indians.

The more she learned of the history of this area, the more she knew she had to continue to fight to save it from destruction. The hard work had just begun for she had money to raise, and the state bureaucracy to convince to take on the long term care of this land, once she had obtained it. She drove all over the state meeting those with the power and those with the money to make this undertaking come true. Finally, it was done - the money was raised, the State Park Department agreed to manage the park, and the Los Osos Oaks State Preserve was dedicated. The first task of SWAP had been completed.

During her ten years of involvement with SWAP, Emily Polk inspired others to start similar organizations all over the state and lent her efforts to their beginnings. Because of her and others that followed, a back-drop of mountains for Los Angeles was rescued; another group was able to save the Sacramento River head-water nursery area; and rare sand dunes and coastal caves were preserved, just to name a few SWAP projects around the state of California.

In 1979, the Polks returned to India and later to England. Before departing, Emily turned over the reins of SWAP to others, and ultimately the Los Osos/ Morro Bay Chapter of SWAP finished the Elfin Forest project she had begun.

One wonders what Emily Polk feels is her greatest legacy: writer, artist, interior designer, world traveler, or SWAP founder. Any of these accomplishments would be enough for most of us; but then, most of us aren't Emily Polk.

If you want to know more about Emily Polk, you will soon be able to read her life story in the Library of Congress in the Women of Achievement section.



SWAP founder Emily Polk with architect husband Benjamin Polk.

## Poems for Drums And Woodwinds: Three Sets of Sequences



By Emily Polk; Los Osos, CA. 1999. 3 vol. set,  
250pp. \$15.00.

A review by Madeline Martin

If a picture is worth a thousand words, then surely a poem is worth a thousand pictures. Nothing illustrates this better than the strong, often poignant imagery created by Emily Polk in her poetic trilogy collection of memories and sensations titled "Drums and Woodwinds". The dynamic octogenarian weaves colorful reminiscences from the skein of her observations on this big blue marble. She depicts the obvious with keen insight and molds the unfamiliar into universal ideas. She helps us to hear "the sigh of sand dunes at rest" and smell "the luna moth swimming...in the musks of night's breath...". She captures the idyll of living on the magnificent Central Coast of California with a joyfulness that is at once sophisticated and sweet.

Mrs. Polk turns our thoughts to the pioneers of this rich land following the "impulses millennia ago that sent men from far east to far west... The round world rounded." She paints her own childhood with the vivid strokes of an artist in thrall with all things ordinary yet exceptional. She allows us to see her little brother's Flexible Flier with the same joy he must have felt and points out with inceptive glee the ripening cherries, plums, tomatoes and pumpkins growing still in her mind's eye. What a delight it is to read the words that can transport us to "this one sun-moment — this fraction of hour, instant of change — and all becomes when, will-be, and the all of now...".

Poetry is, by and large, a forgotten pleasure; more's the pity, because Emily Polk's words can create worlds - "A majestic rage of rain - brute-black, blue-black - pounds down, pours drenching, roaring to gratify trees upheaved to meet it - lust-lashed, lurching, drowned, damned in joy-drunk sod-searching thunder.". Her words can evoke emotions - "The spoon rings against the bowl — sound of metal on fired clay, of mountain against sky, of wave against cliff — of sudden memory.". Her words can carry us to



## Let's All Pull Together

The SWAP Weed Pulling Team meets the first Saturday of each month to wage war on the invasive plants in the Elfin Forest. We welcome all who wish to join us. Our next morning of fun and frolic is coming up on Saturday, December 4, from 9:00 a.m. to noon. Please meet at the north end of 15th Street (more parking available than 16th). Bring work gloves and a shovel or trowel. There are plenty of opportunities for you to vent your aggressions.

Our goal for December is to pull smilax and cape ivy from one or two of the oak groves which are being over-run by those exotic pests. Wear long sleeves and long pants to protect yourself from poison oak. Looking forward to seeing you then,

*Pete Sarafian, Conservation Committee Chair*

## Elfin Forest Weeding Report

*By Pete Sarafian, Conservation Chairman*

The November 6th Conservation Work Party concentrated on mopping up the remaining seedpods from this year's crop of Narrow-leaf iceplant (*Conicosia pugioniformis*). Some of the conical seed pods have already burst open, each discharging about a dozen seeds into the soil. The stalwart work crew included Ann Calhoun, Kathy Dugan, Paula Adrian, Bob McDougle, Richard Webb, Tony Collins, Jay Bonestall, Jim Gold and Pete Sarafian. At least fifteen large garbage bags of plant material were scoured from the Elfin Forest.

Ann Calhoun should be recognized in particular for her novel weed abatement invention, the Super-Duper Seedpod Scooper. News Flash: Anyone who notes a bunch of yellow flowers blooming high in the oak grove canopies should contact SWAP with their locations. This indicates that an infestation of Cape Ivy (German Ivy) is in bloom. This "kudzu of the west" needs to be attacked before the seasonal blooms mature into fruit and seeds.



*An enthusiastic weeding crew removed 12 bags of the invasive Cape Ivy from just one oak grove during October.*

*Members of the crew are (l. to r.) Mary Leizear, Henry Childs, Bonnie Clark, Mike Estabrook, Mary Coffeen, and Tony Collins*

## Alien Invasion, Part 3:

# Yellow Star-thistle

*By Pete Sarafian, Conservation Chair*

*This is the third in a series of articles on alien plant species that are invading the Elfin Forest. Unchecked, the aliens will take over and destroy the plants that have been part of the Elfin Forest for centuries. It is hoped that these aliens will become more recognizable to members of SWAP and the Los Osos community. Community members are encouraged to volunteer to assist SWAP and San Luis County Parks Department in controlling these pests. Community involvement could make a big difference in restoring and maintaining the health of the park for the long term.*

Yellow star-thistle (*Centaurea solstitialis*) is a member of the plant family Asteraceae (sunflowers). The *Centaurea* genus includes other nasty invasives such as Russian Knapweed (which also has overrun western states). Yellow star-thistle is an annual plant that was native to southern Europe. It flourishes, unfortunately, in the western U.S. and is one of the most invasive plants here.

Yellow star-thistle starts sprouting as a rosette of ground-hugging leaves. The basal leaves are deeply lobed, triangular on the ends, and are blue-green or gray-green in color. As the stalks develop, the upper leaves along the stalks are smooth in outline and are pointed. All stems and leaves are covered with fine hairs. The plants usually are one to two feet high in the Elfin Forest and can reach a height of three feet in other locations. A single yellow flower tops each stalk or branch. The flowers turn a snowy white in the fall. Each flower is crowned with spines that are about 3/8 to 1 inch long. This feature gives the plant its name.

The weed has a long annual life cycle. It begins germinating from seed with autumn rains, but can mature as late as late summer. Successive germinations can occur well into the summer growing season. Each plant can produce from 100 to 10,000 seeds, depending on plant size. Wind, water, animals, or human activity disperse the seeds. The plant is a very aggressive competitor and rapidly develops a taproot.

This pest seems to have entered the U.S. through weed contamination of imported alfalfa seed. It was introduced into California in the mid-1800's. Initially the alfalfa seeds were imported from Chile. (The contamination of the Chilean seed probably originated from Spain in the 1600's.) Later imports to the U.S. came from Asia Minor and Europe. These areas also were subject to contamination by the yellow star-thistle.

It is estimated that as much as 20 million acres of California are infested with yellow star-thistle at this time. Likewise, this weed has spread to millions of acres of adjoining western states. The rate of infestation increases exponentially. Its doubling time probably is less than five years, the average for invasive species. Yellow star-thistle infests disturbed roadsides, pastures, grasslands and woodlands. It can be seen in many parts of SLO County, especially along the sides of roads. When present in pastures and grasslands, as it is now, the weed spreads much faster than when it grew along with alfalfa in the 1800's.

*Yellow Star-Thistle continued on page 7*

## From The Chair:

# The Boardwalk and Beyond

By Bob McDougale

The Boardwalk is nearing completion and is an impressive addition to the Elfin Forest. Soon, the benches will be installed and monuments and interpretive signs put in place. CCC crews are finishing the installation of toe-rails and County workers are installing a water line. A recent inspection tour was made by members of SWAP, County Parks, and CCC to check on work yet to be completed. We were all impressed again with the high quality of workmanship by CCC and the fine design work by Mark Dariz and Paul Wolff. Mark demonstrated the value of the Boardwalk by traversing the entire length in his wheelchair.

I strongly recommend that all SWAP members visit the Boardwalk to see how well it meets the needs of all of us in admiring the Elfin Forest. Until the entrance and parking area is completed, it would be advisable to continue to park on 15th Street and walk over to the entrance or along the existing trail at 15th Street. Eventually, a set of steps will be installed at the junction of the Boardwalk and the 15th Street trail. Our monthly walks will probably continue to begin at 15th Street since parking spots are more plentiful there.

SWAP members may rightly be proud of the long, successful drive to raise funds and set aside the Elfin Forest. It is not yet the time, however, to lean back and rest on the pleasure of that accomplishment. The increased accessibility of the Elfin Forest shows even more clearly the need to replant, close off some of the old trails and control the invasion of exotic plants. New dunes are forming in disturbed areas. The old established trails are becoming highways as hikers find it easier to walk on the edges of the trails. Smilax vines are flourishing in places not noticed before.

Your Board of Directors is pursuing several options in accomplishing the tasks yet to be done. Members have been quite willing to join work parties and several outside volunteer groups are available to help. We especially appreciate the response of members to join work parties when called upon. Our strongest need, however, is in the planning of these activities and in coordination with the outside groups. No number of work parties can accomplish much without proper planning of the tasks and a clear agreement on the their goals.

This is where we need members to step up and offer help. The very small number of directors and committee members now involved cannot adequately complete the tasks at hand. Consider what talents and time you can offer to help heal the many wounds



Above: Mike Parsons, Park Ranger Specialist with County Parks, installing irrigation pipe for plant revegetation along the boardwalk.  
Below: Biologist Stephen Dreher explained plant habitat restoration to a rapt group of interested listeners – one of the first groups to use the boardwalk – during SWAP's August walk.



## Thanks, Caroline and PG&E



Thanks to Caroline Gmelin who, because she is a ham radio operator, participated this past October in the Early Warning Siren System test for PG&E and the County Office of Emergency Services. Ham operators observe the sirens to make sure that each one is sounding and rotating, then radio the information to the Emergency Services Center. Caroline named SWAP as the non-profit organization of her choice to be the recipient of a \$25 donation from PG&E.

## Bylaw Change up for Vote

At SWAP's Annual Meeting on December 18, members will vote to change one of the chapter's bylaws. Currently, the bylaw regarding the number of directors on the Board of Directors states that there shall be a minimum of six and a maximum of ten SWAP members elected to the Board by a vote of the membership. The revised bylaw will reduce the minimum number to three. The reason? As many local volunteer organizations have experienced, it is difficult to find replacements for board members who resign or retire. Our chapter's search for additional board members continues, but in the meantime the Board of Directors must be able to conduct business within the guidelines of our bylaws. Phone 528-3207 for additional

december 13

### SWAP BOARD MEETINGS

The SWAP Board of Directors meets on the second Monday of each month at 7 p.m. Board meetings will be held at the NEP Office, 3rd and El Moro Streets in Baywood Park on Monday, December 13, and Monday, January 10. All Board meetings are open to the public. To confirm the date, time and location (which are subject to change), phone 528-4540.

january 10

# THIRD SATURDAY WALKS

## December 18 - 11:00 a.m.

Our 3rd Saturday walk in December will take place after SWAP's Annual Meeting (see article on front page). The walk will begin at 11:00 a.m. at the north end of 15th Street. Walk leader is Pete Sarafian, Conservation Committee Chair, who will point out the many kinds of alien plants which have invaded the Elfin Forest. He will also talk about SWAP's plans to remove and control the invasives, and provide suggestions to homeowners who have the same weeds in their gardens. This walk will last 1 to 1-1/2 hours.

## January 15 - 9:30 a.m.

"Small Ones of the Elfin Forest" is Shirley Sparling's title for the walk she will lead in the Don Klopfer Grove next to the Bay, in the lower part of the Elfin Forest. While walking along a trail or ducking under gnarled branches in an ancient oak grove, have you ever noticed the lichens, mosses or oak galls? Have you looked at the shelf fungi growing on an oak tree trunk, or noticed other fungi poking out of the oak leaf litter on the ground? This will be a great opportunity to do all of those things! Bring a magnifying glass if you have one.

Walks in the Elfin Forest begin at 9:30 a.m. (unless otherwise noted) at the north end of 15th Street off Santa Ysabel in Los Osos.

Wear comfortable shoes,

long sleeves and pants to avoid poison oak.

Please park carefully, avoiding driveways and mailboxes.

We ask that you not bring dogs or other pets.

The easy paced walks last 1-1/2 to 2 hours.



October's 3rd Saturday walk participants at the newly build observation deck at Bush Lupine Point. The walk was led by Audubon member Jim Royer, at left studying a field guide. The following day, 14 Audubon members spotted 112 bird species here during The Big Sit.

## Third Big Sit is First Again!

By Jim Royer

Despite a half day of thick fog, the third "Big Sit" in the Elfin Forest, on Bush Lupine Point overlooking Morro Bay, again had 112 species (Ed.Note:The October, 1998 Big Sit also yielded 112 species). Fourteen Audubon members took turns looking from this seventeen foot circle on Sunday, October 17 – the same day that other Big Sit counts across the nation were taking place. The total was boosted from 110 when Mike Stiles went back to the circle at 9:00 p.m. to find two additional owl species

It would appear that we still are the reigning champions. I have heard nothing to the contrary, despite inquiries on the web and to the organizers of the event. So, tentatively it looks like the Elfin Forest is the three-time national champion for the number of species to be found from one spot, on one day, on the third Sunday in October.

The most unexpected bird was the Red-throated Pipit that went hurtling over several of us as we stood at the overlook. Fortunately, this breeder from western Alaska and Asia has a very distinct call. It is a very rare bird in California – it is supposed to migrate down the coast of Asia to its wintering grounds.

## Thank You to our New and Renewing Members

Compiled by Wendy Brown, Membership Committee

New Members: Tim & Kathy Dugan \*

Renewing Members:

Randolph Ball, Michael Barrows, Estelle Basor & Kent Morrison \*, David & Rosemary Bentley, Eileen Bowen, Darline Broneske, Frank Bush, Peggy Childers \*, David & Linda Chipping \*, Ed Conway, Kathleen Copeland \*, Katie & Jerry Davis \*, Fran Elswick, Laura D. Farwell, Winton & Adele Frey, Norman Friedman, Ed & Kathy Garner, Bethany & Don Griffiths, Chet & Shirley Grimes \*, Charles W. Hallstrom \*, Melody & Gerry Hamilton, Gordon Hensley, Suzanne Hewitt, Susan Howe \*, William H. Jackson, Helen H. James \*, Sally & Randy Knight \*, Howard & Donna Krueger \*, Murray Lauser, Annette Lindeman \*, Norman MacGillivray \*, Jim & Kathy Marrocco, Susan McGinty, Audrey W. Mertz, Donna Lee Miller, Marilyn Moore, William H. Newman, Melvin & Mary Norby \*, Lois Norwood, Alan & Elaine Olson \*, Randall & Shirley Palmer \*, Charlie & Ellen Perryess \*, Tom & Sharon Pritchett \*, Ingrid Reti \*, Nancy E. Ruhl, Carolyn Schanberger, Harold Schuchardt \*, Irwin Seal \*, Peg Smith, Joseph Stilts, Bunty Taylor, Mr. & Mrs. D.R. Thompson, David H. Thomson, David & Libby Tolley, Margaret L. Weiss, and Jim Weldon.

\*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.

## Thirteenth in a Series

# Mock Heather

By Dirk Walters, Ph.D

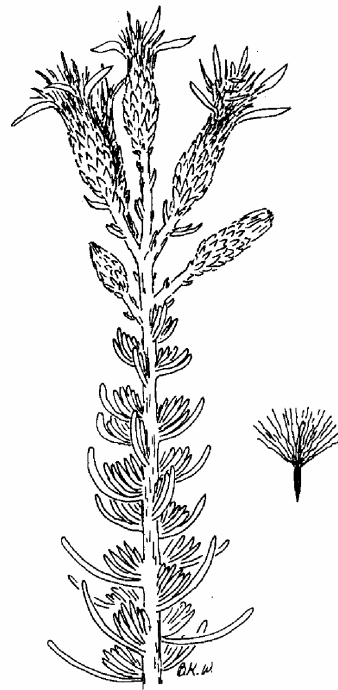
Bonnie's drawing for this month is of mock heather (*Ericameria ericoides* or *Haplopappus ericoides*). In our area, mock heather is a dominant shrub of old dunes that have been stabilized by vegetation. So common is it in old dunes and so rare is it in other situations, that the presence of significant numbers of mock heather individuals can be used as an indicator of stabilized dunes. In the Elfin Forest, it is common in the drier areas where the soil is very sandy and drainage is high. The species is just finishing its bloom and is now literally covered with white fuzzy fruits. The fuzz is the result of the bristle-like calyx (pappus) that aids in dispersal of the achenes. The species ranges along the coast from Point Reyes to Los Angeles County.

Mock or false heather is a member of the Sun Flower family or Asteraceae (Compositae). This family is characterized by bearing its tiny flowers in flower-like clusters called heads. Within the head are two types of flowers. The most conspicuous ones are the 6-8 ray flowers, which display their three fused petals as a long yellow strap. Ray flowers possess a fertile pistil, but no male parts or stamens. The second type of flower is found in the center of the head and its corolla is shaped like a tube with five regularly spaced teeth on top. These flowers are perfect flowers based on their position in the head. Disk flowers are restricted to the head's center and are often so bunched together as to form what appears to be a disk in the center of the head.

The yellow flowers in the heads are surrounded by several over-lapping series of bracts that can be mistaken for sepals. Heads of sunflowers then can be mistaken for ordinary flowers. The bracts resemble sepals, the ray flowers resemble petals and the disk flowers resemble the rest of a flower. Such a flower cluster (inflorescence) can be termed a false flower or pseudoanthium. Actually, it is the heads that serve as the reproductive unit recognized by insect pollinators and not the individual flowers. Plants bearing flowers in heads are very common in our area as well as in California. Roughly one in four or five plants in California bears a head inflorescence.

Both the genus name, *Ericameria*, and the specific epithet (*ericoides*) comes from the same root, "Eric" or "Erica." *Erica* is the genus commonly known as heather. This genus dominates much of Northern Europe. Land dominated by heather is called heath land or moor. Their soils are usually waterlogged and very acid. They are not very productive. The preponderance of heath land is due to human activity. Much of what is now covered by heather was originally forest, but the forests were cut and then the land grazed with cattle, sheep and goats. After the forest was removed, the water table rose and the saturated the surface soil. Under these conditions, only the heather could return.

Heather is a flowering shrub in the same family as our manzanitas. The one common characteristic of heather is their leaves. They are usually very narrow to almost needle-like. Further, secondary leaves are produced in the axiles of the primary leaves such that they form dense clusters at every node. A second look at Bonnie's drawing will show that our mock heather's leaves



Drawing of  
Mock Heather  
by  
Bonnie Walters

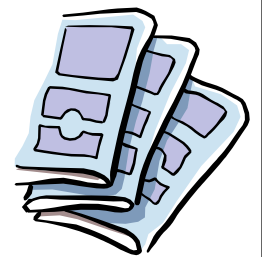
are also almost needle-like and are certainly forming flat clusters at each of the nodes. Thus it's the leaves of mock heather that accounts for the root name (*Erica*). The rest of the genus name "meria" refers to a succession of parts, probably referring to the appearance of the leaves at successive nodes.

The suffix "oides" simply means "looks like or resembles". Therefore, *Ericameria ericoides* translates into the heather leafed plant that resembles heather. You say this is overkill. But recall that this plant was originally called *Haplopappus ericoides*. The most common name for members of its former genus was golden bush. Thus, our mock heather becomes merely a golden bush that resembles heather.

## \$500 Grant for Elfin Forest Trail Guide

Each year, the County Board of Supervisors awards funds for environmental projects around the county. In July, Bob McDougale, Los Osos/Morro Bay Chapter Chair, prepared a request for a grant to support the printing of a trail guide. The guide will be designed and written with the new Boardwalk in mind.

We learned last month that SWAP has been awarded \$500 by the Board of Supervisors. This grant, added to \$300 raised in 1998 by SWAP's drawing for a coverlet with images of Los Osos (donated by Judy and Gary Tewell of Los Osos Rexall), will provide sufficient funds for artwork, layout and an initial printing. SWAP's Education Committee will produce the trail guide.





*Yellow Star Thistle is not only a threat to native species, but also toxic to horses.*

## **Yellow Star-Thistle** *continued from page*

If ingested by horses, yellow star-thistle can cause a chronic, potentially fatal neurological disorder. It also is a threat to native plant species, crowding them out and eliminating them from an area.

Herbicides used on yellow star-thistle include picloram, dicamba and 2,4-D. In the Elfin Forest, only a professional who is licensed or certified to apply such chemicals and who has federal, state, and county permission may do so.

Yellow star-thistle takes years to eradicate from a single site. One must deplete the bank of seeds built up in the soil from previous years. About 90% of yellow star-thistle seeds will germinate or degrade in the first year. About eight percent more will do so in the second year. The remaining two percent take longer than two years to sprout or die off. As with other invasive species, eradication requires an integrated pest management strategy employing such tools as mechanical controls, chemical controls, biological (insect or fungus) controls, and burning. Obviously,

## **A Correction and an Apology to Bud and Gordon**

*From the Editor:*

On the October *Oakleaves* front page is an article announcing a \$15,000 donation from MCI/World Com. My introductory paragraph made it seem as if World Com just happened to think about SWAP and sent an unsolicited donation. My apologies for neglecting to mention two people who were instrumental in bringing this about: Bud Laurent and Gordon Hensley.

Since MCI/World Com is an extremely large organization, local liaison is very important. When MCI/World Com was planning its new building at Santa Ynez and Tenth Streets in Los Osos, then-Supervisor Bud Laurent suggested SWAP to MCI's representative for a community grant. Bud knew that our chapter needed funds both for matching a Coastal Conservancy grant, and for revegetation work in the Elfin Forest.

After Bud left San Luis Obispo County for his position in Santa Barbara, Gordon Hensley, Chair of SWAP's Board of Directors during 1998, continued contact with MCI's Tulsa office for some time. Numerous delays in processing the check for SWAP brought Bud back into the picture as well as Gordon. The Los Osos/Morro Bay Chapter owes many thanks to both

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## **Bird Festival Registration Filling Up Fast**

Act soon if you want to register for the 4th Annual Morro Bay Winter Bird Festival being held from January 14-17, 2000. The deadline for registering is December 31, 1999, but space is limited for the festival itself and some of the more popular events have already filled up! For more information or a registration brochure call 1-800-231-0592, or visit the Morro Bay Bird Festival web site at [www.morro-bay.net/birds](http://www.morro-bay.net/birds).

Festival registration costs \$35, and a one-day \$15 registration option is available. The registration includes: entrance to all non-fee events, unlimited entry to the Museum of Natural History at Morro Bay State Park, a Festival T-Shirt, and bird checklist. Prices for fee events range from \$10 for one of many carpool trips to \$55 for a day of birding at sea. The weekend art show, featuring the avian-related work of many talented Central Coast artists and artisans, is free and open to the public. There will also be vendor booths, offering the latest in bird-related optical and photography equipment, clothing, artwork, backyard bird feeding supplies, etc.

### **Where To Call, Where To Write**

If you have questions about SWAP activities or want to volunteer, please call our phone message service at 546-1199.

A recorded message will have information about the Third Saturday Walks and other current events.

If you have questions, concerns or comments about anything that's happening in the Elfin Forest, call or write:

Pete Jenny, SLO County Parks Facilities Manager,  
1087 Santa Rosa Street, SLO, CA 93408, (805) 781-5930.



### **O A K L E A V E S**

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(805) 546-1199



## Give the gift of Nature this holiday season!



A SWAP membership purchased for your family or friends is a keepsake that will last an entire year. Our newsletter, *OakLeaves*, will arrive bimonthly with information and articles pertaining to the unique environment known as the Elfin Forest. Add your family and friends to the ever growing list of community members that have worked together to obtain, preserve, and protect this natural habitat. We can't think of a better gift for the millennium! EVERY membership counts!

— Katie Davis, Membership Committee Chair

### GIFT MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

- Member \$12
- Defender \$100
- Steward \$25
- Champion \$250
- Protector \$50
- Guardian \$500
- Life Member \$1000

### MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

- New Member
- Renewing Member
- Member \$12
- Defender \$100
- Steward \$25
- Champion \$250
- Protector \$50
- Guardian \$500
- Life Member \$1000

I want to help, please call me!

Have you renewed your membership on time?

Check the label on this newsletter  
for your renewal due date.

**EVERY membership counts!!**

Make checks payable to SWAP,  
Mail to Small Wilderness Area Preservation,  
P.O. Box 6442, Los Osos, CA 93412 - 6442

