



# 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) 528-0392 ❖ FEBRUARY / MARCH 2007



## SWAP Marches in Festive Baywood Parade

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## SWAP Looks to the Future

By Ron Rasmussen, SWAP Chair

*"The moving finger writes, and, having writ, moves on."*

*-- "The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám"*

Our historian, Debbie Levi, has assembled and chronologically arranged news clippings and other information about SWAP beginning in 1983. The next step is to transfer the data to a CD that can be made available to libraries and anyone interested in SWAP's history, especially with respect to the Elfin Forest. An outstanding fact from the data is the number of people who were and are still involved in supporting SWAP. The effort to preserve the Elfin Forest spanned more than a decade from 1983 to 1994 and involved at least a hundred people who were active in fund raising, publicity, and convincing the owner of the property to forego development. The establishment of the Forest as a State and County park carried with it further responsibilities for SWAP. Our chapter has a formal agreement with San Luis Obispo County Parks, extending to 2014, to protect and maintain the Forest. Your SWAP Board and many unpaid volunteers carry out this activity. However, time is not on our side with respect to some board members being able to continue. A new effort is needed to ensure that the Elfin Forest will continue to be a beautiful and protected park for the future.

**Our most important need is for new board members to oversee maintenance and other activities in the Forest.**

Our most important need is for new board members to oversee maintenance and other activities in the Forest. Although the primary responsibility for the Forest rests with State and County Parks, their personnel and funds are limited. Board members, particularly our conservation chief, Pete Sarafian, visit the Forest on an almost daily basis. Without this surveillance, problems can develop that may present a hazard to visitors. Also, substantial volunteer work is required

*Looks to the Future continued on page 2*

# Keep The Dream Going!

By Debbie Levi, SWAP Historian

As SWAP Historian, I would like to share the story that led to the founding of SWAP and the preservation of the Elfin Forest.

Thirty-six years ago, Ben and Emily Polk were on an afternoon hike in their Los Osos neighborhood, and so discovered a beautiful small wilderness of live oak trees surrounded by sage brush and other native flora. Amid all of this natural beauty were homes of many animals as well as a wide variety of habitats. Emily realized that they had found "a gift of nature" meant to be saved for future generations to enjoy. It occurred to her that with our collective strength, we could "SWAP" material riches for the purchase of small wildlands that are adjacent to towns and cities. Musing that individuals or families could SWAP the cost of some small luxury, such as dinner at a restaurant, and give the price instead to an organization to buy such small parcels of wild land, she thought, "Hmm, SWAP---Small Wilderness Area Preservation!" Emily, with the assistance of an attorney versed in environmental preservation and conservationist Margaret Owings, pursued this dream and thus SWAP emerged. Her first project turned out to be the very place she and Ben had first visited, a 90-acre tract that is now called the Los Osos Oaks State Reserve. Others, inspired by her success, began to work to preserve

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## Looks to the Future *continued from page 1*

to maintain a mailing list and to send a reminder letter when a membership is about to lapse. Many other volunteer activities have been reported in *OAKLEAVES*.

A major continuing need is for adequate funds. New plants, erosion control supplies, and contracts for special projects are examples of how funds are used. As noted in the December *OAKLEAVES*, our current financial situation is good, due largely to our loyal membership. However, it would be a great benefit to have a stable source of income that would ensure that the Forest would be maintained in the state that now exists.

In coming months your SWAP board will be discussing methods of providing a continuing source of financial support, such as establishing an endowment, perhaps through grants or bequests to the SWAP corporation. We will also be looking for new board members to carry on essential work for the Elfin Forest. SWAP members should be involved in these efforts. If you have suggestions, comments, or wish to participate directly please write or call us. Also, remember that you are always welcome at our monthly board meetings at the Coast National Bank community room at 7 pm on the first Monday of the month. We want to hear from you!

small wilderness areas throughout California.

In 1994, the Los Osos / Morro Bay Chapter of SWAP, after a 9-year effort, raised the asking amount of \$1.6 million to purchase the El Moro Elfin Forest, next to the Morro Bay Estuary in Los Osos. It continues to be a constant reminder of the natural beauty we find in Los Osos. Today, our SWAP Chapter works to maintain this land that is now owned by the County, and therefore belongs to all of us. Such maintenance requires both hard work as well as a dedicated love for our environment. Now we "SWAP" our time and energy, and our loyal chapter members "SWAP" their generous annual donations to restore and preserve the Elfin Forest as a true small wilderness.

I believe that it is imperative that we keep up the preservation of this "gift". Since everyone in our community has an equal share of this preserved land that belongs to all of us, we must all work together. Membership in SWAP is the beginning of this commitment. However, I urge that we (as a collective) find ways of keeping and preserving this land for future generations. If you can volunteer time to be a "weed warrior" or are able to work with the Education Committee, or can be available to volunteer for any upcoming activities, please call the SWAP message telephone at 528-0392.

Thank you for your involvement. We can (AND WILL) keep Emily's dream alive!

## Where To Call, Where To Write

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.



## O A K L E A V E S

is published six times per year beginning in February.  
Co-editors are Yolanda Waddell and Jean Wheeler;  
layout is by Katy Budge. Editing assistance by Pat Grimes.

Contributors to this issue: Les Bowker, Wendy Brown, Debbie Levi, Bob Meyer, Pat Murray, Ron Rasmussen, Pete Sarafian, Doug Stinson, Rosalie Valvo, Yolanda Waddell, Dirk and Bonnie Walters, Jean Wheeler.

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

# SWAP Elves and Weed Warriors March Again

By Yolanda Waddell

As part of SWAP's mission to involve the community in supporting the Elfin Forest, we participated in the Los Osos Christmas Parade on Saturday, December 9. The parade theme, "A Tropical Christmas," presented a challenge when it came to the Elfin Forest, but Historian Debbie Levi came up with the greeting, "SWAP Says Aloha" (see photo on page 1). Pete Sarafian's Weed Warriors wore Hawaiian shirts, and the SWAP elves wore leis.

Weed Warrior Marty Levi designed and painted Elfin Forest trees on cardboard for the sides of our golf cart "float" which was lent to us by Morro Shores Mobile Home Park Manager Don Rains. Additional decorations came from SWAP storage and members' attics. The heavy rain that fell on the Friday before the parade created another challenge in decorating the float, but all was ready by 10:00 a.m. on Saturday morning, and the predicted rain for Saturday held off until later that afternoon.

Participants in the parade included lead elf Charlie Sitton, followed by his elf contingent dressed in bright green and red costumes: Debbie Levi, Lisa Raines, Jean Wheeler, and three 14-year-olds, Kayola Macri, Kat Schuster, and Katie Rees. Weed Warriors, carrying signs that said, "Weed Warriors: Be One," were led by Pete Sarafian and performed military "shovel" drill maneuvers. They included Ann Calhoun, Terri Gates, Marty Levi and Yolanda Waddell. SWAP Chair Ron Rasmussen followed with a wheelbarrow, symbolic of the wheelbarrow that always accompanies the weed warriors on their work days. Mutt Mitt Committee Chair Dorothy Norwood carried a supply of Mutt Mitts and handed one to each dog owner whom she saw along the parade route. The Levis' dog Rocky, representing canine visitors to the Elfin Forest, wore a lei and walked on leash with Marty Levi. The float was driven by Don Rains, and the photos that you see were taken by Bob Meyer and Les Bowker. Our parade entry was greeted with cheers all along the route. Thanks to all who participated.



## 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

## SWAP BOARD MEETINGS

The SWAP Board of Directors  
meets on the 2nd Monday of each month at 7 p.m.  
at the Coast National Bank,  
1193 Los Osos Valley Road.

The next meetings are  
*Monday, February 12, 2007*  
*Monday, March 12, 2007*

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



# In Appreciation of Turkey Vultures

By Jean Wheeler

The sometimes-maligned Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aura*) is actually a rather magnificent soaring bird. It has no close common ancestor with Old World vultures (which are related to eagles and hawks). Close relationship, supported by DNA evidence, is with storks and ibises, with which they are now included in Order Ciconiiformes. Similarities with Old World vultures such as the bald head and neck, and meat-tearing beaks result from convergent evolution. Turkey Vultures share Family Cathartidae with the Black Vulture (*Coragyps atratus*) and the California Condor (*Gymnogyps californianus*).

Large brown birds, Turkey Vultures are 2-3 feet long with a 5-6 foot wingspan and weigh about 6 pounds. Their bald red heads and necks may aid in cooling the birds as well as being easier to clean than feathers after thrusting their heads inside messy carcasses. This appearance probably accounts for being named after the breeding male American Turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*).

TV's (as birders call them) have long wings and tails. A silvery sheen on the underside of flight feathers contrasts with a darker body when seen flying overhead. The pale feet are large, adapted for walking, have vestigial webbing (recalling their relation to storks), and weak claws. They are not able to pick up prey and carry it off, as old legends erroneously imply. Although their flight may look awkward, the dihedral (v-shape) wing posture and teetering enable TV's to circle in updrafts and soar for very long distances, reportedly as much as six hours without wasting energy to flap wings.

Turkey Vultures seek carcasses by sight and a keen sense of smell unusual in birds. The brain area dedicated to the sense of smell is unusually large. They prefer fairly fresh meat from herbivores rather than carnivores. They have a sophisticated immune system to protect them from diseases associ-

ated with decaying animals. They also eat shoreline vegetation and some farm crops. They can find meat even buried under leaves in a forest. They willingly hunt in forests, unlike the Black Vulture and California Condor, which have somewhat weaker senses of smell and are less agile fliers in forests. TV's can eat large quantities at a time and then go for many days without feeding.

Young are raised in cliff hollows, logs, or among rocks on the ground. No nest is built. Both parents incubate, usually two eggs. Both carry food to their young only in their crops, their beaks and feet being too weak to carry meat. The young fly from the nest about ten weeks after hatching.

Vulnerable to predators (and cars) during laborious takeoffs, Turkey Vultures may vomit up an ingested meal if attacked. The predator usually accepts the free meal and the TV gets away safe but dinnerless.



Top left: In flight, Turkey Vultures soar on updrafts, using the primary feathers at the ends of their broad wings to stay aloft.

Above: Turkey Vultures have red bald heads for easier eating of carcasses.

Photos by Jean Wheeler.

SWAP Board Member Bob Meyer, who is very active on the Conservation Committee made the following wish for the Elfin Forest for 2007:

"May 10,000 seeds native to the area sprout in the Elfin Forest and thrive in 2007. And may at least an equal number of non-natives croak."

# Fennel

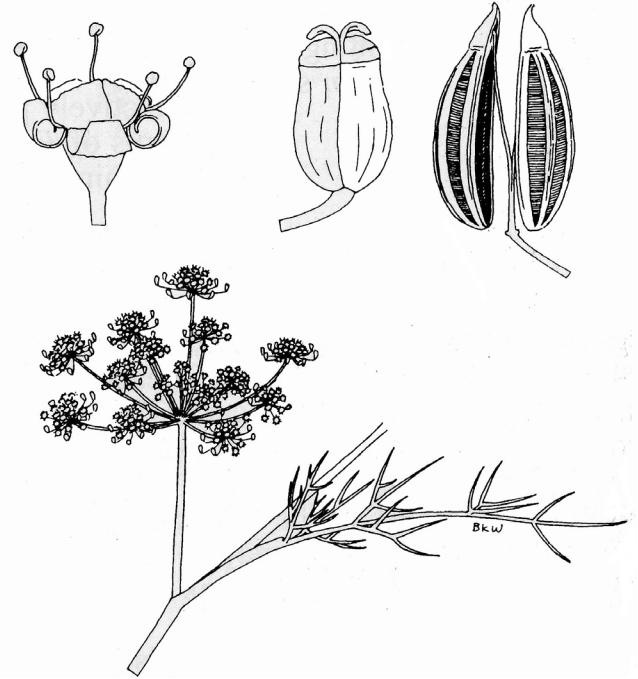
By Dirk Walters, Ph.D.; Drawing by Bonnie Walters

The plant chosen for this installment is a very common weed along the Central Coast. However, I don't remember seeing it in the Elfin Forest. It certainly is kept away from the boardwalk. I suspect this has more to do with the Weed Warriors than any political correctness on the weed's part. The plant is most appropriately called fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*), although most locals mistakenly call it anise because of its anise or licorice odor and flavor. The common name anise is best used for another plant in its same family, *Pimpinella anisum*, which is the true source of the spice of that name. Both of these plants are native to southern Europe where they are grown commercially. As far as I know, fennel is the only one grown in California and it is certainly the only one that has become extensively naturalized. Although definitely a weed by whatever definition one uses, it still has an important use in nature. It is a food plant for the swallowtail butterflies.

Fennel is a conspicuous weed of roadsides and vacant lots. It is also one of our more easily recognized plants. First, it is large, usually over 5 feet tall. And as can be seen from Bonnie's drawing, its leaves are dissected into hair-like segments. The drawing also shows a sequence from flower to fruit. The smallish flowers are unusual in that they appear to have only a single whorl of perianth (the term used for either or both the petals and sepals). When a flower consists of only a single perianth whorl, botany textbooks instruct us to call them sepals. However, in this case, if you were to follow this instruction, you would not be able to identify the plant. Those yellow perianth elements are considered to be petals and the sepals are said to be obsolete.

The primary function of sepals in most flowers is to protect the developing flower through the bud stage. In the carrot or celery family, Apiaceae, this job has been out-sourced to the unique inflorescence type found in this family, the compound umbel. Again, looking at the drawing of the flower cluster you will see that over 10 equal length stalks (rays) radiate from the end of the inflorescence stalk (peduncle). The 20 plus flowers are on the end of their own stalk (pedicel) which arises from the end of the rays. An inflorescence where all the parts radiate from a single point is botanically an umbel. Fennel and nearly every member of this distinctive family have this umbel of umbel inflorescence.

The fruits found in fennel's family are also worth a mention as they also are relatively unique. When mature, the fruit splits into two halves, each containing a single seed. Both of the halves are attached to the same central column. As the



seeds mature, the fruit dries out. The drying causes an internal tension to build in that central column. When the plant is bumped, the energy stored in the column is released and passed to the half-fruits, causing them to be thrown from the plant. There is one last note. On the top of the immature fruit can be seen two curled styles. But, there are none visible in the flower! The stigma (receptive part of female portion of the flower and its stalk (style) are undeveloped and hidden under that fleshy pad shown in the flower. In these flowers, the stamens mature first and shed their pollen. After the pollen is gone from that flower, then the receptive stigmas break through the pad where they can receive pollen from a completely different flower.

*The primeval oak forest closes round us.  
We follow a deer path  
twisting deep between guardian trees  
and suddenly enter a vast forest room.  
There, its huge limbs lifting like a  
great cry from the earth,  
grows a giant tree.*

*The mind grows with the power of the tree,  
reaches out,  
imagination leaps,  
knows hidden energies,  
calm and storm  
and the wisdom of wildness.*

— Emily Polk

# Christmas Bird Count

On the third Saturday of each December, Morro Coast Audubon Society takes part in the Annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count. Their 15-mile-wide count circle includes Morro Bay and the Elfin Forest, so in a very direct way the Elfin Forest provides information about the health of bird populations in the western hemisphere from the high arctic to southern South America.

This year, on the December 16 count day, we encountered MCAS birder Doug Stinson (who is also an employee at Wild Birds Unlimited), spotting scope on his shoulder, in the process of counting Elfin Forest birds. He reported that during the time he was there, he saw 41 species within the Forest and at the Bush Lupine overlook. He said that he saw all of the “expected” birds (a term used only by experienced birders), and found a Greater Scaup among the Lesser Scaups in the bay off of Bush Lupine Point. The total number of species for the county was 204, a very respectable number, and most likely one of the highest in the U.S. A final report on all of the count circles in this 107th annual count will be available on the Audubon web site in September or October of this year.



*Birder Doug Stinson brought his spotting scope to help identify birds in the Elfin Forest and Morro Bay Estuary during the Audubon Christmas Bird Count in December. Photo by Yolanda Waddell.*

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## 2007 Calendar Sold Out; 2008 Calendar in Preparation

Debbie Levi, SWAP's Calendar Committee Chair, reports that all of our 2007 Elfin Forest calendars were sold by mid-December, bringing in an income of about \$2,300 to our Chapter for Elfin Forest projects. Thanks again to our calendar sponsors and photographers, to Katy Budge for her excellent graphic design work, and to Anita Rouse of Hart Impressions Printers for coordinating the printing.

Debbie mentioned that a local artist was so taken with one of the photos in the calendar that she made a painting of it. We agree that all of the photos in the calendar are worth enjoying over and over again.

The 2008 Elfin Forest calendar is already in preparation. Debbie Levi is working on obtaining grants and sponsors to pay for printing and layout, and invites local photographers to send her images related to the Elfin Forest (scenics, birds, animals, plants, insects such as butterflies, etc.) at [teamlevi@sbcglobal.net](mailto:teamlevi@sbcglobal.net).

The Calendar Committee hopes to have all photos in and selected by May 30 so we can produce the 2008 calendar and have it printed and ready for sale by August or September.

## Growing to 12 Pages

*By Yolanda Waddell and Jean Wheeler*

Our chapter's *Oakleaves* newsletter grew from 4 to 8 pages in August, 1997, thanks to a grant from PG&E to help with layout and printing costs. Pat Grimes was the editor at the time. It was a necessary step because our active chapter had numerous projects to report, and we wanted to include longer articles.

As the years passed, the number of informational reports, articles and news items increased to the point that Katy Budge, our graphic designer, had to “shoehorn” them in by decreasing the font size. This worried us because we want our readers, SWAP's loyal members, to find our newsletter readable. Also, each month we had to forego publishing interesting articles and reports for which there was just not enough space.

With this issue, *Oakleaves* will be a 12-page newsletter and will include a table of contents, natural history articles, an Elfin Forest news page and LARGER PRINT. If you have a photo, a comment, or an article that you would like to contribute to *Oakleaves*, please e-mail us at [ywaddell@kcbx.net](mailto:ywaddell@kcbx.net) AND [jeanwheeler@charter.net](mailto:jeanwheeler@charter.net). We'd be delighted to hear from you.

# Warriors Unwind Wire

By Pete Sarafian, Conservation Chair

The all-volunteer military has nothing on the all-volunteer Weed Warriors in the Elfin Forest. A near-record turnout allowed the Warriors to finish early during their December 2006 first-Saturday work-party. (Enough hyphenation for you?) The warriors planted anchor rods and strung wire along the 15th Street sand trail from the entrance of the Elfin Forest to the boardwalk, some 200-300 feet away. The object of outlining sand trails with symbolic fencing is to dissuade visitors from trampling between sand trails and creating numerous trails through the brush. The significance of so many trails is that they are multiple death zones where no living things survive, and wind and water erode the sand. This is a degraded condition that human visitors cause. Aerial photos clearly show that the closer to the Los Osos community one proceeds, the more degraded the condition of the Elfin Forest becomes.

Helping to do the fencing were Marrie Arata, Dave Bowlus, Andrew Brown, Bryson McElvey, Bob Meyer, Ron Rasmussen, Dar Reynolds, Tom and Susan Richards, Pete Sarafian, Henry and Pam Tate, Stuart Thompson, and Jean Wheeler.

Thanks to everyone for a really nice effort.

## Trail Trimmers Needed

Sometime ago, Pat Murray noticed that plants in the Elfin Forest were growing so well, especially after Spring rains, that they blocked paths and even the boardwalk. She began trimming them back, and so the Trail Trimming Crew was begun. With Pat as Chief Trimmer, the Crew now consists of Jerry Ambrose, Susan Chandler, Linda Hansen, Marty Levi, Dorothy Norwood, Ron Rasmussen, Yolanda Waddell and Norma Wightman.

Rather than meeting once a month the way the Weed Warriors do, Trail Trimmers (also called Trail Keepers) work as their schedule permits. Once a new Trail Keeper has been given some instruction by Pat Murray, that person selects a portion of the boardwalk or a trail as his or her own to maintain; thus the name, "Trail Keeper."

With almost a mile of boardwalk plus another mile of trails to keep clear of vegetation, Pat needs more Trail Trimmers. Trimming volunteers provide their own gloves and trimming shears, and are given a County Parks volunteer badge so that passersby know they are official. If you would like to join this energetic crew, leave a message for Pat Murray on our SWAP answering machine, 528-0392. She'll get right back to you, and welcome you to the crew.



*Above: Weed Warriors Bob Meyer and Henry Tate (L-R) fastened cable to a symbolic fence stanchion along the 15th Street trail while Pam Tate (far left) observed the process. Photo by Jean Wheeler.*

*Below: Looking victorious over their speedy (1-1/2 hour) fence building project along the 15th Street trail were (front row) Jean Wheeler, Pam Tate, and Dar Reynolds; (standing) Dave Bowlus, Bob Meyer, Bryson McElvey, Stuart Thompson, Tom Richards, Pete Sarafian, Marrie Arata, Susan Richards, Henry Tate, Ron Rasmussen, and Andrew Brown. Photo by Yolanda Waddell*



## 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.



# Coming Up in the Elfin Forest

*Story and photos by Jean Wheeler*

In February, vegetation is green from winter rains and early wildflowers are in full bloom. Winter bird visitors feed avidly to prepare for long flights back to their northern nesting grounds. By March, we'll host more birds on their way north after wintering in Middle and South America.

Morro manzanita is at peak bloom. Look for its lovely white bells along the lower boardwalk, east of Siena's View. The Fuchsia-flowered gooseberry is also at full bloom. Look for this shorter shrub along the lower boardwalk with red flower tubes (much favored by hummingbirds) and bright green young leaves on thorny branches. Between Bush Lupine Point and Siena's View are tall shrubs of the Hollyleaf cherry, their white flowers also peaking at this season. Many of our California poppies are more yellow than orange this close to the coast. Along the upper boardwalk, Ceanothus or Buck brush, a white-flowering relative of California lilac, is also in bloom.

Migrating Rufous and Allen's Hummingbirds may join year-around Anna's among the flowering shrubs. Say's Phoebe is nearing the end of its winter visit, as are Ruby-crowned Kinglets, American Robins, Hermit Thrushes, Pine Siskins and Fox, Lincoln's, and Golden-crowned Sparrows. Looking out from Bush Lupine Point or Siena's View you can see not just hundreds but thousands of wintering waterbirds. Included are 5 species of grebes, 3 kinds of geese, at least 16 types of ducks, several species of gulls, and many species of wading birds, including Godwits, Curlews, and Avocets. The Morro Bay National Estuary is especially known as a winter home of the Black Brant. Thousands of these geese survive the winter by chowing down on eel grass in the shallow waters of the back bay before returning to summer homes in coastal Alaska.

For more information on species in the Elfin Forest, consult our Pocket Guide (available for \$2, see page 11).

*Top: From Siena's View, the estuary seems dotted with wintering waterbirds.*

*Middle: Buckbrush ceanothus blooms along the upper boardwalk at this season.*

*Bottom: Morro Manzanita shows blossoms and berries along the lower boardwalk.*



# WALKS in the ELFIN FOREST

## Third Saturday Walks

### *February 17, 9:30 — Fungus Foray*

If there is plenty of rain in February, entomologist and fungophile Dennis Sheridan will be able to lead us to many beautiful, and some ugly, species of fungi sprouting from the Elfin Forest floor. He'll help us to find Earthstars, Wood blewits, Yellow staining agaricus, the poisonous Amanitas, Shaggy parasol mushrooms, and dozens of others. Bring a magnifying lens and, if you have a mystery mushroom in your yard, bring a sample for Dennis to identify. Note: this is not a mushroom collecting walk, since all plant material in the Elfin Forest is protected by law. If there hasn't been enough rain to bring out the mushrooms, Dennis will give us an equally fascinating look at the lichens that grow abundantly in the Elfin Forest.

### *March 17, 9:30 a.m. — Off The Beaten Path*

Follow ecologist Dr. Les Bowker to a part of the Elfin Forest not often seen by Forest visitors. He'll lead you off of the boardwalk and along the little-used Habitat Trail in an easterly direction toward South Bay Boulevard, and then down into the Don Klopfer Grove, the largest oak grove in the Elfin Forest. Les will help you to see the plants, trees, lichens and the life that lives on and under them with new eyes. You'll learn to think in terms of the homes or habitats of the plant and animal occupants of the Elfin Forest, and how they establish and then live in their own piece of the Forest. You'll have an excellent adventure -- off the beaten path. Be sure to wear long sleeves and jeans to avoid being scratched by the underbrush.

### *April 21, 9:30 a.m. — Butterfly Walk*

Pat Brown will take walk participants on a tour of the Elfin Forest from a butterfly's point of view. Pat has taken many photos of butterflies in all stages of development from eggs to mature butterflies, and will present those images along with many fascinating facts about the butterflies that make the Elfin Forest their home. She'll point out some of the plants that are host to butterflies, and will lead you to the places where you can see Variable Checkerspot caterpillars munching on leaves of the Sticky Monkey-flower plant, Moro Blue butterflies flitting about among Silver dune lupines, and perhaps a Swallowtail, some Hairstreaks or a Fiery Skipper. Pat will also share information about butterfly books, web sites and butterfly-related materials. She recommends that you bring a hand lens and a pair of close focusing (5-10 ft.) binoculars.

*Walks in the Elfin Forest meet at 9:30 a.m. (unless otherwise noted) at the north end of 15th Street off Santa Ysabel in Los Osos. Proceed up the path to the boardwalk, where the walk will begin. 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 1/2 to 2 hours. For more information call (805) 528-0392.*



*Above: Bob Pavlik shared the writings of Wallace Stegner, Robinson Jeffers, Rachel Carson, Edward Abbey and other natural history authors during his November literary stroll. Photo by Yolanda Waddell.*

*Below: Artist Barbara Renshaw (seated, fourth from right with sketch pad) ended her December sketch walk at the "Highest Point" in the Elfin Forest so that participants could draw or paint an overall view of the forest, mountains or bay. Photo by Yolanda Waddell.*



*At left: A pastel sketch of Hollister Peak painted in the Elfin Forest by Ed Chandler during the December sketch walk. Photo by Yolanda Waddell.*

## *In Memoriam*

John McDonald, one of Morro Coast Audubon Society's best birders, and a good friend of SWAP and the Elfin Forest, passed away in Washington State on October 29, 2006.

John, a native of Baltimore, Maryland, lived in Woodland Hills, California with his wife Anita for 33 years while John worked with Pacific Bell as a technician and a manager. A co-worker introduced John to birding. After John retired in 1979, he and Anita moved to Los Osos, where he immediately became involved with Morro Coast Audubon Society, and indirectly with SWAP. He was Compiler of the Christmas Bird Count during 1980-1987, and added the Elfin Forest to the Bird Count.

According to Tom Edell, his successor on the Christmas Bird Count, "He took the count to a new level, and during his tenure this county had its highest count of 212 species." He also helped put together the original MCAS bar graph checklist that was used as a basis for the bird list in our Elfin Forest Pocket Guide.

John was a mentor to many local birders in the 1980s, and patiently answered the many questions that we phoned to him over the years about birds in the Elfin Forest and the Morro Bay Estuary. In 2004, John and Anita moved to Stanwood, Washington, to live with their daughter. Anita died shortly after. Now we have also lost John, but his legacy continues.

*Ed. Note: Thanks to Rosalie Valvo of MCAS for supplying us with information about John McDonald's life.*

## Thank You to Our New and Renewing Members

*Compiled by Wendy Brown, SWAP Database Coordinator*

### **NEW MEMBERS:**

Suzanne Dannenbring

L.R. Erickson

Aeron Arlin Genet\*

Darlene M. Reynolds

Terry Tennant

### **RENEWING MEMBERS:**

Carmen Fojo & Marie Moore\*

L. Chet & Lee Grimes\*

Freeman & Worth Hall\*

Charles W. Hallstrom

Leslie Hanna & Dan Miller\*

Linda Hansen\*

Joyce Heller

Clement H. Jeffrey\*

Katie J. Karikka

Larry Levine\*

Wendy McKeown\*

Marilyn Moore\*

Donna Murphy\*

Randall & Shirley Palmer\*

Billy R. Pewitt\*

Mary & Arthur Pruitt\*

Stanley Reichenberg\*

Patrick & Dorothy Rygh

Charles Sitton\*

Barbara Spiegelman\*

Kathleen W. Toscano\*

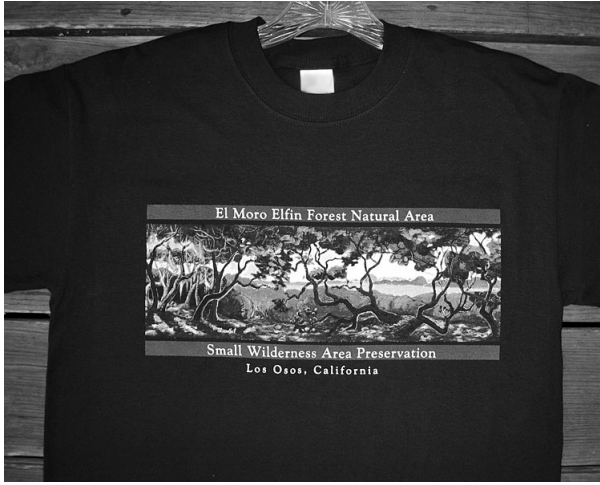
Michael Walgren\*

H. Leabah Winter\*

Roy & Junie Wolf

June Wright\*

*\*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.*



## Beautiful Mural Shirts Available from SWAP

Order these beautiful shirts for yourself or as gifts. They are available as short-sleeved or long-sleeved T-shirts or as thick, warm sweatshirts. The shirts are black with artist Barbara Rosenthal's beautiful mural print in color on both the front and back of each shirt. There is a forest green band with lettering above and below the mural print.

(A few sizes are still available in earlier designs, with teal instead of forest green bands, or without the colored bands. Call to order.)



# SWAP Shoppers' Order Form

*All Prices Include Sales Tax*

**1. MURAL SHIRTS** - Mural design by artist Barbara Rosenthal on both front and back. Words on shirt: "El Moro Elfin Forest Natural Area" above mural and "Small Wilderness Area Preservation" and "Los Osos, California" below mural.

Circle Sizes:

\_\_\_ Short Slv. T-Shirt (Sm, Med, Lg, XLg, XXLg, XXXLg) @ \$15.00 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Long Slv. T-Shirt (Sm, Med, Lg, XLg, XXLg, XXXLg) @ \$17.00 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Sweatshirt (Sm, Med, Lg, XLg, XXLg, XXXLg) @ \$25.00 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. PHOTOS OF THE ELFIN FOREST

Original photo note cards by Bob Meyer

\_\_\_ @ \$3.00 or \_\_\_ 5 @ \$14.00 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Original photo postcards by Bob Meyer

\_\_\_ @ \$1.00 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Indicate No. per View(s):

\_\_\_ All 5; \_\_\_ Don Klopfer Trail; \_\_\_ Ocean View;

\_\_\_ Wild Hyacinth; \_\_\_ Horned Lizard; \_\_\_ Dudleya

### 3. MURAL PRINTS

\_\_\_ signed prints by artist Barbara Rosenthal,

image size 4 1/2 x 16 1/2 in;

mounted on foamcore @ \$20.00 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### 4. POCKET GUIDE

Useful 56-page guide to plants and animals of the Elfin Forest. Charts for bloom season, form, color, and habitat for 200 vascular plants plus lists of 56 lichens and 36 mushrooms known to occur. Habitat and peak months seen are charted for 187 birds. Also listed: 28 common mammals; 10 reptiles; 4 amphibians; 19 butterflies and moths (charted by size, months in flight, color, and host plants); 104 other arthropods and 7 gastropods.

\_\_\_ @ \$2.00 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL OF ORDER \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

(Please print when filling order, and indicate how many of each)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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

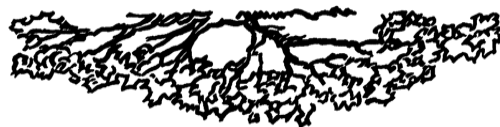
Make checks payable and mail to:

SWAP, P.O. Box 6442, Los Osos, CA 93412-6642.

Call in orders may also be made: (805) 528-0392

New this issue:  
 12 pages, more articles, larger print.  
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 SMALL WILDERNESS AREA PRESERVATION  
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## Introduce a Friend to The Elfin Forest

Wildflowers are coming into bloom with winter rains, many birds can be seen, and animal tracks in the sand testify to passing nocturnal residents. How about introducing a friend to the late winter/early spring beauty of our small wilderness preserve?



Pick up a trail guide where the 16th Street Entrance meets the boardwalk or where the Bush Lupine Point spur leaves the boardwalk loop. Encourage your friend to enjoy the information in the trail guide and on the beautifully-illustrated Interpretive Signs.

Report your friend's reactions and especially wonderful or unusual sightings to the editors for page 8 "Visitor Comments" or "Elfin Forest Sightings" in a future issue of Oakleaves.

## MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

- |  |  |
|--|--|
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Member \$12                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Defender \$100  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Steward \$25                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Champion \$250  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Protector \$50                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Guardian \$500  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Life Member \$1000              |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I want to help, please call me! |  |

Memberships include a subscription to SWAP's bimonthly newsletter, *Oakleaves*. All donations to SWAP are tax-deductible.

EVERY membership counts!

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