

# CVPA Newsletter

QUARTERLY NO. 23

OCTOBER, 1996

## THE COLORS OF FALL by Jon Hammond

Autumn has slowly walked into Cummings Valley and is beginning to reach the surrounding foothills. The Tehachapi area does not have tree species that provide the vivid fall colors of the eastern hardwood forests, but our landscape does reflect the changing seasons with colored foliage.

One of the tree species that does cloak itself in traditional fall colors is the black oak, known botanically as *Quercus kelloggii*. This deciduous oak prefers higher elevations, and is usually found growing between 5,000 and 8,000 feet, though it may be found at some lower elevations in the Tehachapi Mountains.

Black oaks, so named by early botanist Albert Kellogg because of their dark-colored bark, produce large lobed leaves with tiny soft spines on their tips. The leaves are beautiful when they first come out in the spring because they are tipped with pale fuchsia and rose highlights. At the same time, the trees are producing green and later gold-colored catkins which are lovely against the red-tinged emerging leaves.

Black oak leaves later turn a dark and vibrant green, and remain that color until the first cool nights of late summer and early autumn inform the tree that the growing season is almost over. The leaves then begin to shut down chlorophyll production, and gradually turn straw-colored.

This change becomes more pronounced, and the leaves become increasingly golden and even russet-colored. A slow, prolonged fall will produce more color, while an early hard frost will cause most of the leaves to drop before they reach their full color potential.

Black oaks are particularly noticeable because rather than dominating the forests in which they grow, they are usually a companion species to conifers, such as Ponderosa and Jeffrey pines, white fir, red spruce, and sugar pines, though sugar pines are not found in abundance anywhere in our area. The golden leaves against the

green needles are a rich contrast.

Another producer of colorful foliage is the Western choke-cherry, or *Prunus demissa*. This shrub is also found at higher elevations, usually above 4,000 feet, and grows in the understory of larger trees, often shaded by oaks, pines and willows.

Choke-cherries bear small red astringent fruit which is the source of their common name. The fruit makes good jelly if you add enough sugar, however.

Whether or not you use the berries, choke-cherries are one of the few sources of bright red, scarlet and burnt umber leaves in Tehachapi. Their leaves are particularly pretty when they are illuminated by brilliant October sunshine as it streams down from the deep-water blue skies that seem to only be found in autumn.

At lower elevations, harvest colors are provided by different species of buckwheat or *Enogonum*. The flower heads are originally white when they bloom in early summer, but they gradually turn russet-colored in the long warm days of California's rainless summers.

There are other native trees that do produce some color, including willows and cotton-woods, whose waxy sparkling leaves turn bright yellow before they start dropping in earnest.

The best way to enjoy the area's fall colors is to get out and hike around --the changing palette gives notice that winter is approaching and the chances for outside walks are diminishing.

I'll see you out there.



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CUMMINGS VALLEY PROTECTIVE ASSOCIATION

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## FALL FOLIAGE IN CALIFORNIA

Did you think you have to travel to New England to see spectacular fall colors? Think again. California has its share of bright fall colors if you know where to look. At the CVPA meeting on November 7 Joe Fontaine will prove that California can compete with other areas more famous for their fall foliage. Fontaine will use photographs of the high Sierra and the eastern Sierra to prove that September and October can produce displays of oaks, aspens, blueberries, and other shrubs that are well worth the effort to seek out.

By selecting plants that provide fall colors you can even landscape your own home in the Tehachapi area to make the fall as colorful as any other season of the year. Fontaine will supply a list of readily available plants that have been proven to display one last splash of color before the onset of winter. An added benefit to many of these plants is that many of them are western natives that use little water during the growing season.

Join the CVPA at its November 7 meeting to enjoy photographs of both New England and California in the fall and make your own judgment about which area has the most bragging rights.

## STAR PARTIES

The Kern Astronomical Society sets aside a few days each month for trips to the mountainous areas of Kern County to escape city lights and air pollution and enjoy the mysterious but beautiful objects found in the night sky. Members always bring their telescopes to these star parties and welcome guests who are interested in finding out more about the vast universe that surrounds us. The dates are set to avoid the glare of a bright moon in the sky that obscures the fainter but more intriguing objects like distant galaxies and faint glowing gases from stellar explosions. Saturn with its unique rings will be well placed in the evening sky in November. The location for the star parties is not set until just before the appointed dates because adverse weather conditions may require cancellation at the last minute or may dictate the best location for observing. Mt Pinos near Frazier Park has been a popular location but sometimes they are held in the Tehachapi area.

Star parties have been scheduled for November 9 and 16. Call Joe Fontaine at 821 2055 the day before those dates if you are interested in sharing the secrets of the night sky with a congenial friendly group of amateur astronomers.

## SET ASIDE OCTOBER 19TH NOW!!

The second of our semi-annual trash pickups is scheduled for October 19th, 10:00 a.m. (bags, vests, etc. will be available at the old school at 9:00 a.m. for the gung-ho gang who would like to get an early start). Our Burma Shave Idea signs will be up and about (and this time, will be photographed AND in the news!!) marking our intended areas of pickup.

We'll be meeting again at the Old Schoolhouse on Pelliser; SAME great food afterwards; SAME great group of us doing such a good deed, plus some new workers (hopefully) . The weather should be cooler, allowing a more comfortable couple or three hours to clean up our beloved Cummings Valley roadsides.

Please bring a friend, or two or three  
And call me soon to R.S.V.P.!!

Carol D. Wein  
821-1819

## TAX EXEMPT STATUS AND INCORPORATION

As of July 1996, CVPA has received articles of incorporation endorsed by the Secretary of the State of California and tax exempt status as a non-profit corporation from both the Franchise Tax Board and the Internal Revenue Service. This process is now complete. Your dues and donations are tax deductible as of July 1996.

## INSURANCE COVERAGE

The Board is pursuing obtaining liability insurance for the organization and it's officers. Answers to several questionnaires have been submitted to the insurance companies as this process continues. The newsletter will keep you posted.

## SEPTEMBER MEETING

An enjoyable and informative slide illustrated program was presented by Jane Hendron of the Condor Recovery Team. This program was especially meaningful since the released condors have been seen on eight occasions in the Tehachapi area (4 in Alpine Forest Park, 2 in Stallion Springs and 2 in Bear Valley).

## FUTURE MEETING SCHEDULE

We currently plan meetings Nov.7, Feb. 6, Apr. 3 and Jun.5. The November program is covered elsewhere in this newsletter. Other programs have yet to be chosen.

## SEPTEMBER BARBEQUE

About 60 members and guests attended our barbeque on September 21 in Horsethief park in Stallion Springs. We again featured a distinctive Cummings Valley product - ostrich meat in a kabob presentation. For those less adventurous or extra hungry we also had beef hamburgers. Both items were barbequed to perfection on the big gas fired grill/mobile kitchen generously loaned by John Allen of Papa's Pizza in Stallion Springs. Chefs extraordinaire were Les Hansen, Cody Palance and Jim Cornell with part time help from John Curcio. We heard quite a few favorable comments on the ostrich kabobs.

Terry Tuytens of the Summit Restaurant and Saloon donated an ample supply of their Outlaw Barbequed Beans. Also served were rolls, carrot raisin pineapple salad (made with Cummings Valley organic carrots), cole slaw, hamburger condiments, and a variety of delicious desserts provided by CVPA members. Lemonade, iced tea and coffee were the thirst quenchers.

Great credit goes to Laurie Rude who headed up this effort and to all her helpers (including husband, Ben). A large unexpected task was preparing the kabob vegetables and assembling the kabobs. The Summit had planned to do this for us using their kitchen staff, but because of some reorganization problems had to withdraw the offer at the last minute.

A welcome addition this year was the excellent

sound system provided by CVPA member Henry Buchardt. He also provided tapes for background music and used his remote microphone to conduct the prize raffle and allow us to make announcements.

We give thanks to the following merchants who donated raffle prizes: Albertsons, Domingos, 'Hachapi

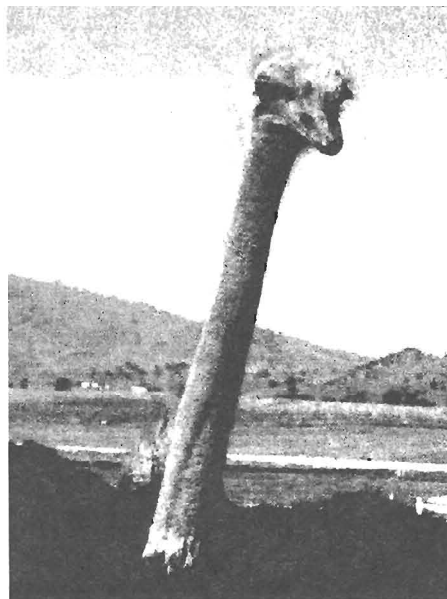
Tees, Java Hut, Merle Norman Cosmetics, Natures Pantry, Savemart, Sky Mountain Resort, South Fork Inn, Tehachapi Veterinary Hospital, Texaco Express Lube and Witts.

Four members also deserve thanks for prize donations: Jo Anne Huckins - basket of jams and jellies, Lorraine McCollough-

nativity scene, Joe Fontaine - two books on local history, and the unknown donor of a beautiful glass plate

Because of a generous discount on the ostrich meat by Les Hansen of the Tehachapi Ostrich Ranch in Cummings Valley, ice donated by Bob Roedel of Springs Emporium and desserts and other member donated items we almost broke even (lost about \$13). New costs this year were \$102.68 for liability insurance to use the park and \$10 to use the electricity there. We may be looking for another site for future barbeques.

Two items were left at the scene: A Chateau dinner plate, beige with brown trim (call the Rudes at 821-1904), and an 11 inch carving knife with serrated stainless blade and wood handle (call the McColloughs at 822-3478)



**Noted:** "Sixty miles south lies Santa Maria, which has suffered from a growth spurt that has brought on miles of ticky tacky strip malls" *Sunset Magazine, Setpember 1996*

# CVPA Newsletter

Cummings Valley Protective Association  
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## CVPA NEWSLETTER

### Membership

A new membership year has begun, and dues are payable as of July 1. Please use the form below to renew right away. Look at the date in the center of the top line of your mailing label. If it shows 97, you are paid up. If it shows 96 or earlier, your yearly membership renewal is due.

CVPA needs your support through your membership. Remember that CVPA's influence and clout come from having a large membership. The CVPA has taken an active role

in working with elected officials, county planners, the land owners and the community in making decisions about the land use.

I am certain that you want to continue your support of the activities such as the partnership with Cummings Valley Elementary School, litter cleanups, eradication of the yellow starthistle, and opinion surveys about land use in Cummings and Brite Valleys. The results of these activities will be reported to you in the quarterly news letter.

*[Handwritten signature]*

Yes, we (I) want to continue to support CVPA!

Enclosed is our (my) \$12.00 dues for the July 1, 1996 thru June 1997 membership year.

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address Changes? \_\_\_\_\_

Checks may be made out to CVPA

Mail to:

Cummings Valley Protective Association  
c/o Albert Sanbrano, Membership Chairman  
30341 Horsethief Drive  
Tehachapi CA 93561