

News from the Friends of

The Bernard Biological Field Station

Of the Claremont Colleges

Volume 2 No. 1 February 2001

P.O. Box 1101, Claremont CA 91711

Website: www.fbbfs.org

LEEP program gets award and grant!

Pitzer's Leadership in Environmental Education Partnership (LEEP) program, which brings classes to the Field Station for 11 weeks in spring, has enabled over 500 children from schools in Pomona and Claremont to study ecological and environmental issues. The program recently was given a Silver Medal for excellence by the Council for Advancement and Support of Education, and an Interactive Education Initiative Grant by the America On Line Foundation. Kudos to Pitzer!

✓✓✓ Sightings

- *The Roadrunners have been dashing around.
- *Two specimens of the gold-backed fern, *Pityrogramma triangularis*, have been found, one on the proposed KGI site.
- *Goldenbush put on a magnificent display during the autumn.
- *Hungry birds are feasting on the bright red Toyon berries.
- *A tiny red and green succulent is carpeting the edges of the fire roads.

Recent Activities

Fourth of July: The Friends had a booth in the park and a float carried by a truck in the parade. There was a background painting of purple mountains against a blue sky with buckets of CSS plants in front. Rabbit and turtle puppets emerged from the vegetation at the whim of several of Claremont's schoolchildren. It was great! Thanks to all who helped.

Village Venture: This year we set up a game booth in the children's area. We had a wheel with drawings of CSS plants and animals for the children to spin and lots of great prizes: BFS coloring books, large plastic bugs, furry animals, posters, and so on. It was a great success and a lot of fun for everyone.

Library Display: The Friends had a display in the Claremont Library during January. There were great pictures of activities at the BFS and old photos of the area. There was also a wonderful array of articles relating to the Tongva, the Native American tribe who used to live in the Claremont area, including north of Foothill.

City Council Candidates

As a non-profit, the Friends cannot endorse particular candidates but we can provide information. A letter was sent to each of the seven candidates setting forth reasons for preserving the BFS and inviting them to send a statement for inclusion in this newsletter.

Mr. Bunck did not respond. Neither did **Mr. Quintanar** although he has stated elsewhere that he supports preserving it. **Mr. Bollinger** declined to make a statement. **Mr. Held**, the incumbent, lives near the BFS and therefore did not vote on the issue. This would be true for any future issues concerning the station.

Mr Nasiali wrote:

Thank you for taking the time to share your views with me about Bernard Field Station. You made a convincing case for recognizing the field station as an important educational facility. I discussed my views with you as follows:

1. I agreed with you about the educational importance of the field station.
2. I indicated my belief in recognizing property ownership rights, including the right to use the property within the framework of adopted zoning and environmental regulations. I also recognized the intrinsic value to the community of certain open space properties such as the hillside areas.
3. I stated that I was not opposed to the College Trustees' intentions to use a portion of the field station for an educational institute (KGI). However, I also stated that I support the position that "educational use" does not necessarily mean only constructing buildings on the site. I believe that a case can be made for recognizing the fact that the field, as currently used, qualifies for being categorized as "educational". Therefore, if I am elected to City Council, I will be prepared to argue for this position. I would view development rights at the field station in the same manner as the adopted policy for development in the hillside areas.
4. I indicated that I support the agreement now in place, whereby the Colleges have committed to leaving a portion of the property to stay as (a field station) for the next fifty years. I would like to see a commitment for a longer period of time and on a majority of the property. Nevertheless, I believe that the way to do it is through negotiation and appropriate use of adopted environmental regulations. In part, it would be desirable to first consider for development other properties owned by the Colleges prior to focusing on developing the field station.

I discussed with you my belief in making the right and just decision. If I am elected to the City Council, this is the principle and standard by which I will make decisions based on hearing and considering all views about an issue. I will not be afraid to support a position that would meet this standard.

Ms Tate-Mann wrote:

I have given much thought to the issues surrounding the Keck Institute and the Bernard Biological Field Station. My concern for preserving the Bernard Biological Field Station is not a position opposing the construction of the Keck Institute per se. Instead, it is a position that advocates compromise and proposing a mechanism whereby the colleges, the City, and the community can dialogue regarding these type of issues. There are always restrictions on the use of property. Thus, it is my position that we must look at long range use and preservation of property. I am pleased to know that the Field station has been used by college and community groups, college faculty and their classes, schoolchildren in both Claremont and Pomona, and the public. I support its use as a teaching and research tool. I encourage this use to continue and the public to be informed of the activities occurring on the Field Station. When I was a youngster, I was surrounded by property that was in its natural state. Property maintained in its natural state protects the environment and the health of people in the surrounding area. As a new City Council member I would give your perspective attention because your perspectives represent residents of Claremont. I will be faced with your concerns and the Claremont University Consortium concerns about the (future) Master Plan presented to the City. A spirit of considering all options, reasonableness, dialogue, and compromise is my pursuit.

I have a listening ear for your concerns for the preservation of the Bernard Biological Field Station. Your concerns will not be ignored by me.

Mr. Miller wrote:

Claremont has an unique opportunity to preserve open space through smart planning for growth. However, the city must be cautious in exercising its authority over land use so as to respect the legal rights of private property owners. As a city council member, I would like to see the BFS preserved as an educational resource and would be interested in your suggestions for winning strategies.

The Lawsuit settlement

In November, the Friends and Claremont University Consortium (CUC) signed a document specifying the terms to be included in a legal out-of-court settlement of the Friends' CEQA lawsuit regarding the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the North Campus Master Plan. On February 9, after much delay and many last minute changes by CUC, the Friends of the Bernard Biological Field Station and Claremont University Consortium signed the legal document.

While the settlement does not prevent building of the Keck Graduate Institute on the westernmost 11 acres of the Field

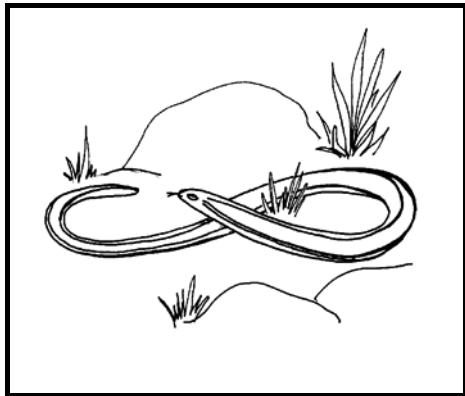
Station, it does provide significant benefits for the Field Station and its programs:

- * CUC has agreed to preserve the Field Station program and 45 acres of the land for a period of at least 50 years. The preserved land includes the "neck" and its extension down to Foothill Blvd, including pHake Lake.
- * The remainder of the BFS can continue to be used as a field station until a development is approved. This cannot happen until after there is a master plan in place for all CUC held land including the quarry and the golf course as well as the BFS.
- * CUC will maintain adequate funding for the Field Station program.
- * Community groups will once again be able to use the BFS for educational purposes approved by the BFS Director.
- * CUC will provide a Native American monitor on-site during grading for the Keck Graduate Institute.

Unfortunately, in the final stages of hammering out the legal implementation for the settlement, CUC insisted on changing the terms agreed on in November and included a provision that states that if they are legally prevented from building on the remaining portion of the field station by anyone, the 50-year protection on the 45 acres will be voided.

In thinking about the pros and cons of the settlement, it is important to realize that it concerns only the lawsuit and nothing else. Even winning our court case would not have blocked the KGI development. It would only have resulted in requiring the City to redo part of the EIR. While the Board was seriously disappointed that we could not protect more of the BFS at this time, and we were extremely unhappy about CUC's last-minute changes, we still felt that the agreement was in the best interests of the BFS and was a step in the right direction.

Meet the inhabitants!



Legless Lizards: Really?

Yes, indeed. There really are legless lizards, and the California species (*Anniella pulchra*) can be found on the Field Station. At first glance, and second too, these fascinating animals look like very small snakes. They are about the length and thickness of a pencil and most are a delicate pinkish-beige on top, with darker

stripes along the sides and a yellowish underside. A few are dark. Unlike snakes, they have moveable eyelids and break-away tails.

These lizards like to bury themselves in sandy places such as the washes at the BFS, and often are found under rocks. They can be found as deep as 18 inches but are usually nearer the surface. They produce an extensive system of burrows which may help to aerate the soil and improve drainage. They spend quite a bit of time feeding on insects where the sandy soil meets the leaf litter under shrubs. *Anniella* feeds on beetle larvae, adult beetles, insect pupae, spiders, sow bugs, ants, and termites.

Legless lizards produce up to three live offspring a year. They can live up to 8 years in the lab but in the wild they are frequently prey to hawks, owls, and coyotes, and to cats and dogs as well as to people, since the largest populations live in coastal dune areas. Legless lizards are a California Species of Special Concern.

A Season of berries



by Mark F. Acuña, Gabrieleno-Tongva

We can celebrate the cold times of "Achocheva" as did the Tongva in their villages throughout the greater Los Angeles Basin when they withdrew into their homes and told stories to their children. It was the great season of mending and learning. It was a time of family withdrawal from the outer world into the spiritual world of "Coyote Tale" time. In spring the world, "Paratsotson", would renew itself and the people would celebrate. But now in the cold times, in the months of "Whistling Wind" and "Cold and Last Hunts" the people rejoiced in the harvesting of the red berries of Toyon. Toyon berries brightened the cold dark days of winter for the Tongva as they do for those who pass by the entrance to the BFS.

Toyon is known by botanists as *Heteromeles arbutifolia*. Californians call it Toyon, Christmas Berry, California Berry, or Holly Berry (giving Hollywood its name). The Tongva called it Ashuwet. This wondrous shrub gave them food, medicine, tools, a dye, and hair ornaments.

The bark and the leaves were made into a tea for stomach pains, produced a seasonal tonic and an wash for infected wounds. Mashed leaves were applied to sores. Flowers were pulverized and steeped to make a medicinal tea which the women drank. The berries produced a dye, as did the bark which was used to dye fish nets. The berries were eaten fresh, roasted, or boiled and

baked. Fresh berries made a refreshing cider. Wood was turned into fine arrows, awls, wedges, scrapers, spoons, mashers, and stirrers, and hair sticks decorated with Flicker feathers for the men.

>>> Alert! Claremont Wildlife Poisoned! <<<

In recent months a Cooper's hawk and two great horned owls have died from poisoning by the anti-coagulant rodenticide brodifacoum near the Bernard Field Station. Two other owls and four coyotes may also have been poisoned. These cases are "secondary poisoning"; the raptors died from eating rodents that had consumed poison but not yet died. In both California and New York, brodifacoum accounts for about 80% of the secondary poisonings by rodenticides.

In California brodifacoum may be used to control Norway rats, roof rats, and house mice in residential, industrial, commercial, agricultural, and public buildings. It is the active ingredient in over-the-counter rat and mouse poisons available in grocery and hardware stores. Both the California Department of Pesticide Regulation and the EPA are reevaluating the regulatory status of brodifacoum, but change will take at least a year.

What you can do:

- *If you find dead wild animals or rodent bait stations, please call or e-mail Nancy Hamlett: 909-625-2223 (home), 909-607-3811 (work), or Nancy_Hamlett@hmc.edu.
- *Educate others about the danger of secondary poisoning of wildlife.
- *Choose safer methods for rodent control. San Gabriel Valley Mosquito and Vector Control will consult on rodent problems. Call (626) 814-9466 or e-mail district@sgvmosquito.org.
- *For more information, see <http://www.fbbfs.org/poisoning.html>.

★ GENERAL MEETING ★

Broad Center at Pitzer
(Take 12th east until it deadends at Mills)
Monday, February 26
7 PM.

This will be a chance for you to ask questions about what is happening and what is likely to happen and to help plan the future. Please make every effort to come!

\$\$\$\$ Recycling\$\$\$\$

Valerie Gustaveson has volunteered to oversee recycling as a fund-raiser for the Friends. You may drop off glass, plastic, and aluminum with redemption value at her house. Call her at 621-1273 for directions. Thanks, Valerie!