



California Native Plant Society
Santa Clara Valley Chapter

THE BLAZING STAR

January-February 2007

GENERAL MEETING & PROGRAM

Friday, January 19th at 7:30 pm
Cubberley Community Center in Palo Alto,
Room H-6 Note Changed Location!

Restoration of Mesopotamian Marshlands
Speaker: Dr. Michelle Stevens

Awareness about the country of Iraq has been a part of our lives for many years now, but what do we know of the physical characteristics of this country? Most of us picture a vast desert, but there is a surprising diversity of habitats, including a marshland larger than the Florida Everglades.

The Mesopotamian marshlands are the largest wetlands in the Middle East, covering over 7,500 square miles. The Marshes lie at the confluence of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, in a region that is so flat that the flow of the two rivers spreads out across the Mesopotamian plain in a broad expanse of distributaries, interconnected lakes, temporary mudflats, and wetlands. Water was diverted from these marshlands, and they were drained for political reasons after the first Gulf War by the former Iraqi leadership in an astonishingly short amount of time, resulting in an eco-cultural disaster of epic proportions. Water is being returned to the marshlands, and the restoration and healing of this unique and culturally important wetland habitat has begun.

Dr. Stevens holds a Ph.D. in Ecology from UC Davis, and a Masters degree from the University of Wisconsin, Madison. She was the project manager for the Eden Again project with the Iraq Foundation from 2002-2003, working with an International Panel to recommend approaches to eco-cultural restoration for the Mesopotamian Marshes of Southern Iraq. She is currently initiating a non-profit organization, "Fountain of Hope", to raise scholarship and research funds for Iraqi scholars.

Directions: Cubberley Community Center is located at 4000 Middlefield Rd. in Palo Alto. Exit US 101 at San Antonio Rd., head south (toward the hills, away from the Bay). Turn right at Middlefield Rd. Cubberley Community Center is on the south (left) side of the road, and room H-6 is on the west side of the complex. Look for signs to help lead you there.

If you're online, see the map at www.city.palo-alto.ca.us/community-services/rec-cubberleymap.html.

CNPS general meetings are free and open to the public. For more info. contact Chapter President Kevin Bryant at mtngreen17@verizon.net or (408)353-8824.

MEMBER'S NIGHT AND GENERAL MEETING

Friday, February 16th at 7:30 pm
Los Altos Library Program Room
13 So. San Antonio Road, Los Altos

Topic: Members' slide show – special plants, places and times of 2006

We're having an extra meeting to make sure we have a chance to see some great pictures of native plants and places at our popular Member's Night event. This is your opportunity to share your best photos from 2006 with the group.

If you'd like to share photos or other materials, please **RSVP to Kevin Bryant by Feb. 9th** at mtngreen17@verizon.net or (408)353-8824, and let him know how many photos/what type of materials, and approximately how many minutes you'd like. Time allotted per person will depend on how many participants RSVP.

Directions: From Foothill Expy., travel ½ mile on San Antonio Road towards the Bay, cross Hillview and turn right into the driveway; library is on the left. From El Camino, travel towards the hills on San Antonio Road, cross Edith and turn left into the unmarked driveway just before Hillview. The sign on San Antonio Road reads “Civic Center, Library and History Museum.” Enter through the lobby of the main entrance.

Earlier Wildflower Show and Plant Sale

Both of our Chapter major spring events will take place earlier this year than last year. Our Spring **Native Plant Sale** will be held at Hidden Villa on **Saturday, April 7, from 10am to 3pm.**

Our 35th Annual **Spring Wildflower Show** will be held **Saturday and Sunday, April 14 and 15,** at Mission College in Santa Clara.

Save these dates to get native plants for your garden and see a beautiful wildflower display. Watch for event details in the next *Blazing Star*.

CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

Native Plant Nursery

Please join us for our special nursery workday, **Saturday January 13, from 10am-3pm.** Our new gate should be installed by then, but we need volunteers to help put gravel into the sunny area to cover the puddles there. We need to move the plants aside, shovel the gravel into place, and then move the plants back. Bring your lunch if you like.

Our regular native plant nursery work sessions take place every **Wednesday, from 12noon to 3pm.** Bring garden gloves, sunhat, clippers, and your lunch. Other tools will be provided at the nursery. Knowledge of plants is not necessary: your willingness to help is all that's required.

For more information, contact Jean Struthers at (650)941-2586 or JeanStruthers@aol.com; or Ray Deutsch at (650)365-6136 or henrymarsh@yahoo.com.

Directions: Hidden Villa is located on Moody Road west of Foothill College. From Hwy 280 in Los Altos Hills, take the Moody Road exit and head west. Two miles west of Foothill College, look for the Hidden Villa sign and driveway on the left. Proceed over the bridge, and park in the visitor center parking lot to your right. The Native Plant Nursery is at the greenhouse just beyond the visitor center.

Gardening with Natives

Gardening with Natives (GWN) is a special interest group within the Chapter which meets on the first **Thursday** of each month, usually at the Peninsula Conservation Center (PCC) in Palo Alto (directions below). The group is open to all and includes a mix of seasoned native plant gardeners as well as beginners. Newcomers are always welcome.

Thursday, January 4, 7-9pm, at PCC, Palo Alto
Discussion Topic: Success with Native Plants

Do you remember the time you killed three ceanothus in a row? Or why the poppy transplants died? Share your stories of trials and triumphs with native plant gardening, and help others learn what works and what is sure to fail. This free format discussion is open to all, and will be of particular interest to folks just getting started with native plant gardening. Bring photos or cuttings to illustrate your experience. Host: Chris Todd.

Directions to the PCC: PCC (Peninsula Conservation Center), 3921 E. Bayshore Road, Palo Alto. From Highway 101, take the "San Antonio North" exit, get immediately into the left-hand turn lane, and turn LEFT onto East Bayshore. This will curve around to the left, then right. Turn right on Corporation Way. Then turn into the first driveway on your left, which leads to the PCC parking lot. The meeting is in the Raptor Suite on the first floor, accessible from the parking lot.

Thursday, February 1, 7-9pm, Milpitas Library Community Room, 40 N. Milpitas Blvd., Milpitas
Note new venue!

Talk & Slide Presentation: Borrowing from Nature's Toolbox – from Inspiration to Installation to Relaxation by Pete Veilleux

How do you choose plants for a simple but truly elegant garden design? If you look for answers at your local garden center, you might come to believe that it's all about manipulating your environment with products they want to sell you – over and over again.

Come to this presentation and learn about an alternative: choosing plants based on the plant community most suited to the conditions in your yard. Look no further than your local wildlands for cues on what to plant and where to plant it. If that sounds limiting, you probably haven't experienced the amazing diversity of habitats and plant communities found in the Bay Area. If you study your options carefully, you can plant more than a garden: you can create a self-sustaining, beautiful ecosystem which can outlive all of us.

Pete Veilleux owns East Bay Wilds, a landscape design-build-consultation firm, and a new native plant nursery which features more than 500 species, subspecies and cultivars of mostly local Bay Area plants. He began gardening with native plants in the 1970s in New England before moving to the Bay Area in the mid-1980s. In 2003, he left a career managing non-profits in order to pursue his landscaping passion. For more information, visit www.eastbaywilds.com.

Directions to Milpitas Library: Take 880 to Milpitas. Take the East Calaveras Blvd exit. After 1 mile, turn left on North Milpitas Blvd. After 400 ft, turn right into the library parking lot.

For more information on the Gardening with Natives group, visit its website at www.GardeningWithNatives.com. GWN maintains a Yahoo group with 360 members, a true resource for native plant gardeners in this area. To join the Yahoo group, visit groups.yahoo.com/group/GardeningWithNatives. To contact the GWN Steering Committee, email GardeningWithNatives@yahoo.com or call Arvind Kumar at (408)715-7020.

Native Hill

Our autumn planting sessions at Native Hill on the Foothill College campus have been progressing very well. Special emphasis has been placed on plants that provide late summer and early fall bloom, to provide color during this normally semi-dormant period at the garden. *Eriogonum*, *Epilobium*, *Lessingia*, and *Grindelia* have been placed in strategic locations throughout the garden, providing a pleasing aesthetic contrast to the greens and grey foliage during this time of the year.

Other plantings in the garden have included *Cercis occidentalis*, *Chilopsis linearis*, *Encelia californica*, *Eriophyllum*, *Mimulus aurantiacus*, *Muhlenbergia rigens*, *Romneya coulteri* and several *Salvia* spp. Our next plan of action will be to focus on annuals to vegetate the open areas in between the perennials.

As always, if you would like to volunteer at the garden or be added to the email list to be notified of upcoming workdays, contact Phil Higgins at phidor@juno.com or (650)941-4752.

Habitat Restoration at Edgewood Park

Join us as we remove invasive exotic plants and protect Edgewood's sensitive habitats. **Friday weeding sessions, at 9am**, occur year-round (note time change, starting December 6). Wednesday evening sessions will resume in mid-March after daylight savings time returns.

For details including meeting places, please see the schedule at the Edgewood Weed Warriors website, at edgewood.thinkersrus.net, or call Ken Himes at (650)591-8560, or email John Allen at jkakwa@earthlink.net.

Photo Group

Our Chapter Photo Group is a special interest group of members which meets on the third Monday of most months at the Peninsula Conservation Center (PCC) in Palo Alto. The Group is open to all, and includes both beginning and experienced photographers. CNPS member newcomers to the Group and nonmember guests are always welcome.

Our next meetings will be **Mondays, January 15 and February 19, from 7-9 pm** at the PCC. Bring photos to share: up to twenty slides, digital images, or prints per photographer are welcome. For more information, contact Patrick Gallagher, at (408)483-9366 or drrust@greenisles.com.



©2005 Judy Mason

Keying with Natives - Winter 2006

Once a month we continue to have a fun and educational time examining various plants attendees bring to hopefully key out to their genus and species. Sally Casey and other folks often have a new book about plants or other keying advice to share with the group. Many wonderful stories of recent or upcoming field trips are also discussed as we carefully examine plant parts under microscope and hand lens.

Lately we've had incredible microscope photos that Patrick Gallagher (Photo Group Chair) has been bringing with brilliant colors and patterns, which are fascinating to view. Many finally discover what that plant is, that they've been

wondering about in their backyard or garden, as we use multiple keying books to artfully reach a conclusion. Below are a couple of the specimens we identified in recent months:

Tree tobacco or *Nicotiana glauca*, which has a yellow tubular flower which hummingbirds love to feed upon even though this tree is not a native to California.

Water hyacinth or *Eichornia crassipes*, which is an aquatic plant that is invading waterways in California. Not all our specimens are native but most are.

Remember to only collect from your own yard or from land which you have permission to collect a plant sample.

By the time you read this, we will have had our December meeting examining ferns. The last time we put a fern under a microscope, the heat from the lamp started causing the pore sacs to burst open, which under the microscope was quite explosive to watch!

So please join us if you would like to get better at the art of keying plants. We meet the last **Friday** of every month except in November and December, at the PCC building in Palo Alto. The next meetings will be **Fridays, January 26 and February 23, from 6:30pm - 8:30pm**. Contact David "Tex" Houston for more details, at (650)303-2777 or tex009@sbcglobal.net.

CONSERVATION NEWS

Livecorps Update & Rare Plant Monitoring

"What is Livecorps?" you may well ask. It's an acronym! It's a committee! It's a renewed effort to fulfill the CNPS mission statement!

As you may know, the CNPS mission consists of two main thrusts: the first is "increasing the understanding and appreciation of California's native plants," and the second is "preserving them and their natural habitats for future generations." Recent years have witnessed admirable progress and organization around the first of these, with efforts such GWN and the Plant Sale helping us get the message out to a broader audience. Now we'd like to get more organized on the second front and step up our efforts there as well.

To that end, we've created a forum to bring together the various Chapter disciplines related to the preservation of native plants and habitat in the wild: **Legislation,**

Invasives, VEgetation, COnservation, and Rare PlantS... AKA Livecorps!

Livecorps holds meetings about eight times per year, at which we discuss the status of ongoing issues, new issues that need our attention, general preservation and conservation strategies, long term planning for our Livecorps efforts, etc. Recent discussion topics include: The Santa Clara County Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP/NCCP), the YMCA Jones Gulch timber harvest proposal, Coyote Ridge conservation efforts, habitat restoration for the endangered fountain thistle, potential impacts of development on the endangered Santa Clara Valley Dudleya, and more.

If you want to learn more about these or have additional issues of your own to contribute, please let us know. We welcome any help and input our membership has to offer! Livecorps meetings are open to all, and our next meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, January 10, at 6 pm at the PCC**. For more information, contact Kevin Bryant at mtngreen17@verizon.net or (408)353-8824.

In addition to its general meetings and efforts, Livecorps is embarking on a major effort to establish a formal **Rare Plant Monitoring (RPM) program** for our Chapter area. The aim is to ensure that we maintain consistent and up-to-date data for the rare plants in our area to assist with our own local conservation efforts, as well as to support state level CNPS efforts.

To help kick things off, we've scheduled an RPM brainstorming meeting to gather and discuss ideas for how to structure and implement the program. If you have thoughts to contribute, please come share 'em with us! The meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, January 31 at 6pm at the PCC**. For more information, contact Kevin Bryant at mtngreen17@verizon.net or (408)353-8824.

State Funding for Invasives Management

The California legislature recently made funding available for invasives projects throughout the state. The California Department of Food and Agriculture has approved two funding requests for invasive weed management from both the San Mateo and Santa Clara County Weed Management Areas.

The San Mateo proposal includes a project for restoration of serpentine grasslands at Edgewood Park. The Santa Clara proposal includes eradication of barb goatgrass on Coyote Ridge and in several County Parks.

Our Chapter is signatory to the Weed Management Area Memorandums of Understanding in both counties. Paul Heiple represents us in San Mateo County and Sue Welch in Santa Clara County. The state CNPS and our Chapter both submitted letters of support for this funding when it was under consideration.

Save the Dates - Marsh Ecology Seminar

Our Chapter will co-host a seminar on Marsh Ecology with Dr. Peter Baye, Ph.D., to be held at the PCC in Palo Alto, on **March 23-24, 9am-4pm**. For further information contact Santa Clara County Conservation Chair Libby Lucas at JLucas1099@aol.com.

help us make 2007 an even better year for California native plants by volunteering for one of the positions or committees listed on page 7, or bringing your own ideas forward for making the Chapter an even stronger advocate for our native flora. Thank you so much for your dedication and support!

CHAPTER FIELD TRIPS

Chapter field trips are free and open to the public. They are oriented to conservation, protection and enjoyment of California native plants and wildlife, and we adhere to all rules and guidelines for the lands on which we are visiting.

In our region it is very important to be prepared for hiking on rugged & steep terrain, wide temperature ranges and rapidly changing conditions at any time of year. All participants should wear sturdy footwear and carry sufficient water, sun protection, food, clothing layers, personal first aid and other supplies you may need. If you have any questions about your ability to participate in a particular field trip, please contact the trip leader in advance.

Jan 16 Tue 7pm Field Trip Planning Meeting

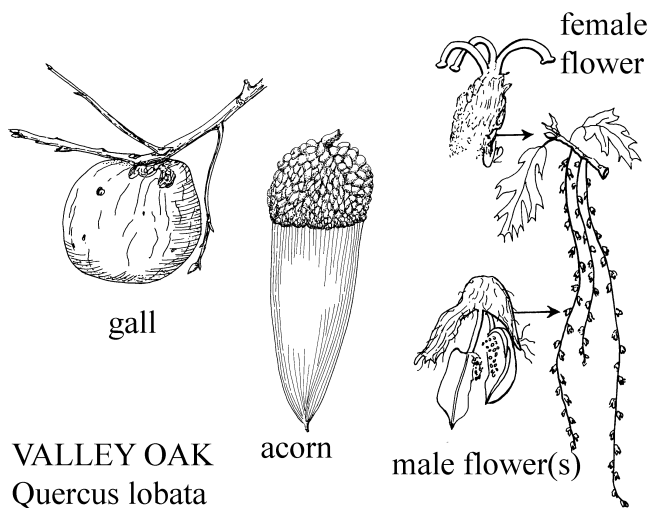
Looking for a fun and easy way to contribute to an important chapter activity? Join us at our next field trip planning meeting, where we will be brainstorming to come up with exciting places for our Chapter to explore. Also, pizza will be involved.

The meeting will be held at the Peninsula Conservation Center (PCC) in Palo Alto, 3921 E. Bayshore Road. Contact Kevin Bryant at mtngreen17@verizon.net or (408)353-8824, for details, or if you have input but can't attend.

Jan 27 Sun 10am Birds of Coyote Point Park

Join leader Adam Winer for this field trip co-sponsored with the CNPS Yerba Buena Chapter, near the city of San Mateo. We will explore the bird-rich habitat of Coyote Point. The San Francisco Bay Area is a globally important location for wintering shorebirds and waterfowl, and many species should be present today. The leader will have a telescope for good viewing of these birds, but you are also encouraged to bring binoculars if you have them.

If time and interest allow, we may also move over to Foster City and Redwood Shores to see if we can find some local stunners such as the hooded merganser and Barrow's goldeneye.



VALLEY OAK
Quercus lobata

acorn

male flower(s)

©2005 Judy Mason

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Judy Fenerty, Chapter President 2006

My past two years serving as Chapter President have flown by, and now Kevin Bryant will be taking over at the New Year following the election at our recent November potluck. I'm sure you will all lend your support to Kevin and our other newly elected officers, Paul Heiple, Treasurer, and Susan Sundberg, Recording Secretary. Even with our dedicated chapter board and officers, we still have a number of vacancies, including Vice-President and Program Chair. Until a new Vice-President is appointed, we will continue to offer member programs through a Program Committee, and Georgia Stigall will ably fill the vacancy on the Executive Committee as Officer at Large.

We had a great year for our Chapter in 2006, with record-breaking plant sales, a fabulous Wildflower Show, dozens of field trips, and many other activities. I hope you will

Heavy rain cancels. Light rain is to be expected. Dress in layers, as it can get windy. For more details, contact Adam at awiner@sprintmail.com or (415)269-7394.

Directions: Meet at the parking lot for the Yacht Club at Coyote Point Park. From San Jose, on Highway 101 north, take the Dore Avenue exit; immediately turn left onto North Bayshore Boulevard; turn right onto Coyote Point Drive to the park.

From the park entrance, continue along the entrance road, staying to the right at all intersections until you reach the parking lot at the end. There is a per-car admission fee.

Feb 25 Sun 10am San Pedro Valley Photo Trip

Patrick Gallagher will lead a Photo Group hike in San Pedro Valley County Park, near Pacifica. We'll hike along the Hazelnut Trail, which provides wonderful displays of many native plants at this time of year. The emphasis of this trip will be on photography, so progress along the trail will likely be slow. The trail loop is a little less than 5 miles, with an elevation gain of about 600 feet.

We'll meet at the Park Headquarters at **10am**. Bring lunch, water, and sturdy hiking shoes. The trail will likely be muddy in spots. We should be done by **3pm**. The County Park Day Use fee is \$5.00 per vehicle. Rain cancels. For more information, call Patrick at (408)483-9366.

Directions: From the South Bay take I-280 north. 4 miles beyond the I-380 intersection, take the Hwy 1 South exit towards Pacifica. After 7 miles turn east onto Linda Mar Blvd. Follow Linda Mar 2 miles 'till it ends at Oddstad Boulevard. Jog right on Oddstad then left into the Park. Park in the main lot just past the entrance kiosk.

Field Trip Report: Sugar Lake Discovery

Joe Cernac sends us this report from the Chapter field trip last July to Sugar Lake in the Russian Wilderness.

Seven backpackers we were, searching for the seventeen conifers reputed to occur in this small watershed. It is said that they occur in less than a one square mile area. We didn't keep track of such units. Besides the usual "Sierran" species (sugar, Jeffrey, ponderosa, and white pines, firs, cedars, etc.) which we found on the walk in, our search was mostly to identify the elusive subalpine fir and two timberline pines.

We earnestly started looking Saturday morning for a spiral/steeple-shaped, medium size fir. We found a handful only; they were young red firs. By the time of our

impromptu lunch at midday, on a small terrace seep on south Sugar Creek, we noted small red and "white" cone bearing firs in front of us. Examination of the "white" firs led us to the agreement that it was the subalpine fir! Some of us claimed that they now could see the differences clearly; they were all around us in this watershed.

The gestalt of it fails this writer. My recommendation is to take a trip to the Northern Cascades to become familiar with it, and then return to NW California.

Another agreement was that it was senseless to differentiate between the two red, Shasta red and Noble, and the two white firs, silver and white. The typical species description of each member came from far south or north of the Klamath Mountains. Here, they intergrade.

Sunday morning we humped the ridge to bag foxtail and whitebark pines and common juniper. As at the bottom, the species diversity is remarkable, eight conifers of this rocky ridge. Later that day, we congratulated ourselves at Etna Brewery Pub. We were a cheerful group.

For the reader's reference, the seventeen species are:

Fir: Shasta red, white, subalpine

Pine: white, sugar, ponderosa, Jeffrey, whitebark, foxtail, lodgepole

Spruce: Brewer's, Engelmann

Other: Yew, incense cedar, common juniper, mountain hemlock, and Douglas-fir

ANNOUNCEMENTS

News and Activities from Other Organizations

Docents Needed For Coyote Ridge Walks

Docent-led walks will take place during wildflower season on Coyote Ridge this coming year. Volunteers will be needed and anyone interested in receiving training should contact Craige Edgerton at the Silicon Valley Land Conservancy at (408)260-3044, or email cedgerton@SiliconValleyLC.org.

Spring Training for Edgewood Docents

Friends of Edgewood Wildflower walks focus on the spectacular blooming of serpentine grasslands at Edgewood Natural Preserve in Redwood City. Docents at Edgewood find that hiking in a beautiful place and being with really appreciative members of our community is a thoroughly enjoyable experience.

Our training program runs every other week from the end of January into April and consists of six **Wednesday evening meetings** each followed by a **Saturday morning hike** that demonstrates the Wednesday topic. Our speakers are well known in their fields and include Toni Corelli, Ken Himes and Paul Heiple.

Please join us! The cost for the training is \$25 to cover materials. For more information or to sign up, please contact Mary Wilson at docent-trainer@FriendsOfEdgewood.org or (650)326-6365.

Going Native Garden Tour April 29

The 5th Annual Going Native Garden Tour will take place **Sunday, April 29, from 10am-4pm**. This free tour showcases habitat and environmentally friendly gardens with a special focus on native plant landscaping. Gardens are located all over the Peninsula and Santa Clara Valley. Registration opens **January 10**. The tour is looking for volunteers to help out at gardens on tour day; for more information visit www.GoingNativeGardenTour.org.

GET INVOLVED!!

We're looking for committee chairs, chair assistants, and committee members in many interest areas in the Chapter – now's the time!

To learn more about any of these openings, please contact one of the Chapter officers listed below.

Program Committee: We're looking for several people to help put on general programs this year. Tasks include contacting speakers, booking venues, setting up rooms, handling equipment.

School Garden Committee: Advisory group for the many schools who contact us for help with starting and maintaining native gardens.

Publicity and Outreach Projects: T-Shirts, display boards, brochures, staffing booths at outreach events – we're looking for creative people who would be interested in tackling various projects.

Vegetation Chair: Coordinate vegetation assessment projects, contact with agencies, and state vegetation program.

Santa Clara and San Mateo County Invasive Plants Chairs: Keeps in touch with invasives removals projects throughout

the County, disseminates information on invasive plants to members, etc.

Corresponding Secretary: Assists with thank-you notes and other correspondence as needed by the Executive Committee. Manages correspondence files in our office.

Poster Chair: Order, distribute, and sell our wonderful posters at events. Could be expanded to increase outreach & distribution to nature shops and other venues.

Chapter Historian: Organizes our records in our office, gathers oral histories, organizes slides, research and compiles historical articles.

We're also looking for: Plant Sale Assistant Chair, Publicity Committee members, Field Trip Assistant Chair, Wildflower Show workers, Education Committee members, Website Committee members, and what ever else you can think of!

CHAPTER OFFICERS FOR 2007

To learn more about our Chapter or give suggestions, please contact one of our officers listed below.

Title	Name	Phone	Email
President	Kevin Bryant	(408) 353-8824	mtngreen17@verizon.net
Vice President	OPEN		
Recording Secretary	Susan Sundberg	(408) 274-5491	sundberg27@yahoo.com
Treasurer	Paul Heiple	(650) 854-7125	pheiple@gmail.com
Past President	Judy Fenerty	(408) 655-3493	judy@fenerty.com
Officer at Large	Georgia Stigall	(650) 941-1068	GeorgiaStigall@yahoo.com

To join our Chapter email list, please send your request to judy@fenerty.com or cnps_scv@yahoo.com.

DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT *BLAZING STAR*

Saturday, February 3, 2007

**Email: mattsson@surfpix.net
Phone: (408)255-3767**