

All Wrapped Up

Excavation of Worker's Cabin B is Complete



Photo by C Nichols

A crew of volunteers that included ten SCAS members completed the excavation phase of the archaeological investigation of Worker's Cabin B on the UCSC campus in December. Cabin B is one of several structures in the Cowell Lime Works Historic District on the UCSC campus, which was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2008. The cabin has been shored up and covered to protect it from the weather until restoration can continue in the spring.

Pat Paramoure, Esther Kenner, Ellen Albertoni, Donnielle Neddeau, Judy Husted, Andrea Merkel, Annamarie Leon Guerrero, Mary Gerbic, and Cat Nichols all put on their boots and did some digging. Sally Morgan, the senior environmental planner and archaeologist at UCSC and also a SCAS member, directed the project. Several of the excavators joined more SCAS members—Lyn O'Niel, John Schlagheck, Eryn Supple, Carolyn Van Kol, and Jim Herman—to help clean, sort, and catalogue the many artifacts that were recovered during excavation, which began last spring.

Among the artifacts found was a medallion dedicated to *Nossa Senhora Dos Milagres* (Our Lady of the Miracles) who is honored in the village of Serreta, Terceira,

an island in the Azores. Also found were an 1882 shield nickel, a small bottle that may have contained perfume or medicine, and a stash of empty Prince Albert Tobacco tins.

It is thought that only men lived in the workers' cabins, however, an abalone hair pin found on the site may indicate that women at least visited the cabins.

Labwork to process the artifacts continues. Excavation of the next structure, the Cardiff Shed, will begin in January 2010. If you are interested in working on either of these projects, please contact Pat Paramoure for information about dates and locations. (See page 11 for contact information.)



Kelsi Lindner excavates the floor boards.









From upper left clockwise: Abalone hairpin, glass bottle, man's ring, *Nossa Senhora Dos Milagres* medallion. *Photos by Pat Paramoure*

Calendar

All General Meetings are held at Sesnon House Cabrillo College 6500 Soquel Drive, Aptos, California at 7:30 p.m. unless otherwise indicated. SCAS website -www.santacruzarchsociety.org

- January 21 **General Meeting** Cabrillo College Archaeological Technology Program (CCATP) alumnus and anthropologist for Albion Environmental, Inc., **Stella D'Oro**, will report on her Masters thesis, "Climate Change and People in the San Francisco Bay."
- Through April 2010 New Exhibit at the San Lorenzo Valley Historical Museum: "Big Trees to Surfboards—The Redwood Connection." This historical exhibit connects the cultural history of Hawaii with the natural history of California.
- General Meeting Ray Iddings of Three Rocks Research will discuss the Joaquin Rocks in a talk entitled, "The Ancient Mysteries of the Diablo Range." Ray is a CCATP graduate of the, and received his Masters Degree from the University of Leicester. Three Rocks Research is a non-profit, public benefit corporation dedicated to researching and communicating information about the cultural history and traditions of California. For more information about, check out www.3rocks.org.
- March 17–20 The **Society for California Archaeology 2010 Annual Meeting** will be held at the Riverside Convention Center. The SCA has reserved a number of rooms at \$99/night for singles and doubles, but they are going fast! See http://www.scahome.org/meetings_events/index.html for details about the schedule and hotel accommodations.
- March 18 The March General Meeting has been **cancelled**, as the SCA Annual Meeting will be in progress on this day.
- April 15 **General Meeting** CCATP alumnus, **Annamarie Leon Guerrero** will speak. The title of her talk is to be announced.
- May 20 General Meeting Speaker to be announced
- June 17 **General Meeting** Speaker to be announced

Items to add? Corrections to make? Please contact us at editorscan@gmail.com.

The newsletter can be viewed—in color!—online at:

http://santacruzarchsociety.org/newsletter.html.

Rock Art Redefines "Ancient"

By David Page

Reprinted from *The New York Times* December 18, 2009

Ridgecrest, Calif. — We were inside Restricted Area R-505 of the Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake, rolling in a minivan across the vast salt pan of an extinct Pleistocene lake on our way to see a renowned collection of ancient rock art. On the console between the seats was a long-range two-way radio. It was there so that our escort, a civilian Navy public affairs officer named Peggy Shoaf, could keep abreast of where and when any bombs would be dropped — or launched, or whatever — so that we wouldn't be there when it happened.

Established in the summer of 1943 in the heat of Allied offensives in the Pacific, China Lake is the Navy's premier weapons testing range and its largest real estate holding. "Every weapon being used overseas right now was tested here," Ms. Shoaf said. The property comprises 1.1 million acres of Mojave Desert north of Los Angeles and west of Death Valley, including the Coso Mountain range and an active volcanic field that is one of the largest producers of geothermal electricity in the country.

The base is a haven for wild horses, burros, rattlesnakes and scorpions. It is also home to a complex of remote canyons holding the greatest concentration of ancient rock art in the Western Hemisphere, known as the Coso Petroglyphs.

With us rode David S. Whitley, an archaeologist and expert on prehistoric rock art and iconographic interpretation. Having visited hundreds of sites all over the world, including Lascaux and Chauvet in France and the Côa Valley in Portugal, he believes the Coso Petroglyphs to be one of the most important rock art sites on earth.

Mr. Whitley estimated that there may be as many as 100,000 images carved into the dark volcanic canyons above the China Lake basin, some as old as 12,000 to 16,000 years, others as recent as the mid-20th century.

Floating across a landscape strewn with more than a half-century's weapons-testing debris —

observation towers, armored vehicles, projectile-riddled shipping containers — I tried to fathom that people had been coming here and making art since at least 90 centuries before the founding of Rome.

"It was a very different place then," Mr. Whitley explained, conjuring the end of the last ice age, 18,000 years ago, the melting of glaciers, the system of saline lakes across what is now called the Great Basin. "This had water over 100 feet deep," he said. Mammoths, saber-toothed cats and giant Pleistocene bison still roamed the upland peninsulas.

Then, progressively, and with big ups and downs, the climate grew hotter and drier. The lakes and big animals disappeared, the pinyon and juniper woodlands moved up in elevation, and life for humans got significantly more difficult. And yet for many thousands of years thereafter people continued to carve figures and designs into the rocks.

We turned onto a washboard gravel road and 12 minutes later came to a small parking area, 49 road miles inside the base's main gate at the edge of Ridgecrest. On this November day the thermometer read 43 degrees, but the air was still and the sun felt warm. We shouldered our lunches and camera gear and walked out along a path made of interlocking plastic tiles laid down in recent years so that Shoshone tribal elders could reach the site without having to struggle in the soft sand. Almost immediately we were in what is known as Little Petroglyph Canyon.

Everywhere we looked, for a mile or so down canyon, there were images pecked or scratched into the rock faces: stylized human figures in a variety of headgear, stick figures with bows and arrows, dogs or coyotes, bear paws with extra digits, all manner of abstract geometric patterns, zigzags and circles and dots, and hundreds upon hundreds of what looked like bighorn sheep, some small, some larger than life size.

Theories abound as to what the images might mean — all but the most recent, that is — or why they were put there. Some archaeologists believe that the images are evidence of simple hunting rituals. Mr. Whitley sees in them nothing less than the origins of human creativity and religion.

petroglyphs are the work of generations of shamans, native plant and thinking about the cosmos. I tried or medicine men, who traveled here (from all over to imagine the distance between myself and the what is now the southwestern United States) to fast person who made those images. Then we stowed our and smoke native tobacco, to hallucinate or have garbage in our packs, made our way back up to the visions, and to render their hallucinations on the minivan and headed down to the base's armaments rock. Perhaps the goal was to make rain. Perhaps it was to impress upon their followers a sense of the supernatural. Either way, where some might see a dearth of material wealth and technology, Mr. Whitley sees evidence of cognitive sophistication.

the latest iPhone," he said. But technology is often a poor substitute for knowledge: "Drop any of us in Death Valley and unless we had an RV fully stocked with all sorts of supplies we'd be dead in a week," he said. The people who came before us, on the other hand, were adapted to this environment, so they could survive with nothing but what they could find or make, in a way that, he said, "runs counter to our technological materialistic view, is probably more admirable, and certainly more sustainable."

For a time, after 9/11, civilian visits to the petroglyphs were suspended. "There's always a risk when you let civilians into a secured area," Ms. Shoaf said. But she said she felt the place was too precious for the public not to have access. So she rewrote the protocol to show the commanding officer how it might be possible to allow tours and still protect the base's security. He agreed. More than 1,100 civilians visit the site every year, either on tours available to the public or as part of private tours with commandapproved escorts arranged through Ms. Shoaf's office.

We rested near the southern end of the canyon, participants 16 and older. sitting on the rocks in the sun and tucking into our of images and tried to imagine what it would be like www.chinalakemuseum.org).

He theorizes, based on his research, that the to spend four days here without food, smoking a museum, evidence of more modern human creativity of a different kind.

IF YOU GO

Public petroglyph tours are available through the "We think of intelligence as expressed in iPods and Maturango Museum (100 East Las Flores Avenue, Ridgecrest, Calif.; 760-375-6900, maturango.org) \$35 per person for nonmembers; \$25 for members of museum and the Friends of Last Chance Canyon (tflcc.org).

> Arrangements can be made through the Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake itself by calling the public affairs office at (760) 939-1683. The base's Web site has information about the petroglyphs and the tours, which carry a number of restrictions, at https://www.cnic.navy.mil/ChinaLake/ FamilyReadiness/PetroglyphTours/index.htm.

> Tours are held on weekends and holidays. Certain Fridays are available for school tours. All tours are subject to cancellation on short notice because of military testing, security concerns or the weather.

> Visitors are responsible for finding two commandapproved escorts, arranging car pools and for filing all necessary paperwork. Up to three groups of 20 are allowed in the canyon each weekend day. No children under 10, and no pets.

> Only American citizens are now allowed to go on tours, and proof of citizenship is required for

Also on the base is the U.S. Naval Museum of lunches. I looked at one particularly elaborate frieze Armament and Technology (760-939-3530,

SCAS Board Members ~ 2010

Lvn O'Niel Kären Johansson **Cathy Phipps Ellen Albertoni Pat Paramoure Cat Nichols Rob Edwards**

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(Ed. note: This is Part 2. Part 1 can be found in the Fall 2009 issue)

Let there be Light...

By Ray Iddings



Summer Solstice Sunrise (Photo by R. Wilcher)

June 21

morning to the distant calls of away that forms an alignment the event. Early morning is my coyotes. Their siren creates an terminal from the mortar and one favorite time and I always enjoy eerie cry as it reverberates through cupule. The mortar is circled by a sunrise. However, this day is the canyon. The day needs an early raised layer of stone, left by special because we are honored to start if we (Ron Wilcher and I) are exfoliating the entire stone surface first witnesses this view since it to make our way to another except for two circles. Why, I was left dormant by the by our summit site located several hundred meters from camp before sunrise. It is an unusual bedrock mortar site containing a circled mortar with cupule alignments coincident with the points of solstice and equinox sunrise. Surely, I think, the Native people also visited to this mountain, as I moves to a clearing located that is marker and three incised lines. have, to witness the summer approximately inline, but several Layers of older stone surface circle solstice sunrise along the edge of a meters east, between the mortar two compound mortars. One of

wonder, did they so carefully Native forbears. remove a thin layer of the stones surface? Did they erase pervious rock art, perhaps to renew the magic?

of the site and it now obstructs a convex mortars, six compound clear view of the sunrise, so Ron mortars, eight cupules, one divot

I wake early the following large rock pinnacle 300 meters and the pinnacle to photograph

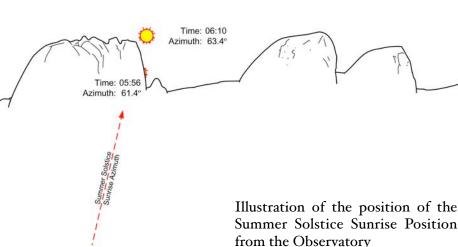
The site is a low-profile 5.5meter (E/W) by 4.5-meter (N/S)Brush has overgrown a portion boulder surface containing five



the circled mortars (a) includes ritual persuasion was successful; two cupules and a divot organized after all, it had been performed, to coincide with solstice and perhaps thousand of times, over equinox sunrises. The 45 many generations, and each time centimeter raised circle was the sun was successfully persuaded formed by exfoliating about one to return to its natural annual centimeter for the boulder's cycle (Hudson et al 1979:40). surface leaving the circle around the mortar. The circle has two layers (b) suggesting that the boulder has been exfoliated at least twice.

The site is located on the relatively flat sandy area about 300 meters southwest from a large, 70-meter tall, rock pinnacle. The summer solstice sunrise, as viewed form this site, occurs along the eastern edge of the pinnacle and marks the northern extend of the sun's annual progression. Locating the site at this point suggests that its placement might intend to persuade the sun to reverse direction, perhaps in a ritual Closing similar to using sunsticks, as some California tribes did, to "pull" the sun back to a central position (Hudson and Blackburn 1978:239). Certainly, in their minds, such

longer have that status among current practitioners of the religion. A critical aspect of sacredness is an active human participation in the sacred place. That is, a sacred place is an ordinary place made extraordinary through ritual (Lane 2002:19). However, in a technical sense, these sites are, like most other archaeological sites, simply rediscovered cultural artifacts. So, is it true that when the ritual is gone, that the place is no longer sacred? Without doubt, a much greater proportion of the landscape was, and still is, considered sacred by traditional Native Americans than by most Euro-Americans. The material evidence left in the landscape at these two sites suggests that the people who once visited these places invested a great deal to labor and ritual into maintaining their connection with the spiritual



Much of Native American religious knowledge has been lost over the last century and consequently, many places previously considered sacred no

powers that they perceived here. Certainly, to these people, this was a sacred place where the physical and spiritual worlds came together ... and there was light (Genesis 1:3).

A Lost European Culture, Pulled From Obscurity

By John Noble Wilford

Reprinted from The New York Times November 30, 2009

Before the glory that was Greece and Rome, even before the first cities of Mesopotamia or temples along the Nile, there lived in the Lower Danube Valley and the Balkan foothills people who were ahead of their time in art, technology and longdistance trade.

For 1,500 years, starting earlier than 5000 B.C., they farmed and built sizable towns, a few with as many as 2,000 dwellings. They mastered large-scale copper smelting, the new technology of the age. Their graves held an impressive array of exquisite headdresses and necklaces and, in one cemetery, the earliest major assemblage of gold artifacts to be found anywhere in the world.

The striking designs of their pottery speak of the refinement of the culture's visual language. Until recent discoveries, the most intriguing artifacts were the ubiquitous terracotta "goddess" figurines, originally interpreted as evidence of the spiritual and political power of women in society.

New research, archaeologists and historians say, has broadened understanding of this long overlooked culture, which seemed to have approached the threshold of "civilization" status. Writing had yet to be invented, and so no one knows what the people called themselves. To some scholars, the people and the region are simply Old Europe.

The little-known culture is being rescued from obscurity in an exhibition, "The Lost World of Old Europe: the Danube Valley, 5000-3500 B.C.," which opened last month at the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World at New York University. More than 250 artifacts from museums in Bulgaria, Moldova and Romania are on display for the first time in the United States. The show will run through April 25.

At its peak, around 4500 B.C., said David W. Anthony, the exhibition's guest curator, "Old Europe was among the most sophisticated and

was developing "many of the political, technological and ideological signs of civilization."

Dr. Anthony is a professor of anthropology at Hartwick College in Oneonta, N.Y., and author of The Horse, the Wheel, and Language: How Bronze-Age Riders from the Eurasian Steppes Shaped the Modern. World. Historians suggest that the arrival in southeastern Europe of people from the steppes may have contributed to the collapse of the Old Europe culture by 3500 B.C.

At the exhibition preview, Roger S. Bagnall, director of the institute, confessed that until now "a great many archaeologists had not heard of these Old Europe cultures." Admiring the colorful ceramics, Dr. Bagnall, a specialist in Egyptian archaeology, remarked that at the time "Egyptians were certainly not making pottery like this."

A show catalog, published by Princeton University Press, is the first compendium in English of research on Old Europe discoveries. The book, edited by Dr. Anthony, with Jennifer Y. Chi, the institute's associate director for exhibitions, includes essays by experts from Britain, France, Germany, the United States and the countries where the culture existed.

Dr. Chi said the exhibition reflected the institute's interest in studying the relationships of well-known cultures and the "underappreciated ones."

Although excavations over the last century uncovered traces of ancient settlements and the goddess figurines, it was not until local archaeologists in 1972 discovered a large fifth-millennium B.C. cemetery at Varna, Bulgaria, that they began to suspect these were not poor people living in unstructured egalitarian societies. Even then, confined in cold war isolation behind the Iron Curtain, Bulgarians and Romanians were unable to spread their knowledge to the West.

The story now emerging is of pioneer farmers after about 6200 B.C. moving north into Old Europe from Greece and Macedonia, bringing wheat and barley seeds and domesticated cattle and sheep. They established colonies along the Black Sea and in the river plains and hills, and these evolved into related but somewhat distinct cultures, archaeologists have technologically advanced places in the world" and learned. The settlements maintained close contact through networks of trade in copper and gold and also shared patterns of ceramics.

The Spondylus shell from the Aegean Sea was a special item of trade. Perhaps the shells, used in pendants and bracelets, were symbols of their Aegean ancestors. Other scholars view such long-distance acquisitions as being motivated in part by ideology in which goods are not commodities in the modern sense but rather "valuables," symbols of status and recognition.

Noting the diffusion of these shells at this time, Michel Louis Seferiades, an anthropologist at the National Center for Scientific Research in France, suspects "the objects were part of a halo of mysteries, an ensemble of beliefs and myths."

In any event, Dr. Seferiades wrote in the exhibition catalog that the prevalence of the shells suggested the culture had links to "a network of access routes and a social framework of elaborate exchange systems — including bartering, gift exchange and reciprocity."

Over a wide area of what is now Bulgaria and Romania, the people settled into villages of singleand multi-room houses crowded inside palisades. The houses, some with two stories, were framed in wood with clay-plaster walls and beaten-earth floors. For some reason, the people liked making fired clay models of multilevel dwellings, examples of which are exhibited.

A few towns of the Cucuteni people, a later and apparently robust culture in the north of Old Europe, grew to more than 800 acres, which archaeologists consider larger than any other known human settlements at the time. But excavations have yet to turn up definitive evidence of palaces, temples or large civic buildings. Archaeologists concluded that rituals of belief seemed to be practiced in the homes, where cultic artifacts have been found.

The household pottery decorated in diverse, complex styles suggested the practice of elaborate at-home dining rituals. Huge serving bowls on stands were typical of the culture's "socializing of food presentation," Dr. Chi said.

At first, the absence of elite architecture led scholars to assume that Old Europe had little or no hierarchical power structure. This was dispelled by the graves in the Varna cemetery. For two decades after 1972, archaeologists found 310 graves dated to

about 4500 B.C. Dr. Anthony said this was "the best evidence for the existence of a clearly distinct upper social and political rank."

Vladimir Slavchev, a curator at the Varna Regional Museum of History, said the "richness and variety of the Varna grave gifts was a surprise," even to the Bulgarian archaeologist Ivan Ivanov, who directed the discoveries. "Varna is the oldest cemetery yet found where humans were buried with golden ornaments," Dr. Slavchev said.

More than 3,000 pieces of gold were found in 62 of the graves, along with copper weapons and tools, and ornaments, necklaces and bracelets of the prized Aegean shells. "The concentration of imported prestige objects in a distinct minority of graves suggest that institutionalized higher ranks did exist," exhibition curators noted in a text panel accompanying the Varna gold.

Yet it is puzzling that the elite seemed not to indulge in private lives of excess. "The people who donned gold costumes for public events while they were alive," Dr. Anthony wrote, "went home to fairly ordinary houses."

Copper, not gold, may have been the main source of Old Europe's economic success, Dr. Anthony said. As copper smelting developed about 5400 B.C., the Old Europe cultures tapped abundant ores in Bulgaria and what is now Serbia and learned the high-heat technique of extracting pure metallic copper.

Smelted copper, cast as axes, hammered into knife blades and coiled in bracelets, became valuable exports. Old Europe copper pieces have been found in graves along the Volga River, 1,200 miles east of Bulgaria. Archaeologists have recovered more than five tons of pieces from Old Europe sites.

An entire gallery is devoted to the figurines, the more familiar and provocative of the culture's treasures. They have been found in virtually every Old Europe culture and in several contexts: in graves, house shrines and other possibly "religious spaces."

One of the best known is the fired clay figure of a seated man, his shoulders bent and hands to his face in apparent contemplation. Called the "Thinker," the piece and a comparable female figurine were found in a cemetery of the Hamangia

culture, in Romania. Were they thinking, or mourning?

Many of the figurines represent women in stylized abstraction, with truncated or elongated bodies and heaping breasts and expansive hips. The explicit sexuality of these figurines invites interpretations relating to earthly and human fertility.

An arresting set of 21 small female figurines, seated in a circle, was found at a pre-Cucuteni village site in northeastern Romania. "It is not difficult to imagine," said Douglass W. Bailey of San Francisco State University, the Old Europe people "arranging sets of seated figurines into one or several groups of miniature activities, perhaps with the smaller figurines at the feet or even on the laps of the larger, seated ones."

Others imagined the figurines as the "Council of Goddesses." In her influential books three decades ago, Marija Gimbutas, an anthropologist at the University of California, Los Angeles, offered these and other so-called Venus figurines as representatives of divinities in cults to a Mother Goddess that reigned in prehistoric Europe.

Although the late Dr. Gimbutas still has an ardent following, many scholars hew to more conservative, nondivine explanations. The power of the objects, Dr. Bailey said, was not in any specific reference to the divine, but in "a shared understanding of group identity."

As Dr. Bailey wrote in the exhibition catalog, the figurines should perhaps be defined only in terms of their actual appearance: miniature, representational depictions of the human form. He thus "assumed (as is justified by our knowledge of human evolution) that the ability to make, use and understand symbolic objects such as figurines is an ability that is shared by all modern humans and thus is a capability that connects you, me, Neolithic men, women and children, and the Paleolithic painters in caves."

Or else the "Thinker," for instance, is the image of you, me, the archaeologists and historians confronted and perplexed by a "lost" culture in southeastern Europe that had quite a go with life back before a single word was written or a wheel turned.



Archaeology Books on Display at Bookshop Santa Cruz

Karen Johansson, vice president of SCAS, designed a collection of archaeology books that ran at Bookshop Santa Cruz during November and December 2010. The display featured books about all periods of California's past, with an emphasis on books about local cultures such as *The Esselen Indians of the Big Sur Country* by Gary S. Breschini and Trudy Haversat and *The Ohlone Way* by Malcolm Margolin. A sign with the SCAS name and a "California Archaeology" poster formed the backdrop.

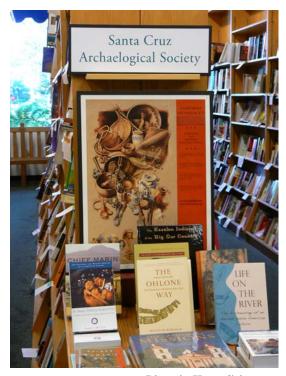


Photo by Karen Johansson.

Volunteer Opportunities for SCAS Members!

This section, new to SCAN, will appear periodically to offer members opportunities to volunteer in partnership with local agencies throughout the year. Comments and suggestions are encouraged. Please email us at <u>president@santacruzarchsociety.org</u> if you hear of an opportunity or have an idea for a volunteer project.

VOLUNTEERS URGENTLY NEEDED!

Do you enjoy sharing information about local history? Would you give 4 hours a week for 3 to 6 months to help local Historical site parks?

On-site training is available. If you are interested, contact Lyn O'Niel for more information and details. Email Lyn at president@santacruzarchesociety.org, or call 831-338-9738 and leave a message.



LABWORK

The excavation phase of UCSC's Cabin B may be complete, but there is still plenty of cleaning, sorting, and cataloging to be done. Labwork will be conducted from 9:30 a.m to noon most Mondays during the next few months.

Work in the Cowell Lime Works Historic District continues. The next excavation date for the Cardiff Shed will be January 23. For information about both of these projects, including dates and locations, call Pat Paramoure at (831) 465-9809, or email her at: patsunicorn@sbcglobal.net. Sign up with Pat for regular email updates!

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P.O. Box 85 Soquel, CA 95073

Nominations Requested

The Santa Cruz Archaeological Society is accepting nominations for the 2010 election for the Society's Offices of President and Secretary.

Requirements:

Nominees must be members of the Society in good standing who are willing and able to devote the time and energy required of the positions. Officers:

- · serve for a term of two years
- attend monthly board meetings (currently held on the second Monday of each month)
- attend General Meetings (currently held on the third Thursday of each month)
- plan and help with various new and ongoing projects throughout the year

If you are interested in serving in either of these positions, or know of someone who might be interested, please submit name, phone number, and a brief paragraph indicating the position sought and describing your interests to: SCAS, P.O. Box 85, Soquel, CA 95073.

Detailed descriptions of the duties of each position are available. Contact SCAS President Lyn O'Niel for copies.

~ SCAN ~
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