

# Friends of Sausal Creek

www.sausalcreek.org  
(510) 501-FOSC (3672)

February - March '06

## Monthly Meetings

**February 15**—David Ralston, Urban Economic Analyst with the City of Oakland, will discuss including Sausal Creek as a critical asset for current commercial district and streetscape planning work in the Dimond and Fruitvale areas.

**March 15**—Glen Tepke, a wildlife photographer living in the Oakmore neighborhood, will present photos and discuss the natural history of the birds of Sausal Creek and the Bay Area.

## END-OF-YEAR APPEAL SUCCESSFUL!

We're giddy, we're grateful, and we're breathing a sigh of relief. Our end-of-year appeal, thanks to all of you, was a huge success. By raising just over \$20K, we quadrupled the amount of money raised at this time last year, and not a moment too soon. Now we have some room to focus on our fundraising efforts. For all of your support, the Friends of Sausal Creek would like to say "thank you!"  
—Sara Marcellino

## \$5K Donated in Honor of Mike Grayson

There's a plaque among the new willows and alders in the creek bed that reads "Mike Grayson, dedicated friend and tireless worker." This memorial was placed in the restoration area of Sausal Creek that Mike loved. In the early days of FOSC, Mike came out almost every workday to tackle the toughest project. He did the 'heavy lifting', applying his might to remove hot water heaters and iron rails. Sadly, Mike passed away in his prime, and his family recently donated \$5K in his name. Let Mike stand as memorial to all the tireless workers and supporters of FOSC. Hopefully, our work will live on long after we have sailed down the river.

—Mark J. Rauzon

## Friend of the Month—Jean Quan

Whether you are holding a candle at a peace vigil or battling blackberries in Dimond Canyon, you will meet Councilwoman Jean Quan. She is everywhere, assisting constituents and making things happen in the Sausal Creek watershed. Jean and her staff responded to our cries for financial help with ideas and action. For example, their current campaign to generate funds on behalf of FOSC has already raised \$3,500. Jean is also exploring other funding sources and new ways that the Friends can collaborate with the City of Oakland. For her prompt and effective fundraising, and her ongoing support, we honor Councilwoman Jean Quan as Friend of the Month.

—Sheelah Weaver

## Save the Date: Sunday, May 7th, Plant Sale at the Nursery!

From 10am-5pm on Sunday, May 7th, check out FOSC's first ever native plant sale at the Joaquin Miller Park nursery. For more information about helping us prepare for this event, or for what plants will be on sale, visit [www.sausalcreek.org/plantsale.html](http://www.sausalcreek.org/plantsale.html) or contact [field@sausalcreek.org](mailto:field@sausalcreek.org).

—Karen Paulsell

## FOSC Welcomes Two New Board Members

We are pleased to welcome two new members to our Board of Directors, Patricia Bacchetti and Helen McKinley. Both women bring a lot of connections and ideas to the Board. Pat, a veterinarian and 22-year Oakland resident, loves native plants, birding, and hanging out with her son. Helen, who grew up near Mt. Shasta, has been an environmental engineer in water and wastewater with the EPA for 18 years. Like Pat, she is also an avid birder as well as a licensed private pilot. Welcome, Pat and Helen!

—Eleanor Dunn



The Champagne Oak saw the original residents of Sausal canyon come and go. Who knows? Maybe a grizzly bear sharpened his claws on the tree; it's old enough to have been a substantial oak even 200 years ago. A sacred tree indeed, as Gary Snyder the poet/wilderness writer suggests. Why not dedicate the life of this witness of hundreds of years of canyon life to the restoration of the wellspring that waters its roots, shelters the birds in its branches and binds a community together? The next time you pass her, reflect a moment on this grand being and wonder how much water has flowed down Sausal Creek since she was an acorn.

—Mark J. Rauzon, appearing in "Oakland's Neighborhoods," compiled by Erika Mailman.

← **THE SOUL OF SAUSAL CREEK: DIMOND PARK'S CHAMPAGNE OAK, CIRCA 1800-2005.**

The Friends are sponsored by the Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District and the City of Oakland, with additional support from private citizens . . . like you!

## SUPPORT THE WORK OF FOSC

Please help us maintain and expand our efforts in the Sausal Creek watershed by making a donation today!

Mail this form with check made payable to:  
Friends of Sausal Creek, P.O. Box 2737, Oakland, CA 94602.  
FOSC is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization and your contribution is fully tax-deductible. A receipt will be sent for your records.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

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Amount of Donation

\$500  \$250  \$100  \$50  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## Friends of Sausal Creek

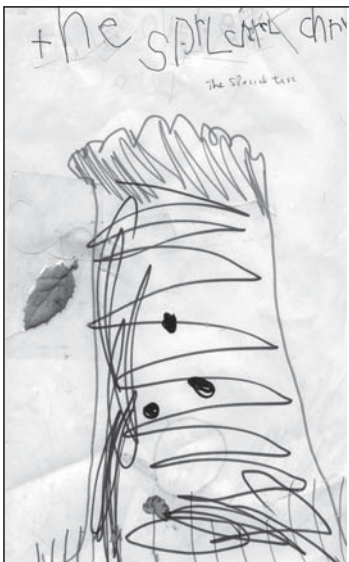
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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Don't miss our monthly meeting on February 15<sup>th</sup> and March 15<sup>th</sup>, 7-9pm at the Dimond Library. Newsletter printed on recycled paper. Thanks for recycling!



**"SPECIAL TREE", BY 10-YEAR-OLD BEN SCHECTER, FROM HIS BOOK ABOUT THE DEATH OF THE CHAMPAGNE OAK.**

### 18th Century Oakland Hills: Grassland & Scrub (& Treeless)

Spanish and English explorers provided the earliest descriptions of the East Bay and the upper Sausal Creek watershed in the late 18th century. They described broad plains and steep hills divided by brushy ravines and arroyos lined with live oaks, laurels, cottonwoods, sycamores and alders.

They made special note of the redwoods in the hills but otherwise commented upon the lack of general tree cover. An account from 1792 also describes the East Bay as country "covered in

shrubby brush or of naked and hilly appearances," with a few tufts of trees on a hilly ridge.

Although grazing by Mexican livestock helped to modify the composition of plant communities in the watershed, total vegetative cover would have remained essentially unaltered.

Euro-Americans were first drawn to the watershed in 1841 by the valuable resource that topped the hills, the redwood forest that was the only major source of lumber for building in the entire East Bay. It took less than twenty years to clear-cut this ancient forest in its entirety. The size and extent of the original forest was very similar to that found today. It was approximately five square miles in size and extended northeast from the upper watershed, over the ridgeline of the Oakland hills, and into the canyons formed by Redwood and upper San Leandro Creeks. There is no

*continued >*

### FOSC ACTIVITY CALENDAR

Unless otherwise noted, call 501-FOSC or email [coordinator@sausalcreek.org](mailto:coordinator@sausalcreek.org) to get information about all activities. For details about ongoing projects, check the Volunteer section of the Friends' website at [www.sausalcreek.org](http://www.sausalcreek.org).

#### Monthly Meetings

*3rd Wednesday of the month.*

- Wednesday 2/15, 3/15.  
7pm-9pm at the Dimond Library,  
3565 Fruitvale Ave.

#### Board of Directors Meetings

*2nd Wednesday of the month.*

- Wednesday 2/8, 3/8.  
7pm-9pm at the Chabot Space  
& Science Center. All welcome!

#### Saturday Workdays

For information contact Kristen Hopper, 510-387-9744 or [field@sausalcreek.org](mailto:field@sausalcreek.org) or go to [www.sausalcreek.org/](http://www.sausalcreek.org/).

#### Aquatic Insect Sampling

*3rd Sunday of the month.*

- Sunday 2/19, 3/19.  
9:30am-noon; call Emma Brown  
to confirm 510-527-2507.

indication, in the historical record, or today, that redwoods naturally occurred anywhere else in the Oakland-Berkeley hills.

Those who came here from forested lands planted trees for aesthetic reasons. Joaquin Miller alone planted 75,000 trees in the watershed. Eucalyptus were popular because, according to the wisdom of the time, products derived from them had a variety of uses, including for medicinal purposes and rust removal, for firewood, and for flame-retardant shingles. Monterey pine and Monterey cypress were also widely planted in the Oakland Hills. Plantations of these three species replaced much of the grassland, scrub and chaparral in the watershed before 1900.

—*Martha Lowe, excerpted from her Master's Thesis, The Upper Sausal Creek Watershed (Oakland, California): Historical and Contemporary Ecology, Watershed Assessment, and Recommendations for Ecosystem Restoration and Management.*

#### February-March '06 newsletter contributors:

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