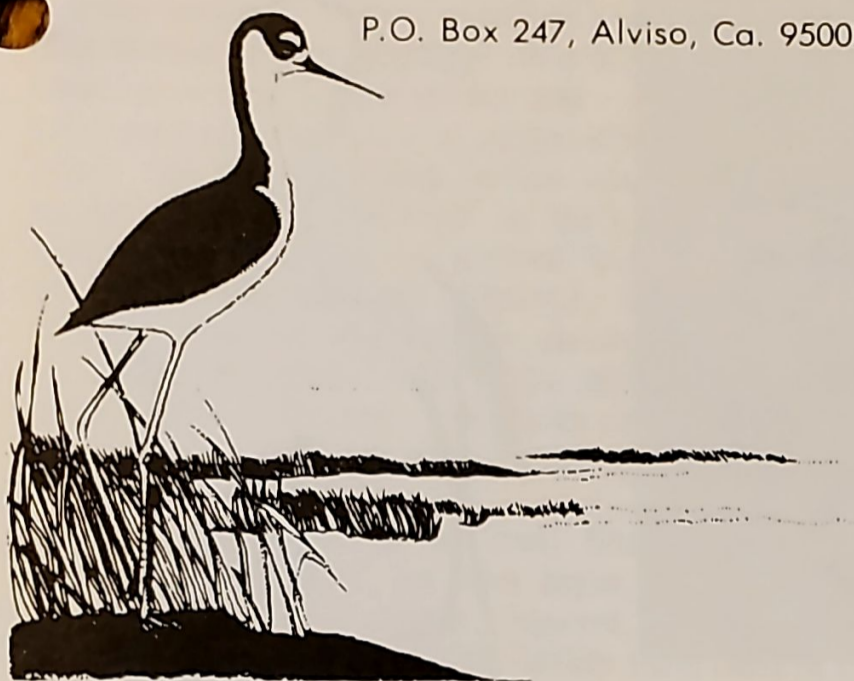


SAN FRANCISCO BAY BIRD OBSERVATORY NEWSLETTER

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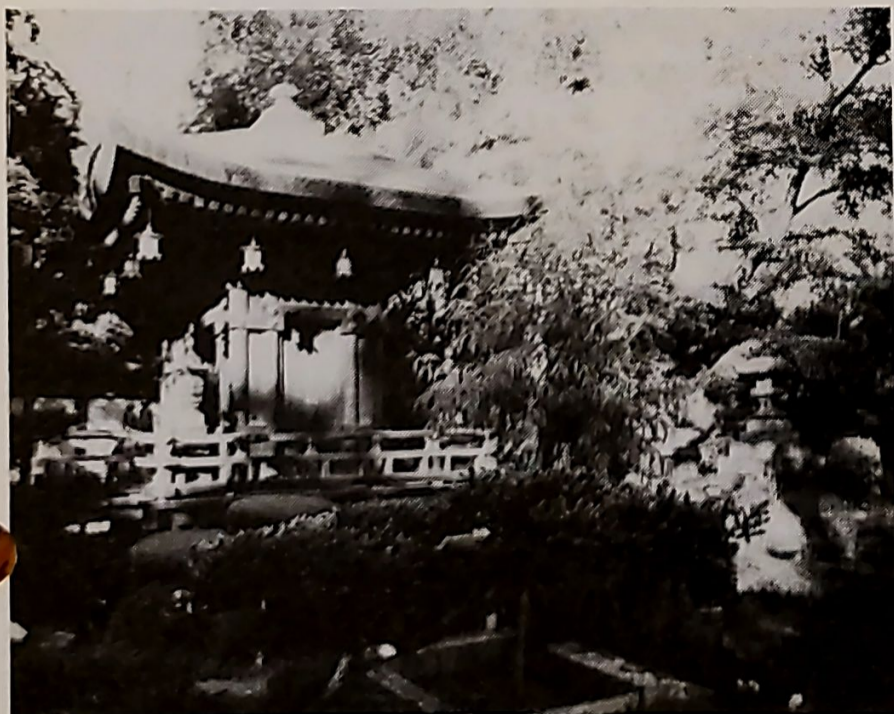
NUMBER 15

OCTOBER 1985

KOTANI-EN FUNDRAISER

Last month we ran a brief article on our Japanese Garden Tour and promised a few more details. Kotani-En was designed in the centuries old tradition of landscape architecture; the gardens, ponds, and buildings replicate an estate of the Samaurai nobility --- circa 13th century.

The shrine was designed by the late Japanese architect Takashima; his small band of craftsmen started in 1918 and labored for some 10 years on this one project. If the term "appreciate in value" has any meaning at all it might apply here. From the original cost of \$250,000 in 1918 (a small fortune even in those days), the re-placement value is in excess of \$2.5 million today.



Buddhist prayer temple

Kotani-En was constructed using only period tools and techniques. Since nails were not used in 13th century Japan, joints are held together by mortise and tenon and splint and wedge. Anyone who collects fine antiques may recognize those terms.

The "garden" part of the property covers about 4.5 acres and includes Koi ponds, waterfalls, a "period" residence, Buddhist temple, and over 200 species of plants. By the way some of the trees and shrubs were gifts from the Emperor himself and others donated by the City of Kyoto. Of course the Bonsai are old (300+ years) and carefully maintained.

The buildings are made of cryptomeria cedar, mahogany, bronze and glazed ceramic tile --- all still in excellent condition. Interiors are authentically designed with traditional features of the period: tatami mats, mahogany carvings, silk-covered panels, bronze ornaments, and sliding shoji screens.

Kotani-En is considered by many authorities to be one of the foremost examples of Japanese art and architecture in the U.S. A property of this quality, detail and authenticity is now rare even in Japan where so many fine landmarks have been lost to fire and other disasters.

The grounds were used for Japanese-American cultural events in the twenties and holds a special significance for Japanese-Americans of the Bay area, a number of whom were married on the temple grounds. There is even a bit of tragic irony here; the grounds and structures were vandalized during World War II in a wave of anti Japanese sentiment; all has been restored to its original beauty of course.

Continued on page 2



Samarai residence



Now that you know at least a little something about Kotani-En, why don't you join with other Bird Observatory supporters. The date, to refresh your memory, is **Sunday, October 27** (rain date November 3) from **10 am to 3 pm**. Donation is \$15/members \$20/non-members, and it is for a good cause. Wine and cheese, hot apple cider---things like that will be provided as well as recorder music by Wembley Symposium. If you just can't find the time on October 27, you might just make the donation anyway! Observatory folks are most gracious and understanding, and besides, that's how ornithological research gets done. Kotani-En is in Saratoga near the intersection of Austin Way and Bainter (that's off Saratoga-Los Gatos Rd). Advanced tickets are available from the Bird Observatory. For more information call (408) 262-6204.

Dave Nauer

NATURE SOUNDS SOCIETY

The Nature Sounds Society, in cooperation with the East Bay Zoological Society, will present this season's first general meeting on Saturday, October 12, from 10:30 to 2:30 at the Knowland Park Zoo, 9777 Golf Links Road, Oakland. (Take the 98th/Golf Links exit off Interstate 580 and follow the signs.) The gate fee will be waived for those attending the meeting.

Arlyn Christopherson, NSS member and "Wildlife School" teacher at the zoo, will lead a "sounds" tour of the zoo from 10:30 - 11:30. Bring lunch (or buy a hotdog at the zoo). Reports from the membership will be presented from 12:00-1:00 and will be followed by the business meeting and election of officers. Nature Sounds Society meetings are open to anyone with an interest in natural sounds, whether amateur or professional. For further information contact Paul Matzner in the Oakland Museum Natural Sciences Department at (415) 273-3884.

SFBBO ENDOWMENT FUND

From its inception, the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory recognized the need for long-term funding. As a means of accomplishing this, an endowment fund was established with the money received from life memberships and memorial gifts. Only the interest used from this fund and to date, the balance of this fund stands at \$4,000. We would like to build this fund up substantially. Please remember us and our programs when considering memorial donations. Thank you.

Correction.

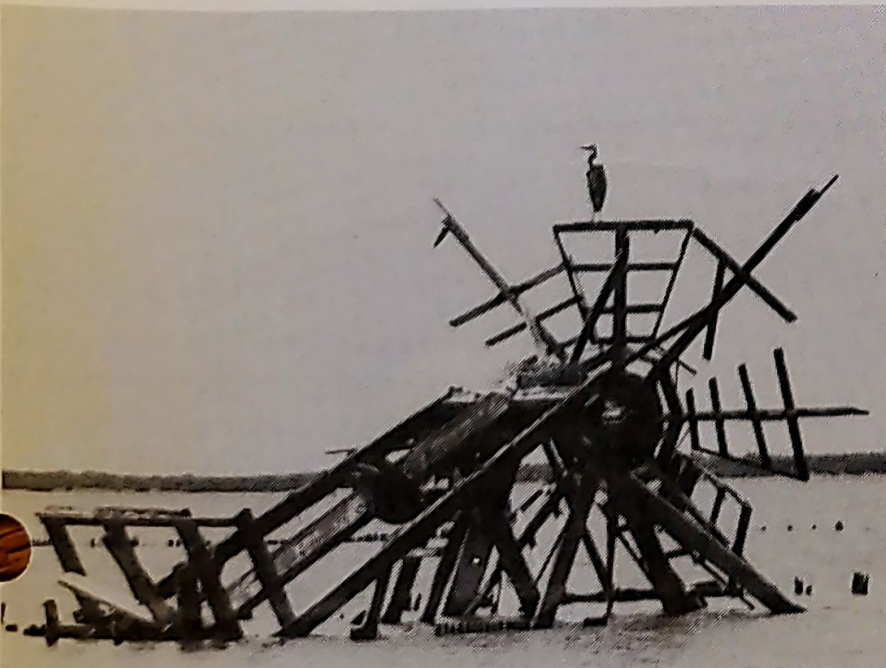
The SFBBO pocket appointment calendars that are on sale at the Bird Observatory office are 1986 calendars not 1985 as advertised in the last newsletter. Still a bargain at \$4

GREAT BLUE HERONS

They came drifting in on the waves of the wind. "How can these creatures be, simultaneously, so awkward and graceful looking?" I asked myself as I watched two Great Blue Herons (*Ardea herodias*) returning to their nests. There were only 3 nests at this site - a small grove of eucalyptus and other trees in a dense urban area in Santa Cruz. The early morning silence was broken by the squawking of the juveniles in their nests, as they realized that breakfast had arrived "kek-kek-kek-kek-kerrrrrr," the nestlings chattered, while the adults settled on branches near the nest, seemingly unconcerned by the demanding chicks. After a few minutes, the parent birds hopped to the nest. The chicks ate heartily and as their hunger diminished, they stopped squawking.

After years of studying the Great Blue Heron nesting colony on Bair Island, we have begun to look at GBHs nesting in Santa Cruz, Alviso, Hayward, Morgan Hill and elsewhere. On Bair Island these herons build nests in the tops of Coyote Brush, which seldom exceed seven feet in height. The Santa Cruz birds were using a more typical site for their nests - the tops of tall trees ringed by a sort of shield of other, often shorter, trees. Great Blue Herons nest in colonies across North America usually in the tops of Sycamore, elm, pine or other trees.

Though Great Blue Herons prefer to nest in large colonies at the tops of tall trees, birds in the south San Francisco Bay areas have adapted to the decline in suitable habitat by using available platforms to nest. On Bair Island, they utilized the Coyote Brush as there were no available trees. On the Baumberg tract near Hayward, Nancy Norvell found them nesting on several derelict Archimedes screws which were once used to pump water from one salt pond to another. Resembling fallen windmills, the Archimedes screws look to me as if they could have chalked on their weathered sides: "Don Quixote was here. And, this time, he won!" The herons won, too, using these relics as nesting platforms in 1984 and 1985.



Great Blue Heron nesting on an Archimedes screw on the Baumberg tract near Hayward. Photo by Nancy Norvell, 1985.

In 1985, Dave Jensen found Great Blue Herons nesting on a PG&E transformer in the middle of Coyote Creek. High above the water and far from land, these birds hatched and raised several chicks.

The adaptability of these individuals is a good sign. But we still worry about the future of Great Blue Herons nesting in the south bay. Habitat is diminishing and toxins in the environment are increasing. We need to learn more about these delightful birds who blend awkwardness and grace to make a living art form.

Ed Roberts

OCTOBER GENERAL MEETING

This month's General Meeting should be of interest to all SFBBO volunteers and for those who just want to learn more about the activities of the organization. Rick Palmer, a photographer and co-founder of **Biosphere Educational Films**, will present a two projector lap dissolve slide show program on Bird Observatory projects and activities. Biosphere Educational Films is an organization designed to fill academic and lay needs for biological and ecological audio-visual information about the south San Francisco Bay and Central California region. Rick has been photo documenting projects and activities for the Bird Observatory since the beginning of the year and has amassed a large collection of slides. This slide show will be used as a promotional presentation for education, volunteer recruitment and fundraising and shows candid shots of volunteers carrying out research projects as well as the wildlife they are studying. So now's the time to see yourself in action, hunched over a nest of chicks, wading through mud and water or traveling by boat through the sloughs. Join us on October 3rd for a great evening.

RESULTS OF BOARD ELECTION

At the September General Meeting the SFBBO membership voted in three Directors to serve on the Board for three year terms. Congratulations to Phyllis Browning, Jean Dubois and Lou Young. Phyllis and Lou are filling in the vacancies of Ginny Becchine and Lorrie Emery who's terms have expired and Jean was an incumbent. To Ginny and Lorrie, thanks! It's your hard work that has made the Bird Observatory work.

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Thursday, October 3, 1985

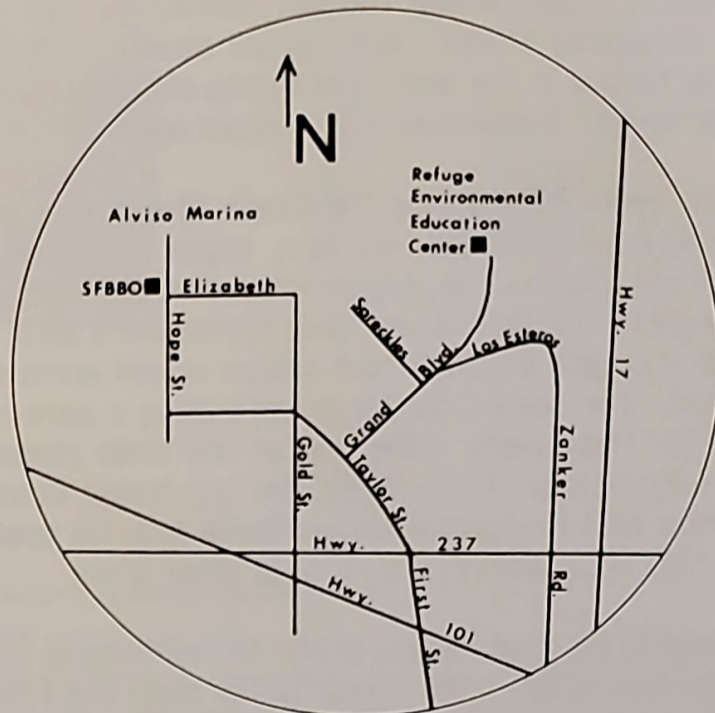
Refuge Environmental Education Center
in Alviso

7.30 pm

FEATURED SPEAKER: Rick Palmer will present a two projector, lap dissolve, slide show program on SFBBO projects & activities for 1985. (See article in this newsletter)

The Bird Observatory office is located at 1290 Hope St. in Alviso. The office is open from 1-5 pm weekdays and some weekends. But before stopping in, call (408) 946-6548 and check the schedule.

The General Membership meetings are held on the first Thursday of the month at 7:30 pm at the San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge Environmental Education Center in Alviso. (see map below). The Board meetings are open to the membership and are held monthly. Call the Observatory for dates and times.



DONATIONS. Thanks to Barbara Cox, Pat Dubois and Kathy Hobson for the refreshments for the September General meeting.




Editor Susie Formenti

Assistant Editor, Dave Nauer

The newsletter deadline is the first Monday of the month. Send contributions to the editor: Susie Formenti, 16675 Buckskin Ct., Morgan Hill, Ca. 95037.

The San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory is a non-profit corporation under IRS statue 501(c)3. All memberships and contributions are tax deductible.

 P.O. Box 247 Alviso, CA 95002 (408) 946-6540	I would like to join Renew my membership in the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory	
	NAME _____	Student/Senior \$10
	ADDRESS _____	Regular \$15
	CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____	Family \$20
	PHONE (____) _____	Associate \$50
	Contributing \$100	
	Sustaining \$200	
	Life \$400 *	
	Patron \$2000 *	
	Corporation \$500 +	

* Single payment becomes part of an endowment fund

Make checks payable to SFBBO. Your gift membership is tax deductible.