

# The Acorn

Newsletter of the Miwok Archeological Preserve of Marin

## Classes Help Illuminate Native Wisdom

by John Littleton, MAPOM Vice President

One narrative thread weaving its way through our California Indian Studies Program is the intention to bring forth indigenous wisdom. With the severe environmental challenges facing the modern world, traditional cultural practices provide a time tested model of right relationship with the natural world. The understandings embedded in this nature-centered worldview are reflected in the words of MAPOM members and class instructors.

Gene Buvelot (Coast Miwok and long term MAPOM board member) emphasizes the importance of keeping skills and practices alive for the general public, and especially for tribal members who are encouraged to enroll in the classes. That knowledge base, he explains, successfully sustained Native people in Marin and Sonoma Counties for thousands of years. "Thus, there's much to be learned." Gene reviews some of the lessons from the past that shed light on the dilemmas confronting us in the present. "Only use what you need. Share with the whole community. Give back with thanks. Take care of the grasses, the trees and the land and you'll have a place to live for a long time. Adopt a non-exploitive relationship with the environment."

As Class Coordinator and vice president of MAPOM, I wonder why these teachings seem so obvious, yet so difficult to implement in contemporary society. What's the resistance? In California the footprint left on the eco-system by our original inhabitants remains barely visible today. The waters ran pure, the air



*Julia and Lucy Parker's Basket Weaving class*

stayed clean and the plants and animals thrived in a healthy environment.

It's important to emphasize that while the classes are intended to impart a formal skill, they informally serve to illuminate that deep-rooted intelligence. Julia Parker (Coast Miwok/Pomo) and her daughter, Lucy Parker (Coast Miwok/Pomo/Paiute) offer basket making. Julia believes: "By teaching students to weave we're not only offering a sacred skill, but also we're connecting them in a magical way to our history and our environment."

Lois Connor-Bohna (North Fork Mono/Chukchansi Yokuts) will teach a class in acorn processing. She believes that "by keeping the ancient indigenous tradition of acorn preparation alive we help preserve the wisdom of our ancestors and our Indian people." During her classes Lois enjoys sharing the old ways "which are grounded in respectful relationship with the Creator's garden."

In his class, Ed Willie (Pomo/Wailaki/Paiute) referred to "...the ethics of nature stewardship, the principles of regenerative land management and the spiritual practices of Native people."

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## MAPOM *President's Message*

MAPOM has many exciting classes and events scheduled and we hope you will be a part of them. We are working with both College of Marin and Point Reyes National Seashore to bring these wonderful California Indian cultural events to you.

On the morning of Big Time on July 20 at Pt. Reyes we will have a fantastic set of four Native California speakers: Sherri Smith-Ferri (Pomo and Coast Miwok), Vanessa Esquivido (Wintu), Eva Salazar (Kumeyaay) and Bradley Marshall (Hupa) each speaking on their cultural experiences at the class. I hope you will consider signing up for this class as this is a rare opportunity. Right after the class, Big Time will be held at Kule Loklo and MAPOM is sponsoring two Pomo dance groups that will present traditional California Indian dancing. There will also be booths with books, basket weaving, bead making and much more.

In addition, we have classes set-up through the rest of 2013 and into next year. Please see the listing here and at MAPOM online. Many are offered for the first time.

Another news item is that we have a new MAPOM board member, Mike Tarkman. Mike comes from a rich heritage of early California people and is an avid historian of our state. We welcome Mike to the board.

I also want to thank the many MAPOM members who came by our table at the Marin Indian Art Show in San Rafael in February. It really makes all of us feel closer as an organization. I know all the board members enjoyed talking with you.

Finally, our classes have been going well and we have heard much praise from those taking them. We look forward to providing you with more.

Again, thank you so much for your interest and support!

*Ralph Shanks, MAPOM President*

## Classes Illuminate Native Wisdom

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And in similar fashion Sky Road Webb (Coast Miwok) and Alicia Retes (Mayo/Yaqui/Cherokee) will be offering a jewelry making, storytelling, tule crafts and games class. While the specific subjects of the day will be valuable, the value of the deeper insight that accompanies their presentation may be invaluable. Both Sky and Alicia see the kindling of ecological consciousness as a subtext of their contribution.

We trust this knowledge can help fuel the greatest good for the people and the planet and for our sustainability into the future.

## *Welcome to our newest MAPOM board member, Mike Tarkman!*



The Acorn is produced and distributed annually by the Miwok Archeological Preserve of Marin. MAPOM is a volunteer based, nonprofit 501(c)3 organization and welcomes new members and public input. We also encourage members to join our Board of Directors and help our ongoing mission to educate with MAPOM programs such as the California Indian Skills classes, and through our publications.

Annual MAPOM membership fees are \$10 for seniors, full-time students and first-time MAPOM students; \$20 for individuals; and \$25 for families. The Acorn is received as a membership benefit. For more information and to join MAPOM, visit our website at [www.mapom.org](http://www.mapom.org), or call (415) 472-3202.

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# MAPOM's California Indian Studies Program class photos



Julia Parker (Coast Miwok/Pomo) instructs Alicia Retes (Mayo/Yaqui/Cherokee) and Shawna Kelly (Cherokee) in the ancient art of basket weaving.



Ed Willie teaches basket weaving at the Point Reyes National Seashore.



Ralph Shanks teaches about California Indian baskets at the UC Berkeley Hearst Museum.



Betty Goerke's Ring Mountain Petroglyph and Miwok Cultural History Class.

Photos on this page and on the front page are by John Littleton.

# College of Marin California Indian Studies Certificate Program in Partnership with MAPOM and the National Park Service

## Projected Class Schedule for 2013-2014

Our exciting course line-up offers a wide variety of subjects through next year. You are welcome to sign up for any course, and a Certificate of Completion from the College of Marin is awarded to those who complete at least five of the various classes offered during the two year period, which must include any one of the four Core Classes. Core Classes will be offered in July 2013 and 2014 at the Kule Loklo Big Time Celebration in the Point Reyes National Seashore and in February of 2014. To register call the College of Marin Community Education office at 415-485-9318 and ask them to send you a brochure. You can review the class descriptions, instructor biographies and projected scheduled dates on our website at: [MAPOM.org](http://MAPOM.org).

July 20, 2013: Core Class: Four California Indian Guest Lecturers with Bradley Marshall, Sherrie Smith-Ferri, Vanessa Esquivido and Eva Salazar. Certificate Award Ceremony. Big Time Festival.

August 17-18: Traditional Acorn Preparation with Lois Connor-Buhna (North Fork Mono/Chukchansi Yokuts)

September 14-15: Basket Making with Julia Parker (Miwok/Pomo) and Lucy Parker (Miwok/Pomo/Paiute)

October 19: Beginning and Intermediate Flint-knapping with Ken Peek and Tsim Schneider (Miwok/Pomo)

November 2: Jewelry Making, Storytelling, Crafts and Games with Sky Road Webb (Miwok) and Alicia Retes (Mayo, Yaqui and Cherokee)

January 2014: Behind-the-scene tour of the Basket Collection at the UC Berkeley Hearst Museum. Field Trip with Ralph Shanks. (Date TBA)

February 2014: Core Class: Overview of California Indian Cultures with Betty Goerke and John Littleton. (Date TBA)

March 2014: Introduction to Paleotechnology with Tamara Wilder. (Date TBA)

April 2014: Acorn Preparation with Lois Connor-Buhna (North Fork Mono/Chukchansi Yokuts). (Date TBA)

May 2014: Basket Making with Ed Willie (Pomo/Wailaki). (Date TBA)

June 2014: Jewelry Making, Storytelling, Tule Crafts and Cultural Wisdom with Sky Road Webb (Coast Miwok) and Alicia Retes (Mayo/Yaqui/Cherokee). (Date TBA)

July 2014: Core Class: California Indian Guest Lectures focused on environmental lessons for the modern world from traditional cultures. Certificate Award Ceremony. Kule Loklo Big Time Festival.

# Kule Loklo Big Times

By John Golda, Point Reyes Park Ranger

On the third Saturday of each July (this year on July 20th) Kule Loklo comes to life during a celebration called "Big Time." Kule Loklo is an exhibit, a collection of buildings and structures - the sort that might have been found in the Bay Area for thousands of years. For some thirty-three years the recreated village has served as a tool to help educate visitors and school groups. During Big Time, Kule Loklo pulses with excitement and activity.

It seems like the event at the Point Reyes National Seashore has always been an important part of our year. As I dug through the records and archives of the National Park Service, I was surprised to find little information on what guided the members of MAPOM and the park staff who planned the first event. Certainly, it was a chance for MAPOM and the park to invite the public to share in what might be their first glimpse of ancient traditions. The first festival at Kule Loklo, known as the "Native American Celebration," was held in August of 1980. It wasn't called "Big Time" until 1987.

Those first celebrations included dancers, artists, vendors, and Native American food.

Volunteers demonstrated arts and traditional talents that have been forgotten by most - skills like creating razor sharp tools and arrowheads of chert and obsidian; making cordage from plant fibers or tanning hides; shaping gleaming beads of clam shell, and teaching children how to make bull roarers thrum in the summer air. Demonstrations of basket weaving introduced visitors to an art that has found its highest expression here in California. Big Time became an opportunity for participants to share their knowledge and their culture, inviting visitors to value traditions and cultures that they may have never understood or appreciated before. Big Time brought the sounds, smells, and excitement that Kule Loklo alone could only whisperingly hint at.

Big Time has changed a little over the years, each generation shaping it to suit their times and needs but keeping true to its spirit. The children who attended the first events are bringing their own children now. It's an event that brings our friends and partners, our visitors and our staff together every year. MAPOM has been an important contributor and partner of Point Reyes National Seashore. We've worked together to share some of those special moments and to keep the tradition of Big Time alive for the future. The California Indian Studies Program in collaboration with the College of Marin is another example of that partnership.



*Bob Thalman (right) demonstrates demonstrates the bullroarer whirling above his head at the 2011 Big Time. (photo by Erik Gordon Bainbridge)*



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### *Thank you to these generous donors to MAPOM*

The Board of Directors of MAPOM would like to thank the following for their very generous donations in response to our 2012 appeal letter (donations received so far).

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