

# Pack 262 News

April 15, 2010

## Briones Hike Does Not Disappoint – 262 Scouts Find Many Creatures and Have a Great Time Discovering !

With the Briones Hike, which approximately 20 scouts and adults attended on Saturday, March 3<sup>rd</sup> two things are always to be expected. First, the scouts will find all kinds of critters – newts, salamanders and frogs. The second thing is that it is usually very wet and

Creek Trail, we transitioned onto the Spengler Trail.

Soon we arrived at the Marichich Lagoons where the boys waded past the gate and explored around the lagoons. A couple of baby newts and full sized newts were found as well as a blue-

### Mark Your Calendars Now For These Upcoming Pack Events:

**Annual Ship Sleepover** – Saturday, April 24 / 7PM to Sunday / 8AM on Bacutha at San Francisco Maritime National Park

**May Pack Meeting** – Thursday, May 20 / 7PM MUR

Advancement Ceremonies for Tigers, Wolves, Bears and Webelos 1

**Annual Pack Picnic** – Sunday, June 6 / 11AM – 3PM at Clayton Community Park



muddy. Such was the case with this exciting event in 2010..

The group set out from Mt. Diablo Elementary School at 9:00 AM Saturday morning – caravan-ing over to the trail head and starting the hike by 10:00 AM. Scouts wore their class B uniforms since it was pretty muddy. After hiking for about an hour on the Alhambra

tailed salamanders and frogs. Everyone agreed that the trek was worthwhile.

## Tall Ship Balclutha has quite a story to tell

On January 15, 1887, with a twenty-six-man crew, *Balclutha* sailed under British registry

from Cardiff, Wales, on her maiden voyage. She was bound for San Francisco. The ship entered the Golden Gate after 140 days at sea, unloaded her cargo of 2,650 tons of coal, and took on sacks of California wheat.

### The Grain Trade

The '49ers panned for fortunes in mountain streams, but less than twenty years later farmers

discovered California's real wealth: its hot, fertile valley floor. Soon horse-drawn wagons laden with sacks of wheat rolled from the fields to landings on the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers. Steam-driven sternwheel boats and railroad boxcars hauled the 100-pound bags along the Carquinez Straits to Port Costa, where deepwatermen (large, ocean-going vessels like *Balclutha*) loaded California's grain crop drew hundreds of British vessels through the Golden Gate each year. The hard dry California wheat traveled the 14,000 nautical miles to Liverpool unusually well, and the amber grain always brought a high price. The many ships coming to load grain resulted in low shipping rates for imported coal and other incoming goods and materials.

Like the Gold Rush, the grain trade shaped California's future. The lowered cost of high-quality coal spurred the growth of manufacturing and transportation. The easy access to international markets won California a measure of independence from the East Coast, and the railroads. In banking, in shipping, and in agriculture the grain trade attracted investment and created jobs. The demand for grain sacks alone pumped \$2 million per year into the local economy (growers paid 10-15 cents apiece for the bags that Chinese workers wove from Calcutta jute).

Because of the months-long ocean voyage, *Balclutha* made only one round-trip per year while engaged in the Europe-to-San Francisco grain trade. She arrived with a cargo three times, but also brought pottery, cutlery, Scotch whisky (from Glasgow and Liverpool) and "Swansea general" (tinplate, coke and pig iron) to San Francisco. San Francisco was just one of many ports of call. Throughout 1880s and 1890s the *Balclutha* sailed the world in the great ocean trades of her day, rounding Cape Horn a

total of 17 times, and voyaging to New York to load case oil, to Rangoon for rice, to Iquique for nitrate, to Callao for guano, to New Zealand for wool and tallow. She discharged her homeward cargoes at Plymouth London, and in the ancient continental ports of Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Antwerp, and Havre.

### **Lumber Across the Pacific 1899-1902**

In 1899 the *Balclutha* was purchased and transferred to Hawaiian registry by a San Francisco company that owned sawmills on the Puget Sound in Washington State. She then made three voyages between the West Coast and Australia, carrying an average of 1,500,000 board feet of lumber stowed in her hold and lashed on deck. Much of the lumber she carried ended up underground, used for mining timbers in the Broken Hill Mine at Port Pirie, Australia. Her cargo home was usually coal from Newcastle for the locomotives of the Southern Pacific Railroad.

*Balclutha* was the last vessel to fly the flag of the Hawaiian Kingdom. In 1901 a special act of the United States Congress admitted the ship to American registry so that she could engage in "coastwise" trade (i.e. between American ports). Soon thereafter, the Alaska Packers Association, a San Francisco firm which harvested and canned salmon, chartered her to carry men and supplies north – to Alaska.

### **Salmon Packet**

In 1902 the *Balclutha* began a new career in the Alaska salmon trade which was to last for 28 years. Each spring the ship loaded cannery supplies and carried north as many as 300 men for the fishing season. In the fall she returned to San Francisco with the pack from Chignik cannery, in a good year 78,000 cases of tinned salmon. In 1904 while on her third voyage to Alaska, the ship ran aground on an

offshore reef and was badly damaged near Kodiak Island. She was then sold to the Alaska Packers Association for \$500. After extensive repairs, they renamed her *Star of Alaska* (all Packer iron and steel sailing vessels had a "Star" prefix to their names). She then continued to work in the Alaskan salmon trade until 1930.

During this career, the ship sailed up the West Coast from Alameda, California, carrying supplies and cannery workers. *Star of Alaska* anchored out in Chignik Bay, Alaska, during April. After the supplies were unloaded and the cannery workers had settled into the company's camp ashore, only a shipkeeper or two remained on board. In early September, her hold packed with cases of canned salmon, *Star of Alaska* started the 2,400-mile voyage back to San Francisco Bay. She was considered a fast sailer, averaging better than twenty-two days for the trip north and fifteen days when homeward bound. During the winter the ship was laid up with the rest of the Packer's fleet of thirty-odd vessels in Alameda, where shipwrights performed maintenance and renovation. In 1911, the poop deck was extended to house Italian and Scandinavian fishermen. Later, additional bunks were added in the "tween deck for Chinese cannery workers. As *Balclutha*, the ship carried a crew of twenty-six men; on *Star of Alaska*, over 200 men made the trip north.

*Star of Alaska* was the only sailing ship the Packers sent north in 1930, and when she returned that September she, too, was retired.