

# The Cachuma Lake Nature Center

Cordially Invites You to the Premier of its

## *“Food for Thought” Speakers Series*

Sunday, September 12, 2010

2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Featuring

*Nakia Zavalla*

*Cultural Director for the  
Santa Ynez Band Of Chumash Indians*

Presenting a talk entitled

### *“The Chumash Presence at Cachuma Lake”*

Focusing on the Chumash way of life before European settlement

With a fascinating look at the reawakening of  
the Samala Chumash language over the past 40 years

The Cachuma Lake Recreation Hall

Light Refreshments & Beverages will be served

2:00 – 2:30 Social hour

2:30 – 4:00 Presentation with a question period to follow

RSVP: 682-1381

## Some Background on the Reawakening of the Samala Chumash Language

Thought to be dead for more than 40 years, the last surviving branch of Chumash languages was merely dormant. For the past several years, Richard Applegate, a linguist hired by the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash, has been working with tribal elders and five apprentices to teach them the language that he unearthed while completing his doctoral thesis at Berkeley in the late 1960s. Applegate recently completed a 4,000-word dictionary, complete with color illustrations, to be used by classes on the Santa Ynez reservation, or, he hopes, by anyone who wants to learn more about this language.

Called Samala, it is one of six Chumash languages spoken by native people living in Central and Southern California at the time of first European contact. The last fluent speaker died in 1965, but the work of John P. Harrington - who for 40-plus years worked to record Native American languages as the head of the Smithsonian's Ethnology Bureau - survived. More than a million pages of phonetic notes on 11 languages, including Samala, also known as Inese±o, remained in boxes. Although most of Harrington's work on Chumash language had been completed before World War I, the meticulous notes and recordings left by Harrington provided the basis for the dictionary. "What an amazing journey it's been for me," said Applegate. "From sitting in a basement in Berkeley with all of those old manuscripts to actually speaking [Samala] with tribal elders and seeing them actively involved in learning it."

.....The five apprentices who worked with Applegate will be responsible for passing on their linguistic traditions to others in a series of classes offered on the reservation. "They're natives and have a huge passion for learning this," said Applegate. He also noted that the road to revival for this language is still long. "At this point, there isn't anyone who's fluent. I'm probably the closest thing there is to that, but I'd have a hard time if I were plunked into a Chumash village 200 years ago."

.....excerpt from an article by Ben Preston  
The Santa Barbara Independent, April 24, 2008