

NEW PROGRAM BY JORG AND MIMI FLEIGE:
THE PLANTS OF SAN PEDRO VALLEY PARK

Jorg is always seeking prime photos of the flowers of the Bay Area (Please note 2 of his photos here); Mimi is looking to present things more powerfully to you, and I think you will see the difference in their new floristic program scheduled for **Saturday, February 13, 2016** at 3pm in our Visitor Center.



(Photo above of **wind poppy, *Papaver heterophyllum***, by Jorg Fleige)

Mimi will highlight some of the uses of our native plants, as she narrates Jorg's visual display of San Pedro Valley Park's flora. The couple is well known in the East and North Bay, having given programs in that area, but this time they have tailored things just for us.



Jorg and Mimi are graduates of Sonoma State, where he majored in Archaeology and she in Psychology and Horticulture. Mimi managed retail plant nurseries for Consumers Cooperative of Berkeley and the Sloat Garden Center; subsequently the pair founded a popular organic horticultural business. They later became active in the California Native Plant Society & the California Horticultural Society & became involved in photography (Jorg) & botanical classification (Mimi) for the Solano Land Trust. (Just above you can see Jorg's lovely photo of a butterfly **Mariposa lily, *Calochortus venustus***.)

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REAL RAIN AT LAST

Istvan Puski, Joseph Piro, Rangers Escoto & Vasquez, etc. spent lots of time and effort digging rain ditches, so it was nice to see some substantial rain water flowing along the drain dips & off the trails. Here are the 3 heaviest rain days in December in SPVP: Dec. 19—1.40"; Dec. 21st—1.87"; Dec 22nd—1.52", and a total of 8.60" through Dec. 29! (Ranger reports are for the previous 24 hrs. of precipitation.) Average rainfall for this month in Pacifica is 4.33", but may be twice that much in the Park. (Note: in the wild years of 1981-1982 we had over 70" in SPVP & there were "only" 37" in SF.)



ROB CALA'S INTERTIDAL LIFE OF FITZGERALD
SATURDAY, JANUARY 16 AT 3PM

Ranger **Rob Cala**, who will appear at the Visitor Center on **January 16**, has an exceptional talent for photographing and understanding the huge variety of life in the oxygen-rich wave-buffed zone between the seashore & deeper waters. Rob has been a ranger at Fitzgerald Marine Reserve for many years, soaking up the atmosphere, excitement & life of these shallow rocky areas. But he is also nationally known as an original intertidal photographer.



Robert Cala has produced an artistic and scientific book of photographs and text on the **sea anemoneae, chitons, octopus, sea stars** and other marine dwellers of this challenging habitat. And Rob's film on intertidal life has been selected by the Thunder Bay International Film Festival in association with the NOAA. The film was also shown at the SF International Ocean Film Festival. (Rob Cala photo of **sea anemoneae** underwater)



With his outgoing personality and good sense of humor, he is sure to be a hit with our nature lovers, as he proudly displays his shallow marine menagerie on our screen, teaching us some of the ecology and life history of its inhabitants.

ON THE TRAIL

Ron Wilson shares his photo of a **Black Phoebe** on a **female coyote brush** plant on the Weiler Ranch road. Ron's been busy with a new rescue border collie, so hasn't had much time to compose his SPVP photos.



Three rain-soaked **teenage girls** came into the Visitor Center on December 20, delighted that they had just seen their first **banana slug** of the season on the Brooks Creek Trail. Moisture loving critters are out in the open again. Keep an eye out for **salamanders!** See page 3. (continued on p. 4)



OLD AND NEWCOMERS “DETAIL” DRAIN DIPS IN DECEMBER

By Joseph Piro

We had a great turn-out for our last Trail Day of the year on December 12th, including a few new-comers (marked with an asterik). Here's our big group picture taken on our way back down from working on the west end of the Hazelnut Trail (behind the Visitor's Center) where we cleaned out several drain ditches and dips -- perfect timing as the weather was wintery pleasant that day but we sure got rain the next day! Standing, from left to right, is **Keith, Shaun***, Park Aide **Brian King, Edna***, **Evita***, **Lucia Riedemann, Vivianne Hiriart, me** and Ranger **David Vasquez** and, kneeling in the front, are **Istvan Puski** and Ranger **Greg Escoto**. Alas, **Carlo Parra** left before we took the picture. Happy holidays to everyone and best wishes for a New Year 2016 filled with good health, happiness, peace and success!



NEWS—NOT SO BRIEF

Big changes are in the wind for San Pedro County Park: **Kevin Scott**, our well-liked and respected, hard working chief ranger for the coastal parks which include San Pedro County Park, Marine Fitzgerald Preserve, Devil's Slide, the Quarry and others, will be promoted to the head of the maintenance for all the S.M. Co. Parks We welcome **Matt de Carlo** as our new head ranger for the coastal division. **David Vasquez**, who has been a respected ranger at SPVP for many years, a great friend of the Friends of SPVP, and who had a little over a year ago been promoted to a ranger III, will be transferred from our park in order to take over as the ranger IV chief for the south parks division: Memorial Park, Pescadero Creek Park (8020 acres!) and Sam McDonald Park. **Laurel Finnegan** will have a promotion to a post in the Redwood City office of County Parks. We are happy to hear that we will still have our lone female, **Miranda HOLETON**, who will continue as a ranger II for SPVP. At this point in time it looks like **Greg Escoto, Kevin O'Brian, & Matt Auda-Capella** will remain at SPVP; **Steve Cross, Shane Rogers, and Rob Cala** will be joining us. **Mark Rogers** will be a new ranger III here.

A NATURALIST'S PERSPECTIVE
by Jim Mackey

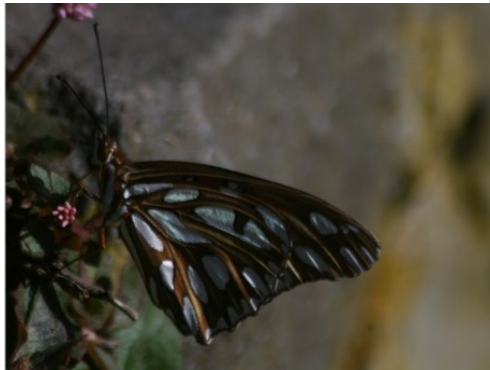
Jan./Feb. 2016

The Tropics visit Pacifica. Last October 22 I was walking down my front walk when, out of the corner

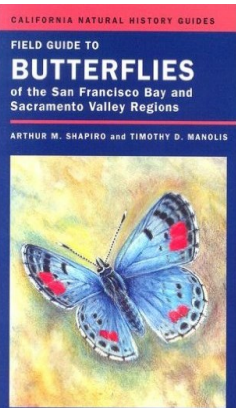


of my eye, I spotted an orange butterfly fluttering near the ground. I stopped in my tracks; it was about the size of a Monarch. Then, hooray! It landed on a red verbena and

spread its wings in the sun. It was beautiful - not a Monarch nor any other butterfly that I had ever seen. It had a few black spots symmetrically located on an orange background, with a strong suffusion of red on the inner halves of all four wings. The undersides of the hind wings were unique in having long blotches of silver. (see Jim Mackey's first photo above of top of the butterfly; immediately above is Jim's photo of the underwing.)



I rushed back into the house and got my copy of **Arthur Shapiro's** "Field Guide to Butterflies of the San Francisco Bay..." My butterfly was unmistakably the species beautifully illustrated in color or plate 17 - by **Timothy Manolis**. It was a Gulf Fritillary (*Agraulis vanillae*). Shapiro reports that it is tropical and subtropical, and a recent arrival in the Bay Area, with only a couple of Bay Area records before 1955. However now it is widespread in the Bay Area. My son, **Jim**, has seen them in Redwood City and Fremont, while my Brother, **Bruce**, has seen them in Berkeley. **Laurie Nikitas** has been seeing these fritillaries in her yard in the Sunset District of SF: "Wow! Have we ever seen them! They showed up about 2 months ago--in our passion flower--and have been there ever since."



I have continued to see them, until November 6, feeding on my neighbor's lantanas (on Sequoia Way, off of Oddstad Blvd.). (orange and yellow flowers are lantana photo credit: Google)



Liam O'Brien, his brochure "Butterflies of San Francisco" (2009) reports that Gulf Fritillaries are established in the Mission District & use passionvines as a host. Shapiro says that this butterfly is the only species in California that never uses a native plant as a host. He also says that it has not established populations in the Sacramento Valley because of its vulnerability to killing frosts.

Why has this butterfly extended its range to the north? Please don't invoke global warming as an open and shut case. But maybe people are planting more passionvines and lantanas? If so, is it because these plants prosper more - due to global warming? Shapiro thinks that the establishment of the butterfly in the Bay Area is probably due to an introduction. He notes that this species is often bred for release at social functions. However he notes that these releases do not seem to persist.

Human-mediated changes in environment produce rapid changes in animal and plant distribution. How about the Eurasian collared dove, that is now breeding in Pacifica? And cattle egrets, that spread from Africa to Latin America to California? And humans, thanks to global cooling the ocean dropped, allowing a migration into the Western Hemisphere? (Ask **Shirley Drye**.)

COMMON SALAMANDERS IN OUR PARK

To your editor's knowledge there are four species of these slender amphibians in SPVP. The *Batrachoceps*



attenuatus is probably the most common, the smallest and the skinniest, but you must look under the leaves to find them. The *Ensatina escholtzii*

and the rarer *Aneides lugubris* (right) (*califtherps* photos) are also found in our Park. **Jim Mackey & Walter Colquhoun** have seen the **Pacific giant salamander** in SPVP.



ON THE TRAIL (Continued)

Ron Wilson's photo of an American Robin that he saw just off the Weiler Ranch Rd. is artistic. Perhaps this is an alder tree that it's perched in, one whose "cones" are getting



ready for a Pacifica spring. He saw the "fella" just waiting to be photographed, the day after Christmas. A week before Ron's sighting, Jim Mackey had seen a scattered flock of about 50 robins between the Plaskon and Hazelnut Trails, with some "focusing" on the *Heteromeles arbutifolia* (toyon or Christmas berry)

**READY FOR THE RAIN on NOVEMBER'S TRAIL DAY**

By Joseph Piro

In anticipation of hopefully rainy weather ahead this winter, Vivianne Hiriart, Lucia Riedemann, Angelica Riedemann (Vivianne's aunt who was visiting), Nick Gil-don, Istvan Puski, Keith and I joined Ranger Greg Escoto for our November 14th Trail Day to do some water management work on the start of the Montara Mountain Trail. Under a crisp, sunny, blue sky we used McLeods, shovels, rakes and mattocks to clean leaves and other debris out of several ditches and dig a few new strategically-placed drain dips along the way to just about the start of the eucalyptus forest. And overnight we did get some rain -- what perfect timing!

JANUARY—FEBRUARY CALENDAR 2016**JANUARY TRAIL DAY**

Saturday, January 9.....9am

JANUARY BOARD MEETING

Wednesday, January 13.....7pm

JANUARY HABITAT RESTORATION DAY

Saturday, January 16.....9am

ROB CALA'S TIDE POOL ANIMALS OF FITZGERALD

Saturday, January 16.....3pm

FEBRUARY BOARD MEETING

Wednesday, February 10.....7pm

FEBRUARY TRAIL DAY

Saturday, February 13.....9am

MIMI AND JORG FLEIGE'S PLANTS OF SPVP

Saturday, February 13.....3pm

FEBRUARY HABITAT RESTORATION DAY

Saturday, February 20.....9am

For all events except the board mtg., meet at the Visitor Center.

FACTOID**TARDIGRADE SPORTS MOST FOREIGN DNA OF ANY KIND OF LIFE AND YOU CAN BET ITS IN OUR PARK!**

Scientists have sequenced the entire genome of the tardigrade, AKA the water bear, for the first time.



Finding out that this weird little creature has the most foreign genes of any critter studied so far – or to put it another way, roughly one-sixth of the tardigrade's genome was stolen from other species: mostly bacteria, but also fungi & plants .

This microscopic water creature grows to just over 1 mm on average, & is the only creature that can survive in the harsh environment of space. It can also withstand temperatures from just above absolute zero to well above the boiling point of water, can cope with ridiculous amounts of pressure & radiation, and can live for more than 10 years without food or water. Basically, it's nearly impossible to kill, and now scientists have shown that its DNA is just as bizarre as it is; maybe all this input of foreign hereditary material is the reason for its capabilities. [Yes, you can find them in SPVP, hiding out in a bit of moss, perhaps—just add water and believe in the "invisible". (Source for text and scanning electron micrograph : sciencealert.com)]

The Leaders of "the Friends of SPVP": President: **Jim Mackey**; Vice President & Editor of this newsletter: **Carolyn Pankow**; Secretary: **Shirley Drye**; Interim Treasurer: **Bing Huey**; member at large: **Istvan Puski**; Visitor Center Staffing: **Mila Stroganoff**; Habitat Restoration leader: **Istvan Puski**; Trail Leader: **Joseph Piro**; Membership: **Jim Steele**; Programs: **Carolyn Pankow**; Trailside Store Team Manager: **Sharron Walker**; Mobile Display Board: **Katie Antista**. Letters to the editor at: carolynjunepankow@yahoo.com