

HOLIDAY PARTY for FRIENDS AND FAMILY

Wednesday, December 8 at 6:30pm

Best known for its gourmet food, lively chatter, and cliff-hanger gift exchange, you will not want to miss the famed "Christmas" get-together with such characters as **Shirley Drye, Susan Hagen, Jim Mackey, and Christine Thatcher**, & a cast of other lively critters. In fact, a strange, "real" critter, a **pseudoscorpion**, did show up at one of these "wild" events much to the surprise of volunteer, **Isabel Ebert**. (snowman clipart from Lester

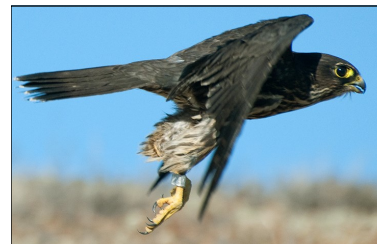
Co. Pub. Lib.) **Jean Leonard**, 359-7485 is the head of the phone crew, who will remind you to bring a \$5-\$10 unisexual gift and will work with you on determining your culinary contribution.



sfunmanch.com

BAY AREA BIRD ENCOUNTERS

On **Saturday, November 13, at 7:30pm**, **Mr. Walter Kitundu** will bring out his photos of hawks, hawks in action. Thank you to **Craig Nikitas**, (last program on Ravens, Crows, etc) for talking this busy man into gracing our Visitor Center. (Kitundu Merlin photo)



This MacArthur Foundation Grant recipient is often called a Renaissance man. He is the inventor of the musical instrument, the Phonoharp. He has built instruments for the Kronos Quartet, was an artist in residence at the Headlands Center for the Arts & was a distinguished visiting professor of "Wood Arts" for '08 at the California College of the Arts. "Walter has performed with the Kronos Quartet, Meshell Ndegeocello, Matmos, & the legendary **Marshall Allen**—in venues as diverse as Carnegie Hall and a high school library in Egilsstadir, Iceland." (The Daily Beast)



Walter is currently a multimedia artist with the Exploratorium, and during the fall he is a faithful hawk bander with the Golden Gate Raptor Observatory in Marin County, along with Craig Nikitas and other loyal workers.

Born in Rochester, Minnesota, Kitundu was actually raised during his early years in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, but returned to live in Minnesota from the ages of 8 to 25. He now lives in San Francisco.

SALMON SPAWNING TRIP for ALL SPVP WORKERS

By the lands of Marin County, kinda near the deep sea waters, lived the salmon beautiful and bold, and the "princess", **Megan Isadore**, who will lead a spawning field trip to the swollen streams of the north. Join us on a free field trip Dec. 4, carpool with us, & call **Carolyn Pankow** at 355-7466. See Megan's write-up on *page 4*.



YOU'RE YOUNG IF YOU'RE 65!

If you can climb a hill, even if you can only, wearing a pair of gloves, yank out the roots of a **poison hemlock**, slam the "holdfast" of an obnoxious **pampas grass**, rescue a red **elderberry bush** from being strangled by **Cape ivy**, you're young, & *we need you to help maintain the native flora.*

Jims Mackey & Pommier are played out. Mackey recently celebrated his 80th birthday & a decade of working on the native plant brigade. Pommier is struggling to keep going after his decades-long fight against pampas grass. **Istvan Puski** should not be expected to go it alone. That, ladies & gentlemen, is the lineup & the bold, bare truth.

Of course we would be happy if you were here every third Saturday of the month, showing up bright and early at 9am, but any time you are here is a good time for the Park. I say, if the friends of Edgewood Park can carry on their battle, if those who extol the loveliness of San Bruno Mountain can do it, then we can show them all that we care about our Park, and we can do it. Can we??

Or will the habitat restoration group bite the dust?

Sincerely, your editor, Carolyn Pankow

ON THE TRAIL

Chilean asters, natives of California, are to be found in their fall bloom "everywhere" on this 10th day of October, in wetter spots by the creek, opposite Plaskon Nature Trail, & on the dryer banks of Weiler Ranch Rd. (idyllwildgardenclub)



In some short grass on the Weiler Ranch Road on an afternoon in mid-October, your **editor** noticed a 1 1/2 in. long **rove beetle** adult, a bit "fat" and metal grey. They are swift predators, but even deign to "chase" down slugs.

DIGGING DIPS ON A WIDENED TRAIL: THE MONTARA

It was just **me** and **Ivan Puski** for the September 11th Trail Day. Ranger **Laurel Hackleman** met us and suggested we continue working on the recently widened Montara Mtn. Trail, so we grabbed a pair of loppers, 2 McLeods and a hard rake. We headed up Brooks Falls & started working from the bench at the intersection downward. We worked a few spots but generally it's settling in pretty well. We also thought we'd take advantage of the easy digging to start re-building some rain dips, so we dug a few in some strategic spots along the way, mostly along the canyon above the eucalyptus forest.

Joseph Piro

"NOVEMBER'S"— PLANT, SKUNKWEED

Back in the late 80's Yuba pass and its extraordinary buttes beckoned to me, as there was a class offered by **Dr. Bob Peterson** on the flora of the Sierras at the S.F.S.U. field campus. During Bob's class nothing was neglected, especially the "belly plants" belonging mostly to the **Phlox** family, the **Polemoniaceae**. This was Bob's specialty as shown by his membership in the society of 3 experts who had an annual national conference to discuss, ponder & fiddle with these quaint flowering plants.



Gracing San Pedro Park are members of the ***Linanthus*** and the ***Navarretia*** genera of the Phlox. I had thought that I

knew most of the flowering plants of our Park, but, despite my class, I had ignored these diminutive fellows. Then one day **Katie Antista** or **Ray Trabucco** (forgive my memory), told me that the stink I was complaining about on the upper Montara Mt. Trail was not from the guy with the black fur & white stripe down the back, but a plant, ***Navarretia squarrosa*** or **skunkweed**. Only a few centimeters tall, this hardy fellow, grows in the middle of trails, where you can release its odor with the scuffing of your shoes against the plant. (info-**Mike Vasey**) Its olfactory presence makes up for its lack of height & showy flowers.

And its raison d'être? Well let it be noted that if you are a patient, detail-type person, you can pulverize the tiny seeds, make a little paste & eat the blend. Mind, you, I am not recommending this until I see someone else consume this mixture without ill effects, and I think you will not try it, as you may wonder about the taste. I squeezed the "forb" between thumb & forefinger, and found a sticky resin adhering to my digits, a protection from dehydration, so I wonder why some **aphids** like to eat the herbage!

Now, if you are a real plant lover, you can visit their flowers from May until August, seeds in Sept, plants lasting till early November, so hurry!

LAUREL HACKLEMAN, our NEW RANGER, Part 2

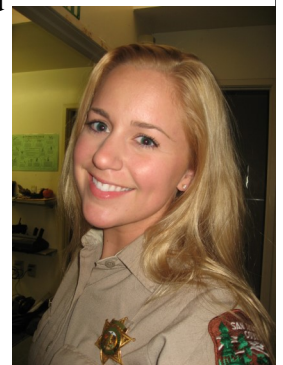
Remember how Laurel backpacked with her Dad & brother on some knockout, blister-making trips? Before that time, when she was "knee high to a grasshopper", she camped & hiked with family members, including Mom, Grandma, & as shown in photo: uncle, cousin, Dad, and herself to his left.



After my education and volunteer work, I began working for the County as a Park Aide in early 2007 at Crystal Springs Trail. If you ever had the opportunity to walk along the reservoir at that time you must remember the port-o pots that we set up every mile or so. The picture there of god-awful human offerings was not pretty, especially if you were on potty patrol; I even went home and cried one night. However, seeing the reservoir first thing in the morning, crystal clear and still like a mirror, really put things in perspective for me.

It was through my internship with the County that I learned about an open Park Aide position, applied, and was placed at District I: Junipero Serra Park & San Bruno Mt. After working there for a few months I was transferred to Coyote Point Park to assist with the busy summer crowds, working with families, taking me back, in a wave of nostalgia, to my old days.

In August 2007, I applied for an opportunity to become a Ranger, and was hired in that round with SPV's, **David Vasquez**. I was then transferred to District II to fill a vacancy and quickly fell in love with Huddart and Edgewood Park. After spending three years in this District, I jumped at the chance to work in District IV (which includes SPVP.) to work with new rangers, & to learn new skills.



As a ranger now, I can still get discouraged with the messes & destruction people leave behind, but minutes later something pulls me back, whether it's a **bobcat** or a covey of **quail**, or just a snapshot of the moment & I think to myself "Wow, I've just seen something really beautiful." Whatever it is, those views, that closeness to nature, always reminds me why I love this job. I get the pleasure of working with my hands, being outdoors, & sharing my excitement for this "wilderness" world with park patrons & volunteers.

Ranger Laurel Hackleman

A NATURALIST'S PERSPECTIVE

By Jim Mackey

Nov. – Dec. 2010

Location is everything. When we bought our house on Oddstad Blvd., in 1969, I was excited to be moving so close to Mt. Montara. I had admired its rugged profile from an upstairs window of our apartment in Parkmerced (in San Francisco). It was also great to be so close to the tidepools in the rocky reefs at Moss Beach (tidepool photo from Facebook). We were visited by many relatives from Ohio, including my grandparents, and my Grandfather asked me which I preferred: mountains or oceans. After some reflection, I said, "oceans." He was surprised, so I explained how beautiful & fascinating a tidepool can be, with so many creatures lurking here & there and interacting with each other. Years later I came to realize that the location we selected for our home made it unnecessary to choose between mountains & the ocean because we had both!



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In the 1970's our family became acquainted with San Pedro Valley. Our children became familiar with the seasonal ponds that occurred where the Pacific Oaks Apartments and Park Mall Shopping Center occur today. There they found treefrog tadpoles to take for "show and tell" at Oddstad School. The children also enjoyed visiting the "metal pieces" by the Weiler Ranch Road. These sheets of corrugated steel, from a collapsed farm building, were a mecca for gopher snakes. San Mateo County began buying land for a park in San Pedro Valley in the 1960's, and the Park's Visitor Center opened in 1983. (See **Barbara Vander Werf's** book: "Montara Mountain" – which is available at our Trailside Store.) The Park's trails are wonderful feats of engineering that poke through formerly impenetrable thickets and criss-cross steep slopes. Maintaining these trails will always be a challenge, & we volunteers can be proud that we have contributed to their upkeep.

Evaluating the Park. From my perspective the most important deficiency of our Park is the lack of a pond. I miss the "breck-eck" chorus of treefrogs that used to emanate from a former pond in the Water District's maintenance yard. But, we are expecting a speaker this winter who will discuss the value of ponds, and, I hope, galvanize us into creating one.

Legs like a kangaroo's
spring you to the moon

where it ripples

in the center of the pond
(Tree-frog photo-sfbaywildlife)

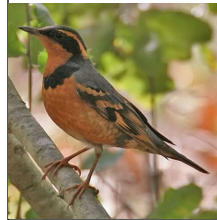
Mary Oliver



The first, of many, assets of our Park is the amazing year-around creek. It provides a riparian woodland of alders and willows; "hatches" of insects that feed our birds; and a

breeding habitat for steelhead trout! Perhaps the next-most outstanding feature of the Park is the views that it provides.

Try looking toward Mt. Montara from the Valley View Trail, or Oddstad Blvd., on a sunny day when the pure-white fog is breaking over the ridge. That is a world-class view! It has something in common with the un-real view looking down Rockaway Beach Ave., & seeing the white, foaming breakers at the end of the street. Our Mt. Montara Trail continues through McNee Ranch State Park to the access road to the top of Mt. Montara, from where you can look down & around over 360°. To get a sense of this view, look at the panorama of photos by **Ray Trabucco** in the Vis. Cntr.(J. Mackey photo of Montara Mt.)



Poor Jim's Almanac. We may be visited by Varied Thrushes this winter. **Ron Maykell** has already seen one in Rockaway Beach.(Varied Thrush photo by **Glen Tepke**)

A DESERTED DUET?

Once again it was just Ivan Pulski and me, Joseph Piro, for the October 9th Trail Day. Ranger **Lauren Hackleman** suggested we take some loppers & handsaws & hike up the Brooks Trail & work on trimming stuff back on the stretch just before the intersection with Montara Mt. Trail, so that's what we did. While we did some decent work, I think we would have been much more effective with the brush cutter. Ah, maybe next time. We hiked back down & then enjoyed the end-of-summer BBQ in the patio.

FACTOIDS

Behind the large eyes of a dragonfly

(photo of eyes of dragonfly from Brisbane.com) lies

a supremely small brain. Is this why the

dragonfly has been known to eat the

"tail" of its abdomen? This from **Edwin**

Way Teale in his book, Adventures in

Nature (which I found among the used

books on the sale table in the foyer of

the Visitor Center): "I was watching the metallic segments of the abdomen [of a dragonfly] moving in and out, in rhythm with the insect's breathing. Suddenly the body curved upward, the tip reached the dragonfly's mouth, and the insect calmly began eating its own tail. I was almost as astonished as if I had seen a man crunching off his fingers or making a meal of his arm. Since then I have read that hungry dragonflies will consume parts of their own bodies to appease the craving for food." (animalhowstuffworks.com photo)

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ON THE TRAIL (continued)

Ranger Jonel spied a **bobcat** at the South Walnut at 10am. The bobcat had the usual white-tipped short tail. Then, on Oct. 11, she saw this feline hunter watching a “mess-o-quail” in the Trout Farm area.

Ranger Laurel saw this wild cat perched on a picnic bench mid-day at the end of September. “He” was looking around, most likely for prey. (Garlynzoo.com photo)

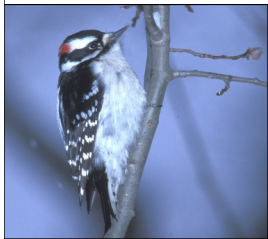


And birds aplenty sighted by Judy Spittler: Winter returns: **Golden-crowned Sparrows**—heard & seen today [Oct 30]; their 3-note mournful call always denotes winter. And 3 **Flickers** (www.Bentler.us) in a tree. **Townsends Warblers** are back - seen first on 9/2. Large flocks of **Dark-eyed Juncos** in Sept along entrance road. **Calif. Quail**, covey 25-35 seen Sept. and today. Sept. 26 had a couple lingering of



Warbling Vireos (photo at right by Sam Barone) & **Wilson's Warblers**; also both **Downy & Hairy Woodpeckers**.

(photo of Downy Woodpecker by Gordon Court)



The inner - what is it?
if not intensified sky,
hurled through with birds
and deep with
the winds of homecoming.

Rainer Marie Rilke

You and the Book Sale

Could you donate any recycled nature books for our fundraiser to our VisitorCenter on Sat. or Sundays? Friends SPVP

“TRAIL DAYS” BARBEQUE

Joseph Piro found himself finally alone on the trail, after an ailing **Istvan Puski** gave up after a noble try. Yet the “Friends” still staged a barbecue behind the V.C. for Joseph and Istvan. Thanks to **Carol Martinez, Skeeter, Phillip Posk, Shirley Drye, and Adrian Stroganoff** for helping yours truly to pull it off. Other folks in attendance, trying to feat a supposed large team of volunteers were: **Jean Leonard, Julie Thomas & Christian Rivlin, Pat and Emily Posk, Susan Hagen & Jim Bigler, Jim Mackey, Jane Turrel, & Ranger Laurel Hackelman.** *Jean's beans & Susan's chicken & rice, & yes, yummy squash, ruled.*

NOVEMBER—DECEMBER CALENDAR

NOVEMBER GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday, November 10.....7pm

NOVEMBER TRAIL DAY

Saturday, November 13.....9am

WALTER KITUNDU'S NATURE PHOTOGRAPY

Saturday, November 13.....7:30pm

NOVEMBER HABITAT RESTORATION DAY

Saturday, November 20.....9am

HOLIDAY PARTY—CHRISTMAS

Wednesday, December 8.....6:30pm

DECEMBER TRAIL DAY

Saturday, December 11.....9am

DECEMBER HABITAT RESTORATION

Saturday, December 18.....9am

Coming events:

Kerry Kriger's "Save the Amphibians"

Saturday, January 22, 2011

Megan Isadore's "Raccoons"

Saturday, March 5, 2011

NEWS BRIEFS

The county trail machine, aide, **Martin King** says, has worked over the rutted Hazelnut Trail.

Active volunteers of the “Friends of SPVP” attended an October 23 appreciation luncheon at the Captain’s House on Coyote Point. Attending the fun event and tasty luncheon were **Shirley Drye, Jean Leonard, Adrian & Mila Stroganoff, Jane Turrel, & Christine Thatcher.**

SPAWNING SALMON FIELD TRIP—for VOLUNTEERS

“Winter is upon us & with the first rains comes the beginning of spawning season! Join **Megan Isadore**, SPAWN watershed naturalist, who will lead you on a tour of the Lagunitas Watershed to learn all about the ecology of our native populations of **Coho salmon & steelhead**, while observing them in the wild. Lagunitas Creek is home to the Central Calif. Coast's most robust population of endangered wild Coho.

Megan has offered to lead the SPVP volunteers on a free VIP creek tour, because we at SPAWN believe that they should all get some perks now and then! The tour will be **December 4**, & will begin at **10am**, & last about 2 hours. We will carpool to various sites where we hope to see spawning salmon, then walk on flat, maintained trails to see the fish. Tours are suitable for all ages! Our youngest tour member ever was about a month old; and our oldest thus far was 97. Everyone is welcome and Megan will tailor the tour to your needs and desires. [lunch afterwards at a nearby café]

The Leaders of “the Friends of San Pedro Valley Park”:

President, **Shirley Drye**; Vice President, **Carolyn Pankow**; Secretary, **Jim Mackey** ; Treasurer, **Jane Turrel** ; members at large, **Jean Leonard, Istvan Puski, and Will Trout**; visitor center staffing, **Jean Leonard**; Habitat Restoration Leader, **OPEN**; Trail Leader, **Joseph Piro**; Membership, **Catherine Antista**; Pgms, **Carolyn Pankow**; Trailside Store, **Jane Turrel, Susan Hagen.**