

KEN HIMES PRESENTS FLOWERING PLANTS OF EDGEWOOD

On Saturday, Jan. 11, AT 3pm, Ken Himes, an original field trip leader of Edgewood Park, will give us a view of and talk



about its abundant flora. Ken told me that chaparral currant can begin flowering in late Oct. into Feb.; western leatherwood can flower in Dec. Sounds a lot like SPVP, but there are distinct differences too, which he will reveal. (Himes/Corelli photo)

“I first visited Edgewood in spring of 1982, leading my first field trip there in ‘84. A golf course was being considered for Edgewood, but was thwarted by our efforts. One thing the Edgewood Park committee realized was that we needed to make the general public aware of its biological richness. We, the Santa Clara Valley Chapter of the Calif. Native Plant Soc., started the current docent program in ‘90, & I was one of the original trainers. I continue to conduct the training sessions for the woodland wildflowers and a second session for chaparral plants and wildflowers” Still, Ken is most proud of his efforts in nearly eradicating the invasive yellow star thistle.

ADAM RATNER—BLUE WHALES, SPERM WHALES, ORCAS,—ETC

We have a great family program planned for you on **February 22, at 3pm.** Adam Ratner, from the Marine Mammal Center, will present a program, Marine Mammal Superheroes, highlighting the feats of the **blue whale, sperm whale, orcas, & bottlenose dolphins.** (blue whale calf breaching by Francois Gohier)



Mr. Ratner is the Guest Experience Manager at the Marine Mammal Center, and has taught Marine Biology to youth in the center for many years. In the past he has also Acted as fish care specialist and assisted with research on fish audition & ocular systems in a laboratory of aquatic bioacoustics.

He graduated from Bates College in Australia with a B.A. in Biology, with an emphasis on Marine Biology. Later, he did graduate work at the University of Maryland, assisting with research on bird hearing & speech in the laboratory of comparative psychoacoustics.

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GIANT BUGS FOR CHILDREN, Saturday, February 15 at 1pm

Once again, the monster **insects** and their relatives from Norm Gershenz’s and Leslie Saul’s Insect Disc. Lab. will greet you with their weird faces, bodies and legs. Get ready for the giant, leg-wiggling **millipede**, 3 times longer than the giant yellow & black one of the Park, the unbelievable leg stalks of the **walking stick** and other “weirdos”. Free if you park outside the Park



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PLANTS FOR SURVIVAL —THE AMAH MUTSUN OHLONE

Dr. M. Kat Anderson, national ethnoecologist of the USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation service, and **Mr. Val Lopez**, chairman of the tribal council of the Amah Mutsun, are coming to our Visitor Center on **Saturday, Jan 25, at 3pm**, for a presentation that should change your mind about the way Indians dealt with their environment.



Dr. Anderson, professor of ethnic studies at UC Davis, is the author of a recent book on these Indian cultures: “Tending the Wild: Native American Knowledge and the Management of California's Natural Resources”; (photo of gathering basket & soap root brush from “greenbeangal”) Kat has an M.A. and PhD in Wildland Resource Science from UCB and a B. A. in Environmental Planning and Management from UC Davis. She has been a consultant to the National Park Service, the US Forest Service, and Calif. State Department of Parks and Recreation. She has published articles in such journals as Economic Botany, Restoration Ecology, Fremontia, Journal of Conservation Biology, Journal of Ethnobiology, and Ecological Restoration.

Val Lopez has been the tribal leader for the Amah Mutsun of the Santa Cruz Mt. area. He graduated from Sac. State U., teaching there part time until the advent of prop. 13. He was the Manager of all Statewide testing for the CA State Personnel Board & later worked at the CA Hwy Patrol where he was the Commander of the Selection Standards & Examinations Section. (Continued on p. 4)

ON THE TRAIL

Judy Clark was hiking with a partner on Sat. Nov 16, when at 4:40pm, they saw a **Great Horned Owl** spread its wings and fly some distance from one Euc to another, fairly high on the Valley View Trail. She was carrying binoculars, so had a solid species confirmation. (Brett McCleary photo)



Carolyn P. saw a skinnier-than-a-pencil, little 6 in. **garter snake** sunning itself on the Weiler side-trail at 10am, Nov. 5.



(On the Trail cont’d on p. 4)

JENNIFER ALPAUGH, & ROB HUGHES LEAD HOLIDAY PARTY

And what a success it was, with 30 Friends singing, stealing gifts, bringing and eating yams, salads, ginger surprises; Rob played the flute, **Eric Reiter** the mandolin, and **Scott Hill** sang and played the guitar. Jennifer hand-made ornaments for our tree. **Carol Martinez, Skeeter, Rob and Jennifer** did a great set up and clean-up. See you all next year!?

INTO NATURE: My Early Years—Carolyn Pankow

1945—There was no doubt about it; the little black ants were winning the battle against the “giant” red ants, and I was spell-bound. All my favorite toys were stuffed animals, whom I’d play with rather than dolls, for hours, so despite being a suburban child in concrete-rimmed Central Glendale in Southern California, the urge was always there. Like most of you, I was a nature lover.

When my parents moved my sister & me from my Grandparents house to Verdugo Woodlands, I was thrilled with



all the **California live oaks** that held a mixed “colony” of **scrub jays, hummingbirds, woodpeckers**, etc., in our backyard at the edge of a shallow canyon, looking down on **California sycamores** below.

Above were the dry hills of the chaparral with their **sagebrush, yucca**, & other native plants I had yet to identify—except for the **poison oak**.

My sister and I and often our collie, Lad, would head up the gravelly slopes and look down on possible trails, one which led to a small stream and the sighting of a **deer** and up higher, an animal trail to an old cave, One day I ventured



down into “deer creek”, taking, undoubtedly a deer path, but after several minutes of exploration, I couldn’t find the clear strip, and had to push my way through what I knew was a thriving tangle of California’s most notorious plant (photo of poison oak from backyardnature.net), wearing my capris.

I will spare you the description of the horrible way my body reacted to the assault of the awaiting wall of disaster.

Much of this scene of beauty, excitement and danger, was obliterated when “the 2” freeway carved its way through our hills after I had left for S.F. and Pacifica. But before that time I married an amateur astronomer I had met in entomology class. He courted me while sharing with me a magnified view of a **jumping spider**. He loved the wild,



turning over every stone, probing every bush, & for 7 yrs. was my hiking & camping partner. (jumping spider photo from a Nat’l Geog. Ws) I had majored in biology, so I was teaching Gen. Sci, & Biology at Lincoln High in

LA, yet each & every weekend we would head to the desert, the mountains, or up the coast, sometimes with students in tow.

We hiked with one group of girls up to the summit of Mt. San Jacinto, took a team of 4 boys on the narrow, treacherous trails above Surprise Canyon in the Panamints, sure we would lose **Robert Verdu-go** with his turned-in foot, off the edge of the trail. Most memorably, we camped



along the Big Sur, and explored tide pools near its mouth, as 14 year-old Ralph told others to turn the rocks back for the animals and swore he would “drive back here when I’m eighteen”.

While camping outside of Death Valley one holiday, we set out small, coffee can mammal traps that I had learned to make early-on in college, in biology club, & though restless **jackrabbits** sprang most of our traps, we caught a **kangaroo rat** and a **pocket mouse**, and as was, unfortunately, popular at the time, took home the former as a little pet, one who kept me awake sometimes, digging sand while not on his activity wheel.

We ran across this industrious little rodent in droves one “star night” in the desert’s Santiago Canyon, on the edge of the San Gabriel Mountains. They were coming after my potato chips as I was munching away, counting comets/hour, nuzzling their way into the folds of my blanket. Though a bright fireball flared like headlights over a hill, the rodents grabbed my attention more and were my concern, especially when some guys at another campsite used them as target practice as morning grew near. (above a desert K.R. with cheek pouches full of seeds from vanishespecies web site)



But the professors at L.A. State were the ones who first got me into the thick of nature: teaching me to set trap lines outside of Barstow, to noose **lizards**, & to find a variety of **snakes** on the road on June night rides, especially **sidewinders**, near the Salton Sea. I explored tide pools at Dana Point—enchanted by So Cal’s **giant sea slug**; I noticed **nuthatches** for the 1st time at the life-giving stream of Buckhorn Canyon in the dry San Gabriels with crazy **Dr. Ross**, who would swerve off the road to point out a **kestrel** on a fence post. College was also collecting critters like the tiny blue & orange **antlered flower beetle** and a surprising variety of **fly** species; My biology profs had opened up a fascinating world, & I ate it all up.



So now I will leave you, while I backpack into the Ansel Adams wilderness area, journey to Alaska, have 3 sons, divorce, and backpack some more, and hike and walk and finally listen to tales told by the new nature “pioneers” in the Visitor Center of San Pedro Valley Park and the neophytes, sometimes taking one to see what poison oak looks like, just in case.

A NATURALIST'S PERSPECTIVE

By Jim Mackey

Jan./ Feb. 2014

State of the "Friends". In the last couple of years the Friends of San Pedro Valley Park have suffered significant attrition, due in part to deaths, illnesses and moves out of our area. The number of members has remained stable, at about 80, but the number performing the work of our organization has dropped. We appreciate the dues that all members pay and the attendance of many at our functions, but we need more workers. Our work may be divided into four categories: hosting at the Visitor Center (V.C.), presenting a natural history program, trail maintenance, and habitat restoration. [photo of Dr. Mackey was taken at one of our barbeques.]



Visitor Center. We are a rare park in having a visitor center. But the budget of the San Mateo County Parks cannot pay staff to do natural history interpretation, so we volunteers have this responsibility. Each Saturday and Sunday there are two, 3-hour shifts for volunteer hosts, totaling about 16 shifts per month. We are indebted to about 16 individuals or couples who have been taking these shifts for some time. This used to be coordinated by the late **Jean Leonard**, who also



took four shifts per month herself. **Carolyn Pankow** has been coordinating the staffing recently, but she has been doing too many other jobs, so this week **Jack Dodson**, industrious visitor center staffer, has volunteered to take over the task of calling the volunteers and setting up the schedule.

Those who act as hosts in the V.C. answer questions about the exhibits & trails, often referring to sources in our library or for sale in our trailside store. The store had been managed by **Jane Turrel**, who was also our treasurer, so she left a large gap when she moved to Petaluma. Happily, **Denise Marcucci** recently took on the job of managing the store, while **Bing Huey**, with the aid of **Carolyn**, is struggling with the big, complex job of treasurer. We especially appreciate this, since, unlike most of us, Bing is not retired.

All members should be proud of our having produced, with funding from the San Mateo County Parks Foundation (aka, the Foundation), two field guides (to wildflowers and butterflies). [thank you to members **Jane Turrel**, **Jim Mackey**, **Ron Wilson**, **Laurie Nikitas**, and **Toni Corelli** for giving their time and expertise to create these educational tools.] These are offered in our store for the ridiculous price of \$2 each. Why not buy one of each? We volunteers are also proud of the display of photos

that we place outside the V.C. on weekends. **Jane Turrel** began this, while **Katie Antista** took over and refined the project to perfection. [Katie is also our membership chair, an involved job that is key to running the "Friends".]

Natural history program and newsletter. **Carolyn Pankow** has been the chief writer and editor of our 4-page, bi-monthly newsletter for more than 12 years. During the same span she has also developed and managed the schedule of presentations in our natural history program! There are about 12 of these each year, along with four hikes. Last May, **Jim Steele** (photo at right) led two bird-song hikes, but we've lost count as to the total number times he's conducted these avian walks. [**Jim Mackey** gave us 5 nature programs over a period of 5 years; **Shirley Drye** (at



left) gave us a memorable talk on the Ohlone. Member, **Craig Nikitas**, in the last 4 years, has given us 3 programs on **birds of prey** and **ravens** and their relatives. However, we recently lost the services of long-time member, **Fred Loughlin**, who was memorialized in the last issue. Fred gave programs to school children to teach them about the animals and plants of the park, a job that has not been picked up and does require a person who knows how to speak and listen to children and who has the wherewithal to contribute time during the week.]

There were two presentations in 2013, supported by the Foundation, that catered to children and their families. One, California Wild, enabled children to meet and learn about a few individual birds and mammals of our area, that had been incapacitated by injuries. The other, by **Norm Gershenz** of SaveNature.org, allowed children, if they dared, to touch (accompanied by oohs, aahs and eeks) large beetles, grasshoppers, etc

THE NEVER ENDING STORY

The habitat restoration group was five "men" strong this time, and included the indomitable **Christine Guzman**, the fearless leader, **Istvan Puski**, **Daniel P.**, **Eugene Kardash**, and **Vlad Kardash**. Yet they could have used several more volunteers to pull the persistent, twining wrap-around, **Cape ivy**, & the solidly rooted **vinca** (periwinkle) from the area around the North Walnut picnic area. Both are fast growers, and some of us never miss a chance to take a swipe at the C.i. especially, when hiking in this area where natives are under assault by a vast army of invasives. However, since the efforts of our team, there is a noticeable clearing alongside the **stinging nettle**, **Calif. blackberry** and other natives—it is as though a breath of fresh air had swept through the area. December, 2013

ON THE TRAIL (continued)

Walter Colquhon & Henry Mattias were walking along the Trout Farm Trail at 10:30, the morning of Dec. 2, when they almost ran over an 11inch long **California**

Giant Salamander, *Dicamptodon ensatus*, lumbering along by the old *house foundation stairs*. Walter’s great photos are in the Vis. Cntr now. Walt said the guy was in a fighting MOOD. (Tim Burkhardt photo)

A young couple originally from Indiana & Louisiana, sighted a **coyote** on Dec. 8 at 10:30am. It was on the hill to the west of the entry road. They hiked the whole Hazelnut, finding



many slippery spots of ice or frost & a frozen **banana slug** along the way.

Judy Spitler was thrilled to see a **White Throated Sparrow** in the Park—the morning of Nov. 9. Jim Steele was impressed with her sighting. (UCSC photo)



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Hi Carolyn: Some neat news. Wandering around the picnic area this afternoon [Oct. 25th; photo Nov. 6] around 3PM, the late sunlight was just warm enough for a spotting of a new member of the Skipper family (*Hesperia*). I have suspected this was here for



some time but finally got a couple of photos to prove it. The **Checkered Skipper, *Pyrgus communis***, (Ron Wilson photo) was sunning on the grasses near the volleyball posts & generously volunteered for a photo shoot. *Best, Ron Wilson*

(Continued from page one)

Though Val’s tribe is unrecognized and unfunded federally, they put their energy into projects for growth of culture and language, especially research projects with USB, UCSC, & Calif. Dep’t of Parks and Rec., etc. The tribe recently created the Amah Mutsun Land Trust, with the goal of restoring the lost ancestral tribal knowledge of land stewardship. They now have a conservation easement of 88 acres at Costanoa Lodge by Ano Nuevo. In Jan. the tribal elders and advisors will meet to start the restoration and management of plants on the land. They will be “Tending the Wild”

Questions or letters to the editor? —email **Carolyn Pankow** at carolynjunepankow@yahoo.com or write **Carolyn Pankow**, Editor of, “**Friends of San Pedro Valley Park**”, 600 Oddstad, Pacifica, CA 94044. She is th writer of all uncredited features.

The Leaders of “the Friends of San Pedro Valley Park”: President, **Jim Mackey**; Vice President, **Carolyn Pankow**; Secretary, **Shirley Drye**; Interim Treasurer, **Bing Huey**; member at large, **Istvan Puski**; *Visitor Center staffing—NEW!* **Jack Dodson**; Habitat Restoration Leader, **Istvan Puski**; Trail Leader, **Joseph Piro**; Membership, **Catherine Antista**; Programs, **Carolyn Pankow**; Trailside Store: **Denise Marcucci** . .

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2014 CALENDAR

- JANUARY GENERAL MEETING**
Wednesday, January 8.....7pm
 - JANUARY TRAIL DAY**
Saturday, January 11.....9am
 - KEN HIMES FLOWERING PLANTS OF EDGEWOOD**
Saturday, January 11.....3pm
 - JANUARY HABITAT RESTORATION DAY**
Saturday, January 18.....9am
 - M. KAT ANDERSON, VAL LOPEZ-TENDING THE WILD**
Saturday, January 25.....3pm
 - FEBRUARY TRAIL DAYS**
Saturday, February 8.....9am
 - FEBRUARY GENERAL MEETING**
Wednesday, February 12.....7pm
 - FEBRUARY HABITAT RESTORATION**
Saturday, February 15.....9am
 - INSECT DISC. LAB PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN**
Saturday, February 15.....1pm
 - ADAM RATNER’S FAMILY PGM—BLUE WHALE, ETC.**
Saturday, February 22.....3pm
- For all events meet at Vis. Cntr. (for Gen.Mtg. call 355-7466)*

FACTOID

Let’s stop fussing about our life span. As you’ve probably noticed, a family including numerous baby **Calif. Quail**, gets smaller and smaller as the birds approach their parent’s size. 74% of a quail family will die off in a year’s time, But the real hard part is that only one in several thousand quail live to be 5 years old! (A. Starker Leopold, 1977) (radleyice.com photo)



DRAINS FOR RAIN—WORK with HOPE on the HAZELNUT

By Joseph Piro

Istvan Puski and I joined Rangers **Greg Escoto** and **Joel Cervantes** for the December 14th Trail Day -- our last one of 2013! It was a

nice Bay Area-style wintery morning -- sunny, clear and a little chilly -- and we worked on the Hazelnut Trail behind the Visitor's Center. We worked our way up about 5 or 6 switchbacks, cleaning out drain dips and clearing the trail surface of lots of leaves and other light debris with rakes and McLeods. Happy holidays & best wishes for 2014. **Joel** in back. L to r: **Greg, Istvan**

