

## EMAIL ADDRESSES GUARANTEE PROGRAM NOTICES

If you're NOT receiving email notices from us about forthcoming programs, please send your email address to :

carolynjunepankow@yahoo.com

## WIDENING THE WAY

By Joseph Piro

We had a nice turn-out for our June 14th Trail Day -- Istvan Puski, my brother Erik, newcomers Nick and Sharon and I worked with Rangers Miranda Holeyton & Greg Escoto doing some bank-cutting just above the intersection of the Old Trout Farm Trail & the Brook's Falls Trail (just above the bench). Primarily using mattocks, McLeods & a hard rake, we broke into 2 groups and tackled a few

narrow spots along that stretch -- it should last a good while & the trail's now a nice, comfortable width there. Enjoy! Front: Sharon, Joseph, Miranda Holeyton. Back: Istvan,; far right, Greg Escoto.



## SUMMER BARBEQUE ON SATURDAY, AUGUST 16

Yes, on Habitat Restoration Day, all fun-loving barbeque addicts of the "Friends" need to gather in the back of the Visitor Center, bringing a pot luck salad or dessert. We promise to have franks and burgers, including garden burgers, condiments, & buns for you. In early August expect a call from Carol Martinez, Carolyn Pankow, Denise Marcucci, Shirley Drye, or Bing Huey, OR phone Carolyn at 355-7466 with your choice.



## VISITOR CENTER STILL NEEDS YOU!

Mila Stroganoff, our new coordinator, has 16 Visitor Center greeter/information desk slots to fill each month; we are again in an emergency situation, with Shirley Drye and Lois Joseph agreeing to do 2 shifts each in the near future. However, One new bright spot is former SM Co Park Ranger & SPVP lover, Katie Beltrano, whom your editor found to be a quick study in learning the ropes. But we need YOU! Call Mila: 359-1642 if you can work 3 hrs/mo. or just fill in.

## TED KIPPING'S BEAUTIFUL PROGRAM SET FOR AUG. 9

Ted Kipping has a great reputation for artistic photography and enthusiastic, original delivery. In our last program he gave us quite a variety of plants and other aspects of the Central Sierra—that was in August of 2006. This present program will be another adventure into his enchanting wilds: "The WEST: A Closer Look" is about a close look at the gestalt of wild & natural California: geology, weather, water, animals and lots of plants - not just plants; they are placed in a context."



Ted Kipping has presented for the California Native Plant Society, the Botanical Gardens of UCB, the Arboretums at Davis and UC Santa Cruz and the Denver Botanic Gardens. Ted studied Natural History at Columbia University and has been involved in horticulture for 35 years. He went to work for the former Strybing Arboretum where he worked with a broad range of trees and other plants. Since then is established his own tree trimming service, "Tree Shaper". He is a certified arborist with the International Society of Arboriculture.



Ted has traveled worldwide in search of rare trees and other plants, photographing in a variety of ecosystems.

(Enjoy 2 samples of his photography at left and above)



## ON THE TRAIL

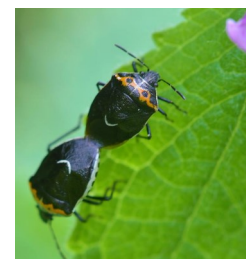
Thanks for letting us know, Ray Trabucco, that a group of Cedar Waxwings were by the locust tree in the Walnut Grove picnic area at 10:30am on May 6. (Audubon Soc. photo)

Amazingly, Ray made an unusual sighting of 2 male Hooded Orioles in the sycamore by the bathroom at South Walnut Picnic Area. This is the first time he's ever seen them in the Park—usually they like to hang around palm trees, their favorite nesting site. (Tom



Benson photo of male Hooded Oriole) Ray also sighted a lovely Black-headed Grosbeak in the So. Walnut.

Bing Huey captured this photo of 2 mating bugs, this time true bugs, order Hemiptera, on the Hazelnut trail. He classified them as Cosmopepla conspici-





## **My Life in 500 Words (plus or minus!)**

**By Sharron Walker**

Hiking or simply strolling in San Pedro Valley Park is a joy! My love of nature began early. Growing up in Northern California, I lived in various parts of the state, mostly near the coast and in the Sierra. Camping and fishing with my parents and older sister, exploring beaches and forests, climbing on granite; all ignited passions in me that have never left.

From an early age I not only had a love of nature, I had the travel bug. Natural discoveries were a priority wherever I found myself, and documenting those discoveries with a camera was a given. Working in the travel industry served these interests well. Ultimately my love for travel, nature and photography guided me into education; initially organizing photo workshops in Half Moon Bay, Pacifica, and the Sierra. This led to my designing a course on travel photography for San Francisco and Sacramento State Universities, and participating - in the 80s and 90s - in Yosemite's Artist in Residence Program. These were all catalysts for subsequently becoming an elementary school teacher here in Pacifica.

What a discovery those 2<sup>nd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> graders allowed me to make! We thrived on our symbiotic relationship. Over the 18 years I taught in Pacifica my students and I participated in numerous environmental programs to include STEP (Salmon and Trout Education Project) for which we incubated steelhead trout eggs in the classroom and

released the fry into San Pedro Valley Creek. We painted decoys for the Common Murre Project to place on Devil's Slide Rock--the project was successful in bringing the Murres back after the 1986 Apex Houston Oil Spill had wiped them out. "Where in the World is Pacifica?" is a video we produced on the geography of Pacifica, parts of it highlighting San Pedro Valley Park.



The video still may be available in our local library. We were also part of the Pacifica Beach Coalition efforts to clean the creeks-- especially San Pedro Creek--and beaches, and with community support created a student storm drain stenciling program placing warnings on street drains to



help protect the environment. The students assisted at Pacifica's TV station, Channel 26, where I produced and hosted a local current events show, Pacifica Currents. The majority of the shows focused on environmental issues. An outcome of these projects landed me a summer job from 1999 to 2003 in the Galapagos Islands and Alaska's Inside Passage as an environmental educator.

Since my retirement in 2004 I have continued my conservation efforts. Although I no longer bring students



to the park, I am attending the Visitor Center on weekends, and more recently have become a Devil's Slide Trail Ambassador. I hike the coast and trails with my camera. Travel continues to be a passion; a recent trip to Patagonia with my partner, Bevan Jones, immersed us in the natural wonders of "el fin del mundo" as we braved the winds and high seas as far south as Cape Horn. Between volunteering at SPVP and patrolling Devil's Slide, adventures to discover new natural wonders - whether in our camper van or flying to some international destination - will continue to be a major part of my life! (Sharron Walker photos)



## A NATURALIST'S PERSPECTIVE

By Jim Mackey

July/Aug. 2014

Woodpeckers! Recently **Ron Wilson** (one of our premier photographers - see our butterfly guide) [see page 4 of this bulletin to check out Ron's great photos of the male and female downys] emailed me that he had heard **nestling woodpeckers** chirping inside a tree by the Plaskon Trail. On Wednesday June 18 it was a fine sunny morning and I was hiking on the Upper Trout Farm Trail, when I encountered another premier photographer: **Walt Colquhoun** (He took great photos of a **bobcat** with a **rabbit** in its mouth). Walt told me that the woodpecker-tree was opposite the bench near the north end of the Plaskon Trail. So I hurried there and sat on the bench. It was about 11:30.

Indeed, there was a **willow** across from me that had two holes, facing me, near the top (at 10 ft. high) in a broken-off trunk. One hole looked old but the other, higher one appeared fresh. I raised my camera with both hands and tried to steady it as I focused on the fresh hole. I didn't want to have to move the camera when, and if, the birds arrived. And after about five minutes I heard sharp "peek" call notes that were coming from two birds that kept moving from perch to perch on opposite sides of the willow. They were



**Downy Woodpeckers!** (Downy Woodpecker photo by Jim Mackey)

On a weekend, when the Visitor Center is open, look at the beautiful photo, by **Ray Trabucco** (another premier photographer) of a male Downy Woodpecker feeding **insects** to a nestling! My two birds were greatly agitated by my presence and continually circled the willow and into shrubs on my side of the trail from where they examined me. They seemed to be habituated to occasional hikers and joggers on the trail but not to old men in brown hats pointing cameras at them. Meanwhile I was able to distinguish one of the two birds as a female and the other, larger one with a red patch on its nape as a male. Both had insects in their beaks. At about 12:15 the male finally began inching toward the hole along a branch that ran toward it, but he detoured behind the trunk. At 12:45, after 75 minutes, they disappeared. I was cramping in pain, worried that I was preventing the nestlings from being fed, & was late for a date with **Joyce**, so I left. (Ray would have been disappointed in me.)

But I rallied the next day, June 19. It was sunny again but cooler and windier. I wore my brown hat again,

hoping that it would identify me to the birds as the same harmless individual, and took my seat on the bench at 11 a.m. I focused my camera on the nest hole and waited. A **Swainson's Thrush** (**Peter La Tourette** photo) serenaded me with its flute-like, spiraling song, and then I heard the "chi chi **chet chet!**" of a **Wilson's Warbler** (**Peter La Tourette** photo)- followed by two streaks of yellow chasing each other through the thicket. At 11:10 I was greeted with "peek" notes! My two woodpeckers had returned, with **insects** in their beaks. But again they continually circled me and the nest tree. **Finally**, at 11:30, the female perched outside the hole; the face of a well-feathered nestling appeared; she fed it and was gone within seconds. She then followed a pattern of returning every few minutes and feeding the young. But the male did not come to the hole. At 12:30 I reached my cramp-pain threshold, remembered that I had a date with **Joyce**, and decided that I would stay for only one more visit. The female came once again and had just left when another bird landed at the nest hole - flashing a red patch on his nape! I felt exultant, like when a Giant hits a walk-off homer in the bottom of the 9th!



Poor Jim's Almanac. Adult **Downy Woodpeckers** tend juveniles for a few weeks after they fledge, so might be seen along the Plaskon Trail and vicinity. Also watch for hatchling **fence lizards** along the Valley View Trail in August.

## A SHADY UNDERTAKING (in the garden)

For our May 10th Trail Day, we had a pretty big turn-out for a nice little project! **Istvan Puski, Stanley, Kevin** and I worked with Rangers **Cat Allen, Greg Escoto** and **Joel Cervantes** re-doing the approximately 30-foot path that curves through the Shade Garden off the Visitor's Center back patio. We dug out the old gravel and bits of rotted wood, staked in new plastic bender board and spread out a new surface of decomposed granite ("DG"). Once we transplant

some native plants back in the area, it'll be all spruced up again for everyone to enjoy! (Photo by **Joseph Piro**: Left to right: **Joseph, Joel, Cat, Istvan, Greg**, and unknown)





## ON THE TRAIL (Continued)

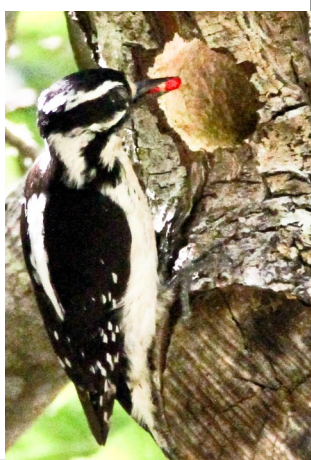
And yes, it really is a buggy world: Keen-eyed **Bing Huey** snapped a shot of these little “sap-suckers” and giant and remarked: “An **ant** rancher (antcher?) practicing **aphid** husbandry, getting ready for a sip of that bug manna. Enjoy.” where and when—the beginning of the Weiler Ranch Rd towards the end of May: Then it got even buggier, as on noon of June 1, **Ron Wilson**, spied and photographed this **syrrhoid fly**, trying to look like a bee, though like a house fly it has only one pair of wings, on the Hazelnut

Trail, identifying it as **Fazia macrura**, and also a butterfly, **Lorquin's admiral - Limenitis**

**lorquini**. whose underwing is so different from the black and orange seen in flight! Then **Ron** snapped this photo of a lovely **damselfly**, who unlike his relatives, the drag-

onflies, alights with closed wings, and is also more delicate and somewhat smaller. So it looks like there was plenty of protein on the wing for the birds to feed their fledglings this late spring.

**Ron Wilson** watched a male **Downy Woodpecker** (at left) feed (larvae) to his unseen hatchlings June 9th at 5pm, on the Plaskon Nature trail. A couple of days later Mama (right) offered a berry to the chicks. (Wilson's severely cropped photos)



## JULY-AUGUST 2014 CALENDAR

### JULY\* GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday, July 9.....6:30pm

### JULY TRAIL DAY

Saturday, July 12.....9am

### JULY HABITAT RESTORATION DAY

Saturday, July 19.....9am

### AUGUST TRAIL DAY

Saturday, August 9.....9am

### TED KIPPING'S THE WEST: A CLOSER LOOK

Saturday, August 9.....6pm

### AUGUST GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday, August 13.....6:30pm

### AUGUST HABITAT RESTORATION DAY

Saturday, August 16.....9am

### LATE SUMMER BARBEQUE

Saturday, August 16.....12noon

(For most events meet at the Visitor Center)

\*Watch your email for possible July program

Back to **Mr. Trabucco**, who informed me that on June 3rd, 4th, and 5th, a juvenile **grey fox** was hanging out in the South Walnut group picnic area and the Trout Farm picnic grounds, at one point checking out the garbage cans.



## FACTOID

**Aneides lugubris**, the **arboreal salamander**, likes to look for **insect** prey and **fungus** up on the trunks of trees—up to 100 feet high! One rainy night I found one climbing up the stucco wall of the front of my house on Big Bend Drive. By the way, salamanders are more common in North America than on any other continent. (source: Bay Nature, Jan—March 2013) ( Gary Nafis photo of the **Arboreal salamander**)

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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 the writer of all uncredited features.

The Leaders of “the Friends of SPVP”: President: **Jim Mackey**; Vice President & Editor: **Carolyn Pankow**; Secretary: **Shirley Drye**; Interim Treasurer: **Bing Huey**; member at large: **Istvan Puski**; Visitor Center Staffing: **Mila Stroganoff**; Habitat Restoration: **Istvan Puski**; Trail Leader: **Joseph Piro**; Membership: **Jim Steele**; Programs: **Carolyn Pankow**; Trailside Store: **Denise Marcucci**; Mobile Display Board: **Katie Antista**



**SPRING BARBEQUE, 2014   with   THE FRIENDS OF SAN PEDRO VALLEY PARK**



Left to right: Joseph Piro, Barbara Kempster, Joseph's brother, Bevin Jones, Marianne Huey, Bing Huey, unknown, Carol Martinez, Skeeter, Jim Steele, Carolyn Pankow, Betty Parent, Ranger Cat Allen, Ranger Joel Cervantes, Denise Marcucci, Ranger Rob Cala, Nancy Jewett, Katie Beltrano, Istvan Puski, Mila Stroganoff, Adrian Stroganoff, Jim Mackey, Shirley Drye, Joyce Mackey, Steve Robinson, Sharron Walker, and Isabel Ebert.