

the FRIENDS of SAN PEDRO VALLEY PARK

JIM MACKEY'S NATURE PROGRAM

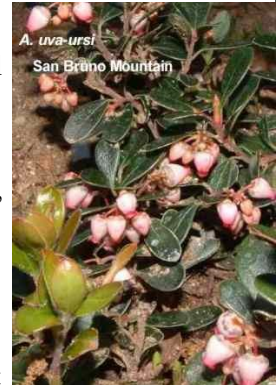
On Saturday, February 24, at 7:30pm, Dr. Mackey will present a dual program, San Pedro Park in 2006 and An Omnivore's Dilemma, in which he will explore the habits and quandaries faced by such borderline omnivores such as the **fox** and **coyote** (Joe McDonald photo of Grey Fox)



Jim's programs are laced with his wry humorous observations, and always based on sound biology. Dr. Mackey is professor emeritus of biology at S.F.S.U., having taught classes that range from Herpetology to Ecology & Biology.

BATCHELDER 'S SAN BRUNO MOUNTAIN

Philip Batchelder long ago fell in love with San Bruno Mountain, and it shows. He will present a program showing the beauty of its floral displays and tell of the wildlife of this state/county park, and then segue into the environmental problems and solutions, the fame, and the importance of this island of wildness on the Peninsula.



The program starts at **7:30 pm on Saturday, January 20th** at the San Pedro Valley Park Visitor Center. I heard him speak at the SF Natural History group, and he delivers!

ON THE TRAIL-Sightings

In broad daylight, 2 **raccoons** of equal size seemed to be "fishing" for food in the overgrown creek area to the "south" of the horseshoe area bridge—**Carolyn** and **Matilda Pankow** (2 years old) sighted them at 3:30pm on Nov. 5.



Pat Robinson saw a **raccoon** also in broad daylight "nested" in a **eucalyptus tree** at least 10 feet off the ground! —on her property on Higgins Road—early November.



Thank you, **Fred Laughlin**, for being such a steady hiker, and one that a coyote could not hide from as it stood on the west side of the Valley View Trail in mid Nov. **Ranger Doug** saw what could have been the same Canine

just a day later.

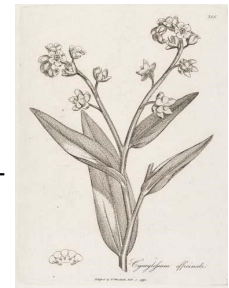
Isabel Ebert found a charming, hairy, 1/4 inch long arthropod on her pants at the Christmas party; it either came from the conifer Christmas decorations **Jonel** salvaged from our park or from the bushes at San Bruno Mt., where Isabel had taken a hike earlier that day. It was a **pseudoscorpion**, a creature with a wicked set of front claws, and 8 legs, resembling a scorpion, but without the tail stinger. No picture can really be accurate enough to capture the beauty of this tiny critter, who was actually decorated with long, black hairs. (On the Trail, continued on pg. 3)



YOUR EDITOR REMEMBERS

This February marks the 5th anniversary of my managing of this bulletin, when I took over from the legendary **Cliff Richer**. Unfortunately this issue will be short as I am now recovering from a knee operation.

My first bulletin for the "San Pedro Valley Park Volunteers" featured a story about **Jim Pommier** and 2 more **pampas grass** eradicators: **Robbin Mackey** and **yours truly**—I can hardly believe that I had the energy at that time, to tackle the large, obnoxious plant, and that Jim is still digging and pulling, holding sway in his Argentinean foe's demise in some areas. That February, 2002, a new sign was put into the park to clarify the trout farm loop, and there was an article celebrating the beautiful program to be given by wildflower photographer, **Jo Ann Ordano** that month.



In June 2002, the bulletin picked up steam when **Jim Mackey** began his series of popular articles for "A Naturalist's Perspective" with an article called "Trail Regulars", about the amateur naturalists **Bess Nericcio**, and a new volunteer, **Ray Trabucco**.

Since that time we've had articles and letters by **Shirley Drye**, **Julia & Ray Trabucco**, **Laurie Nikitas**, **Jack Dodson**, **Judy Spitler**, **Christine Guzman**, and **Winona Aldrich**. Let's increase the momentum; I hope to get more correspondence and contributions from many others this next year!

A NATURALIST'S PERSPECTIVE

By **Jim Mackey**

Friends of Pedro Park. I would like to applaud those who have joined our organization even though they are not able to contribute to volunteer activities, such as trail maintenance or staffing the visitor center. Such individuals often invigorate us by attending an occasional slide show or hike, where they are most welcome. However, those who are able to perform volunteer activities are vital to the operation of our Park. (Kindly refer to the list of officers at the end of this newsletter.) **David Holland**, Director of our County's Parks and Recreation Division, was interviewed in the San Mateo Times on Dec. 19, 2005. He said that his Division had about \$110 million in backlog maintenance, and that "If it wasn't for all those volunteers, we wouldn't be able to manage the parks." At our Park one of the priorities of the staff is trail maintenance, but I am impressed by the reliable significant support of this activity that is given by several volunteers, including **Hal Jorgensen, Joseph Piro, Art Armstrong, Ed Decker, Jim Pommier, & Paden Grey**, as well as the help offered on occasion by those such as **Boris Polanski, Sara Shaw, & Cheryl Broock**.

Environmental Education. Mr. Holland also stated, "...when the public comes they want to have water available and clean toilets and the garbage removed... The other thing they want to have is some learning. What bird is that? Oh, the flower is pretty. What is that? And to have the interpretive opportunities for folks out there; right now we don't have the ability to provide that." Here at Pedro Park we are fortunate to have a fine visitor center. Volunteers, under the leadership of **Jean Leonard**, have managed for many years to provide enough staffing to keep this facility open on weekends. However, this has been a struggle lately and we need to shore up our support for this activity. Two volunteers, **Katie Antista** and **Ray Trabucco**, have devoted a lot of time to assessing the exhibits in the visitor center, and, with the support of volunteer Coordinator, **Nick Ramirez**, have made some stimulating changes. [Thank you, **Jim Mackey, Ray Trabucco, and Hal Jorgensen** for contributing to the displays with your fine nature photography. Also, thank you, **Shirley Drye**, for masterminding the scat display that my granddaughter loves so much! Ed]

Our Natural History Program. The backbone of this program is our substantial newsletter, which **Carolyn Pankow** has now edited for five years. At the same time she has organized our program of speakers and hikes. Carolyn's total investment of time must be similar to that when she taught high school biology! Last year's series of speakers began on Jan. 21 with **Jack Law's** presentation on nature paintings, and ended on Nov. 4 with **Mike**

Boom's talk on mushrooms. There were 10 presentations, including **Zucker** and **Lamberts'** earthquake centennial, **Brent Plater's** environmental law, and **Chindi Peavey's** Lyme Disease and West Nile Virus, **Kevin Clarke's** "Astonishing Ants", **Ted Kipping's** "Plants of the Central Sierra Nevada", [and **Jim Mackey's** review of the Park in 2005] Most presentations drew audiences of 15 to 35, while **Rick Hopkins'** mountain lions drew 50, and **Pat**, the Bat Lady, **Winters** drew over 100. We also sponsored eight hikes; these were led by **Jim Steele** and **Randy Zebell** as well as volunteers **Judy Spitler, Shirley Drye, Fred Laughlin** and myself. [Fred Laughlin, of course, gives innumerable programs and hikes each year for school children, a Herculean effort. Ed.]

Poor Jim's Almanac. Let's watch for the first **trilliums** and **adder's tongues** on the Plaskon Nature and Hazelnut Trails. It will be hard to break **Ray Trabucco's** record of the first trillium bloom on Jan. 12 last year.



WOE TO AUSTRALIA'S WEED

November's native plant day found **Jim Mackey** and **Jim Pommier** cutting down **eucalyptus** saplings just above the entry road to the park, a chore done many times in the past. In Dec. **Mackey & Pommier** also cut euc. saplings, seedlings and sprouts from the hill above the Weiler Ranch Rd, as per last year. It's a hotly contested war. Need we say that more of you are needed for this 3rd Saturday each month? Come and bring a friend or two! (Laurence Bar photo)



TRAIL DAYS

We're still getting a fairly good turnout, but with our strongest rains usually coming in January, we will probably need a larger crew to help with the drain dips, etc. December's trail day found our crew patrolling the Brooks Falls Trail and the lower part of the Montara Mountain trail. They repaired some sloppy drain dips, but generally found things to be in good condition. This part of our trails was maintained by **Dane Wesenberg**, who made a long trip to get to Pacifica, **Joseph Piro, Ed Decker, and Art Armstrong.** **Jim Pommier** worked his way up the Hazelnut, doing some trimming and finally sawing a eucalyptus "log" from the throughway.



In Nov. **Joseph Piro, Ed Decker, & Art Armstrong** wrestled with problems on the Valley View trail.

ON THE TRAIL— continued

In early November Katie Antista saw some of the first blossoms of **pink flowering currant**.



A restless **Bobcat** started its hunting forays in the North Walnut, switched to the South Walnut, going up 2 feet into one of the trees, and then decided to check out the lawn by the Visitor Center. **Katie Antista**—Nov 14.

MUSHROOM MAGIC A WINNER

The eyes of over 2 dozen people were riveted to the screen and to **Mike Boom's** voice as he demystified **mushrooms**. Mike has the ability to enchant and instruct one with the beauty and weirdness of this diverse world of strange beings without making the supposed technicalities tedious; for instance we learned that the cotton threads of mycelium were the main part of the "creatures", that absorb the water nutrients, and minerals needed, but they were photographed to look like strange masses of stringy snow.

Some of the "Friends" present were **Catherine Antista, Enid Brand, Shirley Drye, Jim Mackey, Jim Pommier, Ray Trabucco, and yours truly**. Thanks to **Shirley Drye** and **Jim Pommier** for preparation, take-down, and security.

Best of all, Mike is working on a new program—a personal video of the life of our CA. coastal waters & has promised that we will be among the first audiences at completion.

NEWS BRIEFS

Rangers Brian Gatt, Doug Heisinger, and Jonel Ishida beautified the little wedge-shaped area behind the entry kiosk with a lovely array of native plants and 2 large blocks of native limestone from the Weiler Ranch Road area. **Wild huckleberry** and **Douglas iris** were planted & are looking very healthy right now.

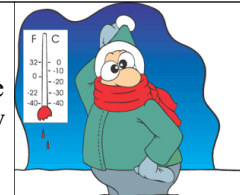
JANUARY—FEBRUARY CALENDAR

- JANUARY GENERAL MEETING**
Wednesday, January 10.....7:00pm
- JANUARY TRAIL DAYS**
Saturday, January 13.....8:00am
- JANUARY NATIVE PLANT DAY**
Saturday, January 20.....9:00am
- PHILIP BATCHELDER'S San Bruno Mountain**
Saturday, January 20.....7:30pm
- FEBRUARY TRAIL DAY**
Saturday, February 10.....8:00am
- FEBRUARY GENERAL MEETING**
Wednesday, February 14.....7:00pm
- FEBRUARY NATIVE PLANT DAY**
Saturday, February 17.....9:00am
- JIM MACKEY'S OMNIVORE'S DILEMMA**
Saturday, February 24.....7:30pm

SANTA AND HIS HELPERS AT WORK

How do you make a party? It took **Jean Leonard**, head of the "telephone tree", **Katie Antista**, table decorator and facilitator, set-up experts **Mila Stroganoff** and **Jim Pommier**, But the heart of the party was our "authentic" Santa in his slick white beard, volunteer coordinator, **Nick Ramirez**, who distributed the surprise gifts. The day before the party **Ranger Doug** set up our traditional tree, which was decorated to perfection by **Miyoung** and **Mike Klein**. However, let's not forget the cleanup crew, **Carol Jorgensen, Jean Leonard**, and others, and the 30 merry-makers, including a late arriving, but hungry, **Ranger Tim Malone**.

We all know temperatures dropped in December, and many might have felt the short but severe hailstorm mid-month, but we know for sure that the temperature dipped to **33 degrees Fahrenheit** here at the park—**Ranger Jonel**



Questions or letters to the editor? email: carolynpankow@comcast.net, or C. Pankow 600 Oddstad Blvd: Pacifica, CA

The Volunteers: **Valerie Patten**, President; **Carolyn Pankow**, V.P.; **Shirley Drye** Secretary; **Ed Decker**, Treasurer; **Christine Thatcher**, & **Jean Leonard**, members at large; **Hal Jorgensen**, Trails; **Katie Antista**, Membership, **Carolyn Pankow**, Programs & Editor; **Christine Thatcher**, Trailside store.; **Jean Leonard**, Visitor Center; **Jim Pommier**, alien plant removal.