

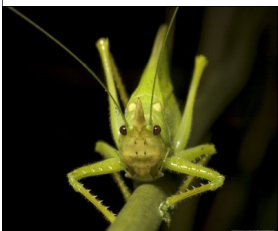
THE AMOROUS LIVES OF INSECTS

Leslie Saul, co-founder of the Insect Discovery Center (see article below), will speak to Coastsiders on the sexual side of insects on **Saturday, February 12 at 7:30pm**, in her “Amorous Lives of Insects”. (mating wasps from Hadianirahmi)



I first met Leslie while volunteering at the S.F. Insect Zoo, of which she was one of the originators, and found her to

have a gentle regard for and sense of humor about her charges. Several years after that time she gave a popular program to us on insects, which included some of the research she had done on the strange story of the perfumed **parasitic blister beetle** larvae & their intrepid journey into **solitary bee** nests.



She has researched **katydids** (David M. Dennis photo) in Costa Rica as well as doing recent work on the chemical ecology and pollination ecology of **sexually deceptive orchids** in Australia. Some of her work has been featured on a David Atten-

borough BBC special, & she has appeared in a Bay Area Backroads episode of interesting insects in our sphere.

She has conducted field expeditions to India, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Ghana, Panama, Peru, Ecuador, Thailand, Trinidad, Borneo, etc. Her photographs of insects & plants have inspired many of us to care about insect diversity.

LIVE INSECTS FOR YOUNGSTERS!

Insects like the huge “**lubber**” **grasshoppers**, gigantic **walking sticks**, one from Australia, **ample hissing cockroaches**, our own large “**stink bug**” **beetle**, and other arthropods (jointed legged animals) like the **whip scorpion**, a critter without a sting, can be seen closeup and touched at this event for children. So come on down and join us at the Visitor Center on **Sat. , February 5, at 1pm** for the time of your life. You’ll love watching your children be much braver than you & will thrill to their enthusiasm.

Pictured to the left is **Norm Gershenz**, with some of his favorite insects. He is the CEO & Co-founder of



SaveNature.org., a multi-award winning entity & the parent of this “Insect Discovery Lab” of SF. Norm was affiliated with the San Francisco Zoo for more than 18 years as an educator, member of the animal care staff, fundraiser (he created Zoo Run), and researcher. Norm is a noted gourmet insect chef & a lecturer in biology. He can spot a beetle at 50 mph, & will select a super presenter.

lect a super presenter.

THE WILD WORLD OF FROGS



If we don’t know that **frogs** are endangered, we have had our heads in the sand. **Dr. Kerry Kriger**, world-renowned specialist in amphibians & their fate will present a program on these amphibians we are trying to save, at our Visitor Center on **Saturday, Jan, 22, at 7:30pm**. (Terry & *Litoria chloris* pictured at left)

Dr. Kriger is the Founder & Executive Director of SAVE THE FROGS!

(www.savethefrogs.com), America’s first and only public charity dedicated to amphibian conservation. Dr. Kriger holds a Ph.D. in Environmental Science from Griffith University in Gold Coast, Australia, and a Bachelor of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, VA. His scientific research focuses on the amphibian disease **chytridiomycosis**, a topic on which he has published 15 articles in peer-reviewed international scientific journals. His research into amphibian declines has been supported by the National Geographic Society and various philanthropic organizations throughout the world, and he has presented the results of his research at scientific conferences in several countries. (critically endangered **variable harlequin frog** of Costa Rica & Panama-.www.Bing.com.)



Kriger has taught university courses in Ecology, Vertebrate Biology, Applied Mathematics and Chemistry, and has written and edited chapters for encyclopedias. Kriger is fluent in Spanish & conversant in Portuguese. He is an avid photographer who has created calendars and posters featuring his wildlife photography. **K.K.**

ON THE TRAIL

Greg Pankow saw a **Snowy Tree Cricket** in a garage near our Park, so undoubtedly they are in our !000+ acres. He said its sound was different from that of our “regular” cricket—a “brrr” sound, and he was amazed by how loud a “noise” the 1/2 in. animal’s wings could generate. A count of its number of chirps per minute is the most accurate gauge of temperature of that of any cricket. (continued on page 4)



WHEN IT'S DRIPPIN' THEY GO A DIPPIN'

For a change we had a nice-sized little group for our November 13th Trail Day -- **Rangers Laurel Hackleman and Jonel Ishida**, as well as **Istvan Puski, Marcos Ramirez, Josh Podesto** and myself. We left the Visitor's Center at 9am under a crisp sunny fall morning with McLeods, rakes and bent shovels to tackle smoothing out and digging some new rain dips on the recently widened Hazelnut Trail behind the VC. With such a good crew we were able to space out and cover a good distance -- easily a couple hundred feet and 2 or 3 switchbacks up. That section of trail looks awesome now and should settle in nicely and last a while! Go enjoy it!

photo of some of the Dec. trail crew: From left to



right: Park Aide, Martin King, Ranger Jonel Ishida, Istvan Puski, Joseph Piro, and Ranger Laurel Hackleman.

We had a good turnout for the December 11th Trail Day, the last one of 2010— it was **me** and **Istvan Puski** on the volunteer front and **Scott Lombardi, Laurel Hackleman, Jonel Ishida, Martin King, Ryan** and **John** from the Park staff. With plenty of McLeods, shovels and rakes, we headed up the Hazelnut Trail behind the Visitor's Center to continue drain dip work. Though our boot soles quickly caked with damp dirt, it was good building a handful of new dips & smoothing out several lengthy sections of trail. Enjoy the trails & happy holidays!

Joseph Piro

FACTOIDS

Our common **earthworm** is a boon to many plants, leaving its fertile castings at the top of the soil, churning and aerating the rest, but one of the most interesting services it provides is for the lungless, damped skin breather, the **California Slender Salamander, *Batrachoceps attenuatus***, who uses the worm's burrows as "hunting tunnels" for some of its favorite entrees, like **mites, spiders, & slugs.**

(photo of slender salamander



THE HUMUNGOUS WINGED-ONE

"It was slow that foggy Saturday when I worked the afternoon shift at the visitor center. Four o'clock, at closing time, came a rush of boys, girls and parents into the center. So I kept the center open. They were my only visitors. One of the kids saw something on the outside wall over the entrance door. His mother came up to the desk and asked me, "What kind of bug is it?" They showed me



where to look, and there it was: a gigantic insect resting on the wall. It was two and one-half inches long with six even longer black legs splayed all over the plaster surface. I had never seen this insect before. (above is the photo of giant on pbase.com)

We went back in to look for the critter in the reference library. The best reference book I could find was California Insects. Two copies are in the gift shop (\$19.95 each) and one copy in the library, the sole general insect book among many butterfly books. I saw its likeness in a photograph. "**Giant Crane Fly**". In description it said, "Enormous" & "one of the world's largest flies". Turned out that our crane fly is a true fly among insects. Though larger and elongated it resembles in structure the common house fly (you'd need a bigger swatter). This "true" fly is from the Tipulid family where flies come from. The adult is often called a mosquito hawk, but has no mouthparts for grasping or chewing, so don't be intimidated by this fine fellow."



Since this sighting and report was first written the giant fly observed by the author and numerous people has probably gone through some of its annual metamorphoses. We saw the mature flying insect during the month or so it was an adult and airborne. It probably mated and laid its eggs in September or October. The mature fly then died and nourished the waters, animals and soil of the creek. Soon its eggs will hatch in these winter months and become leathery-skinned larvae living in the mud of the creek, munching rotting vegetation. And they will still be here as fly maggots or perhaps pupae in early spring; in the summer they'll take wing again as adult giant crane flies, who will be seen in SPVP. Simply, our giant fly lives its entire life, from one stage to another, in this park, laying its eggs in Brooks Creek. They never go away on vacation or on a cruise ship. They are timely in any season because they're always here & surviving. (larva from "Flicker" and by cobalt123)



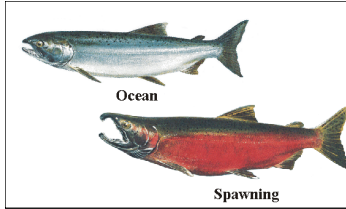
Jack Dodson

A NATURALIST'S PERSPECTIVE

By Jim Mackey

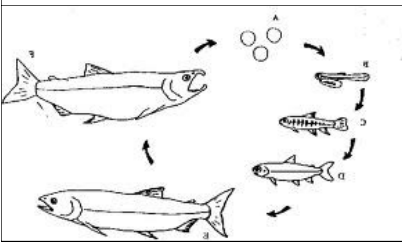
Jan./Feb.2011

A salmon stream! On Dec. 4 I was joined by 5 other Friends of San Pedro Park (**Jack Dodson, Jane Turrel, Phil Posk, and Craig and Laurie Nikitas**) on a trip to Marin County's **Lagunitas Creek**. We were invited by **Megan Isadore**, who had been communicating with **Carolyn Pankow** about coming to Pedro Park to speak to us in March. But now, Megan met us, and 6 others, in Marin. She mentioned that there is a run of



steelhead trout in Lagunitas Creek, as there is in **San Pedro Creek**, but she, and others, are more focused on the endangered **silver (or Coho) salmon**. There are about 500 fish in this population, which is quite a drop from an historic high of about 5000. However it is the largest population of Bay Area silver salmon. (silver salmon-USFL site)

Megan explained that the salmon have a 3-year life cycle and, unlike steelhead, die after spawning. This reminded me of **Aldo Leopold's** essay: "Odyssey", in his wonderful book: "Sand County Almanac." It concerns



the travels of an atom ("atom X") of a mineral, such as calcium, that help us understand **why** salmon die after spawning. Basically, such chemical elements are essential to living organisms, but huge

amounts are eroded from the land and gravitate to the oceans where they sink to the bottom and are locked away through geological time. However, along the way many atoms are intercepted by living organisms and detained or even brought back uphill! Thus when a salmon eats an **anchovy** in the Pacific Ocean it incorporates atoms from the anchovy into its own muscles and ultimately transports them **up** a stream (sometimes hundreds of miles) to its spawning site. There its body decomposes, liberating the atoms that, I like to think, fertilize a food chain that is joined by the salmon's hatchlings! Remember that Pacific salmon streams are fast-flowing, gravel-bottomed, clear and unproductive – unlike a slow-flowing, silted, turbid productive stream.

I would like to offer some snatches of Leopold's poetic descriptions of this phenomenon in "Odyssey:"

"X had marked time in the limestone ledge since the Paleozoic seas covered the land... The break came when a bur-oak root nosed down a crack and began prying and sucking. In the flash of a century the rock decayed, and X was pulled out and up into the world

of living things... a fox caught a gopher in a meadow... where an eagle laid him low... An Indian eventually inherited the eagle's plumes, and with them propitiated the Fates, whom he assumed had a special interest in Indians. It did not occur to him that they might be busy casting dice against gravity; that mice and men, soils and songs, might be merely ways to retard the march of atoms to the sea."

Back at Lagunitas Creek. Megan showed us a salmon **redd** (nest). It was about 6 feet in diameter & was distinguished by pale gravel that had recently been overturned by a female – using her tail. However no fish was present. We then drove to the headquarters of **Samuel Taylor S.P.** & hiked along that stretch of Lagunitas Creek. Megan showed us a second, similar redd, but, again, no fish was present. She did see a total of 5 adult salmon one **evening** a couple of days ago, so she speculated that the fish may hide from **river otters** during the day.

Megan did see a **squadron of 4 otters** recently that was searching around virtually every rock for prey. Happily, she and other authorities value the otters even though they prey, in part, on the salmon. Rather than removing the otters, they have brought in and tethered logs and brush along the banks to provide shelter for the fish. (River Otter from findtarget.com)



No fish. We saw no actual fish, but there were some small rises (honestly) on a pond below the dam to **Kent Lake**. And we saw a

black phoebe, brown creeper, ruby-crowned kinglet, acorn woodpecker at its granary, **kingfisher** and a **hen turkey!** (state symbols.usa) Plus translucent, delicate Pleated

Inky Cap mushrooms (*Coprinus plicatilis*). Also 2 non-amphibious amphibians: a **slender salamander** and an **Ensatina** – both species common in our Park. And it was delightful walking on the springy, moist duff under some fine **redwoods** while listening to the ruffles of the creek and inhaling the pungent aroma of **Bay leaves!**



Poor Jim's Almanac. Our winter really has a feeling of spring as various flowers spring up and the days lengthen. Watch for the white **milk maids** (Treebeard's photo at right) at the entrance to the Plaskon Trail. Also the **pink currant** blooms and the **pussy willows**. The yellow flowers on our rare **leatherwood** shrubs are easily seen along the Brooks Creek Trail uptrail from the Brook's Falls bench. I know that you won't forget the **trilliums** and **adder's tongues**.



(Comments are welcome at mackey.james@sbcglobal.net)

ON THE TRAIL (continued)



Coyote sightings aplenty have been made in the fields just off the Weiler Ranch Road and on the trail in October and November by **Becky Granger, Barbara Kempster, Istvan Puski,**

“Cindy”, Will Trout, Jane Turrel, & a host of others. Nice to have them so visible again. (To the left is a recent SPVP photo of *Canis latrans* by Will)

Dec. 5—**Mountain lion** kill on the Valley View Trail sighted by **Istvan Puski** and **Ranger Jonel Ishida**—When Istvan saw the deer, its haunches were still there. Jonel, who found little more than bones, threw the remains back into the bushes. (deer—istockphoto.com)



Becky Granger found a set of **Puma prints** on the beginning of the Weiler Ranch Road near its intersection with the Valley View.

Istvan Puski found **Chantrelle mushrooms** on the Hazelnut, while working on the pathway for 3 hrs. with **Ranger Hackleman, Aide Martin King** & one other person, digging drain dips. (photo of mushrooms by [Portland] examiner.com)



PARTY GOERS RUN RAMPANT WITH HOLIDAY GIFT STEALS

I witnessed some serious larceny when head lamps, wine, water bottles, and a snuggly comforter were nabbed by some unprincipled party goers. As if to make up for their bad behavior, all rushed in for the cleanup, **Ralph** and **Sandy Larsen** doing the vacuuming and punch recover; **Jennifer Alpaugh** some dish detail; all pitched in to replace chairs, tables, etc. Thanks to **Jane Turrel** and the Rangers for the set up, to **Ranger David Vasquez**, for being our guest of honor, to **Shirley Drye** for being our

JANUARY—FEBRUARY CALENDAR

JANUARY TRAIL DAY

Saturday, January 8.....9am

JANUARY GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday, January 12.....7pm

JANUARY HABITAT RESTORATION DAY

Saturday, January 15.....9am

SAVE THE FROGS WITH TERRY KRIGER

Saturday, January 22.....7:30pm

INSECT DISCOVERY CHILDREN’S PGM

Saturday, February 5.....1pm

FEBRUARY GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday, February 9.....7pm

FEBRUARY TRAIL DAY

Saturday, February 12.....9am

LESLIE SAUL’S AMOROUS LIVES OF INSECTS

Saturday, February 12.....7:30pm

FEBRUARY HABITAT RESTORATION DAY

Saturday, February 19.....9am

Coming Events:

-**Megan Isadore’s “Raccoons”:** Mar. 5, 7:30pm

-**Wildlife Associates’ Children’s program:**

“Rainforest Animals”: Tuesday, April 19

-**Steve Edwards “Ecol Ice Age Megafauna” Sat Ap. 30 at 8pm.**

DONATE NATURE BOOKS TO THE FRIENDS at the VC

Thus helping us raise money and spread the fun and knowledge in all of our nature and science books. Thank

NEWS NOT SO BRIEF

A hearty welcome to **Dave Holland**, Director of the San Mateo County Parks, as he will now have an office in our Visitor Center. The Volunteer office will move to the Trailside store quarters eventually, and the store to the library. **Shirley Drye**, our “librarian”, will set up an area in the museum for our fine selection of Western nature books. Head Ranger, **Scott Lombardi**, has cleverly installed a little kitchenette counter and cupboard unit in our former utility room, which includes a large sink.

Santa, **Jack Dodson** for running our poinsettia raffle, to **Sharron Walker** for giving out her beautifully photographed Pacifica calendars, and to **Jean Leonard** for putting up with all of us this year, and loving it! Best food had to be the 2 disappearing quiches: spinach and bacon that **Monique’s** master French chef talents gave to us—ooh-la-la!—though we loved **Carol Martinez’s** healthy herb potatoes, and all the food in general! Not to forget the last hurrah, the singing of **Mila Stroganoff** & others.

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

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** and **Istvan Puski**; visitor center staffing, **Jean Leonard**; Habitat Restoration Leader, **OPEN**; Trail Leader, **Joseph Piro**; Membership, **Catherine Antista**; Pgms, **Carolyn Pankow**; Trail Store, **Jane Turrel, Susan Marie Hagen**.