

**MEGAN ISADORE, RIVER OTTERS, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 9, AT 7:30pm**

Megan Isadore is no stranger to the Friends of SPVP. She presented a program on Raccoons to us just over a year ago, and following that, took our dedicated volunteers on a field trip to see the Coho salmon and otters in Lagunitas Creek in Samuel P. Taylor State Park, Marin County. (river otter photo by Susan Farrar, nature photographer for Samuel P. Taylor Park) On Feb. 9th, at 7:30, she will be presenting her river otter program in the visitor Center. Since her “stomping ground” is this selfsame state park & its swift-flowing creek & otter hang-out, she will highlight some first hand accounts of these playful fish and crayfish eaters.



Megan left a job in business in order to go to Marin County and help in the fight to save the endangered Coho salmon. She also became involved in wildlife rescue and rehabilitation shortly thereafter. . Since then, Megan has worked for many non-profit organizations, including the Salmon Protection and Watershed Network (SPAWN), WildCare Marin, San Francisco's Orphaned Rescued Mammal Program, Oakland's Yggdrasil Urban Wildlife Rescue, and the Environmental Action Committee of West Marin. Megan also started Oakland's first human/wildlife conflict remediation company, Good Riddance! Wildlife Exclusions. She's a graduate of Marin's Environmental Forum. (Coho salmon photo at left by Susan Farrar) She has worked in researching the recovery of the Coho Salmon, reestablishing them in the streams of Marin County, being a team leader in this effort.



**MONSTER MANY-LEGS COME TO THE VC**

But youngsters are not afraid—parents on the other hand may be freaked out by these creatures from an “unknown planet”. Imagine yourself mouse-sized, coming upon a giant walking stick, or even a giant millipede, who slithers across the way with its “1000” legs. Bring your kids to the Visitor Center on Sat., February 16, at 1pm, so that they can see the inside story of insects and arthropods, and be it known that we have our own huge millipede in the park. His mug shot by Ray Trabucco is on our wall. Be there early so that they can get a place on the floor, whilst you, in your fears sit back safely in your seats. Thanks to Norm Gershenz & the Insect Discovery Lab.



(Internet photo of a giant walking stick featured insect. Sponsored by the San Mateo Co Parks Foundation— thanks!

**BOB AND MARTHA SIKORA'S FOOT JOURNEY PHOTOS on the PACIFIC CREST TRAIL**

We hope to see you on Saturday, January 19, at 7:30, when Bob and Martha Sikora will present a major effort and passion of their lives, a 13 year, 2300 mile journey on the Pacific Crest Trail, from the Mexican Border to Canada, traversing the full length of the Sierra Nevadas and much of the Cascades in California. In this high country of the far West, some of the most untouched country in the lower United States flourishes, and Bob did not choose to let it all pass by without taking some spectacular photos (shown here) of the scenery, & a few of the animals they encountered. The canine lovers among you must take note that 3 prized, pack-carrying dogs accompanied them on much of their journey.

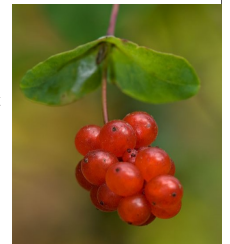


Bob's primary interest in the outdoors (MA, Biology, UCB) had been in Marine Zoology & especially in “Skin Diving”, starting when he was a high school student in Hawaii. He was one of the first four research divers at UCB. He taught advanced placement biology at Berkeley High and enjoys nature photography in his retirement. Martha Ashton-Sikora (PhD, theater, Michigan State University) did her research in India & has authored 2 books & numerous articles on Indian theater forms. She has taught at the University of Chicago and UC Berkeley.



**ON THE TRAIL**

Katie Antista noticed that the lovely almost year-long blooming of the pink flowering currant was already underway on November 12, at the far end of the Weiler ranch road and opposite the last field. On Nov. 22 she pointed out the full red berries of the hairy honeysuckle (internet photo at right) in the native shade garden and the grey-blue berries of the creek dogwood by our stream.



Barbara Kempster was ecstatic after it hit her that the cat she had just seen staring at her in the Trout Farm group picnic area, with its uniform dark color, square jaw, no tuft or on ears, low to ground, no tail up, was undoubtedly a juvenile mountain lion—it was Friday, Sept 28 at 4pm, and a low human activity time. After a minute of stare-down, it sauntered into the creek willows. This is Barbara's second sighting of Felis concolor in our Park. (Read on pt 2 Barbara's story of her life in animals.)

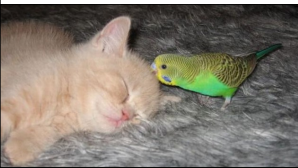


**BARBARA KEMPSTER; ANIMAL WOMAN, pt I**

How appropriate that Carolyn should ask me for my biography when I become officially “old” in January 2013. Born and raised in San Francisco, I grew up with pets. My sister was in charge of naming our animals. Our white **terrier** was Mister Big. Needless to say, men turned their heads whenever we called for him to return home, “Hey, Mister, come here!”



Sunny was our **budgie** that we rescued from the shelter. His wings were clipped which limited his flight pattern from lamp to couch to table and finally to the mantle.



But his favorite place was the floor. He would walk around and find our **cat**, “Kittypuss”, asleep by the heater vent. Sunny would take Kitty’s whiskers and slide them between his beak and crimp the ends. That

was permanent. For Mister it was tugging at the fur between his pads. That lasted about five minutes and then the dog would rest his paw on Sunny’s tail. One of us would have to check out the squawking only to laugh at his plight. Mister didn’t have his paw that heavy on his tail and soon the bird was on the wing. When salesmen came to the door my Mother would say, “I can’t keep the door open. The bird might get out. That’s when Mister would smile at the man and soon he would be stumbling down our front steps. “We didn’t need whatever he was selling anyway”, said Mother.



Our last pet was a deodorized **skunk**. I was too young to be told how this accomplishment was achieved. Named “Pepe”, he would let my sister & I feed

him on our lap. Cottage cheese and mashed banana was his favorite food. But his nocturnal explorations were bothersome. We could hear tinkling melody bells & a toy piano, as he loved to walk up & down its keyboard.

As an adult I had 2 **cats**, not at the same time. Both were very mellow & loving, which I really appreciated after a stressful day or night as an EMT for a year & one half. Later I became a dispatcher for the Pacifica Police Department & finally for the San Francisco Police Department. After 22 years, I retired. At that time, I not only worked the police radio & 9-1-1, but also handled medical & fire calls as well as dispatching fire & paramedics.

Though animals have always been a big part of my life, I found my love of them has transformed onto wild creatures, which give me satisfaction and comfort me.

I find that especially true in SPVP, but also in other places in Pacifica. Watching the antics of a young **deer** two years ago, I told the onlookers, “He’s trying out for Santa’s Rudolph replacement.” This **yearling** was leaping in the distant meadow and trying to get higher with each jump.



When my grandson came out for a month-long visit from Maryland, he had the same magic to attract deer.

The school grounds next door had deer grazing, and then nothing. When Ryan came, back on the hillside mom and leaping son appeared. He even got to see a **bobcat** when we walked into the Park.

**NOTEBOOK of VOLUNTEER AND FRIENDS NEWS-LETTERS NOW AT VISITOR CENTER**

**By Nancy Craig**

The Friends of San Pedro Valley bimonthly newsletters are now compiled in a notebook at the Visitor’s center [work of **Jane Turrel** and **Nancy Craig**.] They are in **FULL COLOR** and **FABULOUS!** [Thanks to the original work of our long-time editor and chief writer of the newsletters, **Carolyn Pankow**, and the popular, talented columnist, **Jim Mackey**].

Want to review **Jim Mackey’s** argument that **eucalyptus** trees aren’t so bad? Can’t remember the name of the Saturday night lecturer on species imported into North America, and the title of the book she wrote? A factoid that caught your attention but can’t entirely remember? Or just review what birds and flowers are likely to be seen at the park throughout the year, especially in **Carolyn’s** “On the Trail” column.

The newsletters are organized in 6 sections, corresponding to the bimonthly format. All Jan/Feb newsletters are together, from 2011 back to 2005. There is an index at the beginning of each section that references sightings or more in-depth information about mammals, [Look at the May/June 2006 issue to find out where **Laurie Nikitas** saw a **skunk** at 2 in the afternoon in the Park], **birds**, ‘other (**reptiles, amphibians, insects**), as well as **plants & fungi**, that are covered in that section of newsletters. Some ‘sightings’ aren’t recorded until the following newsletter. So visitors to the park (as well as volunteers in the Visitor’s Center) should be advised to look at the *following* section of newsletters, as well as the present one, to be aware of what they are likely to encounter in the park.



At the back of the notebook is an index of all the lecturers, programs, the **Jim Mackey** ‘Naturalist’s Perspective’ articles – and other authors - and the editor’s Factoids Great reading for Friends of San Pedro Park volunteers (and visitors) at the Visitor’s Center! Wonderful pictures, great info. TAKE A LOOK!

[Thanks to **Nancy Craig** and **Jane Turrel** for taking many hours to cleverly assemble this “book” for us—your Editor.]

## A NATURALIST'S PERSPECTIVE

By **Jim Mackey**

Jan/Feb 2013

After Ten Years! **Carolyn Pankow** has been the editor, chief writer, recruiter of contributors and envelope-stuffer of the newsletter for eleven years! I am indebted to her for recruiting me, in June 2002, to write this column. Now we have a bulky archive of newsletters [in color] that has been compiled & indexed by **Jane Turrel** and **Nancy Craig**. If you are in the mood to reminisce on a weekend, drop into the Visitor Center & ask the host to show you the archive.

Ask "Why?" You may hike in our Park for recreation of your mind and body, for enjoyment of the beauty that surrounds you, and for an exploration of the natural world. If you are a budding naturalist you will ask what is it and when and where does it occur. Hopefully you will become curious about how these creatures function, and, finally, why these attributes have evolved. I illustrated this point in my column in the January issue of the Newsletter in 2003:

Ask "Why?" Young children sometimes grind us down by endlessly asking why. "Drink your milk!" "Why?" "Because milk helps your bones grow." "Why?" etc. Probably children have a healthy curiosity, plus a tendency to enjoy irritating adults. Have adults lost some of the curiosity of youth?

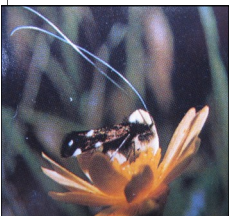
Why are most birds monogamous? Most birds produce four or more eggs in a nesting, and both the male and female seem to be pushed to the limit to provide food for them. Any philandering male might produce no offspring, so no copies of his genes for promiscuity. Incidentally, most species of birds are tree-nesters, which have helpless young. Why? Because there is less predation in trees. Ground-nesters, like quail, have active young (precocial) that don't have to have food brought to them, but they are monogamous, because the male is essential to guard the young. Have you seen a vigilant male quail on a shrub while his family feeds below?



What about mammals? Most species of mammals are polygamous or promiscuous. Why? Because females have mammary glands, and so can feed their young by themselves. This frees the males to enhance their selective fitness by breeding with many females. What about humans? Ask **Shirley Drye**.

Some highlights of the decade:

June 2002. Carolyn & I discover **flame longhorn moths** mating. (photo Powell "California Insects", U.C. Press Dec2002). **A giant salamander, 5-finger fern, red-legged frog & pygmy owl!**



Feb. 2003. An **American dipper** – by **Jim Mackey, Jr.** (photo by jvhigbee)

May 2004. Two large (20 inch) **steelhead** spawning!

Sept. 2004. A **great horned owl** nest-height



measured, 3 ways, at 120 feet!

Sept. 2005. A **red admiral butterfly**

caught in a spider web (internet photo)

July 2011. A bobcat with a rabbit!

Photo by **Walt Colquhoun**.



I thank **Ray Trabucco, Katie Antista, Laurie Nikitas & Jack Dodson** for their help.

## NANCY CRAIG AND THE HUMMINGBIRD

Friend member **Nancy Craig**, retired veterinarian, had a **hummingbird** fly into her kitchen and try to escape out her 12' high skylight. Dr. Craig climbed onto her roof and covered the skylight with a tarp and blankets, but did not deter the hummingbird's skylight escape efforts. She called Friend treasurer, **Jane Turrel** – also a retired veterinarian – who in turn called Friend naturalist **Jim Mackey** who said he had a butterfly net. Before Dr. Turrel could arrive with the net, Dr. Craig could see that the hummingbird was becoming exhausted from its efforts. She climbed a ladder and was able to capture the bird – 'like gently grasping an empty egg shell' -

took the bird outside, and it flew off like a Harry Potter quidditch. Dr. Craig remembered one other instance where a hummingbird got caught in cobwebs, trying to escape from another (this time terrace) skylight. The bird not only allowed itself to be caught, but stayed absolutely still until all the cobwebs were removed before taking off, also like a quidditch. Dr. Craig's advice: Always have a butterfly net on a telescopic pole at hand, and trust hummingbirds to be sensible and allow gentle capture when necessary. (Anna's hummer by Terry Sohl)



## NOV: DIGGING DRAINAGE DIPS on VALLEY VIEW

By **Joseph Piro**

We had nice crisp, sunny weather and a good group for the November 10th Trail Day-**Ranger Kevin**, (photo by **Joseph Vern** and **Cat** (new staff Rangers at SPVP), **Leslie** (a Park Aide), **Nick** (new volunteer) and **myself**. Kevin said we'd be working on improving drain dips on the west end of the Valley View Trail, so we rounded up bent shovels, McLeods and a few other tools & off we went. We started by rebuilding an inside drain dip right at the trailhead & worked our way up to just about the middle of the eucalyptus grove above. Hopefully they'll all do the trick as the rainy season starts.





**ON THE TRAIL** (continued)

**Catherine Antista** lifted her head up to see a dazzling **Great Blue Heron** near the **Ranger Tim Malone Bench**. It advanced farther into the grassy area before disappearing, possibly going into the creek: with **steelhead** in mind? Time was about noon on the 15th of Nov. (photo of heron is from a blogspot)

**Keen-eyed Katie** showed your editor some newly emerged **mushrooms** at the side of the Plaskon Nature Trail on Thanksgiving Day near the entrance to the Hazelnut Trail: the “disintegrating Styrofoam” mushroom and light butter yellow disk of a “new” mushroom next to it, as well as some thin vertical charcoal grey and cream ones (**dead man’s fingers?**) a bit down the Plaskon, and on Dec.1, an army of **earthstars** on the parking lot island near the sun garden. (photo by Harold Jerrell)



**FRIENDS’ HOLIDAY PARTY GETS ROUGH**

First, a big thank you to all who helped make this a happy event for more than 30 people—**Carol Martinez, Mila Stroganoff**, who was our MC, **Jim & Joyce Mackey, Matilda Pankow, Shirley Drye** and a great cleanup crew. And thanks to the chefs—**Nattie Juvland** and **Mila** offered yummy sweet potatoes, **Bevan Jones**, scalloped potatoes—all contributed. However, things got rough when Dr. Mackey’s nature photo (this time of an **earth star** of the Park) was grabbed from **Shirley Drye** once again—no mercy was shown. Photo of a happier **Shirley** with **Christine Thatcher**, taken by **Jack Dodson** just before the theft. Notice a portion of a **Sharron Walker** gift to all—calendar with photos of Pacifica.



**JANUARY—FEBRUARY 2013 CALENDAR**  
**JANUARY GEN. MEETING** (at Shirley Drye’s)  
Wednesday, January 9.....7pm  
**JANUARY TRAIL DAY**  
Saturday, January 12.....9am  
**JANUARY HABITAT RESTORATION DAY**  
Saturday, January 19.....9am  
**SIKORAS’—2600 MI. ON PACIFIC CREST TRAIL**  
Saturday, January 19.....7:30pm  
**FEBRUARY TRAIL DAY**  
Saturday, February 9.....9am  
**MEGAN ISADORE’S RIVER OTTERS**  
Saturday, February 9.....7:30pm  
**FEBRUARY GEN. MEETING** (at Shirley Drye’s)  
Wednesday, February 13.....7pm  
**FEBRUARY HABITAT RESTORATION DAY**  
Saturday, February 16.....9am  
**YOUNGSTER’S PROGRAM—INSECT DISC. LAB**  
Saturday, February 16.....1pm  
**CNPS EVENT: Hike the Hazelnut trail 12 noon, Feb 23**  
For all events, meet at the Visitor Center

**CAPE IVY MEETS ITS MATCH**

in the person of **Itsvan Puski, Christine Guzman**, 2 of our new **rangers**; **Matt** and **Tony** & two high school students in December, on **habitat restoration day**. The scene of the temporary victory over this South African stranger, was the edge of the North Walnut picnic area, near the biggest **Cypress tree**. Thanks, folks!

**FRIENDS OR FOES? The WEEDS**

“A weed is a plant out of place” (Jim Thompson)  
“A weed is a plant whose virtues have not yet been discovered” (Ralph Waldo Emerson)

**DRAIN DIPS FOR RAIN TRIPS**

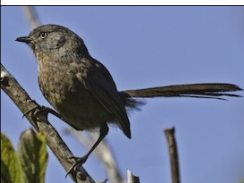
By **Joseph Piro**

We had a great turn-out for our December 8th Trail Day with new-comers **Jacqueline, Michelle, Amanda, Matt, Julie, Keith, Nicole**, and **Barbara** joining **Istvan Puski** and **me**. Working under the guidance of new Rangers **Matt** and **Tony**, we all headed up the west end of the Valley View Trail to continue doing drain dip work -- we worked on the stretch from just outside the eucalyptus forest to nearly the top of the ridge. Some spots were still a little wet and muddy from the recent rain, but we still managed to clean out and build some new dips. Thanks for all the help & happy holidays everyone!



**FACTOID**

Birds have to save energy whenever possible—think of the energy expended for flight. So when a little **Wren** recognized the imminent approach of a **cat**, it flew up only 5 feet into a bush, **just** out of the range of a leaping cat’s claws. **Jon Young**, author of “What the Robin Knows”, had enough knowledge of the ways of nature to know that, indeed, a cat would show up, but it wasn’t just the short flight upward, it was the alarm cry of “chut!” and the pumping tail that let him know there was a reason for the 5’ ascent. (Bob Gunderson photo of Wren.)



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 San Pedro Valley Park”:

President, **Jim Mackey**; Vice President, **Carolyn Pankow**; Secretary, **Shirley Drye**; Treasurer, **open**; members at large, **Istvan Puski**; *Visitor Center staffing-open* thank you; Habitat Restoration Leader, **Istvan Puski**; Trail Leader, **Joseph Piro**; Membership, **Catherine Antista**; Programs, **Carolyn Pankow**; Trailside Store: **open** . . .

## !!! 10 Year Anniversaries !!!

### Missing: Reportage, Acknowledgement and Celebration

Carolyn Pankow's 10th year anniversary as editor of the San Pedro Valley Friends' newsletter passed without mention in the 2012 Jan/Feb newsletter. This was also, coincidentally, the first known instance of a notable and newsworthy accomplishment of a Friend of San Pedro Park omitted from the newsletter. **Jim Mackey's** 10th year anniversary writing 'A Naturalist's Perspective' passed in the May/June 2012 newsletter. A second egregious omission. In Carolyn's defense, two in 10 years is not bad.

Carolyn Pankow not only recruits the Park's expert and engaging speakers, but writes the informative blurbs about their credentials, accomplishments, and upcoming talks; she gathers each of the Friends' park sightings and credits each individually; she reports on and extols the work of the Friends' trail crews; and writes the always informative 'Factoids'. Basically, Carolyn fills all the newsletter spaces not otherwise occupied by contributions from other Friends of San Pedro Park.

Jim Mackey's 'Naturalist' articles are treasures. Observant, well-researched, often thought-provoking, never dull. He can take a walk on Valley View Trail and turn it into an odyssey (Sept/Oct 2009); he can write about squirrels and end up slipping the Giant's Brian Wilson's beard into the subject without missing a beat (Nov/Dec 2011); and broach the sometimes worrisome consequences of maintaining the trails at San Pedro Park (Sept/Oct 2008), all with a wide-eyed, opinionated but non-adversarial view.



### TREASURER TURREL RESIGNS

**Jane Turrel**, our trusty treasurer, Visitor Center scheduler, VC worker, photographic chronicler ("yellows" bulletin board—wooly sunflower at left) of our wildlife, and tireless worker on crafting our native plant brochure, has left us for the "American Graffiti" town, Petaluma, with our just emerging contributor, **Nancy Craig**. We wish both the best, but we remember how Jane set up the interactive nature display for children and adults, how she was always ready to cook whatever we most needed for the potlucks and Christmas parties, how she was the "fanciest" treasurer we ever had, monitoring the monies that went into each cash register for Saturdays and Sundays. We also remember how she came to her first native plant day morning, expecting to plant natives & instead worked up a sweat pulling Cape ivy. It was at that time she suggested that we warn others by changing the name of the work day to "Habitat Restoration Day". We recall how she had our film screen moved to the



rear of the museum, so traffic in the lobby wouldn't interfere with programs, & how she set up the email correspondence for "the Friends", giving a "heads up" for forthcoming programs. Thank you from all of us to our dear friend, **Jane Turrel**.

*Now we need all "Friends", not just a "Jane", to pitch in & do even small jobs for us, or to even take on one job that she used to do. We need you sorely, as we are at the **breaking point**.*

### ELEVENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NEWSLETTER EARLIER TIMES

#### By Your Editor, Carolyn Pankow

How exciting it has been to craft this newsletter over the years for the Volunteers and later The Friends of San Pedro Valley Park. I originally took on the "job" when **Cliff Richer**, our first editor, who already edited a huge bulletin for the Sequoia Audubon Society, told me that he didn't know what to write for our then one page bulletin. I couldn't believe my luck! Did I know what to write? Oh, yes, I did, starting with many lively happenings, including the tale of **Sharron Walker** and her students releasing **steelhead fry (fry above)** into our creek in the 1999 substitute newsletter I wrote for a vacationing Cliff. In fact, for my first 3 issues I wrote the whole bulletin, but realized that there was a lot of talent out there. That's when I approached a new phenomenon, our well-educated naturalist, **Dr. Jim Mackey** & was blown away by his content, "story" development, style, including a subtle wit, & his obvious love of the park. One of his best early columns was: "A Hummingbird Tale" in July, '02..



In June, 2002, the first "On the Trail" column appeared, with observations by **Ray Trabucco** and **Ranger Jonel** of two of the first sets of **fawns**. Toward the end of June, in the second column, Ray sighted a tiny juvenile **Merriam's chipmunk** by the upper Hazelnut. In Nov. Ray counted 14 **wood rat nests** on the Same trail, but it was **Julia Trabucco** that made the most startling find: a "creature from another planet"—a **cicada nymph**. (pictured above) Champion observer of all-time, **Katie Antista**, then made the first of her endless finds when she saw a **bobcat** jumping over a "hedge" by the Weiler Ranch Rd in Mar. '02 And **Shirley Drye** located a **shy Smith's Fairy Bells** for us. In April, **Kelly Trabucco** sighted an 8 inch **steelhead**, jumping out of San Pedro Creek by the Weiler RR bridge. **Christine Thatcher** was startled by a **deer** chasing a **coyote**, across the same roadway. Toward the end of 2003, **Jim Pommier** came across an outbreak of **winged termites** on the Hazelnut. Thanks to "**the Jims**", **Jack, Mila** & all of you who brought news & life into this column over the years.



Who can forget our skilled writers: **Laurie Nikitas** & the spaced-out wild animals; **Jack Dodson** following life down Weiler R. Rd, **Shirley** making us feel closer to the Ohlone. **Judy Spittler** gave us her passion for birds, **Craig Nikitas**, the **cat & coyote** drama, **Phil Posk** a new plant in the Park. Thank you all & everyone I missed, for keeping the bulletin hopping along!