

GORDON FRANKIE, "KING" OF BEES—Sat. Ap 27



On Saturday, April 27, at 7:30, we are privileged to have Dr. Gordon Frankie, specialist in native bees as our speaker at SPVP. He will be speaking especially on his latest research, but also on his general knowledge of these diversified indigenous little Hymenoptera.

Dr. Frankie is a professor & research entomologist in the Division of Insect Biology, College of Natural Resources, University of California, Berkeley. His specialty is behavioral ecology of solitary bees in wildlands & urban environments of Calif. & Costa Rica. He also teaches conservation & environmental problem-solving at UCB.

Many people ask Gordon if bees are likely to sting them. He says, "Native solitary bees, have a list of three things they're interested in: pollen, nectar and sex. And we tell people, "You're not on that list. Don't worry about getting stung!" (internet photo of one species of solitary bee) You can see that Frankie is ready to field your questions.



APRIL 20; EARTH DAY BARBEQUE TIME

Time to meet old and new members of the Friends of San Pedro Valley Park; time for a delicious noon barbeque lunch with plenty of home-cooked dishes. We will celebrate not only Earth Day and the Habitat Restoration People, but also, we will celebrate the life of our late dear friend, **Jim Pommier**, who died on Feb. 18; he was a long time "Friends" member and the head of our Habitat Restoration group.

CALIFORNIA WILD FOR CHILDREN ON APRIL 2



Wildlife Associates comes again to SPVP on **April 2, at 3pm**, for their close & personal introduction to 4 of the Park animals, as well as a prickly porcupine. The local critters will be the **grey fox, the Great Horned Owl, the Red-tailed Hawk, & the opossum**. (opossum photo from Hilton Pond Cntr.) .

Wildlife Associates of Half Moon Bay, was founded almost 30 years ago by **Steve Karlin**, a former Nat'l Park ranger and renowned environmental educator and speaker on television and radio. The organization is dedicated to saving orphaned animals such as a grey fox, abandoned by its mother after school children started throwing rocks at the family. Other animals may have a broken wing or a damaged eye. Besides their educational services, Wildlife Associates, has events, including a festival of animals in the fall, fund raisers for the cause of abandoned or injured animals.



GLENN KEATOR'S PLANTS AND FLOWERS OF SAN PEDRO VALLEY PARK ON MARCH 2

Almost two years ago, when **Glenn Keator** delivered his presentation on the Oaks of California, we were thrilled to hear about some of our favorite trees from a real expert, author of The Life of an Oak: An Intimate Portrait But I was hoping he would one day tell us about the plants of San Pedro Valley Park. Now on Saturday, March 2, at 7:30pm, he will give us a program on the flowering plants of our florally diverse park. (one of SPVP's lovely flowers: **seep-spring monkey flower** is pictured above—photo by **Robert Payne**)



Glenn is a real communicator and teacher. He is an instructor at Lake Merritt College. He has taught many classes at the San Francisco Botanical Gardens, Regional Parks Botanical Gardens at Tilden Park, College of Marin, and the California Academy of Sciences

Glenn was brought up in the Bay Area. He is the author of several other books, including: Designing California Native Gardens, California Native Plant Families—West of the Sierra Crest and Desert and a series of California pocket guide books. Glenn has led many botanizing field trips on the West Coast and to Hawaii, and Alaska, and has made personal studies of the flora of other countries.



ON THE TRAIL

Jan 16. "I [**Laurie Nikitas**] walked the Hazelnut, finding ice all along the trail. Where the ice had melted, the surface was gooey and good for tracks. From the west end to about a mile from the headquarters in the east, there were **cougar** tracks. About 4", so not a huge" cat.



(sierraphotography.com photo)

On Jan 21st **Laurie** saw 2 butterflies, a **Satyr Anglewing** (Cole Slater photo of Satyr Anglewing) and a **Lorquin's Admiral**. It was "warm and lovely—pretty nice for January!

(Cont'd on p. 4)



PARK VOLUNTEER: BARBARA KEMPSTER,
ANIMAL WOMAN, Part II



My other grandson told me about finding a jay's nest blown onto the ground by a strong wind. He took the nest and placed it in the crook of a tree branch. Meantime the jay gathered twigs and string and made another one. He will visit in 2013. (Scrub Jay's nest at left)

I know he'll love San Pedro Valley Park and maybe, he'll be fortunate enough to see a bobcat. He might see a young hawk trying to land for the first time. A few months ago I saw a young **Red-tail [hawk]** gingerly land on a branch, and he wobbled too much, so he flew to another one. Rolling back and forth, he ventured to another branch, and which, apparently was wide enough. The adult hawk gave his/her approval from the distance.



A nice **gopher snake** might be sunning himself on the trail. They are such camera lovers you can almost see their smile.



In 2009, I spotted my first adult **mountain lion** near the horse-shoe pits. It was a hot August day, and he was panting hard. Poor thing needed to get out of the chaparral and onto the valley floor. I talked to him for a while, and his eyes lowered, and I continued to my exit, in the opposite direction.

One other time I was so fortunate to have a **hummingbird** stop and listen while I twittered. He kept flying from side to side and then hovered about a foot away from my eyes and stared at me. What a thrill!

I thought I saw a downed **deer** in the Walnut field only to see his legs running in place. He was asleep! The other deer was so embarrassed, he walked away from the sleeper.

Just when you think we are watching the animals, look out; they are watching you, as demonstrated when a young man sat on a bench, watching some deer grazing in the big meadow. The man fell asleep on the bench, and then there were 2 deer about two feet away, watching the man sleep.

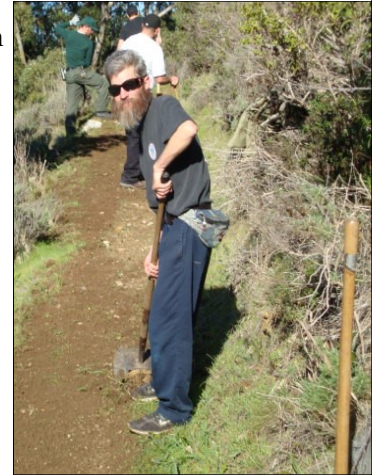
The people I meet in the park are warm and friendly and so informative. **Katie** is always there to advise me about a flower name and where it's located in the park. Ray has a treasure trove of raptor pictures. **Carolyn** gives a name to

a tree nearby. **Jim Mackey** loves to hear the stories of the sightings. Retirement has blessed me with a wealth of animals & flowers. Where else would you find a bobcat resting with his eyes closed under a tree alive with all sorts of birds chirping? Nature enjoying nature. We are not just the stewards of flora & fauna; we are part of the balance.

MEN OR MACHINES?

By Joseph Piro

For the February 9th Trail Day, **Istvan Puski** and I worked with **Ranger Matt Auda-Capel** and 2 other fellows on the east end of the Valley View Trail. In particular, we tackled that relatively short, narrow, pretty rocky stretch a few switchbacks up that they weren't able to do with the trail machine when they worked on it last summer. So, with a lot of noisy dinging on rocks and dirt, we managed to spruce up that stretch with 2 drain dips and an overall slightly wider and smoother surface. [**Joseph**, that wasn't just "noisy dinging", that was blood, sweat, and muscle!] (J. Piro shot of Istvan)



JANUARY HABITAT RESTORATION DAY

Have you really checked out the Trout Farm Trail old trout tanks that are now serving as planters for some of our prize natives? You will find our garden is growing with **ocean spray, sticky monkey, sword fern, bracken fern, thimbleberry blackberry**, a possible **potentilla, Douglas iris**, possible **blue witch or nightshade, yarrow**, a tiny oak tree sprout, and **lizard tail or wooly sunflower!** **Istvan Puski** and crew ripped out poison hemlock, cape ivy and the tenacious periwinkle from the general area. (Ted Muller photo of sticky monkey flower)



A FROSTY HAZELNUT

By Joseph Piro

Happy New Year! Despite a very chilly morning, we had a nice turnout for trail day-- **Ralph Larson, Istvan Puski, Rangers Matt and Tony**, 3 others and **me** -- for our first Trail Day of 2013! Matt said we'd be heading up the Hazelnut Trail behind the VC to clear out drain dips and ditches, so we loaded up mostly with McLeods & rakes & headed on up. We made it up to the bench at the start of **eucalyptus** forest near the top, cleaning stuff along the way. Considering all the rain we've had recently though, overall the trail looked in good condition. (photo of frosty alien, African daisy by **J. Piro**)



A NATURALIST'S PERSPECTIVE

By Jim Mackey

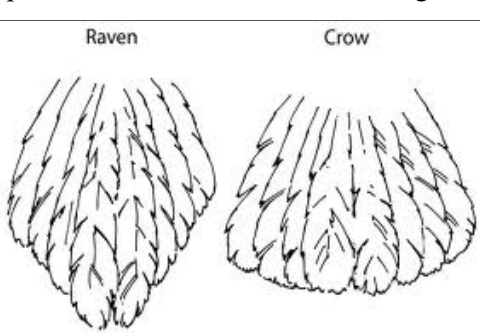
March/April 2013

Crows. A few years ago **Ray Trabucco**, who lives behind me, asked me if I had seen the raven nest in the Monterey pine that grows between us. We were used to thinking that every large, black bird in Pacifica was a **raven**, but then I focused on those in this tree and noticed that they were calling “caws” – not the “croaks” of ravens – so were **crows!** (internet photo of crow to left) I wondered why crows had appeared for the first time in Park Pacifica, and guessed that it was because the



landscaping, including pines, had matured since planted with the initial housing construction in the 1960's. But **Withey**, 2002, in **Marzluff, J.M. and Tony Angell**, 2005, “In the Company of Crows and Ravens”, analyzed Audubon Christmas Bird Counts and produced a map that shows increases within crow populations in the western U.S. and range expansions in California, especially on the San Francisco Peninsula. So maybe crows have appeared in Park Pacifica, not only because of maturing trees, but also because of the increase in suburbanization. Elsewhere, other species of crows have also become urbanized, as in Moscow, Rome, London and Tokyo – where “jungle crows” are a nuisance that has spawned an occupation of crow exterminators!

Those who attended **Craig Nikitas'** excellent lecture in our Park will recall that crows and ravens are classified in the family Corvidae, along with **jays, magpies and nutcrackers**. These corvids, because of their social organizations and omnivorous food habits, have evolved a high level of intelligence. I remember that ravens in East Bay parks have been known to perch on the edges of trash cans and pull up the liners by seizing them with their beaks and lifting them to be pinned with their feet – then seizing the liners further down.



Also crows are known to fashion sticks into tools to probe for caterpillars!

The American Crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*) is smaller than the Common Raven (*Corvus corax*),

with wingspans of 39 in. and 53 in., respectively. Ravens soar much more and display a diamond-shaped tail. (see sketches above) Historically, ravens were viewed with respect and awe by hunter-gatherer peoples but suffered a decline with the transition to farming,

which favored crows. In both species large flocks tend to be composed of younger, non-breeding birds. The older birds (3 yrs.) mate for life and defend nesting territories. At **Pedro Park** a pair of **ravens** built a nest high in a eucalyptus by the parking lot, but it was usurped by **Great Horned Owls**. This species of owl also preys on crows when they are on communal roosts. This has selected for a mobbing behavior that crows direct at any owl that they find roosting by day.



Currently, ravens are much more common than crows in **Pedro Park**, while the reverse is true in **Park Pacifica**. Will the recently established crow population expand into the Park? A key factor will be the amount of food that people provide for the crows. . This may have lessened with the wheeled carts that the new scavenger company provides (and the more-secure waste cans in the Park). For watching ravens, I recommend the **[Bill] Maher** bench on the Brooks Creek Trail. From here you may see many ravens, that may have been foraging at the dump in Half Moon Bay, bathing in **Brooks Falls**. Also, **Jack Dodson** recommends watching a long-time raven nest below Robert's Road.

2 CNPS HIKES OVER HAZELNUT FEB 23

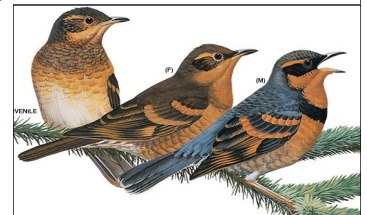
These plant lovers led by **Jake Sigg** (Yerba Buena) & **Toni Corelli** (Santa Clara Chapter), & including Friends **Roger Mascio** & **Bing Huey** sighted blooming **fetid adder's tongue**, **thimble berry**, **hound's tongue**, **blue witch**, **ceanothus**, & the pink & white **anemoneae**. (JV Littell photo of anemoneae)



THRUSH THRILLS—(“Varied”, that is)

By Judy Spitler

I birded for 1 1/2 to 2 hours at the park this morning [Feb 12]; chilly starting out, but the sun warmed things and there was good activity and variety. Most fun for me were 1 or 2 female (center bird in **Doug Pratt** photo) **Varied Thrushes** to the north and south of the visitor center. Uncommon in the winter, but we often will have 1 or 2 and sometimes more. They were hanging out with **Fox Sparrows**, our good looking, dark winter sparrow. Several **Hermit Thrushes** were also on the meadow edges. Both our winter **warblers** were present - **Yellow-rumped** & **Townsend's**; **Winter Wrens**, **Bewicks Wren**, **Wrentits** & **Lesser Goldfinch** were singing. Saw 26 species in all.



ON THE TRAIL (continued)

Fertile fields: On December 29, **Istvan Puski** saw a **bobcat** snag a **gopher** from the area of the north parking lot abutting the church fence. **Katie Antista** observed a **bobcat** hunting **gophers** in front of the Visitor Center at 12:45 on January 31st. It made its way onto the church land. Was this the same feline as Istvan's?



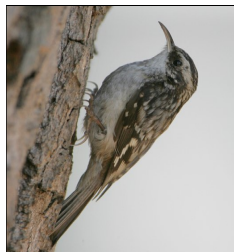
Bing Huey saw the first **milkmaids** of the season, our lovely, flower of the shade, & usually one of the first annuals to blossom in the "California spring". He found it toward the east end of the Hazelnut on Jan. 19th. (David Tighe photo)

Barbara Kempster saw a **Townsend's Warbler** just past noon on Jan 11, by her house on Terra Nova. It would "talk to her" & them cock its head to listen. (Greg Gillson photo)



In early Feb., as our Olympic-class hiker, **Laurie Nikitas**, started walking the Hazelnut, she began counting wood rat nests. By the time she completed the entire trail, with one original & one prosthetic hip, & one arithmetically-tuned brain, she tallied up forty three of this architect's, (dusky footed woodrat) hogans.

Inge Fraser from San Francisco, saw a **Varied Thrush**, a **Hermit Thrush**, and a **Brown Creeper** in the picnic area off the Trout Farm Road on Feb. 3. (Brown Creeper photo by Scott Streit)



BROWN CREEPER

With long claws, stiff bracing tail, spirals up oak,
Curved slender bill probes for beetles,
Suddenly the Sharp-shin
The small bird is nowhere
The accipiter has passed, a small piece of bark is on the move again.

Maxwell Corydon Wheat, Jr.

MARCH—APRIL 2013 CALENDAR

- GLENN KEATOR'S FLOWERING PLANTS OF SPVP**
Saturday, March 2.....7:30pm
- MARCH TRAIL DAY**
Saturday, March 9.....9am
- MARCH GENERAL MEETING**
Wednesday, March 13 at Shirley Drye's....7pm
- MARCH HABITAT RESTORATION DAY**
Saturday, March 16.....9am
- CALIFORNIA WILD FOR CHILDREN & PARENTS**
Tuesday, April 2.....3pm
- APRIL GENERAL MEETING**
Wednesday, April 10 at Shirley Drye's.....7pm
- APRIL TRAIL DAY**
Saturday, April 13.....9am
- APRIL HABITAT RESTORATION DAY**
Saturday, April 20.....9am
- EARTH DAY BARBEQUE (JIM POMMIER)**
Saturday, April 20.....12noon
- GORDON FRANKIE'S NATIVE BEES**
Saturday, April 27.....7:30pm

For all events, meet at the Visitor Center if no other directions are given.

FACTOID

You probably know that the **coyote** is one of the most adaptable mammals in the world, this trickster can change its breeding habits, diet and social dynamics to survive in a wide variety of habitats. In the desert, a coyote female will be approached by many males at breeding time, but choose only one. After the pups are born, the family may disband.

In urban areas, researcher **Stan Gehrt** of Ohio State, has recently found that coyotes develop a strong female-male bond, staying loyal for life, "even though these canines live in high-population densities and have plenty of food, conditions that often drive members of other canine species to stray." He and other researches feel that this may be one key to their success in the city environment. "The male spends just as much time helping to raise those pups as the female does," Gehrt says. "A male coyote", he adds, "knows that every one of those pups is his offspring and has a clear genetic stake in helping them survive. We've had some of the alpha pairs stay together for up to 10 years," says Gehrt.



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 all for helping staff it; Habitat Restoration Leader, **Istvan Puski**; Trail Leader, **Joseph Piro**; Membership, **Catherine Antista**; Programs, **Carolyn Pankow**; Trailside Store: **open** . . .

JIM POMMIER

Jim Pommier was a very good friend of many of us. I admired Jim in so many ways. He was my solid friend, one I could always count on for help, & one who taught me to fight the invasive plants. He gave more than most people know to the survival of our natives within the Park. Jim died in mid-February in his home on Rosita Road in Pacifica.

Jim, the former head of our Habitat Restoration Group, is most famous for destroying Pampas Grass, wherever it threatened pristine park area, including teaching some, like **Sara Shaw** and me, how to dig one of those sharp, green-bladed plants up. He always kept his eye open for a new invader, and never minded hiking long distances to extirpate one.

He went out on many forays with our life-time member and architect of the native shade garden, **Pegge Fields**, helping her vanquish fire weed, and with **Istvan Puski** and **Jim Mackey** and **Sara Shaw** to slice down eucalyptus. He also dug holes and transplanted park plants like Ceanothus and Huckleberry, helping **Nancy Jewett** plant the native sun garden.

Jim worked on trail maintenance with **Joseph Piro**, **Ed Decker**, **Hal Jorgensen**, and **Art Armstrong**, often stealing a little time to unchoke an assaulted native plant from incursions of the invasives – like, yes Pampas grass, but also Cape ivy, English ivy, etc., participating in the test project on Cape ivy removal from a section of the Trout Farm Rd.

And Jim was a runner, participating actively in the Dolphin South End Running Club of SF. He ran more than one 100 mile slog; he was entered in “Who’s Who in America” when he set a record for his age group in a 50mile run. His daughter, **Janese** and son, **Donald**, who volunteered at the park, showed us his “cluttered” medal, trophy and records room.

THE VOLUNTEER: written by your Editor in 2001

Tall, lean, and wiry with muscles, Jim Pommier is a grey-haired bespectacled and impeccably groomed man who looks as though he just left the gym and is headed to a meeting at 100 California Street, but something doesn’t fit—could it be the running club T-shirts he always wears or the Levis?

Raised in the rocky foothills of San Bernardino County, the oldest child of a nurseryman, & his Father’s right hand man, at that “restless age”, he headed to the Marine Corps Logistics Base in Barstow, California. He not only successfully survived boot camp, but took on the challenge of the high altitude marine survival camp

at Sonora Pass in the High Sierras, where he became one of the toughest marines around. Next stop: the Korean War, a time of physical conflict

But Jim is also a thoughtful man whose mind usually centers on alien plants and how to get rid of them or the natural flora and how to protect it. As head of the Chinquapin Trail section of the volunteers he is seeing that the native plant garden is in tip top shape, and finds new homes for “orphaned” native plants. As a former marine his strategy is to stem the tide of the invaders: the eucalyptus from Australia, pampas grass from Argentina, broom from Scotland and cotoneaster from India. He was also part of the troops that did an experimental clearing of a South African cape ivy-infested area off the Trout Farm Trail.

I took a tour near the northern wilds of Pacifica with Jim recently, the archery range and Milagra ridge. No hiding place was safe for the scotch broom and cotoneaster—no secret kept—he knows his foe and its lair. If you join him in his war, do not make the mistake of weeding and throwing the plant into the trail as I did—Mr.

Pommier will brook no slob; these pathways are sacrosanct to him.

A hike with Jim is a hike with a one-clawed person, the claw being his pruning shears. I suppose you take it for granted these days in our park that no maverick, quick-grower like poison oak will slap you in the face A you round the bend—don’t—because Jim was there. Jim is the hiker incarnate. Jim is the restless hunter who haunts all trails.

