

BUTTERFLY BROCHURE EMERGES FROM COCOON

Jim Mackey, Ron Wilson, and Laurie Nikitas have been scouring the environs of San Pedro Valley County Park for months & years, and now Jim and Ron have produced a beautiful compilation of these daytime lepidopterans costing only \$2, which will be useful to all of us budding naturalists. The San Mateo Co. Parks Foundation generously funded this depiction of beauty & diversity in the Park. I'm very pleased to find out that **the pale swallowtail** I saw on the west side of the Hazelnut a few years ago is uncommon. One can also see during which season you are most likely to see a particular little flutterer. (pale swallowtail photo -Allen Riedel.)



© Allen Riedel

BECKY JAFFE ON BAY AREA WILDLIFE

On **Saturday, July 20th, at 6pm**, **Becky Jaffe** will present her photographs of local flora and fauna to guide



you through one year in the life cycle of the Bay Area, highlighting the natural history of the spectacular wildlife who migrate through our home each month and offering tips on the best local wildlife viewing

spots. "We'll play *Name That Migratory Animal!* with pubQuiz-style field recordings and compete for prizes of the esoteric biological variety".

A photographer, naturalist, and educator living in northern California, Becky Jaffe teaches biology to Bay Area highschool students and leads environmental science tours at the University of California's Botanical Garden at Berkeley.

Ms. Jaffe's award-winning nature photographs (one pictured below) have been recognized by the California Academy of Sciences, the Center for Fine Art Photography, and the Entomological Society of America, and have been published in the Buddhist Poetry Review, Bay Nature Magazine, the San Francisco Chronicle and National Geographic's Your Shot. She exhibits her photographs at art galleries & environmental education centers through-out the U.S. and regularly lectures on an array of popular biology topics at venues ranging from the Randall Museum to SF Nerd Nite.



DR. KEATOR'S FLOWERING PLANTS OF SPVP

Glenn Keator will definitely be at our Visitor Center **Friday, August 23, at 6pm**, and both Glenn and I are sorry that we let you down on that Saturday in March—though Shirley Drye and Jim Mackey certainly did not. Below you will find something written about Glenn in his own words.

"I am a botanist, writer, and teacher specializing in California native plants. My interests include ethnobotany, gardening and designing with native plants, taxonomy and ecology, and more, with the goal of uniting horticulture and botany, using natives as the glue. My Ph.D. from UC Berkeley is in botany. My thesis featured the ecology and taxonomy of the genus *Dichelostemma*, one of the brodiaea groups, comprising spring-flowering native bulbs."



"I teach at such Bay Area venues as Merritt College in Oakland, College of Marin in Kentfield & Novato, & the Regional Parks Botanic Garden in Tilden Park. My home & garden are in No. Berkeley, where I have an extensive collection of Calif. natives as well as plants from the other Mediterranean climates of the world. My travels take me across the state of California from seashore to mountains, and northern boreal forests to southern deserts, where I've led numerous day- to week-long field trips into all the major plant habitats. I have also written many books on the subject of California native plants including gardening books and identification guides."

ON THE TRAIL



© Andrew Williams/CritterZone.com

A father with 2 daughters pointed out a **gopher snake** protruding from a "gopher" hole, just in time for your editor to see the beautiful patterned serpent slip backwards into the darkness, on Sun., April 28 at 4:30pm on the upper side of the Weiler Ranch Rd. Then on Wednesday, June 5th, at

9:10am, just as the sun let through some of its warming rays, your editor saw a beautiful, 1 m. long **gopher snake** on the handicap trail He sunned himself a spell before moving on into the high grass.

Denise Marcucci found a beautifully patterned **Sphinx moth**

relative in her home in Park Pacifica, right by SPVP. The moth laid eggs, which hatched out as little green caterpillars. Then she had to try to figure out what to feed them. (**Edwin Hacking** photo of "her" "**Sphinx moth**".) (see p. 4) (Continued on pg. 4)



CATHERINE ALLEN, OUR DEDICATED RANGER

By Cat Allen



Outdoor Education in Bodega Bay at the age of ten was probably my first conscious experience of and with nature. I developed much affection, wonder, and respect for what it offered to me individually as well as collectively in this greater whole of society. Who knew going on a night solo hike for the first time, kissing a **banana slug**, dunking my head in cold creek water, and rubbing red rocks together to make face paint would all later

manifest into a career with San Mateo County Parks seventeen years later. (Cat in Yosemite—always in love with the great outdoors!)

Shortly after high school, I applied for a Park Aide position with San Mateo County, and it was then that I discovered that this could be a career opportunity. Huddart Park in Woodside was where I gained a foundation in the many aspects of parks from trail maintenance, to customer service, to volunteer projects, as well as relationship building with my colleagues. After three seasons as a Park Aide with SMC, I applied and got hired on as a seasonal Open Space Technician position with Mid-Peninsula Regional Open Space District. Working for this agency allowed me to apply and strengthen my skills in trail construction and maintenance as well as resource management with invasive plant species abatement and taking part in the process of planning, implementing and evaluating volunteer projects.

Some of the most rewarding projects in the field were trail building projects. To be able to carve into the land in such a way where it made the least amount of impact on the habitat, but still be functional

and interesting to multiple users was an impressive challenge to be apart of with an enthusiastic and passionate team of people. After a trail was laid out with marking tape, we would start cutting out trees with chainsaws and (Cat in full trail regalia)



hacking stumps with pick axes, ahead of the excavator, which would cut into the trail and create the contour and pitch. The finish work would be done with hand tools, which made feel like an artist with a paintbrush. It was an amazing and grueling process.

During the off season, I went to school at San Francisco State, pursuing a degree in Recreation, Parks, and Tourism Management. I was fortunate enough to work as an intern for San Francisco Recreation and Parks during my last semester at SF State. I worked with San Francisco's Natural Areas Program who protects and manages the pockets of open space in the city. It was here that I was able to learn about the importance of community and partnerships with groups and individuals while realizing that nature and open space is vital in all domains of living whether it be the city or the suburbs.



One of my fondest memories working for the team of naturalist gardeners was collecting egg

counts of the **Mission Blue Butterfly** at Twin Peaks during some of the windiest days in the spring. I could barely hold myself together on the slopes of the grassy terrain, which made me realize how resilient these animals were to such conditions and how clever to have their eggs nestled inside the leaf of lupine. (internet photo of



Mission Blue Butterfly)

Working for these different agencies has not only deepened my love and affection for nature and open space, feelings I encountered at such a young age and have kept with me, but it has also given me the opportunity to help instill and inspire those feelings with others through being a Park Ranger at San Mateo County Parks

TRAIL TRIMMING TROOPS

By Joseph Piro

Under a nice sunny sky, **Istvan Puski** and I worked with **Ranger Cat** and **Brendan** on our May 11th Trail Day, to give the entire length of the Plaskon Nature Trail and the start of the Hazelnut Trail a nice trimming. Cat ran the weedwhacker and the rest of us used plenty of loppers, rakes and whatnot (including a wheelbarrow) to trim everything back and do a nice cleanup. Enjoy this nice little stretch of trail!



A NATURALIST'S PERSPECTIVE

By Jim Mackey

A really warm day! Last June 8, at 1:30 p.m., I went out onto our back deck and found it to be sunny and 79F! Perhaps, I thought, we could have weather like this all summer if only we had settled farther from an ocean that is about 55F year-around - like our



daughter, Robbin, who lives in San Mateo and raises grapefruit and oranges, and has **mockingbirds** in her neighborhood. But I was greeted by the sweet songs of our resident male **purple finch**, (at left), who seemed to be unusually vocal. And then the phone rang; it was an excited **Jack Dodson**,

who was the host at the Visitor Center (V.C.) that Saturday. He reported that the Trail crew, including **Joe Piro**, **Istvan Puski**, had stirred up a **Ceanothus silk moth** - that had settled on a door; I had to see it!

So I grabbed my camera and jacket; but, wait, if I wear my jacket I'll sweat - if I can still sweat. Does aging impair one's ability to sweat? In the summer of 1952 I sweated enough for a lifetime. I worked on the night shift in a wholesale grocery in Columbus, Ohio. So I tried to sleep during the day, with no air conditioning, in a pool of sweat. But, back to today; if I don't wear my jacket, with its six pockets, how will I carry my cell phone, notepad and three pairs of glasses (for reading, distance and sun)?

I parked at the Park and started up the walk to the V.C., but stopped when I saw a **lesser goldfinch**, (Tom Grey photo of this bird)



with something in its beak, fly into the large coyotebrush. I moved under the bush and looked up into it, over the sidewalk, & saw the bird settled on a tightly woven, cup-shaped nest. (This was the same bush in which we saw a **lesser goldfinch** nest on May 21, 2011, on a bird-song hike

led by Jim Steele.) But, on to the V.C., where Jack greeted me, & Istvan led me back out the front door and around to the back door, where the big, beautiful silk moth was in a corner of the pane of glass! This spectacular moth has a wingspan of about four inches and never fails to impress. [see p.4; prob. not a **cecropia**]

(to the right is the **Jack Dodson** photo of this moth) I remember a similar, closely-related **cecropia moth** that emerged from a cocoon that my Great Aunt Jennie had kept all winter in a flowerpot in Ohio.



There was also a silk moth that emerged from a cocoon found in a **Ceanothus** bush by the Boys' and Girls' Club in Pacifica, and another that my son Jim and his mate Rose found attracted to a porch light on our cabin in Mendocino County. But the last previous silk moth that I had seen in Pedro Park was a dead female that **Katie Antista** found on the road by the horseshoe courts on July 10, 2008. My field notes reported that the temperature was 84F, and it had been hot that week.

So, admittedly, Pedro Park is seldom hot, but, on the bright side, it receives considerable sunshine, which has earned this part of Pacifica the apt name of "Sun Valley." Hence our **fence lizards** can dart around with body temperatures in the 90's when the air temperatures are as low as the 60's.

Poor Jim's Almanac. Watch for the tiny (two inch) **baby fence lizards** that should hatch in early August - especially along the Weiler Road. & Valley View Trail.



MARCUCCI; TRAILSIDE STORE; SALE!

Anybody want to suggest a new book for the bookstore? My name is **Denise Marcucci**, and I'm happy to be the new volunteer working in the Trailside Bookstore. We have a table of 50% off sale items in the Visitor Center. We're eager to sell these items and purchase some new books and merchandise. Help us out with your suggestions! [And make a great purchase.]



SPIFFIN' UP THE NATIVE GARDENS

By Joseph Piro

There was a big trail run in the Park today, primarily on the Hazelnut Trail where we were planning to work, so **Istvan Puski** and I worked around the Visitor's Center instead for our June 8th Trail Day. We pulled lots of weeds, trimmed stuff & generally tidied up the Native Plant Sun & Shade Gardens & all around the back patio.

FACIOM

"Fighting in Formation" may seem like something that only people can do—or at least one would hope that, but the "sciencediscovery.com" website, insists that **ants** and **crows** are among the few using this strategy. Possibly the crow at the right is passing on instructions for the confrontation formation.. (dailyfmial.co.uk)



ON THE TRAIL (continued)

When our trail crew leader, **Joseph Piro**, snapped a photo on May 11 of this supreme beauty of a **Douglas Iris** during his Plaskon-Hazelnut work stint, we just had to feature it! Drop by the info board and see it in color, or in 2014, hike a piece up the trail in very early May.



Your editor saw perhaps 100 **bumble bees** working the wild lilac, **Ceanothus**, by the Visitor Center entrance; they all looked the same, but were different sizes. It was a warm morning at 9am on Wednesday, May 1.



Monday, May 27, was a banner day on the East Hazelnut.

Katie Antista and your editor, saw a brown streak of feathers cross a few inches up from the ground over the trail from the bank side; a few yards up another flew by, and Ms. Antista investigated, finding a hole with a little grass nest inside; your editor noticed an egg, then Katie found 3 white ones. **Jim Steele** thinks it may be the nest of the cavity-loving **Bewick's Wren**. (Bewick's Wren photo from roysephotos.com)



Katie and your editor also enjoyed seeing the not-well-known **burning bush** on the beginning of the East Hazelnut and at the far end of the Weiler Ranch Road on May 27—the blossoms are a faded purple-brown. (Yerba Buena Nursery photo of the burning bush flower.)



Stacey, a hiker on the warm morning of May 2, saw a **bobcat** toward the turnaround on the Weiler Ranch Road. "He" leaped into the stream area brush at 9am.

PUSKI, GUZMAN & SHAW RESTORE SUN GARDEN

Once again we can see most of these native herbs & shrubs: flowering **sticky monkey** & **dudleya**, fruiting **currants**, foliage of **yerba buena**, **wild strawberry**, etc. Working for 3 hours were **Christine Guzman**, **Istvan Puski**, & **Sara Shaw**. They struggled to reset some of the identification signs, but that tough customer, hardpan clay, fought back with great resistance on June 15, habitat restoration day.

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**; Interim Treasurer, **Bing Huey**; member 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: **Denise Marcucci** . . .

JULY-AUGUST CALENDAR**JULY GENERAL MEETING**

Wednesday, July 10.....6:30pm

JULY TRAIL DAY

Saturday, July 13.....9am

JULY HABITAT RESTORATION DAY

Saturday, July 20.....9am

BECKY JAFFE'S BAY AREA WILD

Saturday, July 20.....6pm

AUGUST TRAIL DAY

Saturday, August 10.....9am

AUGUST GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday, August 14.....6:30pm

AUGUST HABITAT RESTORATION DAY

Saturday, August 17.....9am

GLENN KEATOR'S FLOWER PLANTS OF SPVP

Friday, August 23.....6pm

For all events meet at the Visitor Center unless indicated otherwise.

LOIS JOSEPH DISCOVERS BIG MOTH

By **Joseph Piro**

While opening the Visitor's Center today (June 8th), **Lois Joseph** (in my photo with Istvan) spotted this big moth sitting in the corner of the window in one of the doors leading out to the patio. **Istvan Puski**



Puski found a book in

our library and identified it as a "Cecropia Moth"... I took this pretty picture of it & Lois happily pointed it out to everyone who came in the VC. Its wing-span must have easily been 5" across and what a treat to see something like that so up close! [JackDodson, who loved its big feathery antennae, saw it fly into a tree after it was nearly killed by a door.] (Please see p. 2-Jim Mackey)

**BAD LUCK FOR ENGLISH IVY ON HAZELNUT**

Istvan Puski's troops hiked up to the **eucalyptus** forest from the west side of the Hazelnut to tear down this invasive pest, **English ivy**, whose seeds get dropped by euc-perching birds in their feces. Most of the group continued down to weed the lower trail while Istvan and **Bing Huey** braved the **poison oak** surrounding some of the ivy.