

BIRD PHOTOGRAPHER, NATURALIST, ED HARPER'S "You watch BIRDS!?" ON THURS, OCTOBER 3RD

This time we will enjoy a mid-week presentation at the early



time of **5pm**, as we must be out of the Park before 7pm, the closing time. I apologize to you who work later hours, but it will be a good opportunity for retirees who enter the land of nod rather early. (photo—Robin Wolcott) to see all this avian beauty in remarkable photos.!

Harper's interest in birds goes back to his early childhood when he was growing up in Montana, where his interest and love of natural history blossomed. Always a teacher at heart, Ed taught mathematics at American River College from 1969 until 2003. His passion for birding led Ed into teaching a variety of classes in field ornithology for the Avian Research Center Extension. He designed and taught many popular classes, including bird song, migration, introduction to the birds of the Sacramento area, and field identification for birds of prey, shorebirds, and gulls. Ed presently serves on the board of the Western Field Ornithologists. He is a popular and frequent speaker at many birding festivals and conferences.

Ed has traveled to all the continents in search of birds, photographing over 2000 species. Some of his photos are found in books, periodicals, and, of course, slide lectures. In North America he has photographed over 750 species of birds. Starting out



as a tour leader for the Mass. Audubon Society in 1980, Ed now operates **Sandpiper Journeys** with his wife, **Susan Scott**. Together they have conducted many world-wide birding & natural history tours. (photo of **Fork-tailed Storm Petrel** is by **Ed Harper**.)

Xtra, Xtra, read all about it! October Field Trip to Hawk Hill On October 12 For All Volunteers & Friends of the Park. The first 25 to sign up on-line will be accepted, Volunteers having priority. See page 4!

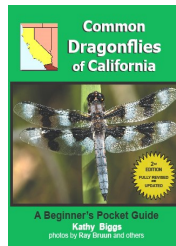
SEPTEMBER 14th FRIENDS BARBEQUE IN PATIO

Strike up the matches, bring on the briquettes, feast on links and burgers; sorry no steaks at this time. Delicious odors will be wafting through the patio behind the Visitor Center at 12 noon on Sat, Sept 14. All our members are invited to the most mouth-watering, down-home barbeque of all time. **Shirley Drye** will bring her potato salad, your editor her "Jean's Beans", **Denise Marcucci** a fruit salad, **Carol Martinez** a surprise salad, and you? The phone team will be calling you soon. (FREE cartoon—download.com)



SEPTEMBER 27: DRAGONFLY EXPERT SPEAKS

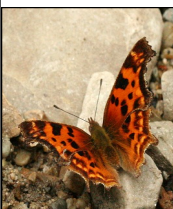
Kathy Biggs has always been a nature lover, camping, stalking birds & collecting insects as a child. Later, when she taught school, she immersed her students in wildlife, & on **Fri., Sept.27, at 5pm**, she will captivate you with the ancient creatures she knows so well, the terrible predators of 300 million yrs ago.



Kathy & her husband became very active in the Madrone section of the Audubon Society back in the 80's., but when they built a pond in their yard in Sebastopol, she became transfixed by the dragonflies, & soon they became her passion—the steady zooming of the blue, red or dark & clear winged creatures, their bulging eyes, their expertise as a predator.

Now Mrs. Biggs describes herself as an author/publisher/dragonfly/wildlife pond spokesperson. She has published and sold over 11,000 copies of her pocket guide: *Common Dragonflies of California*. Her second book, *Common Dragonflies of the Southwest*, has expanded her horizons, enabling her to be a speaker in many areas of our country.

ON THE TRAIL



Bing Huey saw 2 **angle wing butterflies** flying about one another, probably with mating in mind—in the Visitor Center patio on July 7 at 2:30pm on a sunny 73 degree F day. You can refer to your \$2 butterfly brochure, I hope. (photo by **Lynette Schimming**)

On the fairly warm morning of July 2, your editor saw our long-tailed **grey fox** sauntering across the "horseshoe" bridge, unaware of my approach. As a jogger bounded in from the east he saw he couldn't escape in my direction and scurried through the railing and into the brush below. The best recent photo of this clever predator is that by **Walter Cahoun** ("phonetic" spelling, sorry, Walt) It Shows one getting an easy meal recently, as a last resort? For the actual photo refer to **Katie Antista's** moveable display board at the Visitor Center. (grey fox by **Nick Dunlop**)



In early August, **Ranger Cat** saw a **chipmunk** eating **poison oak berries**; she also saw a **Great Blue Heron** on the So. Walnut field. It's noble stand was interrupted by the hungry leap of a resident bobcat, who missed "his" avian entrée. (Thank you, **Bryan William Jones** for the photo!) His web site: <http://prometheus.med.utah.edu/~bwjones/>



(continued on page 4)

DENISE MARCUCCI, NEW VOLUNTEER

1949 - A great year for a curious female to be born! I'm **Denise Marcucci**, one of your most recently recruited vol-



unteers. I'm going to manage the Trailside Bookstore. We'll bring educational materials in for you and your families to enjoy. We've decided to focus our offerings on the Park and local information. I

need your recommendations for books, charts, and environmental art. You can send your suggestions to me at me-mahd@gmail.com. Thanks in advance!

I grew up around Chicago. My family was involved in little theater and little musical theater for most of my childhood, and it was great fun! I graduated from Northern Illinois University, in De Kalb, Illinois. I earned a dual degree which prepared me to teach multi-handicapped preschoolers for eight years in the inner city of Chicago. I loved those years!

I moved here in 1977 to go to SFSU grad school. I thought I'd learn to design teaching materials for those special ed kids. That was great too. But that idea changed a bit and I ended up staying here in Pacifica with a new career in video production and satellite teleconferencing AND a new husband!

I worked for the major players of Silicon Valley, Hewlett Packard, Cisco, Apple, and Sun Microsystems . 1983 brought us twin girls - gorgeous! Our girls are both very artistic and working in New York City - too far away!



In 2003, I became an Emergency Medical Tech (EMT); a lifelong dream. I worked in the emergency room at Peninsula Hospital for four years; and retired when I was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease.

I then took up pottery at Clay Creations here in town. I incorporate my clay work with jewelry making. And lately, I've been making air ferns & mobiles from articles I find on the beaches & trails of Pacifica. (Denise's art at right)



So here I am today with you. I owe San Pedro Park a great deal for all the hours of peace and vitamin D it has given me. I feel like this is a chance to give back.

ISTVAN and the WEED-TROUBLED TROUT FARM

Mr. Istvan Puski just couldn't keep his hands off the living "litter" that despoils the Trout Farm area, and in July and/or August, on Habitat Restoration Day, a group of workers that included **Bing Huey, Ranger Matt, Christine Guzman, Brenda, Elyssa, & Joshua Farmer, Nathan Ramsletter, & Rangers Matt & Greg** managed to get rid of the pushy **poison hemlock**, non-native **thistles**, & other unwanted—a good turn-out for those 2 days—not 'typical'; *we need more volunteers on this third Saturday of each month at 9am!*

FACIOD

Time to tarry a bit in the dark world of the **common mole**. In such a mammal, who strangely has a poor sense of touch, one might expect that the sense of smell as well as hearing, is relied upon to give messages from the underground. But it's still a surprise that the mole actually has a special dimension to its odor detection: "stereo sniffing", enabling it to tell which direction an odor is coming from, thus helping it to locate prey like the earthworm (Je/July "Nat'l Wildlife" research of **Kenneth Cantania**) My apologies to this individual & to all moles for obtaining the photo of this handsome fellow from the "mypest.com" website. A person of the scientific persuasion, as most of our readers are, does not consider this hard-working, worm & insect eating mammal, to be a "pest".



from: "A Handy Mole",
by Christina Rossetti

*A handy Mole who plied no shovel
To excavate his vaulted hovel,
While hard at work met in mid-furrow
An Earthworm boring out his burrow.
Our Mole had dined and must grow thinner
Before he gulped a second dinner,
And on no other terms cared he
To meet a worm of low degree.*

A NATURALIST'S PERSPECTIVE

By Jim Mackey

Sept./Oct. 2013

Why learn the names of plants and animals? Nay-sayers might cite the saying that a rose by any other name would smell just as sweet. However not all varieties of roses are equally sweet-smelling. **Glenn Keator**, in a recent presentation to us, commented that the wood rose (*Rosa gymnocarpa*) (image of wild rose is from



www.nwplants.com) in San Pedro Park was more fragrant than many varieties of domesticated roses. So knowing the name of a desirable variety could facilitate conversing about it or selecting a specimen from a nursery for planting.

Why hike in the Park? I applaud any hikers in our Park, even if they hurry along, perhaps listening to i-pods. At least they are not being couch potatoes. However the mental and emotional benefits are greater for the hiker who at least notices the red tail of the hawk that is fanned out overhead against the blue sky (photo by **Gil Miller** on Cornell



Lab ws.), and perhaps hears the flute-like song of a **Swainson's thrush**. BUT, hikers who learn the names of the plants and wildlife could open a door to a store of information - from others, field guides, the internet, etc., that will enrich their hikes and travel and be an absorbing hobby for the rest of their lives. (The

red-tailed hawk is a year-around resident; a mated pair often perches on the light poles on Fassler Drive. It is the same species as the eponymous Pale Male, the bird that nested on a building bordering Central Park in New York City & was featured in a book. The Swainson's thrush nests in our Park but winters in Latin America. You will appreciate its beautiful song even more when you learn that it is only performed in May.) (photo by **Matt Orsie**)

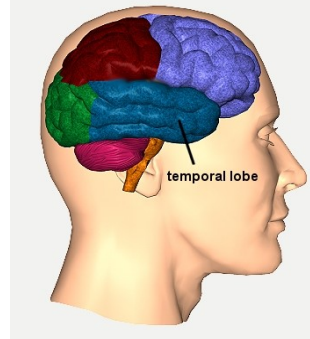


Do you enjoy watching or listening to performances by people - in sports, arts, or drama? Does it

enhance your appreciation of these performances to know the names of the performers - so you can converse about them and learn more about them? The same can be true about knowing the names of species of wildlife and plants.

Carol Yoon, in her book "Naming Nature" ('09), says that taxonomy ... is the deeply human act of ordering and naming the living world." Adam was charged to name the animals in Eden, & the oldest cave paintings are of animals.

Dr. Yoon found, in the scientific literature, that cognitive psychologists have found some individuals who recovered from brain damage who have lost the ability to recognize common animals and plants, like kangaroos, mushrooms and camels, but not artificial things, like kettles, canoes and tricycles; while other patients with similar brain damage have lost the ability to recognize artificial things, but not animals. The psychologists hypothesize that there is a separate center, in the temporal lobe, for each of these two functions.



Dr. Yoon (ibid) also observes that young children "exhibit a natural and irrepressible fascination with living things. (Maybe I am an overgrown child in more ways than one.) Her young son, with a scarcity of living things in the city, focused on naming his toy dinosaurs and Pokemons. (The latter are Nintendo's Japanese pseudo-monsters.) A study of eight-year old children in England found that they could identify about 80 percent of the Pokemons shown to them. Dr. Yoon's point is that humans may have an innate desire and ability to name and categorize living things, and that this would have been adaptive in a hunter-gatherer society.

Poor Jim's Almanac. It's the season for dessert for our omnivores. **Fox** and **coyote** scats will contain **plum, coffeeberry and huckleberry seeds** among the rodent hairs.

THE TUNNEL IS CLEARED

By Joseph Piro



Under a muggy overcast sky, **Istvan Puski** and **I** worked with **Ranger Greg** on our August 10th Trail Day. Greg took a gas-powered hedge trimmer and we did clean-up on several good stretches on the lower portion of the Brooks Falls Trail -- from right above the picnic area at the start of the trailhead to

just a bit below the first bench. A few sections were so overgrown it was like walking through a green tunnel -- now everything is wonderfully opened up and you no longer need to duck and dodge all the foliage. Enjoy! Ranger Greg slices overgrowth away, Istvan Puski clears an area just ahead of the "tunnel" of growth. (Both photos by **Joseph Piro**)

We need more trail blazers, obviously. **7 years ago we always had at least 5 loyal chaps working together—help continue the tradition!**



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

Couple of notes regarding the two moths addressed in the letter. I am almost positive that the **Sphinx moth** that **Denise Marcucci** photographed is called the **one-eyed sphinx** in some quarters (*Smerinthus cerisyi*). The adults don't feed at all but the larva feed on **Willow** or **Poplar**. The underwing, which is covered in the photo, has the one-eye which is pink.....

The other moth shown twice (in two different articles) is common to our area and.....is actually a **Ceanothus silk moth**, more specifically, *Hyalophora euryalus*. The larva feed on **willow, alder, manzanita, madrone** and other plants. The adults do not feed at all. Ron Wilson.

FIELD TRIP TO HAWK HILL WITH CRAIG NIKITAS

At 2pm on Oct. 12, we'll meet Craig Nikitas of the Raptor Society at Hawk Hill in Marin, overlooking the Bay. Even more ore astounding than this view will be the presentation by Craig, a raptor-handler, (seen at right with a Peregrine Falcon. Note no gloves are worn!) since the mid 90's. Mr. Nikitas was recently interviewed by the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy, and this is a small excerpt when Craig was asked what he demonstrated to visitors: *"this is a rare opportunity for people to be in the presence of a wild bird of prey, at a short distance, & see the intensity in the raptor's gaze, & observe its beauty, and feel its power as it flies off into the sky. It's a chance to learn about where these birds live.....in a very personal way."* **Watch for emails on this field trip and sign up at** carolynjunepankow@yahoo.com



BRIDGE APPROACHES CLEARED ON BROOKS CREEK TRAIL

Under a sunny, clear blue sky, **Ralph Larson**, newcomer, **Toshi**, and **I**, worked with **Rangers Matt Capel** and **Kat Allen** up on the Brooks Falls Trail for our July 13th Trail Day. Matt and Kat ran the bladecutter and hedge-trimmers (respectively) while the 3 of us provided rake and pitchfork cleanup action behind. We also trimmed some bigger stuff with loppers. With a nice-size team like this, and using the power tools, we were able to trim back several hundred feet of trail on either side of the small bridge. Head on up and take a look! Photos are of Ralph and Toshi. (This is a **Joseph Piro** image)



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.

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday, September 11.....5:30pm

SEPTEMBER TRAIL DAY

Saturday, September 14.....9am

LATE SUMMER BARBEQUE

Saturday, September 14.....12 noon

HABITAT RESTORATION DAY

Saturday, September 21.....9am

KATHY BIGGS' DRAGONFLIES

Friday, September 27.....5pm

ED HARPER'S "YOU WATCH BIRDS!?"

Thursday, October 3.....5pm

OCTOBER GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday, October 9.....TBA

OCTOBER TRAIL DAY

Saturday, October 12.....9am

FIELD TRIP TO HAWK HILL

Saturday, October 12.....2pm

OCTOBER HABITAT RESTORATION DAY

Saturday, October 19.....9am

ON THE TRAIL (continued)

Walter Cahoun ("phonetic" spelling), sighted **3 bucks** on the Valley View Trail, just past "Gerda's bench". The time was just after 5pm on Thursday, July 11. One standout had only one antler, with only a short "bud" for the second one.

Bing Huey didn't recognize a plant with a strange orange fruit at the end of the Weiler Ranch Road, but he delved into the mystery, and was able to identify the tall shrub as "Western burning bush", *Euonymus occidentalis*, the same plant whose flowers we had in "On the Trail" last month. The find was made at the middle of July. The photo of this bush is by Bing Huey.



Park aide, **Bernadette Manalo**, saw a **mountain lion** by the Trout Farm tanks on Tuesday, August 5.

At 4:30pm on Aug 13, **Barbara Kempster** saw a **Great Blue Heron** in the No. Walnut Picnic Area. A Buck in the So. Walnut watched it fly onto the restroom overhang. At 4:15 a walker had told her that the GBH had been at the No. Walnut when a **bobcat** was present at the So. Walnut. This time the feline did not try for the big "game bird".



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 help, work, and time from staff); Habitat Restoration Leader, **Istvan Puski**; Trail Leader, **Joseph Piro**; Membership, **Catherine Antista**; Programs, **Carolyn Pankow**; Trailside Store: **Denise Marcucci** .