

DISEASES JUMPING FROM ANIMAL TO HUMAN—OCT. 15 at 5pm

Dr. Shannon Bennett of the Cal Academy of Sciences will present “From Aedes to Zika: understanding infectious diseases and where they come from. She will look at the role we play in unleashing many wild animal diseases, wrecking havoc on our health by disturbing the natural environment. Shannon makes it very definite; humans are an invasive species, causing a mess, just as though we were English ivy or kudzu!



Dr. Bennett is the Chief of Science and Harry & Diana Hind Dean of Science and Research Collections. As the

Academy's first ever Associate Curator of Microbiology, she is helping to broaden the Academy's research scope to include a dedicated focus on viruses & bacteria. Her specialty lies in infectious diseases that can be transmitted from animals to humans. She applies advanced technologies from genomics & bioinformatics to study **dengue, zika, hantavirus, influenza, & other viruses, and bacteria** such as **Wolbachia & leptospirosis**, those found in **mosquito vectors**. She is especially interested in the nature of genetic mutations that give viruses the potential to cause epidemics or switch to new hosts.

From 2004-2011, Bennett was an Assistant & then Associate Prof. at the Asia-Pacific Institute of Tropical Medicine & Infectious Diseases, part of the School of Medicine at the U. of Hawaii.

During her 7 years at the Institute, & continuing at the Academy, she has led research projects on virus evolution, identification, and transmission with funding from

the Nat'l Institutes of Health. Prior to her work in Hawaii, Bennett researched the dengue virus in Puerto Rico & parasitic roundworms in Texas and Vancouver. She received her B.Sc. from McGill University and her Ph.D. in Zoology from the U. of British Columbia (above: **Zika virus** by Kuhn, Rossman)

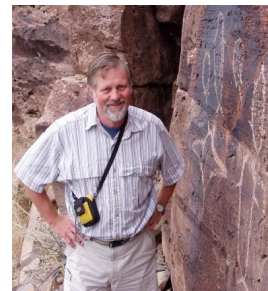
SPVP UNDER THE STARS: BBQ, STORIES, TELESCOPES, CAMPOUT

The Friends are hosting a sleep-over— **5pm** for tent set-up—at the youth camping area of SPVP on Oct. 1, for members & their families. We'll do a cookout at **6pm**. **Bevan Jones**, will read dramatic/hilarious selections from **Robert Service**, as well as spinning a couple of yarns; we'll look through deep sky telescopes, led by astronomer, **Ray Cash**, viewing the heavens; **walk in the night** on Weiler Ranch Rd, where we expect to hear **coyotes** & a **Great Horned Owl**; then we'll end with friendly banter to keep us warm. More details soon. If you are interested, I need to know how many are attending so I can organize the food. Contact Jim at jsteale@sfu.edu



JOHN HARMAN—CAVE PAINTINGS OF BAJA—SEPT. 24

Dr. Harman's focus since 2005 has been on the mysterious art of the Indians of Baja California; he's always restless to trek to these sun-baked lands, to desert rock formations to bring to light the unappreciated skills & life of once flourishing cultures. On **Sept. 24, at 5pm**, at our Visitor Center, he will present his amazing photographic revelations of scenes and figures from the past.



John Harman began his academic career in mathematics, winning a PhD from UCB. His brilliance enabled him to develop his DStretch program, which uses math skills calculated to bring out photographic images that are faded, weathered, & chemically changed over time, bringing to life boldly ancient rock painting. (see below: to the left is an unenhanced photo of Baja cave art; to the rt. a DStretched enhanced of same photo, bringing out the original paint colors)



Dr. Harman has also been involved in the photographing, surveying and recording of rock art sites in Calif. and many other western states, working with the US Forest Service & the BLM archaeologists surveying petroglyph sites in the Tahoe Nat'l Forest and the Carrizo Plains. He is affiliated with the Am. Rock Art Research Assoc. and the Soc. for Calif. Archaeology (SCA). In 2010 he received the Oliver Award for Technical Excellence in Photography from the ARARA & in 2010 an award from the SCA. Jon has made numerous presentations at rock art conferences, and published papers on rock art in many professional journals.

ON THE TRAIL

Ranger Darrick Emil reported that our “resident **Bobcat**” over at South Walnut did a photo pose for one of our new Park Aides, **Robert**. “The Bobcat came out of its little hideaway in the **willows** by the Bridge, went back in and came out as if knowing Robert wanted to take a picture of him. The Bobcat even did a full 360 as if saying ‘Hey, take my picture!’ This was Sunday morning, August 14, when we were opening the park.”



Katie Antista had a near-collision with a **Monarch Butterfly** that fluttered up to her as she was walking on the sidewalk of Linda Mar Blvd at about 3pm, early in August. We'd love to hear if you saw any in SPVP. (photo from campingcanuck.com)



(continued on page 4)

SAN PEDRO VALLEY PARK, A SPECIAL PLACE

By **Judy Bacon**

I have always been an animal person. Growing up in Chicago, the only animals I saw were **squirrels** and **pigeons**. **Marlin Perkins** at the Lincoln Park Zoo gave me my first encounter with a **snake**. The nice smooth skin assured me I would never again be afraid of a snake.



When my husband and I moved to California, I was overwhelmed by the various flora and fauna I discovered in San Pedro Valley Park. I am also a carnivore. After my boys were born, they always teased me and called me a hypocrite about

loving animals and loving to eat them, too! I guess I am. (photos showing Judy enjoying animals were taken on her vacation in Hungary.)

After my divorce, I had to get an education. I spent a lot of time in the park. I would cry there, do my homework there in the presence of various **deer**, have a BBQ there, and recharge my batteries there.

I've always wanted to be a veterinarian, but ended up being a teacher. I loved taking my fifth graders to Outdoor Education where they could experience the natural world. After 20 years, I retired.



When I got married for the second time, I chose San Pedro Park. We got married in the Walnut Grove. A friend of mine, **Eileen Woods**, happened to bring her first grade class through the Walnut Grove in the middle of our vows. After 20 years, we still laugh about it.

I spend my time volunteering at the children's zoo in S.F., Filoli in Woodside and San Pedro Valley Park. Last year, I lost my beloved father of 95 and my beloved son of 44. Again I spent my time and tears in the park. I am overjoyed to hear people who come to the Visitor's Center for the first time and experience what the park has to offer. It is, indeed, a special place. (**Judy Bacon** photo below) [Judy volunteers at the V.C. for at least 4 hours every month]



WALKER, STEELE INTRODUCE SPVP TO SENIORS



Who better than our dynamic goodwill ambassadors: **Sharron Walker** of our trailside store and **Jim Steele**, president of "the Friends", to spice up the lives of Pacifica's Senior Citizens via an informative and animated talk about connecting to nature in Pacifica's favorite "wilderness", SPVP.

The idea was to peak the interest of the oldsters through the Visitor Center "stars", according to Walker: "We were accompanied by some of our Park residents--**bobcat**, **Great Horned Owl** and Mr. **California Quail**—they were a hit! We appreciate Ranger Matt DelCarlo's allowing us to kidnap them." Several of our esteemed elders decided that a hike or talk in the Park would be right up their alley.

THE ENEMY WAS FRENCH

By **Joseph Piro**

For our August 13th Trail Day, Ranger **Greg Escoto**, **Vivianne Hiriart**, **Lucia Riedemann**, **Istvan Puski**, my brother **Erik** and I tackled a large patch of **French broom** along the Park's western boundary (just past the end of Park Pacifica Ave.) near the top of the Valley View Trail. Using pruning clippers and loppers, we carefully cut off and bagged seed-laden branches in a effort to help contain/minimize

the spread of this pretty-but-non-native plant. Unfortunately there's no photo to accompany this little report, as I accidentally deleted the group photo I took... but imagine the 6 of us



"French Broom Farmers" (standing around a large, waist-high pile of brush under a sunny blue sky.

(photo of **French broom** above is from "Bay Nature Magazine.")

OUR HUNGARIAN WON THE BATTLE, BUT NOT THE WAR

On Sat., July 17 Hab. Restor. Day, **Istvan Puski** let nothing stop him from his protracted struggle against three of the invasives at our Park: **poison hemlock**, **Italian thistle**, and **Himalayan blackberry**, which had insinuated themselves again on the lower trout farm road. Istvan was the "last man standing". Are there other intrepid weed-warriors out there? (This is the "bad", thorny **BB** at right.)



A PERSPECTIVE ON THE “Pacifica” HUMPBACK WHALE

By Paul Jones

It's often said that **humpback whales** are the most charismatic whale we have in the north Pacific Ocean, if not the entire world. They are majestic creatures, reaching lengths of 60 feet and they weigh in at almost a ton per lineal foot. Their long pectoral flippers are 15 ft. in length (each!) & are used to describe the genus of this big whale as Megaptera, or big wing. The specific epithet is no-vaeangliae. Put together, this is the Big Wing from New England. It's an acrobatic species & is well known for its song that males sing during the breeding season to receptive females as a display of their fitness. They breach, spyhop (vertical rise to view above water) lobtail (smacking the water with their powerful tail flukes), (lobtailing humpback with **harbor seals** off Calif. Coast at right) pect slap (same thing but using those long pectoral flippers), and even drift head-down, flukes-up letting the wind push them slowly. I've been lucky enough to have them rub up against the keel of a boat and even one time had a pair doing slow-motion ballet-like swimming all around the boat for an hour. They're fun and as unpredictable as whales can get.



Fortunately for us, there is now a rather robust population in the eastern north Pacific and they are putting on a show near Pacifica.



In "normal" oceanographic years, we would have to get on a boat and head out toward the Farallon Islands to see them, as they often don't come closer to land than 5-10 miles. Most abundantly, they feed on fish [esp. **herring, anchovies & krill**] in upwelling zones that coincide with a bathymetric curve that is known as the 100-fathom line (each fathom equals 6 feet so that's about 600

feet deep), and that line is about 5 miles or so west of the Farallon Islands. This year, like last year's El Niño season, the humpbacks are showing up in large numbers within 25 yards of the shore to feed on abundant anchovies. (pictured above in Beth Hoffman's photo)

Why these schools of fish were so plentiful in an El Niño year - and now a year later - is a bit of a mystery. Ocean resources are characteristically patchy in their distribution. On any given day, month or year, food might be readily available, but the next thing you know it's gone. Researchers have documented that



humpbacks and their bigger cousins the **blue** whales, will be in Monterey Bay one year, up in the Gulf of the Farallones perhaps the next, only to be found most concentrated at the Cordell Bank the year after. All of this is due to the coming and going of krill populations & the fish that feed on the krill. (pictured above from www.krillfacts.org) [krill may be 1-2 cm. long, but make up one of the largest bio-masses of any species on the Earth]

But now we have this situation, unprecedented in my 35 yrs of leading whale-watching & seabird trips, where humpbacks are "invading" the nearshore waters of Pacifica to feast upon what must be massive schools of anchovies. Imagine that we have about 10 whales in just the short stretch of shoreline from our State Beach, where San Pedro Crk. runs into the ocean, northward to Mussel Rock. If a single humpback consumes upwards of 3,000 lbs. of fish in a day, this group would eat 15 tons of anchovies in one day! And if you further extend that to the 2,000 or so humpbacks in this distinct population that feeds off California, Oregon & Washington, that's a lot of krill & fish harvested every summer!

By the end of October, these behemoths will be heading back south to waters off Baja, central Mexico, for the calving and breeding season. So, while these graceful giants are still close to our shore, demonstrating how they lunge up to engulf great mouthfuls of fish, you should grab your binoculars and get out there to see the show while it lasts.

HUMPBACK WHALE BY PACIFICA PIER

Text and Photo by Sharron Walker



I was midway on the pier, shooting off the No. side of it & this **whale [humpback]** came as close as about 25 yds. At the same time a young **white shark** swam alongside the pier & **stripers (striped bass)** were being caught. I was shooting for about an hour & could have stayed longer. There were about 5 whales in view on all sides some in the distance; there were blows, backs and snouts showing north, south and east of us. The pier was loaded with fishermen and whale watchers! A fun day at our own Pacifica Pier! [This is undoubtedly a feeding lunge for herring, which show up as white streaks in Sharron's photo. The tubercles on the jaw are typical for this species.]

SCORPIONS AND SPIDERS RULED on August 20th

Shirley Drye was not interested in scorpions UNTIL she went to **Dr. Lauren Esposito's** clever, humorous presentation on **scorpions & spiders** with her enthusiastic friend, **Marlene Testaguzza**. Dr. Esposito told us that California is the number one area for the most scorpion species—# 2 is the Andes! One species of **jumping spider** has a courtship drumming that sounds like a Harley Davidson's antics. Some j. spider males “dress up” in the extreme for females; see Mr. Fashion at rt. **Never underestimate a speaker from the Cal Acad.!**





ON THE TRAIL (continued)

Ray Trabucco saw 3 native rein orchids, *Piperia elegans*, on the W. Hazelnut trail on July 15th, ones that were green, later turning white, however since deer appear to enjoy them immensely, it might be a bit hard to see them as they look in the photo to the left from an article by **Michael Wood**, Yerba Buena chapter of CNPS. Two years ago Ray saw one 3' tall on the Montara Mt. Trail.

On about the same day, 2 busy **Merriam's Chipmunks** were on a Madrone on the W. Hazelnut, and on July 14, late in the morning. Then **Ray** saw a **grey fox** out just after 7pm in the So. Walnut on July 13th. (m. chipmunk photo by **Don Roberson**)



For those who missed the news in the Pacifica Tribune, a **mountain lion** was seen and photographed in the backyard of a home on Big Bend Drive in July.

NEWS BRIEFS

Many updates on programs, trail descriptions, species of the Park, etc. are now on our great "Friends" website: thefriendsofsanpedrovalleypark.org/ Visit it now and explore all the informative and beautiful offerings!

The Trailside Store is up and running again with brand new metal water bottles with SPVP's name on them, and soon other new sale items.

A QUARTET OF NATIVES PLANTED ON ENTRY RD. ON AUG 20

Our habitat restoration leader, **Istvan Puski** and **Ranger Greg Escoto** beautified and shielded the entry stretch of the Weiler Ranch Road from the glare of a new black fence by planting **rushes, Oregon alders, ocean spray, and toyon** in front, in order to keep the wild flavor of our Park intact.

FACIOD

• **How jumping spiders use their eyes.** The spider first senses movement of distant prey with the side eyes which provide a blurry wide-angle image. Once movement is detected, the spider turns in that direction & locks onto the moving prey with the large, middle front eyes. These eyes provide a clear, focused telephoto image, probably in color. The spider can track moving prey both by body movements & by using muscles to internally swivel the elongated eye capsules so that the light sensitive retina of each eye remains locked on the prey. While the spider stalks closer, it uses the side front eyes to judge the distance to the prey. When it judges the

prey to be close enough (ca 2 - 3 cm), the spider leaps. [Our president, **Jim Steele**, had noticed that these little predators that make up half of the spider world, seemed to be turning to challenge him.] (**Thomas Shahan** photo of female *Phidippus regius*—with mascara and lipstick?) (go right)



SEPTEMBER—OCTOBER, 2016 CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER TRAIL DAY

Saturday, September 10.....9am

SEPTEMBER HABITAT RESTORATION DAY

Saturday, September 17.....9am

SEPTEMBER "FRIENDS OF SPVP" BOARD MEETING

Tuesday, September 20.....7pm

JOHN HARMAN'S CAVE PAINTINGS OF BAJA CALIF.

Saturday, September 24.....5pm

FAMILY CAMPOUT, STAR-GAZING, BBQ, WALK, STORIES

Saturday, October 1.....5pm, 6pm

OCTOBER TRAIL DAY

Saturday, October 8.....9am

OCTOBER HABITAT RESTORATION DAY

Saturday, October 15.....9am

SHANNON BENNETT'S ZIKA, MOSQUITOES AND MORE

Saturday, October 15.....5pm

OCTOBER "FRIENDS OF SPVP" BOARD MEETING

Tuesday, October 18.....7pm

For all events except the board meetings, meet at the Visitor Center.

IN THE THICK OF IT!

By Joseph Piro



Turn-out for our July 9th Trail Day was pretty simple -- just **Istvan Puski & me**. Under a somewhat muggy, misty, grey sky, we found 2 spots to work along the Trout Farm Tr. First, just near the bend in the trail near the end of the picnic area, we trimmed some branches & pulled lots of light, vine-like weeds that were starting to cover some **ferns** and creep up the tree trunks; here's a pic of us and the pile. Then we continued up to the old foundation, where we also trimmed things back & I raked all the **eucalyptus** leaves & "acorns" off the entire stretch of trail from there back down to the bench. Head out & enjoy this peaceful creek-side trail! (photos by **Joseph Piro**)

"People fear & demonize spiders," says Oregon macrophotographer, **Thomas Shahan**. "But they are beautiful, beneficial animals—the unsung heroes of ecosystems." Shahan hopes to give all spiders a reputation makeover, "turning repulsion to reverence" (article from National Wildlife Magazine, July 26, 2016)

HUMPBACK WHALE FEEDING BY PACIFIC PIER IN JULY

By Sharron Walker



Sharron Walker reports: I was mid way on the pier, shooting off the north side of it and the **whale [humpback]** came as close as about 25 yards. At the same time a young **white shark** swam along side the pier and **stripers (striped bass)** were being caught). Quite a busy day at the pier. I was shooting for about an hour and could have stayed longer. There were about 5 whales in view on all sides some in the distance, there were blows, backs and snouts showing north, south and east of us. The pier was loaded with fishermen and whale watchers! A fun day at our own Pacifica Pier! [This huge lunge is undoubtedly a feeding lunge for herring, which show up as white streaks in Sharron's photo. The tubercles at the apparent top of the whale show it to be the ventral or lower jaw.

Resource: "Grandest of Lives" by **Douglas H. Chadwick** from our own Sanchez library]