

## 2ND BIOBLITZ OF SPVP HIGHLIGHTS FUNGUS; TALK ON MUSHROOMS CAPS THE DAY ON DECEMBER 3

Our President, **Jim Steele**, has organized a real “down to earth” for us on **Sat. Dec. 3**, knowing that our later autumn



rains will bring bring life from spore or mycelium, as if by magic. He’s worked with rangers to schedule a blitz for 4 hrs. in the Park: **9am to 1pm**, a blitz where **J.R. Blair**, a Mycologist, and Jim can give us a hunt which will turn up plenty of



life, including especially those of the cap & stipe variety: maybe **chanterelles** (see top) or **morels** (see right). J.R.’s fungus talk will begin at 2pm, following the big hunt for mushrooms, etc. In the interim Jim would appreciate it if you could bring a favorite mushroom dish to add to the snack table; microwave for heating it is in our kitchenette.

***For the Blitz, bring a smart phone to take pictures that can be uploaded to iNaturalist. A reminder email will go out a week before the event. Go to our website for Blitz info & any updates: [friendsofsanpedrovalleypark.org](http://friendsofsanpedrovalleypark.org)***



### J.R. BLAIR, THE MUSHROOM MAN

**J.R. Blair** is a lecturer in Biology at S.F. State University & the Director of the SFSU Sierra Nevada Field Campus near Yuba Pass. He obtained his Masters degree in 1999 at SFSU studying under **Dr. Dennis Desjardin**. His thesis was **Fungi**

Associated with *Arctostaphylos* in Central California. He has been a member of the Mycological Society of San Francisco since 1983. He was the president of the MSSF 2007-2009 and was the Fungus Fair chairperson for five fairs.

### JIM MACKEY’S “A NATURALIST’S PERSPECTIVE”

There will be no “Naturalist’s Perspective” in the foreseeable future, as **Jim** is dealing with an important family matter which takes precedence over his love of writing about nature, of bringing aspects of the Park to you with a clever, often whimsical slant. We wish him & his family well, thanking him for 15 years of thought, research & creativity.

**I’m hoping to get submissions from some of you** so that we can have a nature forum column, one that many of you could contribute to. Do you have some insight about SPVP, or would you like to tell us about a hike? Let’s give Jim and others a treat. I know we have some good writers who can help bring the diversity & beautiful complexity of SPVP alive. Send to Ed., C. Pankow; New email: [pankowinca@gmail.com](mailto:pankowinca@gmail.com)



## CORKY QUIRK AND HER DISABLED BATS ON NOV.19

On **Saturday, November 19, at 3pm**, **Ms. Corky Quirk** will make her 3rd appearance with her “perch potatoes” so that you & your family can enjoy a unique experience watching these amazing insect destroyers munch live mealworms on our big screen. In addition you will have the honor of seeing one close up as Ms. Quirk makes her rounds throughout the audience.



But as your curiosity is peaked by the wonder of these, the greatest acrobatic flyers of all winged creatures, Corky will also teach you some of the ins and outs of the bat world, accompanied by photos of some odd but terrific critters.

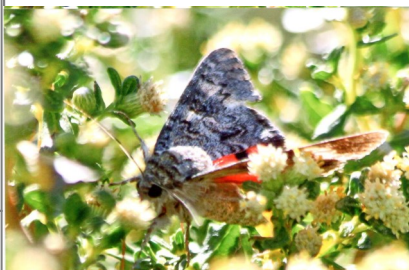
She is well qualified to speak to all audiences about these charismatic acrobats. Corky has been providing programs & field trips for students at the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area since 2005; this area includes a 3 mi. bridge near Davis, which is the resting spot for many pallid & Mex. freetail bats.

Ms. Quirk is the founder of the non-profit, NorCal Bats. She holds a B.A. in Natural Resources with an emphasis in Environmental Sci. from Humboldt State U. (Merlin D. Tuttle photo of spotted bat)



### ON THE TRAIL

**Ron Wilson** was thrilled to get a photo of a new day-flying moth, ***Catocala junctura*** most likely, on a male **coyote brush** bush. Ron notes that they completely hide the red underwings when alighting on tree trunks, where they seem to disappear. He spotted this critter at about 1:30 in the afternoon flying from flower to flower.



That tireless hiker and observer of the Park, **Laurie Nikitas**, saw what I’ve been dying to see, a **ring-necked snake**.

I think of it as a diminutive slitherer that likes to hang out in the litter and loves to eat the little **slender salamanders, *Batrachoseps sp.***, etc. which hang out there also. But this one was 15” long! In Laurie’s photo it’s flipped, so most of its colorful belly faces upward.



**JIM GIOVANNONI: \*TRAIL REGULAR, SPVP COMEDIAN  
MAY 1949—MAY 2016**



My husband Jim loved San Pedro Park and enjoyed his daily visits there over the past 30 years. He could be spotted walking all over Pacifica but always began his 3-10 mile runs, and in later years, walks, completing the Weiler Ranch Trail. Jim appreciated the beauty of the wildlife and had a special affinity for the animals that he encountered

along the way. He told me how he started running very late one night and a **deer** started running beside him and continued by his side all the way from the back of the park to the end of Rosita. He talked with the deer as he ran and the deer kept looking at him and listening as they ran abreast together until they reached the ocean.

Another time he came home to tell me how he encountered a **mountain lion** near the bridge over the San Pedro Creek. He began singing to him in Italian with wide gestures until the lion backed away.

He would stop and talk to the two **bobcats** he would frequently meet along the trail as they lay sunning themselves. He found peace and creativity in the park. He always left the house with paper and pencil and would come home excited about a new song or comedy routine that had come to him in the park.

Jim loved people and enjoyed stopping to talk with other park walkers, volunteers and employees, to tell stories, sing songs, discuss current events and tell anyone who would listen how much he loved his **granddaughter Emma**. (at top with her Grandpa Jim)



Ranger Matt, Madrone, Ranger Greg

Some good friends arranged to have a tree planted in the park in his memory. A **madrone** was planted to the left of the Visitor Center on 7/16/16 by **Greg Escoto** & Chief ranger, **Matt DelCarlo**. Watching it grow will bring great pleasure to all of us in his family.

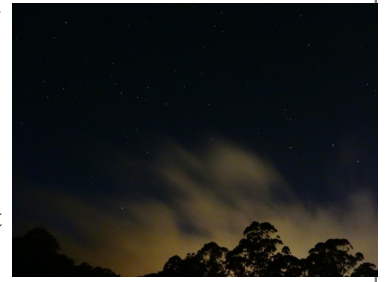
With Gratitude, **Betsy Giovannoni**

**Ray Trabucco** has fond memories of Jim, recalling how he and others would come upon him at the Walnut Picnic Area, as he was singing a comedy verse he'd created, the whole group enjoying laughing together as he charmed them. Ray told me how Jim always respected Ray's quiet time, photographing our flora and fauna; Jim never interrupted Ray, but would meet him later when he was finished, to inquire about his experiences.

\*Note: -**Jim Mackey**, former Friends' Pres. 1st used "trail regular" 15 yrs ago

**HOOTING OWLS, STARS, NEBULAE—STRANGE STORIES—**

First, thanks to **Jim Steele** for organizing this fall event, & coming up with these great amateur astronomers: **Ray & Marie Cash & Angie & Doug Traeger**. And kudos to the "Friends" who came out on this crisp & sometimes breezy evening: **Jennifer Alpaugh, Katie Antista, Eileen Campbell & family, Jack Coots, Shirley Drye, Bevan Jones, yours truly, Joseph & Eric Piro, Istvan Puski, Adrian and Mila Stroganoff**, as well as **Paul Jones, Jim Steele**, & many of his friends.



Jim said that a not-so-sly **fox** dashed a bit through the campground as food was carried to the barbeque and tents were being set up; then at 6pm, 2 **stags** with fine racks stood in the parking lot, doubly on edge at our invasive approach. As darkness closed in, the **crickets** set up a chorus, & two **Great Horned Owls** hooted back& forth across the WRR.

Using a green laser, Jim was able to point out some of the features of autumn; the Great Square in Pegasus & the Andromeda Galaxy, as well as polar dazblers, like the Big & Little Dipper with its rather dim North Star. As excitement peaked, there was a line of eager viewers to see the lovely Swan, Ring & Dumbbell nebulae, etc, & intense star clusters.



Finally, as time raced into the chilling darkness of the new moon, the scene was set for **Bevan Jones** to deliver in a moody, haunting, intimate tone, the spooky & hilarious tales of the Yukon: *the Cremation of Sam McGee*, the *Ballad of Blasphemous Bill*, *Jaberwocky* & a hilarious poetic version of *Cinderella*. (photos by **Joseph Piro**)

**MAINTAINING THE DRAINS—FOR HEALTHY TRAILS**

By **Joseph Piro**

For our October 8th Trail Day, **Istvan Puski, Stan Jensen, Victor Chiang** (both new-comers) & I joined Rangers **Matthew Tolmasoff** and **Robert Rybak** on the Brook's Falls/lower Montara Mtn. Trail loop to do some drain dip maintenance & general scouting of the trail conditions. We used McLeods & rakes to clean out several existing drain dips & identified a few locations where it would probably be a good idea to build new ones before the rainy season ahead. There was

certainly no rain that day though; it was a wonderfully sunny, warm day & we enjoyed chatting with all the other folks out hiking as well. (J. Piro photo)



## SEASONS FOR COLOR; BEAUTY IN CALIFORNIA

October, and there is little more beautiful in autumn than the sight I see from my deck: the flaming red leaves of **Vitus californica**, our state's wild grape. I



first ran into this amazing native while hiking in Morgan Territory near Mt. Diablo on a rare plant discovery hike; my friend and I were not experts in his area, but persisted despite the billed 6 mi CNPS hike that turned out to be a 15 mile trek in the desiccating heat of the summer. A shaded

corner in which we had lunch, with our palmate leaved climber brought a realization to me: We have native grapevines! I had to buy one, to have my own California grape in my yard, even though, at that time, I had no thought, no inkling that it would bring brightness to my Octobers. Another native plant society trip took me to a nursery in Sonoma County, and there I found my tempting little climber. (Flicker photo of *V. californica*.)

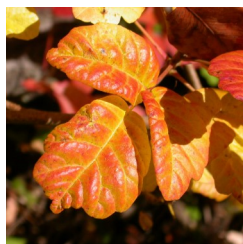
Now my own winding wanderers are surviving well, thanks to careful pruning & limb hanging by **Istvan Puski**, my gardener, but strangely, in a way, as Istvan was tending to my plants, while I asked him to leave any native untouched, I insisted that he remove all the lovely **poison oak** in the far corner of my yard, despite its seasonal blushing colors. Besides, what could look finer than the valentine-heart leaves of the grape?



Well, maybe the pure abundance and variety of this sentimental favorite for "autumn"

colors, this persistent, pretty 3-leafed inhabitant of our Park, could outrank it. Consolation prize: the notorious plants still color-up radiantly on the hill behind my back fence every summer. (Philip Bouchard photo of **poison oak** from "Bay Nature" is above.)

As you well know, **Toxicodendron diversilobum**, a great food for the **mule deer**, **squirrels**, **mice**, **insects** and many birds like our **Wrentit**, is not only inedible to humans, but unleashes a terrible, allergic reaction on the skin of most of us. It's quite helpful that the leaves turn many shades of color: vermillion, flame orange, etc. for much of



the year, alerting our inner alarm to steer ourselves clear of the "fatal" beauty during our summer hikes, especially from June to September. So this prized native doesn't turn red when temperatures dip at night, but instead, in its California way, during our summer drought. (Gregg Erickson's orange **poison oak**)

It's usually in the coolness of fall nights, with lots of sunlight in the day, that anthocyanins, the red coloring in serviceberry, etc, are made from sugars trapped in their leaves. The healthiest plants with an abundance of carbohydrates will be very red, signifying that they are strong in defending themselves. This

other host plants for their offspring that are weaker & drab by comparison. Both poison oak & Calif. Grape have that anthocyanin. A wise old codger in Maine back in '63 when I referred to dignified folks of my present age as "old codgers", said that it was a cold, dry season that brought out the full vermillion of the Eastern maples & other brilliantly colored leaves. I did check the U.S. Nat'l Arboretum *Science of Color in Autumn Leaves* web site, which said: "A growing season with ample moisture that is followed by a rather dry, cool, sunny fall produces more anthocyanin."

Nice to know that we have two "autumnal" seasons in California: one that prompts anthocyanins to be produced when the challenge of cooler weather sets in, and one for plants like poison oak that may be responding cleverly to the stress of drought.

I want to reassure you before I close: I have always gazed with loving respect at the beauty of scarlet poison oak in my sweeping hillside bouquet, with the companion milky-beige blooms of cream bush, **Holodiscus discolor**, (ocean spray to some), and if I had to choose one over the other my loyalty might prompt me to say a sad "Goodbye" to my lovely native grape. (cream bush photo by Pinterest) Carolyn Pankow



Original sources were not available in the U.S Nat'l article I relied on: "The Science of Color in Autumn Leaves".

(Big question: Why are the young leaves of poison oak red?)

## BUILDING A LANDING PAD FOR BROOKS FALLS BENCH

By Joseph Piro



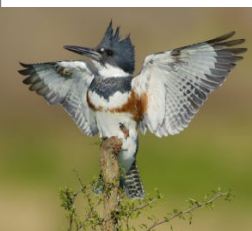
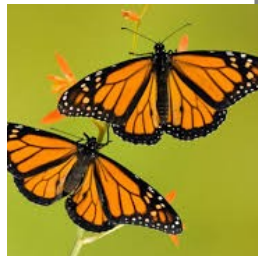
For our Sept. 10th Trail Day, **Istvan Puski** & I worked with Rangers **Greg Escoto** and **Matthew Tolmasoff** (a newcomer on the SPVP crew) on a great little project, building a new "landing pad" under the bench that overlooks the falls up on the Brooks Falls Trail. We took turns carrying a big redwood 2x12, carrying tools like picks and shovels and pushing a wheelbarrow filled with power tools and other stuff we needed for the job. First we built an "L"-shaped retaining wall with the wood and metal stakes in front of the bench and then back-filled it level with rocky soil we cut from the slope behind it. The end result is a nice level pad that's just the right height to easily sit on the bench again and enjoy the wonderful view across the canyon!

**ON THE TRAIL** (continued)

**Katie Antista** enjoyed watching the acrobatics of the **grey squirrels** in the oak trees as they hung by their back toes and gathered acorns with forepaws to stuff in their cheek pouches. Time was about 2pm on Friday on September 30th. (photo from Wild Birds Unlimited, E. Lansing, MI)



**Walter Colquhon**, who tours our Park twice daily, was watching with a keen eye when he saw 2 **monarch butterflies** at the turnaround at the back of the Weiler Ranch Rd. (image of monarchs from [www.monarch-butterfly.com](http://www.monarch-butterfly.com)) Thank you for reading this newsletter and being on alert, Walter!

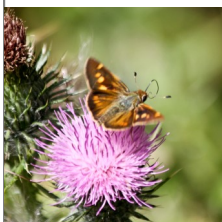


**Ray Trabucco** called with some good news: a **Belted Kingfisher** flew from the creek below the N. Walnut Picnic Area, over the parking lot and back by the Walnut restroom on Oct. 6, at 3:30pm, probably reacting to the occurrence below. (Leelanau Conservation District photo)

**Ray** & his friend, **Keith**, had seen a **grey fox** a few seconds before the kingfisher flew. The agile critter had appeared suddenly by the volleyball pole of the N. Walnut and leaped 4 feet up into a **willow tree**. (Mark Conlin photo of **Grey Fox**)



**Ron Wilson**, with his eye for butterflies, saw a great variety in the Park on a warm Sept. 5th, between 2 and 4pm, a peak time for the flutterers: a **Tiger Swallowtail**, a **Cabbage White**, a **Buckeye**, a **Calif. Ringlet**, a **Lorquin's Admiral**, and an **Umbar Skipper!** Since those particular photos were wiped out by the fickle hand of fate, here you see Ron's Pacifica photo of the skipper on a **thistle** at the left.



**Barbara Kempster**, one of our most patient observers, saw the first **Great Blue Heron** reported in quite some time at 11:30am on Oct. 12, flying from the middle of the Weiler Rch Rd. & over the Walnut Picnic Area, headed west; she said that the spectacle: long legs & all, was breathtaking.. (Robert Burton image)

**NOVEMBER—DECEMBER 2016 CALENDAR****NOVEMBER TRAIL DAY**

Saturday, November 12.....9am

**NOVEMBER BOARD MEETING**

Tuesday, November 15.....7pm

**NOVEMBER HABITAT RESTORATION DAY**

Saturday, November 19.....9am

**CORKY QUIRK'S LIVE BATS**

Saturday, November 19.....3pm

**SPVP BIOBLITZ, ESP FOR MUSHROOMS**

Saturday, December 3.....9am—1pm

**J.R. BLAIRE'S MUSHROOM TALK**

Saturday, December 3.....2pm

**DECEMBER TRAIL DAY**

Saturday, December 10.....9am

**HOLIDAY PARTY**

Wednesday, December 14.....6pm

**DECEMBER HABITAT RESTORATION DAY**

Saturday, December 17.....9am

*For all events except for the mtg, meet at the Visitor Cntr.*

**FACTOID**

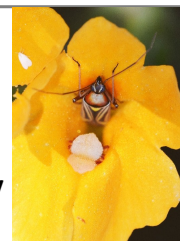
**Gray Squirrels** may have prehensile back toes, but the front toes are quite adept too, being kept exceedingly sharp for clawing into a tree while climbing.



One site said that gray squirrels have been known to drop 100 feet down from a tree, emerging apparently unscathed, however survival must depend on the substrate; one man fell over 200 feet while climbing a **redwood tree**, but survived due to the thick, fluffed up duff at the bottom. This little wonder can also leap from 8 to 10 feet between objects. (Warren Photographic image)

Their name comes from ancient Greek, *skiouros*, meaning "shadow", probably because it likes to shade itself with its tail. Is this why Western grey squirrels have a fluffier tail than E.. grey squirrels, fewer shade trees/acre in the West? (Info from Wild Birds Ultd. of E. Lansing, MI.)

**Bing Huey** never lets a Park insect get by him, and one of the hungry **Hemipterans** he shot & Id'd this year, ***Closterocoris amoenus***, is in this photo he calls "in the monkey's throat": of course, in the **sticky monkey flower** in SPVP. You will see more of his bug photos, including "sex on a green leaf-mattress", & a **Wilson butterfly**, etc. on our online 5th page.



**The Leaders of "the Friends of SPVP":** President: **Jim Steele**. Vice President & Newsletter Editor: **Carolyn Pankow**; Secretary: **Shirley Drye**; Interim Treasurer: **Bing Huey**; Visitor Center Staffing, etc.: **Mila Stroganoff**; Habitat Restoration leader: **Istvan Puski**; Trail Leader: **Joseph Piro**; Membership: **Jim Steele**; Programs: **Carolyn Pankow**; Trailside Store Manager: **Sharron Walker**; Mobile Display Board: **Katie Antista**. Member at large: **Jim Mackey**. Letters to the editor at: [pankwinca@gmail.com](mailto:pankwinca@gmail.com)

**MORE "FRIENDS" PHOTOS FROM THE TRAILS OF SAN PEDRO VALLEY PARK**



Laurie Nikitas' gopher snake  
"Moment in the Sun"  
9/20; Weiler Rd; path in 1st meadow  
(this individual was only 1' long)



Bing Huey's *Cosmopepla conspicillari*  
"Rendezvous on a wood mint leaf"  
(A true bug or Hemipteran)



Ron Wilson's  
Mylitta Crescent, *Phyciodes mylitta*  
1pm, W bridge near Walnut



Laurie Nikitas'  
And this mule deer's body disappeared overnight without a trace.  
Hazelnut, 9/27, 1 mile up, west side



Bing Huey's *Irbisia californica* on a Douglas Iris  
49ers: drinks and gold (dust)



Bing Huey's  
In the monkey's throat

**CHRISTMAS PICKS AT THE TRAILSIDE STORE FOR UNDER \$10**

1. BEAUTIFUL NOTE CARDS FEATURE ORIGINAL ART OF SCENES OR WILDLIFE OR PLANTS OF SPVP BY Jennifer Alpaugh, Sharron Walker and Ron Wilson

2. SPVP STAINLESS STEEL WATER BOTTLES





**THE FRIENDS OF SPVP HOLIDAY PARTY on WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 14 AT 6PM**

At the Zika program, as I had just announced that the party was off for this year, an exciting last minute save occurred when **Skeeter**, that tireless worker, also known as “flash”, came up to me bright-faced, saying that she and **Carol Martinez**, the quiet “can do” lady, will take over the management of the Holiday Party. The team of two will order and deliver the delicious ham and turkey, set up the phone tree, as well as calling many of you, checking the food combinations, getting all the supplies together, and then coordinate with the creative **Jennifer Alpaugh**, who will go artistic with decorations and table pieces to lift your spirit. She has procured her partner, **Rob Hughes**, to play some of your favorite music on the flute and may pass out Christmas songs for an old-fashioned sing-along. **Jim Steele** will be our voice, leading folks as the evening progresses, as well as posing as our Santa Claus for the “Grand Theft” game, which really catches on when someone steals *your* gift. You provide your favorite winter dish & bring a unisexu- al gift of \$10 for each in your party.

# VOLUNTEER

## Make new friends

**Give 3 hours to the Visitor Center Desk, Once a month:**  
**Call Mila at:**  
 650 359-1642

**Work on Trails: 9-12 any 2nd Saturday of the month.**  
**Work on Habitat Restoration any 3rd Saturday of the month.**  
**Meet at the Visitor Center**

Help at parties and barbeques; make flyers for upcoming programs, send in photos of trail observations etc.

# Help the Park