

PAUL JONES "LIFE in the GULF of CALIFORNIA"—JUNE 10th

On **June 10th, at 6pm**, Paul Jones will be at our Visitor Center for a talk on marine mammals and birds of Baja California that will include insider photos and some video clips of his adventures in the Sea of Cortez and Baja Coast. For over 20 years, Paul Jones has been a naturalist leading boat trips that start in San Diego and run the length of the magnificent Baja Peninsula and up into the lower Gulf of California, areas known to have the largest diversity of cetaceans in the world.

His presentation will discuss the wide variety of **seabirds, whales and dolphins** and the rich biota of the nearshore environment in Baja Calif, which is teeming with overall biodiversity. Paul will talk about his experiences in general, discussing the biology of the species that are often seen on these trips. (Paul often shows tourists **pilot whales**; photo taken from



"the Searcher".)



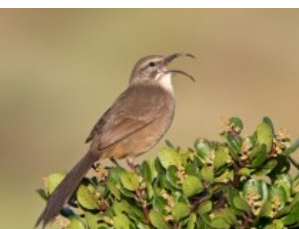
Paul has led tours aboard the classic 95 ft. boat, "the Searcher" for 20 years, to areas shown in map at left. But Paul is also a land lover.

Four years after the start-up of the Pacifica Land Trust, Paul was on its board for several years. until he was appointed to the Citizen Advisory Commission for the GGNRA in 2000.

In addition he's served on the Board of Directors of the SF Bay Bird Observatory, and has worked in the wetland and watershed program at the EPA for 15 yrs.

Mr Jones has a bachelor's degree in Marine Sciences & a Masters in Ecology and Systematics from SFSU. He also co-taught an intertidal ecology class at SFSU for 10 years.

JIM STEELE BIRD SONG WALKS: MAY 13 & 20, 8AM IN SPVP



To your left is a bird many of you will recognize, the **California Thrasher**, and one Jim may use his magic on, to bring forth its unique voice on Saturdays **May 13 & May 20, at 8am**. Jim is a specialist in the area of song for these territory

holders, having learned so much from the late esteemed **Luis Baptista** of the Cal Academy. He brings an expertise & love of avians to these popular walks. Don't forget binoculars!

JIM STEELE'S BIRDS OF SAN PEDRO VALLEY PARK: MAY 20

Who among you nature lovers doesn't yearn to know about the feathered fellows of Pacifica's premier "wild area"—especially at this time of the year? On **Saturday, May 20, at 6pm**, **Jim Steele**, will present a program that will introduce all you avian aficionados to the **birds** of SPVP, their food habits, nesting preferences & the timing of their stays in the park.



In addition, because, as Jim says, 90% of our encounters with birds are by song without a visual identification, he will blend their songs along with their appearance and provide a few tips on how to recognize their melodies. (a favorite: the mewling call of the **Spotted Towhee**, which is pictured at right.

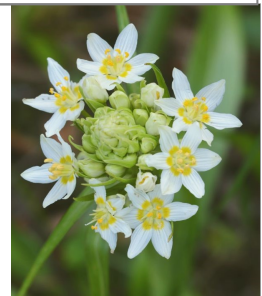


Even better: you can also join Jim on a preliminary bird song walk at 8am on May 20, the day of the talk, or on May 13. On both days, meet at the Visitor Center. All in all, it looks like you stand a good chance of keeping abreast of these territorial defenders, nest builders and care-givers.

Mr. Steele is a graduate of SFSU in Biology, who went on to become the charismatic & innovative director of its Sierra Nevada Field Campus for many years. At the same time he taught popular classes in high school biology in San Francisco. His rather recent environmental book was published in 2013. He has been the president of "the Friends" for 2 yrs, membership chair, & contributing manager of our website.

ON THE TRAIL

Bing Huey hiked along the upper Montara Mt. trail on the evening of Feb. 27th, composing a portrait of the photogenic **Fremont star lily**, formerly classified as **Zigadenus fremontii** and placed in the lily family, but now known as **Toxicoscordion fremontii**, and placed in the family Melanthiaceae, the false-hellebores.



Turkeys galore: many people have seen wild turkeys as small groups or singly, in our Park & along Rosita Rd. near Valdez (**Judy Bacon**) & on Carlton Place off Park Pacifica. But the latest known sighting was by **Katie Antista & Ray**

Trabucco, who upon entering SPVP, saw one under an oak tree at the so. end of the V.C. parking lot—Day: Ap. 22; Time: 6:15pm. (turkey photo: pinter-est.com) (Continued on page 4)



VISITOR CENTER DESK: MOST IMPORTANT JOB in the PARK?

We've recently experienced more attrition, and some real blows: the death of Shirley Drye, the need for Dr. Mackey to be at home with his wife, and before that the health problems of others as well as those volunteers who had to move from our area.

Be a Visitor Center Hero. I know it can be hard to think of setting aside part of 1 day a month in your busy life, but it's 3 little hours on a Saturday or a Sunday (10-1 or 1-4), hours to spend meeting people, helping to teach a bit about the Park and its trails, and reading or working crossword puzzles, Sudoku, etc. when you have private time, not to mention gazing upward at the tall trees through our skylight and surveying the creek from the patio. (Worker talking to former Ranger, Doug Heisinger)



And your scheduler, **Mila Stroganoff***, will usually help you switch with someone else if a big event or illness interferes with your detail. Mila will also give you about 2 hours of training, more if you sense the need, so you don't feel like a fish out of water in your new post.

What do you do? You open or close the Center to the public, possibly sell store merchandise or drinks and snacks, help people select the best trail for their needs, and point out that everything on display is of something found within our Park. Maybe you copy a coloring page from a booklet, point out where to find the best book to check up on a plant, bird, butterfly, etc.

The more time you spend there, the more you learn, and the more you are of help to others. But if you're not there, if no one is there, the Visitor Center is closed and the public loses.



***Contact: Call Mila at home: 650 359-1462; she will be happy to hear from you!**

Editor's Corner

In this SPVP newsletter, I hope you will learn to appreciate more of the "hidden" Park. In the article about plant learning, maybe you'll come away with a different feeling of closeness to the shrubs and herbs that we have come to discover have an intuitive intelligence; in "On the Trail", I hope you realize the likelihood of finding a treasure here, perhaps seeing that organisms can act in ways that delight or mystify you. I encourage more of you to email me your observations or photos of the Park, or to send me a little bio or a memoir about **your** life in nature. I'm at: pankowinca@gmail.com or 725 Big Bend Drive.

VALLEY VIEW DRAIN DIPS REPAIRED

by Joseph Piro

We had a nice big crew for our March 11th Trail Day -- **Keith**, my brother **Erik** & I joined a big turn-out from the SPVP staff: **Greg Escoto, Matthew Tolmasoff, Robert & Steven**. With so many people, we divided into 2 groups to tackle the morning's work of clearing out drain dips on the west. half of the V. View Trail. Though we came across a few very muddy spots, the trail looked in overall good condition & the drains dips have been doing their job. Our TLC included shoveling out the silt, building up the bars and/or lengthening them a bit. Head out & enjoy!



ISTVAN, OTHERS TACKLE THE TANGLED SUN GARDEN

On April 22, before our program, **Istvan Puski** was weeding furiously in the upper corner of our neglected sun garden. He and an older man and several teenagers had worked 3 full hours on Saturday, April 15, the usual 3rd Sat. of the month. "Tons" of grass, sheep sorrel & some forget-me-nots were removed, the latter two being notorious invasives. Thanks, Mr. Puski for your diligence and your loyalty to our plants! (to your right see the pretty but pesky plant, forget-me-not, that ended up overtaking Muir Woods natives. Pull it along with Istvan on May 20th?)



NEWS IN SCIENCE

Can plants learn? Maybe not, thought our young plant physiologist, who was just giving up the ghost. **Monica Gagliano** of the University of W. Australia, was getting ready to dismantle her experiment on training **pea plants** to learn that a fan pulse at a turn in a maze signaled a pathway towards blue light, (something all peas crave), when she suddenly realized that she **had** trained them! Now we know that not only can plants communicate through their root and **mycorrhizal fungal network** and through the chemicals sent out by other plants, but also learn by conditioning, by association, just like Pavlov's dogs. She & others have taught us how easy it is to underestimate plants. (Discover mag. My '17)



A PERSONAL LOOK AT SHIRLEY DRYE

"You can go on ahead; I'm just fine". We were on the Weiler Ranch Road parallel trail, spring of 2015, and Shirley was pondering the beauty and/or virtues of each and every little flower, but since I had set out to get some cardiovascular exercise, I, with some guilt, but at her suggestion, left her alone with her plants.

A while later, upon my return, thinking that I might find her sitting impatiently on the bench, I instead caught her "at home", inspecting some of the willows for signs of antler-rubbing by bucks—was the aspirin story to follow?

The last time I saw her was in the hospital's ICU. I had brought some plant photos from the Park, one that she regarded for quite a time, an enlargement of a photo of a star lily by Bing Huey, and she said, "But I don't want to see pictures of flowers; I want to go up on the trail again.", and in the next breath: "You know Bing is really becoming a great photographer."—her world was much bigger than Shirley Drye and her predicament.

Then she changed the subject. "So what have you been doing?" When I told her that I had been to a conference with my granddaughter's teachers, and that the P.E. teacher, Mr. Bolter, had said he wanted Matilda to be in his class next year—that she was such a hard worker and so much fun, Shirley replied that maybe Matilda would eventually go on to the Olympics—forever optimistic, and always curious about other people, but most passionately caring about children.

When there were teen neighbors who had a major project on Indians, etc. she insisted that they come over to her house so they could work on the project together. Even if they didn't "belong" to her friends she was forever welcoming. To a younger Matilda visiting Shirley for the first time with Grandma, and immediately running over to pound on random keys on her living room piano: an embarrassed Grandma: "Matilda, no, that is not your piano; come here right now!" Shirley: "You can come over to my house anytime, Matilda, and play my piano, and you don't have to ask me first."

With her own, she was putty in their little hands. Grandson Chase, as a 5 year old, having just flown with his family, wanted her to play "travel" with him. She marveled that he made her stand in line at the "ticket counter" for five minutes, walk with luggage, and stand

in line again before boarding the plane. She had me laughing hard, and Shirley herself could barely stop laughing the laugh that shook her whole body. (left to right: grandchildren, Sedona, Bryn, & Chase)



Could you have picked a favorite story of Shirley's?

How about the spear-in-her forehead drama, or the Coast Guard boat that got stuck in the mud when it was monitoring the progress of a "flimsy" but winning Ohlone reed boat across the Bay, or little tales, like the mystery of the disappeared backyard crop of tomatoes.

Then there are all of Shirley's contributions to the Park: at the V.C. desk she captured the interest of many a visitor by engaging them in conversation, bringing them into our realm, often by involving them in a display—her favorite was our scat collection, which she had ordered for children—or by taking them into the shade or sun garden to show them the plants with berries, or the spring wildflowers, but she would also find out where they were from; who they were. To Shirley each person had an interesting story.

She gave us 2 programs on the Ohlone, displaying her valuable collection of artifacts for us, delivered a program on a desert wildflower trip with friend Christine Thatcher, & she garnished many a Friends business meeting with her insights & stories. She purchased books and organized a small library for use by the Visitor Center public, giving credit to Ranger Doug Heisinger for his ideas. She was president of the Volunteers, later the Friends of SPVP, often secretary, & worked on many committees: one helped us decide how to spend our money wisely in our efforts to attract visitors.

In the past rangers allowed her to remove a given number of soap plants for the Rancho Days at the Adobe. One of my first memories of Shirley was as she was walking just past the Walnut picnic area with her arms full of some arroyo willow twigs and small branches, perhaps getting ready to make Ohlone string.

So hard to say "goodbye" to someone who loved so many and so much. (soap root—above; arroyo willow—right)



ON THE TRAIL (continued)



The “dress-for-success” (in staying alive) of the **Monarch butterfly** (PBS-Nova photo) attracted the attention of Paiute **Randy**, near the South Walnut and **Katie Antista** on the Valley View Trail on the same day, March 13th; Katie’s observation was made in the early afternoon.

On March 16th, near the bathrooms by the picnic grounds of the Trout Farm, **Ray Trabucco** found several lattice stink-

horn fungus (*Clathrus ruber*) fruiting bodies which had just erupted into lattice forms from their nascent egg-like bodies underground. Ray said that **James Mackey** had described them as “basketballs”—round and huge at their complete unfolding. (Pinterest photo of lattice stinkhorn reproductive body at fullest)



Laurie Nikitas was the photographer who on March 28, reported: “Found this guy on east end of Weiler Ranch Rd, a couple hundred feet from the loop at the end, around noon—usual docile **rubber boa**, [who] made a leisurely crawl across the road while three enthralled humans

watched. “ Laurie Nikitas

Barbara Kempster’s keen eye caught the subtle beauty of the **grey-veined white butterfly** by the water co. gate where the Walnut Picnic Area Road meets the Weiler Ranch Rd. on Mar. 12th, at 11:30am.



Kay Loughman



Barbara was delighted to see **Mission Bells** flowers celebrating their beauty by blooming with 7 plus flowers on one “stem”, just past the quarter mile mark on the Hazelnut Trail on March 13.

Barbara, Katie Antista, and many others may have seen the “first” **Douglas Iris** on the Hazelnut lower “grassland” by March 14th.



MAY-JUNE 2017 CALENDAR

- JIM STEELE’S SPRING BIRD SONG WALK**
Saturday, May 13.....8am
- MAY TRAIL DAY**
Saturday, May 13.....9am
- FRIENDS OF SPVP MAY BOARD MEETING**
Tuesday, May 16.....7pm
- JIM STEELE’S FOLLOW-UP BIRD SONG WALK**
Saturday, May 20.....8am
- MAY HABITAT RESTORATION DAY**
Saturday, May 20.....9am
- JIM STEELE’S EVENING PROGRAM: BIRDS OF SPVP**
Saturday, May 20.....6pm
- JUNE TRAIL DAY**
Saturday, June 10.....9am
- PAUL JONES’ MARINE MAMMALS & BIRDS OF BAJA**
Saturday, June 10.....6pm
- JUNE HABITAT RESTORATION DAY**
Saturday, June 17.....9am
- FRIENDS OF SPVP JUNE BOARD MEETING**
Tuesday, June 20.....7pm

For all events except board mtgs, meet at Visitor Center.



Brown Creeper &—a nest in a crevice of an old **cypress** near the Walnut Area bathroom-Mar. 14; seen by **Barbara Kempster**. (This one a camouflage challenge for you), is

foraging in the furrows of a cypress, the one to the right is clearly visible. (Bodega Head blogspot photos)



Wren-tit sighted on Mar. 14, by **Barbara**, just before the 1/4 mi. post on the W. Hazelnut trail. He is the “song of the chaparral” — remember: the one who gives showers to his mate?

On Mar. 21, a **Red-tailed Hawk** dropped from a **euc tree** in the Trout Farm area, landing on a **garter snake**; then, in a show of good manners, it hopped up onto a picnic table to devour its lunch, at lunch time.—thanks, **Ray Trabucco**.



Carl T. Woo

The Leaders of “the Friends of SPVP”: President: **Jim Steele**; Vice President & Editor of this newsletter: **Carolyn Pankow**; Secretary: **OPEN**; Treasurer: **Bing Huey**; Visitor Center Desk and Staffing: **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**. *Letters to the editor: pankowinca@gmail.com*



Laurie Nikitas

So, nothing wrong with a beady eye, anyway, not when you have such a beautiful body.



Laurie Nikitas



Bing Huey



Bing Huey's "Star lily" next to a photo of one who loved his macro-photography, a Shining Star, **Shirley Drye**.