

the FRIENDS of SAN PEDRO VALLEY PARK

FRIENDS MEMBER, SHIRLEY DRYE, RESTOCKS, REORGANIZES LIBRARY

Former Ranger **Hanley** was the original impetus behind the library in our Visitor Center—about 20 yrs ago. He figured people could connect what they saw on the trails with photos in reference books, & perhaps choose to browse in books about birds, wildflowers, etc. There were also handy books to learn how to repair a weed trimmer or to build a deck??! What?

“Wait a minute”, thought **Shirley Drye**, many years later— “Very few people are using this facility and when they try they can’t find any answers”—maybe because its too crowded; many books are out-of-date, tell about exotic flora and fauna, or are just plain more than a bit off subject for the park.



At a meeting several months ago Shirley Drye proposed a reorganization of our Park Center Library, which included the purchase of many outstanding nature guides, etc.. At this business meeting, Treasurer **Ed Decker** made a motion to authorize her to proceed with this reorganization. Shirley was encouraged to apply to the Park Foundation for a grant. She did so and the grant was awarded. Then the real work began in earnest. (continued on page 3)

TEACHER OF BIRDS—AL JARAMILLO FEATURED for EVENING PROGRAM

On Saturday, July 28th, at 8pm we are having a very special program, “Island Birding” by an accomplished and popular bird expert who knows how to explain material and to enthrall his audience. **Alvaro Jaramillo** will feature birds on an array of islands, some closer to home, as well as those on the Hawaiian Islands, the Galapagos, etc.



“Islands are living experiments in evolution, where a lost finch could ‘radiate’ into a myriad of forms as happened in Hawaii, from sickle-billed liwi, to the bird with the oddest bill of all, the awesome Akiapolaau.” (photo of liwi above from U.S. News and World Report photo) “We will take a visual tour of islands and show you some of the great birds and birding that can be had there, with a little background of the natural history of islands and why they can be amongst the most interesting birding experiences anywhere!” (drawing of Darwin’s Finch of Galapagos courtesy of Jeff Blincow)



Al has been a leader of birding trips with Field Guides Inc. to such places as Chile and other South American countries as well as 2 popular trips for the “Friends”.

ON THE TRAIL-Sightings

Ranger Jonel Ishida saw a small sized **Bobcat** on the Trout Farm trail—estimated weight was 9-10 lbs. “There was a white edge on the bobbed tail and it had tiny black paws and toes” said our sharp-eyed ranger.

Ms. Ishida also saw a small **skunk** in the North Walnut picnic area, and a huge **Red Tailed Hawk** atop our Visitor Center roof.

(drawing of skunk from twainquotes website)



An at 2pm on 5/30 **Katie Antista** and **Ray Trabucco** sighted dozens of strange iridescent green-black, worm-like larvae on **coyote brush bushes** (at left) on the turn-about at the end of Weiler Ranch road. They searched for the half-inch critters on other coyote brush in other areas but could find none.



(continued on page 4)

AUG. 11 BARBEQUE HONORS TRAIL WORKERS

Meet some of the trail workers on Saturday August 11 at 12—2pm when we will have our late summer barbeque; this time trail-man, **Ed Decker**, is “off the hook” for barbequing; anyone who volunteers for a shift during this 2 hour Saturday job will be appreciated. (Call **Jean Leonard** at 359-7485.) The event is a Pot Luck with hamburger and hot dogs. To join us call Jean!.



ELECTIONS FOR “FRIENDS OFFICERS TO BE HELD AT GENERAL MEETING —JULY 11

At the May general meeting it was agreed that we should follow our by-laws rather than have informal election. The nominating committee: **Raul Ortega, Shirley Drye, and Carolyn Pankow**, have selected these candidates, but others may be nominated from the floor in July: President, **Valerie Patten**; V.P., **Carolyn Pankow**; Secretary, **Shirley Drye**, Treasurer, **Ed Decker**. Members at Large will be elected from this slate of nominees: **Christine Thatcher, Jean Leonard, Ray Trabucco, & Raul Ortega.**

TRAIL DAY—May-June

May: it turned out to be an unusually small group of us regulars — just **Ed, Art, Jim*** and **myself**. Good gosh — we didn't even have **Hal** and his doughnuts for the morning start! After a bit of our regular chit-chat, the phone rang and Ed answered it. It was **Ranger Doug** and he suggested we hike the Brooks Falls/Trout Farm loop trimming any low-hanging branches or anything else that might be growing towards the trail. So we all gathered some tools & headed out. Along the way we cut down a few **eucalyptus** branches, whacked down some spikey weeds, trimmed some bushes by the old foundation and whatnot. And, for a change, we mysteriously lost something — a small handsaw. But we all made it back down to the Visitor's Center again, so all in all in was another successful trail day. (***Decker, Armstrong, Pommier**).



[Saturday, June 16th]— Just **Art, Ed** and **myself** [showed up.] After the usual donuts-and-coffee & catching up, **Ranger Doug** suggested we take a string trimmer up the Valley View Trail & trim back the trail-side grass and whatnot. Art and Ed took rakes & loppers along & I suited up with the big orange vest and helmet & manned the string trimmer. Starting at the near end of Valley View (at the horse-shoe pits and the start of Weiler Ranch), we hiked up to where the trail starts to level off along the ridge and then worked our way back down. The whir of the trimmer filled the air, grass went flying on both sides of the trail and in the end virtually that entire stretch of trail was well cut back & looked much better. *Joseph Piro*



FACTOID

Golden rod, *Solidago Californica*, one of the plants most often accused of causing allergies, would only really give you a problem if you were to bury your face in it. Why? Because this much maligned plant does not have a wind pollinated flower. “This plant is a **bird, bee, and butterfly** bonanza.” Enjoy the display of its yellow flowers in our native sun garden or along the beginning of the Mt. Montara trail. Look for them in late summer, and if you sneeze don't pin the blame on them.

(image adapted from photo by Diane Fisher)



CALIFORNIA BLACK WALNUT



Seven lovely and little and undoubtedly delicious Walnut trees have been planted at the North Walnut picnic area, which no longer needs to be identified as “the No-Walnut Picnic Area”. Luckily we had “Ranger” **David de Vasquez** on the scene, who capably put a wire netting around the trees to deter hoofed gourmands. In the early afternoon you may have seen the sprinklers watering these arboreal babes, nurturing them at their more vulnerable age.

No worry about root rot from damp soil, as these trees, our **Northern California Black Walnuts, *Juglans California*, var. *Hindsii***, are more resistant to our **fungi** than the English Walnuts and in fact are used as the root stock for any one of these trees grown in California. The fruit of our **Juglans** is another matter— not such a perfect “choice”.

Our **Western Grey Squirrels** have been busy at work for thousands of years selecting the walnuts with the thinnest shells and largest prize within, but it seems as though they need a few more millennia to achieve perfection—the nutmeats are meager. Foxes & woodpeckers also prize the nutrition of the small nut and are “working towards its perfection”. (photo of Squirrel from Mary Beth Stowe's w.s.)



To find these mature trees of dark brown, furrowed bark, go to the sites of old Indian encampments, such as those around, naturally, Walnut Creek. Other than these locales, its hard to find them in the wild, which makes me speculate: Were they introduced to the West by native import from the East? Maybe, however, they did become scarce in their natural riparian habitats when European settlers began cutting them, prizing their wood for use in furniture, etc.

I was ruing the fact that I will probably not be here when they reach their magnificent maturity, when **Jim Mackey** told me what they say about another, fairly slow growing tree. “When you plant an olive tree you are planting it for your grandchildren”. Our descendents will have a lovely heritage from our plans and work, thanks to **Ranger Doug** and others.

A NATURALIST'S PERSPECTIVE

By Jim Mackey

Hidden worlds. My daughter, **Robbin Mackey**, recently graduated from film to digital photography. This made her Canon SLR film camera, with its 70—300mm macro zoom lens, available to me. So now I am getting good looks at even the smallest **butterflies!** And this fauna, which I have overlooked, is varied, with many exquisite and beautiful species. So each sunny day I am eager to explore different sites in our Park in the hope of discovering new (to me) species and to learn how these creatures behave. My excitement is akin to my state when I first visited a tropical rain forest, or discovered “wee animalcules” when viewing a drop of pond water through a microscope. Robbin said that it may be like she felt when she first snorkeled over a coral reef.

Butterfly behavior. Indeed, like birds and bees, butterflies also “do it”. I was elated to find two beautiful, orange and black **Mylitta Crescents** linked “tail” to “tail” on top of the white inflorescence of a **yarrow plant** along the Trout Farm Trail. This couple was too preoccupied to be alarmed by my approaching within three feet to compose a photograph. How did I identify this species? By a stroke of good timing our **Trailside Store manager**,

Mila Stroganoff, had just stocked the newly published “Field Guide to Butterflies of the San Francisco Bay and Sacramento Valley Regions”, by **A.M. Shapiro & T.D. Manolis**.

I rushed into the Visitor Center and bought the first copy. (With my 10% “Friends of the Park” discount, & tax, the price was only \$18.46.) This book has not only excellent color paintings and species accounts but some 125 pages covering butterfly biology and “things to do with butterflies”. It is quite authoritative about population dynamics because **Prof. Shapiro**, of U.C. Davis, has been monitoring a set of sites along Rt. 80 from the Bay Area to Donner Pass for more than 30 yrs. His web site is: <butterfly.ucdavis.edu>.

My pursuit of small butterflies has not prevented me from continuing to admire the large ones. The **Lorquin's Admiral**, with its white diagonal stripes across a black background, and orange wing-tips, is easily appreciated with one's naked eyes. I have been seeing

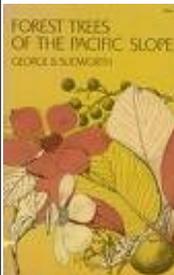
them at lower sites, however Shapiro reports that this species has declined. He also informs us



that it was named after an unsuccessful miner during the 1849 Gold Rush, Pierre **Lorquin**, who sent specimens back to an entomologist in France.

Bird behavior. Our treasurer and his wife, **Ed and Joy Decker**, have been honored by a female **Anna's Hummingbird**, who built a nest in a **Ficus** tree in their yard. However she has been decorating their porch with white droppings. I told Ed that I knew that he wouldn't want her to leave the nestlings' droppings to foul their own nest. Happily the Deckers decided to allow the excrement to accumulate until the young leave the nest. When will that be? To answer that question you could consult another great book that is for sale in our Trailside Store: “**The Birder's Handbook**”, by **Ehrlich**, et al. This is not a field guide, but is an amazing array of information about the natural history of each species, with over 1000 references, plus dozens of essays on bird biology & under \$20!

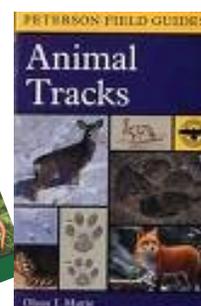
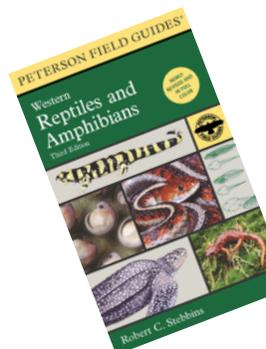
Poor Jim's Almanac. Watch for hatchling **Fence Lizards** in early August.



Shirley Drye—Library—continued Shirley started separating the wheat from the chaff, treasuring and keeping books like Sudworth's “Forest Trees of the Pacific Slope”, placing them in a smaller group and boxing the less useful bulk, “Mission Days”, etc.

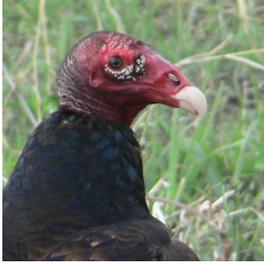
She then purchased close to \$600 worth of books, and divided these “reference books” into several sections, so that “insects” are clearly separated from “birds” from “wildflowers”, etc. Later she made labels for each category.

A new volunteer, **Rachel Sterling**, is a graphic artist and was only too happy to produce a design for a poster which will draw people into the library room.. Rachel has suggested that once the poster is finished, we use the design to make book marks for the park. Ranger **Doug Heisinger** has given his support and an extra push to make sure we indeed have a new library that can really be used by the public.



ON THE TRAIL (continued)

Katie and Ray were also surprised by the **Turkey Vultures** parked on the concrete tables at the South Walnut picnic area the next day at about 2pm. Katie was impressed by their huge presence.



Judy Spitler, the “Friends” representative from the Sequoia Audubon Society keeps track of our feathered friends more than any-

one else who regularly hikes in our Park. This was her report for early May:

May 2 - 1 **Western Kingbird** (right);
 May 8 - at least one of our resident **Black Phoebes** was already feeding fledglings. There were 1 or 2 singing **Yellow Warblers**, 1 male **Bullocks Oriole**, and several **Western Tanagers**.



It's a bit frustrating that I can't show you these in color, but check one of the guides in our newly formed library. Below-left you can see a drawing of the yellow and black **Bullock's Oriole** by the famous naturalist, Stebbins. .



May 27— Judy saw a blue **Lazuli Bunting** singing male at the start of Weiler Ranch Rd. & a House Wren - singing from cavities on the north service road.

Katie Antista saw a **doe** with 2 **fawns** and one with a single youngster on June 25th. The doe with twins was pruning plants in the Native Sun Garden.

Ms. Antista also noticed a **quail** pair with about a dozen young. They came from the Hill below the beginning of the Monara Mt. trail, & scampered across the entry road & onto the west. part of the parking lot. The babes were repeatedly jumping—trying to launch themselves onto the curbing to follow their parents. Katie waited, but after quite a while a few still hadn't made the leap.



On May 28 an anonymous couple reported in our Visitor Center “guest book” that they had photographed a **grey fox** on the Montara Mt. trail.

JULY—AUGUST CALENDAR*

- JULY GENERAL MEETING**
 Wednesday, July 11.....7pm
 - JULY TRAIL DAY**
 Saturday, July 14.....8am
 - JULY NATIVE PLANT DAY**
 Saturday, July 21.....9am
 - ALVARO JARAMILLO'S BIRDS**
 Saturday, July 28.....8pm
 - AUGUST GENERAL MEETING**
 Wednesday, August 8.....7pm
 - AUGUST TRAIL DAY**
 Saturday, August 11.....8am
 - TRAIL WORKERS BARBEQUE**
 Saturday, August 11.....12noon
 - AUGUST NATIVE PLANT DAY**
 Saturday, August 18.....9am
- (*For all events meet at the Visitor Center)

THE TAMING OF THE TREES

Sat., May 19—Three figures stride up the Valley View Trail, pruning saw, loppers, pruning shears, & pulasky in hand—one a healthy young blonde, one a muscular septuagenarian, one we can recognize immediately—the tall, wiry frame, the determined demeanor of—**Jim Pommier**, the leader. The other pair, **Sarah Shaw** and **Jim Mackey** are lost in conversation until they hear Pommier's voice—They are to uproot or cut down the roots or trunk of the quick growing Australian **Eucalyptus**. Jim and Sarah work up a sweat tackling the 10-20' high tough trees, as does their leader. All 3 work on the devilishly beautiful yellow **Scotch broom** & after this Pommier knows he must face the deep-rooted **cotoneaster**, the plant we grow in our yards, letting birds eat its red berries & carry the seeds far afield; Will it never end?—always a new enemy. (Karl Urban's Scotch Broom)



Sat., June 16 finds the trio standing on the bridge with a new volunteer, **Kathy Kohberger**. Kathy, Jim, Sarah, & Jim cut back the branches of the fast growing tree of the creekside, Oregon Alder, which has obscured any view of the stream beneath. This project is a favorite of Jim Mackey's—he is the one who has sighted 2 special **amphibians** from the bridge in the past. **Katie Antista** has just started her work in the Native Sun Garden. Burr clover, and other aliens must go, but having brought a pair of her loppers from home she decides to trim an unruly tribe of yarrow, etc. Later Pommier joins her.

Questions or letters to the editor? email: carolynpankow@comcast.net, or C. Pankow 600 Oddstad Blvd: Pacifica, CA

The Volunteers: Valerie Patten, President; Carolyn Pankow, V.P.; Shirley Drye Secretary; Ed Decker, Treasurer; Christine Thatcher, & Jean Leonard, members at large; Hal Jorgensen, Trails; Katie Antista, Membership; Carolyn Pankow, Programs & Editor; Mila Stroganoff, Trailside store; Jean Leonard, Visitor Center; Jim Pommier, alien plant removal.