

# Valley Views

The Friends of San Pedro Valley Park

November/December 2022

## Upcoming Talks & Walks

### A November Presentation by Dr. Shannon Bennett

#### “Animal to Human Infectious Disease Transmission: Present and Future”

Dr. Shannon Bennett will present a lecture on **Saturday, November 12<sup>th</sup> at 3 pm** in-person at the Visitor Center. She joined the California Academy of Sciences in 2011 as the institution's first-ever Associate Curator of Microbiology, where she broadened the Academy's research scope to include a dedicated focus on viruses and bacteria. Her specialty lies in infectious diseases that can be transmitted from animals to humans. In her lecture, Dr. Bennett will focus on certain diseases that are with us at present and ones that may occur in the future.



**About the Speaker:** As the Chief of Science and Harry W. and Diana V. Hind Dean of Science and Research Collections, Dr. Shannon Bennett is responsible for the Academy's programs of scientific research and exploration, as well as overseeing the Academy's priceless collection of nearly 46 million scientific specimens from around the world. In this role, she helps to shape bold new research initiatives and oversees a world-class team of explorers and scientific leaders who are working to explore, explain, and sustain life on Earth. Dr. Bennett also holds an appointment as one of the institution's [Patterson Scholars](#) in Science and Sustainability. She received her Bachelor of Science from McGill University and her doctorate degree in zoology from the University of British Columbia.

### A December Presentation by Lewis Stringer

#### “Daylighting springs, creeks, and marshes: 20 years of wetland restoration in the Presidio of San Francisco”

Lewis Stringer will present a lecture on **Saturday, December 10<sup>th</sup> at 3 pm** in-person at the Visitor Center. He will discuss the decades long effort to restore the Tennessee Hollow Watershed and Mountain Lake. Topics will include ecological design, revegetation, invasive species control, water quality and ecological monitoring. Innovative wildlife reintroductions that help improve ecological function, such as the restoration of California floater mussels and Olympia oysters will also be discussed.



Thompson Reach 2005



Thompson Reach 2013

**About the Speaker:** Lewis Stringer is the Associate Director of Natural Resources at the Presidio Trust. He has over 25 years of experience applying technical, policy and scientific expertise to the design and implementation of ecological restoration, research, and education programs in the San Francisco Bay Area. After years of managing habitat restoration projects at sites such as Crissy Field, Lewis is now focused on bringing ecological innovation to the design, research, and maintenance of the Presidio's cultural landscapes. He completed his graduate studies in Land Rehabilitation from Montana State University in 2003 with a focus on plant ecology in disturbed landscapes.



## The Friends of San Pedro Valley Park

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### Visitor Center

The Friends provide  
volunteer hosts to staff the  
reception desk at the VC  
when it is open on  
Saturdays and Sundays  
(only) from 10 am to 4 pm.

Our Trailside Store is open  
during those hours.

**Editor's Note:** Regular readers of this newsletter will surely note that some significant changes have been introduced with this issue. First and foremost, the newsletter now - for the very first time - has a name! The Board of Directors selected the name Valley View from a list of possibilities recently submitted by our members when asked for their suggestions. We think it not only recognizes the essence of the park's geography and the views from its trails, but also conveys our aim to tell our readers about the 'goings-on' of both the park and our organization. Completing the new banner is a photo of Montara Mountain, which provides not only an appropriate background for the new Valley View name, but evokes a feeling of the park and the mountain's profile that visitors know well.

Finally, the format itself has been changed in an attempt to modernize the look of the newsletter and allow for a little more leeway in how we present our news, articles and photos in each issue.

I hope you like the new look and encourage you to send us your feedback via email or let us know when we see you in person.

*Mark Golembiewski*

### More Upcoming Talks & Walks

#### A Mushroom Foray in San Pedro Valley Park

The Friends are pleased to announce that on **Saturday, December 17 at 10:30 am**, J.R. Blair will once again lead fungi enthusiasts and nature lovers on a mushroom foray in San Pedro Valley Park. The walk will last approximately an hour and a half until noon. Heavy rain cancels.

There is a fee of \$6 for parking within the park. Street parking is free.

Please **sign up on Eventbrite**. There is a limit of 20 people for this event.

Link to Eventbrite: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/mushroom-foray-in-san-pedro-valley-park-tickets-435773459147>

**About the leader:** J.R. Blair received his Bachelor's degree at the Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington and obtained his Master's degree at San Francisco State University in 1999 studying with the accomplished mycologist, Dr. Dennis Desjardin. His thesis was Fungi Associated with Arctostaphylos in Northern California. Since then, J.R. has been an active member of the Mycological Society of San Francisco. He served a two-year term as President and was Fungus Fair chairperson for five years. J.R. has taught mushroom identification workshops for mycological societies and outdoor education programs for many years. He was a lecturer of biology at SFSU for 21 years and then director of the University's Sierra Nevada Field Campus for eleven years until his retirement in December 2020.



### Friends of SPVP Christmas Party

The holiday season is just about upon us! That means it's time to plan for our annual **members' Christmas party**, which this year will be held on **Wednesday, December 14 at 7:00 pm**.

We will be having a little fun again this year with our traditional gift exchange. A \$10 maximum per gift is suggested. Turkey and ham will be provided with members being asked to bring sides and desserts.

Members will be contacted by email or telephone regarding attendance and the dish(es) that you plan to bring.

## Recent Programs

### Joe Morlan's "Neotropical Migrations"

by Mark Golembiewski

On Saturday, September 24th, Pacifican Joe Morlan gave us a very interesting look into the hows and whys of the neotropical migrations of various species of migratory birds from their northern breeding grounds (as far north as the Arctic Circle in Canada) to their southern wintering grounds (as far south as the very southern tip of South America). Using a series of excellent colored maps of species-specific migratory patterns in the Western Hemisphere, he not only showed us the extent of the amazing journeys taken by many migrant birds, but then delved into explaining the mysteries of why and how these creatures travel such excruciatingly long distances between seasons. For one bird, the shearwater, its migrations can extend an unbelievable 40,000 miles from New Zealand to Japan to Alaska and back again to New Zealand!



Orange-crowned warbler  
by Joe Morlan



Photo by Jean Bartlett

Joe showed us the migration patterns of some species that we're familiar with here in Pacifica, like the olive-sided flycatcher (breeds in Canada, winters in Central America and northeast South America) and the orange-crowned warbler (breeds in Canada and the western US, winters in the southern US and Mexico). He also discussed the seasonal travels of the Pacific-slope flycatcher, the barn swallow, Baird's sandpiper, Allen's hummingbird, Swainson's hawk and others. We also learned that the Calliope hummingbird, the world's second smallest bird, has the longest migration pattern for a bird its tiny size. It travels more than 5,000 miles each year from southern Canada and the northwestern US down to pine-oak forests in Mexico and back again. Quite a journey!

### Dr. Tom Parker's "Manzanitas as a Whole Ecosystem"

by Mark Golembiewski

For those of us who are not botanists and/or biologists, we could never imagine the ecosystem that has evolved and thrives with manzanitas, a major component of the chaparral plant community. On Saturday, October 15th, Dr. Tom Parker presented beautiful photographs of various manzanitas and where they are found in California. He showed us the various inflorescences that manzanitas form, spoke to the different times the plants bloom, some in December and January and others in February and March. He spoke about seeds and how seeds of the madrone (a tree in the same family) are quite different from manzanita. One is fleshy, the other is not. Manzanitas have evolved different methods to survive fires, some have evolved burls and the others depend on massive numbers of dormant seeds in the ground that sprout when fires come through. Manzanitas support rodents, insects, and bird populations.



Photo by Mark Golembiewski



Photo by Tom Parker

It is really eye-opening to realize just how manzanita plants in San Pedro Valley Park (*A. montaraensis* and *A. crustacea*) support diversity in so many ways. It starts with pollinators like bumblebees, butterflies and Anna's hummingbirds who visit the winter flowers for nectar and continues with insects who lay their eggs in parts of the fruits that result from the pollination. The plant's fruit also gets eaten, stored and dispersed by various animals, while hundreds of species of insects can feed on the leaves of the mature plants. Tom showed us many fascinating examples of how these symbiotic relationships take place. He explained how various fungi can invade the stems of new growth, as well as the leaves, and how the manzanita plants support fungal growth on the bark and in the soils beneath the plants. Finally, he gave us examples of how ants make nests in the bark, birds live off the insects present on the plants and how the manzanita can provide habitat for other animals, invertebrates, and microorganisms.

Taken in total, it was a truly an illuminating view of the interconnectedness of nature both above and below ground.

## A Group of Scouts Gives Us a Boost

by Joseph Piro

We had a big group for our September 10, 2022 Trail Day, with a few Scouts from local Troops 72 and 4172 coming to help. **Andrea, Kaitlyn, Kalia, Caitlin, John** and **David** joined **Istvan Puski, Stan Jensen**, my brother **Erik** and **I** for a nice hike up the west end of the Hazelnut Trail. Ranger Greg Escoto told us they had recently brushed it, but said some spots could still use a little trimming. So we mostly geared up with loppers, but also took along a few other tools.



Before we headed up the hillside we showed the Scouts our toolshed and some of the other tools we use... along the way showed them trail maintenance features like drain dips and how they're built... and explained the various seasonal tasks we do (Spring is a lot of trimming, Fall and Winter drain dips and culverts are worked on, etc.). We made it up to the eucalyptus forest and turned around. Enjoy the trails!



## Maybe We'll Get You Next Time Jubata!

by Mark Golembiewski

On the Morning of October 7th, a small group of us die-hard invasives-killer volunteers (Bing Huey, Carl Schwab and myself) met with Volunteer Coordinator, Stu Smith, with the intent of once again trying to stem the tide of Pampas Grass (or Jubata Grass, *Cortaderia jubata*) invasion in the park. Our intended mission was to help minimize the spread of this dreaded plant along the Valley View Trail by cutting off the plants' flower stalks (plumed panicles), placing them in garbage bags and disposing of them as waste to be buried.

Upon our arrival at the park, however, we learned that the rangers had recently sprayed the trail-accessible jubata plants along Valley View with Roundup herbicide. Since some were reluctant to "engage" the jubata after the recent spraying activity, we decided to hike up the trail anyway and tackle other invasives that we identified along the way. We also scouted an area off the trail where we had removed Scotch broom before and found that it had become a forest of cotoneaster! That's a big project for another day!



## November/December Calendar

<b>Nov. Trail Day</b>	
<b>Saturday, Nov. 12.....</b>	<b>9 am</b>
<b>Bennett: Disease Transmission</b>	
<b>Saturday, Nov. 12.....</b>	<b>3 pm</b>
<b>Nov. Habitat Restoration Day</b>	
<b>Saturday, Nov. 19.....</b>	<b>10 am</b>
<b>Dec. Trail Day</b>	
<b>Saturday, Dec. 10.....</b>	<b>9 am</b>
<b>Stringer: Wetland Restoration</b>	
<b>Saturday, Dec. 10.....</b>	<b>3 pm</b>
<b>Members' Christmas Party</b>	
<b>Wednesday, Dec. 14.....</b>	<b>7 pm</b>
<b>Dec. Habitat Restoration Day</b>	
<b>Saturday, Dec. 17.....</b>	<b>10 am</b>
<b>J.R. Blair: Mushroom Foray</b>	
<b>Saturday, Dec. 17.....</b>	<b>10:30 am</b>
	<b>(Reservation needed)</b>

## A Mellow Trail Day by Joseph Piro

We had a pretty mellow October 8, 2022 Trail Day -- **Mary Larsen** and **I** took a McLeod, rake and pair of loppers and hiked the popular Valley View/Weiler Ranch Rd. loop (with a small bonus of the Plaskon Nature Trail). We didn't find too much trouble, but did clear out a few drain dips, filled a few trip-hazard gopher holes and trimmed back some branches here and there. And it felt like a classic Fall day -- fog at the beach and sunshine back in the valley. Enjoy some Fall hiking in the Park!



## >> FACTOID <<

Hummingbirds don't suck nectar from a flower. They use their long, "embroidery thread-thin," translucent tongue to lap it up at a speed of 13 reaches/second! Their tongue is forked and has absorbent fringes on the edge of each fork, with grooves down the middle so that there is an assist of capillary action in the trip to its mouth.



Source: "in the trip of the nectar to its mouth" from the book, "Birdology" by Sy Montgomery



— Carolyn's Corner —

### DON'T MESS WITH MOTHER NATURE: The Critical Importance and Endangerment of our Coastal Fog in San Pedro Valley Park

Have you noticed that summer fog is not as common in Pacifica as it used to be? Looking out from my bedroom window on Fern Avenue in Valley Mar, five decades ago, I would often be enchanted by the cool blanket of soft grayness below. Walking along the beach at Linda Mar, I'd be surprised by human figures emerging from the thick, cool shift of opaque moisture as if by magic. Our fog has always helped to lower the temperature and decrease the evaporation from plants during our summer droughts, but it also creates the drip that gives a much-needed drink to our natives. Our lovely ground-cover, little white-flowered **Yerba Buena**, relies on that drip, as does the delicious, late summer fruit of the **huckleberry**, a delicacy craved as food by **deer, small mammals, coyotes, foxes, insects**, a variety of birds, like the **waxwings, robins, thrushes, woodpeckers, and warblers. Sword ferns**, and undoubtedly our petite **star flower** and many other herbs, shrubs and trees, including our redwoods, rely on a regular drink of the condensed summer fog.



The amount of fog on our coast may have gone down by 33% over the last century, but during some periods the amount of fog actually increased in some areas.\* Hmm, could climate change be implicated? Not so easy to see: As I found out, the understanding of the formation of fog is difficult, as it's a result of complex interactions between ocean evaporation, aerosols, atmospheric pressure, vertical air layering, onshore-offshore temperature gradients and coastal mountain topography, as well as the strange Pacific Decadal Oscillation. One factor seems to be the inability of cold water vapor from the ocean to punch through a layer of compressed warmer air above it. We certainly have warmer air above now, but it has to have been compressed so that it falls instead of rising. What's going on? I ask you to check out the resources below and to understand that there is no consensus among scientists as to the connection between fog and climate change. So, while the verdict is still out as to why our Pacifica fog is waning: could the proof be in the pudding?



Photo by Carl Schwab

A few of the sources for this article: [USGS.gov](http://USGS.gov) (\*please note: very recently there has been a project to map Eastern Pacific fog presence in detail); **EOS**, the science news magazine published by American Geophysical Union; **NOAA Website**; **Inside Climate News: Science; Fog and Nature**: Demystifying the Mist; **Bay Nature Magazine**, July-September, 2013

### LET'S GIVE a HURRAH for the OLD HAZELNUT!

Back in the old days, if you climbed up the west side of the Hazelnut Trail, and got to a point just beyond the **eucalyptus trees** at its summit, there was a barrier thicket of "chaparral" and an old wooden gate; only the hardy, which included my friend, **Istvan**, navigated their way through on a very old, narrow and neglected pathway as it descended into the deep canyon that finally opened into the valley of the Weiler Ranch Road. Undoubtedly wildlife had helped to keep this old, neglected track remotely passable.

Somewhat after that time, I hiked the narrow west trail in the '86 with my friend and scuba diver, **Ella Morgan**, who gave me a chill as she remarked.. "It's like we're in one of those hedge mazes; enclosed and enveloped in this wild brush; there's a feeling like being trapped in a forest of giant kelp". How mysterious it seemed then; we knew we were in the wilds, but now though it might be an aid to the claustrophobic or someone being rescued by an emergency team, it's highway-wide and only remarkable in its free, unobstructed view and its safety.



There was also an area of the trail on the west side that was a real scramble going up, and a hazardously steep back its descent. For safety's sake, it was closed off by brush and a new gradual bypass was carved out. Many

*continued on page 6*

## Pacific Beach Coalition & *The Edge of the Wild* Film by Sharron Walker

The Friends joined Pacific Beach Coalition's Showing of the film *The Edge of the Wild* on Friday, April 26 at the Pacifica Community Center. The film highlighted the epic battle between private property rights on San Bruno Mountain and the survival of a species, the Mission Blue Butterfly. It was a packed house and local environmental organizations had tables set up to include:

- San Bruno Mountain Watch
- Pacifica Gardens/Native Plant Nursery
- Protect San Pedro Mountain
- San Mateo County Libraries
- Pacific Beach Coalition

.... and the Friends of San Pedro Valley Park were there too!



Photo by Sharron Walker

Participating in this community event supported not only the event itself, but raised the awareness of our own organization as well as others. We, the Friends' Board, also felt it was important to support the Pacific Beach Coalition and San Bruno Mountain Watch. Working together we are a much stronger force. We need, as organizations and individuals, to do whatever we can to promote environmental awareness.

After the film showing, hosted by PBC President Lynn Adams, a panel discussion took place, which was an informative follow up to the film.

Special guests on the panel were:

- **Michele Salmon**, Film Narrator
  - **Gail Mallimson**, Writer, Producer, & Editor of *The Edge of the Wild*
  - **Ariel Cherbowsly Corkidi**, Director, San Bruno Mountain Watch
  - **Mike Vasey**, Botanist and Conservation Biologist
  - **David Schooley**, San Bruno Mountain Docent
- (Photo below – in order left to right)



Photo by Sharron Walker

For more information on *Edge of the Wild* and the fight to save the Mission Blue butterfly on San Bruno Mountain go to:  
[www.theedgeofthewild.com](http://www.theedgeofthewild.com)

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### Hurrah for the Old Hazelnut *continued from page 5*

of us loved the old, woodsy, shaggy trail and tunneled our way through to the rough old favorite, hermits in our secret refuge.

One of my most favorite parts of the Hazelnut was the **manzanita** grove, which while still a beautiful show of **Arctostaphylos** with its smooth, red, but peeling bark and its evergreen, waxy foliage, is a bit disappointing ever since a gracefully curved low branch going across the throughway was removed... No challenges were allowed. Sometimes many wish there were a different kind of trek in the park marked by this sign: "Hike at your own risk, as you are entering 'Wilderness Trail.'" At one time it could have been: "Hazelnut Trail, Only for the Hardy."

## — Park Notes —

If you stopped by the park on the weekend of October 22-23, you likely saw a contingent from a local scout troop, led by a candidate for the Eagle Scout rank. Their work was overseen by SMCo Parks Volunteer Coordinator Stu Smith and were hard at work installing the new landscaping in front of the 'sitting wall' that had been put in place near the flagpole earlier this summer. They put down barrier cloth and cut holes for the plant locations, laid out drip irrigation lines around those locations, dug the holes for the plants (which wasn't easy in the dry, hard soil), installed gopher cages around the holes, and planted the new plants, which included artichokes, yarrow, blue fescue, Douglas iris and strawberry. They finished up the project by covering the area with a layer of gorilla hair mulch. A much needed improvement.

Kudos to Stu and the scouts for a great job!



Photos by Mark Golembiewski

### **Photo Contest Winners Back on Display in Visitor Center** by Mark Golembiewski

Thanks to some welcome support from Head Ranger, Matt DelCarlo, who had three new display stands built for the Visitor Center, the winning photos from our inaugural photo contest held earlier this year are now back on display in the Visitor Center. They will remain there on view until May of next year when the new winners of our 2023 photo contest are announced.



Photo by Mark Golembiewski

Stay tuned for further information in January on the details of **next year's photo contest**, which we are expecting to run again from February 1 to May 1, 2023.

We are hoping to expand participation in next year's contest and encourage more photographers to show us the fruits of their efforts when they take photos of flora, fauna, landscapes and people in San Pedro Valley Park.

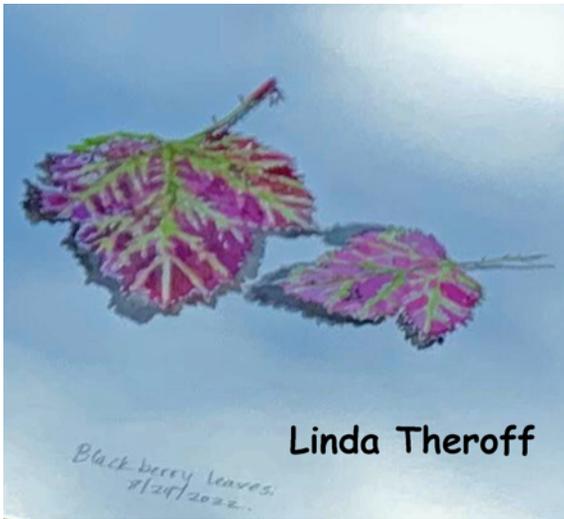
In addition to next year's contest, we are also planning to present, for the first time, **photography workshops** (instructional classes) for users of both DSLRs and smart phone cameras. The workshops will be taught by a retired professional photographer who is well known by the Friends of SPVP. Although, all details have not yet been finalized, it is expected that one class for DSLR users will be held in January and a second class in February. Similarly, a single workshop for phone camera users will also be presented in January, followed by another in February. Class sizes will be kept small to enable and emphasize hands-on instruction. Further details will be announced on our website and by email sometime later in November as the workshops are finalized.

## On The Nature Journaling Trail by Sharron Walker

**End of Summer Colors and Seeds** was the September prompt for the San Pedro Valley Nature Journalers. We met at our usual spot at the Creekside Picnic Area – shared our journals with some interesting revelations. Seeds of plants can be as attractive as blooms!

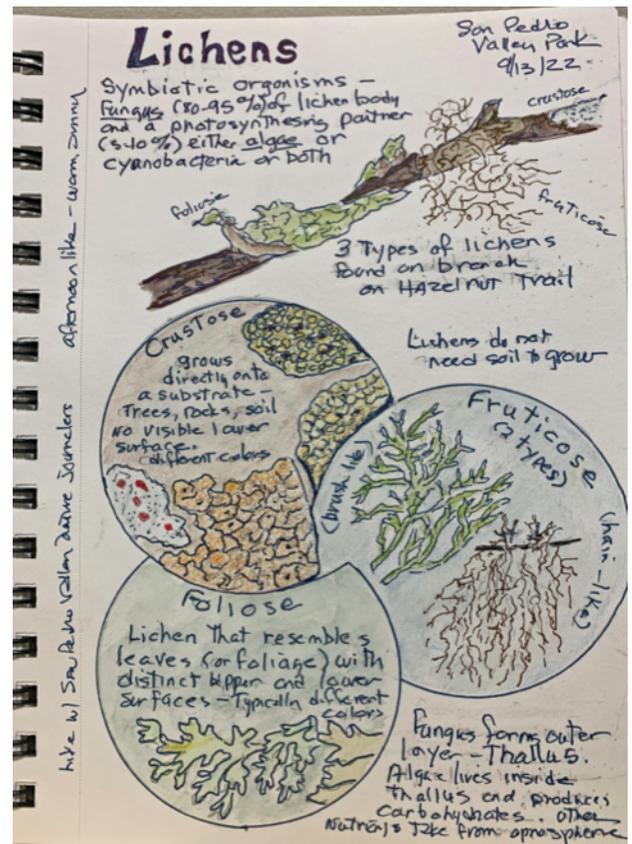
Melanie Heisler's Nature Journal page shows Silk Tassel (*Garrya elliptica*) with both stages of the fruit. Silk tassel bush is a flowering evergreen shrub in the Garryaceae family that is known for its cascading flowers. It is native to California and Oregon. In SPV Park there are three bushes located along the trail leading from the Native Plant garden to the bridge over the So. Fork of San Pedro Creek. Of the three, the first two are male plants, the third furthest away from the garden is female.

Silk Tassel has dioecious flowers, which means that plants have male and female flowers on different plants. As illustrated in Melanie's NJ page. The plant not only has separate male/female flowers, they have male plants (with only male flowers) and female plants (with only female flowers). On the Silk Tassel, the dioecious flowers are concentrated in flower clusters which cascade downward, male catkins are grey-green, female are shorter and silver-grey. The plants flower in Feb - May.



End of summer colors are well illustrated by Linda Theroff's NJ Page of a blackberry leaf!

Another prompt was **Lichens**. The NJ page shown at right illustrates the three types of lichen: Crustose, Fruticose & Foliose. All are found in the park. Often overlooked, lichens are fascinating!



## The Friends Finally Have a Barbeque!

It had been more than three years since the last one, thanks to COVID, but the Friends of SPVP finally got together in person at the Visitor Center on Saturday October 1st, for the annual members' barbeque. A good group of about 30 people turned out on a beautiful early Fall day to enjoy a feast of hamburgers and hot dogs - grilled by our Master Griller Joseph Piro - along with all the 'fixins' and a great variety of side dishes. We thoroughly enjoyed the food as well as the good company. It was great to gather together as a group again!



In addition to the usual festivities, your Editor was completely surprised to be honored with a certificate as the winner of the photo contest's Peoples' Choice Award (as voted by visitors to the Visitor Center who viewed the winning images) - presented by Sharron Walker.



If that wasn't enough, President Judy Bacon then made a second presentation to commemorate my new role as Newsletter Editor. She even got me a cake!

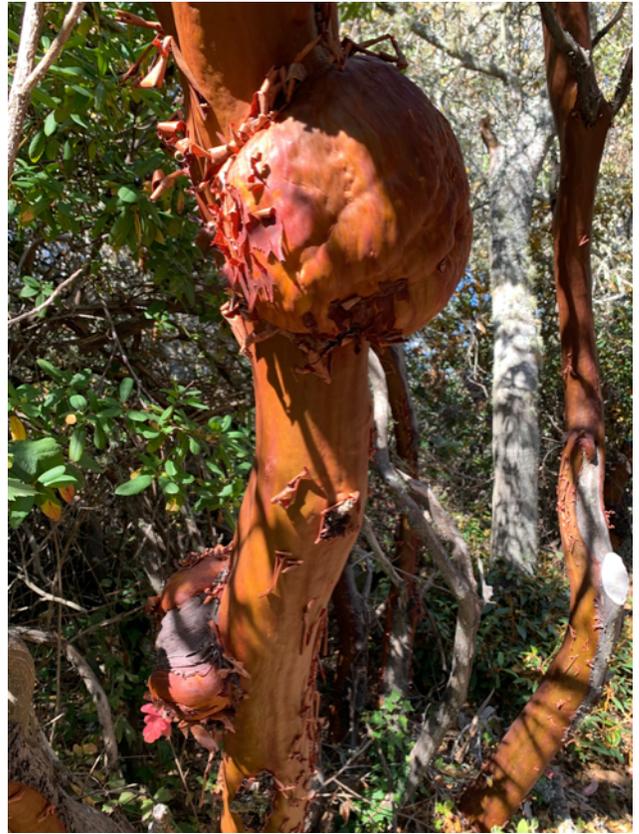


Photos by Bevan Jones, Sharron Walker and Joseph Piro

## Flora and Fauna of the Fall Season



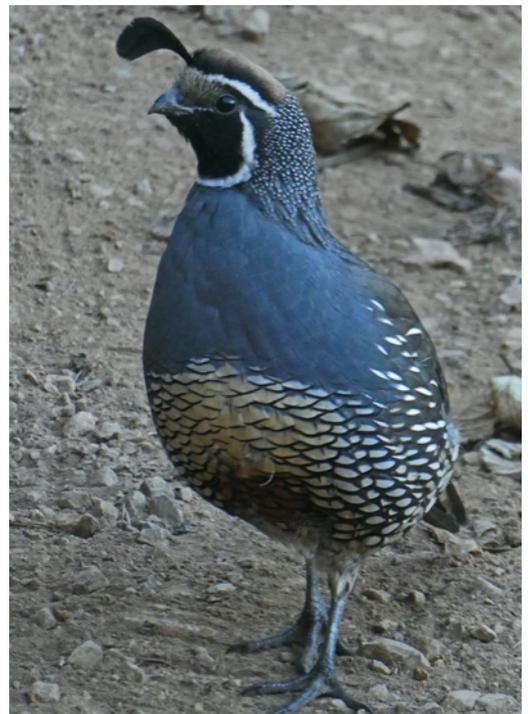
A determined Sunday visitor at the Visitor Center taken by Melinda Moses on 9/18/22



Burls on Brittle leaf manzanita (*Arctostaphylos crustacea*) along the Hazelnut Trail taken by Sharron Walker on 9/13/22



Mule deer visiting the Visitor Center taken by Sharron Walker on 9/3/22



Male California Quail along the Hazelnut Trail by Sharron Walker on 10/20/22

## The Artistry of Bing Huey in SPVP

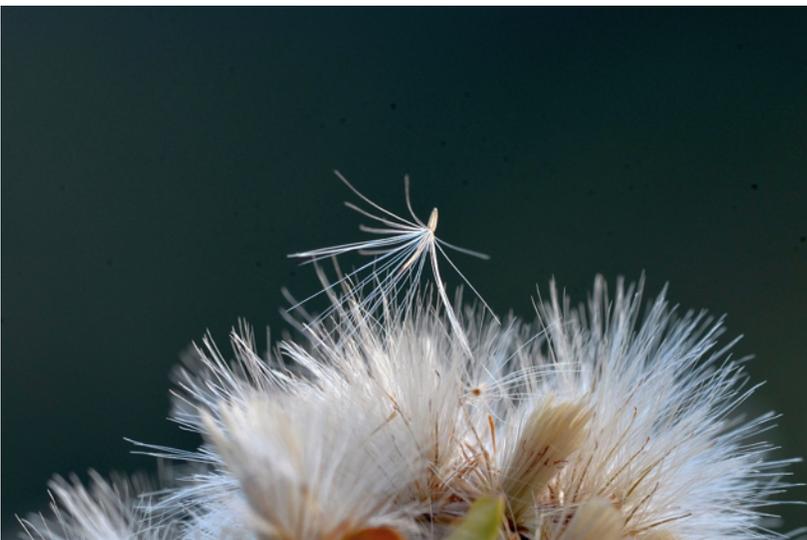


Orb web on Silk Tassle  
near the Visitor Center  
10/21/22

Lichen (*Cladonia*) on manzanita burl  
(*Arctostaphylos crustacea*)  
along the Hazelnut Trail  
10/21/22



Coyote Bush seed  
along the Hazelnut Trail  
10/3/22



## The Artistry of Bing Huey in SPVP - continued



Midge  
along the Plaskon Nature Trail  
10/9/22

Dried tendrils of wild cucumber  
along the Hazelnut Trail  
10/16/22



Strap lichen (*Ramalina*) caught on blackberry vine  
along the Valley View Trail  
10/23/22