

Valley Views

The Friends of San Pedro Valley Park

November/December 2023

Upcoming Talks & Walks

A November Zoom Webinar by Bill Leikam “A Year with the Urban Gray Fox”

On **Saturday, November 11th at 7 pm**, the Friends of San Pedro Valley Park are pleased to welcome Bill Leikam, also known as, The Fox Guy. He is a researcher and author of a book on foxes, Road to Fox Hollow. Bill will present his lecture entitled “A Year with the Urban Gray Fox,” which will be an in-depth introduction to the Gray Fox (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus townsendi*). He will first give us an overview of the gray fox, followed by explaining the fox’s natural life cycle, and then describing how and when foxes pair-up, have pups, raise them through to adulthood, and then disperse to find territory and mates of their own. Join us to learn all about the gray foxes that reside in San Pedro Valley Park.

About the Speaker: William Leikam states that science has been an important thread throughout his life. He has conducted research on the behavior of the gray fox, which he began documenting, photographing, and studying thirteen years ago. This study resulted in the development of the Urban Wildlife Research Project. Bill’s pioneering work has attracted a great deal of attention from the press and there have been three documentaries filmed about his work with the gray foxes. There has also been a news article published in Bay Nature, and a documentary by Syler Peralta-Ramos, Stanford University, and produced at Stanford University entitled The Foxes, My Professors. Bill was a contributor to a field guide, Canids of the World: Wolves, Wild Dogs, Foxes, Jackals, Coyotes, and Their Relatives by Dr. Jose R. Castello and wrote a book entitled Road to Fox Hollow.



To participate in this Webinar, please register in advance using the following link:
https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_m96-1V2CRoOtQNsxH6CXaA

Include your name and email address to register. You will then get a confirmation email with further instructions, and reminder emails closer to the event.

Mushroom BioBlitz with J.R. Blair

On **Friday, December 15th at 10 am**, 30 people can comb the trails for one hour searching for and collecting mushrooms. Place your collected mushrooms in a large basket or doubled paper bag. Waxed paper sandwich bags (available at Oceana Market in Eureka Square, Pacifica) would be helpful if you can find them. Then return to the Walnut Grove picnic area for J.R. Blair to identify and discuss them. The more mushrooms collected, the better! Rain does NOT cancel the event, so do dress accordingly.

The collection of mushrooms is for the Mycological Society of San Francisco’s Fungus Fair at First Unitarian Universalist Church Center, 1187 Franklin Street in San Francisco. The Fungus Fair will take place on Saturday, December 16th from 10:30 am to 5:30 pm.

Please make certain that you can attend and sign up on Eventbrite:
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/mushroom-bioblitz-with-jr-blair-tickets-737650200607?aff=oddtcreator>

About the leader: J.R. Blair received his Bachelor’s degree at 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.”



The Friends of San Pedro Valley Park

600 Oddstad Blvd.
Pacifica, CA 94044
(650) 355-5454

friendsofsanpedrovalley@gmail.com

Board of Directors

Judy Bacon, *President*
Mark Golembiewski, *Vice-President*
Enid Ansgarius, *Secretary*
Susan Kern, *Treasurer*
Adrian Stroganoff, *Membership*
Mila Stroganoff, *Programs & Field Trips*
Carl Schwab, *VC Host Coordinator*
Melinda Moses, *Trailside Store Manager*
Istvan Puski, *Habitat Restoration Day Leader*
Sharron Walker, *At-large Member*
Bing Huey, *At-large Member*

Website/IT Guru

Jayesh Kapoor

Trail Day Leader

Joseph Piro

Newsletter

Mark Golembiewski, *Editor*

Carolyn Pankow, *Editor Emeritus*

Mila & Adrian Stroganoff, *Proofreading & Production*

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.

Friends of SPVP Christmas Party

With our Halloween celebrations just completed (trick or treating for the young ones and costume parties for us older folks), the Holiday Season is now truly upon us! That means it's time to plan for our annual, year-end **Christmas party**, which this year will be held on **Wednesday, December 13 at 6:00 pm.**

Drinks and appetizers will be offered during the "cocktail hour" before dinner. Baked turkey and ham will be provided as the main course, with members being asked to bring sides and desserts to share with all.

We will be having a little fun again this year with our traditional, after-dinner gift exchange (back by popular demand). A \$10 maximum per gift is suggested if you choose to participate.

Please RSVP to Judy Bacon at baconegg@earthlink.net and let her know the dish(es) that you plan to bring. Members will be contacted regarding attendance.

Recent Programs

Nature Walk in the Rain

by Mila Stroganoff

It's drizzling and grey outdoors this Sunday, October 22nd. It looks rather miserable to say the least and the Friends have a 10 am nature walk scheduled with J.R. Blair. Will anyone show?

Everyone does arrive and not only that, but they also stay throughout the whole walk. Well, a walk is rather an inflated word for this, even stroll won't apply. Perhaps a very slow meander through the wonders of the natural world. J.R. Blair starts with blooming purple artichokes and the ray and disc flowers in the Asteraceae family, then heliotropism - the leaves or flowers following the sun, pappus, California sagebrush, California mugwort and Coyote Brush. The Coyote Brush is a dioecious plant with male and female flowers on separate plants.

We also encounter Silk Tassels which were planted in a row, another dioecious plant. Then the conversation moves to several trees which were planted and are non-native to the park. J.R. discusses Douglas Fir, Redwood, Giant Sequoia and the cones of each tree.



But the focal point of all our attention is drawn to the Banana Slug in the Phylum Mollusca. What a fascinating slug, slow and steady and there are plenty of them basking in the rain. We all have to take care not to step on one.

There was much more....

With waterproof outerwear, umbrellas, and dedicated people, we had a very pleasant and very informative walk.



A Good Late Summer Day

by Joseph Piro

We had a nice turn-out for our September 9, 2023 Trail Day -- **Mary Larsen, Stan Jensen, Istvan Puski**, my brother **Erik**, new-comers **Cheryl** and **Charlie**, and **myself**. Ranger Greg Escoto suggested we head out to the east end of the Valley View Trail and work on the switchbacks, so that's where we went.

Knowing the soil can be pretty rocky there, we took along picks, hard



and soft rakes, a round-point shovel and a McLeod or two.

As we made our way up the hillside, we fixed a good stretch of trail that was particularly rutted, cleaned out several drain dips and trimmed back some overgrown vegetation. Once we reached the top, we just decided to continue on and made the full loop.

Enjoy the trails and the late summer weather!

And a Fine Early Fall Day!

by Joseph Piro

We once again had a nice group for our October 14, 2023 Trail Day -- **Mary Larsen, Istvan Puski, Hope Savage** (a new-comer), **Jana Hoffman**, my brother **Erik** and **myself**. With a big trail run taking place on the eastern side of the park, one of the Rangers suggested we go up the ever-popular Brooks Falls Trail, so that's where we headed.

With the loppers, rakes, McLeods and mattock we took along, we trimmed some brush and branches, and scraped out some drain dips. We made it up to the bench at the Montara Mtn.

Trail intersection and enjoyed the view before returning back down the mountain.

Certainly a nice way to spend the morning and enjoy the trails on these beautiful Fall days!



November/December Calendar

November Trail Day

Saturday, Nov. 11 9 am

Leikam: Gray Fox (webinar)*

Saturday, Nov. 11 7 pm

Nov. Habitat Restoration Day

Saturday, Nov. 18 10 am

December Trail Day

Saturday, Dec. 9 9 am

Members' Christmas Party

Wednesday, Dec. 13 6 pm

J.R. Blair: Mushroom BioBlitz*

Friday, Dec. 15 10 am

Dec. Habitat Restoration Day

Saturday, Dec. 16 10 am

*(Reservation needed)

We Got Some of You This Time Jubata!

by Mark Golembiewski

On the beautiful morning of September 28th, a small group of invasives-stalking volunteers (Bing Huey, Istvan Puski and myself) met with Volunteer Coordinator, Stuart 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 mission was to hinder the spread of this invasive plant in the areas 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. We had attempted to do this a year ago, but were thwarted by the use of an herbicide just a few days prior by County personnel. This time, we were not to be denied and successfully whacked off the stalks of a number of plants trying their best to propagate. Mission accomplished! We won this small battle, but there are many to go!

>> FACTOID <<

MALES GIVE WORTHLESS GIFTS TO LADY SPIDERS

Many species of male spiders throughout the world wrap up worthless presents to attract sexually-tempting female spiders, gifts like a cast off exoskeleton of an insect, over-wrapping them carefully with silk. Scientists think the trick may have evolved because it's less effort for the male, who would have to spend greater effort trying to find a nutritious fresh, dead fly, but can easily procure a cast-off skeleton of a molting beetle larva for his chosen fair damsel.

continued on page 5



— Carolyn's Corner —

THE HEAT IS ON

So what happens when we can't turn the heater off? In the beginning, some surprising results: the bills of our dark-eyed juncos are 4% longer than they were 40 years ago; mice have longer tails; some shrews longer legs. Coincidence? If we were able to look far down the "heated road," would we be startled by SPVP birds with parrot-like bills? The beak and mouth and legs are great cooling off places for the body—more on that later. Who knows what surprises the growing heat of the climate crisis has in store for coming generations! A topic for later: the inability of green plants to make food at a high temperature, restricting the green mass at the bottom of the food pyramid.

And to what extent can an animal change in response to the environment without becoming handicapped in other ways? Can you imagine our brush rabbit growing longer ears that could keep it cooler in a warming world? How would it be able to navigate the thorny, almost impenetrable brush of the chaparral without snagging an ear in on a prickly branch? Would a junco's enlarged bill be unsuited to crush the seeds it presently eats? Would a deer with longer legs for cooling lack the strong musculature of an African Antelope, perhaps over-testing its bone strength.

Delving deeper into our imagination—will our foxes get disk-like ears like the fennec foxes of Africa, and will at least one of our SPVP mammals develop a camel-like hump so it doesn't have to have its heat-retaining fat reserves layered around most areas of its body? Makes me think of the Bushmen of South Africa's searingly hot Kalahari Desert, people that like the camels have most of their fat in one area—their posterior in the Bushmen's case. But how do our warm-blooded animals resist heat in this day and age?



Fennec fox

Many birds sleek their feathers down, adding moisture if they can, thus reducing their fluffy insulation; owls and others flutter their throats to expel warmer air; vultures spurt their urine-feces combo abundantly on their legs to cool off. Badgers, and amazingly, the kit foxes of the San Joaquin Valley can burrow furiously into the cooler ground. It seems that animals such as goats and members of the dog and cat families rely on evaporative cooling of the nasal passages, as well as mouth and tongue, cooling a special network of blood vessels to the brain, while so many species rely on the shedding of fur in order to keep cool. Kangaroo rats save on water by keeping their urine very concentrated. And birds and most mammals can cool off from their beaks, moistened membranes of their mouths or from appendages. With the exception of the horse, a few primates are the only critters to be studded with the evaporative cooling offered by sweat glands all over the body.



Gemsbok

But some mammals can maintain or reach a high body heat without destroying brain cells. Some animals of the now temperate areas are able to tolerate higher body temperatures, as do those of a lower latitude critter, the outlier of all—the gemsbok, with its tolerance of a 116 degree Fahrenheit body temp. It's truly a stand-out among large mammals for physiological adaptations to desert heat. Some of these African antelope can go for months without drinking water, assuming they have succulent, fresh plants to eat. This oryx has already proved how well it can do in the Sonoran Desert, as over 4,000 of these lithe but sturdy runners inhabit Southern New Mexico after the introduction of 95 individuals from 1969 to 1977. Clearly they have adapted well to this new desert/grassland. Will they take over not only that desert, but the north, as mule deer, elk, and pronghorn become more heat and drought stressed?

Unfortunately I doubt that even the gemsbok, the birds that evolve larger beaks, or larger-eared foxes can survive the heat we'll produce if we continue to burn our fossil fuels and to make a multiplicity of plastics for everything under the sun with our petroleum, releasing carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases. The living world is fighting for its survival with physical and behavioral changes, geographical shifts, migration. We need to get on that team, joining nature instead of undercutting it with our expedient, self-indulgent ways. We need to share the Earth with others that make our life possible and give our future generations the chance for a healthy and happy existence on our only habitable planet.

Sources: *Scientific American*, *Science News online*, *Nature magazine*, *National Geographic*, *Cornell University Bird Lab*, etc.

Ranger Lisa DiLorenzo's Transfer to Coyote Point

We were disappointed to suddenly learn on Tuesday, October 24th that Ranger Lisa DiLorenzo is leaving her post as a supervising ranger at San Pedro Valley Park and will be transferring to the County Park Department's Maintenance Division at Coyote Point beginning Monday, October 30th.

Lisa has worked at San Pedro Valley Park for about 4 years and for the County Parks Department for 10 years overall. Because her work schedule included the weekend days, she frequently interacted with many of the Friends who served as Visitor Center hosts, those who volunteered otherwise on the weekends, and with Board members who were often in and out of the Visitor Center. She was always very friendly, cordial and helpful and willing to answer our many questions.

Lisa tells us that she will maintain the same job title, i.e., Park Ranger III, in her new job with the Maintenance District. Part of her new duties will include garbage collection once a week (she has a Class B commercial driver's license that allows her to drive the large garbage trucks) and expanding the County's playground program with her Certified Playground Safety Inspector certification. She will also be involved in other projects throughout the department.



Because we had little time before Lisa packed up her personal belongings and left the ranger's office in the VC, several of us (Melinda, Judy, Enid, Carl and myself) quickly gathered on the afternoon of Wednesday the 25th (as she packed) to say our thank yous and wish her well in her new endeavors at Coyote Point. We presented her with a goodbye and best wishes card and enjoyed some celebratory cupcakes as we chatted for a bit. We will miss you Lisa!

And if you happen to be in the park on a Monday, keep a look out for the County's garbage truck coming through on its regular rounds. You might see Lisa behind the wheel and you can say hi!

WORTHLESS GIFTS TO LADY SPIDERS *continued from page 3*



Then he uses multiple "silk" wrappings that increase complexity of the gift "paper," so that it takes longer for the distracted female to open her prize, which gives the male time to have "safe sex" with the female before she's discovered the ruse. I don't believe that, in the end, the female spider feels, "It's the thought that counts."

To make things worse, the stingy male will usually hold on to the poor present with a strand of silk, just in case the female runs away. My thought is that perhaps he may then regift it to another tempting lady.

Researcher: Maria Albo, University of the Republic in Uruguay, whose study was done on the Paratrechalea ornata, a South American spider.

We Need Volunteers!!

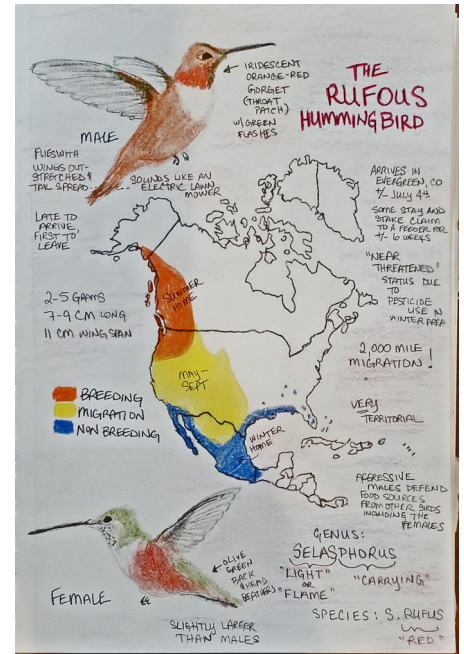
The Friends of SPVP are continually looking for new volunteers to join the small, but dedicated, group of individuals who now contribute to our organization's activities on behalf of the park. If you are interested in learning more about how you can help us and give back to our wonderful park — whether it's being a host at the Visitor Center on weekends or helping to maintain the trails each month, or just pulling weeds and invasive plants now and then — **please contact President Judy Bacon or our Visitor Center Host Coordinator, Carl Schwab**, or any of the members of our Board of Directors (listed on page 2). We'd be more than happy to speak with you about our various volunteer opportunities.

On The Nature Journaling Trail

by Sharron Walker

For the past two months, “Clouds” and “Bird Migration” have been our prompts. There are three basic types of bird migration: 1) Long distance migrants that move from breeding ranges in the US & Canada to wintering grounds in Central & South America involving long distances; 2) Medium-distance migrants who cover distances that span a few hundred miles; and 3) Short-distance migrants that may only move from higher to lower elevations on a mountainside. And there are permanent residents who do not migrate at all as they find adequate supplies of food year-round.

The Rufous Hummingbird has a major migration route. Marguerite Maxwell’s NJ Page (*at right*; she is one of our remote members from Colorado!) illustrates well its journey!



September 13 – 17 found three of our journalers attending the Wild Wonder Nature Journaling 5-day Conference (online). Melanie Heisler, Annie Blair and Vivian Walz attended and at our October meeting shared their journals. Lots to be learned from these online conferences! The annual conference is open to all, so if you have an interest in nature journaling, I suggest you check it out.



At our Oct 26th meeting, Melanie gave us an informative and hands-on Botany workshop! As Melanie said her goal was “to give a very basic introduction to botany by looking at flowering plants – their basic floral patterns and traits in order to identify plant families.” And she did it! She engaged us with our loupes to explore the basics of botany. We are now knowledgeable of flower parts thanks to Melanie! Not only do we nature journal in our group, it is a platform from which we can share our skills and learn from each other!



The San Pedro Valley Park Nature Journalers meet on Thursdays from 3 to 5 pm, usually near the end of the month. Dates vary depending on members’ availability. If you are interested in learning more about Nature Journaling, contact us: sharronlee@aol.com

BTW, our group is on the Wild Wonder Nature Journalers Map. Go to: www.WildWonder.org

The Friends Hold Their Annual Membership Meeting, Election and Barbeque!

by Judy Bacon

The Friends of SPVP got together at the Visitor Center patio on Sunday, September 17th, for our annual members' barbeque, which this time including a membership meeting and election of officers. A good group of about 34 people turned out on a beautiful late summer 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, in person, once again!



Like many other areas in our lives, our annual Friends' BBQ is steeped in Tradition!

- The Friends always set up tables and chairs and take them down at the end of the BBQ without being asked - Tradition!
- Mila Stroganoff supervised the election and announced the officers for the coming year: Judy Bacon - President; Mark Golembiewski - Vice-president; Enid Ansgarius - Secretary; Susan Kern - Treasurer. Congrats!
- Sharron Walker announced the winners of the photo contest. Congrats!
- Joseph (along with brother Erik) is our number one burger flipper - Tradition! (what's new is, though, is including vegan Impossible Burgers)
- For dessert, we had a cake, along with cookies and Istvan's homemade olallieberry squares - Tradition!
- Toward the end of the BBQ, our master photographer, Joseph Piro, got us together for the BBQ group picture - Tradition!
- All who were there had a wonderful time visiting with old friends and new - Tradition!



Surprising (Non-native) Flora of the Fall Season by Mark Golembiewski

On one of my regular exercise walks through the park one recent October day (the 13th), I was quite surprised to see something most unusual (at least to me). Beautiful, large purple flowers were growing on two of the larger artichoke plants that have been planted in the landscape garden in front of the Visitor Center. I had never seen flowers on an artichoke plant before and I was struck by both the size and beautiful purple color of the flowers. I had no idea! I just had to stop and snap a couple photos with my iPhone to capture the scene.

When I got home, I consulted Wikipedia to learn that: “The edible portion of the plant consists of the flower buds before the flowers come into bloom. The budding artichoke flower-head is a cluster of many budding small flowers (an inflorescence), together with many bracts, on an edible base.” Now I know!



The Fauna of SPVP by Bing Huey



Tarantula hawk wasp
on Queen Anne's Lace
taken on 07/09/23
along the Valley View Trail



Snout moth
on blackberry leaf
taken on 08/18/23
along the Valley View Trail



Young buck along the Valley View Trail
taken on 09/11/23



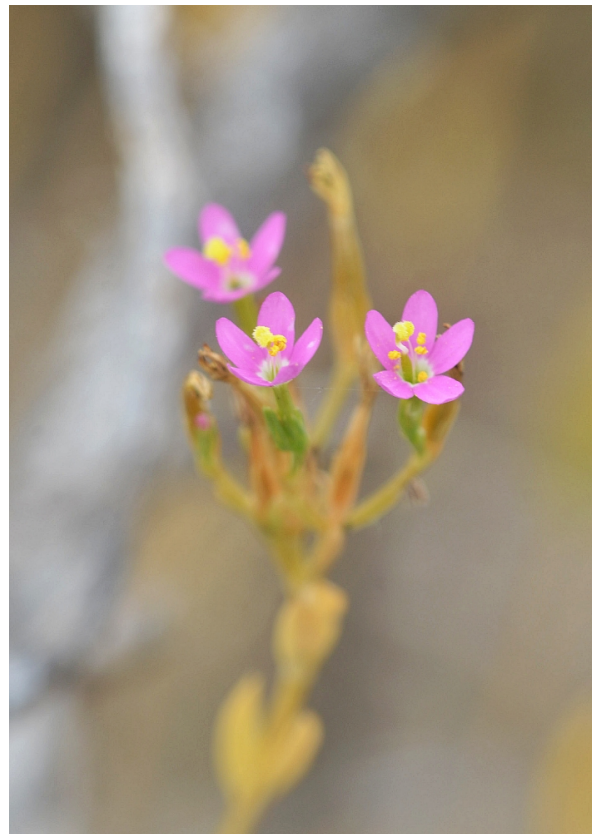
Black tailed deer browsing on poison oak
along the Valley View Trail
taken on 09/11/23

More of the Amazing Flora and Fauna in SPVP by Bing Huey



Amanita phalloides (Deathcap)
taken on 10/23/23
along the Hazelnut Trail

Blossoms of centaury (*Centaurium erythraea*)
taken on 09/11/23
along the Valley View Trail



Banana slug emerging from the ground
taken on 10/16/23 along the Hazelnut Trail