

Art Show, Auctions to Benefit Nature Center

Art for art's sake . . . and for the Effie Yeaw Nature Center!

ARNHA has joined with the Sacramento Fine Arts Center (SFAC) to sponsor an all-day celebration of the arts, including an art competition and exhibits, out of doors painting by young and old, live and silent auctions, and a gala reception at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center Saturday, May 15, from 4 to 9 p.m.

The first-ever event, "Painting Where the Wild Things Are," is a benefit for the nature center, which is threatened with possible closure in the current Sacramento County budget crisis. (See adjacent story).

Also a first is the collaboration between ARNHA and the Sacramento Fine Arts Center. "We really appreciate SFAC's assistance," said Marilee Flannery, Nature Center Director and ARNHA Board Member. "Its members have the expertise to make the event a success and are taking an active role in organizing the art competition, auction, and show. Even though they are also a struggling nonprofit, they are taking only a very small part of the proceeds for their efforts."

The Fine Arts Center invited artists to submit paintings with the theme of the American River Parkway and the wild things that live there. Internationally acclaimed landscape artist Gregory Kondos of Sacramento will choose the 60 works to be exhibited at the arts center, 5330 Gibbons Dr., Carmichael, from April 27 until May 8. Awards will be given to outstanding paintings and on May 15 all will be moved to the Nature Center in Ancil Hoffman County Park, where they may be previewed before the evening auctions. Half the sale price of paintings will go to ARNHA to benefit the nature center and half will go to the artist.

Artists also are invited to participate in *plein air* (out-of-doors) painting in the Effie Yeaw nature area during the morning hours of May 15, with a silent auction in the evening. The artist and EYNC will divide the proceeds.

And children will be welcome to submit paintings mounted on poster board or matted, but not framed and with no glass. Or they may produce the work at the nature area on May 15, with packets of necessary art materials available for purchase. All paintings will be for sale for \$20 each, again with the artist and EYNC splitting the proceeds.

Some of the artists whose work will be shown and sold at the Gala include Gregory Kondos, Jian Wang, Pat Mahoney, Terry Pappas, and Tom Sellis.

The silent auction will offer many fine paintings, and the live auction will include 12 exceptional works of art chosen by the organizing committee.

see "Art Show," page 3

Will ARNHA Take Over Nature Center?

Supervisors to Hear Parks Department Plan on May 12

The County Board of Supervisors has scheduled a workshop for May 12, at 2 p.m., to hear a proposal by the Regional Parks Department for helping to deal with the current budget crisis by turning over management of the Effie Yeaw Nature Center to a nonprofit group like the American River Natural History Association. "ARNHA is an obvious choice because of its continuing support of the Nature Center over many years," Parks Director Janet Baker told *The Acorn. (See President's column, Page 2).*

No county funding is assured beyond June 30 for the 33-year-old, award-winning nature center. However, ARNHA Board and Associate Board members are hoping the Supervisors

see 'Nature Center," page 5

Board of Supervisors Meeting - May 12, 2 PM - Please Attend!

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ARNHA American River Natural History Association P.O. Box 241 Carmichael, CA 95609

The ACORN is published quarterly on partly-recycled paper by ARNHA, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. Letters to the editor should be sent to the address above.

(916) 489-4918 • www.arnha.org

President's Message

"In prosperity, our friends know us; in adversity, we know our friends." – John Churton Collins

I would like to thank everyone who has come to the rescue of the Effie Yeaw Nature Center (EYNC) in the last few months and saved us from closing down in April. Because you called, emailed, and wrote letters, the Board of Supervisors, led by Susan Peters and Roger Dickinson, pulled the Nature Center and all the Regional Parks off the chopping block for the last quarter of this fiscal year. This reprieve did not last long, however. The County and Regional Parks has again put EYNC on the chopping block with the prospect of zero funding from the County for the next fiscal year starting July 1, 2010.

We would again ask the Board of Supervisors to rescue the Nature Center for the next fiscal year. In total, the Regional Parks share of the County's General

Fund Budget is only about one-third of one percent—and EYNC's share of that is even smaller. The rally must continue.

We are in discussions with Regional Parks to see how ARNHA could run the EYNC. We are asking, though, that we are allowed a transition time of three to five years to make that happen, a period in which Regional Parks and the County continue to fund EYNC at a functional level as ARNHA looks to find stable sources of income for the Center. We are currently far from being able to raise the amount of money necessary to run the Nature Center and pay personnel enough to provide current levels of programs and hours. Call me or Marilee Flannery if you have any ideas on finding funding for this privatization of EYNC. Plan to attend the May 12 budget workshop at the County Board of Supervisors chambers at 2 p.m. to let them know how important keeping Effie Yeaw Nature Center (EYNC) open is. In the meantime, email or write them about EYNC.

dickinsonr@saccounty.net • 874-5485 jyy@saccounty.net • 874-5481 susanpeters@saccounty.net • 874-5471 macglashanr@saccounty.net • 874-5491 nottolid@saccounty.net • 874-5465

> 700 H Street, Suite 2450 Sacramento, CA 95814

Already many of you have increased your memberships and have upped your donations to the Nature Center; you have participated in ARNHA's fundraisers and have offered your services to help the Center through these rough times. You have called and emailed the County Board of Supervisors and let them know how much you value the Center and its exceptional environmental programs.

In spite of all of our efforts, EYNC's fate is still in question. Please keep up the good work.

Additional fundraising events are the following: On May 15th the first-ever "Painting Where the Wild Things Are" Art Gala (see page 1). The Carmichael Kiwanis will donate back to the Nature Center the entire profits from any tickets sold through EYNC or ARNHA to their annual Taste of Carmichael on May 22. Contact the Nature Center, 489-4918, to buy your tickets for either of these events!

Thank you for all your support!

Larry Washington President, ARNHA

"Art Show," from page 1

Silent auction bidding will begin at 4 p.m. and finish by 7:30 p.m. when the live auction will begin.

The Gala will feature a light supper, wine, hors d'oeuvres and the music of Lisa Phenix and her band. The cost of admission to the Gala is \$30 per person. To reserve admission, call the Effie Yeaw Nature Center, (916) 489-4918, or visit eync@saccounty.net. Participation is limited, so reserve early.

Volunteers will be needed for setting up the day before and the day of the event, and for clean-up the day after the event. If you are interested in helping, please contact Jamie Washington at 489-4918, ext. 224 or washingtonj@ saccounty.net.

"Painting Where the Wild Things Are" is the culmination of months of planning by an ARNHA-SFAC committee that includes David Peterson, SFAC Show Chair; Lia Robertson, ARNHA Membership and Fundraising Development Coordinator; Carol Doersch, ARNHA Associate Board Member and Past President; Noah Baygell, ARNHA Board Member and Past President; Linda Thomas, ARNHA Board Member; Molly Keller, ARN-HA Associate Board Member; Peggy Kennedy, ARNHA Vice-president; Paula Baldi, ARNHA Associate Board Member, Stephanie Monzon, ARNHA Associate Board Member; Diana Holt, SFAC; Helen Plenert, *plein air* painter; and Effie Yeaw Nature Center staff members Betty Cooper, Marilee Flannery, and Jamie Washington. Special thanks to Susan Webb for her donation of designs for the event logo, invitation, and program. All of these creative people deserve our gratitude.



benefiting ARNHA & the Effie Yeaw Nature Center

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3

Bird & Breakfast Pay off

ARNHA, in cooperation with Sacramento Audubon field trip leaders, netted \$2,870 in another successful Bird and Breakfast fundraiser March 13, Lia Robertson, ARNHA membership and fundraising development coordinator, reported.

Eighty-two guests signed up to go birding at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center and return for a delicious breakfast of casseroles, oatmeal, fruits, and breads

Fashion plate

It's a toss-up these days whether a certain member of the woodpecker family is seen or heard first. We refer to the Northern Flicker, a jay-sized bird that wears a coat of many colors. Perched on a cottonwood snag, it shows off a brown back, a black crescent across the chest, numerous black spots on white underparts, and the male

sports red sideburns. In flight, it flashes salmonred colors under the wings and tail, along with its trademark, a white rump.

While the flicker is no song stylist, it signals its presence with a yelping call that carries the sound of its name long distances through the

woodlands. And about now it may be heard drumming on a tree trunk, drilling a nesting hole with its chisel-like bill.

For a flicker, raising a family can be a traumatic task. After moving into a freshly-built tree cavity to lay her eggs, the female may be joined by a pesky starling with the same thought in mind. The flicker is usually evicted by the aggressive starling, one of nature's less desirable processes that has reduced the population of flickers, at least hereabouts. donated by ARNHA members and friends.

On a crisp, sunny day, the Audubon birders, coordinated by Jack Hiehle, led visitors to 54 species, including nesting Hutton's Vireo, Bushtit, and Anna's Hummingbird. Other highlights included Red-breasted Sapsucker, Blackthroated Gray Warbler, Cooper's Hawk, Red-shouldered and Red-tailed hawks, and White-tailed Kite.

Historical note: ARNHA's first Bird and Breakfast was held in 1985, inspired

But ordinarily the flicker doesn't spend as much time in trees digging out insect larvae as do other woodpeckers. Indeed, it's the only woodpecker that forages on the ground, hopping awkwardly about and using its long sticky tongue to search out its favorite food, ants.

While its common name is Northern Flicker, that isn't as colorful as some of its regional names. In the West it used to be called the Red-shafted Flicker for its

> wing and tail feathers, which were used by Indians for ceremonial vests and headdresses.

The eastern variety was formerly known as the Yellow-shafted Flicker. It is also called high-hole, red hammer, yocker bird, wilcrissen and wake-up. The last name refers to its occasional practice of drumming on rain spouts and the wood siding of houses at 4

o'clock in the morning. At such times even the flicker's most ardent admirers might decide that this avian fashion plate would be better seen than heard.

From "An American River Journal," recently published by ARNHA. It features drawings by the late Jo Glasson Smith, ARNHA co-founder, and nature essays by Peter J. Hayes, retired newspaper editor and ARNHA associate board member. It is available for \$9.75 at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center, ARNHA.org, and selected stores. by the late Jo Glasson Smith, ARNHA co-founder, during the presidency of Carol Doersch, current associate board member. Karen Noack Galster chaired the event.

ARNHA Unveils "American River Journal" Podcast

ARNHA has begun a series of podcasts of excerpts from our newly-published "An American River Journal" read by author Peter Hayes and accessible by visiting www.arnha.org and clicking "Podcast." The volume, with drawings by ARNHA co-founder Jo Glasson Smith, was published last fall.

The podcast is narrated and produced by Liz Williamson, volunteer with the Effie Yeaw Nature Center. Before retiring and joining the nature center, Liz was associate director of the American Bar Association Center for Professional Education, producing educational video, audio and online programs -- including podcasts -- for lawyers.

Lia Robertson, ARNHA membership and fundraising development coordinator, said,"Our goal is to add a podcast to the website each week. We are making them to complement our efforts in educating people about the flora and fauna along the American River and parkway. We hope they will inspire people to support the stewardship of the parkway by becoming involved with ARNHA or other local environmental education/activism groups."

The "new media" venture is introduced on the ARNHA website with the essays "Showboat," (Yellow-breasted Chat), "Superflower," (Yellow Mustard), and "They're Back," (Swallows). ■



"Nature Center", continued from page 1

can be persuaded to find the resources to allow the county to continue operating the nature center and remove the threat of closure. This sentiment was well-expressed by Peggy Kennedy, ARNHA Vice President and *Acorn* Editor, who said:

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long tradition of providing environmental education for the children and adults of Sacramento County. The 77 acres of natural preserve is an unusual treasure in the midst of suburban development. It would be a pity if the museum and assembly building were closed, if the nature preserve were left open to vandals, vagrants, and others who do not value the preserve. The portion of County funding needed to keep Effie Yeaw Nature Center open and functioning as a source

of environmental education is a tiny part of the County budget.

"The benefits the Effie Yeaw Nature Center brings to the businesses and homeowners of the County make keeping the Center open a good business decision. Hearing a third grader who has just completed a workshop at Effie Yeaw Nature Center say, "This is the best day of my life' is all the testimony we need."

With the County facing a projected \$118 million deficit in fiscal 2010-2011, Janet Baker said officials also are exploring the possible transformation of the Parks Department itself.

"We are researching different models statewide for County Regional Park agencies—whether they be special districts, conservancies, or joint powers authorities. The goal is to find the model that best fits our region and offers the most likely opportunity for success.

"In the end it may be that voters will be asked whether or not they would support a special tax or assessment to protect and maintain regional parks, open space and trails in the region."

The Board of Supervisors is not expected to make any decisions at its May 12 workshop but rather to give parks

> officials direction on how to proceed in June budget hearings.

> "It will be very important for all ARNHA members to participate with us, to be there or watch it on TV," the parks director said.

Baker said park officials recognize that there are many challenges around the idea of transitioning the nature center from county control to ARNHA, a 501(c) (3) nonprofit organization founded in 1981 when the nature center was threatened with closure. But she

said the change could provide the potential for "sustaining and growing the Nature Center's programs over time by allowing increased flexibility and cost savings.

"I believe that there could be a successful model for the Effie Yeaw Nature Center similar to what happened with the City of Sacramento and Fairytale Town and the Sacramento Zoo back in the 1980s," she said. "Both of these organizations successfully transitioned to be almost fully operated by their non-profits.

"The transition will take time and could include annual benchmarks such as leasing the facilities and fund raising goals. There may be some opportunity for limited County support for facility maintenance or Center programs during the transition."

It was widely agreed by ARNHA and Nature Center officials that such a huge

expansion of ARNHA's role would not be possible without a major financial commitment from the county during a transition period.

This conclusion is illustrated by recent financial figures for the nature center and ARNHA.

According to EYNC Director Marilee Flannery, EYNC expenditures in 2008-09, the last year EYNC was fully funded and able to do all of its programs, were \$980,000. (Staffing, \$700,000; Utilities, materials, and supplies, \$100,000; County overhead, \$180,000)

(During that year, the nature center served about 100,000 children, teens, and adults with 944 programs, both on-site and in the community at schools, libraries, other parks, and other community sites. Of these programs, 103 were free to the public. Entrance into EYNC has also been free for the 33 years it has operated. Free admission was judged to be governed by the American River Parkway Plan.)

Total EYNC revenue in 2008-09 was \$287,000 (Program revenue, \$140,000; Grants, Sponsorships, Agency Support, \$100,000; Donations, \$47,000, including \$40,000 from ARNHA.)

Flannery continued, "If the EYNC is to operate as a nonprofit and wants to pay the same wages as staff have earned previously (not likely) and have the same programs, then it would take \$513,000 to operate the EYNC (Cost of EYNC without County Overhead).

In stark contrast, ARNHA has budgeted \$134,500 in total unrestricted income in 2009-10, while allocating \$59,500 to the Effie Yeaw Nature Center.

To point to Fairytale Town's transition from City of Sacramento operation to nonprofit status as a model for Effie Yeaw as the Parks Department suggests would present challenges and opportunities. For instance, the William Land Park children's play park is fenced in and takes in about \$600,000 annually in admissions; it is considered unfeasible to

continued next page

Check Out June Fun Days at EYNC

Let's Rally Around EYNC!

ART GALA - Painting Where the Wild Things Are

1. The exhibit at the Sacramento Fine Arts Center (SFAC), 5330 Gibbons Dr., Carmichael, will be held from April 27 to May 8. The paintings will be transferred to the Effie Yeaw Nature Center for auction on May 15. For details, contact SFAC Show Chair David Peterson at 916-716-5951.

2. For information about participating in the May 15 *plein air* quick-draw artists' project, show, and sale, contact aquacolorist@yahoo.com

3. Children who would like to participate in the junior painting event on May 15 should call the Effie Yeaw Nature Center (916-489-4189) for information.

4. Ticket for the May 15 gala at Effie Yeaw Nature Center - \$30. To order, call 916-489-4918 or email eync@saccounty.net.

5. For questions about the May 15 gala or for other event questions, call the Effie Yeaw Nature Center (916-489-4918) or visit www.arnha.org.

What visitors are saying about the Effie Yeaw Nature Center

"Beautiful . . . great way to make students aware of their environment."

-Teacher at Green Oaks Fundamental

"Seeing animals and being in their habitat makes the learning real."

-Teacher at Granite Bay Montessori

"I feel that your nature center is perfect. I like going into the forest and seeing turkeys and deer. I was impressed. I would like to come again."

-Student at Phoenix Elementary

"This is the best field trip ever! This place made me feel so happy." -Student at Phoenix Elementary

Young people are stepping forward to help the Effie Yeaw Nature Center in an admirable spirit of voluntarism

During these financially troubling times for the Effie Yeaw Nature Center, young people are stepping forward to help out. Four neighborhood girls collected \$22.76 that they earned at their "Free Lemonade" stand to help keep the nature center from closing. The girls, Tenley Ong, Olivia Sloss, Arianna Ong, and Sarah Schuette, were also attending the Spring Fun Days Jr. Rangers Day Camp at the center.

Also, a Boy Scout, Matthew Ramos, completed his Eagle Scout project at EYNC. He planned and oversaw fellow scouts and their parents as they replaced rotting wooden benches by the front entry to the Nature Center. They also replaced old fencing around the area with a solid fence from the side-lot parking lot to the main sidewalk leading to the nature center.

"Matthew and his troop were hard workers, focused, safety conscious, courteous, and finished the job in two days," said EYNC Volunteers Coordinator Jamie Washington.

In March, Ethan Brown, as part of his bar mitzvah study, organized a golfa-thon. He met his goal of raising over \$1,000 for the Nature Center. charge admission to the unfenced nature center and its 77-acre preserve.

At the same time, this disadvantage could be partially offset if the county granted Effie Yeaw a share of the \$5-per-car parking fees collected in Ancil Hoffman Park.

Fairytale Town's \$1.2 million annual budget also includes \$270,000 from the sale of food, a source of revenue not now available to EYNC. But food service would be possible within Health Department restrictions, Marilee Flannery said.

Nonprofit organizations that seek grants are said to enjoy a more sympathetic response from foundations and business firms than do governmentsupported groups. However, there can be a downside when donors restrict awards to specific projects and not ongoing operations such as staff salaries.

"As scary as it is to transition from a city department to a non-profit, it has been good for Fairytale Town," says Kathy Fleming, executive director of Fairytale Town. "We can fundraise without any hindrances. And when we go out to bid on a contract, because we're a nonprofit, people want to help us out."

EYNC Needs You. . .

. . . in these trying times to join, upgrade, or send a gift ARNHA membership.

To pay by credit card, go to arnha. org. To mail, make check payable to ARNHA and send to American River Natural History Association, P.O. Box 241, Carmichael, CA 95609-0241.

- Student \$15
- Senior (60+) \$20
- Individual \$25
- Senior Family (60+) \$30
- Family \$35
- Contributor \$60
- Sponsor \$100
- Sustainer \$250
- Patron \$500
- Life Member \$1000

Jack Hiehle: A Man with a Passion

By Peter Hayes

There were several "firsts" in the 25th annual American River Wildlife Count – most bird species and the sighting of a sea lion and Clark's Grebe in the river. But perhaps most noteworthy for many was the fact that Jack Hiehle was winding down his longtime role as coordinator of the ARNHA event.

Jack, a two-time recipient of county parks "Outstanding Volunteer" honors from the Board of Supervisors, shared responsibility for the December 5 count with Lea Landry, a Sacramento Audubon field trip leader and membership chair. Lea will take over completely in 2010.

Last year, Jack was looking ahead to 2010 when he would be 89 and decided it was time to let someone else recruit wildlife observers, tabulate reports for the ARNHA archives and the media, and even take to the field himself, often on a cold, rainy day, to help count the critters. "My knees were starting to feel it," he said.

A 1947 Forestry graduate from UC Berkeley, Jack went to work for California Fish and Game where he coordinated big game activities throughout the State. Then he moved to California Department of Parks and Recreation, serving as head of its National Heritage Section, retiring in 1984. One of Jack's biggest fans is Marilee Flannery, director of the Effie Yeaw Nature Center, for which Jack has served as a volunteer research ecologist.

"Jack is a man with a passion for the Parkway," Marilee says. "His three decades or more of educating people about its elements from the wildlife to the health of the oak woodlands

shows remarkable devotion and dedication. On weekend mornings, he's up and working at invasive plant removal in the Effie Yeaw Nature Area before most people have had their first cup of coffee. He has shared his expertise and concerns about the Parkway ecosystem with Parkway

managers and workers for years, but he doesn't stop with talk.

"Just a few of the things he's done include wading into a murky pond to cut cattails that threaten to take over a wood duck's favorite nesting site, protecting with fencing the base of a massive cottonwood from the teeth of a beaver because the tree is home to many nesting egrets, and organizing volunteer work parties to remove thousands of nonnative plants such as Spanish Broom and Pampas Grass.

"Jack uses his seemingly limitless energy for the good of all who enjoy our American River Parkway."

Most recently, Jack's prime concern for the nature area habitat has centered

> on protecting oak trees from further loss due to drought and hungry deer. He says 68 deer were recorded in the 77-acre nature area in last December's wildlife count. "That's a pretty doggone high population, higher than it should be. For one thing, loss of oak trees results in loss of the Acorn Woodpeckers." So Jack and other volunteers have fenced

off young oak trees to keep the deer from munching the leaves and finishing off the trees.

"We're always scrounging for wire," he says. "But I could see I was doing something for EYNC."

And others might say that Jack, through his remarkable voluntarism, is a role model for all of us.

Summer Fun Days – Last Two Weeks of June – As of Now

Due to the significant decrease in staffing, as well as uncertain future funding for the Nature Center, **Summer Fun Days** are currently scheduled only for the last two weeks of June.

If funding becomes available, ARN-HA members will be notified immediately and, as always, will receive first sign up privileges. All sessions are 9:00 am to 12:00 pm. See the insert for programs currently planned.

Taste of Carmichael Offers Food, Wine, Music

You are invited to support the Effie Yeaw Nature Center by buying tickets to the 8th annual **Taste of Carmichael**. This event showcases and provides samplings of culinary treasures from the restaurants and food stores of Carmichael as well as wines from ten regional wineries.

Music headliners include the nationally acclaimed Rio Jazz Band, Sisters Swing, and Vintage Fare. Door prizes, a silent auction, and raffle prizes are part of the fun.

Tickets cost \$35 per person in advance or \$40 at the door. The full value of tickets sold by EYNC or ARNHA goes to ARNHA. The event is on Saturday, May 22, from 4:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the La Sierra Community Center, 5323 Engle Road. Phone the Nature Center, 489-4918, to buy tickets. ■

American River Natural History Association P.O. Box 241 Carmichael, CA 95609-0241 (916) 489-4918 • www.arnha.org Address Service Requested



Nonprofit Organization U.S. Postage PAID Permit No. 226 Carmichael, CA

ARNHA Calendar of Events

- · ART GALA: Painting Where the Wild Things Are Saturday, May 15, 4-9 pm (see page 1).
- Plein Air Quick Draw Saturday, May 15, 9 am to 2 pm at EYNC for information contact aquacolorist@yahoo.com
- Kid Art Painting Saturday, May 15, 9 am to 2 pm at EYNC for information contact EYNC@SacCounty.net
- Taste of Carmichael Saturday, May 22 (see page 7)
- June Fun Days June 14-25 at EYNC (see insert)

Welcome, New Members!

- Gary Agid
- Chris Andis
- Hilary Bartle
- Jacqueline Bernales
- Elisabeth Bower
- Jean & Greg Burke
- Gay Currier
- Betty Diamond
- Michael Donnoe
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- Don Sibbett & Brianna Cutts
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