

THE ACORN

American River Natural History Association Members' Newsletter
Summer 2017



Acorn Woodpecker • Art Gala • Parkway Signs



from the president

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ARNHA

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Spring has come to the Effie Yeaw Nature Center and the American River. Plants and animals are enjoying the lushness provided by this year's generous rainfall. The Red-shouldered Hawks are back in their nest near the museum building, and male turkeys are doing their spring dance. Do yourself a favor and get out into the Nature Study Area to feel renewal all around you.

Recently, we had two successful events. Bird and Breakfast was well attended both days. The Sacramento Audubon Society set up their scopes to view the various nests and observe bird behavior. Next was a special brunch to show our major donors how much we appreciate them. Our new animal ambassadors were also present to say thank you.

Speaking of donors, you can show what ARNHA and the Effie Yeaw Nature Center mean to you on May 4, the Big Day of Giving. We hope that you choose to donate to ARNHA/Effie Yeaw. Or during the Spring Appeal, consider a monthly pledge. The benefit of monthly pledges for ARNHA is a steady stream of income that aids efficient planning. The benefits of pledging are knowing that the place and services that you care about can continue, and you will not receive other requests for donation.

School programs and spring camps are filled with eager young naturalists. Summer camps are filling fast. When I walk through the nature center during these activities, it is thrilling to see these young people enthusiastic about learning. I am reminded that we are making a difference that will last long past the program or camp. Would we like to do more? Yes, but that is a discussion for another time.

When you get a moment, check out the new website. Same web address, SacNatureCenter.org, but a whole new look, easier to move around and more content. It is still being fine-tuned, so if you see something that needs attention or could be improved, let me know and I'll communicate it to the right person. In today's world, often the first contact a person has with an organization or place is through their website and it is important that it is something special from the first click. Want information on ARNHA? Click on the ARNHA button and it is all there, including the most recent copy of *The Acorn*.

Finally, on June 10, we have Art Where the Wild Things Are, our annual art gala. This promises to be a magical evening, blending some of the best art of the region with the beauty of nature. This is one of our biggest fundraising events. If there are any tickets available by the time you read this, grab them. If not, plan for next year.



ARNHA President Joey Johnson

Photo by Kari Bauer

Acorn Woodpeckers Take Care of their Own

Their storage trees contain as many as 50,000 acorns

essay and photos by Ed Harper



it goes about its daily routine, or by drumming as it hammers on a resonating surface to interact with others of its species. A fascinating family, *Picidae*, woodpeckers are a nearly cosmopolitan family of birds, comprising some 216 species found on all continents except Australia and Antarctica.

It is a medium-sized bird with an all-black back, a black-and-white clownish face, and a red crown. The female shows less red, however, since there is a black band separating the creamy white forehead from the red cap, whereas the male lacks this black band. From below, the black breast band gives way to ragged black streaking extending down along the flanks of otherwise white underparts.

In flight, note the white patches in the wings, along with the white rump, markings that separate this species from the only other all black-backed species in the Sacramento area, the Lewis's Woodpecker. Its clamorous *whack-up, whack-up, whack-up* calls are distinctive.

Melanerpes formicivorus is the scientific name for the Acorn Woodpecker. The genus name, *Melanerpes*, means "black creeper," which fittingly describes the first view we often get of this woodpecker. The specific name, *formicivorus*, alludes to "anteater" which aptly describes one of its food preferences. Acorn Woodpeckers can often be seen "fly catching," as they sally out from a high perch to grab a flying insect, such as a termite or flying ant, and return to its perch, ready to fly again when prey is sighted. They also subsist on acorns, oak catkins, fruit, flower nectar and pollen, and sap, particularly when the sticky sap wells have trapped insects. Acorns are critical for winter survival and are a major food component when insects are few.

Acorn Woodpeckers are noteworthy for living in closely-knit colonies that collectively prepare for lean times by storing acorns in soft porous bark or in the limbs and trunks of soft wood provided by dead trees. These storage trees or granaries can consist of as many as 50,000 acorns. Even fence posts, telephone poles, and the soft eaves of homes have been used for granaries when dead trees have been cut down or are not available. An excellent place to see Acorn Woodpeckers and their granaries is the American River Parkway, especially the woods in Ancil Hoffman Park around the Effie Yeaw Nature Center with its mature oaks.

With a united front, they will defend a territory ranging from four to twenty acres. Their social and family bonds are evident as they collectively gather and store acorns for granaries that are jointly guarded from pilfering jays and squirrels, other Acorn Woodpeckers and Lewis's Woodpeckers.

Nesting and reproduction by the species can seem bizarre. A dozen or more adults may take part in mating, egg laying, and tending the young in a single nest. Although there is the traditional pairing of a single male and a single female, a group effort is more likely. This may be as simple as one breeding male and two breeding females or more complex arrangements involving two to four males pairing with two or three females.

In these colonies, core breeders are assisted in the rearing of the young by several non-breeding adults. Since normally all of the birds are related, even the non-breeders have a genetic investment in the rearing of the young. The non-breeding birds of the colony are most likely physiologically capable of breeding, but their status within the group limits their active

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Acorn, continued from previous page

participation in breeding. However by being in position to inherit a role as a breeder in a high quality territory, a non-breeding bird's chance for reproductive success in life is enhanced.

Females may engage in a dramatic form of competition: egg demolition. As nesting begins and females start depositing eggs in the communal nest, they may snatch an egg of a rival female. Such eggs frequently are cached in nearby trees and are eventually consumed by all members of the group. Each female seems bound to an axiom to "destroy an egg of a rival and replace it with one of your own." But ultimately this behavior settles down when females start to occupy the nest cavity at the same time and lay eggs simultaneously.

The eggs are white and unmarked. Unable to discriminate maternal from nonmaternal eggs, a female leaves her co-breeder's egg alone. Although this "egg demolition derby" would seem to be an activity of violence and destruction, a useful consequence is the synchronization of the egg laying by communal-nesting females. If a female simply added her eggs to those laid several days earlier, her late developing young would be less likely to survive. By eradicating eggs laid before her own, a female gains an advantage in egg ownership, promotes synchrony of hatching, and improves the chances that some of the surviving offspring will be her own rather than those of a co-breeder.

Both males and females share equally in incubation, a period of about 11 days. After the young have hatched, females spend more time caring for the young than do the males and breeders spend more time caring for the young than non-breeders. Offspring fledge after 30 to 32 days and become independent at about two months of age. Insects are fed to the young in the nest with all members of the colony contributing. After fledging, young birds learn to flycatch and feed on sap. It takes

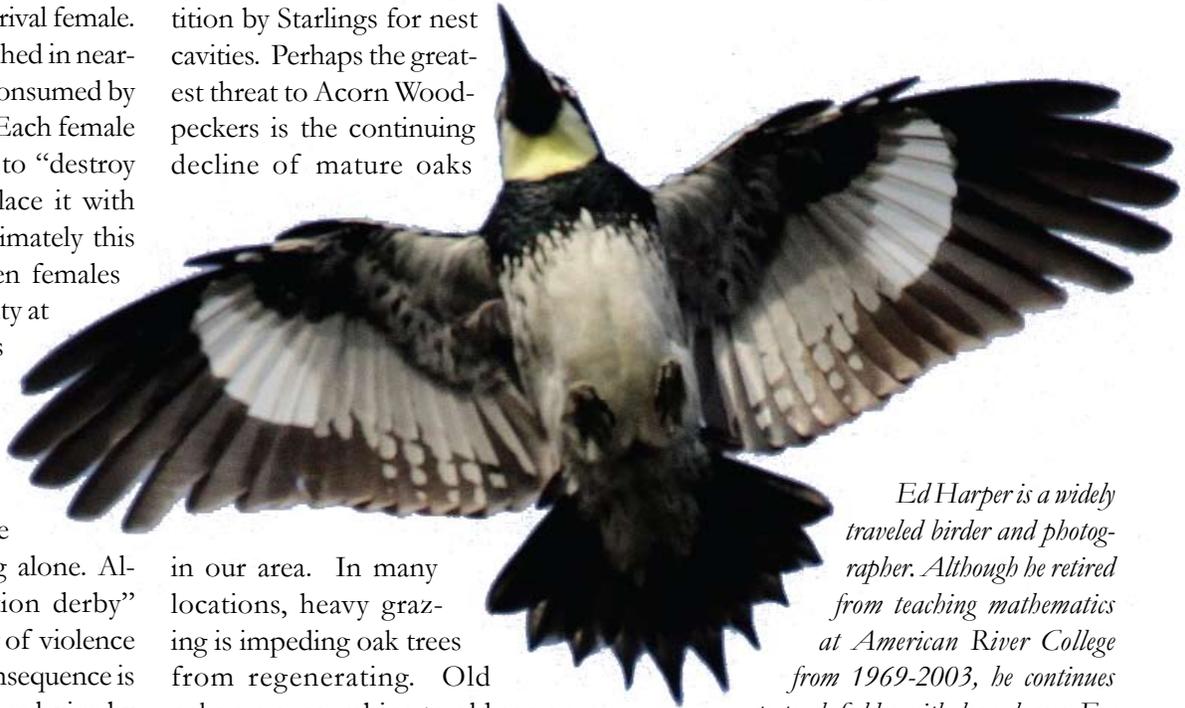
about six weeks for juvenile birds to become skilled in handling and cracking acorns.

Acorn Woodpeckers can be considered pests at times by growers of nuts and fruits. As consumers of large numbers of insects they can also be deemed beneficial.

Populations seem to be stable in spite of increased competition by Starlings for nest cavities. Perhaps the greatest threat to Acorn Woodpeckers is the continuing decline of mature oaks

in our area. In many locations, heavy grazing is impeding oak trees from regenerating. Old oaks are succumbing to old age or disease and are not being replaced. In other areas development is removing or replacing oaks with other trees. Since the Acorn Woodpecker is a species so intimately associated with oaks, this could lead to declines.

Next time you're in the field, take time to enjoy this species and speculate about its interesting natural history. Can you differentiate between males and females? Have you ever seen it foraging on the ground? What does it appear to be eating? How big is its granary? Do you see defense of the granary? What birds might be the breeders? And do they really have egg demolitions?



Ed Harper is a widely traveled birder and photographer. Although he retired from teaching mathematics at American River College from 1969-2003, he continues to teach field ornithology classes. For the past several years he has taught "Birds of Winter in the Sacramento Valley" for the American River Natural History Association. These classes are held at the Effie Yeaw Center, usually in January and have been very eagerly attended. ■

Cover Photo by Linda Thomas

Even though Acorn Woodpeckers are easy to see at Effie Yeaw Nature Center, scouting for an unobstructed, well-lit view of a bird, with a backdrop that shows habitat and behavior, takes time and patience. This male, on a granary tree, finally paused a few moments for a portrait. The bird made many trips to the tree to store acorns and check on his cache. He also confronted other curious birds who intruded and made raucous conversation.

The day was bright, so no tripod was necessary and, in fact would have hindered my ability to stay with this active bird. After most of a morning, I was able to capture a few images while he perched. I favor this one for its classic profile.

My camera was a Canon T3i, with a Tamron 18-270mm lens.

Let Nature Nurture

by Jaden Fong

When I was old enough to become a camp counselor, I could not wait to help shape young campers' experiences. The first year was just as amazing as my most recent fourth year. Throughout these four years, I learned that, simply put, kids need to get their hands dirty. They need to experience river water running through their fingers, the dirt under their fingernails, and the sun shining on their faces. Nature camps help to balance out the influence technology has on children. These camps serve as a step back from the screens, a gust of wind to clear away the fog technology has planted.

When a young boy is hiking along rocky terrain, sweaty and tired, he cannot hide his true personality. He can be free to run and scream and laugh. He can freely express amazement or confusion as to why a lizard can grow back his tail.

Even when children's personalities might not always be full of curious excitement and they are frustrated, nature will win. I remember a camper plopping down, arms crossed, nose scrunched, face red with anger. When I asked him what was wrong, he told me that he was tired, hot, and wanted his computer. His frustration remained constant for the following few days, but gradually it lessened. By the end of the week, he was pointing out turkey vultures flying overhead and warning his fellow campers of upcoming poison oak. Just one week of constant exposure to nature transformed him.

Another camper was diagnosed with ADHD and, according to his mother, was an extreme introvert. I was not surprised. On the first day I met him, he was afraid even to speak and isolated himself in the corners of the play mat. At the end of camp, the other counselors and I laughed as we agreed he had become the biggest handful because he was constantly running around, laughing, and screaming. On the camp's final

evaluation form, his mother wrote us two paragraphs about her son. Our laughter soon turned to silence and, then, to huge smiles. Apparently, he came back from camp, "a new kid." He told his mom that he was excited for school, wanted to join other nature camps, and insisted he take her on a trail to the river. We were in awe and pleasantly stunned to witness the huge impact the camp had on him.

Those who ask, "Why bother teaching children about nature, when their future jobs will be all in technology?" probably have never been to a nature camp. The purpose of children joining a nature camp is as much about exploring who they are as it is learning how plants grow. They need to find a balance between experience in nature and technology. Not only is this fresh air healthy for the body, it is also healthy for the mind and soul. Experiencing the real world through nature shapes minds and forms childhood memories in a way that sitting in front of a television cannot.

Too much exposure to technology is not healthy for children. It can lead to developing an isolated and limited lifestyle. Nature can lead them along the unbeaten path and allow them to withdraw from the constant technological stimulation society encourages. Sometimes, Nature is the best teacher

Jaden Fong, a junior at Jesuit High School, began visiting Effie Yeaw Nature Center (EYNC) when he was a toddler. Since then, he has enjoyed attending numerous nature camps at the center, and at the age of 14, began to volunteer at EYNC. He has a passion for both nature and writing, and especially finds joy in helping others discover and experience the magic those fields provide. ■

Top: Melanie DuBoce helps campers with their birding skills. Middle: Wendy Warren describes a deer skull to young campers. Bottom: A young camper checks his bird list.





Under the Oaks

by Pete the Parkway Coyote

Volunteers have been busy removing Bull and Milk Thistle and cleaning and replacing oak tree cages damaged in the flood. While the English Walnut tree at the main trailhead seems to have reached the end of its lifespan, Blue and Valley Oaks newly planted behind the Nature Center are doing well.



Paul Bannick, wildlife photographer and author of the newly published *Owl: A Year in the Lives of North American Owls* gave a morning bird photography class at Effie Yeaw Nature Center on Friday, March 17, as part of his recent lecture circuit in Northern California.

On the Preserve, Purple Bush Lupine, and California Poppies herald the arrival of summer. Pipevine has already gone to seed, but Pipevine Swallowtail Butterflies continue to enjoy the Preserve, and their eggs and caterpillars cover many Pipevine leaves.



The weather barely cooperated on Used Book Sale Day. Nevertheless, hundreds of books sold, most for a dollar or two, netting nearly \$300 for the Nature Center. Thank you, Peter Hayes, for donating your library to ARNHA.



Wood Ducks flying in and out of tree cavities dazzled attendees of March 18 and 19 Bird and Breakfast. Birding with Cathie LaZier's team of Sacramento Audubon leaders, guests enjoyed spotting scope views of Anna's Hummingbird, Red-shouldered Hawk, and Bushtit nests. Young birders at the family event had a chance to make a Kestral Bracelet. A sumptuous breakfast was enjoyed by all.

Under the oaks, down by the river, yeah On a blanket with nature is where I'll be . . .

ARNHA volunteers recently met the public during two nature-oriented family events. On February 25 at Yolo County Duck Days, Molly Keller and volunteers met the public to promote the EYNC, hand out our map and brochure, sell books, and ask kids to identify a turkey feather. (Best answer: Raccoon!). Visitors enjoyed tours of the Yolo Bypass Preserve and kids enjoyed lots of hands-on activities.

On May 20, visitors to Walk on the Wildside at Beech Lake, also, enjoyed our presence as well as tours of the Preserve, live animals, and music.

Birds, busy with feeding, calling, nesting, and social interaction, enriched Rich Howard's Spring Birding Class, ending on April 1. Participants enjoyed listening to recordings of local birdcalls, viewing excellent photos of local birds, and hearing interesting facts about them. Then, they took their new knowledge to the field where birds, such as a Northern Flicker, cooperated by giving them terrific views.

- Pete the Parkway Coyote

Pete's curious nature, sharp eyes, and keen sense of smell make him a great ambassador for the American River Natural History Association.

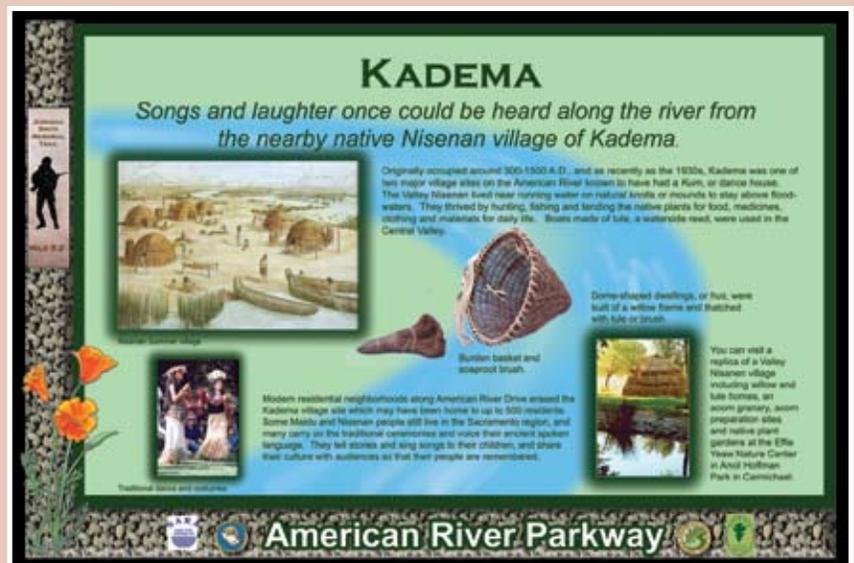
Parkway Interpretive Signs to be Renewed

Many years ago, Sacramento County Regional Parks installed a series of signboards at a dozen locations along the American River Parkway. Originally designed by former EYNC staffers Cameron Cooper and Marilee Flannery, the colorful signs depict historic events, the natural setting, wildlife, outdoor activities, and things to see in the vicinity. Although mounted on permanent frames, the two by three foot signboards have suffered from years of weather and vandalism. Changes in the nearby setting have made some signs outdated.

Noting the deteriorated condition of the signs, ARNHA Board Member Noah Baygell encouraged the ARNHA Board to take on updating and replacing the signs with the financial assistance and collaboration of other interested partners along the Parkway. Noah organized a meeting of experienced hands to review and edit each sign and reached out to other groups, to provide comment and potential funding for the project. Both the ARNHA Board and the SARA Board pledged \$600 toward replacing the signs. Additional funding will be required to complete the project and contributions are welcome.

ARNHA Board Member David Wade edited the signs under direction from Mary Maret and Jeff Leatherman of County Regional Parks. The original design concept is retained, but new information and photographs are included. New aerial photographs taken by Tom Gohring under a permit granted to the Water Forum will replace the old images from the US Army Corp of Engineers.

County Regional Parks will review and approve the updated signs and, then, manage the printing and replacement of the signs along the Parkway. Final approval is anticipated this summer, and installation will occur as the Regional Parks maintenance schedule allows.



2017 New Members - January - March

- Ron & Cheryl Adams
- Michelle Adams
- Leah Adams
- Virg Anderson
- Kimberly Anderson
- Jose Avila
- Jennifer Baker
- Caitlin Beno
- Maria L. Beristain Durrett
- Cynthia Bird
- Steve Blackledge
- Demetrius Borris
- Tracy Brady
- Mallery Buckman
- Janet Burton
- Sandy Cahan
- Kenneth & Treia Callahan
- Samantha Chang
- Theresa Charlton
- Evgeniy Chekrijev
- Gesna Clarke
- Dana Cole
- Shalimar Commons
- Andrew Craven
- Hayley Crews
- Jammie Daffoon
- Pabina Dhawan
- Lucy Douglass
- Michelle & Kerry Drebohl
- Jennifer Eslami
- Jorge Gaj
- Nathan Garris
- Vishnupriya Govindan
- Tom Grabau
- Mr. & Mrs. Marshall Graves
- Gary Grech
- Julia Guiliano
- Bradley Harlan
- Heather Harris
- Ken Harris
- Nicole Heffernan
- Alan Ho
- Scarlet Hughes
- Anne Isreal-Connolly
- Sarah Jeffryes
- Ann Kanter
- Deena Karagianes
- Lee Kauffman
- Dennis Kauffman, Jr.
- Jong Choon Kim
- Larry Klink
- Darla Lackey
- Holly Lane
- Shelby Lard
- Heather Lazark
- Lloyd Levine
- Joel Levine
- Tracey List
- Matthew Lyon
- Marilyn Maeda
- Danielle Martin
- Kelsey Mayo
- Scott McCaslin
- James McDaniel
- Mark McDonell
- Susie McGuffin
- Diane McKernon
- Frances Messier-Reece
- Carli Miranda
- Ashlee Mojica
- Lori Mortensen
- Amy & Dawn Moy
- Erin Mullin
- Teri Nartker
- Michelle Nast
- Vanessa Nauta
- Carmichael Colony
Neighborhood Assn
- Allison & Michael Newman
- Duane Orzol
- Sara O'Toole
- Leslie Palmer
- Bob Pasko/Anderson
- Shirley Paulson
- Philip Ramey
- Cynthia Rogers
- Sarah Ross
- Sandie Rugroden
- Sandy Sagen
- Gretchen Schmidt
- Cindy Scribner
- Megan Seely
- Kary & Moe Seitter
- Michael James Shaffer
- Gayle and Douglas Sheeks
- Jenna Sims
- David E. Smith
- Joseph Soots
- John Tighe
- Diane Torres
- Heidi Truitt
- Patricia Valenzuela
- Karen Varma
- Christina Vredevoe
- Terry Wardinsky
- Anne Webster
- Dorothy West
- Cecilia Whitworth
- Rebecca Withey
- Jim Woodward
- Aden Wyzanowski
- Ronald Yemma

New Online Presence for ARNHA and the Nature Center: www.SacNatureCenter.org

In late summer 2016, Bobby Reed visited the Effie Yeaw Nature Center with his wife and young children. He was immediately taken by the beauty of the preserve, the resident animals inside the Visitor Center, and the friendliness of the staff and volunteers. Recognizing the Nature Center as an important educational center for families and individuals, he then went online to learn more about it and view upcoming family events. Unfortunately, he had a difficult time finding what he was looking for. He noticed that the website was a bit dated and that it didn't adequately showcase the natural wonders that so many enjoy here. Luckily, Bobby Reed is the owner and president of a local web design agency, Capitol Tech Solutions.

The next day, Bobby contacted the Nature Center and offered to re-design the entire site as a donation from his firm. Over the next few months, the Nature Center staff worked with the Capitol Tech Solutions team (Bobby, Jeremy Hawes, and Greg Bernard) to develop a new website incorporating both the Nature Center and ARNHA. The site launched on March 30, 2017, and has received much praise from members and visitors. With a clean design, user-friendly navigation, and plenty of amazing photographs, the website now truly does showcase the beauty of the nature preserve and the special moments of children, families, and individuals connecting with nature. We are thankful to Jeremy and Greg for their tireless work over the past few months, and to Bobby for his very generous offer and donation. We were honored to have been able to work with such a professional and skilled team. Thank you for helping us connect with our community in a more effective way!

Capitol Tech Solutions, located in downtown Sacramento, specializes in providing complete web design, search engine optimization (SEO), digital marketing and custom software & database development solutions for businesses, trade associations, campaigns or non-profit organizations. www.capitoltechsolutions.com (916) 443-5395. ■

2017 Donors --- January-March

- Quintin Allen
 - American River Parkway Trail Patrol
 - Arden Park Garden Club
 - Bud & Karen Banker
 - Banner Bank
 - Jason Auriemma & Ann Marie Kennedy
 - Dick Barbar & Sandie Dunn
 - Anna Barela
 - Karen Binsacca
 - Karen Bishop-White
 - Beth Blair
 - Kenneth & Treia Callahan
 - Linda Cochran
 - Betty Cooper
 - Cynthia Cox
 - Gay Currier
 - Gayle Dax-Conroy
 - Jacqueline DeLu
 - Linda Dixon
 - Walter & Eleanor Dong
 - Department of Water Resources Storm Water Quality Program
 - Drobny Law Offices
 - Nathan Fairman
 - Marilee & Stephen Flannery
 - Fort Hemenway Manor
 - Ginger Gaddi
 - Michael & Barbara Genovese
 - Patricia & Randy Getz
 - Girl Scout Troop 1170
 - Girl Scout Troop 1576
 - Ted & Mary Glum
 - Gary Gravier
in memory of Debby Gravier
 - Teri Griffis
 - Pete Hayes
 - Intel Corporation
 - Joey Johnson
 - Virginia Kaser
 - Annie Kempees
 - Peggy & Bruce Kennedy
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 - Catherine Kiefer & Judith Shellenbarger
 - Linda & Roy Kimura
 - David Komaromi
 - Suzanne Krale
 - Michael Laing
 - Karon Larson
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 - Ted & Jean Lawson
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 - Marjorie Lehr
 - Christina Lewis
 - Barbara Lezon
 - Marya Liberty
 - Lyn Livingston
in memory of Jim Livingston
 - Loveall Foundation for Children
 - Donna Madeira
 - Walter Malhoski
 - Lestelle Manley Nichols
in memory of Betty Jo Whitney & "Rudy" Locke
 - Dennis & Nancy Marks
 - Marty Maskall
 - Maureen Maurer
in memory of Maureen Ahern
 - The McConnell Foundation
 - Lynn McCook
 - Ann McClintock
 - Chelsea Miller
 - Robin Miller
 - Don Mongeau
 - Barbara Moore
 - John Moore
 - Cindy Moreno
 - James Morgan
 - Deborah Moskovitz
 - Lillian Nelson
 - Karen Nemetz
 - Lou & Ellen Nishimura
 - Susan Oie
 - Sara O'Toole
 - Out of This World
 - Pacific Investment Consultants
 - Tracey Peterson
 - Tom Phillips
 - Myra Pierce & Fred Dal Bello
in memory of Carol Thomas
 - Norbert & Iris Pobanz
 - Raley's Family of Fine Stores
 - Diane Ramsey
 - Rochelle Reed
 - Ruth Rezos
in honor of Bill Dillinger
 - Sacramento Natural Foods Co-op
 - John & Kathleen Schnobrich
in memory of Marie Tonelli
 - John & Julia Serences
 - Somach, Simmons & Dunn
 - Morna Stephens
 - Stromayer-Maurer Family
in memory of Maureen Ahern
 - Chloe Svoboda
 - Jaclyn & Jon Teofilo
 - UBS Investment Bank
 - Unitarian Universalist Society of Sacramento
 - Larry & Jamie Washington
in honor of EYNC Volunteers &
in memory of Marie C. Tonelli
 - Betsy & Fred Weiland
 - Kate Williams & Tom Gohring
 - Liz Williamson
 - Lucinda Woodward
 - Jerome Yatsko
 - Amy Yee
- In memory of Lou Heinrich, Sr.
- American River College Patrons Club
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 - Bruce and Peggy Kennedy
 - Evangel Kinge
 - Janet Olson
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 - John & Betty Robinson
 - Judith Shellenbarger
 - Warren & Mary Truitt

2015-2016 ARNHA Annual Report Now Available

Each year, ARNHA produces a report of the previous year's activities intended to give members, donors, sponsors and other interested people information about its services and financial performance. The 2015-2016 Annual Report (and previous reports) can now be found on the new website. At www.SacNatureCenter.org, click on "ARNHA" in the top menu bar and select "Annual Reports."

If you've never thumbed through ARNHA's Annual Report, you may want to. Not just a dry, number-heavy financial statement, the report is filled with beautiful photos and interesting infographic statistics to help the reader understand the positive impacts that ARNHA and the Nature Center are having on the community. Check it out online, or ask for a printed copy the next time you are at the Nature Center! ■

Frank Cirill, American River Parkway Warrior, Leaves Great Legacy

A Celebration of the Life of Frank Cirill, a Save the American River Association (SARA) tower of strength, will be held at 11 a.m. June 10 in the Valley Oak Picnic Area of Ancil Hoffman Park, 6700 Tarshes Dr., Carmichael, CA. He died at age 94 on January 7.

For nearly half a century, Frank rallied supporters and resources to maintain flows in the Lower American River and to ward off developments that threatened to clutter the sylvan American River Parkway in the heart of the Sacramento metropolitan region.

A Memorial Service for his immediate family will be held on May 20 with a wreath-laying ceremony and burial at sea outside of the Golden Gate Bridge from aboard the SS Jeremiah O'Brien. Frank served in the U.S. Merchant Marine in World War II and until 1949.

In lieu of flowers, remembrances in his honor can be made to SARA. Details on giving are available at www.sarariverwatch.org/ways_to_give.

Some of Frank's accomplishments:

- He led SARA in 1972 when a \$12.5 million bond issue funded the purchase of the first 4,000 acres of the parkway, acquisition of Elk Grove Park and Gibson Ranch, and a second bond issue in 1978 to remove sewage

plants along the Lower American, and fund construction of what is known as Sac Sewer.

- He headed a 20-year campaign that raised \$700,000 to prevent the East Bay Municipal Utility District from taking water at the Folsom South Canal. Failure would have drastically reduced the flow of the Lower American River.

- Frank was credited with persuading a state assemblyman to drop legislation that would have allowed development of a golf course, 40-acre parking lot and other facilities at Bushy Lake on the American River's flood plain next to Cal Expo. He also blocked plans for another golf course at Mississippi Bar at Lake Natoma on the River.

He was employed for 27 years by Continental Heller Construction Corp., serving as a chief engineer overseeing the \$68 million restoration of the State Capitol from 1975-81. He served on the Sacramento County Parks and Recreation Commission.

Frank is survived by his wife Doris, who worked in support of his many endeavors during their 56-year marriage; a daughter, Lisa; a son, Curtis Cirillo, who took back the original family name; son-in-law Kevin Shirley; daughter-in-law Soussan Cirillo, and grandchildren Rose, Wolfgang, and Levon. ■

June 10 Art Gala Brings New Faces to Oak Woodland at EYNC

Eight years ago, the American River Natural History Association stepped up to take responsibility for keeping the doors of the Effie Yeaw Nature Center open and the Nature Study Area accessible to visitors.

In the months before the transition occurred, the looming question was:



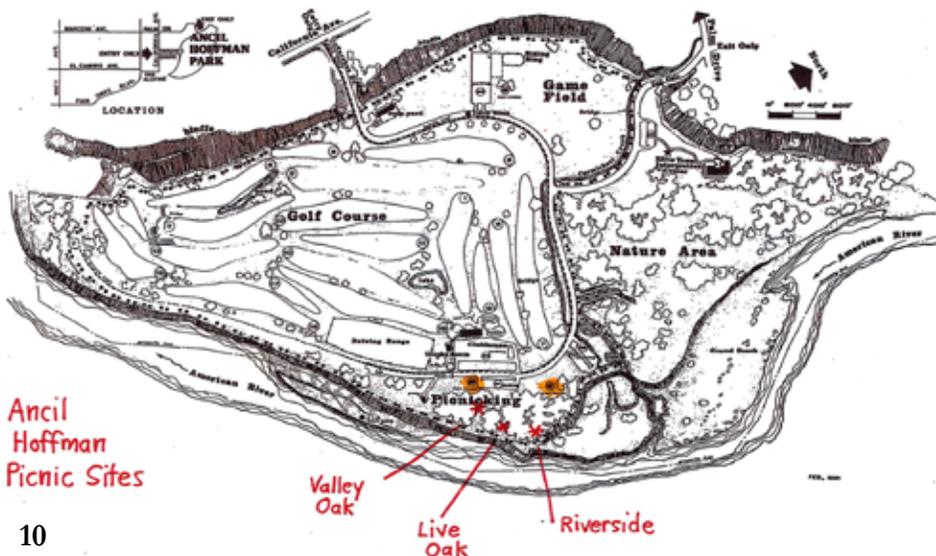
how to raise money to save the important programs the Center offers? One answer was the inspired collaboration between the late Carol Doersch of ARNHA and David Peterson, Director of the Sacramento Fine Arts Center. A joint event, Carol and David realized, could benefit both the SFAC and ARNHA. Thus was born the annual Spring Gala and Art Auction - Art Where Wild Things Are.

For eight years, the event has grown and flourished under the unflagging guidance of David Peterson and the SFAC, and the hard work of ARNHA, the EYNC staff, and many dedicated volunteers.

This year, the Gala will be held at EYNC on Saturday, June 10. The familiar structure of the event remains: dinner tables set up under the oaks, soft music by Sean O'Connor, wonderful

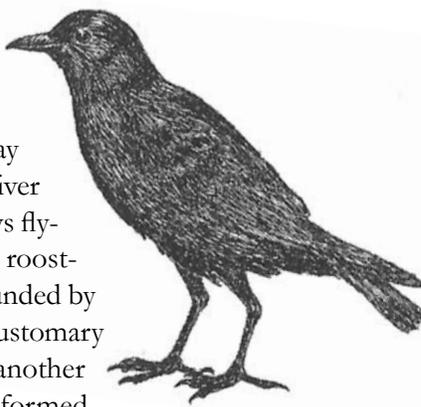
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ANCIL HOFFMAN COUNTY PARK



Ancil Hoffman Picnic Sites

A Look Back



Dried stalks of last year's sweet fennel sway life-like over the muddy waters as the swollen river surges toward the ocean. Two American Crows flying with metronome-like wingbeat join others roosting in a clump of leafless cottonwoods surrounded by water. With the river flattened out beyond its customary course, it is easy to transport oneself back to another century when drenching rains and snowmelt formed an inland island sea in the great valley, rolling slowly towards the Pacific.

It's a relatively placid scene now, in contrast to the 19th century flooding. In those days, reclaimers built levees while gold-mining activities upstream sent silt and debris down the river, clogging the stream and forcing flood waters higher. It was often a losing battle, as in May 1867 when the rampaging American River rose so high it flowed across the Sacramento River into Yolo County near the town of Washington.

Now, thanks to the Folsom and Nimbus dams, the river behaves itself. There is sanctuary for mallards, hoarsely-croaking American Coots, and stately great blue herons. Echoing up and down the river is the rattling cry of a belted kingfisher.

A green haze of emerging leaves envelops alders and willows, undeterred by water flowing over their roots. The grassy shore is brightened by the pink blossoms of tiny filarees, and minute blooms of giraffehead of the mint family.

Yes, it is just like another century, but for a few exceptions, such as the bright yellow anti-freeze container, beer cans and fragments of synthetic ice chests. They're neither flora or fauna, only the components of a moldering midden to puzzle archeologists of a future century.

From An American River Journal, published by the American River Natural History Association (ARNHA). It features illustrations by ARNHA co-founder Jo Glasson Smith and nature essays by Peter J. Hayes, retired newspaper editor and ARNHA Associate Board member. The book is available for \$9.75 at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center, ARNHA.org and selected bookstores. Visit ARNHA.org "Podcasts," to hear readings of the essays by the author. ■

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art inspired by the beauty of EYNC and the American River Parkway, the chance to mingle with friends and fellow ARNHA and EYNC supporters, and the opportunity to bid on juried art through the silent auction and during a spirited live auction.

But this year, there are some changes and new faces as well. The art on display at the SFAC and available for purchase at the Gala Auction will include a wider variety of media, including photography. In addition to the awards granted by a jury of local well-known artists, the art will include EYNC "Staff Picks" - art selected by EYNC staff.

This year's Honorary Chair is local author and Inside Publications publisher Cecily Hastings. The Emcee will be KCRA 3 Anchor Edie Lambert; KLM Auctions will conduct the live auction. Also new to the event this year is Global Gourmet Caterer, which will provide a variety of delicious food. A menu can be found on the EYNC website at sacnaturecenter.net.

The Gala is always a popular event and typically sells out quickly. As of press time, tickets were on sale and going quickly. If you would like to attend and haven't gotten tickets, check SacNatureCenter.org for availability. ■

Ask a Naturalist

Q. How do butterflies find their host plant?

A. Naturalist Rachael Cowan replies:

"This time of year the Preserve offers fluttering movements of butterflies in every direction. Some are busily working to find nectar while others are seeking the right host plant for their eggs.

Both Pipevine Swallowtails and Monarch Butterflies require a specific plant on which to lay their eggs. How do they manage to find the right plant among all the other plants? Although their vision is not great, their compound eyes are sensitive to shapes, light and color.

In order to make sure they have located the right plant, they will land on it and use chemoreceptors on their feet and antennae to capture the chemical signature of the plant to be processed by their nervous system. Essentially, they are "tasting" with their feet!

By using chemoreceptors, they can determine the correct identification of the host plant and the quality of that plant. If they choose the wrong plant, or the right plant that could not support larvae hatching from eggs, their offspring will not survive. The survival of many butterfly species is dependent on those tasting feet!" ■





ARNHA Calendar of Events

- **Taste of Carmichael**
Friday, May 19, 5:30 pm to 8:30 pm,
La Sierra Community Center
5325 Engle Road, Carmichael
- **Art Where the Wild Things Are Show**
Tuesday, May 16, through Sunday, June 4
Sacramento Fine Arts Center
5330 B Gibbons Drive, Carmichael
- **A Journey Through California's Biotic Beauty**
Thursday, June 1, 6 pm to 8 pm, EYNC
Saturday, June 3, 8 am to noon, TBA
- **Art Where Wild Things Are Art Gala**
Saturday, June 10, 5 pm to 8 pm
Effie Yeaw Nature Center (story page 10)
- **Summer Nature Camps**
Monday, June 19, through Friday, July 28
Effie Yeaw Nature Center
Registration Now Open

See SacNatureCenter.org for more information.

Jack and Jill

The Story of Two Newts

by JoLynn Garrett

We've heard the old nursery rhyme, "Jack and Jill went up the hill to fetch a pail of water, Jack fell down and cracked his crown, and Jill came tumbling after." Unlike the Jack and Jill of the nursery rhyme, Jack and Jill, EYNC's California Newts, *Taricha torosa*, grow back damaged body parts! For example, Jill lost some toes of her right front foot. Over time, however, she is slowly growing her toes back.

Both Jack and Jill were born in captivity and donated to the Effie Yeaw Nature Center in 2014, where they were added to our programs and have become permanent residents in the lobby. They are often taken out on school programs to educate children on amphibians and to show what these beautiful but dangerous critters look like.

Our Newts are highly toxic and can kill a fully grown human adult if the human ingests even only a small portion of a Newt's skin or body. If threatened, the Newts will roll over onto their backs or stand up on their hind legs to flash their bright orange bellies. The only predator able to withstand their tetrodotoxin is the Garter Snake.

Newts are indigenous to California and can be found from the coast to the foothills of the Sierra. The females lay their eggs in early spring attached to plants submerged in water. The eggs incubate and hatch into larvae. The larvae will go through metamorphosis at the end of summer and early fall. Gills turn into lungs, and the Newts crawl out onto land.

Young Newts will make their way overland to take refuge in oak wood-

lands, chaparral, and grasslands. Come spring, they will return to the same pond or stream in which they were hatched and reproduce. California Newts can live more than 20 years.

Unfortunately, the California Newt has faced a huge decline in their population due to habitat loss caused by human activity, water pollution, drought, and the introduction of non-native species such as bullfrogs, predatory fish, and crayfish, which feed on newt eggs and the larvae. ■

