



Can You Hear the Song Sparrow Sing?

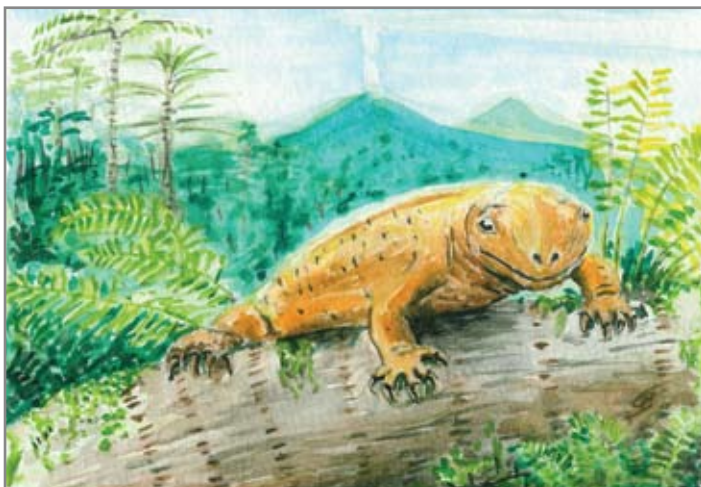
Story and drawings by William E. Avery, Ph.D.

“We forever drift in and out of the miracle before us.”
- Mark Nepo from *Finding Birdsong*

We are bird watchers. We come from a long line of bird watchers. Our survival has depended upon our studies of birds. We mammals have depended upon birds for eggs and meat and for information about our environment. The presence of birds can tell us things about the productivity and safety of our habitat. Before we learned all of this, we mammals were small, furtive, and were preyed upon by birds! We hid from birds and only came out at night. We watched birds very carefully then. Our lives depended upon it. As we consider this relationship with birds, we are traveling back 200 million years - deep into evolutionary time. Go back another 100 million years and birds and we are one. We come from a common ancestor. We are deeply related.

I want to tell the story of this relationship. I am setting off this morning with Daisy, my golden retriever, from my doorstep heading toward the American River. My goal is to find a Song Sparrow singing his song, listen and acquire a photograph that I could turn into the artwork for this story. I also want to complete a 15-minute bird count for the Great

Diadectes, birds' and mammals' common ancestor of 300 mya.



Backyard Bird Count (GBBC). It is an unseasonably warm February morning and it is also Charles Darwin's birthday. I can't think of a better morning to go birding and consider the evolution of our relationship with birds. I begin my count by hearing a Black Phoebe.

Three hundred million years ago a line of amphibian vertebrates began to show the characteristics of reptiles with dry, scaly skin and the ability to lay eggs on land rather than in the water. These amniotic eggs had leathery shells and inner membranes to protect the embryo, store food and also store wastes. All of us mammals, you, me and Daisy, and all reptiles had a common ancestor in one of these species of

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Art Where Wild Things Are Gala and Fundraiser Planned for May 21, 2016

By Barbara Lezon

This year's Art Where Wild Things Are Gala, an elegant fundraiser benefitting the Effie Yeaw Nature Center, will be held on Saturday, May 21, from 5pm to 8pm on the beautiful grounds of the Nature Center, along the American River Parkway.

This grand event, which sells out every year, draws arts patrons and nature-lovers, as well as local community leaders. Guests will be treated to an exquisite supper by Jackson Catering, local wines, music, silent and live



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Dear ARNHA Members

The Nature Center and the Nature Study Area were looking delightful as ARNHA supporters and birders gathered in late March for the annual Bird and Breakfast weekend. The native plant gardens were showing their spring blooms, with the cheeky faces of the Monkey-flower providing a bright yellow highlight by the Assembly Building entrance. The grass in the Nature Study Area was long, lush, and greatly appreciated by our resident Black-tailed Mule Deer. Among the birders gathered were my two houseguests from Scotland who were eager to add to their bird lists with species we are used to seeing here but which are never seen in Europe. As we walked along the path to the building I was pleased to be showing them the Nature Center at a time it looked so lovely and was hosting such a well-loved event.

My friends were impressed by the many, many workers who had come together to make the event happen:

- Sacramento Audubon Society members who prowl the Nature Study Area for weeks in advance, searching out the nest sites that participants are always thrilled to see up close with a well-placed scope;
- The guides and scope monitors who enable participants to see and hear birds that might otherwise pass their notice;
- Carmichael Kiwanis members who bring their skills and enthusiasm to arrange for and cook Sunday's delicious pancake breakfast;
- ARNHA organizers and Nature Center staff who recruit dozens of volunteers to bake the casseroles and muffins, make the fruit salad and oatmeal, donate numerous other items, organize the raffle and the silent auction, and make a substantial commitment of time, all essential elements of the traditional over-the-top buffet on Saturday.

On a small scale, one weekend a year, Bird and Breakfast is an example of much we do at ARNHA and the Nature Center: excellent educational programs on natural history topics, made possible with the help of volunteers, donors and community support. Thank you all for your help.

With best wishes



Liz Williamson
ARNHA President



Photo by Susan Skinner

*Above: Liz and Echo,
our animal ambassador
Great Horned Owl.*

Sparrow, from page 1

early “amniotes.” We probably looked a lot like *Diadectes*, a large lumbering cross between a dry-skinned salamander and lizard. This ancestor of ours lived its life in a lush tropical landscape, courted, mated, laid shelled eggs, and may well have tended those eggs till they hatched. At that time you and I and the song sparrow were one. We had the same genes, the same brain, the same body, and we appreciated the same food, same smells and the same sounds!

I make my way to the edge of the water and by now have added eight more species including an Anna’s Hummingbird and a beautiful pair of Acorn Woodpeckers to my GBBC count. Now a pair of spectacularly ornate male Wood Ducks have emerged from the vegetation, and there is a Great Blue Heron! What diversity of size, shape, food preference and colorful plumage!

All these species of birds come from a lineage of bipedal dinosaurs called theropods. This group also includes the familiar *T. rex*, *Velociraptor* and *Archaeopteryx*. Indeed it would be accurate to say that all birds actually are dinosaurs. One day we might even describe the mesozoic as the age of birds. More and more of the familiar dinosaurs are being discovered to have been feathered. So as some of *Diadectes*’ descendants went off to become the reptiles and predatory feathered dinosaurs, another lineage gave rise to hairy mammal-like reptiles called synapsids. It is from this lineage that we furry mammals hail. And at the time of the bipedal and feathered theropods we were about the size of mice and still laid eggs. We ate insects and eggs. We had to watch out for the toothy, flying or running feathered predators - the ancestors of our song sparrow. We studiously learned their ways, becoming burrowers, nocturnal, with eyes adapted for darkness and a nose sensitive to the slightest nuances that meant food, friend or foe.

I add two more birds to my species list: White-crowned Sparrow and Canada Goose.

An asteroid crashed into the Yucatan peninsula 65 million years ago causing massive planet-wide climate change. In the new climate most of the large dinosaurs, including the feathered theropods with teeth, perished.

But survivors included lizards, snakes, frogs and toads, turtles and small mammals. Also surviving were the small feathered dinosaurs, with beaks, that could fly fast and far. A new age of life dawned. Flowering plants and insects diversified. Mammals and birds also multiplied into thousands of new species during this time. The mammals and birds preyed on each other. One lineage of birds became perching singers. One lineage of furry tree-dwelling insectivores became primates and eventually story-telling, musical toolmakers! We continued to keep an eye on each other. We have benefited from eggs, meat, feathers, and from warnings in the forest of approaching prey or threat. Birds have had to learn the ways of both prey and of predatory mammals to survive in this so called age of mammals. We have deeply influenced each other’s evolutionary story.

Our GBBC species count is up to 24 over a period of 15 minutes when I finally hear my first Song Sparrow, *Melospiza melodia*: “Madge-Madge-Madge, put-on-your-tea-kettle-ettle-ettle.” Three short notes followed by a buzzy phrase and a beautiful melodic trill. There it is: a song. With melodic phrasing, rhythm, repetition of the theme and variation. All the elements we understand in a song. Even though our brains differ (ours slower-processing, wrinkled but bigger; theirs much faster, smoother and smaller) recent studies have shown that humans and birds have very similar neurological developmental patterns and specific brain centers in common for learning song and vocalization. And why not? We share a common ancestry and our surviving ancestral lineages are intertwined in a coevolutionary interrelationship with one another and also with our shared environment upon which we both depend.

Earliest mammals like Morganucodon facing early theropod dinosaurs, 200 mya.



The Song Sparrow is perched now on a willow branch and singing loudly. Madge-Madge-Madge, put-on-your-tea-kettle-ettle-ettle. Another sparrow has flown into his territory. They chase each other around several clumps of reeds. I crouch down and find one of the sparrows in the viewfinder of my camera. Daisy’s ears perk up as she looks in the direction of my interest. I peer through the camera and can see the Song Sparrow’s distinct crown markings

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and vertical breast stripes with one large central dark spot. I snap a few shots but will wait till I get home to see how they turn out.

So what do we hear when we hear the Song Sparrow sing? Maybe: “The morning is warm, it feels like spring, there are no predators around, this patch of reeds and willows is mine, I proclaim my wish to mate and carry on this life with a partner! Madge-Madge-Madge, put-on-your-tea-kettle-ettle-ettle!” Each of us hears the melody in a similar way, but also in a unique way. Perhaps it brings you a sense of nostalgia for the first time that you heard it, perhaps it kindles a sense of joy and a sense of the miraculous.

It is a miracle that in the vastness of space, a galaxy can form, suns condense out of exploded stars, orbiting rocky planets coalesce where water condenses and collects at the surface, simple replicating life evolves out of chemicals, more complex organisms arise through shuffling of genetic material and differential survival. More advanced organisms evolve: invertebrates, eventually a diversity of fishes, amphibians, Diadectes giving rise to dinosaurs and mammals each developing the ability to study each other and eventually to sing and to listen.

Just like human song, birdsong speaks of many things. Birdsong can kindle that sense of enchantment but it can also tell us about our environment. Are we remembering our interdepen-

dency, are we keeping our biosphere safe and healthy?

Today’s GBBC not only yields 48 birds in 24 species, but also tells a story spanning hundreds of million of years of relationship, of intertwined survival. If you really listen there is potential for true enchantment! The miracle of life is proclaimed! What melodic beauty our cousins can create. I wish you Happy Birthday, Charlie Darwin. I wish you all - joy, wonder, and the magic of birdsong.

William Avery is a frequent contributor to The Acorn and is a Professor in the Department of Biological Sciences, CSUS. His artwork appears in Field Guide to California Rivers, UC Press, 2012, and Field Guide to Oregon Rivers, OSU Press, 2014. ■

Song Sparrow, descendant of theropod dinosaur, present day.



Gala from page 1

auctions of juried artwork—including original pieces by Gregory Kondos, Jian Wang, Pat Mahony, Maria Winkler and the late Earl Boley. The artwork will be on display at the Sacramento Fine Arts Center May 1, through May 20, with a reception there on May 14.

The Gala proceeds benefit the Nature Center’s youth education programs, including one very special program that brings classrooms of low-income students to the Center and Preserve. For many of these children it is their very first time in a natural, wild environment and can be a life-changing experience.

“The gala is our largest fundraiser of the year – it is very important to us and we expect to sell out once again this year,” says Betty Cooper, Development Director at Effie Yeaw Nature Center. “This event brings together the fine arts community of Sacramento with the generous contributors of the Sacramento region for an evening of great food and wonderful artwork in a unique and beautiful setting.”

Tickets are on sale now - \$75 per person – and may be purchased online at www.SacNatureCenter.net or by calling (916) 489-4918.

Barbara Lezon is Development Associate at EYNC, handling EYNC’s marketing and communications. ■



Introducing Our Future Stewards

By Cheryl Romo

It was early afternoon and the yellow Monkey-flowers were in bloom, one of those glorious spring days when the sky is clear and fresh after the winter rainy season.

Inside the Effie Yeaw Nature Center (EYNC) building, the place hummed with the chatter of dozens of curious visitors, many of them pushing baby strollers occupied by wide-eyed children in their Sunday best. While the squirming tykes were drawn to the eye-level, glass-enclosed snake exhibits, moms and dads appeared mesmerized by the beauty of the rescued birds of prey, particularly by little Sophia, a Northern Saw-whet Owl.

Veiled from the public in a back room lined with cages, were two fresh-faced high school students who stood side-by-side at a kitchen sink washing dirty bowls and drying them. They were student volunteers and had spent the morning feeding and caring for the Effie Yeaw Nature Center's wide assortment of creatures.

Nicole Bilaver and Ethan Hall, both 16, are students at Mira Loma High School in Sacramento. They're among a select cadre of volunteers, who range in age from 14 to 18, who care for animals, help with children's nature camps and often end up supporting the staff and docents whenever needed. "We couldn't run this place without them," said JoLynn Jarrett, the nature center's animal care supervisor.

"These are the people who will become the future stewards of our natural resources," added Jamie Washington, EYNC's volunteer coordinator. "The work they do is important – and, without their help, we would not have the volunteers to take care of our animals, manage our nature camps, or assist with special events like Nature Fest."

While many of these young volunteers recall visiting the nature center

with their families as small children, each has a unique story to tell about how the center has impacted his or her life.

Ethan Hall is a soft-spoken and serious student who hopes to one day become an engineer. For more than two years, he's been an animal care worker. In the beginning, he said he volunteered only because it was part of a public service requirement at his high school. However, he found a community of people who made him feel accepted, supported and valued. "I'm a very quiet person," he said, smiling at his co-worker. "So working around people has been good for me."

Nicole Bilaver, a charismatic young

“. . . they're five years old and they're passionate about nature and ask questions. They're our future biologists and veterinarians – and they keep coming back. It's cool."

woman, isn't sure what she wants to be when she grows up. She began volunteering last summer because of her school's public service requirement and started out doing odd jobs, like cleaning picnic tables, before being accepted as an animal handler and a nature camp assistant. Then she fell in love with the animals and the children who came to visit them.

"There are always a ton of little kids here," she said. "And at the nature camps, most of the kids seemed smarter than me. They're five years old and they're passionate about nature and ask questions. They're our future biologists and veterinarians – and they keep coming back. It's cool."

Another volunteer looked as if he was about to burst into song when he dashed into the room where Hall and

Bilaver were washing dishes. But Awki Banda, also a student at Mira Loma, hesitated when he saw a stranger and, once introduced, proffered a hand in greeting. The 18-year-old youth talked about his life as he stacked and rearranged animal cages. Banda hopes to become a veterinarian and began working at the nature center at the beginning of the year. "Volunteering here is fun and interesting," he said.

On another day, when the skies darkened and rain clouds showed no mercy, Keegan Ball, 17, met with a visitor under the shelter of a nature center patio cover – and, thoughtfully, shared his two years of experiences as a volunteer assistant with children's nature camps and his concerns about climate change.

"One of the more rewarding ways to work with children is to teach them about nature and the environment. I like to think that I'm part of this great thing," he said. "There was one kid. He took notes in a notebook and he had a magnifying glass. He was just the right kind of kid."

Personal enrichment, Ball said, has come from learning more about Native American culture, how to recognize animals by their droppings, which animals use burrows, and learning about different types of salmon. The young man isn't quite sure what he wants to do with his life. But if he doesn't go away to college, the Mira Loma High School student said he's certain he'll continue volunteering at the nature center. And Keegan Ball isn't alone.

The affable Max McGregor, 14, is currently the youngest student volunteer at EYNC and hopes to increase the number of hours he works each week. McGregor, who is home-schooled, has been an animal handler since January of this year. "This is my school," he said

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with a proud smile.

Both his parents are naturalists who run a children's nature camp at the William B. Pond recreation area on the American River Parkway. They met while attending a Native-American-influenced tracker's school in New Jersey, and their son said he's worked alongside his parents since he was four years old. An appreciation for nature and primitive life, McGregor joked, is in his DNA.

"I've been waiting to get old enough," he said. "I've been coming to the nature center since I was a kid. This [work] calls to me. I work with all the animals, especially Rocky, the American Kestrel. I also work with reptiles and amphibians. Soon I want to work with larger birds, but so far just the smaller."

In homage to his parents, McGregor hopes to go to a tracking school before becoming a firefighter. "At first I thought I wanted to be a doctor," he said. "But then I thought I'll be an EMS and a wild-land firefighter. I hope to join the Sacramento Fire Department."

EYNC Volunteer Coordinator Jamie Washington heaped high praise on these students for their service and dedication. Not only do they work hard, she said, "but they also bring a youthful enthusiasm that energizes their fellow volunteers, our staff and our visitors."

Cheryl Romo is a member of the ARNHA Publications Committee.

Max enjoys working with the snakes at the EYNC. His animal care duties include weighing, feeding, handling, and cage cleaning. Here he has taken Jasper, the Pacific Gopher Snake, outside for some fresh air.



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- Gloria Bugbee
- Nelly Bulloss
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- Jim Gardner
- Angelina Gibbs
- Misael & Dee Dee Gomez
- The Ha Family
- Erica Haga
- Thomas Haka
- Karen Hamilton
- Christine Hansen
- Jim Hargrove
- Tyla & Jim Heaton
- Dianne Heilman
- Ronald Hester
- Karen Hofer
- Matthew Holdgate
- The Johnston Family
- Roger Jones
- Christine Jordan
- Sara Keeler
- Sharon Kowall
- James Lanier
- Brian Lewis
- Brian Mackin
- Charles V. McDonald
- Cathy McDonald
- Nancy McKenzie
- Robin Miller
- Deborah Newton
- Dawn Niekarz
- Tara Nye
- Karen Packer
- Tom Phillips
- Sarah Pinkerton
- Jason Rankins
- Nancy Reitz
- Kirsten Reynolds
- Peri Riggins
- Melinda Rivasplata
- Georgette Robin
- Kelly Rodriguez
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- Michael J. Ross
- Jacqueline Ruiz
- Meredith Ryan
- Catherine Seguine
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- Alex Tarahteeff
- Melissa Thompson
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Be sure to check out the new educational sign by Molly Keller at the EYNC!



Taste of Carmichael Promises Good Food and Good Entertainment

On Friday, May 13, the Carmichael Kiwanis presents dinner and entertainment for just \$40 a person. Proceeds from all tickets for this event purchased at Effie Yeaw Nature Center go directly to support the programs at Effie Yeaw Nature Center.

Over 45 food vendors will offer samples of their best.

Todd Morgan & the Emblems Rockabilly will take you back to yesterday with its Rock and Roll beat, and Vintage Fare will showcase its tight vocal harmonies and “amplified acoustic” sound. Both music groups are from Carmichael.

The fun begins at 5:30 p.m. at the La Sierra Community Center at 5325 Engle Road in Carmichael. ■

Lower American River Conservancy Proposed

By Cheryl Romo

A bill sponsored by Sacramento-area state lawmakers could bring millions of dollars in needed funding to improve and enhance the American River Parkway by creating a locally-controlled conservancy.

The 5,000-acre parkway is often referred to as the environmental “crown jewel” of Sacramento County. The 23 miles of riverfront draws some eight million visitors a year and boosts the local economy by an estimated \$364 million annually. Assembly Bill 1716 is sponsored by Assembly members Kevin McCarty, Ken Cooley and Richard Pan, and has been endorsed by the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors.

The legislation would create a Lower American River Conservancy that, supporters say, will be an effective way to secure greater amounts of funding through state park and water bonds. However, funding likely would not be available until 2020 – and one of the first projects would be to develop and implement a natural resource management plan for the American River Parkway.

The American River Natural History Association, parent organization of the Effie Yeaw Nature Center, and other local environmental groups are monitoring the legislation and support the conservancy concept, but want to ensure that transparent policies are in place and local ownership and control are maintained. EYNC Executive Director Paul Tebbel said it is vital that any new conservancy created “follows the rules and regulations currently in place to preserve and protect the parkway and its users.”

At present, the legislation proposes a 15-member governing board made up of state, county and local officials selected by a majority vote of the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors. The governing board would oversee the conservancy with a goal of protecting natural habitat and water flow. The board would work closely with local non-profit stakeholders to identify grant opportunities and other sources of revenue.

“Of particular interest to the Effie Yeaw Nature Center,” Tebbel said, “is that the conservancy will have the ability to help fund the enhancement of interpretive and educational facilities related to the American River Parkway and its natural, cultural and historical resources. These funds could support new exhibits at EYNC or improvements to the nature center itself.”

AB1716 is currently wending its way through the legislative process. Updates on its status and public interest, according to Assemblyman McCarty’s office, may be found at [Facebook.com/LowerAmericanRiver](https://www.facebook.com/LowerAmericanRiver).

Cheryl Romo is a member of ARNHA’s Media/Publications Committee. ■

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Calling All Nature Detectives and Junior Rangers!

Spring Break was a busy week at Effie Yeaw Nature Center, with children ages 5 through 11 participating in day camps on a variety of nature topics. Registration is now open for week-long Summer Camps, which run from June 13 to July 29 for ages 6 through 11, and a four-day Camp 5 for five-year-olds. Check the website at sacnaturecenter.net or pick up a brochure at EYNC, but act fast, because camps fill quickly!

Photos by Kari Bauer



Ask a Naturalist

Q. Is the Nature Center located on a native village site?

A. Brena Seck, EYNC Lead Naturalist: “No, but we are not far from the location of a known village. The Nature Center is situated on land that was formerly a seasonal flood plain, which would not have been ideal for year round living. The village that you see in the front grounds of the Nature Center is a replica, built as a demonstration area for visitors and educational groups.

“About a half a mile away, on the bluff overlooking the Ancil Hoffman Golf Course, there was once an established permanent village that the Valley Nisenan (southern Maidu) people referred to as “Yamankudu,” which is similar in meaning to our English phrase, “Mountain View.” On a clear day, looking east, they had a distant view of the Sierra Nevada. This village site was likely used until the early 1800s, when the arrival of settlers, development and the gold rush changed the area.

“Over time, most evidence of the Yamankudu site likely biodegraded and was not obvious to the untrained eye because most of the structures and items in the village were made from natural materials. In more recent history (early 1970s), this location became the site of the five-acre “Governor’s Mansion” property, which today is a private gated community.”

A 'B & B' Winner

Volunteers from ARNHA, Sacramento Audubon Society, and Carmichael Kiwanis joined forces on the March 19-20 weekend to stage the annual ARNHA Bird and Breakfast fundraiser, raising just over \$7,000 benefiting the Effie Yeaw Nature Center (EYNC).



Photos by Kari Bauer

With gorgeous weather both days, adults and children enjoyed nesting antics by Bushtits, hummingbirds, Red-shouldered Hawks, Cooper's Hawks, House Wrens, White-breasted Nuthatches, and Black Phoebe, all pointed out by Audubon leaders.

After the bird walk on Saturday, visitors sat down to casserole buffet breakfasts prepared by ARNHA Board members and Nature Center volunteers. On Sunday, the Kiwanians served up tasty pancake breakfasts.



Audubon coordinator Cathie LaZier reported, "One group of visitors observed a 'changeover,' where the female bird left the nest (to feed?) and the male settled down on the eggs . . . The nest hole on the big Walnut tree at the beginning of the main trail appeared to be a site of contention between a pair of House Wrens and a pair of White-breasted Nuthatches . . . We were never out of the sound of House Wrens singing!"

A raffle and silent auction contributed to the successful fundraiser. EYNC Volunteer Coordinator Jamie Washington reported "lots" of volunteers assisted in the labor-intensive event, a few of whom included Liz Williamson, Betsy Weiland, Molly Keller, and Jaclyn Teofilo. ■



Banking on Voluntarism

by Peter J. Hayes

Kimberly Rider is an Effie Yeaw Nature Center volunteer who not only serves as greeter, educator, and gift-shop cashier but, thanks to her day-job employer, also plays a role in EYNC's fund-raising efforts.

Last year, she went to work for the City National Bank in Roseville and found that it encourages employees to become volunteers in the community. She's a nature-lover, so when she spotted the Effie Yeaw Nature Center on the bank's list of volunteer opportunities, it caught her eye.

One of her first jobs was to volunteer at last fall's NatureFest that features science and nature education, along with outdoor recreation. Her volunteering has evolved into serving as a volunteer receptionist in the nature center on Sunday afternoons.

EYNC Volunteer Director Jamie Washington says "Kimberly is doing a terrific job. She is a real people person." And her employer's "Dollars for Doers" program directed \$250 to EYNC when Kimberly volunteered 20 hours, which will grow to \$500 when she records 40 volunteer hours for the year.

Kimberly takes her job seriously enough to come to work an hour early to check out the wildlife in the nature area, so she can report to visitors on deer, turkey, woodpeckers and other critters. She says, "I like working with the public and being able to share the center with people who haven't been here before." She also relishes serving as an educator. "I enjoy helping children understand that it's our responsibility -- we all have to do our part to take care of nature." ■

Kimberly Rider, volunteer-fundraiser, greets EYNC visitors.



Photo by Kari Bauer

Fluctuating Flows Cancel River Clean-up

High flows in the American River in March inundated the river's edges and low-lying areas. When the flows receded, they left behind exposed and saturated river banks.

Out of concern for the fragile river terrain, and for the safety of the many volunteers expected, the American River Parkway Foundation (ARPF) decided to cancel the Great American River Clean-up scheduled for April 9, 2016.

The ARPF will reschedule the event as a series of smaller clean-ups in coming months. The annual fall clean-up is scheduled for September 17, 2016. Check the website at arpf.org/clean-ups.php for more information. And in the meantime, take a bag along on your next visit to the Parkway, and bring home some trash! ■



Photo by Melissa Shumate

Floral Pioneer

Lupine is popping up in the unlikeliest places, swatches of blue and purple flowers flourishing on the steep banks of highway cuts, rocky soil and sand dunes, from the coastal strand to the big valley to the mountain tops. It is one hardy harbinger of spring in California.

As a member of the valuable pea family, a lupine's bonnet-like blooms resemble the traditional sweet pea arranged in a circular pattern along the stem in spikes up to 18 inches long.

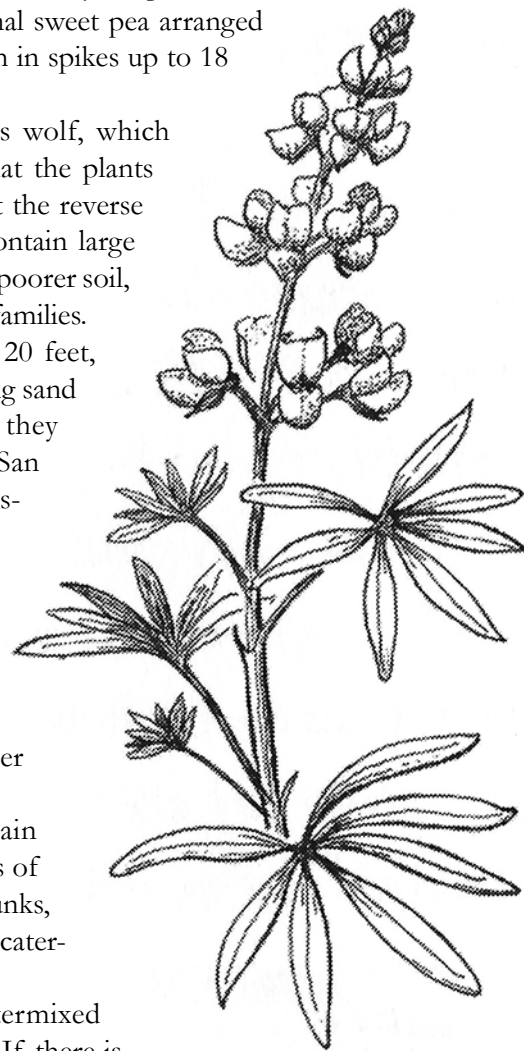
Its Latin name *lupinus* means wolf, which comes from the mistaken idea that the plants robbed the soil of its fertility. But the reverse is true because a lupine's roots contain large amounts of nitrogen that enriches poorer soil, pioneering the way for new plant families.

Lupine roots grow as long as 20 feet, which makes them ideal for keeping sand from blowing away. That's why they planted it in the sand dunes of San Francisco in the 19th century to establish Golden Gate Park.

A lupine's leaves add to its rugged nature. They're shaped like your hand, with anywhere from 3 to 17 leaflet "fingers." This diminished leaf size lets them get along with less water than other plants need.

Some species of lupine contain poisonous alkaloids. But the seeds of others are savored by birds, chipmunks, squirrels and deer, while butterfly caterpillars are nourished by the leaves.

Often the blue lupine are intermixed with golden poppies on a hillside. If there is more beautiful exterior decorating in California, we have yet to see it.



Reprinted 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 Yeam Nature Center, ARNHA.org and selected bookstores. Visit ARNHA.org "Podcasts," to hear readings of the essays by the author.

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ARNHA Calendar of Events

- **Taste of Carmichael**
Friday, May 13, 5:30 pm to 8:30 pm,
La Sierra Community Center
5325 Engle Road, Carmichael (story page 8)
 - **32nd Annual Nature Bowl Regional Finals**
Saturday, May 14, 9 am to 4 pm,
3rd-6th grade student teams
California State University, Sacramento
 - **Nature of Things Series**
Kate Marianchild - Secrets of Oak Woodlands
Saturday, May 4, 10 am to 2:30 pm, EYNC
 - **Art Where Wild Things Are Awards Reception**
Saturday, May 14, 5 pm to 8 pm,
Sacramento Fine Arts Center
5330 B Gibbons Drive, Carmichael
 - **Art Where Wild Things Are Art Gala**
Saturday, May 21, 5 pm to 8 pm
Effie Yeaw Nature Center (story page 1)
- See SacNatureCenter.net for more information.

You're invited to the
**14th Annual
'Taste' Event**

Live Music, Sample
Wines, Beers, Food,
Car Displays, Raffles,
Silent Auction.



Taste of Carmichael

Friday, May 13, 2016 - 5:30-8:30 pm

La Sierra Community Center 5325
Engle Road. Fundraising for
Children, Schools, and Community
Charities.

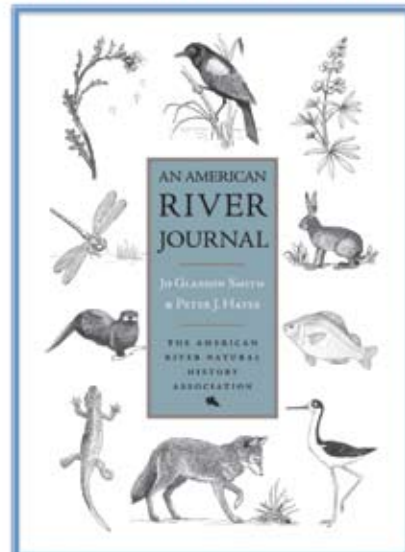
See prior year's www.carmichaelkiwanis.org
[facebook.com/carmichaelkiwanis](https://www.facebook.com/carmichaelkiwanis).

\$40/person Event tickets: Contact Karen
Borman ph. (916)489-4476 bormank@aol.com.

Sponsor Manager: Vera Vaccaroph.
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An American River Journal



Jo Smith and Peter J. Hayes
capture the beauty and peace of a walk
along the American River,
joining drawings and essays
from their observations of nature's rhythms
through the seasons.
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