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## ***THE BLAZING STAR***

January-February 2001

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### **MEMBERS' NIGHT -- GENERAL MEETING Friday, January 19, 2001 Saratoga Library Community Room, 7:30 P.M.**

This is the time to bring your best slides of the last year, including special plants, special places and special times. Anyone with one or more pictures is welcome. We do have to limit everyone to 5 minutes so all can participate, so please plan your slides accordingly. If you're bringing slides please arrive early. If you have a slide tray, bring it loaded. Otherwise, bring your slides sorted in order and we'll provide tray space. There will also be space for displaying prints, drawings and other plant-related material. If you plan to participate in displaying slides or other displays, please "rsvp" to Georgia Stigall ([gstigall@aol.com](mailto:gstigall@aol.com) or 650-941-1068) by January 15, so we can organize the logistics in advance.

[Directions to Saratoga library](#): Exit highway 85 on Saratoga Avenue. Head southwest, toward the hills, and take the first driveway on the left after Fruitvale, into the library parking lot.

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### **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: THE TREASURE OF THE SANTA CLARA VALLEY**

When we began to sense that preservation of Edgewood's rare serpentine ecosystem was within our grasp, some of us CNPSers turned our sites south to the larger and more vulnerable serpentine hillsides of southern Santa Clara County. The ridge to the east of US 101, known as Coyote Ridge, contains the major remaining population of the Bay checkerspot butterfly. It is also home to at least nine other animal species protected by state or federal law and ten plants listed as rare or endangered by CNPS. The area of prime habitat is more than ten times as large as Edgewood, all privately owned, and until recently, without any sizable community-based

advocates of the kind Edgewood always had. It was clear to us that the Coyote Ridge area had to be preserved, and clearly this would be quite a challenge.

We formed a committee of members with a variety of skills, and began assembling data. We hired Stuart Weiss to develop a Geographic Information System database that would overlay our plant data with information on the Bay checkerspot butterfly, and geological and land use information. This will form the basis for a report on the resources of the area.

Our committee realized that it was critical that we begin educating the public about this spectacular area and the need to preserve it immediately. We were buoyed by the 81 percent favorable vote in the City of San Jose to lock in the current Greenline protecting the southern hills from development. This meant there was strong community support for open space preservation in San Jose.

So, we developed a color brochure, *Coyote Ridge, the Treasure of Santa Clara Valley*. We are sending this brochure first to environmentalists and friends in public agencies in decision-making positions asking them to join us in a broad-based effort to obtain preservation of the serpentine habitat. We have developed a slide show that we can present to groups. There will be a forum on Coyote Ridge/Coyote Valley Conservation issues at PCC on March 15 (see announcements in this issue). With staff from the Stanford Center for Conservation Biology, we will be leading additional walks to the Butterfly Trust Area on Coyote Ridge in the Spring. There will be walks for chapter members on April 7 and April 14. Details on how to reserve space will be in the March *Blazing Star*. In addition, we will be conducting plant surveys this spring.

We need help on all of these endeavors, people to work on plant lists, people to lead walks, people to help spread the word. Here's what you can do. Give me a call at 650-856-7579 or email me at [seleve@ix.netcom.com](mailto:seleve@ix.netcom.com); I will send you a copy of the brochure, or send a supply if you know of others that should have copies. Come to the forum, give me your ideas, give me your address, tell me you can work on a plant list, lead a trip, make a slide presentation, organize meetings, do fund raising, take pictures, write deathless prose. **Do it!** [Coyote Ridge](#).

Don Mayall

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## CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

### PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP

The photography group held a well-attended potluck at Ken Himes's Belmont home in December and revisited the Smith River area. They were joined by others on this year's July 4th field trip there, who added their snapshots and tasty concoctions to the event. The group will continue meeting on Mondays at 7:30PM at the Peninsula Conservation Center. Lottie Jenvey will be featured at the January 8th meeting. For information about the February 5th meeting call Sonja Wilcomer at 650-494-0104.

## **GARDENING WITH NATIVES**



We will have our normal first Thursday meeting on January 4th at 7:30 PM. The meeting will be a potluck dinner, held at Stephanie's house. Bring a main course, salad, vegetable, drinks, etc. We will also review our plans for the upcoming year. Questions, Stephanie Mangels, 408-629-8004

Directions: From 85 south, take the Blossom Hill Road exit. Make a left off the freeway onto Blossom Hill Road, going over the overpass. Keep going on Blossom Hill Road Past Snell Avenue, Judith, and Eagles. Take a left at Lean, the signal after Oak Grove High School. Then, take your first right onto Hayes. Go down Hayes several blocks until you see Garrison (it is a circle, so you have two chances to find it). Take a left onto Garrison and our house 5319, at the far end of the circle (the only one without a front lawn).

### **RESTORATION AT FOOTHILL PARK**

The last two broom removal trips in December (and also the last two of the 20th century) were at 'area five' on Los Trancos trail. We entered from Los Trancos Road and this shortening the walk in. This area has broom both above and below the trail but it is not as dense as the plots closer to the main entrance. As a result there are many more natives coming up; bulbs, seedling oaks, red berry and many others to enjoy. If you have a free day come out and enjoy the peace of the woods, the views, the wild life and the plants. You will be helping to restore this beautiful area to its full glory. We would love to have you join us.

- Saturday, January 6: 9 am Page Mill Park and Ride.
- Sunday, January 14: same as last week.
- Saturday, January 20: 9 am Orchard Glen picnic area.
- Saturday, January 27: same as last week
- Sunday, February 4: 9 am Page Mill Park and Ride.
- Saturday, February 10: same as last week.
- Sunday, February 18: 9 am Orchard Glen picnic area.
- Sunday, February 25: same as last week

If you would like further information contact Ellie Gioumousis, 650-494-6276 or [ellieg@ispchannel.com](mailto:ellieg@ispchannel.com) (The e-mail address may change soon, so if it bounces call to get the new address.)

### **THIRD ANNUAL "GREET THE NEW YEAR" WALK & PICNIC AT AÑO NUEVO STATE RESERVE**

Please join us at Año Nuevo State Reserve on January 1, 2001. We will meet in the parking lot at 10:45am. Look for the CNPS sign on a car roof. This will be an easy walk from the parking lot to the pond, and on down to Cove Beach for our picnic. This will be a casual trip - the depth of botanical discussion will depend on who attends! We can also expect to see many raptors and other birds. Please RSVP to Georgia Stigall at [gstigall@aol.com](mailto:gstigall@aol.com) or phone 650.941.1068, just so we have an idea of who/how many to expect. If you want to arrive later, meet us at Cove Beach. Bring your lunch, layers, sun protection, rain gear, field guides, binoculars, etc. There is a \$5 entrance fee to the Reserve. This has become a very fun tradition for our chapter...please join us! (Please note, we will cancel for heavy rain.)

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## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **NOT TOO LATE TO MAKE YOUR DONATION FOR EDGEWOOD INTERPRETIVE CENTER**

If you have not made a donation for the Edgewood Interpretive Center project, please consider making one now. Make out your check to San Mateo County Parks and Recreation Foundation, mark it "CNPS Match" and send it to the Foundation at 215 Bay Road, Menlo Park, CA 94025. Get it there by January 31. The chapter is matching member donations to a maximum of \$1,250. For info call Don at 650-856-7579. [Friends of Edgewood Natural Preserve](#).

### **VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY: RUN A NATIVE PLANT NURSERY AND HELP PROTECT CALIFORNIA'S NATIVE FLORA, FAUNA, AND BEAUTY**

The San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge Complex Headquarters in Fremont, California needs one to three individuals to comprise a Volunteer Management Team (VMT). This group will run our Native Plant Nursery in conjunction with staff from the Refuge Management Team (RMT).

Duties: Manage all aspects of the Native Plant Nursery, schedule volunteers, grow plants important to the San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge and the Bay Area, develop an annual operating plan with the assistance of RMT, and manage and troubleshoot other issues as they occur.

Benefits: Enjoy the satisfaction of working on a National Wildlife Refuge where you will be surrounded by native plants, butterflies, birds, reptiles and mammals, as well as working with people who share your passion for restoring the land to its natural state. Gain experience or offer your time on a worthy project. Sell excess plants to the public so that they will incorporate native plants into their daily lives and help proliferate native species.

Qualifications: Must have extensive native plant, nursery, or horticultural skills, or lots of free time and a strong desire to study and learn. Must make a one-year commitment, with the option to renew at the end of your term. Please call James Aliberti at 510-792-0222 ext. 41, or email [james\\_aliberti@fws.gov](mailto:james_aliberti@fws.gov)

### **THE WAYNE RODERICK LECTURE SERIES**

Saturday Mornings 10:30 to noon. Visitor Center for the Botanical Gardens at Tilden Park. Free to the Public (These lectures usually fill to capacity, so come early)

#### **January**

- 6: The Botany of Pt. Reyes National Seashore (Steve Edwards)
- 13: History of the East Bay Regional Park District (Jerry Kent)
- 20: The Ruby Mountains of Northeastern Nevada (Stewart Winchester)
- 27: A Year on the Oat Hill Mine Trail of Napa County (Dick O'Donnell)

#### **February**

- 3: Robert Sibley Volcanic Regional Preserve (plus plants), and Introduction to the Bedrock Geology of the East Bay (Steve Edwards)
- 10: Adventures in the Ecological Restoration of Walnut Creek (Dann McCright)
- 17: A Paleobotanical Study of Catalina Ironwood and Its Changing Environments (Diane Erwin)
- 24: East Bay Natural History at First European Contact (Steve Edwards)

### **2000 IN 2000 AT EDGEWOOD PRESERVE**

On December 8, 2000 the intrepid habitat restoration volunteers at Edgewood Preserve, under the untiring leadership of Ken Himes, surpassed 2000 volunteer hours for the year. This number represents ONLY the time spent physically removing non native plants - it does not include walking to and from the work sites, scoping for target species, preparing documentation, organizing volunteers, monitoring work sites or staff time worked by Edgewood rangers. If you would like to join us on Fridays year-round (plus Saturdays by special arrangement or in the Summer months) contact Ken Himes at 650-591-8560 or John Allen at JCAKWA@aol.com. No botanical expertise is necessary as training is provided. Obviously we're having a great time out there, because we keep going back for more! Watch for more complete details in Edgewood restoration in future issues of the *Blazing Star*.

### **WANTED: PLANT SALES CHAIR**

We are seeking a Plant Sales Chair. Jean Struthers will continue to grow the plants at our nursery (along with Ray Deutsch and others) but after doing a wonderful job of coordinating MANY plants sales, Jean is ready to hand this off to someone else. Many people volunteer to help with the plant sale. It's important work and we have a lot of fun too! We need a chair to coordinate the volunteers, tasks and other details. If you are interested, please contact Jean Struthers at 650-941-2586 or JeanStruthers@aol.com; or Georgia Stigall at 650-941-1068 or gstigall@aol.com. Even if you are not interested in chairing the committee, please join us for the plant sale-planning meeting listed in this issue of the *Blazing Star*.



*Sequoia sempervirens* (coast redwood)

## **ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM ON COYOTE RIDGE AND COYOTE VALLEY**

March 15th, 2001, 7pm, Peninsula Conservation Center, 3921 E. Bayshore, Palo Alto, CA

Intensive industrial development is being proposed for the agriculture lands south of the urbanized part of San Jose, the valley surrounded by the hills that support a rare and diverse serpentine ecosystem. What are the implications of development on this ecosystem? Come to this forum and find out. The forum is being co-sponsored by the Santa Clara Valley Chapter of CNPS and Bay Area Action + Peninsula Conservation. Watch the March *Blazing Star* for more details. If you want to help out, call Don Mayall at 650-856-7579.

### **YELLOW STARThistle AT EDGEWOOD: PART I**

Have you visited Edgewood County Park and Preserve lately? It is not only a good time to see the bright red berries of California holly (*Toyon*), and the emerging growth of herbaceous plants long dormant, but you can also view the sites that were mowed last summer to control yellow star-thistle seed production. These bright green sites are a definite contrast with the adjacent unmowed areas with their dense masses of yellow star-thistle skeletons. Our monitoring of these sites shows a definite reduction in yellow star densities. Monitoring results from spring 2000 will be discussed in a future *Blazing Star*.

Although it is not known how long yellow star has been present at Edgewood, the area most impacted is the non-serpentine grassland that surrounds the Central Ridge. The service road/serpentine loop trail traverses these grasslands and the monocultures of yellow star are easily seen. It was the lower slopes of the Central Ridge that were heavily abused by off-road vehicles in the late 60's and 70's before San Mateo County acquired Edgewood. Heavy rains in the 90's appeared to enhance the rapid expansion of yellow star across the scarred landscape.

A group of volunteers, under the direction of Elly Hess, began hand removal of yellow star in the early 90's. This work contained the spread in some areas. The main footholds of yellow star-thistle continued to expand.

In 1999 a committee of Friends of Edgewood and CNPS approached San Mateo County Park staff to set up trial mow sites as a method for reducing yellow star seed production. Park staff did the mowing with advice from the committee. Two sites were selected; one at the southwest base

of the Central Ridge that now covers almost 4 acres (Mow Site I) and the other in the northeast portion of Edgewood along the service road before it descends to the day camp picnic area (Mow Site II). A small fire contained at Mow Site II consumed most yellow star it reached and formed the basis of a monitoring effort to compare mowing with burning as control methods.

In 2000, CNPS and Friends of Edgewood formalized a partnership with San Mateo county to design and execute a weed management plan for Edgewood. There is much to accomplish and we welcome volunteers.

Ken Himes

### **SUBMIT YOUR PROGRAM IDEAS**

In my new role as chapter vice president, I'm responsible for organizing speakers and presentations for our meetings. Since this is everyone's chapter, I want everyone's ideas and suggestions! Let me know who you recommend for speakers and what types of presentations and activities you'd like to see at our general meetings. All ideas are welcome. Please contact me at [gstigall@aol.com](mailto:gstigall@aol.com) or write to Georgia Stigall, 17287 Skyline Blvd #102, Woodside CA 94062-3780; or phone 650-941-1068.

### **PLANT SALE PLANNING MEETING**

We'll be meeting in January (date to be determined) to start planning for our April plant sale. Please join us with your ideas and suggestions for making our sale as dynamic, successful and fun as possible. The goals of this meeting will include identifying the various tasks to be done, begin soliciting volunteers and talk about plant-related suggestions and other ideas. Everything we can organize in advance will make the logistics of our sale go more smoothly. Contact Jean Struthers at 650-941-2586 or [JeanStruthers@aol.com](mailto:JeanStruthers@aol.com).

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## **FIELD TRIPS**

All trips are open to the public but sign-ups are sometimes necessary where we have space or parking limitations. Bring lunch, water, warm clothing and walking shoes. Heavy rain cancels. Call field trip leader for questions.

**JANUARY 20, ST. JOSEPH'S HILL**— Ken Himes will lead a discovery trip through this mid-peninsula preserve. We will see coast silk tassel (*Garrya elliptica*), and big berry manzanita (*Arctostaphylos glauca*) in flower, and possibly chaparral currant and hillside gooseberry. Directions and details, Ken Himes, 650-591-8560.

**JANUARY 21, 9:30, AM THE ANNUAL DIRCA WALK**— This year the *Dirca* walk will look at two stands; one damaged in the Blue Oaks development in a fire management area and the second stand in an open space nearby that was cut several years ago by a trail management group that had trouble identifying the plants. It is a chance to see how rare plants can be treated when we are not watching. From the Blue Oaks site we will hike up Hams Gulch. The area also has a lot of plants off trail that should be in flower. We will meet in the Ladara Shopping Center

behind the Shell Gas Station on Alpine Road just west of I280. Call Paul Heiple 650-854-7125 for more information.

**MARCH 10, 10 AM, SAN BRUNO MOUNTAIN COUNTY PARK**– Ken Himes and Mary Simpson lead this early spring trip through one of the last intact remnants of the Franciscan flora on the peninsula. The endemic San Bruno Mountain manzanita, coast rock cress, Franciscan wall flower, and footsteps of spring will be in flower. Take 101 N, exit Brisbane. Proceed on Old Bayshore and pass Brisbane. Turn left onto Guadalupe Parkway to park entrance and meet in the parking lot just beyond the park entrance station. Details call Ken Himes.

**MARCH 11, 10 AM, COAL MINE RIDGE**– Early spring flowers, nice views, 4 mile hike. Meet at Alpine rd. and Willowbrook dr., Portola Valley. From 280 take Alpine rd. west about 4 miles. Park on Willowbrook. For more information: Tom Cochrane [trailtraveller@webtv.net](mailto:trailtraveller@webtv.net) or call 650-969-3181.

**MARCH 19 - 24 ANZA-BORREGO DESERT TRIP**– I have reserved the Palm Canyon Group Camp Site for the five nights of March 19-24. The site is limited to the first twenty-five callers. At press time the details of the trip are not finalized, just the dates. To reserve your place call Paul Heiple 650-85407125.

**MARCH 24, RARE PLANTS OF THE SERPENTINE GRASSLANDS**– Toni Corelli – RVSP with Ken Himes at 650-591-8560. Limit 20 people. We will take a waiting list.

**MARCH 25, MT. TAMALPAIS** – The focus of this trip will be to see *Calypso bulbosa*, the fairy slipper orchid. We are near the southern limit of this orchid and Mt. Tamalpais is the closest place I know of with large populations of these plants. Several color varieties grow on the mountain, we should see some of them. We will also visit a very interesting serpentine area on the mountain. Sargent Cypress (*Cupressus sargentii*), musk bush (*Ceanothus jepsonii*) and Tamalpais manzanita (*Arctostaphylos hookeri* ssp. *montana*) will be some of the species to look for along with many old favorites found on the mountain. Details, call Paul Heiple

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### **SANTA CRUZ CYPRESS FIELD TRIP REPORT**

On November 12, five native planters took a trip to Portola State Park to find a hidden grove of the rare Santa Cruz cypress. This species is only known in four locations in the Santa Cruz mountains. We visited the site off Butano ridge about 500 feet down the west side of the ridge. From the park headquarters, we had to hike up 1600 feet to the top of the ridge. Along the way, notable plants were – redwood inside-out flower (*Vancouveria planipetala*), redwood violet, yerba deselva (*Whipplea modesta*), *Clintonia*, California harebell, California vanilla grass (*Hierochloa occidentalis*), and wax myrtle. At the ridgetop we noted warty leaf ceanothus, chapparral pea, brittle leaf, Santa Cruz mountains manzanita (*Arctostaphylos andersonii* – a rare 1b species), and knobcone pine.

When we found the cypress grove it was in a setting of cemented sandstone slab with loose sand deposits. Some trees were about 40 meters tall. Thomas' book says they are seldom over 10



meters. Near the cypress were California lace fern (*Aspidotis californica*), broom rose (*Helianthemum scoparium*) and Santa Cruz mountains flannelbush (*Fremontodendron californicum*). Ken Himes took some pictures of the "historic" event and Paul Heiple started a plant list to be added to this spring when the annuals are out. It was a heavy duty hike to reach the grove, but it was worth it!

**P.S. The Santa Cruz chapter is putting together a book about the flora of Santa Cruz County.** They will need some financial help to complete it. Donations can be sent to Suzanne Schettler, P.O. Box 277, Ben Lomond, CA 95005. They should be made out to CNPS. Note that its for the Flora Project. They can be contacted at [www.cruzcnp.org](http://www.cruzcnp.org) or email me at [trailtraveller@webtv.net](mailto:trailtraveller@webtv.net) for information.

Tom Cochrane



*Pinus monticola* (Western white pine)

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Information on activities: Mary Simpson [marysimpson@earthlink.net](mailto:marysimpson@earthlink.net), Phone 408-370-2177

Deadline for the next Blazing Star Saturday, February 15, 2001.  
Cynthia Gilbert, Newsletter Editor 650-364-9295 or [cgilbert@jps.net](mailto:cgilbert@jps.net)

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