



MAGPIE CALLS

Newsletter of the Santa Ynez Valley Natural History Society
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*Dedicated to the study, exploration, and appreciation of natural history
in the Santa Ynez Valley region.*

Dear Members and Friends of SYVNHS...

by Dennis Beebe, SYVNHS Board President

Greetings Members and Friends of the SYV Natural History Society, your board has again put together an exciting lineup of lectures and field trips for the Fall/Winter 2017 Program. Just take a look herein. I am also announcing two changes for the field trips this year and next year.

The first change enacted is a new registration procedure that some of you have already noticed. From now on you must register for each individual field trip separately, normally 30 days prior to each trip. For example, registration for our first field trip this season, a birding trip to sites in Lompoc on 30 September, became available on 30 August. The registration date for each subsequent field trip is included in the field trip description.

The second change is in the field trip process, to be instituted on our first trip in the Spring 2018 Program, not yet scheduled. At that time we will begin charging a fee of \$10.00 per member per trip. Other participants will be charged also: \$25.00 for non-members and \$5.00 for each non-member child. Believe me this was an agonizing decision, which this board and previous boards have been discussing for years. The additional funds generated by this policy will enable us to continue to offer a wide variety of outstanding and unique trips with both local and visiting experts, as well as to help

Upcoming SYVNHS Lectures and Field Trips

- Sep. 20 When Mountain Lions are Neighbors (lecture)
- Sep. 30 Birding Miguelito Canyon and Ocean Beach (field)
- Oct. 12 Hiking in the San Rafael Wilderness (lecture)
- Oct. 26 Cultural Markings in Blue Stone (lecture)
- Nov. 12 Fall Colors in Fir Canyon (field)
- Dec. 7 Monarch Butterflies – Facts and Fate (lecture)
- Dec. 17 Introducing the Trees of UCSB (field)
- Jan. 6 Pismo Monarch Butterfly Grove (field)

cover administrative costs. The board also wants to expand its outreach to the youth of the Santa Ynez Valley. The extra income from field trip participants will help us to start to address this goal.

Once again I thank our board members and other volunteers for their hard work in implementing our successful Spring 2017 Program and developing an equally interesting follow-on for the Fall/Winter 2017 Program. Thanks go to volunteer Terrie Patterson for taking our new outreach program to the high schools and Marc Kummel for putting *Magpie Calls* together again.

Upcoming Lectures and Field Trips

When Mountain Lions Are Neighbors

Free lecture and book signing with Beth Pratt-Bergstrom

Co-Sponsored by Solvang Library

Wednesday, Sept. 20, 7:00 p.m.

Legion Wing, Veterans Memorial Hall

1745 Mission Drive, Solvang

In a rapidly urbanizing state with nearly 40 million residents, how do we create wildlife friendly spaces and practices in our neighborhoods, rural lands, and along the wildland boundaries? This lecture will explore the many ways that Californians are learning to co-exist with—and often to

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Mountain Lion cubs in the Santa Monica Mountains, photo by National Park Service

protect—the wild animals that are all around us. Whether it is the mountain lions roaming Los Angeles, the kit foxes in Bakersfield, or the black bears in Yosemite Valley, each place presents its own challenges as humans interact with wild creatures. The good news for wildlife and animal lovers is that years of research, citizen activism, and evolving management practices are producing results that help preserve wildlife and their native habitat.

Beth Pratt-Bergstrom has spent more than 25 years in environmental leadership, and has worked in both Yellowstone and Yosemite National Parks. She is the California Executive Director for the National Wildlife Federation and is currently leading the #SaveLACougars campaign to raise money for a wildlife crossing that will span the 101 freeway in the Santa Monica Mountains. Her new book, "When Mountain Lions Are



Beth Pratt-Bergstrom at Año Nuevo State Park, photo by National Park Service

Neighbors: People and Wildlife Working it Out in California has been praised as a publication in which "Natural history, science, politics, and the storyteller's art interweave."

Birding Miguelito Canyon and Ocean Beach

Field Trip with Rebecca Coulter

Saturday, September 30, 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Participation is limited to 15

Advance registration begins August 30 at synature@west.net or 805-693-5683

Members free/ non-members \$20

Join us for a morning of birding at Miguelito Park and Ocean Beach Park in Lompoc. Fall migration is underway! Southbound migrants are passing through en route to their tropical wintering grounds, while wintering birds, such as White-crowned Sparrow, Townsend's Warbler, and others, are just arriving to spend the winter here in our region. This seasonal changing of the guard also brings the possibility of wanderers that pop up unexpectedly to surprise and delight birders with a glimpse of something out of the ordinary. Miguelito Park's variety of trees, shrubs, and open space along San Miguelito Creek can hold many riches. After we've explored the park, we will make the trip out to the Santa Ynez River mouth at Ocean Beach Park, where we'll look for shorebirds, gulls, waterfowl, and raptors, then stay for a picnic lunch before heading home.

Terrain is mostly flat and even, possibly with some walking on sand. There are good facilities at both locations. Bring lunch, dress in layers, and be prepared for the usual windy conditions at Ocean Beach. Scopes are appreciated at the beach, and binoculars are essential in both places.



Photo courtesy of Rebecca Coulter

Rebecca Coulter has been birding in the Santa Barbara region for 20 years. She leads field trips and birding classes for the Museum of Natural History and the SBCC Center for Lifelong Learning. She is head compiler for the annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count in Santa Barbara, and enjoys sharing Santa Barbara's rich bird diversity and wide range of habitats with new birders. She is particularly interested in teaching how bird sounds can help build identification skills and enjoyment in the field.



Photo by Liz Muraoka

Backpacking and Hiking in the San Rafael Wilderness**Free lecture with James Wapotich**

Co-sponsored by the Los Olivos Library

Thursday, October 12, 7:30 p.m.

Santa Ynez Valley Grange

2374 Alamo Pintado Avenue, Los Olivos

Join local author James Wapotich as he shares images and stories from his treks through our local backcountry. Ever changing, the Santa Barbara backcountry is a place of surprising diversity and rich beauty. It is also among the most remote wilderness areas in California. Within these natural lands, you'll find waterfalls, quiet potrereros, old homesteads, and miles of trails to explore. This talk will highlight some of the best trails and camps in and around the San Rafael Wilderness that can be used to craft backpacking trips and day hikes. James will also be available to answer questions on safety, equipment, and backpacking basics.

James Wapotich has hiked many of the trails in the southern Los Padres National Forest. He is a Volunteer Wilderness Ranger with the Forest Service, and is the author of the Santa Barbara News-Press hiking column, *Trail Quest*.



Photos by James Wapotich



Cultural Markings in Blue Stone: A Story of the San Rafaels Free lecture with Sam Spaulding

Co-sponsored by the Los Olivos Library
Thursday, October 26, 7:30 p.m.
Santa Ynez Valley Grange
2374 Alamo Pintado Avenue, Los Olivos

Pictographs are paintings on stone using natural materials, while petroglyphs are carvings or markings in stone. Chumash pictographs in Santa Barbara County are well documented, and the best known, *Painted Cave*, is a state historic park. Vastly less is known about petroglyphs in the Santa Barbara region, and most of the documented sites are markings in sandstone. Very few serpentinite stones with incised markings in our local area have been described or documented until recently. Now, after twenty years of research, Sam Spaulding is aware of at least 65 unique petroglyph sites scattered across the backcountry. Markings include cupules, grooves, geometric designs, as well as zoomorphic and anthropomorphic symbols. Further, these appear to be restricted to serpentinite, which is distributed in California no further south than the Santa Barbara region. Interpretation of these cultural markings remains challenging and even mysterious. In this evening presentation, Sam Spaulding will discuss his research and discoveries.



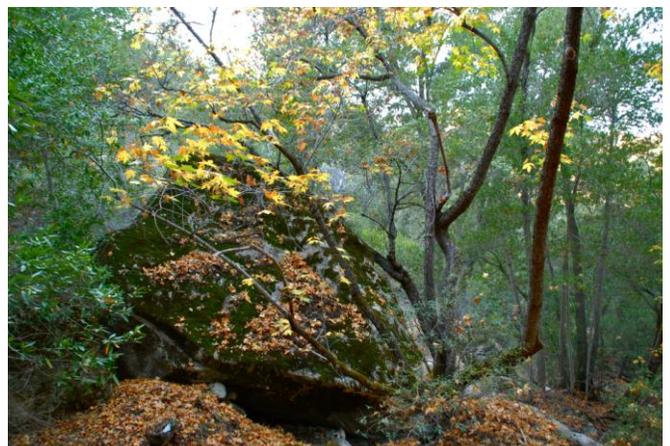
Cultural markings in serpentinite, photo by Sam Spaulding

Sam Spaulding is a Santa Ynez Valley Natural History Society board member, a docent at UC Sedgwick Reserve, and has had a life-long relationship with the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History. He studied at UCSB and received his degree in cultural anthropology, then taught physical education and classes in natural history and science at Laguna Blanca School. Sam worked for Channel Islands National Park Service doing considerable fieldwork in archaeology, resource management, and wildlife biology. He was also Island Caretaker for the Vail family on Santa Rosa Island.

Fall Colors in Fir Canyon Field Trip with Liz Gaspar

Sunday, November 12, 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
Participation is limited to 20
Advance registration begins October 12 at
synature@west.net or 805/ 693-5683
Members free/ non-members \$20

Walking down Fir Canyon on the Davy Brown trail is like finding a secret passage in the mountains. The canyon is narrow at the top where the hike starts, and the stacked shale walls help to make it shady and quiet. Shy Brown Creepers live in this coniferous evergreen area year-round, attracted by the stands of misnamed Big-cone Spruce, which, confoundedly, gives the canyon its name. Giant Canyon Oaks grow in the canyon as well. The trail makes its way down slope and into exposed chaparral before settling into riparian woodland, where broadleaved deciduous trees—Big-leaf Maple, California Sycamore, White Alder—grow creekside and may be changing color and dropping leaves by this time. Along the way we'll look for Lady Bird Beetles gathering to overwinter and signs of the 1993 Marre fire.



Fall color in Fir Canyon, photo by John Evarts

After a couple miles walking down canyon, we'll head back up to the trailhead. Hikers have the option to continue with the group to drive down Sunset Valley Road to Davy Brown Camp, the other end of the trail. Here, we'll tour a lower elevation suite of evergreen and deciduous trees and shrubs, including Valley Oak, Blue Oak, Scrub Oak, California Juniper, and Black Walnut.

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Walking poles are recommended for this hike, as the elevation change is moderate and sometimes strenuous. Dress in layers, and bring a hat, lunch, and water.

Liz Gaspar has led natural history field trips for the Santa Ynez Valley Natural History Society and other organizations. She was the park naturalist at Cachuma Lake for twenty years, and while there, co-authored "Wildflowers and Other Plants of the Cachuma Lake Area, Santa Barbara County," published by County Parks in fall 2015. She earned her master's degree in plant ecology from UCSB, where she studied native grasses.



Fall color in Fir Canyon, photo by John Evarts

Monarch Butterflies – Facts and Fate

Free lecture with Marion Schlinger

Co-sponsored by the Los Olivos Library
Thursday, December 7, 7:30 p.m.
Santa Ynez Valley Grange
2374 Alamo Pintado Avenue, Los Olivos

Marion Schlinger, a local entomologist and a board member of the Santa Ynez Valley Natural History Society, will present an informative talk on one of the most familiar and regal butterflies in our midst, the monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*). Everyone, from young children to adults, recognizes these impressive orange and black butterflies from their backyard, books, classroom science projects, various news stories, or having visited one of our local monarch overwintering sites along the Pacific Coast. In this presentation Marion will delve into the intricacies of the monarch life cycle and the importance of their host food plant, various species of milkweed. Factors affecting their Eastern and Western migration patterns will also be examined, especially as they pertain to our local areas. Monarchs today are at risk from habitat loss and agricultural impacts. These issues involving the fates (both natural and manmade) of the monarchs will be addressed along with conservation efforts that are or can be implemented. Following the talk there will be a screening of the fabulous PBS NOVA video "The Incredible Journey of the Butterflies," which showcases the monarch butterflies' 2000-mile migration in the eastern United States. Through amazing photography, the film illustrates the monarch migration, highlighting the fascinating and treacherous journey these butterflies make. Despite the interest and years of studies, it is still a mystery to scientists how



Mating Monarch Butterflies, photo by Marion Schlinger

monarchs navigate this amazing journey each fall with clockwork precision. Marion will also lead a field trip to the Pismo State Beach Monarch Grove in January, see next page.

Marion Schlinger's interest in entomology began when she received her first butterfly net on her eighth birthday and collected and pinned butterflies from her backyard in Connecticut. She began raising caterpillars such as the monarchs and giant swallowtails through high school. Marion continued her interest in entomology at the University of San Francisco, followed by graduate work at UC Berkeley for her master's degree and candidate in philosophy degree, studying *Dolichopodidae* (long legged flies). Her love of butterflies, especially monarchs, continued, and she led several field trips to Natural Bridges State Park in Santa Cruz for overwintering monarch viewing, and has long been interested in monarch butterfly migration and their overwintering sites here in California.

Introducing the Trees of UCSB: Six Continents in Three Hours Field Trip with Larry Ballard

Sunday, December 17, 9:00 a.m. to noon

Participation is limited to 25

Advance registration begins November 17 at

synature@west.net or 805-693-5683

Members free/ non-members \$20

Campus parking: \$4

UCSB has more than 250 tree species from six continents growing on campus. This walking tour will take a look at the architecture of trees, discuss identification tips, and serve as an introduction to the urban trees of the Santa Barbara area. We'll see Weeping Pine, Queensland Kauri, Chilean Wine Palm, Abyssinian Coral Tree, and Manna Gum among others. Many of the trees were planted while Dr. Vernon Cheadle was Chancellor of UCSB (1962-1977). The Cheadle Center for Biodiversity and Ecological Restoration is a continuation of his botanical legacy.

Larry Ballard has an interest in all aspects of the region's natural history, and has led many natural history trips for our organization as well as for other groups and institutions in Santa Barbara County.



Ribbon Gum tree, photo by Owen Duncan

Visit to the Pismo Monarch Butterfly Grove Field Trip with Marion Schlinger

Saturday, January 6, 2018, 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Participation is limited to 25

Advance registration begins December 6 at

synature@west.net or 805-693-5683

Members free/ non-members \$20

Join entomologist Marion Schlinger to visit the Pismo Monarch Butterfly Grove to see the thousands of overwintering monarch butterflies that roost in the branches of stately eucalyptus trees at Pismo State Beach. The field trip follows her previous lecture presentation in December. This monarch site has averaged 25,000 butterflies over the past few years and is considered to be the largest overwintering colony on the California coast. Marion will address their behavior, general biology, requirements of an overwinter site, and natural and man-made threats affecting the monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*). The field trip is timed at the peak of the assemblage of monarchs, which start gathering here in October and start dispersing in February.



Monarchs in the Pismo Beach grove, photo courtesy of
Pismo Beach Conference & Visitors Bureau

The area has easy walking access and the trip will go rain or shine, unless there is a bad storm. Dress in layers and rain gear, weather depending, and bring binoculars, snacks or a lunch, and water.

Past SYVNHS Programs:



(Clockwise from top) Society members raise a toast to the legacy of Tom Dibblee (with Ghost Pine Wine, made from grapes sourced from Franciscan melange soils) on a hike to the summit of his eponymous "mountain" at the Sedgwick Reserve. Long-time SYVNHS member Margaret Mansfield (in the front) was among hikers on the March 4th trip; she was a friend of the late geologist Tom Dibblee. Some of the participants in the Carrizo Plains field trip, photo by Terry Atterbury. BLM Botanist and trip leader Denis Kearns (in cowboy hat) pointed out the cryptobiotic soils in the southern end of the Carrizo Plains. All other photos by John Evarts.



Marc's Stumper

We're having Hurricane weather! As I write this, Hurricane Harvey has flooded Houston, Hurricane Irma has stormed across Florida, and even Santa Barbara has experienced showers and an unusual *microburst* from the remnant of once-Hurricane Lidia down in the Gulf of California. It's a timely reminder that there are *Eastern Pacific Hurricanes* that form off the west coast of Mexico. Could we have a full-on hurricane here in central California, and what does this tell us about the Earth? Ocean water temperature is not the whole story!

About last issue's stumper: Look out to sea from the crest of the east-west Santa Ynez Mountains... The next landmass is Antarctica, not Hawaii! The Brooks Range in Alaska, the Uintas in Utah, and the Ouachita Mountains in Arkansas also run east-west, but there are few others in North America. One effect of this unusual orientation is that one side of our mountains always points towards the sun, while the other points away. The cool north slopes shelter surprising native critters like wild huckleberries and banana slugs that really belong much further north.

Here is a photo of hurricane weather from a few years ago in July 2015 – it shows Hurricane Dolores (downgraded to a tropical storm) streaming over our mountains. This is looking towards Mission Pine Mountain at the layers of clouds that remind me of the banded atmosphere of Jupiter. We had some sprinkles that day – like virga that made it to the ground. Could we get a real Hurricane in California?



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