

The Dripping Faucet

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**OAK GROVE NATURE CENTER AND
DOCENT COUNCIL
SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY PARKS AND
RECREATION**

“BUGFEST 2009” A SUCCESS!

On April 25, 2009, months of planning and hard work came together in our first annual “BugFest”. The smiles on the faces of over 300 visitors told the story. BugFest was a success. From the time adults and youngsters arrived at the Nature Center until they left hours later, they were delighted with activities galore.

Dr. Kathy Schick acted as our event chairperson and did a marvelous job. She and Nancy Shephard sewed the insect nets together that were used for our ‘Bug Safaris’, a very big hit with the kids. The children then took their specimens inside the Nature Center to the ‘Bug Doctor’, Phil Keathley, who assisted them in identifying the critters.

Other activities that took place in front of the Nature Center included ‘Bug Crafts’, ‘Bug Races’ and ‘Bug Games’. And the Audubon Society Was there selling T-shirts.

Within the Center there was plenty of activity. The Bohart Museum of Entomology at UC Davis brought quite a collection of living and mounted specimens. Several of the live specimens were available to

touch and hold. This was a very popular spot. The Great Valley Serpentarium also provided some live and mounted specimens for viewing.



A Madagascar Hissing Cockroach that visited us from the Bohart Museum of Entomology at UC Davis.

The Delta Fly Fishers provided us with examples of ‘flies’ that mimicked real insects and gave demonstrations on fly tying.

We had a display of carnivorous plants using photos and live plants, put together by David Marraccini and Bob Stahmer. Carnivorous plants are usually found in places with nitrogen-poor soils and have developed ways to ‘eat’ insects and other creatures as a way to get nitrogen.

In the class room we had insect videos playing all day. These were hosted by David Attenborough and our

Dr. Kathy Schick had assisted in the production.

For the smaller visitors we made up tubs with soil and added an assortment of arthropods for them to look for.

From the window, visitors could see youngsters scurrying about in the Native Plant Garden. Maya Reyes and Tory Petersen uncapped containers releasing lady beetles that immediately flew onto their hair and clothing. A few tiny micro-nibbles resulted before the lady beetles took off in search of aphids. (Well, lady beetles are carnivorous!)

At the vernal pool youngsters fished for small photographs of invertebrates and exchanged them for bug shaped prizes.



Face painting, very popular!

Mary Fuhs spent the day at her display of “water bugs” by the creek. (continued pg.2)

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

"Deep summer is when laziness finds respectability."

~ Sam Keen

Summer's here - but there's no laziness around the Nature Center! The park is bustling with family parties and picnics, children fishing and exploring, and people just enjoying being outdoors. And with the extra daylight, it's a perfect time of year to offer more evening programs at the Nature Center.

Our "Nature Nights" programs will now be held on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays of each month

for June-August. (We will switch back to the 3rd Friday of the month starting in September.) And during these summer months, we'll be offering programs that the whole family can enjoy, such as a Kids' Crafts Night or Jay Bell's talk titled, "A Bird Can Fly and So Can I, Except...". Bring your friends and family, your visiting grandchildren, your own kids or even your neighbors' kids, and spend a fun evening at the Nature Center.

We're also excited to announce that the Star Parties hosted by the Stockton Astronomical Society (SAS) will continue

throughout the summer.

"Astronomy in the Park" will offer astronomy themed activities/crafts in the Nature Center followed by stargazing out in the park. Join us as we learn fascinating facts about our solar system, our galaxy, and the stars, pose your questions to the SAS astronomers, and discover the wonders of the night sky.

Make sure to check the "Dates to Remember" section of this newsletter for the dates, times, and details of these



Jay Bell will be presenting "A Bird Can Fly and So Can I, Except..." August 6th.

events since they may vary. For future event information, visit the Nature Center's homepage on www.mgzoo.com.

Enjoy your summer!



Maya Reyes fishing for invertebrates in the vernal pool.



Maya and Tory preparing to release Lady beetles.

"BUGFEST 2009" CONTINUED

Field microscopes showing dragonfly nymphs and exoskeletons were among the favorites. The youngsters were also delighted to provide Mary with lady beetles, ants and spiders they vacuumed up from the creek banks in a collecting "Bugzooka."

In the oak woodland at the Native American pounding rock Conni and Jim Bock helped youngsters find bugs and bug 'remains' in Valley Oak acorns.

One of the most popular activities was near the Native American tule hut where Rene Reyes painted elegant insects and scary spiders on over 300 happy faces.

For the gastronomically adventurous we provided gourmet bugs; chocolate dipped

crickets and mealworms and an assortment of seasoned crickets were offered during the day on a silver platter. Brave bug tasters were rewarded with an "I ate a bug" sticker.

Many thanks to all who volunteered to make our first 'BugFest' a fantastic success! Our gratitude to the Boy Scouts, Troop 148 and Venture Crew 148, Delta College Professor David Dodson's Natural Resources students, our Nature Center volunteers and friends: Linda Bazett, Conni and Jim Bock, Tim Camuti, Alan England, Kasey Foley, Mary Fuhs, Dr. Phil Keathley, Marie Mielbrecht, Cindy Milford, Tory Petersen, Carol Rexroth, Maya and Rene Reyes, John Schick, Susan Schneider and Nancy

Shephard. If we missed anyone our apologies and thanks.

A special thanks to Dr. Kathy Schick for donating her time and expertise to spearhead the festival.

Judging from the multitude of favorable comments we received, 'BugFest' may become our signature event.

Martha Mallery, David Marracini, James Rexroth



Tory Petersen eating a chocolate covered cricket.

RENEWALS

A big "Thank You" to our recent renewing members: Beverly Fitch McCarthy, Janet Parris and Pat Powell. Your contributions assist us in providing the events and programs that help reach the children and adults of Stockton, San Joaquin County and the surrounding region with the conservation message.

A special "Thank You" to Alice Hunter for continuing as a sponsor with her generous donation of \$500.00.



One of five Monarch caterpillars a few days before they disappeared.



One of five Pipevine Swallowtail caterpillars given to us.

BUTTERFLY UPDATE

Painted Ladies

For the 'BugFest' we purchased Painted Lady Caterpillars, 30 of them. They ate an artificial diet and grew rapidly. A few had formed chrysalises by the 'BugFest' but were not ready to hatch. Over the next few week more formed chrysalises and some started to hatch. It was exciting to see all those butterflies. We plan to do this again next year.

Monarchs

The milkweed we planted in the Native Plant Garden a couple

of years ago is thriving. Both species, *Asclepias speciosa* (Showy) and *Asclepias fascicularis* (Narrow Leaf) are spreading and make attractive host plants for Monarch butterflies. But where are the butterflies? We saw only two Monarchs. One laid eggs on a couple of plants. Five caterpillars hatched but disappeared several days later. Were they big enough to wander off and form chrysalises? Or did something get them? It's a dangerous world out there.

Pipevine Swallowtails

Of the five Pipevine Swallowtail caterpillars given to us by Emmy Gunterman of Sacramento's native plant society, two left our pipevine plants after a few days and were munched on by ants, another disappeared. We brought the remaining two caterpillars into the Nature Center. Both escaped from their net cage and have formed chrysalises near the windows. We're hopeful for completed metamorphosis, but maybe we need a class ... Butterfly Propagation 101?

Martha Mallery, James Rexroth

"... did something get them? It's a dangerous world out there."



Lucy Parker demonstrating how to start a basket. Below: Julia Parker sorting tules for weaving.

TWINED TULE BASKETRY CLASS

On April 18, 2009 we held our first Native Skills Class, Twined Tule Baskets. Fourteen students gathered their materials and followed the directions of our instructor, Lucy Parker, who was assisted by several of her family members including her daughter Ursula Jones and her mother Dr. Julia Parker.

A few of the students had trou-

ble at the start and had to take apart their basket and begin again.

As students got the hang of manipulating the tule reeds, talk shifted to other events and happenings in the world. It reminded me of how it might have been in a village as the women gathered to weave their baskets and discuss

village life.

As the afternoon waned and baskets were completed, everyone agreed that it had been a wonderful time and that they hoped it would happen again.

That evening several students joined docents and staff at a dinner for the Parkers. A pleasant ending to a wonderful day.

James Rexroth



WE'RE ON THE WEB!
WWW.MGZOO.COM



**OAK GROVE NATURE CENTER
AND DOCENT COUNCIL
SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY PARKS
AND RECREATION**

4520 W. Eight Mile Road
Stockton, CA. 95209

Phone: 209-953-8814

Fax: 209-953-8814

E-mail: jrexroth@sjgov.org

Website: www.mgzoo.com

Committed to preserving the natural environment of the Oak Grove and educating others to the values of continuing such preservation.

D A T E S T O R E M E M B E R

June 18, 6:30 PM; Nature Nights-Kids Crafts Night. Join us for an evening of fun making baskets, gall animals and nature necklaces. Call 953-8814 for more information.

June 20, 8:00 AM; San Joaquin Annual Butterfly Count. Meet at the Oak Grove Nature Center Parking lot. Call Kathy Schick at 464-8304 for more information.

June 21, 8:00 AM; Consumnes Annual Butterfly Count. Contact Kathy Schick at 464-8304 for details.

June 27, 8:00 PM; Astronomy in the Park. Join us as the Stockton Astronomical Society presents a star gazing event. Kids Crafts in the Nature Center at the beginning of the evening. Call 953-8814 for details.

July 2, 7:00 PM; Nature Nights-to be announced. Check the website or call 953-8814 for information.

July 12, 8:30 AM; Monthly Bird Census Join Coordinator James Rexroth for a walk through Oak Grove Park to count the birds. Volunteers get free parking for the census. No experience necessary. Call 953-8814 for details.

July 16, 7:00 PM; Nature Nights-to be announced. Check the website or call 953-8814 for information.

July 25, 8:00 PM; Astronomy in the Park. Join us as the Stockton Astronomical Society presents a star gazing event. Kids Crafts in the Nature Center at the beginning of the evening. Call 953-8814 for details.

August 6, 7:00 PM; Nature Nights-"A Bird Can Fly and So Can I, Except" Join us as Jay Bell of LUSD discusses bird flight and compares bird and human anatomy. Call 953-8814 for details.

August 20, 7:00 PM; Nature Nights-to be announced. Check the website or call 953-8814 for more information.



Dr. Kathy Schick enjoying the "BugFest"