

Edgewood



Explorer

March 2002

Volume 9 Number 1

EDGEWOOD PHOTOS TO BE ON DISPLAY AT HISTORY MUSEUM

This year the Friends of Edgewood are undertaking a brand new project. We will be putting on an exhibit of photos taken at Edgewood by Bay Area amateur photographers.

Photographers are invited to submit photos taken since July 1, 2001. They can be of plant life or wildlife, natural landscapes, or people enjoying the Park. Photos must be postmarked between June 1 and June 30, 2002.

All qualified photos will be displayed at the San Mateo County History Museum in Redwood City starting September 19. Judges will select 16 entries, based on artistic merit, for prominent



Photos currently on display in Museum's rotunda

display in the Museum's beautiful rotunda. These 16 photos will also be available for sale to the general public. A portion of the proceeds from the sale will be donated to the San Mateo County Parks & Recreation Foundation and earmarked for the Interpretive Center project.

Entry rules and forms are available at www.friendsofedgewood.org or by calling (866) GO-EDGEWOOD.

INTERPRETIVE CENTER PLANNING

Planning for the proposed interpretive center at Edgewood has begun. The Acorn Group, teamed with Ron Yeo, FAIA Architect, has been selected to develop the Conceptual Plan. They anticipate finishing by the end of the year.

This month, the first of 2 public workshops will be held. The March workshop is a 2-part event, and all interested parties are encouraged to attend:

- **Public Meeting and Project Overview**, Thursday March 14, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m., Community Conference Room at the Redwood City Public Library located at 1044 Middlefield Road, Redwood City.
- **Walking Tour of Potential Building Sites**, Saturday, March 16, 1:00—3:00 p.m., meet at the corner of Edgewood Rd. and Cañada Rd. (parking is limited, so try to share a ride).

The Conceptual Plan developed by The Acorn Group will include recommendations on interpretive programs and exhibits suitable for the interpretive center, a site plan with alternatives, conceptual building drawings, and phasing recommendations.

INSIDE THE EXPLORER

A Closer Look at Tidy Tips.....	2
Wildflower Walks Have Begun.....	2
Western Meadowlark	3
President's Message.....	3
Ranger Roundup	4
Adopt-A-Highway Update	4
New Edgewood Flora Due In March.....	5
Treasurer's Report	5
Death Caps Show Up In Edgewood	5
Membership Dues	7
Upcoming Events	8
Weeding Statistics for 2001	8

A CLOSER LOOK AT TIDY TIPS

By Bob Young

This is the eighteenth of a series of articles describing the flowers pictured in our wildflower brochure. —ed.



Photo by Sonja Wilcomer

Tidy Tips (*Layia platyglossa*) is shown in the brochure “Common Native Wildflowers of Edgewood,” published jointly by the Santa Clara Valley Chapter of the California Native Plant Society and Friends of Edgewood Natural Preserve. In Mary Elizabeth Parsons’ book, *The Wild Flowers of California*, she writes “... among the most charming of our flowers are the beautiful tidy-tips.”

Layia platyglossa is an annual plant in the Sunflower family. Its daisy-like flowers are 1 ½ to 2 inches across with yellow petals that have white tips. It blooms in Edgewood grasslands in April and May, varying in height from a few inches to about six inches. It is found from northwestern to southwestern California, and into the Central Valley, under 6000 feet elevation.

The specific epithet *platyglossa* comes from two Greek words: *platy*, meaning wide, flat, or broad and *glossa*, meaning the tongue or language. In Helen Sharsmith’s book *Spring Wildflowers of*

the San Francisco Bay Region, she refers to *platyglossa* as “flat tongue, for the ray-flowers.”

The genus name honors George Tradescant Lay, an early 19th century English plant collector. He was a naturalist on the English sailing ship *Blossom* that left England in 1825 and returned in 1828. The *Blossom* was on a voyage of exploration, and also was in support of another English party that was searching for the fabled Northwest Passage. Lay and others on the ship collected extensively on South Pacific islands, Hawaii, Alaska, California, China, Mexico, and South America. A few years after the return of the *Blossom*, Lay was back in China, not as a naturalist but as a missionary. Shortly before his death in 1841, he published a book about the moral, social and literary character of the Chinese. `

WILDFLOWER WALKS HAVE BEGUN

The carpets of wildflowers covering the serpentine grassland at Edgewood Natural Preserve are renowned throughout California and beyond. Over 50 different species of blooming wildflowers can be seen on a single walk. Many of these flowers occur elsewhere in the Bay Area, but are not seen in such brilliant displays.

You may also see some rare or unique plants and possibly a Bay Checkerspot Butterfly!

All walks take place every Saturday and Sunday from March 2 through June 16. They begin at 10:00 a.m., end at 1:00 p.m., and start at one of the two parking areas, as noted below. There is no stop for lunch, so visitors should bring a snack and water and a hat. No reservations are needed. Restrooms are available only at the Old Stage Day Camp.

- **March** walks start at Old Stage Day Camp
- **April and May** walks start at I-280 / Edgewood Park & Ride
- **June** walks start at Old Stage Day Camp.

For more information, or to schedule a guided tour for your group, call Malini Kaushik. `

WESTERN MEADOWLARK

By Lee Franks



Photo by George Jameson

The Western Meadowlark is one of North America's most abundant and widely distributed birds. Its frequent roadside occurrence, colorful plumage, and melodious song make it one of our most popular birds; no fewer than six states have it as their state bird. Although the Western Meadowlark was known to explorers Lewis and Clark, it was John James Audubon, who in his 1844 report on Meadowlarks west of the Mississippi, gave the bird its Latin name, *Sturnella neglecta*. Although a gifted songster, the Western Meadowlark is not a lark, but related instead to New World blackbirds. Meadowlarks can be found in their preferred open grassland habitat on the west side of the Park, where they are year-round residents.

Appearance

This is a medium-sized songbird with a long slender bill, short tail, and long legs and toes. The sexes are similar in coloration and pattern, but the female is smaller and less strongly marked. The adult birds have a dark crown with a light median stripe. A light line over the eyes becomes bright yellow from eye to bill. Their upper parts are a pattern of buffs, browns, and black streaks and bars. Under parts are bright

(Continued on page 4)

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Kathy Korbholz

I am honored and excited to be your newly elected President, and will try to continue the high standards and traditions set by our fine outgoing president, Peter Ingram.

My goals and priorities for 2002 are:

- Increase membership and expand Executive Committee
- Set direction for schools outreach program
- Have successful Expressions of Edgewood program
- Maintain weeding progress
- Continue strong relationship with County Parks & Recreation staff

I'm happy to introduce our 2002 Executive Committee members:

Officers (also Directors)

- **Kathy Korbholz**, President (Executive Committee Chair, Interpretive Center Project Rep, County P&R Staff Liaison)
- **Peter Ingram**, Vice President (Executive Committee Vice Chair)
- **Carol Belew**, Recording Secretary (Volunteer Hours Tracking)
- **John Allen**, Treasurer

Other Directors

- **Toni Corelli** (Plants & Habitat Advisor, CNPS Liaison)
- **Katherine Greene** (Publicity Coordinator)
- **Bob Young** (Membership Coordinator)

Other members of Executive Committee

- **Frank Figoni** (Trail Patrol Coordinator)
- **Julie Foster** (Docent Program Training Coordinator)
- **Carol Hankermeyer** (Schools Outreach Coordinator)
- **Ken Himes** (Weed Management Program Field Marshal)
- **Malini Kaushik** (Docent Program Walks Coordinator)
- **Bill Korbholz** (Webmaster / Information Technology / Newsletter)

RANGER ROUNDUP

By Ric Munds

San Mateo County Parks and Recreation will sponsor an Earth and Trail Day kickoff event at Flood Park on Saturday, April 20, 2002, which is Earth Day. The event will begin at 11:00 a.m. and end at 3:00 p.m. The theme is "Earth Day Embraces All Cultures." This event will promote community participation and awareness of the various environmental programs and environmental education opportunities that exist throughout San Mateo County. There will be displays for each organization represented at the event. The California Native Plant Society (CNPS) will be providing a display. We are looking forward to having all of our Friends groups and other park volunteers participate.

In addition, Edgewood County Park and Preserve will have a workday on Saturday, April 27, 2002. Sign-in will start at 8:30 a.m. and work will begin at 9:00 a.m.

CNPS holds their weekly weeding party at Edgewood every Friday morning at 8:30 a.m. Please contact Ken Himes for details. The Audubon Society gives a bird walk at Edgewood on the last Sunday of every month at 8 a.m. The walk begins in the day camp parking lot. Please contact Lee Franks for further details.

We appreciate all the volunteers at Edgewood for the work and time they contributed last year. Total volunteer hours for 2001 were approximately 5,000! The volunteer effort has made such a positive difference in the park. Thank you very much! `

(Continued from page 3)

yellow, and the sides, flanks, and under-tail feathers are a dull white. The most striking feature of their plumage is the black shield-shaped patch on the chest, which strongly contrasts with the bright yellow chest.

Breeding

The breeding cycle occurs from mid-February to

(Continued on page 6)

ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY UPDATE

By Ken Seydel

December 8, 2001

Our regularly scheduled cleanup, the first Saturday of the even-numbered months, was rained out. So we rescheduled for the following weekend. But only six hardy souls showed up! Brian Cole, Carolyn Dorsch, Bill & Kathy Korbholz, Ulla Peterson, and Ken Seydel had to work past noon in order to finish.

As always we found interesting things to fill our bags. At one place there was a frozen dinner, a bottle of port, and a ten-dollar bill (some kind of party?) We met a 3 ½ foot gopher snake. We found a tennis ball and two golf balls (where do they come from?), and a number of flags, and pieces thereof.

We found the usual hubcaps, and a surprising amount of car parts. There had been several cars off the freeway during the rains. It is surprising how many pieces these plastic cars break into when they go over an embankment. The CHP admonition to slow down in the rain really should be heeded!

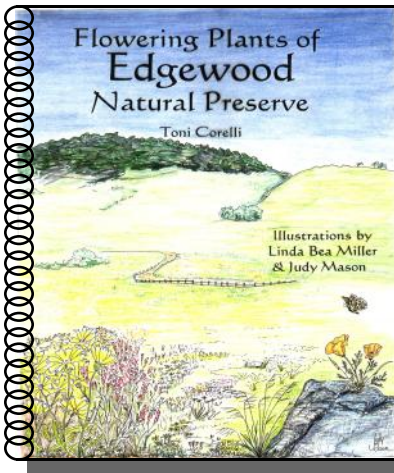
February 2, 2002

Despite my absence due to a conflicting social event, we ended up with a good turnout—9 people. The crew worked 3 hours and filled 14 bags. The trash wasn't too bad this time, some speculated because of the cold weather, and people driving with their windows up.

Some interesting stuff collected: 2 hubcaps, a trashcan lid, and one CalTrans Adopt-A-Highway glove. But all hands were accounted for: Brian Cole, Sarah Divine, Carolyn Dorsch, first-timer Tom Johnson, Bill Korbholz, Maggie Mah, Margaret Marshall, Ulla Peterson, and Susan Russell.

If you have an interest in joining our great group please contact me. We will see that you are safety trained and equipped with your very own Picker, hard hat, goggles, gloves, and bright orange vest. `

NEW EDGEWOOD FLORA DUE IN MARCH



Toni Corelli's Flowering Plants of Edgewood Natural Preserve is due to be published this month. The 280-page book catalogs 453 vascular plant species found at Edgewood. Each species is

illustrated and described, including identification keys, name derivation, past and present uses, and other interesting information. The book is illustrated by Linda Bea Miller and Judy Mason.

Toni has generously donated 50 books to the Friends for gifts to the first 50 **new** members at the \$25 level or higher. In addition, the Friends will offer the book as a premium to all members who renew at the \$100 level or higher.

To purchase the book, complete the order form on page 7 and send it with a check for \$25 per book (tax, shipping, and handling included).`

TREASURER'S REPORT

By John Allen

During the year 2001 the Friends of Edgewood had income from membership dues, donations and the sale of wildflower brochures, magnifying lenses, and other items.

The group's principal expenses included donations to the Parks Foundation (matching donations from members for the Interpretive Center), publishing and mailing the *Edgewood Explorer*, conducting the docent-led wildflower walks, and hosting the annual meeting and picnic. For the year, we had a net loss of just under \$500, about 7% of our expenses.

Thanks for your continuing support. For more information, contact me.`

DEATH CAPS SHOW UP IN EDGEWOOD

By Bill and Louise Freedman

In a December 1999 article, we commented on the unusually small number of *Amanita phalloides*, the Death Cap, in Edgewood. Now, 2 years later, we have identified many of what is probably the most dangerous fungus in history.

On our foray of 12/31/01, we found 36 varieties of fungi, 19 of which we had never found before on the Edgewood Trail and the Sylvan Loop. One gray mushroom with attractive pink gills, *Entoloma nitrodosum*, is poisonous and smells just like nitric acid. Another charming small fungus with a pleated cap setting off a brown central area is called a Japanese Parasol. Its gills and spores are black.

A large, fleshy yellow spore-bearing mushroom which bruises a brilliant blue color is called the Butter Bolete because it melts in your mouth. *Volvariella speciosa* (no common name) is a tall stately shiny white species with pink gills and a cup at its base. It is edible but can be confused with Death Cap and cause severe illness.

A dirty white fungus, *Inocybe sororia*, with a streaked cap which smells strongly of corn silk (that's its name) is saturated with poisonous muscarine. A clump of yellow-capped mushrooms growing at the base of a stump signaled the presence of the "Jack-O-Lantern" (*Omphalotus olivascens*). The gills of these fungi glow pale green in a darkened room. Collectors of wild fungi for the table have occasionally become very ill thinking that these are chanterelles.

A diminutive fungus with chocolate-brown spores, *Agaricus semotus*, turns yellow when handled, smells like anise, and tastes like licorice when it is cooked.

We have found about 108 different fungi in the park (vs. 41 reported 2 years ago). Our hearts leap to see members of the Third Kingdom popping up before our eyes. Let us admire and appreciate these "Wildflowers of Winter."`

(Continued from page 4)

mid-July. The Meadowlark is a ground nester that requires large grassy areas, like those we have in the western reaches of the Park. The bird is well adapted to wide open spaces. Its long legs carry it quickly through the grass and the mottled color of its upper parts blend in with the open drab grass surroundings. They nest in natural and scraped grassland depressions. The nest is made of coarse grass, and lined with finer grass and animal hair. The nest is often covered by a roof or arch, and some have an entrance tunnel and runway. Females alone gather materials and build nests, requiring about 6-8 days to complete.

Eggs are laid after the nest is lined; 1 egg in early morning on consecutive days. The female seldom visits the nest during this period other than to lay. She is quick to abandon the nest if disturbed. The average clutch size is 5 eggs. The male shows no interest in the nest with eggs, leaving incubation duties to the female. Incubation begins with the laying of the last egg and normally lasts 13-14 days.

The young hatch nearly naked with no direct parental assistance, normally on the same day. Their eyes remain closed for 4 days, and feathers start emerging by the 6th day. The young are brooded by the female, who also has the feeding duties. Food items, mostly insects, are fed directly from bill to throat, without regurgitation. The male's attentiveness to the young seems to vary with degree of attention to his other females. After 10-12 days in the nest the young are ready to fledge. Their bodies are fully covered by feathers, but their flight feathers are not completely developed, making them incapable of sustained flight. However, their legs are strong, enabling them to run quickly when threatened. At 15-16 days they are capable of short flights, and sustained flights at 20-21 days. The young remain dependent on the parents for up to 2 weeks after fledging.

Behavior

Feeding Meadowlarks feed almost entirely on the ground, obtaining food from the top of the

ground or by probing beneath the soil. Their diet consists largely of vegetable (grain and weed seeds) and animal matter (insects). Favorite insect foods include beetles, cutworms, grasshoppers and crickets. They feed on grains in winter and early spring, insects in late spring and summer, and weed seeds in the fall. Foraging birds walk or run on the ground, but when they approach their nests they walk more stealthily with their body closer to the ground.

Sounds Meadowlarks have a large repertoire of calls and songs which they use to proclaim territorial ownership, attract mates, broadcast personal characteristics (age, sex, competence), warn of potential dangers, and maintain social contact. While both sexes vocalize, it is the loud, complex territorial song of the male that is the most conspicuous and familiar sound we hear when walking along the grassland areas on the west side of the Park. The song serves as a signal to potential rivals that the territory is occupied by a resident male, prepared to protect his exclusive use of that space and any associated females. The song generally lasts for 1.5-2.0 seconds, and may be delivered from the ground, but more typically from high perches (fence posts, shrubs, rocks) located throughout their territories, or more frequently, along the perimeter, adjacent to neighboring territories. Each male has a repertoire of 6-9 territorial song types. They usually produce a round of repetitions of one type before switching to another. Song switching is often in response to an intruder's song, advertising its readiness to interact.

Sexual The females usually arrive on the breeding grounds 2-4 weeks after the males. Pairing occurs immediately upon arrival, and they remain close together, foraging and prospecting for nest sites. The female does not pair with another male while the 1st male continues to maintain his territory successfully, but the male usually has 2 mates concurrently. The pair bond is maintained until the female has completed parental care or aborted a final nesting attempt. Thereafter the female will forage in and out of the former breeding area

(Continued on page 7)

without male escort, often in association with other meadowlarks.

Within minutes of the female's arrival, the newly formed pair may participate in an aerial chase, initiated by the female. Chases may be single flights of short duration or a series of brief flights alternated with intervals of rest and posturing displays on the ground, conveying the message of a desire to mate. The male posturing display is one in which he struts about the female, holding body more erect, with bill pointed downward toward an expanded chest. In response the female assumes a receptive position with bill and tail elevated and wings slightly drooped and quivering.

Territoriality, the most aggressive social behavior, is characterized by acts of display intended to discourage the presence of rivals, and by the exclusive continued use of a defined area for an individual and its mate. Meadowlarks seem to require a territory of about 5-7 acres, and

males who are unsuccessful in acquiring mates fail to maintain territories. When territories are being established, resident males constantly engage in evicting trespassers. Intruders are aerially pursued until beyond territorial boundaries. When territorial boundaries are disputed, competitive renditions of song by neighboring males from adjacent song perches occur. In addition to singing, posturing displays are used, the most common being tail and wing flashing, whereby the tail feathers are nervously snapped out and in, while the wings are flashed open and shut with great speed. Body contact and fighting between males, though uncommon, can be quite severe with much thrashing of wings, jabbing of bills, and clawing.

References

The Birds of North America; Wesley Lanyon; No. 104; 1994.
Ornithology; Frank Gill ; 1990; W.H. Freeman & Company.



MEMBERSHIP DUES

New or renewing members may clip and complete this section to pay **tax-deductible** annual membership dues. Please send your check payable to **Friends of Edgewood Natural Preserve** to the return address on the back of this panel. Renewing members can determine their membership expiration date by checking the four-digit code to the right of their name on their mailing label. For example, if the code is 06/2001, membership runs through June 2001.

Questions, call Bob Young.

Name

Address

City State Zip

Home Telephone Work Telephone

- \$15 Basic Membership (includes newsletter)
- \$25 Family Membership (newsletter)
- \$7 Student/Retired Membership (newsletter)
- \$50 Supporting Membership (newsletter, *Edgewood Checklist of Plants*, and Edgewood photo greeting cards (boxed set))
- \$100 Benefactor Membership (above premiums plus Toni Corelli's 280-page fully-illustrated Flowering Plants of Edgewood Natural Preserve)
- \$250 Patron Membership (above premiums)
- I am enclosing a gift of _____.
- Please send ___ copies of the *Edgewood Checklist of Plants* (\$3), ___ copies of the 28-minute video *Saving Edgewood Park* (\$15), ___ copies of Flowering Plants of Edgewood Natural Preserve (\$25). Includes tax, S&H.

I would like to participate in the following:

- Docent program
- Trail patrol
- Publications
- Weed management
- School outreach
- Habitat restoration



UPCOMING EVENTS

o *Saturdays and Sundays, March 2nd through June 16th*, **WILDFLOWER WALKS**. The flowers are already looking beautiful this season. Don't fail to come out this year. See insert for details.

o *Last Sunday of Every Month*, **SUNDAY BIRD WALK**. Meet Audubon Society docent Lee Franks at the Day Camp kiosk at 8:00 a.m.

o *Saturday, April 6th, June 8th*, **ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY CLEANUP DAY**. Meet at the Park & Ride at 8:30 a.m. Call Ken Seydel for more information or to arrange for safety training and to get your very own trash picker.

o *April 20th, 27th*, **EARTH DAY EVENTS**. Come to Flood Park on April 20th from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. for the Parks & Recreation kickoff event, and join the Rangers at Edgewood on April 27th at 8:30 a.m. for a workday.

o *June 1st - June 30th*, **EXPRESSIONS OF EDGEWOOD**. Submit your favorite photo taken at Edgewood for display in the San Mateo

WEEDING STATISTICS FOR 2001

Last year, volunteers racked up a total of 1,911.5 hours removing 341,062 exotic plants at Edgewood. This compares with 2,076 hours spent in 2000 removing 673,139 plants.

Many thanks to our great volunteers! ^

The Edgewood Explorer is published four times yearly by the Friends of Edgewood Natural Preserve, a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving Edgewood for the human, plant, and animal generations to come. The newsletter is produced by Kathy and Bill Korbholz with assistance from Laverne Rabinowitz and contributions from many Friends. For more information about the Friends of Edgewood, visit our web site at www.friendsofedgeswood.org, mail us at PO Box 3422, Redwood City, CA 94064-3422, call or fax toll-free at (866) GO-EDGEWOOD, or email info@friendsofedgeswood.org.

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SAVE THE DATES
March 14 and 16
Interpretive Center
Public Workshop
See Page 1