



Edgewood Explorer

PRESERVE • EDUCATE • RESTORE

September 2017

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Volunteer Appreciation Event

by Kathy Korbholz

On June 25th, the Friends of Edgewood held its first volunteer appreciation event. The event was open to all volunteers from our many programs – Wildflower Walk docents, Junior Explorer docents, Education Center hosts, Adopt-A-Highway Road Warriors, camera trappers, Board members, and independent project managers. The Friends also welcomed and recognized Edgewood volunteers who are sponsored by other groups – California Native Plant Society Weed Warriors and San Mateo County Trail Patrol members.

It was a great opportunity to meet volunteers from other programs and to attach faces to names. Volunteers placed colorful stickers on their name tags representing the program(s) in which they participate. As a way to encourage mingling, guests were “assigned” the task of speaking to at least two people from programs other than their own. The icebreaker worked so well that we had to ring a bell to get everyone’s attention so we could begin our short program.



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Over fifty volunteers attended the event, and many more volunteers sent their regrets. The culmination of the event included the formation of an “experience circle.” Volunteers were asked to arrange themselves into a circle, lining up in order by number of years of Edgewood experience. The circle completed with the newest volunteers from this year’s docent class

standing next to the longest serving volunteers. The event photo shows this connection point. Each volunteer was asked to introduce the person to his/her right and announce the number of years that person has volunteered at Edgewood.

Earlier in the day, volunteers were asked to guess the total number of years of experience represented by all of the volunteer attendees. Guesses ranged from 75 to 600,000. The final sum was 537 years – and that number represents only about half of our active volunteers.

As an all-volunteer organization, there would be no Friends of Edgewood programs without the time and talents of our many volunteers. As a small measure of our sincere appreciation for the volunteers’ valuable service, volunteers were given a thermal-lined grocery bag. When polled, those who attended thought the event was worth a repeat.

The volunteer appreciation event was organized by a newly formed Volunteer Committee including Sandy Bernhard, Gina Barton, and Trevlyn Williams and is chaired by Kathy Korbholz. We welcome ideas to recognize current and to recruit new volunteers. New volunteers are welcome to join any of our programs at any time; *come join the fun!* 🐛

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Volunteer Spotlight: The Lowensterns

by Sandy Bernhard



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Edgewood has many successful docent teams—Nancy and John Baum, Bill and Kathy Korbholz, John and Frances Morse, to name a few—but the partnership of Jake and Alice Lowenstern is unique. They are Friends of Edgewood's first and (so far) only parent-youth docent team.

Graduates of our 2016 docent class, father and daughter share a love for the outdoors and a friendly, engaging manner. Jake, a research geologist at the USGS in Menlo Park in charge of the Yellowstone Volcano Observatory, had enjoyed leading geology hikes at that park. After years of weekend hikes at Edgewood, a school project of Alice's prompted the two to take docent training. Alice, then just 12 and a student at the San Carlos Charter Learning Center, says she thought it would be fun leading hikes, but she never dreamed there was so much to learn about nature, especially about flowers.

Theirs is a complementary partnership. On a typical Lowenstern wildflower walk, Jake handles the geology but relies on Alice for precise flower IDs. Though Alice, now 14, conducts her official FoE walks with her dad, she has also led solo hikes for her school and a group of young Girl Scouts. She said she was nervous at first co-leading Edgewood walks, but she clearly projects confidence and competence: she has been asked many times what she is majoring in at college!

What do Jake and Alice most enjoy sharing with the public? Alice likes telling the stories of the dusky-footed woodrat and the Bay checkerspot. Jake has enjoyed adding the more recent history of Edgewood to his stories of its geologic past. Asked about a favorite Edgewood flower, Alice did not hesitate: purple mouse-ears (*Mimulus douglasii*), our littlest monkeyflower with the out-sized charm. Jake chose no favorite flower; instead he spoke of the pleasure he takes in the "scents" of Edgewood—sagebrush, yerba santa, bay laurel and, yes, even eucalyptus. Alice agreed that each trail has its own distinct perfume.

Jake does have some favorite trail stops: the view from the Franciscan Trail looking out over the aqueducts coming up Edgewood Road and the views from the Central Ridge looking out across the watershed provide opportunities to connect the story of Edgewood to the history of the CA Water Project, the Bay, and greater California. Last fall, Jake led a third-Saturday Nature Hike focused on Edgewood's geology; in October, he'll be giving an enrichment presentation on this topic for FoE volunteers. Jake is also taking part in FoE's new camera-trapping program.

Edgewood Third Saturday Nature Hikes

September 16: TBD

October 21:
'Enchanted Edgewood' –
Corrina Blaney

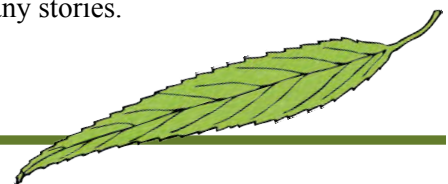
November 18: 'Creature Feature: Dusky-
Footed Woodrats' – Kathryn Strachota

December 16: TBD - Roger Humphrey



Alice and Jake agree that the whole experience of training and volunteering at Edgewood has been great fun and tremendously rewarding. This fall, the Lowenstern family begins a move to Portland, Oregon, where Jake will be the new chief of the USGS Volcano Disaster Assistance Program. Jake and Alice promise they'll be back though, ready to lead hikes again, on Alice's spring break.

The Lowensterns will always have pride of place as Edgewood's first parent-youth docent team; we hope their story will inspire many more such partnerships, learning about and sharing with others Edgewood's many stories.



Edgewood's Grass Attack

by Bill Korbholz

Anyone who visited Edgewood this year must surely have noticed the grasses. In the grasslands, you had to peer through the tall oats and rye grass to see the wildflowers. Even in the woodlands, grasses exploded.



Purple needlegrass (*Nassella pulchra*); public domain photo on Wikipedia.

For most things botanical, 2017 has been a banner year, thanks largely to the heavy winter and early spring rains. Some species have been seen where never before; others in far greater densities. Grasses responded very favorably to our heavy rains this past season.

By species count, grasses make up well over 10% of Edgewood's flora. Of the 63 species of plants at Edgewood that are members of the Poaceae, or grass family, over half, 36, are non-native. These non-native grasses make up a significant percentage of cover in the grasslands, often more than 50%. Interestingly, almost all of Edgewood's non-native grasses are annuals, while almost all native grasses at Edgewood are perennials. (For more info, visit <http://nrdb.org/simplesearch.asp> and select Flora in Edgewood matching Poaceae.)

But, you may ask, what's the big deal about non-native grasses? A weed is a weed, right? WRONG! Most non-native grasses are prolific seed producers. Moreover, their seeds are light and spread easily on the wind. So far this sounds like some of our problem forbs (non-grass herbaceous flowering plants), but unlike many of our thistles and other target weeds, hand-pulling annual grasses is not very practical. Once you have a grass infestation, it is really hard to eradicate it.

Ok, so control is difficult, but you may still ask, so what? Here's the issue with non-native

grasses. They can often outcompete native species when introduced to favorable habitats, especially non-serpentine grasslands (non-native grasses are far less competitive in serpentine-rich soil). They exclude other plants (both native and non-native) by their sheer number and by the demands they place on resources such as water, sunlight, and soil minerals. The thatch they create makes it easier for more non-native grasses to establish and prevents germination of native species in subsequent seasons.

The fact is, non-native grasses like rye grass (*Festuca perennis*), wild oats (*Avena fatua*), and purple falsebrome (*Brachypodium distachyon*) are quickly pushing out the native components (remember those carpets of wildflowers?) of our grasslands.

So what can be done? The Edgewood Weed Warriors have been able to chalk up many significant successes at Edgewood—weeds that have been controlled and even eradicated—like yellow star-thistle, bristly ox-tongue, Fuller's teasel, French broom, and even some grasses like Medusa-head and, in isolated areas, Harding grass. But the vast majority of the non-native grasses remain at large and, at least in 2017, many have extended their density and range.

In the past we've tried controlled burns, some hand-pulling, and we even grazed sheep experimentally one time. Burning is very problematic due to the proximity to the residential neighborhoods and the impact to air quality. Hand-pulling is really slow and tedious, and it's not practical across large areas, and grazing is not cost-effective because of the small acreage. Mowing can be moderately successful under some conditions, like in the butterfly habitat, where the serpentine composition of the soil is relatively high.

Another option, that has proven effective at Coyote Ridge, is using a graminicide, or grass-specific herbicide. However, this can be problematic as a number of graminicides may

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A Final Thank You to Don Mayall (1932-2017)

by Kathy Korbholz



On June 28th, the Friends of Edgewood lost a true friend and longtime supporter, Don Mayall. Don and his wife, Carolyn Curtis, were two of the very early members of the *Save Edgewood Coalition*. It was his photographic eye behind the camera in the 30-minute video entitled *Saving Edgewood Park* that was produced by the California Native Plant Society (CNPS). The video, which aired on local TV, was given to the public and local agencies in an effort to champion the unique nature of Edgewood and garner support to prevent it from becoming a golf course.

After Edgewood was declared a natural preserve in perpetuity in 1993, Don went on to advocate for another local area of special concern, Coyote Ridge. We are indebted to Don's work there, for Coyote Ridge is the

source population of the Bay checkerspot butterflies used to repatriate the Edgewood population. Because larvae numbers at Coyote Ridge are so abundant (thanks to their protection), the California Department of Fish and Wildlife granted special multi-year permission to Dr. Stuart Weiss to relocate a controlled number of larvae back to Edgewood.

Don became a member of CNPS in the 1980s, and he held many leadership positions (including chapter presidency and chair positions for field trips, rare plants, invasive exotics, and more) in the organization. In 2012, Don was named a CNPS Fellow. As the CNPS website states, "Becoming a Fellow is the highest recognition CNPS awards its members. These members have accumulated extraordinary accomplishments towards the understanding, appreciation, and preservation of California native plants."

In a *Fremontia* (the CNPS quarterly magazine) article proclaiming Don's Fellowship, it was reported that Don was looking at photos of particularly beautiful wildflowers during a wildflower show in the mid-1980s. It was those photos that caught Ken Himes' eye. Don encouraged Ken to explore Edgewood. Edgewood is forever indebted to Don for steering Ken in its direction.

Don authored several articles for *Fremontia*. Of particular importance was the Winter 2008 edition which featured several articles written by Don and/or Carolyn:

- "Protecting Coyote Ridge," by Don Mayall
- "Edgewood County Park And Natural Preserve: How It Happened," by Carolyn Curtis
- "Conservation Of Serpentine Endemics By A CNPS Chapter: Two Strategies," by Don Mayall and Carolyn Curtis

Don was part of the first CNPS class of Edgewood docents and, in fact, led this reporter's first wildflower walk at Edgewood. His friendly style – just enjoy the beauty and don't fret about learning all the plants' names – made it easy to become engaged. We offer our condolences to Carolyn and are forever grateful for the role Don played in saving Edgewood for future generations.



Spreading Edgewood's Beauty

by Kathy Korbholz



Friends of Edgewood volunteers Kelly O'Connor, Trevlyn Williams, and Martha Vercoutere have found a new way to spread Edgewood's beauty to a broader audience. They have adopted one of the eyesore utility boxes along Jefferson Avenue (next to John Gill School) for creative embellishment. For Kelly, a local elementary school teacher and artist, this box was her third project.

The beautification effort, a partnership between the City of RWC and the Redwood City Civic Cultural Commission, is seeking to transform common utility boxes into distinctive and beautiful works of art. The intent is to help both enhance the beauty and vibrancy of Redwood City and deter unsightly graffiti on utility boxes. Students, Redwood City teachers, and local artists were encouraged to apply to adopt a box.

Kelly submitted her design, was chosen as a finalist, and assigned her location - at the traffic light alongside John Gill Elementary School. The chosen artists use regular exterior house paint over a metal primer which should last up to 20 years. Once a mural is finished, the City coats it with a UV and anti-graffiti protectant which extends the life of the artwork and helps with

graffiti removal should the artwork ever be defaced.

The first photo shows Trevlyn Williams, a well-known local artist, sketching the scene on a painted background. The completed artwork features Edgewood's iconic hill with fog sitting atop the Santa Cruz Mountains in the background. Moving left to right around the foreground of the box, viewers will enjoy the scene changing from early to late spring. The larger surface, facing the street, will feature Edgewood in its full springtime glory. Laurie Alexander joined the team to paint a matching background on a companion box across Jefferson Avenue. Kelly thought the second box looked a little lonely and added a few flowers.

Be sure to appreciate the eyesore's transformation the next time you drive by or are stopped by the traffic light. Until you do, here is a photo showing the completed art work. Special thanks go out to our artistic volunteers for identifying this creative new way to publicize Edgewood Natural Preserve's springtime beauty. *



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not have been specifically reviewed and approved for restoration purposes, as would be required for use at Edgewood.

To begin to address the problem of non-native grasses invading Edgewood's grasslands, Ramona Arechiga, the Parks Department's Resource Manager, arranged for a consultation from Grey Hayes. Grey is with UCSC's Department of Environmental Studies and is a respected expert on grassland management. I joined him, together with Ramona, Stu Weiss, Christal Niederer, Paul Heiple, and Drew Shell, for a 3-hour field study of some of Edgewood's grassland habitats on June 5. Roaming across the southern portion of the park, we attempted to characterize the different types of grasslands at Edgewood, focusing on plant cover,

species richness, geology, slope, aspect, hydrology, and other factors.

What's next? With that information, we should be able to draw some conclusions about why some areas are in better shape than others, and that should ultimately lead us to developing effective management strategies and techniques that may be specific to the different grassland types.

Managing Edgewood's grasslands is an ongoing effort, and over time it will probably cost a lot of money. However, I firmly believe that we can do a better job of controlling non-native grasses. Complete eradication park-wide is impossible, but I hope that we can fully restore some high-quality serpentine-rich areas, and reduce infestations in others. ❖

Other Park News: For an update on the status of the PG&E gas pipelines that run through Edgewood, see <http://www.friendsofedgeswood.org/pge-pipeline-project>.

Thermal-Lined Grocery Bags for Sale

The thermal-lined grocery bags mentioned in the volunteer appreciation article are for sale in the Education Center for \$7.00. The bags measure 13" X 15" and have a zipper closure at the top. It is not practical to mail them because, although they collapse flat for storage, they cannot be folded small enough to meet postal regulations for "flats." Stop by the Education Center and stock up today!



Thank you, Thanh! Above, Bill Korbholz presents Thanh Mougeout with a "President's Award" for her exceptional service during her 5-year term as Docent Coordinator. Thanh volunteered to coordinate the Wildflower Walks program in 2013 and continued through the 2017 season. Despite her numerous and extensive world travels, she remained conscientious and responsive to the program. Her upbeat and gentle emails have endeared her to all of her docents. She is and always will be a great Friend of Edgewood.

ODE TO MIMULUS GUTTATUS, THE COMMON YELLOW MONKEYFLOWER

a poem by Mike Willemssen

You are a common little flower, but not at Edgewood,

I fear the summers are too dry. But when I saw you by the Sylvan waterfall,

You opened a window of memories.

I remember you in Yellowstone, basking in hot spring overflow.

And in Glacier Park, shivering by an icy brook, while grizzlies picnicked in the huckleberries;

Not long ago they foraged at Edgewood, and pillaged the wood rats' castles.

Every year our family hikes as if a pilgrimage, south from Carson Pass, through a meadow with fields of monkeyflowers, topped off with iris and larkspur. One year we saw a wooden sign: "in memory of my dog." Nothing more. The next year the sign was gone but the flowers remained.

At Hetch Hetchy you shared a stream with waterfall buttercups. Around you stood the flamboyant harlequin lupine, displaying its colors of blue, red-purple, and gold.

In Sequoia Park, you straddled the gravel of Ten Mile Creek, to tell hikers "there's only one more mile to go."

But it is time to close the window. It's still spring, and Edgewood is the Queen of the Spring, a glory beyond compare.

I'll see you in the summer. ✍

Yes, I'd like to become a Friend of Edgewood!

Here's my membership donation to support preservation, education, and restoration:

Join or renew online at FriendsOfEdgewood.org

- \$25 Friend \$50 Advocate *
- \$100 Steward * Other: \$ _____

* Donors of \$50 or more receive a set of six Edgewood greeting cards; donors of \$100 or more also receive a one-year subscription to *Bay Nature Magazine*.

Name _____

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I'd like to get the newsletter by email mail.

- Please keep my thank-you gifts.
- Please keep my donation anonymous.

Make checks payable to **Friends of Edgewood**, and mail to:

Friends of Edgewood
PO Box 3422
Redwood City, CA 94064-3422

For volunteer opportunities, visit
www.FriendsOfEdgewood.org/Get-Involved




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**Calling
 all Friends to the**
 ANNUAL MEETING
 Sunday, Oct. 15, 2017; 11:30 AM
Details will be mailed soon!
 Food - Fun - Festivities
 FREE!!!

Mission Statement of The Friends of Edgewood — To protect and celebrate Edgewood as a unique treasure by promoting exemplary stewardship, and by reaching out with informative public programs. www.FriendsOfEdgewood.org

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**Bill and Jean Lane
 Education Center -
 Autumn Hours and By
 Appointment***


Wed	9:30 am to 12:30 pm
Sat	9:30 am to 4 pm
Sun	9:30 am to 4 pm

*Subject to volunteer staffing.

**2017
 Board of
 Directors**
 Laurie Alexander
 Sandy Bernhard
 Kathy Goforth
 Bill Korbholz
 Kathy Korbholz
 Linda Leong
 John Morse
 Todd Reimche
 Mickey Salgo
 Howie Smith



UPCOMING EVENTS

General Meeting 
 10/15 (Sun); 11:30 AM

Adopt-A-Highway
 Next Sessions: 9/10, 10/7, 11/5, 12/2
 To volunteer or get more information, contact
 Dave Hershey at [adoptahighway-
 coordinator@FriendsOfEdgewood.org](mailto:adoptahighway-coordinator@FriendsOfEdgewood.org)

Third Saturday Nature Hikes
 9/16, 10/21, 11/18, 12/16 - 10 AM @ BJLEC

Second Sunday Bird Walks 
 9/10, 10/8, 11/12 - 8 AM @ BJLEC

For more event info, see
www.FriendsOfEdgewood.org/events

The Edgewood Explorer is published quarterly by the Friends of Edgewood Natural Preserve, a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving and restoring Edgewood and to educating the public about its treasures. The newsletter is edited by Linda Leong and is supported by contributions from many Friends. For more information about the Friends of Edgewood, visit our website at www.FriendsOfEdgewood.org, mail us at PO Box 3422, Redwood City, CA 94064-3422, leave a message or fax us toll-free at (1-866) GO-EDGEWOOD (1-866-463-3439), or email us at info@FriendsOfEdgewood.org.