

Dear Nature Fiends,

I know it is strange, but this Rattler is for November and December, so I will start by sending you my very best wishes for all the holidays that are coming your way. We want to thank you for your interest and the very fact that you are reading this newsletter!

One event that you should mark on your calendar right away is the Holiday Craft Fair coming up on December 7 and 8 (check the flyer). Though it is the only fundraiser for Placerita, it is primarily a lot of fun.

The word has spread through the valley and people plan ahead to be part of it. It is the only place where you can make your own holiday decorations using fresh greenery, seeds and pods, all available in big piles that smell wonderful. You can let your creativity run free – just buy a straw wreath and you are good to go. Entire families get involved and the results are incredibly gorgeous and professional. There are also children's crafts planned so everyone can have a great time...and Santa is visiting.

We appreciate your support and your friendship. Come and enjoy Placerita, fall is an especially incredible season in our park.

To check the programs, go to placerita.org. See you soon!



The Rattler

Sponsored by the Placerita Canyon Nature Center Associates
19152 Placerita Canyon Road, Newhall, CA 91321
www.placerita.org (661) 259-7721

Placerita Canyon Nature Center
Over 50 Years of Nature Education
November-December 2024

Editor: Evelyne Vandersande Publisher: Heidi Webber



Paul Levine Excellence in Interpretation Award 2024

By Ken Yasukawa

I am honored to select the recipient of the Paul Levine Excellence in Interpretation award for 2024. Although I did not know Dr. Paul Levine (he died 5 years before I became a docent at PCNC), I feel a strong connection to him. He was a retired cardiologist from Brooklyn, NY. I'm a retired zoologist from Queens, NY. He did his first year of medical residency at what is now Albert Einstein College of Medicine. I was a research assistant at AE-CoM. His interest in the natural world and commitment to teaching brought him to volunteer at Placerita Canyon Nature Center, where he treasured the opportunity to share his interests and deep knowledge with children and adults alike. I would say, "Me too!"



Dave Taylor is a deserving recipient of this award. He is a Docent from the Class of 2017 and a great ambassador for the park. He is always friendly and welcoming, willing to share his knowledge and to encourage others to explore the park. He has developed an effective and popular Nature Box program, which he presents on weekends and during the summer. He also offers the two Treasure Hunts (indoor and outdoor) to young visitors,

and even makes the incentive badges that are awarded to all treasure hunters. He has worked hard at the Open House events, organizing docents to show the Nature Boxes. He regularly guides school tours and is a skillful leader. He's been a mentor to new trainees. He has a fun sense of humor and includes playfulness in his interpretations. Young visitors really like his use of animal skins, which he pretends are the real animals. He is always easy to work with, dependable, and good natured.

Celebration of Life for Diane Southwell by Glenda Perl

Saturday, September 28, the Nature Center held a Celebration of Life for one of our long-time Docent Volunteers, Diane Southwell.

Diane's husband, Jim (also a long-time volunteer and President of PCNCA for 15 years, community activist, and all-around good guy) shared many memories of his life with Diane, starting at the beginning of their courtship when they were teenagers (Jim was 4 years older than Diane, and her parents did NOT approve of that) and continuing through raising 3 kids, and eventually landing in Saugus (there was no Santa Clarita Valley yet).

Jim told of how he and Diane became interested in the Nature Center. Both were heavily involved with the development of the SCV in the 1960s. Many family members, friends and neighbors recalled their own fond memories of Diane, Jim, and their family antics. And, of course, there was food afterwards!

RIP, Diane.



The Raptors of Placerita

By Heidi Webber

On Tuesday morning, October 1, Denny Trugger, Rick Brammer, Jack Levenberg and Ron Kraus met at my request to make a short video of some of our beloved raptors to show at an Outreach.

The story behind this is simple. Because of the threat of Avian Flu, we haven't been able to take our birds off the premises for a few years. For around 15 years, we have done a special (to me) outreach at the Sierra Vista Jr. High Creepy Crawly Lunch Bunch in October near Halloween, where we gather in the library with kids who eat their lunches while we give a short 25-minute outreach. It's always a fun time. Last year we did get special dispensation to take the birds to this event, but with the

Avian flu roaring back, this restriction appears to be a permanent situation. So we are left with two or three snakes and a spider! Not enough to be able to talk about for even that short amount of time.

The librarian, Lorraine Fulleman, suggested we make a video instead. Short and sweet, we can also answer questions and still show the snakes and spider. So I contacted the bird handlers and Ron and made my request. It's a very simple video, basically the guys talking about the birds like they would any presentation, and they can sure get a lot of information into their allotted three minutes each!

Once Ron works his magic of the video, it will also be available on our website for other uses, and I'm sure it will be a hit at Sierra Vista! Thanks to all of you to help make this happen.

Here's the link for the video. It's exactly what we wanted and the Librarian at Sierra Vista is beyond thrilled with what we put together on short notice. I'm sure the kids will feel the same.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1aysNKldQtO0lcX8yesL0qOF8bQlho5PN/view?usp=sharing>

Desert Tortoise Brumation

by Marietta Ewing, Recreation Service Leader

Very soon the days will cool and grow shorter and our Desert Tortoises, Speedy and Turbo, will be entering the natural process of "brumation". What does the term brumation mean? The word "brumate" is used to specifically describe the "reptile" period of dormancy.

Usually in October, our tortoises begin to show signs that it's time for a long winter's nap. They "sleep" later in the morning and become inactive earlier in the evening. Their appetite decreases and they begin to naturally consume less food. I keep a close watch on them and monitor their activity and appetite. By careful monitoring, they will show us when it's time for brumation. While they are brumating, they are housed inside our Animal Room where they are safe from predators.

In April, Speedy and Turbo naturally begin to emerge from brumation. Over the spring and summer months, they are fed a nutritious diet each day consisting of romaine lettuce, carrots, broccoli, squash and various other veggies.

Our tortoises were donated to Placerita Canyon in 1989. Speedy is now 59 years old and Turbo is 89 years old. Our tortoises are outside on exhibit and ready to be presented to our school groups between April and approximately the end of October. We bring them out and place them in their outdoor enclosure each morning, weather permitting, and bring them indoors each night for their protection.

Recently, the Mojave Desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*) has officially been declared an "endangered species". Some of the reasons for this are habitat loss, disease and predation. Ravens and small mammals prey on tortoise eggs and juvenile tortoises which have a soft carapace. Coyotes and kit foxes may prey on the adults.

The California State Bird is the California Quail, and the California State Insect is the California Dogface Butterfly. What is the California State Reptile? The Desert Tortoise of course!



Who Was the First Docent at Placerita?

Frank McDaniel

The Nature Center was built in 1971, and Frank Hovore was hired to be the first Regional Park Superintendent.

Frank was trying to figure out how to get the word out that Placerita was a natural area. The park had so much potential, but he inherited a basketball court in the area where the amphitheater is now, and a full-scale playground with swing sets and a slide in the picnic area. How could he change this image?

A few months after the opening, Frank McDaniel walked into Frank Hovore's office. The conversation went this way: "Who are you?" "I am Frank McDaniel, and I am your first docent. You do not know it yet, but you need me, and I need you. I am a Boy Scout troop leader with many Eagle Scouts looking for projects. You can provide those projects, and we can provide some help."

The Nature Center needed trails badly, so the visitors could see the park. The Eagle Scout projects were many: building steps, removing bushes, collecting rocks to line the sides of the trails, and digging for proper water runoff. Seeing all this effort, the County brought help to open some of the larger trails.

For years, Frank McDaniel had a "Bragging Board" showing all the Eagle Scouts who did their projects at Placerita. Frank McDaniel has a trail dedicated to his memory behind the Nature Center.

It takes a village...Frank is on the left of this picture (1997)





Indigenous Peoples' Day at Placerita

by Denise Allen

Indigenous Peoples' Day is a holiday in the United States that celebrates and honors indigenous American people and commemorates their history and culture. It is celebrated on the second Monday in October and is an official city and state holiday. It was celebrated in many County Parks and of course, at Placerita Canyon Nature Center.

Dennis Garcia (Tataviam Elder) spoke, told stories and danced at Indigenous Peoples' Day at Placerita. He was followed by a movie, "White Sage." He brought many artifacts to show the audience and explained how they were used. It was a great way to understand our local culture and celebrate a special day.



ed asking for advice or help. And now we have a traffic jam centered around her spot! After a year or so of this, we just gave her a table in the corner of the room, then we gave her the ribbon caddy at her request, and a tradition was born!

After all these years, she is seeing people who were children when she started and who now are coming to her with their children. Some bring her baked goods, or a favorite sandwich or drink. (She REALLY misses when we had bake sales as she benefited greatly from them!).

So, after all these years, she was happy to show us how she does it; her tips and advice on how to get it done quickly. Now she can leave the room to relax a few minutes and have a snack or lunch.

Thanks Traci!

Your Name Tag

I explained in a previous article how our logo changed from a very simple oak tree design to the more elaborate and complex logo of a Great Horned Owl. You won't be surprised if I remind you that the very talented Jill Goddard used her artistic talent to design the final product.

The name tags went through a similar evolution. At first the docent name tags were all green, but the idea of reflecting seniority and hard work on the name tags made sense.

We were a brand-new Nature Center, and we wanted to make sure the County took notice of what hard workers we were. That was long before the use of computers, so the docents entered the number of hours they were working in a notebook on the docent desk. Those hours were given to the County once a year. We always got a very positive response; they were proud and a little bit surprised by our achievement.

The docents decided it might be a good idea to make that service visible on the name tags. An acorn would be engraved on their name tag for every 500 hours of service. The word spread quickly, and the result was not quite what was anticipated. After a few years, some docents had name tags covered in acorns. The notebook where the hours were recorded became a mess of additional hours quickly scratched in - obviously the race was on!

There wasn't space for that many acorns on the name tags, so the symbol was changed. A diamond shape was added to each name tag and a little sparkling stone was added to the diamond shape indicating unusually high achievement. That did not last long at all because the diamond would fall off the name tag, to the great frustration and distress of the docents.

There weren't any established standards for this, so I came up with the approach. Now you know why there is a diamond shape on your name tag. The number of years of service is changed on the name tag every 5 years, to the very same diamond shape. The idea of a progression in service is still there. New Docents get a green name tag. After 5 years of service, they get a thin gold name tag, and after 10 years of service it's a thicker gold name tag. I have overseen the name tags for 30 years, and this latest scheme seems to work.

A docent name tag is needed for identification by our visitors, and I am happy to say, it is worn proudly by the docents at Placerita. I have always been grateful and happy to provide them through the years.

Now, you know the whole back story about that small but important name tag!



Bow-Making Class

By Heidi Webber

On September 25, a group of docents met at Placerita to be taught the quickest and best way to make a beautiful bow for wreaths at the Crafts Fair.

RuthAnne Murthy originally brought up the need for this class to give our infamous Ribbon Lady, Traci Stockhausen-White, breaks during Craft Fair Weekend. Traci rarely takes a break, even for a snack and she is swamped the entire weekend, but she wouldn't have it any other way.

Traci started making these bows at Placerita about 25 years ago. It started when she came to construct a wreath or two. She's always been very artistic and this was right up her alley. Soon, she's advising people on either side of her with tips on how to make their wreath. And then showing them how to make a bow for that wreath. Then more people around her start-



Thank You, Lori Wolfe

Lori handles the scheduling of the school groups at Placerita. It is a very difficult task, and I remember well the grateful silence during the board meeting when she accepted this complex challenge. Having school children come to the Nature Center is our most beloved activity. The docents train long and hard to be able to explain the circle of life, show the animals, and take the children on a trail adventure for a firsthand look at animals and plants and hopefully to spark the joy of learning to look at nature.

However, after the restrictions of the Covid years and the ensuing regulations creating administrative difficulties, the task was even more difficult and complex. Lori is very well organized, and did not get discouraged. She dug in her heels, and the school tours are coming back to Placerita on a fairly regular basis, to the great delight of the docents and children. Thank you so much Lori Wolfe, you brought back so much joy, and a feeling of accomplishment for many at Placerita. We know how hard you work to make this happen. We take notice!

Best Foliage at Placerita!

We all know that Placerita Canyon Nature Center is a wonderful State Park with great trails, beautiful nature during all seasons, unique animals, plants and very interesting programs to learn to enjoy all that nature has to offer.

Somehow, incredible fall foliage viewing is not the first fact that jumps to mind ... and it is a mistake. Check this link to see how we have been noticed as the Underrated State Park where you can view the best foliage in Southern California.

<https://www.onlyinyourstate.com/nature/california/state-park-fall-foliage-socal>

One of my favorite spots to take foliage photos (and I love to do that a lot!) is from the upper parking lot, right off Placerita Canyon as you leave Placerita Canyon Road. Do your best to catch it on a sunny day at the Golden Hour, one hour before sunset, and you will be enchanted with the result. You will be at a higher elevation than the trees, so you will catch the changing color along with the darker background of the hills.

We are all different and learning to observe is the most important thing of all. Find the place that brings you joy, and relish this new fall season.



Fall Kick Off--September 17

by Denise Allen

After the long summer, a Fall Kick Off is planned each year, so the docents get reacquainted with each other, roll up their sleeves and get ready to work. This year it was very well attended, and we heard about Nature Tots, the Walker Cabin, the Amphitheater, new "Birds" in our museum, our Community Nature Series, Books and Hikes, Nature Boxes, and other opportunities that our magical park offers our docents and community.

It was a beautiful sunny but fortunately cooler day, and we could feel fall coming. It was a nice way to start off together again.

Thank you to Ron Kraus, Herb Broutt and the hospitality committee for their part in the successful kickoff to Fall!



Trail Treasures

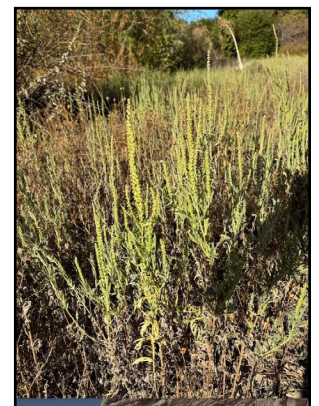
By RuthAnne Murthy

This common herb grows throughout the western United States. It is a perennial herb that stands about 2-4 feet tall. The entire plant is covered with short hairs that can irritate the skin. It is highly aromatic, and some say it is minty. It grows in disturbed areas and along roads.

Ragweed leaves grow alternately from 1 ½ inches to 5 inches long. The leaves form from short stems and are deeply lobed (lanceolata).

The plant flowers from July to November. The flowers grow in spikes (racemes) of 12-25 flowers. Because ragweed is part of the Asteraceae family, it has disc flowers like an aster. The flowers are green and are easy to overlook. There are male and female flowers on the same plant. The flowers produce abundant pollen that floats in the wind. Because of that, many people have ragweed allergies in the fall causing sore throat, stuffy nose and cough.

California native people used the leaves to make tea for nausea and fever and made tea from the roots for a laxative. All parts of the plant are edible for humans and livestock. Small mammals and some birds use the plant for nesting material and for food. Many people dislike western ragweed because of their allergies, but if you are looking for flowers in the autumn, it is a true trail treasure.



Western Ragweed
Ambrosia psilostachya



SCV River Rally Clean-up by Glenda Perl

PCNCA once again participated in the annual SCV River Rally cleanup. An exhilarating morning was had by all! A big thank you goes out to the PCNCA Outreach Team (Will Webber, Heidi Gray Webber, Judie Kerr Davis, and Jayme Thomas).

Thank you, Jason Webber, who also spent most of the morning chatting with the visitors. More than 1,000 volunteers showed up to pick up trash from a section of the Santa Clara Riverbed by the William S. Hart Pony Baseball field.



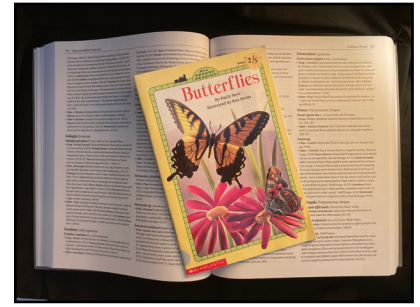
Ron Kraus is the Official PCNCA Historian

We could not be more delighted that Ron accepted this new position. For many years, Ron has taught Placerita History during docent training. He has conducted extensive research to make sure that all the statements taught are accurate, which is not always an easy task. He has collected many artifacts, photos, and documents from PCNCA's past.

As an organization built by many docents, their knowledge and aptitude is so vital, and he knows the docents personally.

Ron has a deep love for Placerita. Looking at an old photo and examining the mountain range in the background, he can tell you the very spot the photo was taken!

Ron is a docent from the Class of 2002. Congratulations on your new position, and thank you for all your help and all the knowledge you share.



Butterflies and Ethnobotany in the Library!

By Gary Freiburger

Thanks to an anonymous donor for "Butterflies", an easy-to-read book that might be useful for Nature Tots or for reading to your child or grandchild. Lots of pictures and simple text!

The Board of Directors also purchased "Native American Ethnobotany" for the library. This 900+ page volume contains detailed information on plants used by Native Americans across the continent.

Both titles can be checked out by signing your name in the white notebook on the library shelves.



WINTER SCHEDULE

CRAFT FAIR: Saturday December 7 and Sunday December 8. See flyer.

Books and Hikes: 4th Sunday of the month from 9AM to 10:30AM. Please register at booksandhikes@placerita.org

Bird Walks: 1st Saturday of every month with Rosemarie Regis. 2nd Saturday of every month with Ken Yasukawa. For all levels of birders, from 8AM to 10AM. Bring binoculars, water and a field guide.

Blooms of the Season: Learn about native plants with RuthAnne Murthy, 4th Saturday of every month. Meet on the patio at 9AM for a one-hour stroll. Bring your camera and questions.

Family Nature Walk: Every Saturday from 11AM to noon with Judy McClure. An easy 1-hour walk exploring the natural and cultural history of the area.

Hike with the Downhill Sliders: 2nd Monday of the month, check Trails and Nuggets for information

Placerita Nature Tots: 2nd Saturday of the month at 9:30AM. For 3-to-6-year-olds. Program lasts 45 minutes to one hour and will involve learning about the environment. To register, go to Nature_tots@placerita.org

Nature Education: Every 3rd Sunday of the month at 2PM, PCNCA provides a free educational program open to the public. Check the webpage to learn about the topic.

Native Plant Renewal and Restoration: Every Thursday at 9AM, led by Robert Grzesiak. Bring garden gloves and water.

Upcoming Events for Docents

Wednesday, October 23: St. Francis Dam and Pumhouse tour with Dan Kott – RSVP required.

Thursday, November 21: Trip to the Antelope Valley Indian Museum.

Saturday, January 11: Holiday party for docents and significant others. 6PM.

Fall and winter hours for Placerita Nature Center Park: Beginning on November 1st through and including February 28th, 2025, the office and park are scheduled to be open from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. The Courtyard, Office, Museum and Classroom will still be closed on Mondays, and the entire park and office will be closed completely on Christmas Day.



Jennie Marsh and the Walker Legacy

My name is Jennie Marsh, and I relocated to Santa Clarita from Colorado Springs, CO. I wanted to build a retirement that allowed me to draw on my previous work experience as an Educator, so I reached out to Ron Kraus in April 2022. He asked me to help with the Nature Tots program because its leader was no longer able to continue, and my background seemed a strong fit. I was delighted to jump in, and believe I have helped the Tots program broaden its wonderful offerings in science, literature, music

and preschool skills.

When I completed docent training this year, my first job was to start scrubbing and scraping! Marc Alva advertised that he needed help with a massive cleaning of the Walker cabin. It had been closed for 2 years due to Covid. This was an intense experience to say the least! We had no running water. We used disinfectant sprays, masks and gloves, metal brushes and scrapers. The prior “tenants” (mice) had had a huge ongoing party in the cabin! But we persevered in our work, and that work opened a new, meaningful opportunity: to promote and preserve the Walker Legacy.

The Walker Legacy

When Evelynne asked me to write an article for The Rattler about my work as a new docent, I realized that this was an opportunity to share my thoughts about the Walker Legacy.

What does leaving a legacy mean? It means giving something that will be valued and treasured by those who survive your death. That is exactly what Frank E. Walker did. He sold his Placerita homestead to the state of California and the Los Angeles County Parks & Recreation department instead of selling it to developers.

Because of Frank E. Walker’s foresight, we now enjoy this remarkable park which has been preserved for our community. The Walker cabin is a special repository of the Walker past: Frank and his wife Hortense raised twelve children at Placerita. He mined gold, raised livestock, opened a western-style camp for the public and rented his property to movie studios to film over 110 westerns. Recently I met with two of Frank’s grandchildren, Bob and Debbie. They told me emphatically that their Poppa would have tears in his eyes if he could see what his land had become, how many lives it touches daily, and the phenomenal programming our docents have created to support his legacy.

The small team of dedicated docents who make up the Walker Cabin committee, which I chair, has accomplished a lot since we began six months ago. We have developed a strong relationship with Bob Walker, Frank’s grandson. He has generously shared his knowledge, annotated archives and photos. We are currently working with another Walker grandchild on the family’s ancestry. We have researched and produced a docent tour “menu” (see note below) and photo album, to ensure what we tell the public is historically accurate. We have reopened the cabin for public and school tours during the week and on the weekends. I can’t tell you how many thrilled visitors we have had that come into the cabin and remark they had come so often in the past to view the interior (unsuccessfully) and were so grateful to finally be able to do so now.

My role as a PCNCA docent is to help translate this legacy into meaningful educational materials and resources for our community. We have big dreams which include hosting a concert with donations to be used towards cabin exhibits, creating a short video for the public which shares the story of the Walker legacy, and collecting personal anecdotes about immediate Walker family members. This will help tell the behind-the-scenes stories of these hard working, talented, and stubborn Walkers.

These are just some of our ideas for the future!

Thank you so much for taking the time to read this. And please stop by the cabin for a tour and, if the legacy bug bites you too, join our mission to preserve the Walker legacy.



The Bob Moss Award and Cup 2024-2025 by Pat Coskran

Last Fall, I was honored and humbled to receive the Bob Moss Cup from the previous recipient, Sue Murachanian.

This award is given to a docent who has shown special initiative, done creative projects, or started a new program. This year’s recipient checks all of these boxes.

The docent that earned the cup this year is Dennis Cain.

Dennis, Ellen Coleman and Barb Heinzl created the Books and Hikes Program, which just celebrated its first anniversary. This program has developed into a thriving and expanding offering for our community.

Dennis led a Docent Enrichment Program addressing how the Placerita Creek Watershed fits into the larger Santa Clara River Watershed.

He worked with Cristhian Mace (LA County Natural Area Biologist) to develop a tree health assessment survey, and helped organize fellow docents in assessing and tagging our woodlands.

Dennis is a member of the Docent Class of 2023, but he tells me that he feels like his docent era is just beginning. He feels blessed to be able to work with his fellow docents in developing fun and meaningful activities for our community and visitors.

The inscription on the cup states, “For Outstanding Volunteer Work, Improving PCNCA to a Higher Level”.

Congratulations, Dennis. Your efforts have already moved us to a higher level, and we look forward to what’s next. I am pleased to pass the Bob Moss Cup on to you.

*The Walker Cabin docent menu is available on the PCNCA Docent Training website under the History segment



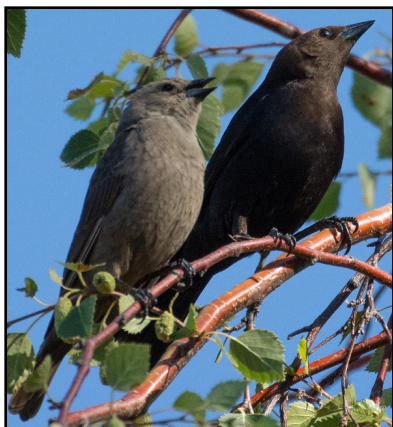


Photo by Gary Park

Brown-headed Cowbird

by Ken Yasukawa

The Brown-headed Cowbird is North America's best known brood parasite, meaning it lays its eggs in the nests of over 220 other species of birds (host species). Originally these "Buffalo Birds" were limited to short-grass plains, where they followed herds of North American Bison to feed on insects stirred up by their movement. Brood parasitism freed cowbirds from a month-long commitment to raising young and allowed them to follow roaming herds of bison. The Brown-headed Cowbird has dispersed widely from the prairies of North America and can now be seen at Placerita.

Brood parasites have adaptations that help them to find suitable nests and lay eggs in them, and to ensure that their eggs and young are raised by the hosts. Because hosts are raising young not their own and because parasites may also remove host eggs and eject host young from the nest, host species have adaptations to reduce the risk and cost of parasitism. Hosts and parasites are thus "model species" for the process of coevolution and many studies have focused on cowbirds and their many hosts.

The Red-winged Blackbird, which I studied for 44 years, is an important cowbird host through its status as one of North America's most common species and because it nests in open habitats suitable for cowbirds. My colleagues and I found that female cowbirds watch and listen to female redwings to find nests and often time their laying to coincide with the 3–4-day laying period of redwings. We also found that female redwings initiate incubation early to make it harder for female cowbirds to access their nests and desert nests that receive a cowbird egg too early, and that male redwings fiercely attack female cowbirds found near the nests on their territories. Despite these and other anti-parasite adaptations, up to 20% of our redwing nests were parasitized and redwings readily care for cowbird eggs and young. Once I even found a redwing nest with four cowbird nestlings and no redwing nestlings.

Although redwings are not seriously affected by cowbird parasitism, other species such as Kirtland's Warbler, Black-capped Vireo, and Least Bell's Vireo, which have small populations, are seriously threatened by parasitism. In some cases, cowbirds are trapped and removed from these threatened populations.

Gary Park - RIP October 2024

I was deeply saddened to hear that Gary Park passed away recently. Here are some testimonials from the staff and the docents at Placerita. He was much loved and appreciated.

Frank Hoffman, Recreation Services Supervisor. I have known Gary for years. His work in our Know Your Nature Center in the display case shows examples of many of our local birds, and I use that display every single week. He also created a PowerPoint presentation for me years ago that I still use today for training docents at the Santa Monica Conservancy, and the Antelope Valley Audubon Society educating their membership too.

Ken Yasukawa, Docent and Bird Walk Leader. I personally will miss him—I learned most of what I know of local bird ID from him! I also used his photos on the new Hummingbird Garden display board.

Rosemarie Sanchez-Fraser, Docent and Bird Walk Leader. One of the last events Gary came to was Helen's Sweeney "Singing in the Park." I think we all expected something different, but it ended up being a teaching experience for him, even though he told the leader, he was not interested in participating! I knew he was uncomfortable in the hard seats, so I left to bring him a cushion from my car. When I returned, he had taken over the conversation from the speaker. And we all learned that birds send messages to each other by singing of any danger or intrusions. I will miss him greatly! I extend my condolences to the family. He was a very special friend.

RuthAnne Murthy, Docent and Blooms of the Season Leader. I am so sorry to hear this sad news. He was a lovely person with so much talent and enthusiasm. I know the birders will miss him. He was so generous when asked if we could use his photos, he always said yes.

Evelyne Vandersande, Docent and Rattler Editor. For many years, Gary Park let the Rattler use his photos. He was a professional photographer, and his photos are copyrighted but he was willing to share his talent freely. Check all the previous issues to look at his photos, this is what an artist's work looks like. Thank you, Gary, you will be dearly missed





The Placerita Canyon Nature Center
Presents its Annual

Holiday Craft Fair

December 7th and 8th, 2024

10:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M.

at

Placerita Canyon Nature Center

19152 Placerita Canyon Road, Newhall

1 1/2 miles east of the 14 freeway

Create and decorate your own holiday wreaths, centerpieces and ornaments using a large assortment of fresh-cut greenery, pine cones and other beautiful natural treasures. In addition, our gift shop will be open with lots of holiday items.

Please note that this is a fundraising event for the Placerita Canyon Nature Center Associates (a non-profit corporation) and that there is a charge for all activities (cash, check, credit and debit cards will be accepted.) Make your own Wreath, Yule Log, or other craft as you desire. Children's crafts will also be available. For those with allergy concerns, please note that peanut butter is used on some craft items.

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