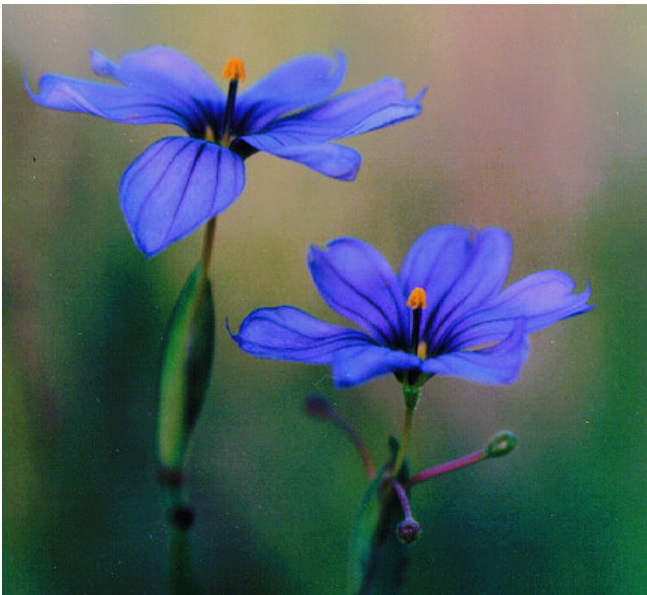




A CLOSER LOOK AT THE FLOWER BLUE-EYED GRASS

By Bob Young

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



Photograph by Sonja Wilcomer

Blue-Eyed Grass 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.

It blooms in moist, open, grassy places from March to May. The generally purple, six-pointed flowers with yellow centers are on the sides and at the end of the flower stalk. It can grow from four inches to twenty inches tall. The leaves, shorter than the flower stalks, are flat, narrow, and grass-like.

The flower color can vary from purple to a very pale blue, rarely white. They open in the morning and close in the afternoon. Individual flowers have a short life, but they are replaced daily during the blooming season by new flowers.

Blue-Eyed Grass is in the Iris family of plants, not in the Grass family. Although in the Iris family, Blue-Eyed Grass does not have the usual Iris shape of three sepals pointing out (or down) and three petals pointing up.

Its scientific name is *Sisyrinchium bellum* (pronounced sis-ih-RINK-ee-um BELL-um). Back in about 300 B.C. a disciple and successor of Aristotle named Theophrastus gave *Sisyrinchium* its generic name. In Greek, *sisy* means pig and *rinchium* means snout. It was said that pigs grubbed out the tubers of this plant.

Blue-Eyed Grass was first designated as *Sisyrinchium bellum* in 1876 by botanist S Watson.

On the Pacific Coast, Blue Eyed Grass is found in California and Oregon, generally less than 7000 feet in elevation.

Since the eye of the flower is not blue, and the plant is not a grass, maybe we should heed the words of Edith S. Clements who wrote, in 1928, in her book *Flowers of Coast and Sierra*, "...the name grass iris is preferable to that of blue-eyed grass commonly used." Or for our Edgewood Natural Preserve, we could give it the name that Toni Corelli sometimes uses: "yellow-eyed, purple iris." `

INSIDE THE EXPLORER

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11 NEW DOCENTS GRADUATE

By Dianne Hunt



Docent Coordinator Dianne Hunt

ATTENTION wildflower lovers who enjoy Edgewood Natural Preserve and would like to learn more about its diversity and wildflowers. We have eleven new docents who just completed training, for a total of 60 California Native Plant Society docents leading wildflower walks at Edgewood

Natural Preserve this spring.

Thank you to Susan Sommers, Toni Corelli, Ken Himes, Bill Kirsher and Bob Buell for another year of excellent training classes and field trips.

Docents who will graduate and receive their official CNPS nametags on March 5th are:

- Bob Archibald
- Anne Curran
- Herb Fischgrund
- Linda Franklyn
- Katherine Greene
- Peter Ingram
- Mary Anne Leary
- Roger Myers
- Susan Peterson
- Chris Sapyta
- Jean Struthers

They are all anxious to share their newly acquired knowledge and their appreciation of Edgewood Natural Preserve.

Docent-led weekend walks will begin on Sunday, March 8th at 10:00 am at the Day Camp entrance. Be sure to check the schedule printed on pages 5 and 6 for dates, times and starting locations. Please call me with any questions you may have about these walks. See you on the trail!!! ^

TRAIL PATROL SIGN-UPS GOING ON NOW!

Each February, the Edgewood Park Volunteer Trail Patrol mounts a recruitment campaign for new members. This year, Trail Patrol recruitment has been given a substantial boost by a county-sponsored mailing of 1500 recruitment flyers to households in the Emerald Lake area.

In the flyer, interested parties are asked to contact FOE Trail Patrol Coordinator, Nancy Mangini, who will reserve them a space in the two-evening Trail Patrol Training Program to be held on March 12th and March 19th. This training, conducted by the San Mateo County Parks and Recreation Division, is designed to provide new Patrol members with instruction in park rules, observation and reporting techniques, on-trail communication methods, and conflict avoidance skills.

Then, on Sunday, March 29th, the entire Edgewood Park Volunteer Trail Patrol will be asked to gather at the Day Camp area at 1 PM to meet new members, reestablish contact with existing members, and decide upon patrol schedules for the upcoming wildflower season in the preserve.

If you did not receive one of the flyers and are interested in joining the Patrol, or know of someone else who may be interested, you can contact Nancy or email her.

The Friends of Edgewood would like to thank Nancy, her husband Michael, and Patrol member Corrine Mangini for spending much of their President's Day weekend folding, stuffing, and stickering the 1500 flyers that went out in February! ^



ROCKY'S CORNER

By Judy Grimsby

HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY & SAINT PATRICK'S DAY to one and all. I want to take this moment to share with you some words of wisdom. I received them from my daughter's school in the passing of one of their teachers.

Enjoy the moments of winter...
 Try to slow down enough to hear
 Your children's smile and feel the
 Warmth of family...

— Debbie LaTorre-Ritchie

What a winter we have been having this El Niño year. We may all be tired of the rain, mud and ditch digging but take a look at what's blooming! I love this time of year, the grass is showing so many different shades of green and the winter rains are refreshing to the soul. Yes we are right around the corner to wildflower season. I need some volunteers to help fold the wildflower walk schedules. Please call me Wednesday through Saturday.

With the upcoming season it is extremely important to keep visitors on the trails. Last year there were several maverick trails deeply engraved in the Iris and the Mule Ears patches. If you like to hike and talk with people contact Nancy Mangini, 365-4449 or Lynne Fritz, 599-1306 to sign up for trail patrol.

For the more physical type, there is a trail maintenance training class being held at Junipero Serra Park in San Bruno March 28th and 29th. We could use some help on trail maintenance this spring as we have been overwhelmed with the winter rains. The Edgewood crew has been busy with rebuilding the habitat barriers again, and doing our best in keeping up with the rain.

Tom and I have gone to various homes in the Sunset entrance area, explaining the after hours activity in the park. Homeowners have been willing to call if they spot anything suspicious.

You may have seen several closures during the



storms this season. These closures are temporary due to the overwhelming rains. February 14th was the first time I saw thunder and lightning at Edgewood. The staff is looking forward to a less rainy spring and summer. Spring is like the return of some old friends and a renewal of life. Keep an eye on the Day Camp information board for the wonderful drawings created by our park aide Tobias Wolf.

WHAT AM I?

I come in many colors including several shades of green, yellow and orange. I am a perfect example of a symbiotic (mutually beneficial) relationship. I prefer humidity but can withstand periods of drying and am even heat tolerant.

Because I have no excretory system, I cannot eliminate waste material, and that makes me sensitive to pollution, especially sulfur dioxide. Therefore, scientists use me as a biomonitor. What am I?

Answer on page 4

WHAT AM I? — A LICHEN

By Kathy Korbholz

Lichen comes from the Greek word *leichen* meaning tree moss. Although lichens appear to be independent organisms, they are not. Each lichen species is a synergistic partnership of a particular fungus and a particular alga. Nearly 1000 species of lichens are found in California. The algal cells utilize sunlight to produce food, while the fungus provides structure and probably protection for the alga. The fungus determines the major structure of the lichen which is called the thallus. Some scholars debate whether the relationship is truly symbiotic, mutualistic or parasitic.

Lichens have very simple physiological demands. Mineral nutrients come from dust, dew, fog, and rainwater and are eagerly taken up by the thallus. When dry, lichens enter a dormant phase and can endure long periods of drought and extreme temperatures. When moistened, they are ready to resume growth at once. The result is that lichens have invaded and thrive in almost all habitats from desert to polar. Often mosses are their only competitors. Because they remain dormant much of the time and grow so slowly (usually 1-10 millimeters per year) they are considered Methuselahs among living organisms. Some arctic species are estimated to be 5000 to 9000 years old—nearly twice the age of bristlecone pines in California.

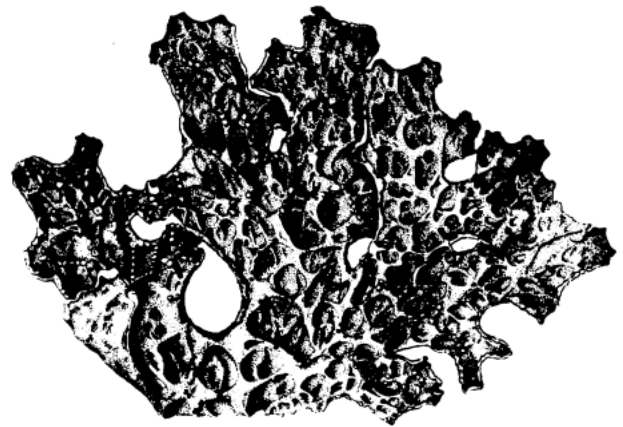
For weavers and fabric manufacturers, brilliant lichen colors make unusual textile dyes. Native Americans used lichens to color porcupine quills to weave into their baskets, Europeans used lichens to dye wool, and a rare coastal lichen from southern California is used to make litmus paper.

Lichens are used to this day in European perfume making. Their antibiotic properties are still used in China and were probably as popular with native Californian Indians as they are today with Seminoles in Florida.

With no excretory system to rid their thalli of

contaminants, lichens are very sensitive to pollution. The very presence or absence of lichens is a useful biological indicator of contamination. They have been collected in and around cities to measure the concentrations of lead and other toxic materials in the thalli.

Lichens are divided into three common growth forms. The simplest, **Crustose**, grows firmly attached to rocks, bark, or other surfaces and appears as a crust on objects. Some are so fine and tightly attached, they almost look like a coat of old paint. The second, **Foliose**, looks like leaves or foliage. It can be tightly or loosely attached to the surface, often with root-like threads called rhizines. Its wrinkly surface is more or less flat. The third, most complex type, is called **Fruticose**. These lichens are attached to the substrate at only one point. They may grow erect and resemble scrubby little bushes or may hang down from branches as gray green streamers. They are often misidentified as Spanish moss.



Typical foliose lichen

Most authorities believe lichens are not parasitic and do not harm the trees on which they grow except possibly by shading leaves below them. In fact, they benefit the landscape by pioneering on bare rock, eventually breaking it down into soil fit for leafy green plants. Soft-textured fruticose and foliose lichens enhance the beauty of the forest, while brightly colored crustose lichens can transform a barren rocky landscape.

(Continued on page 7)

**Santa Clara Valley Chapter of the
California Native Plant Society**

WILDFLOWER WALKS AT EDGEWOOD PRESERVE

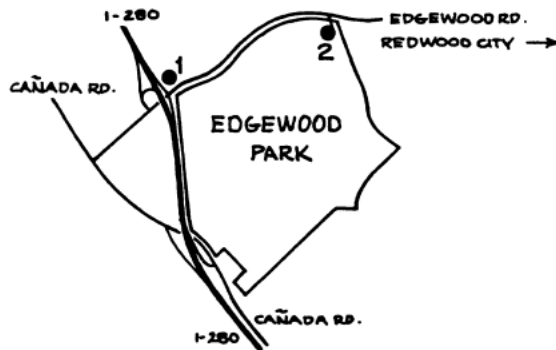
The carpets of wildflowers covering the serpentine grassland at Edgewood Preserve are renowned throughout California and beyond. Over 50 different species of wildflowers can often be seen in bloom on these short walks. Many of these flowers occur elsewhere in the Bay Area, but are not seen in such brilliant displays. You may also see some rare or unique plants and maybe even a Bay Checkerspot Butterfly!

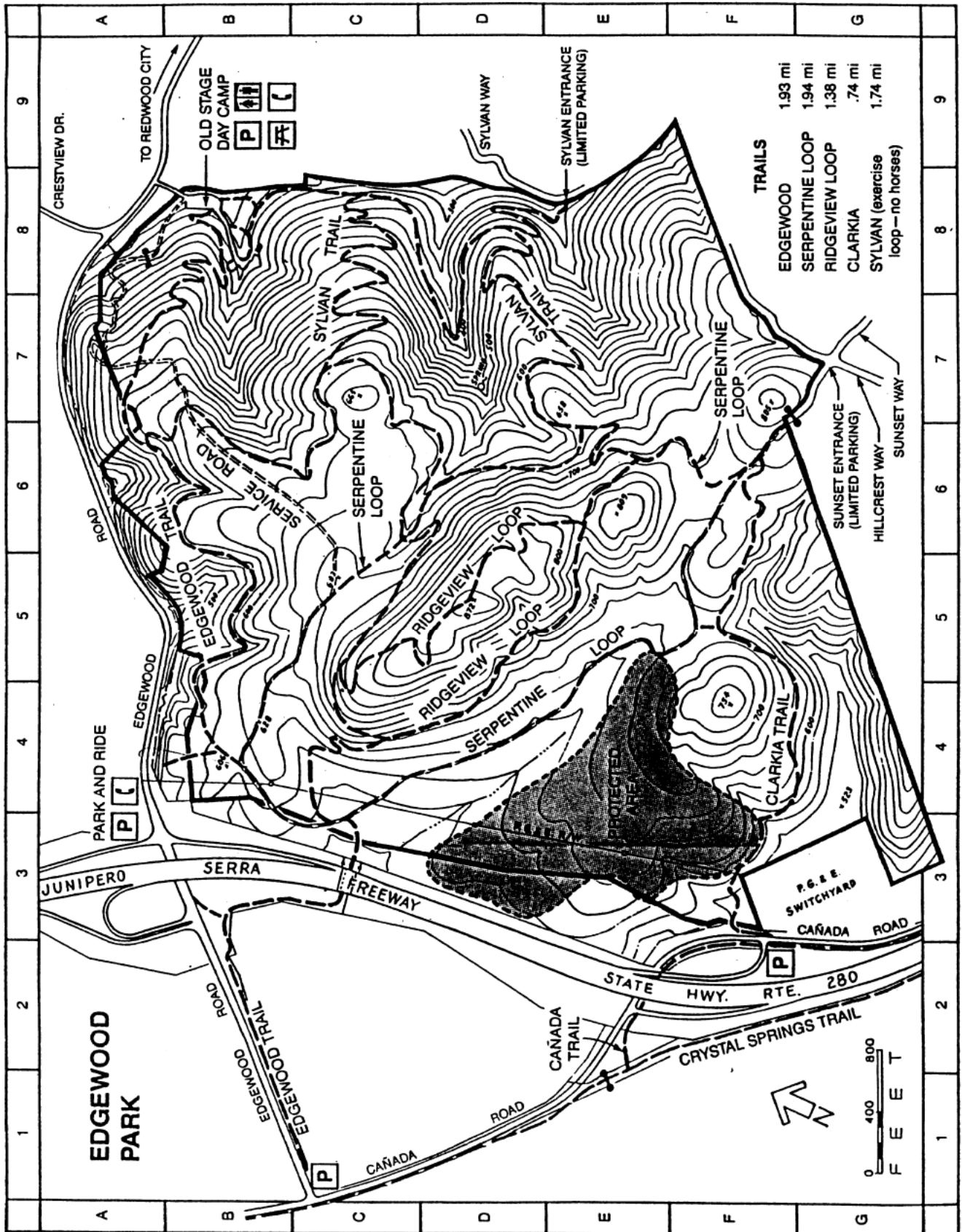
THE SCHEDULE OF WALKS AT EDGEWOOD – 1998

CLIP AND SAVE

| <u>Date</u> | <u>Day</u> | <u>Leaders</u> | <u>Meeting Place</u> |
|-------------|------------|--|----------------------|
| March 8 | Sunday | John Allen, Marjorie Fletcher | Day Camp |
| March 15 | Sunday | Roger Myers, Paul Heiple (Geology will be featured) | Day Camp |
| March 21 | Saturday | Al Huber, Carol Hankermeyer | Park & Ride |
| March 28 | Saturday | Elly Hess, Bob Young | Park & Ride |
| April 4 | Saturday | Gene Bulf, Maxine Olson | Park & Ride |
| April 5 | Sunday | Jan Simpson, Sandra Overton | Park & Ride |
| April 11 | Saturday | Susan Peterson, Norma Jean Galiher | Park & Ride |
| April 12 | Sunday | Bill Kirsher, Stephen Buckhout | Park & Ride |
| April 18 | Saturday | Joyce Nicholas, Richard Gehrer | Park & Ride |
| April 19 | Sunday | Bill Korbholz, Bob Archibald | Park & Ride |
| April 25 | Saturday | Mansur Nur, Carol Belew | Park & Ride |
| April 26 | Sunday | Kate Connors, Frank Figoni | Park & Ride |
| May 2 | Saturday | Robert Strode, Al Huber | Park & Ride |
| May 3 | Sunday | Donna Maytham, Anne Curran | Park & Ride |
| May 9 | Saturday | Dianne Hunt, Sally Casey (Grasses will be featured) | Park & Ride |
| May 10 | Sunday | Bob Buell, Katherine Greene | Park & Ride |
| May 17 | Sunday | Kathy Korbholz, Laurie Coon | Park & Ride |
| May 24 | Sunday | Chris Sapyta, Jutta Hempel | Day Camp |
| May 30 | Saturday | Don Mayall, Carolyn Curtis | Day Camp |
| June 7 | Sunday | Donna Peterson, Ken Himes | Day Camp |

All walks begin at 10:00 a.m., last about three hours and start at one of the two parking areas, as noted on the list and the map below. Bring a snack and water. No reservations are necessary. Restrooms are available only at the Day Camp entrance. For more information call To schedule a guided tour for your group, call Dianne Hunt, Docent Coordinator.





(Continued from page 4)

This year's greater-than-normal rainfall presents the perfect opportunity to appreciate these fascinating organisms. In Edgewood, just look for the velvety green attached to branches of



trees and shrubs; even broken branches and twigs on the ground offer specimens. Then study larger rocks next to the trail to view the bright

yellow and orange lichens. Try the Clarkia Trail. The upper portion offers eye-level foliose and fruticose lichens on the serpentine chaparral. Along the lower portion of the trail, you can find a magnificent collection of crustose lichens on a huge serpentine outcropping right next to the

TRAIL DAY AT EDGEWOOD

The 13th annual California Trail Days will take place the last weekend of April. Sponsored by California State Parks, California Recreational Trails Committee, and California Trails and Greenways Foundation, Trail Days are a great way for volunteers to help promote trail development, build new trails, and improve existing trails.

Edgewood will be hosting a Trail Day event on Saturday April 25th to repair some of the trail damage caused by El Niño. If you would like to help out, please contact Volunteer Coordinator Lynne Fritz.

MEMBERSHIP DUES REMINDER

New or continuing members of the Friends of Edgewood Natural Preserve are asked to pay **tax-deductible** membership dues annually to offset the expenses associated with preserving Edgewood. If you would like to join the Friends, continue your membership, or simply make a contribution, please clip and complete this section. Mail it to the return address on the back of this panel with your check payable to **Friends of Edgewood Natural Preserve**. In return, you will receive four more issues of the Edgewood Explorer and the full-color brochure *Common Native Wildflowers of Edgewood*.

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 (newsletter, *Checklist*, greeting cards, and 28-minute video *Saving Edgewood Park*)
- \$250 Patron Membership (newsletter, *Edgewood Checklist of Plants*, greeting cards, video, and 16x20 photo-poster)
- I am enclosing a gift of _____.
- Please send _____ copies of the 28-minute video *Saving Edgewood Park* at \$15 each.
- Please send _____ copies of the *Edgewood Checklist of Plants* at \$3 each.

- Particular interests:
- Public relations
 - Docent
 - Exotics control
 - Newsletter
 - Trail patrol
 - Revegetation
 - Community outreach



UPCOMING EVENTS

- o *Weekends beginning March*, **EDGEWOOD WILDFLOWER WALKS**. See pages 5-6 for dates, times, and meeting places.
- o *Thursdays, March 12 and 19*, **EDGEWOOD PARK VOLUNTEER TRAIL PATROL TRAINING**. Call Nancy Mangini.
- o *Saturday and Sunday, March 28 and 29*, **TRAIL MAINTENANCE TRAINING CLASS**. Junipero Serra Park in San Bruno. Call Judy Grimsby for details.
- o *Saturday, April 25*, **TRAIL DAY AT EDGEWOOD**. To sign up, call Lynne Fritz.

TREASURER'S REPORT FOR 1997

By Bob Young

Friends of Edgewood remained financially sound in 1997, with income slightly exceeding expenses. Our major sources of revenue were from membership dues, donations, and sales of butterfly T-shirts.

Our most significant expenses were associated with the production and mailing of newsletters and flyers, and the one-time costs of buying and printing the T-shirts. In 1997, we also had expenses for our participation in the Climate Best Fest and for gaining our nonprofit status.

Thank you for your support. For more information, please contact me.

The Edgewood Explorer is published four times yearly by the Friends of Edgewood Natural Preserve, a nonprofit organization dedicated to keeping Edgewood Park and Natural Preserve a place for all to enjoy the natural beauty and habitat. The newsletter is produced by Kathy Korbholz with assistance from Laverne Rabinowitz and contributions from many Friends.

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FIRST CLASS