

# Edgewood



# Explorer

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## NEW DOCENT GRADS

**By Mary K. Wilson, Docent Training Coordinator**

We've graduated another class of new and enthusiastic docents this spring. Please welcome Pam Berreyesa, Amity Binkert, Gary Cornelsen, Jayne Hahin, Kirsten Hoyer, Weilin Pan and Suzanne Schleck.

Our seven new docents started with a variety of backgrounds ranging from knowledge of Sierra wildflowers to knowledge of the plants of the Midwest or Europe rather than of California. In addition we had a Mid-Peninsula Regional Open Space docent, a trail patroller and dedicated jogger, a pediatric nurse, and a new mom.

This group was so enthusiastic that they took Ken Himes up on his offer to show them the Brodiaea complex and Bush Mallow one evening a month or more *after* docent training ended! A great time was had by all despite our staying out until it was nearly too dark to see as we hastened down the Service Road to the parking lot.

John Allen, Bob Buell, Toni Corelli, Paul Heiple, and Ken Himes taught our training classes again. A **huge** thank you is due them for the knowledge they impart and for the enthusiasm for Edgewood that they engender! ♻️

## EDGEWOOD'S TRAIL PATROL

**By Herb Fischgrund**

As part of the County's Volunteer Program coordinated by Volunteer Coordinator Nick Ramirez, Trail Patrollers supplement the ranger staff by walking Edgewood's trails and educating park visitors about the special care required to protect our natural preserve. Six new members joined the patrol in 2006. They are

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## CHESTNUT-BACKED CHICKADEE

**By Lee Franks**

Chickadees are named after their husky calls, typically a high, thin, scratchy "tseck-a-dee-dee." They belong to the order Passeriformes (perching birds), and are in the Titmouse family (Paridae). There are about 65 species of titmice in the world, and all are small, perching birds with soft fluffy plumage, usually in grays and browns.



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The Chestnut-backed Chickadee, *Poecile rufescens*, is most common along the Pacific Coast regions, and is believed to be the smallest member of its family, measuring 4-5" long. Unlike most chickadees (there are 7 North American species, 4 of which are found in the Pacific Northwest), the Chestnut-backed has no whistled song, but uses gargle or clicking notes instead.

### Appearance

The back, sides, and rump are a deep rufous-

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chestnut that contrasts with the white of their underparts. Their cap, from forehead to hindneck extending to just below their eyes, is blackish, bordered below by a white cheek patch. The throat and upper breast is a blackish-brown, in sharp contrast to a white lower breast. Their wings are brownish gray with white edging. The tail is also brownish gray, but the edging is pale gray. Males, females, and young all look alike.

### Behavior

Chickadees are active birds that constantly hop about in the outer branches of Edgewood's oak trees. They especially like clinging upside down to a twig or making short flights from tree to tree. These flights are usually done when feeding and are best described as a slow bobbing flight. They are able to perform remarkable acrobatics as they glean insects, as well as their eggs and larvae, from leaves, twigs, branches, and bark.

During the breeding season they are territorial, but they join mixed-species flocks in the winter. Territories often adjoin those of the Oak Titmouse, with which the chickadee competes for nest sites, and, to some extent, food. Chickadee nests are 50% hair and fur. The most common hair they use comes from deer, rabbits, and coyotes. The adults make a layer of fur about a centimeter thick which is used to cover their eggs whenever they leave the nest.

Chestnut-backed use nest boxes in the park when they can't find a more suitable place to build their nests. Since they are year-round residents,



Michael G. Shepard

they usually make use of boxes in winter to serve as a winter roost to conserve heat. By grouping together in a small space they are able to use their escaping body heat to warm the air around them, thereby saving a great deal of metabolic energy. This type of prolonged contact increases the likelihood of transmitting parasites and diseases between the birds. But the benefit of sharing body heat must outweigh the potential health risk.

### Sounds

Chickadees are small, but they are social and they work together to fight predators. They believe that there is strength in numbers. When a chickadee spots an owl, hawk, or other predator perched nearby, it makes a warning call that sounds like its name ("chick-a-dee-dee-dee.") Other chickadees within earshot then swarm together and mob the predator, usually harassing it so that it flies away.

Scientists have found that not only do chickadees use vocalizations to coordinate predator behavior, they actually have different calls for different predator situations. Chickadees that spot approaching predators give high-pitched "seet" calls and flee. They also seem to vary their "chick-a-dee-dee" alarm calls in order to send slightly different warnings. For example, the "dee-dee" call becomes longer or shorter, depending on the size of the predator. Small raptors are actually more dangerous to chickadees than large ones, because they are more agile and better able to catch tiny birds. The big beaks and talons of the large raptors are only useful if the bird can catch its prey. Chickadees can turn on a dime, so the smaller raptors have a better chance of catching them.

So, the number of "dees" at the end of chickadees warning call sends a message to other birds in the flock about how dangerous the nearby predator is.

### References

The Birds of North America, No 689, 2002;  
Donald L. Dahlsten, Leonard A. Brennan, D.  
Archibald McCallum, Sandra L. L. Gaunt. 🌿

(TRAIL PATROL, Continued from page 1)

Gary Cornelsen, Larry and Ann Gordon, Jerry and Claudette Gow, and Daphne Pereas.

Nick and Trail Patrol Leader Marshall Lim recruit volunteers and promote involvement throughout the year. No special background or knowledge is required, only a desire to help out. After an initial screening process, Marshall gives you a one-on-one orientation at the Park, at the end of which you graduate and receive your special cap and patch. Most of the need is on weekends when the park is most heavily used, but some patrollers like to walk during the week. Whatever time you can volunteer will help. To volunteer, contact either Nick or Marshall for more information.

As a bonus, Trail patrollers have the opportunity to take county-sponsored first aid and CPR courses and attend other learning programs related to County parklands. ♻️



Ken Himes shows pride in his French broom conquest.

**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 six-digit code to the right of their name on their mailing label. For example, if the code is 06/2006, membership runs through June 2006. Questions, call (866) GO-EDGEWOOD or contact membership-coordinator@friendsofedgewood.org.

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- \$75 Supporter** (newsletter plus choose one):
  - Set of 6 Edgewood photo greeting cards and 1-year subscription to BAY NATURE magazine
  - Toni Corelli's Flowering Plants of Edgewood
- \$100 Steward** or  **\$250 Guardian** (newsletter, set of 6 Edgewood photo greeting cards, plus choose one):
  - 1-year subscription to BAY NATURE magazine
  - Toni Corelli's Flowering Plants of Edgewood

**Please do not send any premiums.**

**I am enclosing a gift of \_\_\_\_\_.**

Please send \_\_\_ copies of *Common Native Wildflowers of Edgewood* (\$2.50), \_\_\_ copies of the *Edgewood Vascular Plant List* (\$3.00), \_\_\_ copies of the Apr-Jun 2004 BAY NATURE magazine (\$6.00), \_\_\_ copies of Flowering Plants of Edgewood Natural Preserve (\$25.00). Includes tax, S&H. All items subject to availability.

I would like to participate in the following:

- Docent program
- GIS/GPS mapping
- Newsletter/web
- Public relations
- Weed management
- Schools outreach
- Habitat restoration
- Adopt-A-Highway



## UPCOMING EVENTS

- ❑ *Monthly, BIRD WALKS.* Audubon Society docent Lee Franks leads monthly bird walks usually during the last week of each month. The walks start at 8 am at the Day Camp kiosk. For more information contact Lee at [birdwalks@friendsofedgewood.org](mailto:birdwalks@friendsofedgewood.org).
- ❑ *Monthly, ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY.* The next sessions are scheduled for 7/1, 8/4, and 9/9. Contact Ken Seydel to volunteer or for more information.
- ❑ *Sunday, October 21, FRIENDS OF EDGEWOOD GENERAL MEETING.* Save the date for a fun afternoon at Edgewood with your fellow Friends. ♻️

## ORIGINAL ARTWORK BENEFITS FRIENDS OF EDGEWOOD

Trevlyn Williams, an Edgewood docent, will be having another exhibit of local landscape paintings at Gallery House, 320 California Ave, Palo Alto. Showing the 24th July through the 18th August.

As per the last two exhibits, 10% of sales proceeds will be donated to Friends of Edgewood. The opening reception Friday July 27<sup>th</sup>, 6-8pm, with wine, food and music. All are invited.

The paintings will feature Edgewood landscape and natural features. The big difference this year is that most of the work will be acrylic on canvas, a new direction for this artist. ♻️

The Edgewood Explorer is published quarterly 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 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.friendsofedgewood.org](http://www.friendsofedgewood.org), mail us at PO Box 3422, Redwood City, CA 94064-3422, call or fax toll-free at (866) GO-EDGEWOOD (866-463-3439), or email [info@friendsofedgewood.org](mailto:info@friendsofedgewood.org).

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