



THE CONTRA COSTA HILLS CLUB
PO Box 2056, El Cerrito, CA 94530
Website: www.contracostahills.org

FIRST CLASS MAIL

Founded February 22nd, 1920
103 YEARS OF
CONSERVATION—COMPANIONSHIP—HIKING



April 2023



KNAPSACK

Co-Editors: Silvia Akinaga, Rosemary Johnson
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103rd ANNUAL MEETING – MARCH 19, 2023

The 103rd Annual Meeting was off to a drizzly start but that did not stop an enthusiastic group from doing the traditional walk around Lake Merritt, dodging puddles along the way. By the time we made it back to the Garden Center, Board members and others had set up an assortment of goodies and hot coffee/tea. A welcome sight indeed. It was time to greet our fellow CCHCers and settle down for lunch and goodies.

Our speaker this year was Joseph O'Connor, who gave a talk on the history of harbor/estuary/lagoon areas of Alameda which have become a sanctuary for water birds and ducks. He gave a shout out to former President Nixon for signing a couple of important environmental acts that helped make this so. Joe's presentation included many photos of the Alameda area as well as birds/ducks that frequent the area. His motto is "If you are out there enough, you'll see EVERYTHING!" Very interesting and informative.



Roberta O'Grady & Joseph O'Connor.

Fran Ternus opened the meeting and Suzy Mark read a message from Stew Perlman, who was unable to attend. Fran then handed out 25-Year Awards to Dorothy Bradt, Jerry Ford, Irene Dunn and a 40-Year Honoree Award to Nick Brockman.



Suzy Mark reads a message from Stew Perlman.

Photos by Sylvia Kwan



Lakeside Garden Center - photo Sylvia Kwan

Reports:
 Suzy Mark, Treasurer; Financial Report

Lucy Perdichizzi, Social Committee Chair: Expressed thanks to all who have made donations to help subsidize the spring and holiday luncheons. This has helped keep the price to attend affordable.

Connie Gee, Membership Chair: We now have 227 members, down from pre-pandemic total, but recently several new hikers have joined the club.

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Annual Meeting Continued from Page 1.....

Beryl Vonderheid, Conservation Committee Chair: A big thanks to all who have donated to Conservation, which has enabled the committee to donate to many worthy organizations.

The nominees for 2023-24 Directors and Officers were announced and, although we did not have a quorum, we voted and the slate was approved. This will be ratified by an email vote (sent to CCHC members on March 21.)

The meeting was adjourned and everyone got busy putting chairs/tables/whatever away, saying goodbyes and heading home.

2023-24 Officers & Directors: President: **Stew Perlman**, Vice President: **James Baranowski**, Treasurer: **Cameron Mitchell**, Recording Secretary: **Mindy Svorny-Moore**, Corresponding Secretary: **Patricia Derickson**, Membership Secretary: **Connie Gee**. Directors: **Mike Branning**, **Helen Johe**, **Rosemary Johnson**, **Suzy Mark**, and **Fran Ternus**.



Cameron Mitchell/Stew??

Sue Fernstrom and Ziggy



Front: Mike Branning, Connie Gee, Patricia Derickson, Cameron Mitchell; Back: Mindy Svorny-Moore, Rosemary Johnson, Suzy Mark, and Fran Ternus. Photo S. Akinaga



Bringing Goodies: Patricia Derickson, Anita Ford and others,

Jerry Ford models new CCHC men's polo shirt



Cameron Mitchell, Suzy Mark, and Fran Ternus—25- and 40-year awards are presented.

Photos courtesy of Silvia Kwan



SAVE THESE DATES

- **April 2-5, 2023 CCHC Trip to Pinnacles National Park.** Details in December 2022 Knapsack
- **Wednesday, April 19, 2023 Spring Luncheon; details in March Knapsack. RSVP by April 13.**

OPEN HIKE DATES JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2023

The deadline for submission of hike descriptions is April 30, 2023. There are two 2nd quarter Sunday hike dates open: June 4, and 25.

Open Thursday Hikes: July 6, 13, 20, and 27; August 3, 10, 17, 24, and 31; September 7, 14, 21, and 28.

Open Sunday Hikes: July 2, 9, 16, and 23; August 6, 13, 20, and 27; September 3, 10, 17, and 24.

For Thursday hikes contact: Jim Baranowski, 925-577-1022, Brnw_th@yahoo.com

For Sunday hikes contact: Marilyn Vihman: 510-708-3853, marilyn.vihman@york.ac.uk

CAROL MATTHEWS



Carol Matthews, a member of the Contra Costa Hills Club since 2003 passed away on February 7 at her assisted living home, Elder Ashram, in Fruitvale. Her family was with her.

Carol was an avid hiker, belonging to the Sierra club before joining CCHC. We had many hikes together and overnight trips to Yosemite and Lassen among other parks. Born in New York City, she moved to Tucson at the age of 18, where she and Jim Matthews started a family, eventually settling in Oakland. Jim passed away in 1978.

Carol raised five children, has five grandchildren and two great grandsons. She taught all of them to love nature, plants, trees and birds. She was also a great fan of literature and classical music, especially opera, which she heard on the radio every Saturday morning as a child. Carol never grew old. Always a great listener and fun to talk to, she was funny, ironic and irreverent. When asked why she hiked so much, (sometimes 30 miles a week) she replied, "I have to".

Obituary by Roberta O'Grady and Carol's daughter.

CCHC 2023 MEMBERSHIP ALERT *

Hi Hiker Friends, if you have yet to renew your membership, see below:

For those who receive a mailed paper copy of the *Knapsack*, look at your mailing address label! CCHC members that have not paid 2023 dues by March 25 will have the message "Membership Expires 4/23," members who have paid their dues will see the message "Membership Renewed."

Members who receive the e-*Knapsack*: To avoid disruption in receipt of the *Knapsack*, submit your dues as soon as possible, preferably by April 30.

According to our bylaws annual dues of \$25 per person (\$40 for two people living in the same household) **PLUS \$8 IF YOU WISH TO RECEIVE THE KNAPSACK VIA US MAIL**, are supposed to be submitted as of April 1, 2023. So, unless you can say, "My check is in the mail," mail it today! Make check payable to "CCHC" and mail to:

Connie Gee
1121 Brighton Avenue
Albany, CA 94706

*The *Knapsack* is sent to all CCHC members via email, except Honorary Members or those who elect to pay an extra \$8 (to cover mailing costs) when renewing their membership.

Be sure to sign and submit the Contra Costa Hills Club MEMBERSHIP WAIVER AND RELEASE with your membership dues. For a copy of the waiver, go to the CCHC website www.contracostahills.org and click on "Membership Information" or refer to the copy printed in the March 2023 Knapsack.

IN THE HIKERS' FOOTSTEPS

Mt Tam Watershed -
Teresa Schwanauer



Sunday, February 19, 2023 Reinhardt Redwood Regional Park, Skyline Gate Leaders: Sue Lai & Miu Wan

~ 61F at Redwood Regional P. A precious day before chilly weather mid-week. By 10:30 am. crowded French Trail was showing traces of after-rainstorms here & there. ~ 6'



French Trail, Pink Currant, Skunk - Laurie Lau; Giant Trillium - Sophia Garcia

diameter shallow root clumps were upside down lying on both sides of the trail. Our appreciation to the people who have been clearing the trails. Under thick canopy the shady trail has always small spots of sun. There, Trillium, Hound's Tongue, Milk-

maid & Wild Currant were facing the sun, enjoying their life. After a good work out, lunch at the Trail's End picnic area accompanied by water sounds. The legend of no water on Stream Trail was finally broken. Hiking back by the stream was very soothing. Then half way in the middle of the trail, we encounter an unusual site. Monsieur skunk, what are you doing there? We were



warned by the smell a while ago, but we didn't expect to see the sprayer so close. Then we noticed that he might be injured. He walked wobbly-like, circling the same spot. This skunk was surrounded by dogs & hikers without hiding away. A skunk can spray with deadly accuracy so we carefully navigated without disturbing him. Hope he is alright. We finished hiking after a seemingly long stretch of gentle uphill. Thank you, Sue & Miu, for leading a lovely hike, and Miu for the generous treats!

~7 miles with <1100' elev. gain.

Fellow hikers, we need more volunteer Hike Writers!

Sophia Garcia



Tuesday, February 21, 2023 Cascade Canyon OS/Mt Tam Watershed Leader: Mark Petrofsky

Ten gathered at Doc Edgar Park to consolidate into two cars due to limited parking at Cascade Canyon Open Space/Mt Tam Watershed near Fairfax. Mark warned us of a creek crossing at the beginning and end of hike, and it truly was an adventure as the rains had made the water deep and fast running. Happily, we all crossed both directions with no one getting wet or hurt!! We then hiked along San Anselmo Creek to the 20-foot Cascade Waterfalls where



we took many photos of the gushing falls. Then the real climb began on trails going through varied terrain. As we climbed higher, the panoramic views were stun-

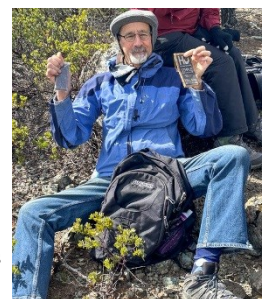


ning. Towards the top the winds picked up and by the time we had climbed over 1,450 feet (in under 3 miles) we were putting our jackets and hats back on. The temperatures had plummeted and the gusts of winds were powerful. We stopped to have lunch in a pretty pygmy forest where the trees growth is

stunted due to poor quality soil that contains chromium and nickel. Many of these trees are old but only 10 feet tall. After lunch we wandered around some short trails to enjoy this dwarf forest and then headed back down. The steep descent caused a few slips and slides but Mark managed to get his harem of nine women back safely! It was a wonderful 6.7 mile out and back hike. A big thank you to Mark who, as always, had chocolate for us after lunch!!

Teresa Schwanauer

Creek crossing, Harem at Falls, Mark with his chocolate offerings - Teresa Schwanauer



Thursday, February 23, 2023
In Charlie Chaplin's Footsteps – Niles
Leaders: Jerry Ford & Laurie Lau

On a cold, gray morning, thirteen intrepid hikers (three more would join later during the hike) gathered at Union City BART to walk along Alvarado-Niles Boulevard to visit the historic and quaint town of Fremont's Niles District. Along the way we experienced dark clouds, sunshine and wind. Actually, by the end of the hike, we had hail and rain. We first visited the California



Nursery Historical Park that officially opened this past summer after it was restored. We explored the site that began its operation in 1884. It was one of the largest nurseries in California and supplied trees, roses, and other plants across the country. In fact, it helped beautify the San Francisco Pacific Exposition with its trees and plants. We continued our walk to downtown Niles passing a replica of a pirate ship in a backyard. Soon, we were at the site where Essanay Studios once existed. Jerry gave us a historical account of the once-thriving silent film company that featured Bronco Billy's Cowboy Westerns and Charlie Chaplin's silent films. Jerry directed us to a neighborhood street where six of the original eight homes built for the Essanay employees still stand. The studio came in 1912 from Chicago and left for

Hollywood in 1916. It was time for lunch as we gathered at Niles Town Plaza, which features a train depot for passengers who traveled between Niles and Chicago. While in Niles we stopped for a photo shoot with a statue of Charlie Chaplin that stands in front of the Florence Saloon. As we headed back, we took a few minutes to pose with a twelve-foot skeleton standing in front of a modest home. After a round trip six-mile hike, we said goodbye and thanked Jerry Ford and Laurie Lau for a delightful day.



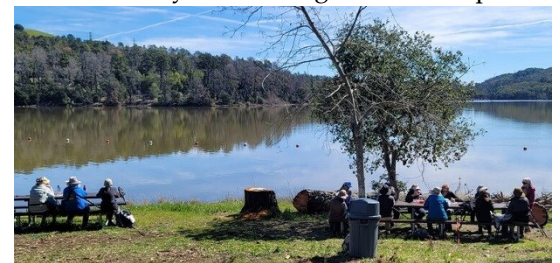
California Nursery Historical Park, Pirate ship in a tree, Hikers with Charlie Chaplin statue - Laurie Lau

Stew Perlman

Sunday, February 26, 2023
Mount Tam Cataract Falls
Leaders: Mike Branning, Laurie Lau & Bill Chen
Canceled due to expected rain (and maybe snow!)

Thursday, March 2, 2023
San Pablo Reservoir
Leaders: Patricia Derickson & Karen Arntzen

San Pablo Reservoir was created by an earthen dam in the valley of San Pablo Creek in 1919. The dam was seismically retrofitted in 2004 by mixing concrete with the soil. The water that fills the reservoir comes in part from the Pardee Reservoir in the Sierra Foothills. The Dam is surrounded by a recreation area managed by the East Bay Regional Parks where Patricia and Karen planned a lovely hike, beginning at San Pablo Dam Road and Bear Creek Road. Eighteen hikers joined Patricia and Karen. We thanked Patricia for getting the Park Permit which is required for these trails. We hiked along the west side of the reservoir on a somewhat muddy trail through a forest of pines and many other trees. Here we noted the beautiful Giant Trillium in bloom. We went on to the East Bay Municipal Utility District Watershed Headquarters. There we noted our trail was closed. We had a short walk along Old San Pablo Dam Road, then returned to the trail. From there we had beautiful views of the Reservoir, now filled with water, and the bird life. Rosemary pointed out the



Reservoir view from trail, Giant Trillium, White Pelicans & Dbl-crested Cormorants - Laurie Lau; Lunch with a view, Under a fallen tree - Sylvia Kwan





Mergansers (38) and Cormorants. At a lovely lunch spot at the small boat launch area, we saw 27 White Pelicans resting on a long dock. A kayak came in to the dock scattering most of the pelicans. Motorized boats are taken out to protect the water from pollution. We stayed on our trail to return to Bear Creek Road, noting some fallen trees and a little mud. It was a lovely hike on a beautiful day. Thanks to Patricia and Karen, and for the delicious cupcakes and cookies.

Roberta O'Grady

Sunday, March 5, 2023
Sobrante Ridge, El Sobrante
Leaders: Colette Cussary & Diane Cannon

Another day of hike leader anxiety, to do or not to do. Hike was on and 17 hikers headed to the Sobrante Ridge Trail. Deep smell of the Middle Earth. California Bay was blooming. Dainty illuminated Milkmaid is a lantern for the elf. Rain clouds left a blue sky. Martha, a guest and naturalist from Coyote Hills, explained about animal scats, e.g. coyote scats are rope-like and typically filled with hair and bones. Also, we learned that another name for miner's lettuce is Indian Lettuce, honoring the Native Americans. Colette created a silent hike on extremely rare Alameda Manzanita Trail. There we immersed ourselves in



Rare Alameda Manzanita, Field of Indian Warrior plants, Alameda Manzanita Trail, Green, green hills - Sylvia Kwan

the magenta world of the Indian Warrior extravaganza under Manzanitas and Live Oaks. Indian Warrior is a parasitic plant, attaching to the roots of other plants to obtain nutrients and water. Back to Ridge Trail, a short exciting moment blessed by a heavenly hail. We hurried carefully on the muddy, slippery downhill to the picnic area. Mike, who lives nearby, gave us a lovely visit. Family picture, then time to warm up our bodies again. Red maid, Trillium, Ribes and



Hound's Tongue by the trail. Mt. Diablo with its snow cap to westward and Mt Tam to eastward. A

golden eagle was high up and a salamander was taking a spring nap under the broken bark of a fallen tree. Today we enjoyed many natural wonders on the trail through its microclimates.

Thank you, Colette, for this memorable hike and for the treats & lemons.

Thank you, Diane, for taking care of hikers as



always. ~6.5 miles with ~1500' elev. gain.

Sophia Garcia

Thursday, March 9, 2023
Richmond Marina and Meeker Slough
Leaders: Rosemary Johnson & Sue Fernstrom
CANCELED due to rain

Sunday, March 12, 2023
Five Canyons Open Space, Castro Valley
Leaders: Diane Cannon & Pam Littlejohn
CANCELED Because of trail conditions and rain

Thursday, March 16, 2023
Alameda Creek in the Springtime
Leaders: Beryl Vonderheid & Roberta O'Grady

We finally had a sunny, 65-degree day for this hike. After nineteen of us rounded up at the Union City BART station, JoAnne Schultz led us in singing Happy Birthday to Roberta O'Grady. We followed Alvarado-Niles Boulevard, then turned West to wind along the border of Quarry Lakes Park. Our first stop was the Isherwood Staging Area, then we followed Alameda Creek toward the town of Niles. About halfway we ran into two other club members Rita and Dexter.



We encountered numerous downed trees from the previous week's wind storm. We did notice a blooming Euca-



lyptus tree. Storyboards along the trail explained the workings of the new fish ladder designed to allow steelhead to spawn in Niles Canyon. The rubber dam installed for flood control was completely submerged as a result

of recent storms. Because of flooding, our leaders changed the lunch site from Shinn Pond to Niles Community Park. After lunch, some of our group wandered into Niles to explore the town. The rest backtracked along the creek to the Quarry Lakes entrance, then followed the Eastern border along the BART tracks to the ranger station exit. Another mile along Alvarado-Niles Boulevard returned the group to BART. The hike was a total of eight miles.



Jerry Ford



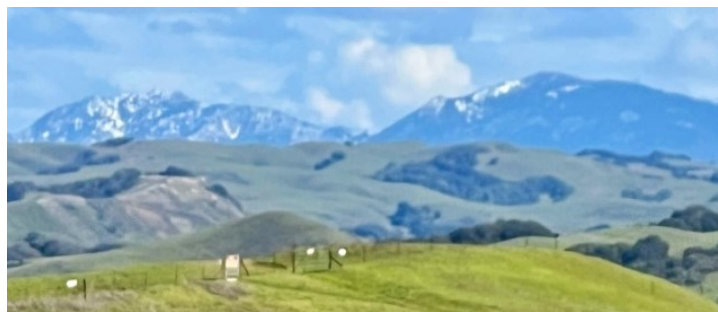
Isherwood Park, along Alameda Creek, Shinn Pond, towards Niles (note sign on hill) - Sylvia Kwan; Alameda Creek Trail - Ben Hui



More photos from Sunday, March 5, 2023 Sobrante Ridge, El Sobrante



Clockwise from left: Red maids, Indian Warriors, Snowy peaks of Mt. Diablo in the distance - Sophia Garcia



NOTE: The Board and Conservation Committee are currently not physically meeting due to COVID-19 shelter in place orders. CCHC members should contact Stew Perlman with any concerns so they can be discussed at the meetings. Conservation issues should be addressed to Beryl Vonderheid.

Please submit your hike write-ups of up to 300 words as soon as possible after each hike to Rosemary Johnson at compasros@comcast.net. All other submissions should reach Silvia Akinaga at sakinec@aol.com by the middle of the month to appear in the following month's issue.

OFFICERS & COMMITTEES 2023-2024

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•James Baranowski

Treasurer

•Cameron Mitchell

Recording Secretary

•Mindy Svorney-Moore

Membership Secretary

•Connie Gee

Corresponding Secretary

•Patricia Derickson

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•Mike Branning

•Helen Johe

•Rosemary Johnson

•Suzy Mark

•Fran Ternus

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• Jim Baranowski, **Thursday Chair**

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•Lily Ho

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