



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

FIRST CLASS MAIL

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



DECEMBER 2020



KNAPSACK

Co-Editors: Silvia Akinaga, Rosemary Johnson
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

As you continue to finish eating the leftovers from your Thanksgiving dinner, perhaps you are contemplating how you are going to celebrate this unusual holiday season. As a hiking club we have had to institute a variety of changes to our hiking schedule and to our hiking protocols to conform to the everchanging COVID pandemic. I want to thank everyone for understanding the changes that had to be made so that we remained safe during this unprecedented time. Although we are essentially a nonpolitical organization, I believe that as an organization that cares about the environment, we will be in better hands with an administration that cares about the planet that we inhabit. I am sorry that we won't be seeing each other at our annual Holiday Luncheon, but our hikes continue to bring the joy and friendship that are needed more than ever. No matter how you celebrate this season, we are all hoping for a healthy and prosperous 2021. The Club will continue to modify the hikes as we do our best to adhere to the advice of our public health officials. On behalf of the Board of Directors, I want to wish everyone a HAPPY and HEALTHY HOLIDAY.

Stew Perlman



SAVE THESE DATES

- October 2021— Prairie Creek
- March 2022—Anza Borrego

Information on the above Overnight Outings will appear in future *Knapsacks*.

OPEN HIKE DATES FOR APRIL to JUNE, 2021

The deadline for submission of hike descriptions is January 31, 2021.

Open Thursdays: April 1, 8, 15, 22, and 29; May 6, 13, 20, and 27; June 3, 10, 17, and 24

Open Sundays: April 4, 11, 18, and 25; May 2, 9, 16, 23, and 30; June 6, 13, 20, and 27

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

For Sunday hikes contact: Mary Ulrich, 925-937-2932, cchcsundays@gmail.com



Thursday, October 22, 2020
Sycamore Valley Park, Danville
Leaders: Jim Baranowski, Patricia Derickson & Sylvia Kwan

On this warm sunny day, the occasional oak tree, the mild breeze and windy hilltops were much appreciated. We all decided we'd like to come back again on a cool spring day when we were surrounded by green hills.

Holly Ito

A big "Thank You" to Patricia and Sylvia for leading this hike that had been well-planned by Jim Baranowski before he was called out of town to help care for his 99-year-old mother in Detroit. This was a new hike for all eight of us, and also a chance to celebrate Fran Leighty's birthday.



Holly Ito, Patricia Derickson, Yvonne Moss, Fran Leighty, Sylvia Kwan, David Jadeson, Barry Waldman & Rose Susoeff

before he was called out of town to help care for his 99-year-old mother in Detroit. This was a new hike for all eight of us, and also a chance to celebrate Fran Leighty's birthday.

The trails are part of the East Bay Regional Park District Sycamore Valley Regional Open Space Preserve. The hike started out toward the back of the park at the Sand Hill Trailhead where we climbed up the hill along the dried grasslands about .7 miles to the Short Ridge Trail. Walking on the Short Ridge Trail we enjoyed the scenic views of the valley below on one side and of Mt. Diablo on the other.



Header: Private vineyard, Sand Hill Trail, view from Short Ridge Trail, Old Blackhawk Road - all photos by Sylvia Kwan

After a mile and a steep downhill, we continued out onto the local streets of Danville viewing some beautiful large homes and yards until we got back into the park entrance and headed up to the Sand Hill Trail and back down the hill to the park.



Tuesday, October 27, 2020
Tilden Park
Leaders: Anne Herrick & Mary Ulrich
CANCELLED because park closed due to high winds
2nd cancellation – will these gals ever get to go?

Thursday, October 29, 2020
Ladybugs in Redwood Park
Leaders: Beryl Vonderheid & Roberta O'Grady

It was one of those glorious Autumn days, sunny and warm with bright blue skies. The deciduous trees were turning golden to red. It was an "I am so glad to live here and not living through my first snowfall elsewhere" kind of days. Led by Beryl and Roberta, it was short and sweet as we walked through the redwoods on the Stream Trail in search of ladybugs.



Fall color, Roberta, Beryl, Redwood Grove - photos by Jan Lecklikner

This being 2020, we found none. It did not matter. It was so breathtakingly beautiful, and it felt so lovely to be with our hiking community, that the missing ladybugs just felt like par for the course of this crazy year. Rita informed us that walking through redwoods blocked COVID 19. Source: Rita. True or not, the redwoods filled out souls and nourished our flagging spirits.



It turns out that Redwood Regional now has a new name: Reinhardt Redwood Regional Park. Dr. Aurelia Reinhardt was once the president of Mills College. She was one of five prominent civic leaders elected to the Park





District's first Board of Directors in 1934 and was an influential spokesperson for the preservation of redwoods and public open space. We have much to be thankful for her efforts to preserve this space from the loggers who coveted it.

Jan Lecklikner

Tuesday, November 3, 2020
Del Valle – Eastside/Westside Loop
Leaders: Pat McDonald & Roberta O'Grady
CANCELLED because no one signed up!

Thursday, November 5, 2020
Bay Farm Island Loop Hike
Leaders: Patricia Derickson & Roberta O'Grady

The sunlight on the bay was spectacular. Seen from Bay Farm Island the water was several shades of blue, and sparkled. The hikers walked around the perimeter of a lovely bayside housing development. There were walking paths, bike trails, and small parks throughout the area. The homes had views of Alameda, Oakland, Mt. Tamalpais, and San Francisco. The back yards faced emerald green canals spanned by arched wooden bridges, and shaded by trees -- reminiscent of Monet's Giverny paintings. Each minimal backyard consisted of a deck, potted plants, and a private dock for kayaks and paddleboats to use on the canals.



Rosemary and Linda spotted some interesting birds along the way. Almost as soon as we started walking, Rosemary saw a red-breasted nuthatch fly into a small tree. Almost at the end of the hike Linda saw a belted kingfisher fly back and forth across the lagoon. Along the bay there were a couple long-billed curlews and a solitary spotted sandpiper. Several saw the large white Great Egret stalking prey at the edge of the lagoon, and everyone noted the double-crested cormorants that had taken up residence in a tree.

Kayaker, Lunch, Jan & Noël at Ferry pier - Sylvia Kwan; Long-billed curlew, Spotted sandpiper, Cormorants in tree - Rita Poppen

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Kayaker, Lunch, Jan & Noël at Ferry pier - Sylvia Kwan; Long-billed curlew, Spotted sandpiper, Cormorants in tree - Rita Poppen



The hikers lunched in a partially glassed-in waiting area by the commuter ferry. The views were incredible. Some said San Francisco looked like Oz. Airplanes took off from nearby Oakland airport, almost close enough to see passengers in the windows. Near the lunch area were ground squirrels who seemed to expect treats from their visitors. Later, everyone headed back, along canals that reflected mirror-like images of the homes. The hike ended with applause for leaders Patricia and Roberta.

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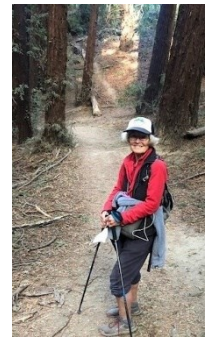
Linda Malm



Tuesday, November 10, 2020
Strawberry Canyon to Chaparral Peak
Leaders: Celeste Burrows & Pat McDonald

So glad we were able to do the rescheduled hike on such a glorious day. Four eager hikers enjoyed perfect weather, some 'character building' climbs, far reaching views and good conversation on our 7-mile hike. Celeste was an excellent guide and source of information about the foliage and history of the area. She showed us the home in which she had lived just off our trail. From there she had watched runners race up the steep incline practicing for the annual Strawberry Canyon race. Needless to say, we did not race up that incline or the incline to the 1,772 ft Chaparral Peak. When our proposed lunch stop on the peak was occupied, Celeste remembered an even better lunch spot for safe distancing just a short way off our trail. Barry, one of our new members who lives in Berkeley and who had often hiked Strawberry Canyon, appreciated the new trails he now can take to hike on his own. It is truly a gift to hike and enjoy the beauty that surrounds us.

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Pat McDonald

Celeste B.
 Laura O'Donovan,
 Pat McD.,
 Barry Waldman, Bay
 view from Peak -
 Celeste B.



Thursday, November 12, 2020
Walk the Hayward Fault in Berkeley
Leaders: Jim Baranowski, Noël Siver & Patricia Derickson

Jim Baranowski wasn't available to lead this walk on the Hayward fault, so Noël Siver led it. We began at the Rose Garden in Berkeley, where Bill Motzer gave us background. The Hayward fault last struck in 1868, when it ruptured the ground from Fremont north to San Leandro, causing much damage. In Berkeley and to the north there was still much severe shaking.

It was known as the Great Quake for years, until 1906, when the San Andreas quake took that title.

Right across the street from where we met were a couple of examples of the fault. The playground and picnic area at Codornices Park are level but sunk below street level, and on the far side there is a steep uphill slope. Jim wrote the fault runs right there, at the bottom of the popular concrete slide, transition from flat to hillside. Next to the park is the EBMUD Berryman reservoir. Built there in 1877 at a low point, no thought of a fault, but entirely rebuilt in 2012 with a huge steel tank to contain the water if the fault moves.



We walked by the old Hillside School, abandoned as a public school when an excavation revealed the fault underneath. Now a private home, with plans for artist studios in the extra space.

Hearst Mining Building on the campus is protected from quakes with rubber isolators supporting the building. We saw the dry moat, an excavation entirely surrounding the building to isolate it from lateral side to side motion. At the UC football stadium the walls were originally designed in two sections, one on each side of the fault, to provide some flexibility in quake. The stadium was retrofitted, but the walls were kept in sections.

Peter Nurkse

Bill M. re: fault, Noël at Hillside School, up Rose Way stairs, Hearst Memorial Mining School - Sylvia Kwan



Tuesday, November 17, 2020
Shell Ridge, Walnut Creek
Leader: Mary Ulrich

We couldn't possibly have timed it any better. We met at the Hanna Grove parking lot near Borges Ranch for this almost 4-mile hike at 9:30 a.m. We finished before noon. Ten minutes after driving away, the rain started. When Mary had emailed those who had signed up to say that she was going to hike despite the weather forecast, six out of seven still joined her. All were happy that we did. We enjoyed a refreshing jaunt in sun and clouds and a, sometimes, fierce wind. It was actually quite pleasant.



We got our workout in quickly. The first mile and half we headed uphill. Every time we came to a trail junction, we knew the choice would be whichever trail was going up.

The views were great, especially with the many cloud formations. At one point, we had sun and puffy white clouds above and behind us but in the far distance we could see the dark rain clouds gathering.



View downhill to cows on trail, Hikers Patricia, Rosemary, Holly, Mary, Mindy & Dexter - Rita Poppen; Mount Diablo shrouded in clouds, Borges Ranch - Mary Ulrich

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We followed Mary on a figure-8 double loop. We finished the first loop close to a spot we would come to again just before heading into Borges Ranch and our way back to the parking lot. When we first reached that spot, Mary kindly offered the option for anyone to bail out and take the short way back. No one did. We all came prepared if we did get the worst of the weather but we never were tested.



It was a first-time hike for me, and I believe for others too. It was an interesting route, vigorous without being strenuous, not overly long but a fine length. And much to enjoy along the way. Thank you, Mary, for providing a new adventure.

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Rosemary Johnson



FROM THE CONSERVATION COMMITTEE:

In case you wonder where the money goes when you donate to the Conservation Committee, here is a recent example.

In October, the National Park Service celebrated the acquisition of the historic Almond Ranch which was made possible by the John Muir Land Trust. Last year, we made a special contribution to the Land Trust toward the purchase of this land. This was in addition to our regular annual contribution.

Often referred to as the “missing piece,” Almond Ranch on the Franklin ridge, south of downtown Martinez, now connects the Contra Costa County section of the Bay Area Ridge Trail, a 550-mile loop with stunning views that circumnavigates the entire Bay Area.

The acquisition of this property will allow public access to 18,000 acres of open space that contains land crucial to saving wildlife such as the red-legged frog, the American badger, and the golden eagle.

“It’s a massive wildlife corridor, and now that corridor will remain unfragmented in perpetuity so wildlife can roam free,” stated Linus Eukel, Executive Director of the John Muir Land Trust.

The Conservation Committee is thrilled to have played a small part in the acquisition of this valuable protected public place.

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A HEARTY WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST MEMBER

Margaret Riley of San Ramon

STAY SAFE

- MASK UP
- SOCIAL DISTANCE
- WASH HANDS

We WILL get through this!

- ◆ I took a walk in the woods and came out taller than the trees. *Henry David Thoreau*
- ◆ To solve a problem, walk around. *St. Jerome*
- ◆ The wilderness holds answers to questions man has not yet learned to ask. *Nancy Newhall*
- ◆ In all things of nature there is something of the marvelous. *Aristotle*
- ◆ I go to nature to be soothed and healed and to have my senses put in order. *John Burroughs*
- ◆ To walk in nature is to witness a thousand miracles. *Mary Davis Treat*
- ◆ Look deep into nature and you will understand everything better. *Albert Einstein*

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.