

Mission Trails Regional Park News

Volume 25, Number 4

-- A Publication of the Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation --

Fall 2014

Owl and Oak: A Modern Fable

By Audrey F. Baker

It was the witching hour. Waves of mist drifted along canyon ridges of Mission Trails, settled into hallows, and engulfed sage and chaparral.

Moved by musical murmurs of the San Diego River, Oak sighed, lifted his weighty branches, and reached into Sky. He then bent his great trunk. Up righting himself, he rose too swiftly and jolted. Branches violently flailed, fungi blades snapped from his trunk, his deep roots shook the ground, and the resulting spasms, felt throughout, quavered his twigs' tips. Like shooting

stars, multi-colored lichens and mosses exploded into the air, and a strange thumping sound arose from the ground, where Great Horned Owl found himself unceremoniously thrown from the tree.

Wind could not account for these mystical vibrations. He had not passed through Oak's canopy. He directed Moon to ride its light along the crest of Oak's leaves, through his enticing acorn-laden branches, past the witch apples that housed the wasp nurseries, and to rest on the deep fissures of Oak's trunk. There, the face of the Kumeyaay spirit who dwells within, is etched.

Under Moon's brilliant spotlight, a drama played out.

Owl, continued on p. 5

Trail Guide Training

By Ranger Chris Axtmann

Recruitment time is here again, for our annual Trail Guide Training program. Each year, this training is conducted for people interested in learning about the natural and cultural history of Mission Trails, and then sharing this knowledge with others on interpretive nature walks throughout the park.

The class curriculum covers a variety of subjects, including ecology, botany, geology, history, birds, mammals, reptiles, insects, Kumeyaay culture and more! This 10-week training involves a three-hour classroom session every Wednesday evening, from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m., and a three-hour field study session on Saturday mornings, from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. During the 11th week, students are evaluated on their interpretive skills during a sample nature walk, take an extensive written final exam on the material learned, and then receive a certificate of completion at a graduation ceremony. Trail Guide graduates are expected to share their new knowledge on at least one guided walk per month, but are welcome, of course, to do more than that after they get their feet wet.

In addition to leading guided nature walks, MTRP Trail Guides also staff

Training, continued on p. 3

Best of Show



Deep Freeze by Rick Wiley



A Message From Executive Director Jay Wilson

The Mission Trails Regional Park [MTRP] Foundation says good-bye to a valued employee. Roland Roberge, the Administrative Assistant for the MTRP Foundation, who served admirably for 14 years, has retired. Prior to going to work for the Foundation, Roland was a volunteer at Mission Trails. He was a valued asset to MTRP, the MTRP Foundation, and the hundreds of people he worked with each year, helping them to arrange the use of our meeting rooms or to rent the Visitor Center after hours for a special event. Some of his other responsibilities included bookkeeping, processing donations, maintaining the donor data base, publishing the e-newsletter, and serving as editor of the quarterly newsletter which he transitioned from a one-color to a fantastic four-color publication. Roland, "A sincere thank you for taking me under your wing when I joined the staff five and a half years ago and teaching me all the nuances of the MTRP Foundation."

Now I would like to welcome Maggie Holloway who is replacing Roland as the Foundation's Administrative Assistant. Maggie brings extensive

experience working with non-profit organizations, both as paid staff and as a volunteer, to the position. On behalf of all of us at Mission Trails, "Welcome aboard Maggie!"

I also welcome Julie Aeilts, the new Ranger Aide for the Kumeyaay Lake Campground. Remember the Kumeyaay Lake Campground is open for camping each Friday and Saturday night. For just \$20 a night you may camp with up to six people per site.

If you camp on the second weekend of each month, you can take advantage of two bonus activities. On the second Friday of the month the San Diego Astronomy Association sets up telescopes in the day-use parking lot from dusk to about 10:00 pm. Then on Saturday morning meet at the Campground Entry Station at 8:30 am for a 90-minute guided nature walk offered by one of the Volunteer Trail Guides. Go to mtrp.org, click on "Park" and then "Campground" for more information and to make your on-line reservation.

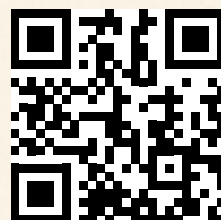
Every day is an adventure of discovery at Mission Trails!

Upcoming Art Exhibits

October 11 - November 7, 2014
Art in the Park Exhibition

November 8 - December 5, 2014
Two Person Photography Show
Beverly La Rock and Janine Free
Reception: November 9,
1:00 pm - 4:00 pm

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High Spirits Flutes

Pocket Flutes

By Patty O'Reily
Gift Shop Manager

With the holiday season approaching may we suggest giving the Gift of Music? In our gift shop you will find the beautiful Pocket Flutes from High Sprits Flutes in Patagonia, Arizona. From the talented hands of Odell Borg we present his beautiful Pocket Flutes,



crafted from single pieces of aromatic cedar, red cedar, or walnut and tuned to the key of A major.

These are not toys, but fully functioning, beautifully crafted miniature instruments, perfect for learning to play and for personal pleasure. As their name implies, they are small enough to put in a pocket and are easy to carry for playing on a whim. They are 5-hole flutes and are 9" long with a fixed fetish decoration. At the reasonable price of \$40 they offer a golden opportunity for the learning process, and if a passion is born Odell fashions a full line of full-sized flutes in a wide variety of prices, woods, and musical tones. We would be happy to refer you directly to him for making a personalized flute and could then procure your instrument for you when you wish.

All high spirit flutes are crafted from woods that are sustainably plantation grown and are finished with non-toxic oils. No musical experience is required,

simply the desire to learn. Each Pocket Flute comes with simple instructions on how to play and a website address that is dedicated to teaching more detailed playing techniques and fingering charts. For your protection we have hygienic "flute straws" for those who wish to try the flutes before purchase. All you need bring is curiosity and the desire to make music on these sweet-voiced little masterpieces.

If you would like to listen to flutes of all kinds you are invited to come to Mission Trails Regional Park on the second Sunday of each month from 1:00 to 3:00 pm. The San Diego Native American Flute Players gather in our outdoor amphitheater to honor Native American music with a "flute circle". Players of all levels of skill are welcome to stand and play for the assembled listeners both to share their gifts and to experience an opportunity to play before an audience. These happily unstructured concerts are free and open to the public. They are also listed on the events page on our website: mtrp.org. The Gift Shop is only steps away if you want to see the Pocket Flutes at the same time. We look forward to seeing you.

Training, continued from p. 1

Discovery Tables in the Visitor Center; help out with special events, such as our annual "Explore Mission Trails Day;" attend monthly Trail Guide meetings, with special guest speaker presentations; and enjoy monthly outings to other open space areas with fellow Trail Guides on Trail Guide Treks. The training program is really a lot of fun, is with a great group of people, and, we are always looking for fresh new faces to join the MTRP Trail Guide team.

So, if you already know and love Mission Trails Regional Park, then why not learn more about it, so you can share that love with others? No experience is necessary, just a willingness to learn and share. The 2015 Trail Guide Training program is scheduled to begin on Saturday, January 10th and runs through March 28th. Please note there is a \$25 materials fee due at the first class meeting. Space is limited in this once-a-year training, so don't wait to contact Ranger Chris (at caxtmann@mtrp.org or at 619-668-2746) if you would like to be added to the 2015 Class Interest List, as it is already filling up!

First Place - Color (Scenic View)



Dam Water by Terri Thompson



It's Been My Pleasure by Former Administrative Assistant Roland Roberge

Within a few months of moving to San Diego I discovered Mission Trails Regional Park. Because I began exploring this beautiful open space park from the Jackson Drive trailhead, I had hiked nearly every trail before I realized the Visitor and Interpretive Center, and a trail map, existed. Upon entering the the Visitor Center I was amazed not only by the building, with its high glass wall, but also the spectacular view of Mission Gorge. A knowledgeable volunteer introduced me to the Park's trail map and pointed out the Pyles Peak/Cowles Mountain area of the Park. A few months later, as a volunteer, I was introducing visitors to my favorite hikes and sites in Mission Trails.

After a few years of volunteering, the then Administrative Assistant for the Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation, Barbara Cleves Anderson, was resigning her post and convinced me to apply for the position. I thank the Foundation's President, Joe Morse, Vice-President, Nancy Acevedo, and Secretary/Treasurer, Dorothy Leonard for giving me the chance to become part of the Foundation's organization. The position has been one of the best jobs I have ever had. It gave me the

opportunity to work with a talented and dedicated group of City Park Rangers, staff and volunteers to help maintain and protect this wonderful landscape and ecosystem. Although I have not met many of them, I also have developed a great appreciation for the Foundation's donors who continue to give generously to help the Foundation achieve its goals.

All good things must come to an end and after fourteen years of serving the Foundation, and by extension, the Park and the City's inhabitants, it is time for me to retire and return to volunteering in the Visitor Center and elsewhere within the Park. When visiting the Park you may see me, once again, directing people to my favorite hikes and sites, or helping on the work crews by maintaining trails, restoring habitat, and beautifying the Park. It will continue to be, my pleasure.

Winter Solstice Hikes on Cowles Mountain

The Mission Trails Regional Park Trail Guides will lead pre-dawn hikes to the area of the solstice observatory on Cowles Mountain on December 20th and 22nd. The Canyoneers of the San Diego Natural History Museum will lead the hike on December 21st. Each hike begins at 6:00 a.m. and lasts approximately two hours. The solstice site is approximately one mile up the trail. The age of the site is unknown. It is known that the Kumeyaay used similar sites in southern California. For all three hikes, we hope to see the rising sun split by a peak on the eastern horizon. The ascent will be in the dark. Sturdy shoes and a flashlight are recommended. There is danger of eye damage if you stare directly at the sun. You can observe the sunrise safely for a very few seconds through narrow slits (such as between your fingers held together) or smoked glass.

First Place Color - People, Flora and Fauna



Aztec Hummingbird Dancers by David Cooksy

Welcome Maggie Holloway



Maggie Holloway recently became the Administrative Assistant of the Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation after being the owner of the Designmaker Studio, a marketing graphic communications studio in San Diego for 20 years. Originally from the East Coast, she moved to San Diego in 1986. She is a San Diego Natural History Museum Canyoneer volunteer. In the past she has been a San Diego Zoo Volunteer Interpreter, an Earthlab Naturalist Guide, San Diego Mountain Bike Association board member and California State Parks volunteer. Her primary duties for the Foundation include booking facility space for institutional meetings, maintaining Foundation records and working with City of San Diego staff to assist in the everyday operations of the Mission Trails Visitor and Interpretive Center.

Owl, continued from p. 1

“You throw me out?” came the accusing voice of Great Horned Owl as he raised himself from resulting wreckage. Erect, he shook off loose bits and inspected himself, wingtip to wingtip. Grumbling incessantly, he begrudgingly preened cobwebs from his feathers. “You, whooo-hooo call yourself Tree of Life, evict me!”

Coyote, who knows all that happens in his sphere, overheard the accusations

First Place - Black and White



Trail to South Fortuna by Brian Baxter

and broadcast the event through howling relays. Curious animals approached and were soon scrambling for choice seats on Oak's ground-level branches. Sparrow-sized Big Brown Bat ceased his insect-scooping flights, draped his wings and hung amid Oak's outer twigs.

Raven made a dramatic and authoritative entrance. Holding his bristled beak against his breast, he threw an ill-omened stare over the rancorous gathering. In deference to Raven's great magic and his contributions to myth and poetry, the crowd instantly hushed.

Order was momentarily disturbed by the cawing fanfare that proceeded the arrival of a murder of crows. Renowned as able and intelligent creatures, they

enthusiastically volunteered to accept appointment as jurors to decide the merits of Owl's injury case. Once on the ground and conspicuously feeding on the insects and seeds around them, they pledged to carefully listen to testimony.

Oak stoically held a mild expression of exasperation.

A knobbed branch found amid the rubble was cleverly fashioned into a gavel by Young Crow, and Raven opened the proceedings with, “Continue, Mr. Great-Horned.”

“Drive me out? Repeated Great Horned Owl, I, the most fierce, powerful, silent hunter whooo-hooo stalks chaparral and sage, riparian and woodland ways?” Rotating his head a full 270 degrees, he

Owl, continued on p. 6

Owl, continued from p. 5

measured the effect of his statement on the assemblage.

Still spitting out web and debris, he challenged, "You want your branches graced only with the daily geometric danglings of Orb Spider or the filthy old tangled cobwebs made by Comb-footed Spider? Tarantula tells me you banished Black Widow. Am I to be next?"

Oak reluctantly responded. "Brother Tarantula is weak venomed and wanders in fall spreading rumor! Sister Black Widow is – ill-tempered and prefers isolation, security. She builds her abode under objects. Remember, her venom is 15 times stronger than Rattlesnake's. It is better she chooses seclusion."

Western Screech Owl shrieked in agreement, spectators chattered, and the crows moved to another feeding spot. The gavel sounded. Raven cried, "Order!"

Great Horned Owl then turned to Big-Eared Woodrat. Her presence was marked only by the tip of her nose timidly extending from her midden, her stick home. Pointing an accusatory wing, Owl declared, "I know for certain Oak expelled Black Rat, preferring this – this condo-dwelling packrat!"

Oak answered. "The People of the Earth know the story of Black Rat. To exact their revenge on all humanity, Witches have turned many in his family into nightmarish demi-demons, and have enticed scores to trade nature for human homes. Like all rats, those who remain here live in balance, building their own homes, as it should be."

While Oak spoke, Great Horned Owl considered the woodrat midden. His acute hearing detected the presence of a fall litter inside. Making a mental note, he returned to his present concern.

He worried that Oak had persuasively refuted his accusation of malicious intent and that he had not gained the sympathy of the jury or gallery. He needed a compelling final argument. Inspiration came with the arrival of Turkey Vulture.

Vulture spent a long day circling Sky in search of the sulfurous chemical emissions that lead him to a meal. With hisses and grunts, he wearily perched on a barren Sumac. His eerie preoccupation with "dead things" caused many to shun him. Owl, however, saw in him a sympathetic witness.

Owl introduced him as "poor, lonely Vulture; dejected, ridiculed." Pointing to his bald and rippled blood-red head and face, he said, "Some call him a partially-feathered dinosaur. Poor soul, did not Oak banish you to the dying Sycamore?"

Turkey Vulture let out a deep grunt. Jury and assembly alike took it as a firm "yes." Owl hid his glee.

Wrenit, the Voice of the Chaparral, interceded. "We know Vulture has no voice box and cannot speak. He communicates by behavior. I will translate."

She asked, "Vulture, do you prefer dead trees? Do you live where you wish? A lifestyle choice?"

Markedly raising and lowering his head, Vulture responded "yes" to all, and appeared to smile, if only for a moment.

That smile reflected in the deep fissures of Oak's trunk.

Great Horned Owl is wise, valuing Truth above all. Recognizing the testimonies of Oak and others had comforted him and those present, he suppressed his disappointment and privately accepted

defeat. Craftily reframing the events of the evening, he delivered a lengthy, stirring closing statement extolling the virtues of "Harmony in Nature."

"...and so, my friends, tonight we witnessed that together we can face any burden, overcome any misfortune (a reference to himself), resolve any differences, achieve any goal...."

Afterward, the crowd dispersed, inspired, yet weary as a Vulture!

Notable Donations

July 1 – September 30, 2014

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Mission Trails Regional Park Donor Opportunities

By donating to Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation, you are preserving the past and investing in the future.

Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation provides opportunities for individuals, businesses, community organizations, and foundations to support a variety of programs and projects within the park. Community support is important to ensure adequate funding to maintain the award winning Mission Trails Regional Park Visitor and Interpretive Center and the multiple amenities the park has to offer.

Special event and project sponsorship are also available. Sponsorships for Explore Mission Trails Day, an annual event held each May, range from \$500 to \$5,000. Exhibit sponsorships begin at \$2,500. Bench and table sponsorships range from \$1,500 to \$4,000 depending upon the item and its location in the park. Contact Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation at 619-668-3280 or mtrp@mtrp.org for additional information.

Names of contributors of \$1,000 or more will be engraved on the donor board displayed at the Visitor and Interpretive Center. Yearly donations of \$100 or more are accumulated from year-to-year for donor recognition purposes.

Become a Business Friend of Mission Trails

Business Donors making contributions of \$100 to \$500 are eligible for a web site link from the Mission Trails web site for a period of six months. Business Donors making contributions of \$500 and above are eligible for a period of one year.

Our Funds ... You may designate your donation for one or more of the following funds.

Friends of Mission Trails - General support for all Park programs.

Trail Maintenance

Tree and Habitat Maintenance

Education Programs

Library Books and Supplies

Lake Murray

Endowment Funds

General Endowment Fund

Library Endowment Fund

Other ways you may donate ...

Memorial or In Honor Of gifts - Honor a friend or family member with a donation.

Matching funds - Identify Mission Trails Regional Park (MTRP) Foundation for a matching funds contribution if your employer has a policy of matching charitable gifts.

Gifts of Securities - To allow donors to realize full tax deductions for appreciated stock, MTRP Foundation accepts gifts of stock. Contact us at 619-668-3280 or mtrp@mtrp.org for further details.

Wills - Remember MTRP Foundation in your will.

Charitable Remainder Trusts - With a CRT, highly appreciated assets are placed in an irrevocable trust. Those asset proceeds provide income to the donor and/or the donor's beneficiaries for life. Contact your financial advisor for information.

Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation, Inc.

One Father Junipero Serra Trail, San Diego, CA 92119-1008

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You may designate your donation for one or more of the following funds. Please indicate the amount.

Friends of Mission Trails - General support for all Mission Trails programs and projects. \$ _____

MTRP Foundation Endowment Fund - Earnings used for programs and projects..... _____

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Donor Levels

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Roland Roberge, Editor.

A COPY OF THIS AND PAST NEWSLETTERS ARE AVAILABLE ONLINE: mtrp.org/newsletter.asp

Twenty Second Annual Photography Contest Reception and Awards Ceremony

People's Choice



Great Egret Ballet by David Cooksy

The winners of the 22nd annual Amateur Photography Contest were announced at a reception held on Sunday, September 28 in the Mission Trails Regional Park Visitor and Interpretive Center.

The Leonard Buttermann Best of Show award was presented by Executive Director, Jay Wilson in memory of Leonard Buttermann, an avid amateur photographer for seven decades. Best of Show was awarded to Rick Wiley for "Deep Freeze." The People's Choice award went to David Cooksy for "Great Egret Ballet." A complete list of winners and their entries can be seen on the Photo Contest page on our web site mtrp.org under Events.

The photography contest, reception and awards ceremony are an annual event sponsored by Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation in cooperation with the City of San Diego Park & Recreation Department. This year's business sponsor was SANDIEGAN.COM.