



# MOONLETTER

Valley of the Moon Natural History Association, February, Full Moon, 2004

## Jim Adams Receives State Medallion

The Valley of the Moon Natural History Association and the California State Parks are proud to announce that Jim Adams is the latest recipient of the prestigious California State Parks Medallion Award. This award is given to California State Park volunteers who show exemplary dedication in service.

Jim has volunteered for 16 years at the Valley of the Moon Parks in the Silverado Sector of the California State Parks. He has been nominated for his extraordinary work. He is responsible for the addition of the electric car that provides visitors with limited abilities a rewarding experience in Jack London State Historic Park. He has overseen the first restoration of the Cottage and provides input into our current restoration of the Cottage. The Ferguson Observatory attributes its current strength to Jim's persistence in encouraging the Valley of the Moon Natural History Association to provide support. He is currently active on the Board on which he has served for many years.



Jim received the award at our annual Christmas Party held at the House of Happy Walls Museum. Brian Hickey, Acting District Supervisor, Diablo Vista District, presented the award to Jim. The California State Parks are glad to have volunteers and docents like Jim. They help make the State Parks a valuable treasure for everyone. It is volunteers like Jim who have a significant and positive impact on the public's experience with State Parks.

The state park system has attracted over 11,000 volunteers who contribute almost nine hundred thousand hours each year. It is an honor, indeed, when volunteers like Jim stand out amongst the 11,000 volunteers, and all of us are proud to have Jim with us at the Valley of the Moon Parks.



## The MAU to the Rescue

January 22 was a busy day for the Valley of the Moon Parks! All of us are especially grateful to our Mounted Assistance Unit as they were patrolling our Parks that day.

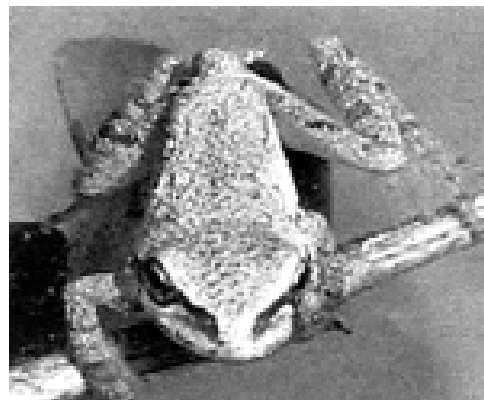
Debbie Bailey, president of the Mau Association and Paulette Carroll were patrolling Annadel when a hiker reported a man with a gun. They acted quickly, calling for assistance from the Rangers. The Rangers responded identifying that the "man with the gun" was actually a researcher doing studies on the Turkeys. The researcher was identified with an orange vest and a volunteer cap and he was authorized by Departments of Parks and Recreation and Fish and Game to collect turkeys in the Park.

At the same time, Kathy Province, another MAU, saw a car burglary in progress as she was entering Sugarloaf Ridge State Park. She promptly drove to the Ranger Station and reported the incident to Ranger Robyn Ishimatsu. Ranger Beane, who was leaving Sugarloaf at the time, heard the radio traffic from Ranger Ishimatsu and was able to follow the suspect. Although the suspect was not apprehended, the Rangers, thanks to Kathy's alertness, have identified the man.

The Mau's are to be commended for their responsiveness to these situations. They provide an invaluable service to our Valley of the Moon Parks and we are very appreciative of their commitment and hard work.

# Naturalist Notes

Chuck Whatford



## Singing in the Rain: Pacific Tree Frogs

This time of year whenever I'm near an aquatic habitat (in our Sonoma County the wet winters form shallow pools in the meadows as well), especially when it's raining I can't help but hear a loud chorus of frogs. Most of the time in our area the frog choristers are Pacific Treefrogs (*Hylidae regilla*), one of our most common amphibians.

They're small (about 2 inches long). But don't be fooled by their small size—they're agile jumpers. These little guys can leap as much as 3 feet into the air! In addition to their small size, you can recognize treefrogs by their long legs and adhesive toe pads. Their skin is rough and varies in color from green to light tan to black, often with dark spots. Although most tend to be greenish in color, in a few minutes they can change their skin color to match their surroundings! Both sexes have a black stripe across the eye, usually a dark triangle between the eyes, but only the males have gray throats.

Their call is a high-pitched, 2-part musical note, often described as a loud two-part sound: "kreck-ek." Many folks think the call sounds like "rib-bit."

In spite of their name, Pacific Treefrogs are chiefly ground dwellers. They have been found in every freshwater habitat from sea level at the coast to over 11,000 feet in the mountains. Look for them locally in low vegetation (such as grass and shrubs) along the borders of slow-moving water such as marshes, ponds, and roadside ditches. Adults eat a variety of insects and other delectables (tasty to them anyway). Being mostly aquatic, their larvae (tadpoles) develop in water and the adults leave water only temporarily.

They usually breed between January and August, depending on local microclimates and local conditions, but I've heard breeding choruses from the local Pacific Treefrog population in the wet area near our house in the Rincon Valley area of Santa Rosa as early as December. Their mating behavior is similar to that of other frogs. For protection from predators they mate at night. At the right time in the winter males gather in ponds and begin to "sing," usually calling from a floating position near the shore in shallow water. These "breeding choruses" are designed to attract females. When a female is ready to breed, she calls back. Frogs have good hearing, thanks to the large eardrums on the sides of their heads. Once a female returns his call, the male is able to location her position by sound alone and, upon hearing her call, swims towards her. During the breeding season male frogs develop an enlarged "nuptial bump" on the first finger of each hand. This bump is apparently important for tactile stimulation of the female's armpits, causing her to lay eggs. Once in position on her back, the male is then able to shed sperm over the eggs as she lays them. The fertilized eggs turn into floating masses that hatch in about 10 days (those that don't get eaten by predators, that is). After they hatch the tadpoles move and feed in the ponds. In about 7-8 weeks metamorphosis occurs during which the tadpoles develop into adult frogs.

Pacific Treefrogs are the most commonly heard frog on the Pacific Coast. (In fact, many movies made in Hollywood that include authentic nighttime sound feature the calls of the Pacific Treefrog.) They're active both day and night and are found from southern British Columbia to Baja California and east to Montana, Idaho, and Nevada. They've also been found on the Channel Islands, off the southern California coast. Locally listen/look for Pacific Treefrogs at False Lake Meadow in Annadel State Park, at the meadow near the Observatory in Sugarloaf Ridge and at the Lake in Jack London State Historic Park.

### Listen for the Treefrogs

*Hike with Bill and Dave to the Waterfall at Sugarloaf Ridge State Park, February 14*

*Hike with Norm to Bald Mountain at Sugarloaf Ridge State Park, February 21*

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# MAU PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

## February 2004

Hello M.A.U. members! I hope each of you are well! I spoke to a Ranger at each of our Valley of the Moon Sector State Parks to get an update of park conditions, and I want to pass that information on to you. Annadel: I spoke to Ranger Wardell and he said we should be aware of the fact that there is an Oak Tree on the eastern side of the Channel Parking Lot that is being evaluated. It is roped off and eliminates about one-quarter of the horse parking area. So, if you plan to ride, please avoid parking your trailer length-wise so everyone will have enough room. You might also consider trailering with a MAU buddy. Ranger Wardell says that the trails are wet and that there are downed trees on lower Warren Richardson and Channel Drive. Canyon Trail at the horse-shoe turn near Annadel Heights is very muddy, so be careful and perhaps avoid it by taking the uphill slope. North Burma is also very muddy. ( Ranger Wardell is due to retire in six weeks. When you see him, be sure to thank him for his years of service and to wish him well)! Sugarloaf: I spoke with Ranger Robyn and she said the normal winter closures are in effect. That means Red Mountain, Brushy Peak, and Vista Trails are closed. She also asked that when we turn in our patrol logs that we indicate what is blooming where, and what is not blooming that usually does. That information will be passed on to the Nature Walk folks. Jack London: I spoke with Ranger Sheryl and she also said the normal winter closures are in effect. That means that upper and lower Fallen Leaf, Treadmill, and the Lake Trail are closed. Please be advised that the Vineyard trail has had slippage and needs repair. There is also a tree down at the beginning of Sonoma Ridge.



We have four new MAU members that need some help in getting their evaluation rides &/or their patrols. They are Liza Loofbourrow (791-9794), Charles Levine (707) 280-1100, Nancy Kasovitch (539-9651), and Victoria Harris (538-2327). Please give them a call when you are planning to ride so that they can participate and fulfill their membership obligations. We do not want them to become discouraged!

Our volunteer coordinator investigated our 24 hour rule and learned that we still must abide by it. Several members have asked if they can fill out a patrol log if they ride spontaneously without this 24 hr. notice to the park. You may fill out an ordinary piece of paper and indicate on it any trail conditions or situations that you think need attention and send it to the appropriate park ranger, but we cannot give you patrol credit nor will you be covered by workmen's compensation insurance. In order to be on an official MAU patrol, you must give 24 hr. notice. When you have done this you are covered by workmen's compensation. Then you should of course, fill out an official patrol log, send it to the appropriate ranger, and log your hours with our hour recorder, Lynn Harris.

Docent training begins March 27, 2004, at 10:00 a.m. at Sugarloaf. If you have any friends that are interested in becoming members of M.A.U., please encourage them to attend. You can have them contact our volunteer co-ordinator, Joyce Moldovan, at 938-4827 for further information.



### ***The River's Music***

*By Micelle Gruben, Age 11 from River of Words*

Down from the rocky mountain  
It gushes from a ledge.  
A waterfall  
Clear and tall  
Cascading from the edge

It rushes through a stream bed  
Carved out by the work of time.  
And fills a nook  
With a bubbling brook  
That adds to the water's rhyme

It trickles through the forest  
The vital veins of Earth  
And the woods resound  
With the water's sound  
And the melodies of mirth.

### **Valentine Hike**

Dave and Bill's Hike will take you to see and hear the **Rivers Music** at the Sugarloaf Ridge Falls.

# Valley of the Moon Winter Events

**Saturday, February 14**  
**Valentine Hike**  
**With Dave and Bill**  
**Sugarloaf Ridge State Park**  
**9:45 a.m.**

**Saturday, February 21**  
**Solar Viewing**  
**11:00 a.m.**  
**Night Skies**  
**7:00 p.m.**  
**Ferguson Observatory**

**March 1**  
**Return VMNHA**  
**Annual Membership Dues**

**Saturday, March 27**  
**New Docent Training begins**

Valley of the Moon  
Natural History Assn.  
California State Parks, Valley Sector  
Jack London State Historic Park  
2400 London Ranch Rd.,  
Glen Ellen, CA 95442  
Basic Membership: \$20 per year

**Board of Directors:**  
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Cookie Hirn  
June Perez  
Mary Catherine Doherty

Joyce Moldovan, Volunteer. Coordinator  
Phone or Fax: (707) 938-4827  
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Articles submitted for publication are welcome and should be received by the 15th of the month, unless prior arrangements have been made.

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