



Crescenta Valley View

“The power of the universe makes us infinite.” — John Muir

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Crescenta Valley Sierra Club Monthly Newsletter

July 2015



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John Muir

B: 4/21/1838

D: 12/24/1914



ExCom Chair Carole Mintzer, the Monarch from Dearborn, and youth celebrate Earth Day in Griffith Park

Bringing Back the Monarch

By Silvia Darie

The latest graduates from Dearborn Elementary Chapter Academy have wings and truly fly high. They are Monarch butterflies (*Danaus plexippus*) that have found their start in the new butterfly habitat at this school in Northridge. Nestled in the middle of the San Fernando Valley, this school has responded to the national call for action to bring back the Monarchs, which have seen dramatic a decrease in numbers in recent years due to loss of habitat.

I didn't know much about the Monarch until I started

growing it. Soon I fell in love with it. As it goes through the five stages, or molting periods, named "instars," the larvae grow from 1 mm, to almost 2 inches. The bigger the caterpillar, the more it eats. A caterpillar in its 5th instar can easily eat fourleaves of milkweed a day before resting to spin its chrysalis. The chrysalis is a gorgeous green color with

Join us for our annual 4th of July Picnic

We are holding our Annual Picnic on Saturday, July 11th, at Deukmejian Wilderness Park, located at 3429 Markridge Rd in La Crescenta, beginning at 8:00 a.m.

An array of fruits, pastries, juices, and other treats are on the menu. A tree-watering hike is planned. Hikers can enjoy an easy hike and participate in watering the young pines and oak trees in the park that the CV Group, and others, have planted during the past few years.

golden crown and golden studs.

When the butterfly is ready to come out, the crysalis changes to iridescent blue black, and orange wings show through. The birth of the butterfly is quick and

(See Monarch, page 4)

Management Committee

Chair	Fred Dong
Vice Chair	Jeffrey Wilson
Secretary	Marlene Plummer
Treasurer	Jerry Burnham
ExCom Representative	John Lajeuness
Webmaster	Chuck Gooley
Programs	Wayne Fisher
Membership & Outings	Silvia Darie
Conservation & Newsletter	Bettie Pearson

<i>Events and Outings</i>	<i>Date and Time</i>
<i>4th of July Picnic and hike, Deukmejian Wilderness Park, 3429 Markridge Rd, La Crescenta, CA</i>	<i>Saturday, July 11, 2015, 8:00 a.m.</i>
<i>Panama Exploration and Canal Cruise (at capacity)</i>	<i>Friday, July 31, 2015 to Tuesday, August 11, 2015</i>
<i>Gary Nelson, Mountaineer, Los Angeles County Library, 2809 Foothill Blvd., La Crescenta, CA</i>	<i>Tuesday, September 8, 2015, 7:30 p.m.</i>
<i>Bali and Flores Island Trip</i>	<i>Wednesday, September 9 to Thursday, September 24, 2015</i>
<i>Danielle Frank, artist, Los Angeles County Library, 2809 Foothill Blvd., La Crescenta, CA</i>	<i>Tuesday, October 13, 2015, 7:30 p.m.</i>
<i>China Panda Yunnan Shangri La Adventure</i>	<i>Thursday, October 8, 2015 to Wednesday, October 21, 2015</i>

Conservation

The Conservation Committee voted on Wednesday, June 17, 2015, to approve the following two resolutions:

The SC supports efforts to secure Walnut Canyon as a publicly owned passive open space park and opposes any development in its open space, including the current development proposal to construct a 32-home project.

The Proposed SR 710 Resolution states: the Sierra Club (1) opposes the SR 710 Draft EIR/EIS highway tunnel alternatives; (2) prefers continued refinement of more comprehensive alternatives like the City of Pasadena's Locally Preferred Alternative... (3) calls for analysis of replacing existing truck freight with a rail alternative.

Dean Wallraff informed the committee of the availability of grassroots committees that are in need of revitalization. There is not enough staff to support all of the 50 or so committees within the grassroots network. As the priority of the



Hikers enjoyed the May 6th trek to snow-covered Mt. Islip, led by Karen Bueler and Long Beach Group's Sharon Moore.

National Board is the Beyond Coal campaign, non-priority campaigns are relegated to one of the committees on the grassroots network. Most of the work is done by volunteers.

The Chapter has a volunteer connections link which lists opportunities to volunteer within the chapter.

At the most recent conservation committee meeting, Darrell Clarke, the committee co-chair, said that the Chapter has not recommended a particular route. Rather, it was waiting for the EIRs which are due to be finalized in the coming months.



Joe Barrett (seated at table), Mark Legassie (wearing hat) and Lauren Chroman, of the “Save Our Canyon” Campaign

May Speakers Talk of Open Spaces and Saving Habitats

At the CV's June forum, we heard from speakers John Monsen and Mark Legassie.

Monsen, a member of the Forest Committee, is leading the campaign to expand the San Gabriel National Monument to include Condor Peak.

The audience seemed on board with this campaign. We appreciate our open spaces and any help we can obtain to maintain those spaces is greatly appreciated.

Our Crescenta Valley Group's Executive Committee voted to support expansion of the San Gabriel monument and the establishment of the Condor Peak Wilderness Area.

We have also voted to support by resolution the “Save Our Canyon” campaign, which is aimed at halting the Canyon Park Development.

Legassie is one of the key leaders in the campaign. He gave persuasive reasons why the development is a very bad idea. For one thing, if completed, with just one major artery, there would be in-



John Monsen (standing)

creased traffic.

Lauren Chroman, a biologist, stated that she had studied the ecology in the area and spoke passionately of the threat to wildlife habitats should the development proceed.

She pointed out that the Fish and Wildlife Service has identified the area as the critical final habitat of a number of species.

The Coastal Sage Scrub, which is an endangered plant, grows in the area and putting homes in the area could force it and certain other species into extinction.

In addition to threats to the Sage Scrub, Chroman indicated that the project threatened to destroy the habitats of the Santa Ana Sucker, Arroyo Toad, Coastal

gnatcatcher, Southwestern Willow Flycatcher, Least Bell's Vireo, CA condor, Braunton's milk-vetch plant, Nevin's barberry plant, Slender-Horned spineflower plant and impact Angeles' reserve drink supply.

The Environmental Impact Report for the project is due out soon.

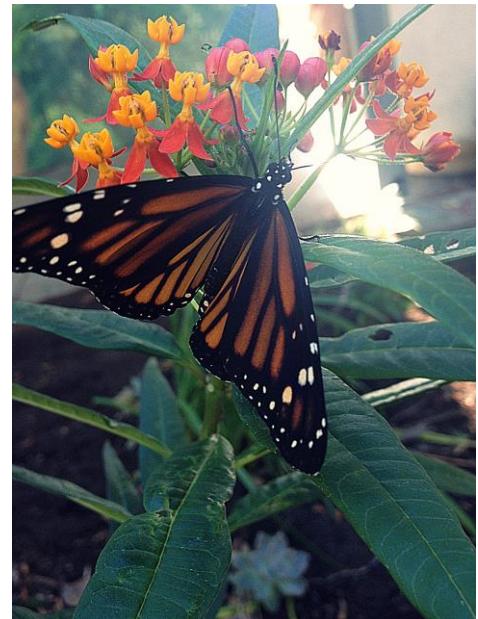
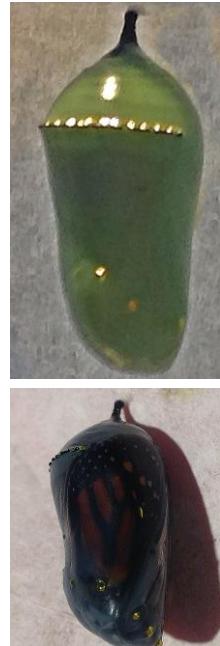


Above: Least Bell's Vireo (*Wiki*)

Below: Santa Ana sucker (*FWS*)



Photo by Paul Barrett, USFWS

*Photos by Silvia Daria*

Above: Monarch caterpillar in 4th instar; **top center**, crysalis; **center bottom**: butterfly ready to emerge; **right**: Monarch butterfly

Monarch, from page 1

spectacular as the wet butterfly emerges, dries up and is ready to fly. The males have two black dots on the lower wings.

At Dearborn Elementary the butterfly habitat was started a few months ago in the school's Literacy Garden with full support from the principal and a few milkweed plants that provide food for the Monarch caterpillars. *Asclepia Curassava*, the showy orange blossomed tropical variety of milkweed, was used initially because frankly, it is prettier. However, because it does not go dormant, this plant has the potential to disturb the normal migration of the Monarch. As time goes, this plant will be replaced by the native *Asclepia fascicularis*, the narrow leaved Californian variety of milkweed that loses its leaves in winter. See, there are

4 generations of monarchs throughout the year, but the last one, during winter time lives about 3-4 months, and migrates. If the temperatures stay warm and food is abundant during winter months, the fear is that butterflies will skip the migration.

Even though small, the Dearborn garden has seen the beginning of at least 30 Monarchs. Caterpillars are harvested and grown indoors to increase the rate to maturity, and to avoid predators such as the Tachnid flies that parasitize the caterpillar by injecting their eggs in the Monarch larva.

For school age children, it is fascinating to find the caterpillar munching on a leaf and then follow it through stages until its metamorphosis into a crysalis and later into a butterfly. It would be devastating to feed and follow such a caterpillar for couple of weeks, just to see the Tachnid larvae come out of the

crysalis and making their cocoon instead of a butterfly.

The lessons learned from growing Monarchs are multiple. Kids learn about natural supply and demand when they see a plant overwhelmed by caterpillars. They also learn about the various predators that impact a species survival, and learn about the specifics of each specie. They soon learn that no milkweed, means no monarchs, since monarch caterpillars would not eat anything else. They also learn that one has to struggle a bit to come out strong. Try helping a butterfly to stretch its wings, and you will soon discover that without the struggles, it will never fly. If nothing else, that's a good lesson to learn.

If you'd like to find out more or help the school with its Butterfly Habitat and other environmental projects, please contact Silvia at outdoorsygal@sbcglobal.net.