

**SOUTH PASADENA LOCAL HISTORY
SOUTH PASADENA PUBLIC LIBRARY MATERIALS
SUBJECT: ANIMALS**

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Animal Commission

(818)799-9101

Animals
S.P. Quarterly
Summer 1991

Beverly Biber, So. Pas. Animal Commission

Summertime Isn't Easy For The Animals

The popular song, "Summertime," tells us this is the time of year when the "livin' is easy!" For most people and many animals, that is true. Unfortunately, the summer months are filled with hazards for our pets and wildlife.

Despite the Spring rains, California's prolonged drought and dwindling water supplies in nearby foothills is expected to be unusually hard on wildlife. Many wild animals will become more visible, and in some cases, become injured or trapped in yards, as they search for food and water. In fact, our community experienced three incidents involving deer in 1990, along with numerous raccoon, skunk, and coyote encounters. (According to Animal Control, deer and other wildlife come down from the San Gabriel Mountains and foothills and wander in and around the arroyo, ravines, and canyon-hillside areas of South Pasadena.)

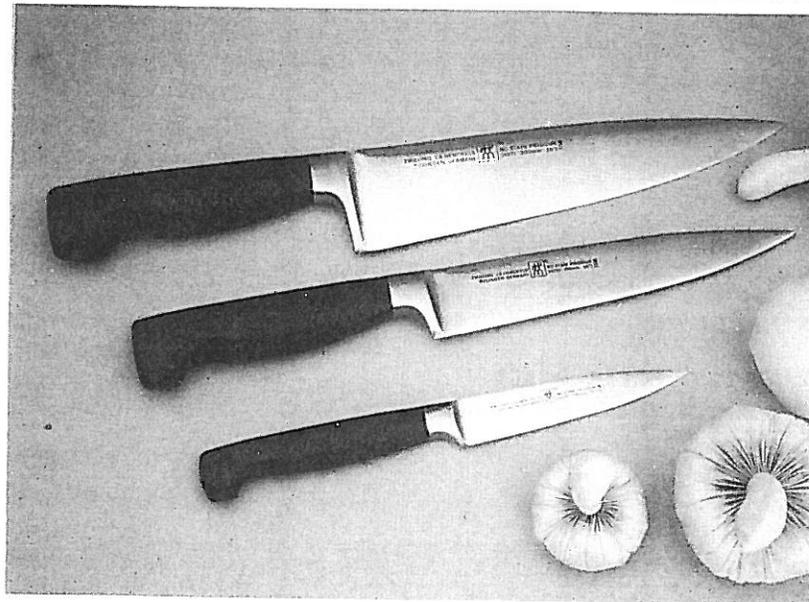
Increasing wildlife activity should not be a cause for alarm. However, residents should take extra precautions with their pets during the drought period along with usual measures for coping with urban wildlife. This should include driving with care in areas commonly known as "critter crossings" or where a deer might possibly bolt across the road. It should be noted that many domestic animals who might otherwise remain calm on an evening walk might suddenly pull free from their leash and chase after a wild animal. For this reason, a secure collar with a firm grip on the lead is a must if you walk your dog in areas known to be frequented by

wildlife.

Walking with your dog on a balmy summer evening (avoid exercising your dog in the heat of the day or on hot sidewalks) is just one of many outdoor activities in the warm months that give your pet more opportunity to escape or to wander off unnoticed. Sometimes a very frightened animal can manage to get out of an otherwise secure area. This is especially true during the 4th of July when sharp explosions and frightening pyrotechnics can cause

some animals to panic and jump fences, break through doors, pull off their leashes and run blindly into street traffic. Even in the absence of sudden, ear splitting noise, animals can be injured by such things as sparklers (magnesium coated, they burn at 4,000 degrees and can burn the foot pads of your dog or cat), or other items which, if ingested, cause a toxic reaction. This 4th of

See Pets page 23



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What to do when Fido acts like a dog!

Now that Spring is here, so is "puppy season," and many families are adopting new puppies or dogs into their households. With this new addition to the family comes a period of adjustment for everyone, including the dog.

Once the owner deems that sufficient time has past for Fido to adjust, some problems may surface. In many instances, Fido acts like a dog and his owners are not willing to accept his behavior as normal. Some dog owners want their dogs to be cats, or people with fur coats. Natural behavior is seen as destructive, problematic or neurotic. Tragically, this conflict often results in the dog being turned in to a shelter to be euthanized. This does not need to happen! Mutual respect and understanding can go a long way towards harmony in the household if an owner can learn ways to channel certain canine behaviors and control them when necessary.

Some common complaints and possible solutions are:

1. Chewing: a very natural instinct for dogs, some breeds more than others. If yours is a chewer, fine. Rather than reprimand him for chewing, designate what he can chew on. Supply him with lots of acceptable chew toys and only reprimand him for destroying unacceptable items such as table legs or fences.

2. Barking: a very common complaint. If a dog barks constantly, look at the facts behind the behavior. The amount of time a dog spends alone is a key fact. Dogs are pack animals and do not like to be left alone. Although a certain amount of



WALK YOUR DOGS—Linda Magallanes teaches Dog Obedience for owners and four-legged friends in Parks and Rec Dept.'s classes.

time alone is unavoidable, if a solitary dog is left unattended in a backyard all day and night, this is cruel to the animal. Possible solutions are to get another dog as a companion, make a concerted effort to spend more time with the dog either inside the home or out, or perhaps consider owning a more low-maintenance animal.

3. Digging: This can be

controlled by designating a digging area for the dog and fencing off unacceptable areas such as flower beds or vegetable gardens.

Exercise is another very important way to channel a dog's behavior. Some dogs are destructive out of boredom. Spending time with your pet re-directs excess energy and helps build the bond between you.

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What To Do When Fido Acts Like A Dog

One final solution to correcting destructive behavior is seeking help from a professional: Dog obedience school. This is another quality-time area for owners to share with their dogs, while dogs learn to please their master and respond to commands.

In the Pasadena area, the Pasanita Obedience Club offers classes in Brookside Park on Wednesday evenings and Saturday mornings. For further information call 818 797-7070.



AT EASE—Dogs take a break from training in Parks and Rec Dept. Dog Obedience class.

Pets

from page 9

July, make sure your pet is securely confined, preferably indoors where it will feel safe and protected.

Should you have the misfortune of a pet running off and fleeing beyond its normal, familiar territory, keep in mind that the best way to be reunited with your pet is through use of license and current identification tags. If you happen to be away on vacation and a friend is caring for your dog, be sure you also have current tags with temporary identification or someone who can be contacted

during your absence. This can save many anxious hours and lives.

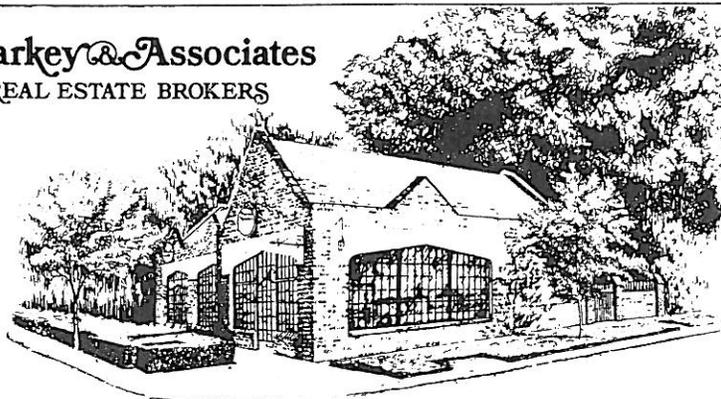
Large numbers of otherwise well cared for pets arrive at animal shelters daily with no identification, and therefore, no way to facilitate a reunion if any at all. In addition to making certain that your pet always wears a proper fitting collar (animals should never wear choke collars except during the supervision of their owner) and identification tag, all pet owners should have their pets spayed or neutered. The tragedy of lost pets and pet overpopulation is often the result of unspayed/unneutered dogs or cats getting out of their yard to mate with an animal in heat.

Finally, the most obvious summer hazards are due to soaring temperatures. Heat stress is a major problem for animals. Pets do not sweat; their lungs are their cooling system (dogs panting). With nothing but hot air to breathe, your pet can get sunstroke or heat stroke very easily. For this reason, all pets

need a shady place to lay in and access to cool water in a spill proof container. Above all, never leave your pet in a parked car in hot weather. Even in the shade or with some of the windows opened up, the interior of a parked car can heat up to 120 - 160 F in just a few minutes. If your pet exhibits signs of heat stress or heat stroke (e.g., heavy panting, glazed eyes, rapid pulse rate, dizziness, vomiting, or a deep red or purple tongue), get him into the shade immediately. Run cool water over the entire body or immerse the animal in cool water. Limit water intake until the pet has sufficiently recovered from the acute state of heat stress and consult a veterinarian. If you observe any animal who might be suffering from heat or dehydration, try to confine it and get help from Animal Control.

These are just a few of the precautions you can take this summer to make the living easier for our pets and wildlife.

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Llamas: Camel Kin Captive SoPas



Andean Pair Right at Home in The City of Trees . . .

by NORMA LeVALLEY

What's one of the best burglar alarms in South Pasadena, has eight legs, uses up to 80 gallons of water at one sitting and spits when mad? The answer: a pair of llamas.

These gregarious, healthy pets need to have a llama buddy, as the South Pasadena residents, who are the proud owners of these strange two-toed animals, found out.

Llamas, meaning "speechless brothers," are members of the camel (camelid) family, which originated in North America. Almost 11,000 years ago, they left North America, going to Asia, Africa and South

America. There are now about 25,000 llamas in the United States where they are being used as pack animals and, more recently, to guard sheep from wandering coyotes. Their soft, fine wool makes beautiful sweaters and blankets.

Llamas usually weigh between 280 - 350 pounds and have a life expectancy of 15 - 20 years. They don't eat meat, and the two llamas eat about a bale of hay a week along with some grain. They drink a lot of water at one time, are extremely clean and like to be petted on their necks and woolly backs.

They communicate with each

other by humming and give a "shrill, rhythmic alarm call" when startled.

They have large brown eyes, lengthy eyelashes and are incredibly curious. Our local llamas like to be haltered and taken for a walk through the hills. They are disease-free, do not have fleas or attract flies.

In their lovely location, they can run around fruit trees and nibble on avocado leaves.

On the rare occasions when the llamas have a disagreement, with remarkably good aim, they spit at each other. It's a way of saying, "You're in my space."



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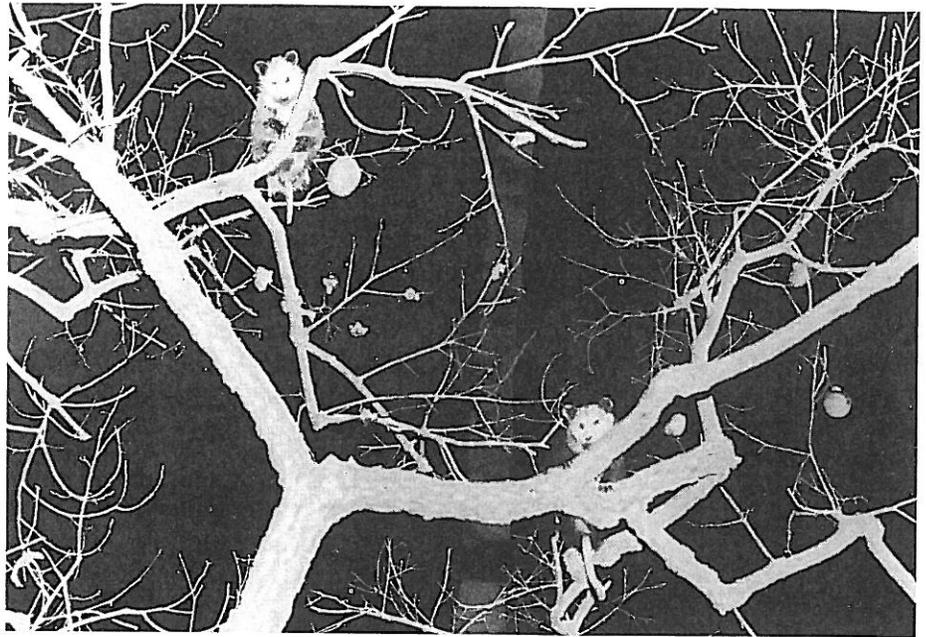
Pesky Critters Call City Home

by JOHN FORSHA

We, who live in the "City of Trees," tend to forget that we are not the original residents of this town. Like many yards in South Pasadena, mine is blessed with a wide variety of fruit trees. These provide decorative landscaping, lush shade and table d'hote for our original citizens — skunks, opossums, raccoons, squirrels, rats, mice, etc.

In particular, my house is obviously at the convergence of a series of ancient opossum trails (visible from satellite, no doubt.) and these nocturnal animals resent my intrusions into their busy cafeteria traffic.

A simple evening trash run becomes an outtake from "Aliens," with 20 pounds of angry, slaving, hissing opossum waiting by the barrel. My *animals* obviously haven't read their own press. They don't "play possum," they ask for I.D. My wife refuses to enter the yard at night unless accompanied by a gun-bearer. At one point, it was impos-



UP A TREE--Tree seems to be bearing strange fruit as night-blooming opossums peer out at intruders. Familiar animal can be seen scooting across streets through the beam of car headlights en route to other feasts.

sible to decide whether a particular tree was bearing persimmons or possums, so thick were the limbs with gray fuzzy "fruit."

The common Virginia Opossum (*Didelphis virginiana*) is the major new world representative of the marsupials (including those cute koalas and kangaroos). The name

See 'Possum page 35



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'Possum

from page 29

comes from the Algonquin language, "A Passin," meaning "pale dog." Considered quite edible by many Americans, possum brings \$4 a pound at the French Market in New Orleans. Perhaps Bristol Farms would be...? Nah.

In any case, a call to Ray Magallanes, our City Animal Control Officer, provided me with a Hava-Hart (non-lethal) trap and directions for snaring these "pests." One week and seven possums later, things were much quieter. Ray relocates such undesirables by releasing them in the Angeles National Forest.

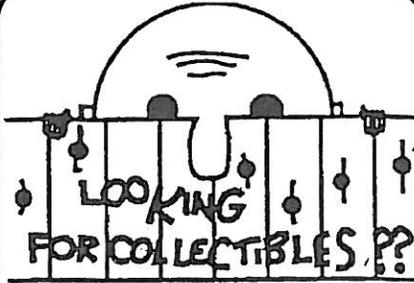
For now, it's peaceful in my yard. I can take out my trash with-



PLAYING POSSUM--City Animal Control Officer Ray Magallanes is not fooled by upside-down friend 'playing possum.'

out a whip and chair, and things no longer go bump in the night.

At least until next season.



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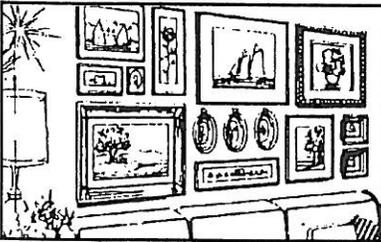


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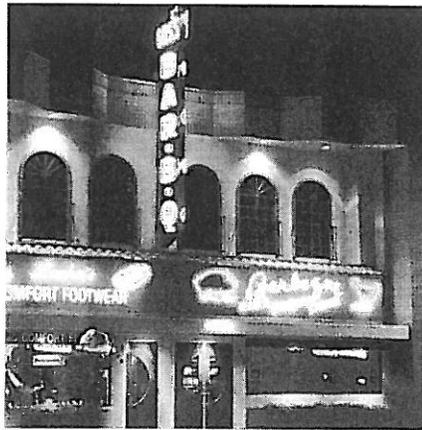
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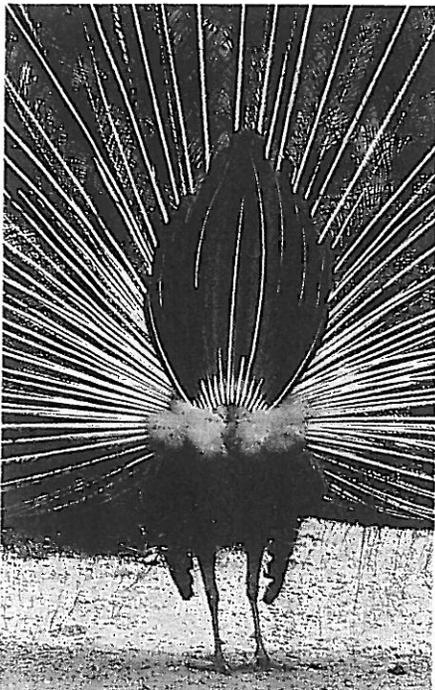
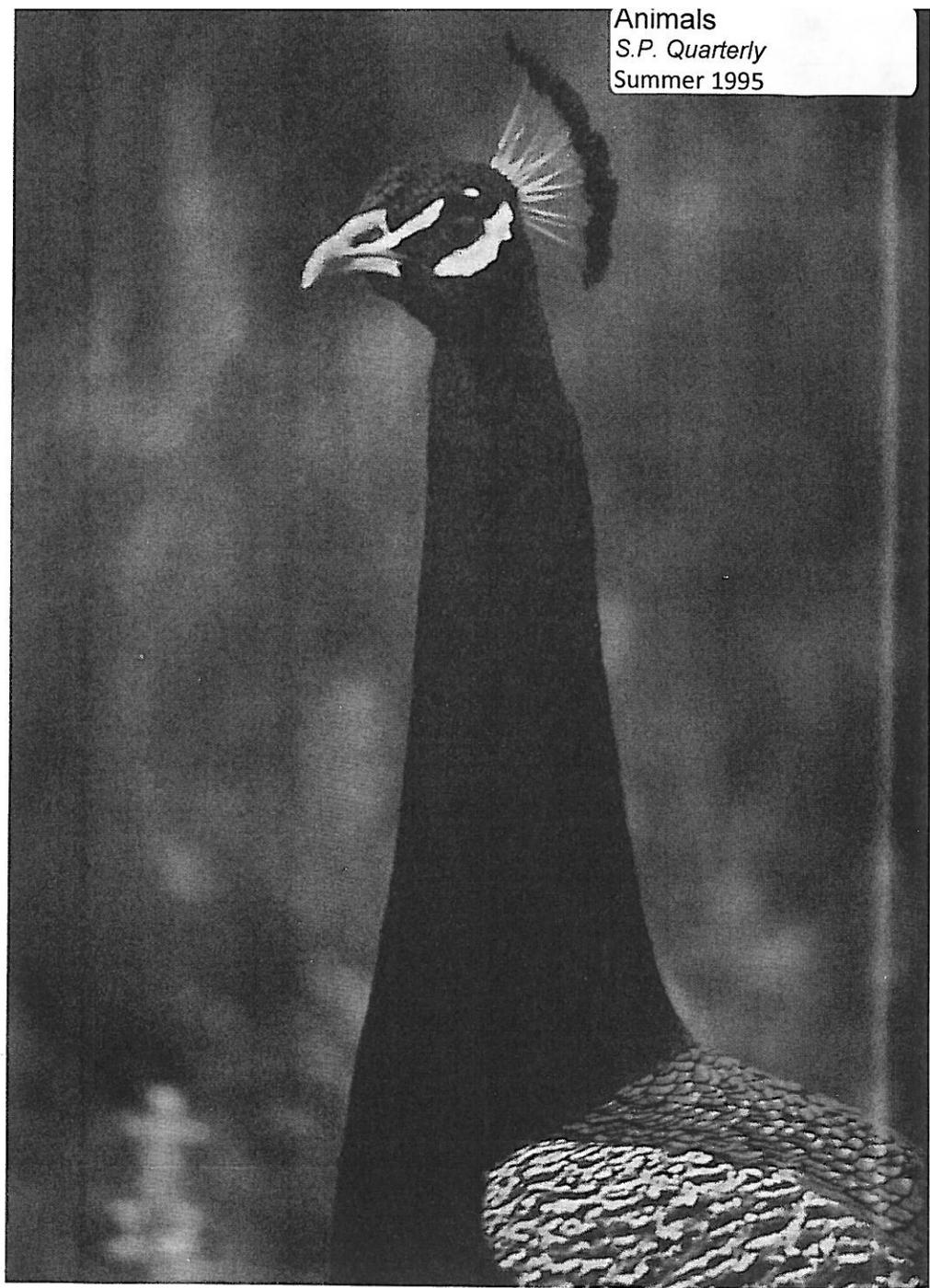
If the gardeners were asked what were the biggest pests to the plants and flowers at the Los Angeles Arboretum, they might well scratch their collective heads and say, "Well, it's hard to say whether it would be people or peacocks."

A peacock and his bevy of peahens, unfortunately, tend to have peabrains.

When Los Angeles County took over the ownership of the Los Angeles Arboretum in 1953, the County also inherited the offsprings from the original peacocks, believed to have numbered about six. The peacocks were ordered by "Lucky" Baldwin, who bought the 8,000 acre ranch for \$200,000 in 1875 and turned it into a working ranch and showplace.

Elias Jackson "Lucky" Baldwin hated the name "Lucky," saying he had worked hard for all his money. He did acknowledge that in 1867, before he left for a world tour, he locked his depressed shares of stock in Hale and Norcross in his safe requesting his brokers to sell at \$800 a share. He forgot to leave them the keys to the safe and by the time he got back to the ranch in 1869, the price was \$12,000 a share.

On his second world tour in the 1870s he saw, for the first time, the peacocks in India. Being a connoisseur of a pretty face, big brown eyes and colorful attitude, when he saw the magnificent, cobalt blue



Fowl Play

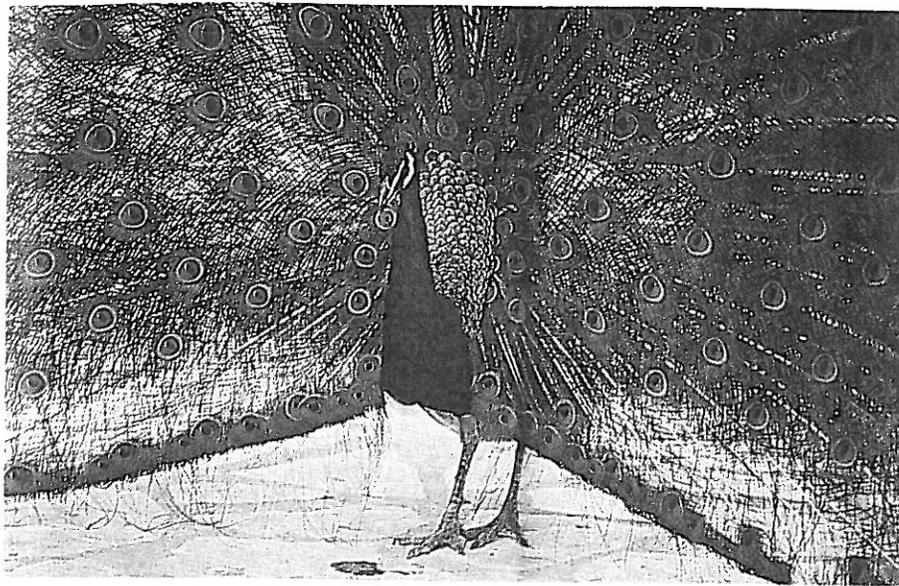
by Norma LeValley
Photographs by William Ericson

plumage, royal crown and regal bearing, he immediately knew that was just what his ranch needed.

His peacocks have multiplied, with not quite the same rapidity as his stocks and land value, but the offsprings of the approximated six peacocks are now numbering in the 300 range on the Arboretum

grounds. Many others, who "flew the coop," are now squawking their ways through parts of Pasadena and other communities.

Scientifically they are classified as "gallinaceous" birds, or fowl. This family of scratchers includes the pheasants, grouse, quail, ptarmigans, partridges and chickens.



From an aesthetic standpoint, their "Achilles heel" rests with their featherless unattractive legs and ugly feet.

Their most commendable features are the male's iridescent blue head and body and the fan or train which contains more than 200 feathers and spans nine feet. When the peacock sees a peahen, he tries to attract her attention by the spreading of the train, the quivering sound of the feathers and his traditional step forward, step back, turn, dance.

This fan or train is not the peacock's tail, which is much more mundane. The bird has three different types of feathers: the straight, stiff, meshed flight feathers, the small, loose fluffy down and the ornamental plumes, which generated the name "bird of a thousand eyes." This latter designation made paranoid natives afraid they were being watched and, therefore, the

birds were thought to bring bad luck to the superstitious.

Although the male birds are considered to have the mentality of a rock and to be completely untrainable, they are very egocentric. Hence, the phrase, "proud as a peacock." Their strutting and contented unfolding of their fans can lead to traumatic problems for the male birds.

It has been said that, "A high wind presents a threat to his dignity, as he tries to keep his train up while staying upright himself." The other problem is that he cannot see behind, leaving himself open to a "rear attack."

In India, his predator is the tiger; in this area hawks, coyotes and an occasional aggressive dog can attack the bird. The older birds fight back and their ungodly screams can be heard for miles.

Preening is their main delight in life and next to eating and court-



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ing a peahen, a peacock's other joy in life is seeing himself in a mirror or reflected in water.

The female or peahen is dowdy and with her assortment of brownish, bland feathers, pales in contrast to her gaudy male counterpart. Peahens tend to ignore the males until mating time, when, for the most part, they continue to ignore them.

The birds roost in trees at night and can fly up to about 40 feet in

the air. Their real problem is getting down, which they do in the flight style of the gooney bird. Namely: Splat!

Despite their idiosyncrasies, through history they have been admired for their beauty. According to the Bible, King Solomon sent ships to the Orient for gold, silver, ivory and peacocks and few can argue with Charles Darwin when he wrote, "the eye of the peacock feather is one of the most beautiful objects in nature."

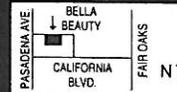
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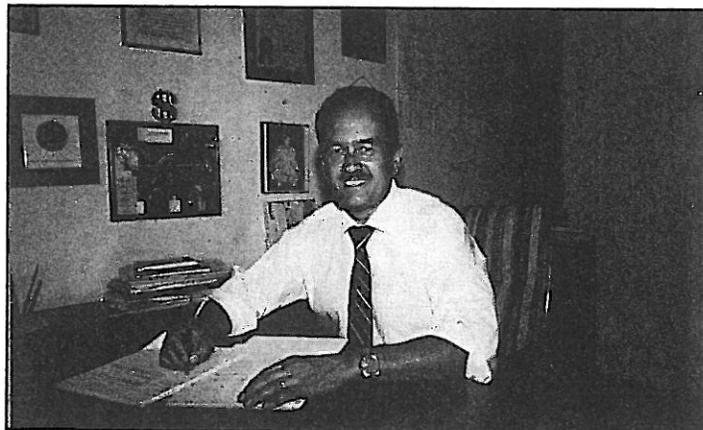
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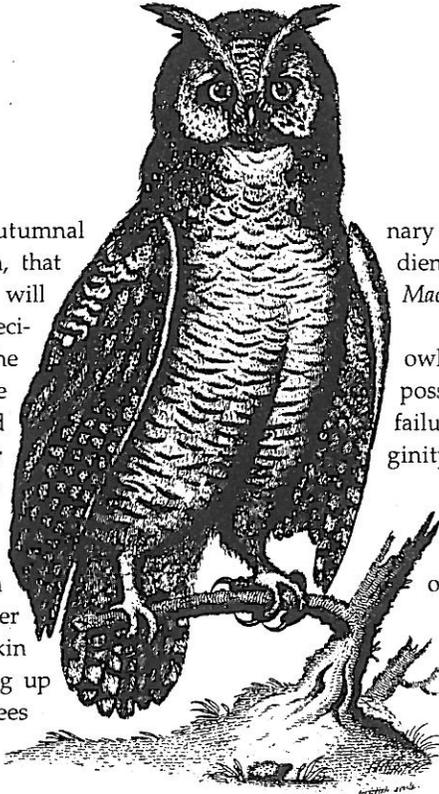
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A Parliament of Owls

BY JOHN FORSHA



As the autumnal equinox draws nigh, that day when the sun will rise with uncanny precision directly over the mysterious heel stone at the end of Garfield Park — I'm unclear whether ancient druids or the Kiwanis are responsible for the monolith — signaling the winter solstice. Pumpkin patches are springing up where Christmas trees once flocked and, in spite of a decided lack of frost on 'em, fall must be here, bringing with it, everyone's favorite anachronism, Halloween.

And as witches and goblins gather, among the bats, rats, cats and Power Rangers, you'll surely find an owl or two.

Few birds have inspired as much superstition and folklore as the owl, and it's all very ambivalent. Wise old bird or harbinger of doom, take your pick.

For example, Athena, Greek goddess of wisdom bears an owl on her shoulder. So does Lilith, Sumerian goddess of death.

In folk medicine, placing owl feathers beneath one's pillow will insure sound sleep and owl soup (gack) will cure coughs and colds.

Now, I know this is true, for all my wife needs to do, when I'm under the weather, is approach my bedside with a steaming bowl of hearty owl soup and . . . *voila* . . . my recovery is nothing short of miraculous.

On the down side, owls are very popular as symbols of death and misfortune, and even make another owly culi-

nary appearance as an ingredient in the witches brew of *Macbeth*.

Hearing the hoot of an owl can foretell such grim possibilities as death, crop failure, acne or loss of virginity. The poet Spenser called the bird "death's dreadful messenger."

Just looking at an owl explains a lot of its diverse appeal. Owls have wonderful faces built around enormous eyes, which, as in most predators, are placed flat to provide good binocular vision. The

eye balls are distorted, making a wide screen retina for good vision in low light. The eyes are set in feathery cheeks which give that owly appearance and may even help focus sound reception to the ears, hidden behind them. The feathery horns of some species are eyebrows, not ears.

Walking around an owl displays another disconcerting ability of the bird. Its head will follow you, Linda Blair-like, 180 degrees around before snapping back and around, like a ballet dancer's, without losing sight of you.

Most owls are nocturnal and all are carnivorous. Depending on the species, their diet includes insects, birds, other owls, rabbits and rodents of all sizes and description.

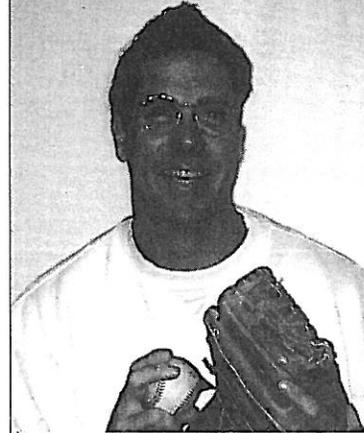
Owls have a nifty feature which allows them to hunt effectively in the still of night. Their flight feathers are equipped with fluffy silencers enabling a great horned owl the size of a spaniel to drift through the night sky like thistle-down.

Owls don't build their own nests, but occupy holes in trees, cliffs, animal

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PHYSICAL THERAPY

"As a pitcher I injured my shoulder. Dr. Frank Jobe, Dodger team physician, highly recommended going to Yonemoto Physical Therapy, and I'm glad I did. I can now throw again."

— Jim Gott, former Dodger pitcher (14 year major leaguer), host of KABC Sportstalk



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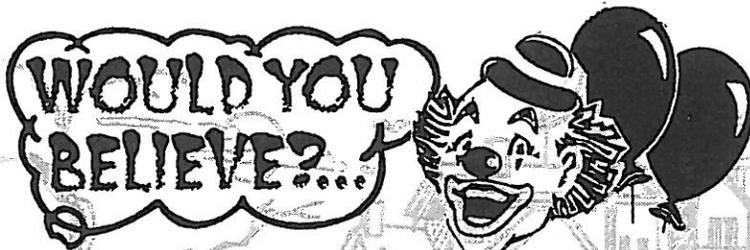
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burrows, the abandoned nests of other birds or old, unoccupied buildings.

And then there are their voices. Owl songs are best when experienced in context. Say, at midnight in a forest or churchyard. Their voices have an oddly human quality that can send anyone's imagination into a tizzy. The voicings vary from the classic "who" types to the insane high-pitched cackle of the screech owls, and the tormented screams of the barn owl.

Speaking of bad press, a recent *Los Angeles Times* article described a nightmare experience involving a horned owl. The bird crashed through a living room window, wreaking noisy and smelly havoc until it escaped into the night. Smelly, as the bird had recently dined on skunk and was reeking of that wonderful *woods* aroma.

Some of my earliest memories are of owls. At age three, watching my father through a window, hanging diapers on a clothesline which had been appropriated for the evening by a family of screech owls. Although only six inches in height, they managed with fierce yellow stares and hissing, clicking beaks to keep father at bay.

Several years later at scout camp in Twenty-nine Palms, I was on the receiving end of a classic snipe hunt. It was a full-moon-lit night, and I was hunkered in a creosote bush, clutching a gunny sack and waiting for action.

Now, I may not have been able to tie a running bowline or start a campfire by rubbing two Girl Scouts together, but I well knew what a snipe was and that it relied on large bodies of water for its livelihood. There is no beachfront property in Twenty-nine Palms.

So, as I waited for the older boys to herd that elusive dehydrated snipe my way, the palm tree next to my bush cleared its throat and announced in a loud sepulchral voice . . . *Too Whoo*.

My air of ornithological arrogance vanished in a shattering rush of adrenalin. Heart thudding, I looked up and observed a dark shadow the size of a DC-9 detach itself from the tree and float off across the moonlit desert.

Later, once I had gained my composure, I joined the rest of the troop around the campfire and told lies about snipe and giant man-eating desert owls, and ate toasted marshmallows.

Owl's well that ends well.



Gophers



BY JOHN FORSHA

I was wondering if it was ever going to stop raining. Everything I own is dampish and mildewed. Even the office is squishy and mushrooms are growing under the copy machine.

Unaccustomed as most Californians are, to any marked seasonal changes, the end of our seemingly Biblical flood could certainly qualify as spring to me.

Easterners, who enjoy real seasons have their own mythology which helps them cope with some really depressing weather. As an example, we have Groundhog Day and Punxsutawney Phil.

Phil is the honorary weather rodent — kind of like a furry Rose Queen —

who makes his annual appearance on February 2 in the town of Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania at a typically embarrassing media event.

Phil, freshly fluff-dried and looking tan, rested and ready, is coaxed or cattle-prodded on cue to pop out of his hole, glance sagely about, whiffle the air and opt for — spring — or the six weeks of extra winter behind door number two.

Well, we here in the San Gabriel Valley, don't have the luxury of ground hogs to keep track of our equinae ver-nae. The only local rodent that lives in a burrow and could possibly fit the bill is the . . . gopher. And, as anyone who has wandered around the Arroyo lately can

testify, we've got lots of them.

The average gopher, sadly, is not really the media idol type.

Around six to eight inches long, with gray-brown fur, tiny beady eyes, small ears and tail and grotesque fur-lined pouches extending from cheeks to shoulders, framing those orange rodent incisors, the gopher is in no danger of being called cuddly.

Fortunately, one hardly ever sees the animal itself, but its mounds and tunnels are obvious evidence of its presence in the begonias.

The gopher is wonderfully evolved and specialized for underground living. The forepaws are flattened and heavily clawed for digging, and the lips close tightly around the exposed front teeth, enabling the animal to gnaw and fill his pouches without getting a mouthful of dirt.

When his "cheeks" are full, he retreats — his fur has no "direction," allowing free forward and backward movement — to one of several underground chambers used for storage and

See *GOPHERS*, page 52

Animals
S.P. Quarterly
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GOPHERS

from page 28

nesting.

Gophers are solitary and live alone in large tunnel systems, including several nest and pantry rooms, often covering from 50 to 100 feet of territory.

Every spring the males emerge from their burrows and go in search of a mate. Sadly, for our groundhog metaphor, this has more to do with testosterone than the vernal equinox.

After mating, showing utter disregard for family values, everyone goes home alone. Female gophers usually have one to two litters of two to ten pups per year. The pups mature sexually in three months, and so it goes.

I asked around City Hall, curious if these animals had impacted upon civic government in some way. The most I could gather after a mild bureaucratic shuffle was that the contractors who maintain our public parks deal with our friends on a gopher-to-gopher basis. Not a large or expensive problem, I guess.

Problematically speaking, although gophers are damaging to some commercial crops, they don't seem to be a real significant economic problem and are even beneficial by aerating the subsoil and preventing erosion.

Perhaps you have one in your yard? Now, I have *seen* several varieties of gopher traps and most of you just don't need to even go there. They are fiendish medieval contraptions of springs and claws and knives that the merest glimpse of would make an inquisitor shudder and a heretic recant on the spot.

By odd coincidence, as I was standing in line at the local re-cycler, a lady asked me if I knew anything about gophers. She has been waging total war in her yard for several years now, and so far, the gophers are winning. She has placed 18 traps and numerous baits and, for all her efforts, she has only racked up one gopher.

"Yep," she replied with a twinkle, "He poked his head out, and I whacked him with a shovel."

Personally, I have a rock garden and have yet to enjoy a personal one-on-one relationship with a gopher.

I guess this will just be yet another one of life's little disappointments. 

Monarchs

by John Forsha • Photographs by William Ericson



Were there a popularity contest to select a favorite insect, based I suppose on general familiarity, personality, lack of yucky eating habits, good personal hygiene and a winning appearance, one couldn't do much better than the monarch butterfly. Every school kid not only knows what it looks like, but probably could lecture mom and dad on the intricacies of metamorphosis, without ever cracking the works of Kafka.

Another treat for the teacher, with the monarch, you get to add migration to the curriculum. The monarch is the only true migratory insect, in our case, summering on the western slopes of the Rocky Mts., and wintering along the California and Baja coasts. The eastern monarch is the real long distance champ. One specimen, tagged in New England, was recovered in Mexico's Michoacan, some 2900 miles distant and many months later.

One really odd thing about this whole scenario is the insect's complete dependance on the milkweed plant to complete its life cycle, and the absence of same from the wintering resort locales. The western monarch likes coastal eucalyptus and pine forests which lend shelter from the weather and provide ample flowering plants for food, but no milkweed. Local roosting areas include Leo Carrillo State Beach, near Malibu and Doheny State Beach in Orange County. The average summertime adult butterfly eats nectar from flowers, mates, lays eggs on a milkweed plant and dies. Life expectancy, about one month. It's the last generation of summer where things take a different turn.





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As the leaves start to change color, and the air crispens, this twilight generation X takes wing for the south. Unlike birds, who flew there with mom and dad, these butterflies have never even seen a brochure of the place. Yet, incongruous as it seems, they gather into flocks and flutter off into the unknown. Now these guys aren't up there with the geese. They are scudding along the hedgerows, being sucked into the grills of Peterbilts and Kenworths and, in general, doing it the hard way, and doing it for hundreds and hundreds of miles at a very fluttery and modest 10 to 15 mph.

How do they do it? For one

perly surfaces.

In early February, their biological clocks kick into gear, and the orgy begins. The males have identifying black spots on each rear wing, which act as pheromone broadcasters announcing the news that there is indeed something about an Aqua Velva man. As the happy couples stay together for three to five hours, it isn't unusual to see a groom fluttering off, dragging his bride unceremoniously backwards through the air. Hey, it's spring.

Now the vacationers have a new urgency, as the females turn northward and head towards the home they left in the fall. None will make



thing, the whole migratory generation is frozen in an extended pre-adolescence. All acne and no dating, they will not mature sexually until the following spring just before they commence the return trip. Until then, they cluster in the eucalyptus groves in rustling orange and silver tapestries, sunning and sipping nectar by day and huddling against the cold at night.

These butterfly groves are truly incredible. The air is spinning with living orange and silver thistle-down, and the ground pulses as resting insects warm their wings in the sun. The wings act as radiators, warming or cooling the butterfly's blood as it circulates through the pa-

perly surfaces. Their first stop in those vital milkweed bushes, they will lay their eggs and soon die thereafter. The clock is now running at regular time and it will take three or so generations of matings and a whole string of roadside milkweed bush nurseries to make the trip home by summer.

The real miracle happens on the milkweed. That metaphorical transformation from egg to hungry worm to glittering butterfly, all in the space of a month. The eggs hatch in four days and the tiny caterpillars begin to do their thing. They eat ... a lot. In two weeks, the caterpillars will have moulted five times and increased their weight by three thousand percent. Then, after spinning a silken

grab bar on the underside of a milkweed leaf, the larva hangs upside-down and with the sixth moult, becomes a shiny green and gold chrysalis, or cocoon.

Ten days later, the chrysalis splits open and an adult butterfly emerges to continue the journey home to the mountain meadows that it has never seen.

Part of the relationship between the milkweed and the monarch is the toxic sap of the plant which provides the insect with a dangerously bad taste to any potential predators. A bird that samples a monarch, and manages to get past the nasty taste, will proceed to get quite sick, and won't consider going back for seconds.

Milkweed is not very common in the San Gabriel Valley, a great disappointment to me as a young biologist. As a consequence, I have never witnessed the life cycle of the monarch in the flesh, but after years of counselling, I've managed to resolve my childhood issues of butterfly envy, and am able to lead a fairly normal life.

As with many of the wonderful, mysterious events that nature has to offer, the migration of the monarch butterfly is on that good old endangered item list. Some are afraid that the wintering groves, particularly those in Mexico, will be logged, subdivided or both, thereby breaking the migratory chain and threatening the entire species. Others argue that the monarch is very common and in fact seems to be thriving, in spite of the wide use of pesticides and the continuing destruction of wild milkweed.

For me personally, it's a split decision. I have great faith in two seemingly opposing ideas. First, humanity will probably continue to act as if there were no tomorrow, although it will bemoan the fact and some progress will be made in defense of the environment.

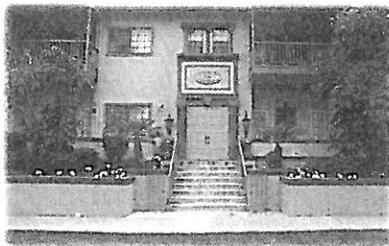
Second, I really believe that the planet is, thankfully, a much tougher bird than most think. The sheer tenacity of life, its wonderful ability to change and grow and adapt is simply amazing. My money's on the butterfly.

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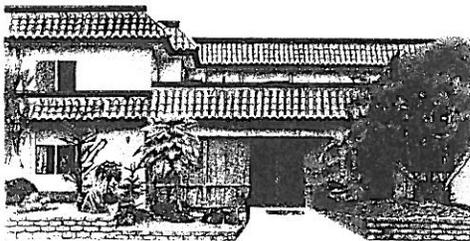


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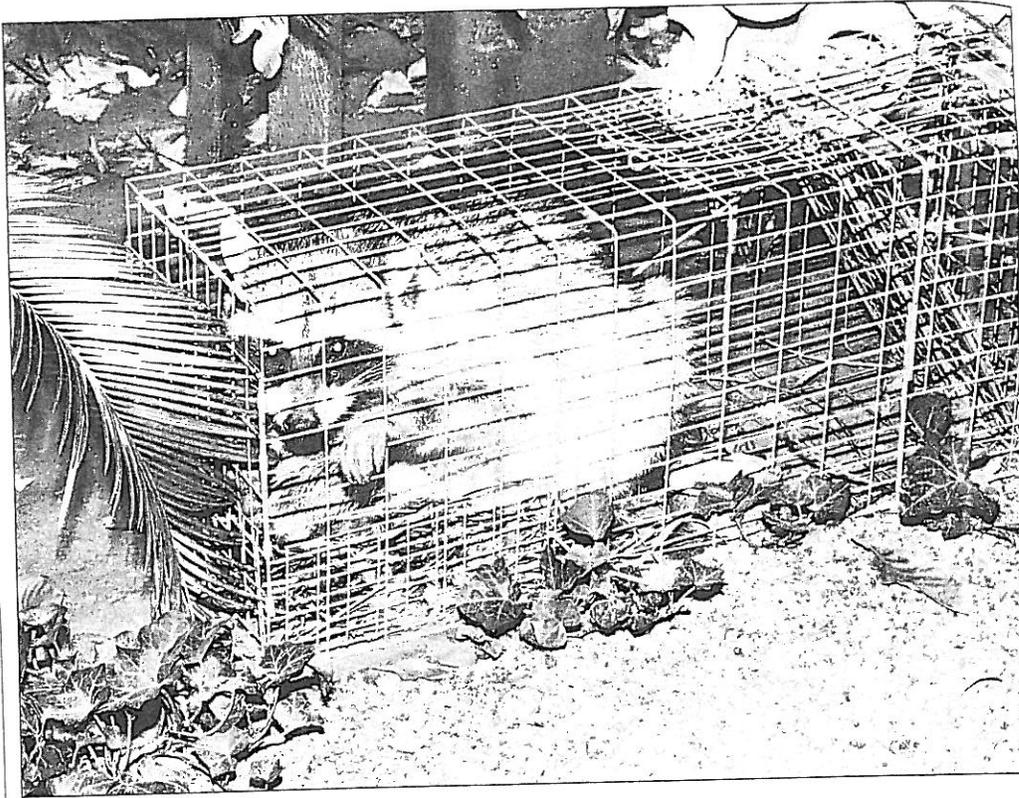


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BANDIT

By JOHN FORSHA



My first experience with this very personable and extremely intelligent animal occurred in a seedy hotel room in the Denver tenderloin in 1962. I was performing with a trio at the local folk club and was catching up on my beauty sleep at one in the afternoon, when the door flew open and the rest of the entourage crowded into my luxurious suite of room, where you had to step out into the hall to change your mind, and deposited two tiny, squirming balls of fur on my chest.

"Whozzit?," I managed, forcing one eye-lid open a slit.

"They're baby raccoons, aren't they the cutest things ever?" our girl singer cooed.

One of the "cutest things ever" had discovered my nose and was attempting to find out, with one delicate black hand, what I was concealing in there. The other climbed to the top of my head, using an ear as a foot hold.

Our group had started this tour in Oklahoma City, and had already acquired a four-foot long bull snake

and a carton of box turtles as traveling companions. It was beginning to look like we were in the wrong business.

As it turned out, the raccoons had been purchased at a Chicago animal store by a well meaning friend, and had all their shots, as it were. Years later, after many varied and never-dull-moment adventures the twin raccoons would go their separate ways. The female, who was always a looker, even scored a starring role in a Disney film, achieving more fame in her way than her singer/parent ever did. Both ultimately retired to a wilderness section of Topanga Canyon where they joined a pack of semi-tame wild raccoons that were loosely fed and cared for by some local animal lovers.

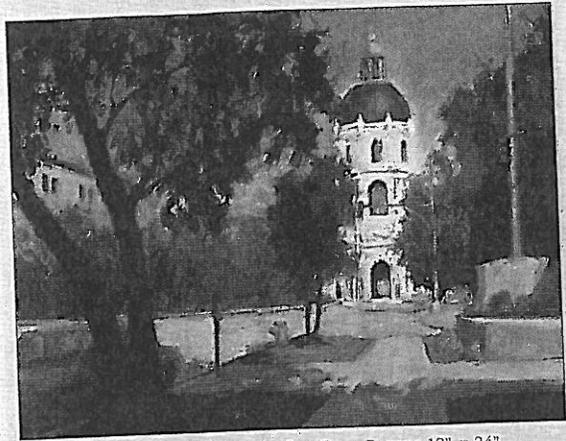
For some reason, a lot of people that I knew in the 60's had pet raccoons, and as a result I have a wealth of stories about their always surprising, and usually destructive antics. The biggest lesson to be learned from all these experiences is that keeping a wild critter as a pet is

not a good idea. Particularly an animal as intelligent and diabolically creative as a raccoon. It's fun and charming for a while, but as you are re-upholstering your entire living room for the third time, you begin to realize the folly of your ways. Also, we quickly learn that being a caregiver for wild animals is a full-time job in its own right and most of us are happier visiting the zoo than living in it.

A musician friend had a large, no, in fact obese but much beloved raccoon that shared his home. He was difficult to get in touch with as the raccoon loved to follow any wire, but particularly a phone wire to its source, and then disassemble/disconnect or simply rip the offending serpent from its lair. The rest of the game involved creating an elaborate and artistic cat's cradle of cord, lamps and furniture. I well remember watching a much beleaguered phone man restapling the line along the baseboard to the jack... the raccoon, black shoe-button eyes a-twinkle, waddling along behind at a respectful distance removing each fresh staple with his nimble black fingers.

For an animal that doesn't have an opposable thumb, the raccoon is a master of dexterity. There isn't a drawer, cupboard, door or window that won't ultimately yield up its secrets to the busy hands of, what I like to think as nature's perfect burglar. When confounded by heavy security such as a padlock, I have seen a raccoon settle down like an international jewel thief and spend some serious time prodding and poking all its nooks and crannies with a wistful expression on its masked face, before admitting failure and moving on.

In the San Gabriel Valley, we are no strangers to the raccoon and his nocturnal ramblings. Since stealth is not the raccoons long suit, his visits are often announced by much rustling and crashing in the bushes. Neatness also doesn't seem to count. A garden that a raccoon has visited has that certain ineffable raccoon *je'ne sais quoit*. Koi ponds or fountains and their contents are particularly popular, as a reminder of their



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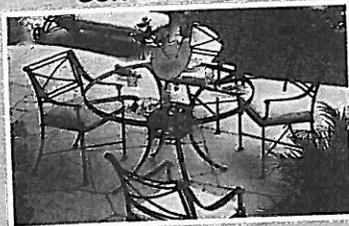


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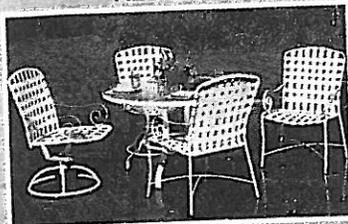
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In the wilds, raccoons frequent streams and creeks where they forage for crayfish, mussels, insects and fish by touch, turning rocks over and groping beneath them with those sensitive, safe-cracker's fingers. Their alleged "washing" of food may be more a hunting reflex than a love of cleanliness. Juggling a crawdad to avoid the pinchers can look like busy scrubbing. Needless to say, the koi pond, post raccoon, lends a new bold touch of neo-shambles to the otherwise pristine landscape.

The raccoon belongs to a large family of carnivores including the weasels, otters, skunks, badgers and from the Asian branch of the family, the sole vegetarian, the giant panda. Of course, all the raccoons I ever knew would eat anything they could get their paws on, and look around for more. The panda is so finicky about his bamboo diet he is all but extinct. The local raccoons love everything from twinkies to chorizo and the only thing endangered about them is their waistlines.

Alas, the giant panda presents a case of natural selection painting itself into a corner. It is a too-large animal with a carnivore's digestive system that has become stuck in a vegetarian diet, without upgrading its plumbing. Sadly, it will continue to survive only with the intervention of conservationists and zoos. In nature, bigger is usually not better, and particularly when using low-octane bamboo fuel.

The word raccoon is derived from an American Indian word *aracoun* which, loosely translated, means "scratches with hands." In its Latin name, *Procyon lotor*, *lotor* means washer, another reference to the raccoon's scrubbing of food items. In captivity, raccoons often use their water dishes for this ritual.

Raccoons are mostly solitary in their habits, but in some areas forage in groups of six to ten. They don't pair for life and the female rears the kits alone, usually four per litter. Raccoons don't hibernate, on the other hand, who in Southern California does? Nesting is opportunistic with the animal using whatever is available ... hollow trees,

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abandoned burrows, rock piles, old unused basements or even rusted-out car bodies (where available). The young are born in the spring, weaned at about seven weeks and are accompanying mom on her nightly forages by June.

In our local census, raccoons are only surpassed by squirrels, possum and skunks, in order of population. They have adapted quite comfortably to the urban life-style and are aficionados of California cuisine. My avocado trees are tres popular in season along with the dessert tray (garbage can) *s'il vous plait*. One season, growing weary of the all night cafeteria hustle and bustle in the yard, I obtained a humane trap from the animal control officer at city hall and set out to do some population control. I was primarily concerned with the possum clan and was using a size appropriate trap. In the first week I had bagged and relocated five possums and was going for a personal best.

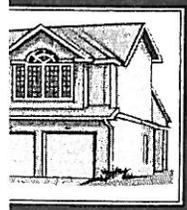
One morning I discovered a very

large, very angry and very crowded raccoon, clucking and hissing like a steamboat and filling every inch of my possum-sized trap. Stricken with guilt about my raccoon version of the black hole of Calcutta, I dashed off to phone the animal control officer and arrange for a pick-up. In my absence, my guest had seen to his own comfort in true raccoon style. He managed to reach through the bars and pull an expensive potted cycad over to the cage and tear every single frond off the plant. When I returned, he was on his back with a cycad blanket pulled up to his chin ... snoring softly.

Man has always enjoyed the company of the raccoon in one form or another. Hats and coats were big for a while and roast of raccoon has graced many a table. Some meat markets in the south still stock freshly dressed whole coons (not a pretty picture). I personally much prefer my raccoons with a twinkle in their eye and an inquisitive button nose in my business. †



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HAWKS

BY JOHN FORSHA

Walking in the Arroyo is a real pleasure these days. There is a degree of irony in the reconstituted "natural" stream bed that parallels the old concrete flood control channel. It is a new balanced ecology that recognizes both our needs and responsibilities and is developing into a typical San Gabriel Valley creek habitat, complete with cattail-choked ponds, frogs, fish, squirrels, lizards, snakes, dragonflies and birds, birds and more birds. Bird watchers should beware and keep a weather eye on the ground as along with the many flourishing species of fauna, one of the flora, native poison oak, is doing particularly well.

Casting your eyes up towards the



battlements of "stately Wayne Manor," of Batman fame, you are likely to see a red-tailed hawk, riding the thermals and looking for something incautious down the food-chain. And I do mean looking. Hawks possess the most uncanny and accurate long-distance vision of any living species of anything. They, like most predators including man, have excellent binocular vision, a rarity in the rest of the bird world. What the hawk's eye has that makes it so particularly good are a larger number of receptors per square inch of retina and a rapid "zoom" focus lens that give the bird a highly detailed and sharp field of vision. It is believed that an eagle can detect small movements from as far as a



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A few years back, a friend who knew of my enthusiasms, told me about a spot in the Angeles National Forest where a pair of red-tails (buteos) had a nest with a newly hatched clutch of chicks. Feeling very much the wildlife photographer, I set off, armed to the teeth with lenses, film, tripods, cable releases and that most indispensable item of wilderness paraphernalia, a



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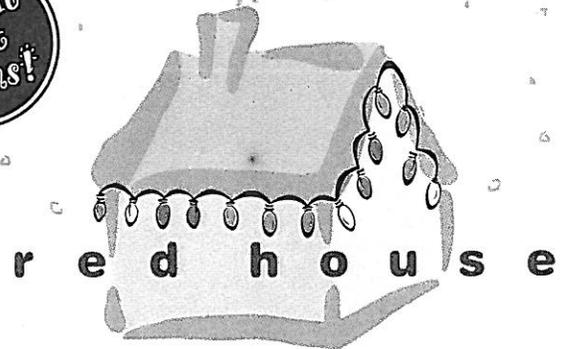
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males and both exhibit the same coloring, darkish brown back, lighter breast and the signature rusty tail. The young are uniformly lighter in color and lack the reddish tail feathers.

Other hawks that live locally include the dressy little sparrow hawk, a falcon, and the mid-sized Cooper's or chicken hawk, an accipiter. I've seen both species on local power lines, probably waiting for a dove or two. More often than actually seeing these smaller hawks, you'll hear their distinctive cries. According to the field guide, a shrill *killy-killy-killy*, and a loud *kack-kack-kack*, respectively. I love these written phonetic representations of bird song. They are so well meaning and totally inadequate, and quite often the only help you'll get from your bird book.

The peregrine falcon, one of the near tragedies of the DDT era, is an occasional visitor on its way south to Baja for the winter. Also known as the duck hawk, this beautiful bird not only made a come-back from

near extinction, for a while several were actually nesting on the cornices and ledges of downtown L.A. skyscrapers.

Historically, our collective mythology has alternately deified or demonized the raptors. From the Egyptian hawk-headed god Horus to heraldry, these birds have captured both our imagination and our fear. Farmers have blamed birds of prey for everything from chicken thievery to baby snatching and have hunted them almost to extinction in some cases.

And always, the symbol of royalty and aristocracy. Could one imagine a medieval duke in armor and full regalia riding boldly forth, perhaps on a crusade or such, banners all aflutter, with a fierce chicken on his gauntlet? Duckery, the sport of kings? I think not. No, our respect is reserved for the lion, not the lamb. Even today, we atavistically love the killers at the top of the food-chain. Just look into the golden transfixing eyes of a living bird of prey and you feel it. These are graceful and deadly athletes. The avian top guns, so adept in their trade that their name has become a synonym for warrior. I can see the hawk's supposed dinosaur lineage in his eyes, and I believe it. Pure T. rex.

An interesting footnote involves DNA testing. Not only can genetic technology exonerate convicted felons, it can reorganize the way we classify the animal kingdom, and as it turns out, an entire family of birds once believed to be raptors, are not. All of the new-world vultures, including the California and Andean condors and the beloved old turkey vulture, are more accurately to be included in the stork family. That certainly puts a new spin on that old baby delivery service.

With the holidays upon us and all, I suppose there's nothing particularly festive about a bird of prey, but when you're up to your armpits in swans-a-swimming, geese-a-laying-for-crying-out-loud, extremely noisy calling birds, French hens and those really irritating partridges, a chicken hawk with an attitude and a hearty *kack-kack-kack* sounds pretty good to me. †

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An hour's walk found me hunkered down in a madrone bush half-way up the side of a small canyon, directly opposite the hawk's nest, which was the typical ungainly mass of twigs and branches occupying the top of a dead tree in the canyon bed.

Sure enough, there was a trio of fluffy white hawklets in the nest, panting in the morning sun. I managed to get my camera set up in time to "shoot" mother red-tail's arrival bearing a freshly killed snake. Unfortunately, I was a better naturalist than a photographer, and my nifty 300 mm zoom lens was woefully inadequate for the job at hand. The prints did record the events described, provided I was around to explain to the viewer which blurry shape was which.

As mommy fed her chicks, I was snapping away in my bush, in total melt-down over my incredible luck to have shared this intimate moment with these beautiful birds, when a thought popped into my mind,

Where's poppa?

At that, an icy finger tickled my spine and I felt, just for a second, like something very small and fuzzy that should have stayed at home in bed that morning. The foliage I was crouching in was very dense, except for a spot over my head... And there, floating motionless in the thermal updraft a hundred or so feet above me, was the male, perfectly framed in the two-foot break in my cover.

Red-tails mate for life and like the good parents that they were, one or the other kept watch from the sky above me for the balance of my stay.

Red-tails are the most commonly identified hawks in the San Gabriel Valley. They are easily found along the arroyo, soaring or sitting in a tree-top, waiting and watching a clearing for the tiniest movement of lizard, mouse, squirrel, snake or bird. Most birds can easily outfly these large hawks, but the clumsy and careless may come to grief. Red-tails average around twenty inches tall with a four foot wing-span. The females are slightly larger than the



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With spring around the corner, soon your backyard will become a wildlife wonderland for interested youngsters. After the winter rains, wildlife becomes active in search of food, mates and exercise. Viewing these animals can be a fun learning experience and a great way to share your time with the youngsters in your life. Exploring the lives of your yards' critters can be fun and easy. You can observe without leaving your own home by setting up a viewing area by a window. Pick a location that will give you many different views, like tree branches, grass, flowers, rooftops, and trash cans.

You will have a greater variety of animal sightings if you watch at different times of day and in different areas. To add to the experience, help the children keep a chart of the animals they view in your yard. You can easily track the time of day and frequency that you see each animal.

Natural history books and field guides for birds, reptiles and mammals in California will help you

Window Safari



By JENNIFER HODGEN,
WILDLIFE OFFICER
THE PASADENA HUMANE SOCIETY
& SPCA

PHOTO BY JOHN FORSHA

identify and learn about animals you see. To begin your window safari, here is some basic information about some of the more common animals that you will observe.

Tree squirrels are very abundant in our urban neighborhoods. They are equipped to climb trees with their sharp claws, gnaw acorns with their rodent teeth, and balance on telephone wires and branches using their big fluffy tails. These rodents will be active throughout the day foraging for food, and chasing each other up trees. During the fall they were busy collecting food for the winter, now they've started foraging again.

Hummingbirds can be seen hovering in front of brightly colored flowers. They beat their wings in a figure-eight pattern during flight and use their long tongues to drink nectar from flowers. Surprisingly, "hummers" will eat small insects on the wing, and bring them to feed their young in the nest. These tiny birds are among the most colorful

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with iridescent feathers. Seven species of hummingbirds can be seen in California throughout the year.

Opossums are one of the more misunderstood nocturnal animals in our area. Often described as large rats, opossums are marsupials; like kangaroos, females have a pouch in which they carry young offsprings. Contrary to popular folklore, opossums do not hang by their furless prehensile tails, but they use their tails when climbing. They are nonaggressive animals whose natural defenses include playing dead and opening their mouth to intimidate with their fifty teeth.

Birds of all sizes and colors may flock through your yard during the year. Crows are among our most abundant and most recognizable feathered neighbors. As omnivores, these large black birds are nature's sanitation experts. They will eat anything from fruit and vegetables to birds and small mammals. Crows will protect each other in a community; an alarm call from one will bring individuals from all directions to help out.

From your window vantage point, you can teach children about the importance of respecting the natural world around them. You can encourage the humane treatment of animals by setting a positive example for youngsters. From inside your home you can teach children safety around wild animals. Discourage them from handling any wild animal, even those that appear cute, injured or dead. Do not attempt to capture any wildlife to bring inside for viewing. Many animals are protected and require certain licenses before taking them from the wild. Most animals can't find appropriate food while in your house and may die.

The wonder of the outside world is as close as your own backyard. You can teach your children many valuable lessons and discover animals that you would never expect to find in an urban community. By spending time helping kids learn about the world around them, you will cultivate caring and informed lifelong learners. 🌱

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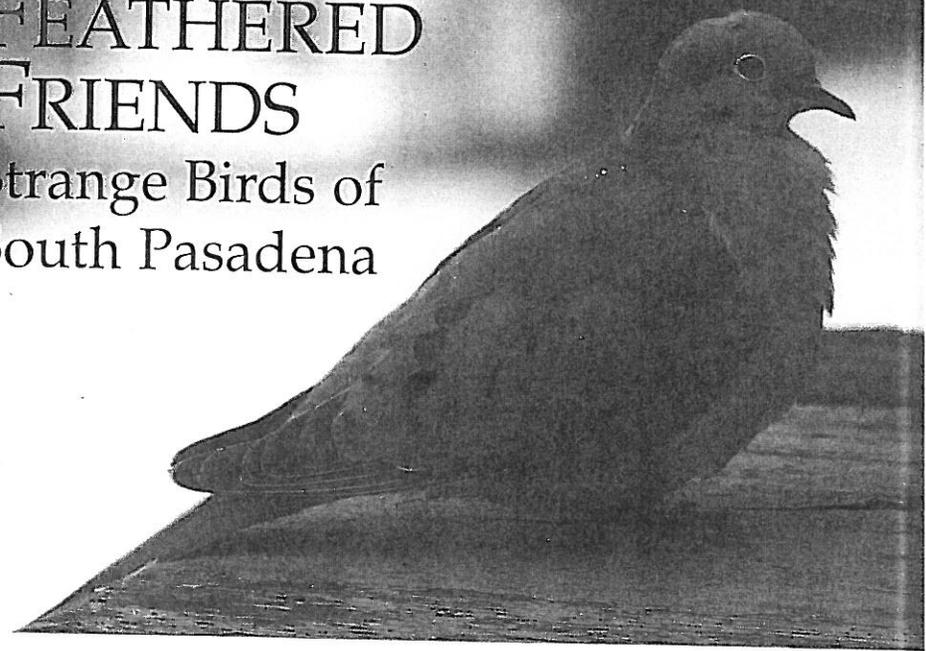
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Strange Birds of South Pasadena



BY NORMA LEVALLEY

Maybe it's just part of our heritage in South Pasadena. After all, it was only one hundred and eleven years ago this November that the Cawston Ostrich Farm first opened, bringing thousands of people to view the antics of the 50 live ostriches at their show place across from the local Arroyo Seco Nature Park on Monterey Road.

Women clamored to the factory where ostrich feathers were processed and dyed to meet the demands of the fashionable, young ladies who coyly persuaded their fathers or boy friends to purchase a feather adorned hat or a dramatic boa scarf to enhance their own personal beauty. Orders were received from Parisian millinery shops and other European cities that catered to fashion icons at the turn of the 19th century.

It was not until the invention of the automobile came along that the fickle females found riding in an open-air vehicle, racing at a speed of 25 miles per hour, left the flight bound feather covered bonnets blowing in the wind down the dusty streets at the end of the 19th century.

More recently, the raucous shrieking of the wild green parrots permeates the air in downtown South Pasadena. Hovering over the business district and the trees

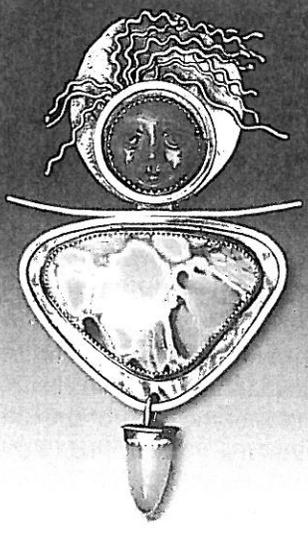
around Trader Joe's, there has been considerable speculation about how they arrived here in the first place. At first it was hypothesized that they were involved when a pet store in Pasadena caught on fire and they escaped through the roof and came south to South Pasadena.

Some say they came here because of the good schools, while others think the parents of the young, wild birds brought their protégés here, screeching at their baby birds to eat all their seeds if they wanted to grow up to be as large as the ostriches were.

Within the last few years, there have been sightings of three peacocks in the hills of the Altos. They can be seen wandering along the roof tops, playing a constant game of follow-the-leader. Their voices travel a long distance and replicate the sound of someone stepping on their tail feathers.

The feistiest birds in town appear to be the tiny hummingbirds. If their nectar feeder is empty, they decide to dive bomb any human being trying to replace their food supply. They have a just-don't-let-my-dish-get-empty-again attitude.

One of the most-friendly birds in town is the mourning dove. Similar, but smaller than a pigeon, they have a rather drab coat of pinkish beige feathers and, unlike most birds, they



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have a pointed tail. Their wings have black spots and their black eyes have a whitish ring around them. Through the night and in the early morning their "hoo-ah hoo, hoo, hoo" sounds much like an owl's call. Similar to the pigeons, their head bobs from side-to-side when they walk.

The monogamous birds are "poetry in motion" when they fly. Graceful in flight, they have been clocked in at more than 55-miles an hour.

Their home building skills leave much to be desired, especially since it is the wife who is left to design and build it. The haphazardly built nests of twigs and conifer needles, usually attached to the branch of an evergreen tree, frequently fall apart, leaving the two babies evicted before they feel mentally ready to fly. Both parents are involved in their upbringing, with the father's duty time scheduled from early morning until noon and the mother's instinct forcing her to take over from afternoon through the evening hours. The parents also provide the early diet of about 99% seeds.

The babies are called "squabs." The parents have up to six broods per year. The male dove apparently leads the female to several sites, but the female chooses the ultimate nesting branch. Her mate brings the twigs and needles back to their chosen birthing site, while the female heaves them in any direction that appeals to her at that moment.

Despite her lack of nest-building skills, the species was named in 1838 by French zoologist Charles Bonaparte, in honor of his wife Princess Zenaide. No mention was made of the Princess's building skills.

The squabs leave the nest in 10 to 14 days, but the overprotective parents continue to feed them for an additional two weeks.

While we enjoy the heritage of the gangly ostrich, the shrieking parrots, the fashionable peacocks, and the feisty, colorful hummingbirds, listening to the repetitious vocalizing of the gentle mourning dove coming through the unseen darkness on a clear night is a soothing lullaby. †

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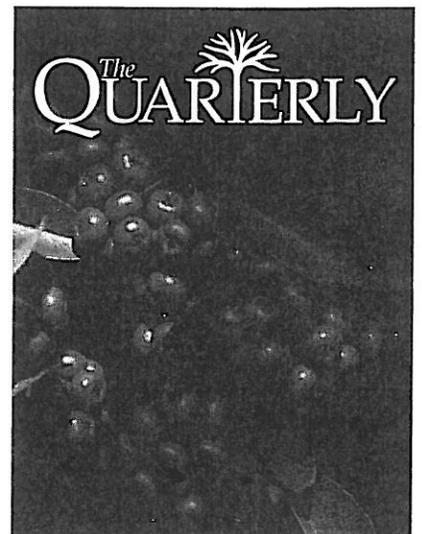
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Animals
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BEAR KARMA

Guess Who Came for Dinner

By KIM BOSELL

A black bear named Samson, who had a fondness for hot tubs, popularized awareness that living next to the Los Angeles National Forest might bring unexpected guests to the communities adjacent to the wilderness areas. People from all over came to the aid of the old bear, getting him a stay of execution, finding him a permanent home and donating money to build an enclosure where he lived out his remaining years.

For most people this was the end of the story. For the residents along the foothills this was only the beginning. As many as 5 to 12 different bears roam around the residences along the fringe where urban sprawl and wilderness meet in Monrovia.

Due to the situation with Samson, the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) decided to fund an urban black bear study. Kim Bosell, who worked on the study as a DFG volunteer, has since become the expert who Monrovia and other police departments call when they get "bear" sightings.

What is an urban black bear? It's a bear who conducts the majority of its day-to-day activities within urban areas along the foothills. "The bears that we dealt with believed the easiest way to gather fattening food was to go where people were. We lovingly referred to them as 'trash bears.' During the two and a half-year study, we trapped, tranquilized, radio collared, tracked and worked to re-



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educate seventeen bears. Along the way we re-educated many humans too," said Kim.

Black bears are relatively small bears compared to grizzlies and polar bears. The average weight for males is between 300 and 400 pounds and the average for females is 150 to 200 pounds. Although they are called "Black Bears" they can be a variety of colors including black, brown, cinnamon, blonde and even white. A common misconception regarding the black bear is that it is a fierce predator.

Although listed as a carnivore, bears are omnivorous and opportunistic. Since a bear's survival depends on its fat stores for hibernation, meals that require using a lot of energy to obtain, such as chasing down a deer or rabbit, are replaced with an easy catch of fruits, berries, roots, grasses, insects and garbage found in urban areas. During the fall months bears go through what is known as a "feeding frenzy." They feed on as much food as possible to gain the necessary weight for hibernation. Hibernation during the winter is not caused by cold weather, but is an adaptation due to food unavailability. Because of the arid climate of Southern California, hibernation periods can be three to four weeks, unlike colder areas where it is two to four months. Therefore it is possible to start seeing bears as early as January.

Another common misconception is that black bears are nocturnal. In truth, some bears are more active during the day than at night. When people and bears are sharing habitat it is possible for the two to meet. Black bears are not territorial or aggressive toward each other, with the exception of males during the late June to early July mating season and females defending their cubs.

Fear of these encounters can be overcome by understanding the bear's behavior. A bear standing up on its hind feet is in an observational mode. Although their sight is good, they rely heavily on their sense of smell. Bears that stand are trying to better see and smell what it is they have come upon. Most bears ignore people or run away. A bear that feels threatened will let you know. Vocalization is usually the first step. Moaning, low growling, huffing or jaw chomping are the bear's way of telling you it is uneasy with the situation. If this does not send the intruder away the bear will slam its front feet to the ground. This stomping behavior shows intent to charge. Although most charges are bluff charges where the bear veers off before reaching its target, it is better to avoid reaching this point by slowly backing off.

Bears are attracted to urban areas by the smell of barbecues and garbage cans. They are very intelligent and learn quickly where food is

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available. Bears work on a reward system. If bears never find a food reward in a yard there is little reason for them to go there. If the bear is rewarded by fruit trees or easily accessible garbage cans in your yard, the bear will add you to its list of places to loiter. This increases the chance of a bear/ human encounter where someone may get hurt.

"Intentionally feeding bears teaches them a lack of fear toward people and that the food comes from inside the house," said Kim. "It won't be long before the bear helps itself to the food in the kitchen. If this occurs the bear will pay with its life; there are no second chances.

"During the course of the bear study I learned some very interesting things. Each bear has its own personality and method of operation. Some of the bears I worked with would learn quickly from a bad experience with humans, for example, being shot with a beanbag or rubber bullet. These bears often moved back into the forest and began foraging on natural foods. Then there are the stubborn ones.

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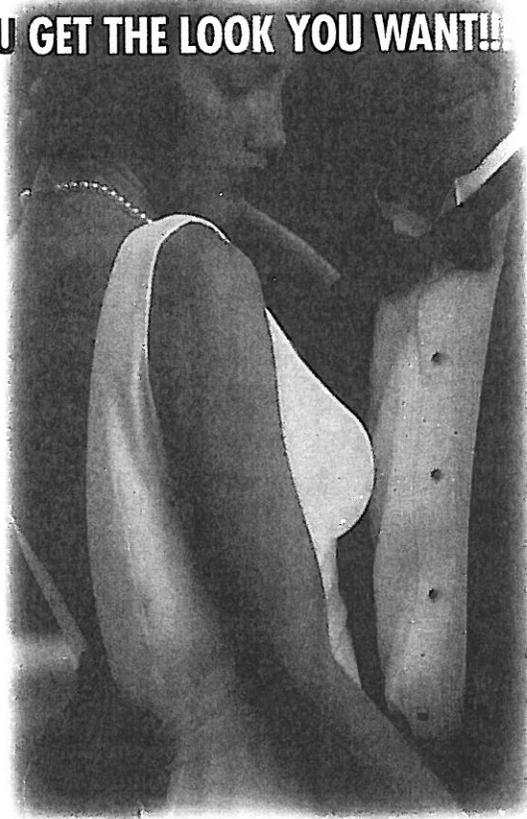
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These are bears who have grown accustomed to the easy meals and seemed to see the hazing practices as simple inconveniences. These bears remain on the fringe of the forest and urban dwellings, taking full advantage of opportunities such as a 50-pound sack of dog food left in an open garage. Also there are the bears that show strong preferences in what they eat. These bears only brave human habitat when avocados, plums, loquats or olives, or other favorite fruits are ripe."

Kim now works with the Monrovia Police Department running a Bear-Be-Gone program where she tracks the local population, educates homeowners and uses deterrent devices to keep bears out of neighborhoods. One deterrent device used is a blue Bear-Be-Gone trash can that is loaded with bait on a trigger attached to pepper spray. When the bear knocks over the can and pulls the bait, it receives a face full of pepper spray. The reason? To teach bears that trash cans are a bad thing.

Kim said, "bears are extremely

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intelligent. I have witnessed problem solving by a bear that took a direct hit from pepper spray via a Bear-Be-Gone trash can. Days later the bear returned. The Bear-Be-Gone can was in a different location. He by-passed this blue trash can, ignoring the smelly bait, and went to check an empty black trash can alongside the house."

The theory that bears operate based only on smells was challenged in Glendora where a bear would come down the same street at exactly 11 p.m. once a week on trash night. "When a holiday came up we knew there would be no trash pick-up, therefore no cans would be out. I sat and waited to see if the bear would come. Sure enough at 11 p.m. the bear came down the street looking quite perturbed that there were no trash cans out. He did not approach any of the houses where trash was stored along the side, but simply left and returned the following week at 11 p.m."

In all her work with problem bears, she says, "it is rarely a bear

problem that I am actually dealing with, it is almost always a people problem. Bears are only taking advantage of our generous invitations of garbage, pet food, fruit trees and swimming holes."

For Kim, the daily adventure is teaching both bear and humans to co-exist together in the same foothill areas.

According to the Department of Fish and Game, people living or visiting in bear habitat should follow these precautions:

- Keep garbage in a secure area or container
- Keep barbecue grills clean
- Pick up fallen fruit
- Put away pet food and bird feeders at night
- Never approach a bear
- Never feed a bear
- Do not run from a bear, back away slowly
- Yell at the bear, bang pots and pans or anything available, create a general commotion

For more information, Kim Bosell can be contacted at Monrovia Canyon Park at (626) 256-8282. ♣

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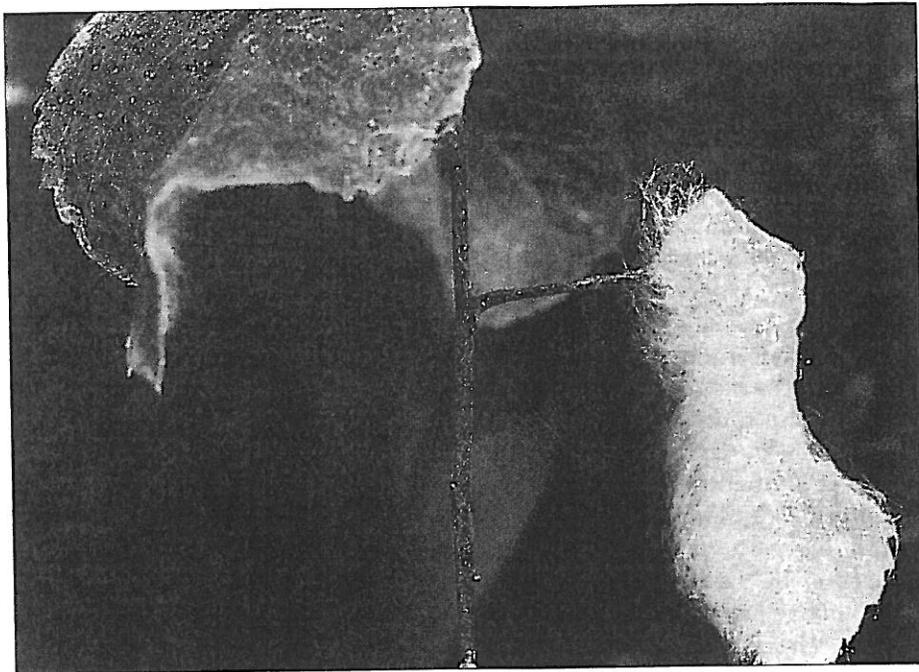
Attack of the GIANT WHITEFLY

By JOHN FORSHA

Well, as usual, it was a *drang* and *sturmy* night in Southern California in October and on Walpurgis Nacht, all the ghosts and goblins, witches and Powerpuff Girls, Power Rangers and Pikachus were making the rounds in search of treats in response to mild threats. At my house, where once welcoming jack-o-lanterns twinkled, the scent of hot cider wafted on the breeze and piles of popcorn and mounds of Mounds and Mars Bars awaited the touch of eager hands...now only silence greeted the passersby and darkness ruled the night. The ground beneath ones feet was littered and crisp with strangely pale dead leaves and an eerie white "moss" festooned the blighted branches overhead, scabrous and evil in the moonlight. Not a pretty sight, my friends. It is the mark of the dreaded giant whitefly and once it gets its waxy little toe in your door, or yard, you've got a fight on your hands.

And, there isn't much that can be done. One text suggests removing the infected leaves by hand and sealing them in a plastic bag for disposal. Wonderful idea. I acknowledge this while gazing up at my forty foot avocado tree which is bristling with the characteristic white waxy beards, trailing from the undersides of about half of its considerable crown of leaves, the nearest ten feet above my reach. The air under the tree is bright with myriad drifting motes, each an adult giant whitefly, with the magnificent wing-span of one-eighth of an inch. Ordinary whiteflies are much smaller. The flies are busily mating and searching for new nest sites and the state of things is rapidly deteriorating.

I still remember the day that the invasion began. In true sci-fi potboiler style, it was an ordinary day, I was minding my own busi-



ness and doing some light house work when I noticed that old roll-down bamboo window shade that had shielded our living room from the neighbor's garden all winter was in need of repair. As I reached for the pull-cord, I could swear I heard an ominous diminished chord swell amid the background noise of illegal gas leaf-blowers, edgers and mowers that permeated the calm, sunny spring morning in our town.

The shade rose to reveal to my horror stricken eyes, a yard a-whirl with a blizzard of whiteflies. Not unlike one of those paper-weight globes that generate a snow storm when shaken, the very air seemed to seethe with life. Every plant wore the white cowl of the dreaded fly and the under-belly of each leaf teemed with tiny white worms, the larva of the winged demon.

My neighbor seemed unmoved by this enemy occupation of his green space and mumbled something about "nature doing its thing." Lately he prowls the yard at odd hours with a hose and a haunted look, flushing all the flies he can squirt. This is one of the best tactics to use against the fly, and seems to be quite effective in interrupting the life cycle of the damned thing.

The giant whitefly, *Aleurodicus dugesii*, is a native of Mexico that has gradually been inching its way northward. It was first found in the San Diego area in October of '92, and is now common in most of Southern California. It isn't a true fly, but is more closely related to the

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Homoptera, a family that includes many difficult children, such as the scale insects, aphids, plant lice, leaf hoppers, cicadas and the notorious glassy-winged sharpshooter. The giant whitefly threat to plants takes two forms, the first being fluid loss as both the adult flies and the larval stages feed directly on plant's sap using their needle-like mouth parts like tiny vampires.

Secondly, as the insects go about their business, they exude a sweet sticky honey-dew that will coat not only the affected parts of the tree but your BMW and anything else parked under it. In the tree's case, the sticky coating fosters the growth of a sooty black fungus that can interfere with a plant's photosynthesis. The general result is a rapid loss of leaves and, depending on the size of the plant, its ultimate demise.

The first sign of impending infestation is the distinctive, white, waxy spirals left on the leaf's underside by an egg laying adult fly. These look like white finger-prints, and become home bases for the hatching larvae. As the larvae grow, new generations of eggs hatch until the leaf is hosting a veritable political convention of flies, eggs and larvae, and the characteristic white beard of the larva's waxy exudate begins to dangle beneath the leaf. There are four larval instars, or nymph stages between egg and adult, which really resembles a tiny white moth, more than a fly.

So, what to do? Insecticides don't work. The waxy exudate seems to protect the eggs and nymphs from the poisons. The best method is removal and disposal of the infected leaves, coupled with hosing off the leaves with a mixture of water and detergent, and keeping the plant well soaked to bolster its fluid balance. The giant whitefly is extremely tenacious and keeping a plant free of infestation will require loads of patience and a lot of squirting. The sad truth is that in all probability, you will get to start all over again in a month or two.

Thanks to the efforts of some entomologists at UC Riverside, help

is on the way. In Mexico, scientists located two varieties of tiny wasps that prey on the giant whitefly, and are carefully testing and breeding these natural parasites in greenhouses. The California Department of Food and Agriculture is currently coordinating the trial dispersal of the wasps and a variety of lady bird that has also shown some promise as a potential biological control in selected areas of San Diego County. Evidently, the wasps and beetles survived the winter and it only remains to be determined how many "agents" are needed to prove effective as a control of the whitefly in any given area.

Biological controls will take time to establish themselves, so in the meantime we fight on as best we can. I'm actually beginning to enjoy living with white fringe on my yard and am developing a taste for honeydew. I'm even learning to ignore the gelatinous pod-people in the basement and I hardly even notice the . . . skzzzreek . . . pellet implanted in my . . . qqkwoorxx . . . brain anymore . . . fzyjizzxxl . . .

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