Important Changes in Chapter Communications
by Cliff McLean

One of the most important responsibilities of chapter leaders is effective communications with our members. This includes information about upcoming activities, like program meetings and field trips, as well as important news about native plant issues in our area and items of interest related to native plants. Our chapter newsletter, The Paintbrush, has for many years been one of the mainstays of this communication effort, along with email notices in more recent times.

Over the past year the CNPS state office in Sacramento has been developing a new on-line capability to improve the way membership information is handled and for communicating with CNPS members. The new features are based on a software product called Luminate Online. One of the reasons for this development is the need to conform with legal requirements for sending email to members. To that end, all CNPS chapters, including ours, are transitioning to the Luminate system for sending email notices to members.

Our San Gabriel Mountains Chapter will soon begin using this new email method. Email announcements will look different, but the content will be the same as before.

The Luminate system is also available to CNPS chapters for constructing chapter newsletters and for distributing them via email. Our San Gabriel Mountains chapter’s board of directors believes this is an opportunity to modernize our practices.

We hope to move to this fully electronic form of newsletter after this issue. We will have the internet advantages of attractive formatting, with full-color photographs, and with articles as long or as short as needed to convey information fully. It will also be less expensive for the chapter by eliminating printing and mailing costs. As a result, we may be able to publish the newsletter more frequently than quarterly, as appropriate, to provide more timely information for our members.

The transition to an electronic newsletter comes at a time when our current editor, Laura Hoopes, is stepping down (for personal reasons unrelated to the Continued on page 2)
impending transition). We sincerely thank Laura for her dedicated efforts in producing this issue and others over the past year. We thus have a current opening for the position of newsletter editor. Any interested member with reasonable computer and internet skills should be able to gather the articles and calendar information and prepare them for publication. And it means the editor is required to understand the complexities of traditional desktop publishing software. Please contact me if you or someone you know may be interested in helping with these interesting new chapter developments.

I hope that you, our members, enjoy the new, more flexible communication tools. If you have any problems, please let me know, at cliff.mclean@verizon.net.

A practical note about your email preferences
Please note the following important detail concerning the distribution of our chapter notices and newsletters after the transition to the new state-wide electronic email system...
All members can control how much and what kinds of information they receive by email from CNPS. This control is managed through a profile at the state CNPS office’s web site www.cnps.org. If you do not know about this profile, or don’t care to change anything, you will receive all emails sent from this chapter and from the state office.

However, if you alter your profile, you should be aware of an issue that some of our members have already encountered. To view your profile from the web site, log in using My Profile (on a computer) or the Profile Login link (on a mobile device). (The path to this login varies, depending on the device that you are using. If you need help, you can contact me or call the state office at 916-447-2677.) When you are at the Interests and Subscriptions page, there is a question at the bottom of the screen that says "Email Preferences: Yes, I would like to receive email from California Native Plant Society. Deselect to unsubscribe from all CNPS emails." If you remove the check mark for this question, you will not receive any group emails from any CNPS group, including those from the San Gabriel Mountains Chapter. To receive our chapter activity notices or newsletters, you will need to keep this question checked. If you want to opt out of state CNPS mailings but keep chapter emails, you can deselect the options adjacent to these questions, but leave the last option Local Chapter News check marked and leave the Email Preferences box checked. If you find that you are no longer receiving emails from the San Gabriel Mountains Chapter, but want them, please check your profile or contact me at cliff.mclean@verizon.net.

Your Email Options as Shown on State CNPS Web Site

- [ ] CNPS Plant Science Training
- [ ] CNPS Rare Plant Treasure Hunt
- [ ] California Native Plant Society News
- [ ] Conservation Action Alerts
- [ ] Local Chapter News

Email Preferences

- [ ] Yes, I would like to receive email from CNPS.
  Deselect to unsubscribe from all CNPS emails.
Keep It Messy for Nature
Article and Photographs By Barbara Eisenstein

I grow California native plants for many reasons. The biggest one is that I love California and the plants that evolved here. Who can resist the happy faces of our sticky monkeyflowers (Diplacus aurantiacus)? Also, it is nothing less than a miracle that the creamy flowers of California buckwheat (Eriogonum fasciculatum) appear in the hottest, driest time of the year.

Camp Native Versus Camp Other
Some might say that this is a frivolous argument at a time when global climate change and mass extinction threaten our very existence. In fact, gardeners who are concerned with environmental issues divide themselves into several factions when it comes to the importance of gardening with native plants. Some advocate growing only local natives, while others prefer a less rigid approach using native plants plus exotic ornamentals. There are even those who believe we can create excellent habitat using plants from anywhere so long as they provide ecological services needed by the animals we wish to attract.

It is unfortunate that people create these divisions. It gets heated and sometimes even mild-mannered gardeners call each other names, claiming that their way is the right way. But as in all things, it is more complicated. How we garden is as important, environmentally speaking, as the plants we select.

An Unnatural Native Garden
It is actually quite possible to create a most unnatural garden of native plants, a place that is unusable by pollinators, birds and other critters. This hypothetical garden may include a collection of locally native and appropriate plants, but if it is too neat and tidy, neither bird nor lizard can gain purchase. And if we use machinery to maintain it, the place can become inhospitable to all. What lizard can withstand the desiccating breath of the monster leaf blower? Even escaping the vile machine, the dinner choices would be sparse. By removing leaves and organic detritus, the villainous blower leaves little for insects to eat, and no place for them to stay. And, as most of you know: no bugs, no lizards; no bugs, no birds; no bugs, no spiders.

This imaginary native plant garden may be designed as a formal landscape – you know, with geometric grids of live-forever (Dudleya virens ssp. hassei) or California fescue (Festuca californica). When a fallen twig, some leaves, or even the occasional death of a plant breaks the symmetry, the gardener has to take action. The design is preserved over the needs of any garden occupants, save the two-legged ones.

What Does a Lizard Need?
In order to better understand how to increase available habitat in our urban and suburban places, let’s consider what a garden denizen like a lizard wants. For just a moment, visualize yourself as a common western fence lizard. There are four things on your mind. One is avoiding the disastrous fate of becoming a canapé for the resident cat. Second, you must warm yourself up in the mornings and stay cool if the day is hot. Third, you have to eat. And finally, what is life without a family? If you are a male, you need territory and a lookout to find both food and females. As a female you need to be able to find an acceptable mate when the time is right, and a safe place to lay your eggs.

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Keep It Messy, Continued from page 3
Given all of these requirements, you want a place with a bit of mess. It should have rocks and logs where you can catch some rays, look for food, and if you are a male, show off for the ladies. Decomposing logs provide a nice perch and are a place where insects (yummy food) congregate. They also allow you to instantaneously disappear when the hungry cat is on patrol. Furthermore, you blend into the colors of the organic matter that covers the garden floor. What you want, therefore, is a less tidy garden.

A Watchful, Gentle and Messy Gardener
Rather than arguing about the advantages of native versus nonnative plants in the garden, let's take a look around and see what nature really wants. I love native plants, but some nonnatives — so long as they are not invasive — may be fine too. More importantly, to invite nature into our gardens we need plants that appeal to pollinators, plants with berries and seeds, and plants that offer cover and perch. Native plants, animals and microorganisms evolved together, and so their relationships have been tested in time. We can learn much from them, but let us remember that it is not just who is in our garden, but how we treat them. I am writing this piece right after New Year's Day, and my 2020 resolution is to be watchful, gentle and messy in my garden. How about you?
Fence lizard suns himself on a log in the South Pasadena Nature Park

UPCOMING CHAPTER ELECTIONS
By Lyn McAfee

The biennial election of chapter officers will be held at the January program meeting on January 23, 2020. Current officers were elected in January 2018. A nominating committee, consulting with chapter leadership, recommends a slate of members willing to serve in the elective offices:
President: Cliff McLean
Vice President: Helena Bowman
Secretary: Kelly Schmoker
Treasurer: Jane Tirrell
Chapter Delegate: Helena Bowman

All CNPS members affiliated with the chapter are eligible to vote. Nominations can also be made from the floor, including self-nominations. The elected officers, plus members appointed by the president to serve, comprise the chapter board. The board provides leadership, guidance, and oversight for chapter programs and activities, as well as managing chapter finances. Board meetings are held the evening of the third Thursday of odd numbered months.
Baja Tamarisk Removal Trip
by Katie Gallagher

This year’s annual Baja Tamarisk trip October 24-28, 2019 was a great success! It was cosponsored by the CNPS-SGM chapter (us!) and Southern California Botanists. All the trip attendees left town Thursday morning, ate some flavorful fish tacos in Ensenada for lunch, and spent our first night on a mesa overlooking near-pristine arroyos in the backcountry outside of San Quintin. The first full day was spent controlling the invasive Tamarisk trees in these arroyos. I was super pleased with how hard all the volunteers worked. After we had our one day of work out of the way, we spent the next two days exploring, playing, and eating. We visited the cardon and elephant tree forest in Cataviña for a night. It's like walking on the surface of an alien planet. The next day, we tide-pooled in San Quintin Bay and basked in a beautiful sunset at the foot of a cinder cone. On our last day, we hiked to the top of the cinder cone for the vista over the entire bay. What a way to end the trip! Thank you to everybody that joined! I hope you enjoyed bringing a little Baja spirit in your life.
The San Gabriel Mountains Chapter emails announcements about upcoming events—talks, hikes, sales, last-minute notices and late-breaking news. You can sign up for our mailing list by going to our email subscription page at cnps-sgm.org/subscribe or by contacting Cliff McLean at cliff.mclean@verizon.net. Use the web page cnps-sgm.org/contact to contact committee chairs listed on page 8 for the latest information about chapter activities.

**BOARD MEETINGS**

On the third Thursday of odd-numbered months except July, from 7:30 to 9 PM at Eaton Canyon Nature Center. All members are welcome to attend.

January 16, 7:30 PM
March 19, 7:30 PM

**PROGRAMS** (See details on cnps-sgm.org)

On the fourth Thursday of each month except July, August, November, and December at Eaton Canyon Nature Center.
January 23, 7:30 PM See below for details.
February 27, 7:30 PM See below for details
March 26, 7:30 PM Program to be announced later.

**PLANT WALKS**

Join us monthly at 9 am on the second Sunday (except July and August) for a gentle walk around Eaton Canyon Nature Center. Make friends and learn the native plants.
February 7, 9:00 AM
March 8, 9:00 AM

**EVENT DETAILS**

January 23. A Sense of Place: The San Gabriel River Watershed
Gabi McLean will lead us on a pictorial tour of the plants, the places, and the people of the watershed, from the top in the San Gabriel Mountains to Whittier Narrows. Gabi is a member of the San Gabriel Mountains chapter and has served on our board for the past 22 years, including six years as president. She and her husband Cliff have hiked the San Gabriel Mountains and surrounding area extensively and together created the interactive CD, Plants of the San Gabriel Mountains: Canyons and Foothills. Gabi provided most of the over 1800 photographs in the CD, some of which you will see here.

February 27. Talks by two chapter grant recipients.
Floristic discovery in the land that time forgot, by Maria Jesus and Studies in Eastwood Manzanita (*Arctostaphylos glandulosa*), by Glen Morrison.
Opening of School Project Undertaken with Pasadena Audubon Society
By Laura Hoopes
On November 16, the Washington School native plant garden designed by Jesse Chang and constructed at work days for us and Pasadena Audubon, opened and welcomed volunteers for final plantings. These pictures by Lois Brunet show scenes from that festive opening.