

# Hastings Reservation News September, 1990

## Resident MVZ Staff

Manager/Editor ..... Dr. Mark R. Stromberg  
 Research Ecologist..... Dr. Jim R. Griffin  
 Research Zoologist..... Dr. Walt Koenig  
 Research Associate..... Dr. Janis Dickinson  
 Reserve Steward.....

**Hastings Natural History  
 Reservation**  
 A Biological Field Station of the Museum  
 of Vertebrate Zoology, University of  
 California, Berkeley.  
 38601 E. Carmel Valley Road  
 Carmel Valley, CA 93924  
 (408) 659-2664

## Weather Report : Lightning Strikes Several Places, Some Rain

September at Hastings was generally hot, dry and unusually windy. Thunderstorms blasted Hastings on Saturday, September 22. Hits on Haystack Hill and School Hill blew out PG&E lines to the offices, lab Ranch House, Hastings well and Bunkhouse. Immediately after the lightning, the only rain for the month, 0.42 inches, pelted the reserve for about 20 minutes. This was the first rain in months but salamanders were seen that evening. Clouds remained on the 23rd, then the usual hot days (daily highs in the low 90's) and cool evenings (middle 40's) returned. Oak trees began dropping acorns the first week, and deer were common along Big Creek, taking the acorns dropped by the trees, as were jays and woodpeckers. Male deer were chasing does with some enthusiasm during the last week of the month. Gray squirrels and a bobcat with kitten have been seen several times along Big Creek.

## Research : DNA Fingerprinting Samples To Berkeley

Walt Koenig and Janis Dickinson prepared to spend most of the fall in El Cerrito, conducting DNA fingerprinting at the MVZ lab facility. Walt and Janis rented a Berkeley apartment and can be reached during the week at (415) 527-2028. Dr. Koenig and Dr. Bill Carmen (back in Berkeley) and Mark Stanback spent 4 days conducting the annual acorn crop census. Bill Carmen was able to bring his wife and children along on two weekends. We enjoyed having them here. Amy Knight, the new field assistant for the woodpecker project, arrived September 15 and took up residence in the bunkhouse. Mark Stanback and Nancy Popkin (Red House) are keeping up field observations of their woodpecker groups, and Phil Hooge (Fanny's Cabin) was busy with related field work. Jim Griffin spent the month organizing a major oak symposium to be held in October; sending papers out for review, editing, etc. Jim also started sampling his usual set of oak trees for acorn production data. Elizabeth Ross, MVZ, banded jays on 7 days, over 4 weekends as a part of her ongoing doctoral research. Dr. Virginia Boucher (UCB-Forestry) was here 3 days to sample lichens. Pam Muick (UCB-Forestry) along with her parents and son, spent 2 days taking data from her acorn seedling plots. Dr. Vernard Lewis (UCB-Entomology) and Mike Haverty (US Forest Service) spent the 27th collecting a wide variety of termites and other wood-dwelling insects. Vernard was invited by Rana Creek Ranch to investigate wood boring beetles in the Markula house.

## Administration : It is the Robertson House, After All.

Fanny Arnold once again paid us a very welcome visit. This time we saw Fanny for three days, as Fanny stayed with her friend Betty in Carmel. Mark Stromberg met Fanny in Salinas on the 25th at the office of Ken Tunstall, an engineer and architect. Fanny explained her plans for the reconstruction

of the lower barn to Mr. Tunstall. Fanny will work with this engineering firm to produce plans. Then the plans will be forwarded to the University Physical Resources Department for further developments. We look forward to working with Fanny on this project. It will provide badly needed dry storage for large items and two large rooms for short-term storage of research equipment, safe from mice and woodrats.

### How We Learned to Tell Robertson from Robinson....and a few other things along the way.

Fanny and Mark proceeded that afternoon to Carmel Valley Manor to meet Amalie Elkington and Elizabeth Barrat for a pleasant afternoon visit. Amalie had conducted considerable research into the former owners and builder of what we had been calling the Robinson House. In 1869, John Robertson became a naturalized citizen of Monterey County and by 1872 owned Palo Escrito peak and the surrounding ranch. John Robertson was married to a Spanish Californian named Bartola. She was quite an imposing presence and was known for running a very strict household. Spanish was spoken at the Robertson House. John and Bartola had a daughter Louisa, and a son, Charles R. Robertson. In 1896 Charles homesteaded what is now the annex to the reserve purchased by Fanny Arnold. Louisa and Charles may have had another sibling, but this is not clear. Amalie Elkington is going to check this further as well as a guess that Bartola may have been a native American. In 1896, Charles listed his family at 12 children. Louisa Robertson married Dr. S. M Archer. County records show that Dr. Archer had settled in the Santa Rita area in 1869 and by 1872 sold the county a set of hospital buildings he had constructed as a private hospital. His hospital was widely admired and apparently Dr. Archer was very active in civic and social causes. He was appointed as the first county doctor of Monterey County. Dr. Archer and his wife Louisa (Robertson) had seven daughters. These included Louisa (whose married name was Dahlgren), Mary (married name; Davis), Agnes (Melin), and Sallie (Zane). Sisters Agnes and Sallie spent many years at the house, and many older residents still call it the "Melin Place", (pronounced "Meh-lehn"). Sallie's husband, Colonel Zane, committed suicide in the Robertson house. Agnes Melin died in 1967, aged 91 years. The Zane family lived in Pebble Beach. Josephine Zane collected many plants now in the Hastings herbarium. After the death of Mrs. Melin, a series of owners degraded the housing to the wreckage repaired by Mrs. Arnold over the last two years. These owners included Buddy Lamb, now deceased member of the Losers, an affiliate of the Hells Angels. From the many bullet holes, shotgun blasts and general abundance of spirit bottles, we can surmise wild times were had. In 1972, an aerial photograph we have on file show a complex of many buildings, including garages, a barn and several sheds. By 1987, only the wreck of the main house and the badly abused cabin were left. A 1907 survey in our files named the place as "Mrs. Robinson's house and garden". Confusion over the name was widespread; in an interview with a local source in 1951, Amalie Elkington's informant on the matter recorded (from memory after interviews) that the house was referred to as the Robinson House. However, historical data clearly support the use of the name Robertson. Henceforth, we will use this name. We will have to repaint a few signs.

The next day, Fanny brought Nan from Salinas to Hastings. Nan is Tom Arnold's sister. Walt, Janis, Dale and Mark drove up the Arnold Road to the cabin where we had a great picnic lunch with Fanny and Nan. We made some video tapes of Fanny and Nan relating tales of life in the cabin in the 1930's. These videos are our attempt at oral history. We hope many more tales can be recorded this way in future visits by Fanny. Fanny toured the lichen enclosure along the Arnold road.

On Thursday, Fanny and Betty Monning (nee Wheeler) and Betty's sister Ginge Williams came out to the Robertson House from Carmel with Flavia Flavin Edgren. Betty and Fanny both attended the Carmel Ranch School. Betty knew Flavia from those early days, and Flavia would visit the Zane family at the Robertson House in the late 1940's. Flavia was married to Martin Flavin, one of Carmel's more colorful characters, and the author of several Broadway plays which were great hits. In those days, the Robertson house had a very lush garden close in. The grape arbor survives from those days when

many other flowers and trees grew near the house. When we did the reconstruction, we suspected that many springs originated just uphill from the house, and a surprisingly damp place persisted under the back deck. Although they would support lush growth, such natural springs were the eventual cause of the collapse of the house. Flavia commended the garden Phil Hooge and Denise Fruitt have put in above the cabin. Flavia reflected that the garden and the rear of the cabin carry on the bohemian spirit of the site in the 1940's. I hope to visit further with Flavia and record more of the history of the Robertson House.

Later that day, Fanny and Mark met with Ken Tunstall at the Lower Barn. Ken suggested that the barn be posted as a dangerous hazard. The beams are clearly severely stressed and may break any day, causing total collapse of the roof. Plans were modified and decisions on overall shape, doors, open stalls and windows were discussed. Fanny will approve final plans. We hope to salvage all the old wood siding and replace it on the ends of the new pole barn. Troy Hussey visited with Fanny and some final changes were planned to improve the kitchen cabinets and counters before Fanny turns it over to the University early next year.

Several improvements were made in communications. Peninsula Communications toured the reserve and are preparing a plan for NRS to install a repeater-based radio communication system for the reserve. We are preparing this plan at the request of Jeff Kennedy at Systemwide NRS. We tested a regional radio paging system and added it so that people can reach Mark Stromberg in a more timely manner. Just dial the office number, or if in more of a hurry, the local pager number (648-6363) then punch in the number you want Mark to call back.

The annual report was completed for Hastings and forwarded to MVZ for inclusion in the larger MVZ report. We had a new record number of research users- nearly 5,000 person days. Gordon Hempton was here the 14th and 15th with a CBS film crew (for Charles Kuralt). Gordon made his high tech recordings of the dawn chorus of bird sounds. Gordon then left for Hawaii and points west. Ads were run in the local paper for the open maintenance worker/ reserve steward position. Frank Pitelka and Mark Stromberg worked with the Dean's Office to further the request for funds for replacing the inadequate and unsafe septic and water supply systems here. Our volunteers were out 11 person days.

## Facilities, Maintenance and Buildings

---

Phil Hooge got some help from Mark Stromberg in loading up the recycling and emptying the old generator room. We set up new bins for aluminum, glass and California redemption glass. Jim Griffin continues to monitor the water pumping. Mark Stanback is keeping the water troughs full. Mark Stromberg cleaned out the workshop, removing several woodrat nests. Troy Hussey removed the last of his saw horses, ladder, wheelbarrow, etc. that had been in storage. Mark fixed the tipping rain bucket. Spider webs across the circuit board were associated with the failure of the thing to transmit data. Mark and Walter spent a Saturday evening borrowing a 2,000 watt gas-fired generator from Cathy Camp and Larry Sassarini at Ranchos Tularcitos and having the good luck to find Roger at Oak Ridge Ranch able to diagnose and fix it. This kept the ultracold freezer cold and the DNA samples from damage. Thanks to Roger and Cathy! PG&E were out on Monday following the Saturday storm and restored power to the lab.

With the lightning strike on the submersible pump on the Hastings well, Maggiora Brothers came out and installed a new pump. The old one was literally fused in places. We found that this can be covered by University insurance and sent for the appropriate forms.