

Tehipite Topics

December 2004 ❧ Vol. 50, No. 9

www.tehipite.sierraclub.org

December General Meeting

Madagascar, the Eighth Continent

Presented by Helen Gigliotti

December 8th at 7:00 P.M.

The Unitarian Universalist Church

4144 N. Millbrook, Fresno

Helen Gigliotti is a retired Professor of Biochemistry and administrator at Fresno State, and an avid international traveler and photographer. Recent trips to Mongolia, Antarctica, Borneo, India, and Baja California have resulted in slideshows and photographic exhibits in the local community. Join Helen on this journey to the fascinating island of Madagascar, which became separated from the east coast of Africa 165 million years ago. In its isolation, Madagascar became a laboratory for evolution, giving birth to wildly

strange creatures and plants. As we travel from the northeastern rain forests to the southern deserts, we will visit wildlife reserves and experience the fascinating culture of the native peoples. We will enjoy several species of the precious and most ancient of all living primates, the exotic lemur. We will experience many endemic species of chameleons, frogs, birds, and other fauna, including those found in the “Spiny Desert”. Despite its unfor-



fortunate past, rapidly developing ecotourism is becoming a powerful force in the preservation of Madagascar’s remaining endangered species. ❧

Election 2004: Getting Over It and Getting On With It

by Bob Morris, D. C. Chapter

For many of us, this past presidential election commanded unprecedented involvement. I spent weekend days in Philadelphia going door to door and connecting with potential voters with the Sierra Club Environmental Education Campaign (EVEC). I even donated money to my candidate, which those who know me will recognize as particularly uncharacteristic. Like many others, I was disappointed with the outcome and indulged in anger, vilification of the opposing candidate and his supporters, and woeful predictions of war, environmental degradation, and plunder by the carbon based industries.

I got over it.

It wasn’t easy. Long walks in the woods provided a chance to dig back into the past and slowly, bit by bit, recognize that I hadn’t ever felt comfortable about angry finger pointing fulminations by my candidates, first Dean and then Kerry. I was disappointed with my own demonizing of those with whom I disagreed. I should know better. On August 28, 1963 in Washington D. C., and in Selma, Alabama in 1965, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. taught us the principles of nonviolent activism. An effective movement could not be built on anger and hate then, nor can it now. Tolerance, respect, love and peace, are the characteristics of effective movements of the past, aggressively and courageously applied in the face of angry foes motivated by fear and insecurity. During the Anti-Vietnam War March on the Pentagon, the guarding soldiers were largely neutralized when demonstrators put flowers in their gun barrels and expressed concern and understanding for their difficult position. Some were persuaded to put down their arms, and ultimately the nation was persuaded to think peace was a better way. *See Election, page 6*



GOING, GOING... GONE?



Sea turtles date back nearly 90 million years and are among the Earth's oldest surviving species. Yet the Kemp's Ridley sea turtle is quickly fading away—it is losing its habitat at an alarming rate. At the Sierra Club, we've mounted a major campaign to defend the Endangered Species Act and preserve threatened habitats before their inhabitants are gone forever.

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Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

Join!

(2)



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Tehipite Chapter Annual Banquet

Yosemite Park Interpreter Sheldon Johnson will present a program from the standpoint of an African American soldier in the 9th Cavalry patrolling Yosemite Park at the turn of the 20th century.

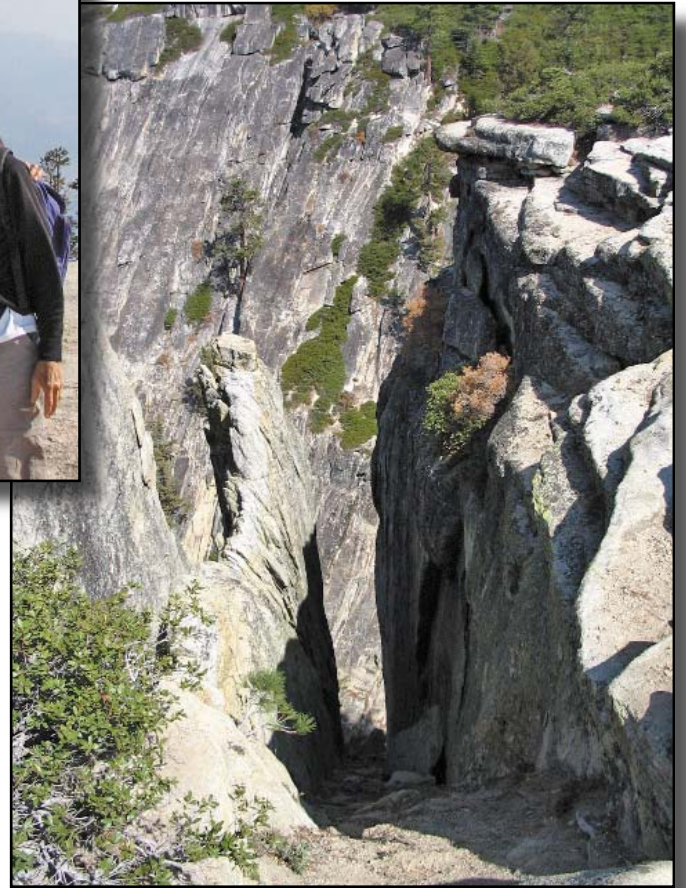
Fresno State Student/Faculty Dining Facility

February 26th, 2005, 6-9 P.M.

Keep the date reserved!

More information to come in January *Topics*.





JoAnne Armstrong's hike at Glacier Point, with Half Dome in the background. It was a glorious day! JoAnne is second from the left, Heather and Bob on the right, JoAnne's daughter and her boyfriend, and two others. This is only one of the many wonderful experiences that our Outings Committee provides, not only for Sierra Club members, but for the general public as well.

Merced Group

Conservation Committee and Executive Committee Meeting

Thursday, December 9th at 7:00 P.M.
345 E. 20th St., Merced (Rod Webster's home)

General Meeting

No General Meeting in December.

Outings

No outings planned for December.

Sierra Club 2005 Calendars and Engagement Books are now available! They make great gifts that can be enjoyed all year long. Purchase them at Group sponsored meetings and events, or phone Rod Webster at (209) 723-4747.

Merced Group

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Excerpts from an Essay on China

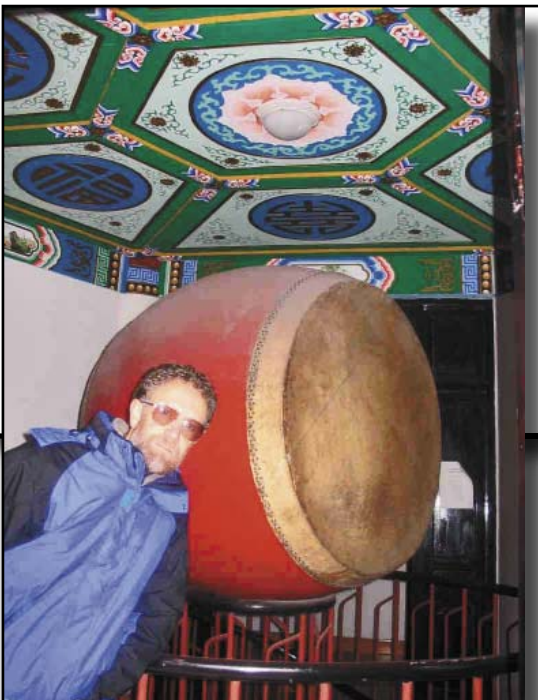
by Gene Richards

Ever lived where it's really humid? The weather here would be almost balmy compared to any summer in Central California—except for the humidity. Eat breakfast, and work up a sweat. Go for a walk to buy vegetables from the open air market down the road, and work up a sweat. Play tennis under an almost always overcast sky, and... Fortunately bike riders ace it again, as the cooling of the motion is just about enough to carry off the sweat of the exercise—almost. Speaking of which, it takes longer to get across town from my old school to the new university by car than by bike, sitting in stifling heat and exhaust, waiting. *Ugly*. It's about fifty minutes by bike compared to over an hour by car. But here, there is something to look at and wonder about all along the way. Oh, hey, look at that! There's a little shop that sells nothing but toilet paper!

A typical Chinese family banquet, with a foreign friend.



With my new university, I have a new living situation. I guess this is about as close to middle class as I've ever been in China—American middle class: two bedrooms, three air conditioners, microwave, video and DVD players, washing machine. Actually, the standard by which I judge all Chinese living situations is the size of the refrigerator. You never see the large ones we have in the States, or even close. I do have friends with very large apartments and have seen some large detached houses, but no big refrigerators. Part of this is because the Chinese are used to buying almost all their food fresh and often. Someone in the household will go out every morning to the vegetable market to get about a day's worth of stuff, including live animals (poultry, rabbits or fish), eggs, produce, tofu, pickles, noodles, bread—almost anything. It's sort of like having a cut-rate Whole Foods on almost every major corner, with squealing pigs, and everyone haggling over prices.



Gene and a temple drum in Chengdu, Sichuan, PRC.

I realize, in these rambling thoughts, that I'm usually talking about my life in the city, but eighty percent of China's 1.2 billion people still live as peasants in the countryside. Their existence, while slowly being elevated, is still a long way from what we would call tolerable. They work hard, have little security, live humbly, and maybe dream of a better life. Some city people are little removed from these primitive conditions and some of the students I see everyday are right off the land, or only one generation away from the peasant's life. To sum up my own point of view, I sometimes imagine I could live on a farm with them—for awhile. You know, the simple life. Then I think that probably I couldn't.

*At a flower farm outside the city.
Beautiful—but overcast.*



I have also reflected about what it is that sets expatriates, like myself and the others I meet here, apart. Is there a different breed of person who goes overseas to live? Is there some sympathy that distinguishes us, but which unites us with all those who do go to live “elsewhere”? It seems to me that it is partly a sense of adventure, which in my case may have something to do with the fact that my folks lived overseas, in Europe and South America, for many years when I was small. There's some curiosity in there too, but not the “let's-look-it-up-in-the-encyclopedia” kind of curiosity. It's some quality of skepticism, of not taking someone's word for something, of having listened to someone many years ago talk about another country, and never really being able to have gotten it out of your mind. There's some boredom involved also, of looking around yourself at home and realizing there must be something more to the world. Maybe it's just that when others were watching the Lowell Thomas and Michael Palin types explaining the rest of the world, we were not satisfied to sit and watch the tube, but had to go out and see for ourselves. ✂

*Gene Richards will present a program on his travels in China at the General Meeting on January 12th.
Contact him at gene1@cvip.net for his complete essay.*

Upcoming Chapter General Meeting Presentations

January 12	Gene Richards.How to Get Used To a Foreign Culture —Further Experiences in China
February 9	Mark Keppler.....Coalition Community Trails
March 9	Keith SauerNorth Slope to North Fork
April 13	John & Marcia Rasmussen.....A Trek to the Top of Mt. Rainier
May 11	Heather Anderson.....Alaska and ANWR

ECOVIEW

by *Marin Orvis*

HOHOHO

Fifty million Christmas trees are purchased in the U.S. each year; 30+ million get taken to the landfill.

The 2.65 billion Christmas cards sold each year could circle the planet ten times.

Five million extra tons of trash are produced between Thanksgiving and New Year's.

If everyone wrapped just three gifts in reused paper, it would save enough to cover 45,000 football fields.

WHEW!

To rid yourself of unwanted junk mail (let's face it, some of it we want), try www.newdream.org/junkmail/index.php.

This should generate letters for you to print out, sign and mail to marketing preference organizations. Unwanted catalogs? Call the usual toll-free number and ask to be



taken off the mailing list. Whenever you order a product or otherwise share your address, always remember to say, "Please do not sell, rent, or trade my name."

More Trivia: DECEMBER 17-23 SATURNALIA

The most beloved of all Roman holidays, this week-long festival honored Saturn, the god of agriculture. It was celebrated most heartily by slaves, who were granted freedom for the week. Household roles were reversed, with masters waiting hand and foot on their servants, enduring their complaints. Almost all business in the empire stopped as people indulged in a gay round of feasts, games, gambling, visits, and gift giving. If this is beginning to sound like another December celebration you know, listen to this account of the festivities from the writer, Libanius. "The impulse to spend seizes everyone. He who, the whole year through, has taken pleasure in saving and piling up his pennies becomes suddenly extravagant." (Wouldn't you think he'd have lots more to say if he were alive now?)

Enjoy your holidays, continue being mindful of good environmental ways, and come back next year! ♻️

Election, from page 1

We seek harmony and balance in our relationship with nature, and that same harmony and balance are needed in our social order if we are to advance an agenda of good stewardship of the environment. The myth of Red and Blue states is just a media invention intended to help them sell air time and newspapers. In Oklahoma and Indiana, as well as in Massachusetts and California, people from both parties want to breathe clean air, drink clean water and protect wild places for their children. If we address them with love and respect, we can get past their fear of us and talk about how we can work together to insure a clean, secure environment for the future.

Sierra Club has two new initiatives that will help us to build these relationships. Building Environmental Communities (BEC) is evolving from the EVEC election year program mentioned above. It involves building relationships with other organizations that have some common objectives, and organizing volunteers to spread the word about environmental initiatives in their communities. In Philadelphia that worked great. We had thousands of conversations with people of all demographic groups, and got unprecedented turnout for the election. We can do the same here in our own neighborhoods to address national, regional and local issues. Chris Carney is our Washington Region BEC organizer, and you can contact him at

Chris.Carney@sierraclub.org, or (202) 237-0754, to get more information.

Engaging Our Members (EOM) is the second initiative. Volunteers put together small gatherings in their homes, usually six to ten friends, neighbors, work associates, etc. You will be supported with guides to help get discussions going on environmental topics, and in many cases we can arrange for local Chapter leaders to come and help you with the discussions. We have discussion guides on air pollution from power plants now, and more are coming. We haven't identified a local volunteer to handle the EOM arrangements yet, but if you are interested you can contact me at arccbob@earthlink.net or (202) 548-8240.

In our December meeting, the Appalachian Region Conservation Committee will be discussing these programs and how we can use them in our campaigns to build a clean energy economy and stop poisonous and greenhouse gas emissions. We also will discuss forming a Power Team and a River Team to lead initiatives on energy and water issues. Let me know if you want to be a part of these teams. Non-violent does not mean passive, and we intend to vigorously use all legal means to engage the corporate entities that are harming the environment and help them find a better way. ♻️

Trip Schedule

Outing Ratings

Distance	Elevation Gain
1) up to 6 miles	A) under 1,000 feet
2) 6 to 10 miles	B) 1,000 to 2,000 feet
3) 10 to 15 miles	C) 2,000 to 3,000 feet
4) 15 to 20 miles	D) 3,000 to 4,000 feet
5) over 20 miles	E) over 4,000 feet

Our New Tehipite Chapter Outings Chair is Carolyn Ordway (559) 449-7780 jbord606@yahoo.com. Please contact her with any questions concerning our outings program. Contact the trip leader directly if you are interested in one of the listed trips.

Tehipite Chapter outings are free and open to the public. All leaders are unpaid volunteers assuming responsibility for a good trip, and your cooperation is mandatory. Please review additional trip and participant requirements at www.tehipite.sierraclub.org/outings.

December 11th - Saturday

Cross Country Skiing - Intermediate
Location to be determined, weather and snow permitting.

John Cameron (559) 896-6919

December 11th - Saturday

Day Hike (3C)
Garlic Falls. Scenic 13 mile hike along Middle Fork of Kings River.

Marcia & John Rasmussen

(559) 332-2419

Rasmussen@BigBaldy.com

December 18th - Saturday

Cross Country Skiing - Intermediate
Location to be determined, weather and snow permitting.

Gerald Vinnard (559) 431-5780

December 18th - Saturday

Day Hike (1A) Easy
San Joaquin River Trail from San Joaquin River Gorge area along the gorge to see Indian sites and a huge tunnel.

Don Redmond (559) 268-1537

December 19th - Sunday

Trail Running
North Fork of Kaweah?
Speed and distance will be adjusted to abilities of runners.

Marcia Rasmussen (559) 332-2419

Marcia@BigBaldy.com

December 26th - Sunday

Snowshoe
Dave Wallace (559) 284-2586

December 26th - Sunday

Day Hike (1A) Easy to Moderate
Pincushion Ridge. Millerton Lake Recreation Area. A gentle climb up a tabletop hill to view the lower river canyon and Millerton Lake.

Aimee Leyva (559) 438-8670 or

301-3977

December 29th - January 1st

Wednesday - Saturday

Celebrate the New Year at Mammoth Lakes and Mountain! Cross-country (25 miles of groomed trails), downhill ski, snowboard, snowshoe. Share cost of condo. Space is limited.

Don Gaede (559) 434-5138

January 8th - Saturday

Cross Country Skiing
Beginners' Lesson
Location to be determined, weather and snow permitting.

Walt Taguchi (559) 435-2818

January 15th - Saturday

Day Hike (1A) Easy
A nice route along edge of Millerton Lake from Winchell Cove on first section of San Joaquin River Trail. Keep an eye out for eagles!

Don Redmond (559) 268-1537

January 15th - Saturday

Beginners' Snowshoeing (1B)
We will hike on the Coyote Trail that overlooks Shaver Lake. Maybe a snowball fight or build a snowman. It's like winter wonderland! Come play in the snow and have fun.

Carolyn Ordway (559) 449-7780

January 22th - Saturday

Cross Country Skiing - Intermediate
Location to be determined, weather and snow permitting.

Gerald Vinnard (559) 431-5780

January 23rd - Sunday

Trail Running
Location and difficulty to be decided.

Marcia Rasmussen (559) 332-2419

Marcia@BigBaldy.com

January 29th - Saturday

Cross Country Skiing - Intermediate
Location to be determined, weather and snow permitting.

Steve Fretz (559) 439-6673

February 5th - Saturday

Cross Country Skiing
Beginners' Lesson
Location to be determined, weather and snow permitting.

Walt Taguchi (559) 435-2818

February 6th - Sunday

Annual Snowshoeing Bowl.
A perfect antidote for the Supper Bowl. Location to be determined.

Dave Wallace (559) 284-2586

February 12th - Saturday

Angel Falls (1A) 4.8 miles
A wide cascade that looks like angel wings. It's located on the northeast end of Bass Lake near Oakhurst.

Carolyn Ordway (559) 449-7780

February 19th - Saturday

Day Hike (2B)
San Joaquin River Gorge
Aimee Leyva (559) 438-8670 or (559) 301-3977

February 19th - Saturday

Cross Country Skiing - Intermediate
Location to be determined, weather and snow permitting.

Gerald Vinnard (559) 431-5780

February 26th - Saturday

Cross Country Skiing - Intermediate
Location to be determined, weather and snow permitting.

Steve Fretz (559) 439-6673



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January *Topics* deadline December 15th



Your Participation Wanted!

Four of our hard-working Conservation Committee members: Tom Eliason, George Whitmore, June Gill, and Ron Mackie. We welcome volunteer support to help protect our wilderness areas and to deal with issues of water; air quality; sprawl; Yosemite, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks; Sierra and Sequoia National Forests; our local San Joaquin River; and more. Meeting time is 7:00 P.M. the first Wednesday of every month at the Unitarian Church.