General Meeting

Sonoma County Vernal Pool Plant Communities

October 18, 2011 7:30pm

Speaker: Ayzik Solomeshch

Our October speaker, Ayzik Solomeshch has studied Sonoma County vernal pools for several years. Ayzik will describe the ecologic-floristic classification system of vernal pool communities currently in use statewide involving a network of reference pools. Ayzik will explain how the classification system is used to assess vernal pool ecological conditions, to compare natural and constructed pools, and to support the development of standard procedures and criteria for evaluation of mitigation success. Ayzik will share his findings regarding Sonoma County vernal pools including a comparison of the Santa Rosa Plain vernal pools to the surviving pools of the Sonoma Valley. Ayzik’s work expands our understanding of Sonoma County vernal pools and contributes to more effective management strategies and informed conservation policies.

More information on the classification system can be found in the Vernal Pools chapter (written by Ayzik, Michael Barbour and Robert Holland) appearing in *Terrestrial Vegetation of California*, 3rd edition, UC Press.

Biography:

Dr. Ayzik I. Solomeshch has been a Project Scientist at the University of California Davis, since 2001. Previously he was Director of the Geobotanical Laboratory in the Institute of Biology, at the Russian Academy of Sciences. He is a member of the US National Vegetation Classification Panel, International Committee of Phytosociological Nomenclature, and The European Vegetation Survey Team. His expertise is in vegetation ecology, in particular the classification of wild land vegetation types. For the past ten years he has been a member of a vernal pool research team that surveyed vernal pool vegetation throughout California and developed a classification of vernal pool communities.

Plant ID Hour

You see the plants blooming but the names are unclear? No need to fret, Plant I.D. Hour is here! Arrive at 6:45 p.m. before the General Meeting, and bring specimens of plants you want to identify. At Plant I.D. Hour you can see plants up close and key them to species, while getting to know fellow Milo Baker Chapter members. Plants that you key out or learn with friends are easily remembered! Bring in some mystery plants to challenge us. I’ll bring in the dissecting microscope and some flowering plants from the local area. Keying is worthwhile and challenging for all of us, but it is fun to work through them together, and learn what distinguishes this plant from that one.

Join us for Dinner before the Meeting:

We’ll gather for dinner at 6 pm at Kirin Restaurant, 2700 Yulupa Ave. We hope our speaker will join us, but we always have an enjoyable group of fellow members and a delicious Northern Chinese meal in any case. Please contact Liz Parsons, 833-2063, lizpar8993@aol.com by Oct. 17th if you plan to attend.

Calendar

10/08  40th Annual Plant Sale
10/11  Board Meeting
10/18  General Meeting
10/15  Submissions deadline: November Newsletter

Field Trips
10/15 Shell Beach/Pomo Canyon Trail

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General Meetings are held on the 3rd Tuesday of each month at Luther Burbank Art & Garden Center, 2050 Yulupa Avenue, Santa Rosa. Milo Baker Chapter Board meetings start at 7:00pm, 2nd Tuesday nine months of the year, Environmental Center, 55 Ridgeway Avenue, Suite A, Santa Rosa. The next Board meeting is October 11th. Anyone interested in the work of the chapter is welcome to attend!
Plant Sale News

I hope that everyone who received the plant sale flyer in their September newsletter will place it on a bulletin board in their neighborhood. In this way we should cover the county with our publicity. Thank you.

There was a good list of the plants that we are growing for the sale in the September newsletter. However, it is not a complete list as members are growing small number of plants too numerous to mention. Other plants will be selected at Cal Flora and Mostly Natives, the two nurseries that support our sale.

There will be wonderful CA native bulbs from Brent and Becky’s again this year. We have also been increasing the number of seeds that will be offered. So check out the seed and bulb table at the south end of the hall. You might be surprised with something new.

At the book table Wendy Smit and her crew will be offering a wonderful selection of books, as well as t-shirts and CNPS posters for sale.

Lynn Houser, our past president, will be at the membership table telling our customers about the benefits of membership in Milo Baker Chapter.

There will be a bonus for anyone joining at the sale. Near the books and membership table will be Louisa Carter with her beautiful notecards and paintings. Louisa has some beautiful drawings of our local native wildflowers that are delightful. Please stop by her table.

Frederique Lavoipierre will be there representing the Insectapalooza at Sonoma State with a delightful display of insects and a microscope for close viewing.

Katy and Dave Biggs will be returning with their display of pond plants and dragonfly information. They will have water plantain (Alisma plantago-aquatica), Marsh buttercup (Ranunculus sp.), arrowhead (Sagittaria sp.) and Pt. Reyes checkerbloom (Sidalcea calycosa rhizomata).

Milo Baker Chapter is partnering with the Laguna Foundation on their Adopt-a-Vernal pool program now in its 6th year. At the plant sale, we will be soliciting donations for this effort and for a flora of the Laguna. The Board of Directors of the Milo Baker Chapter voted to match any donations received up to $1,000.00. Look for this opportunity near the refreshment table, where John Herrick will be available to talk to you about this important project.

Becky Montgomery, Mary Aldrich, Kathi Dowdikan, and I will be pricing and labeling plants the week before the sale. Anyone who has some free time during the day on Monday October 3 at Casa Grande H.S. in Petaluma, Tuesday in Sebastopol, Wednesday at Cal Flora, or Thursday in Santa Rosa, please call Liz at 833-2063. These vital tasks go faster if we have a lot of help. The plants will be collected at the usual collection centers. If you are growing plants for the sale please bring them to any of the following locations on the weekend before the sale:

Collection Centers:
1. Mary Aldrich, 4775 Newanga, SR, 539-9005
2. Cal Flora Nursery, D and Sommers, Fulton, 528-8813
3. Hale’s Apple Farm, 1526 Gravenstein Highway, N, Dave Hale, 823-4613

On Friday night, October 7, we will need truckers to transport plants from the collection center to the Vet’s Memorial Building. Call Liz if you have a truck and can help.

If you helped at our sale last year, Judy Hartwig (832-1821) will be calling you soon to ask you to volunteer. I hope that all members will help us again. This is a huge effort and WE NEED YOU! Call Judy and volunteer. We need cashiers, salespersons, drivers, and help in many areas. Please mark your calendars for October 7 and 8 and plan to help us by working at the sale. If you can’t work, please come by and shop for plants. Workers only can purchase plants on Friday evening before the sale, so make plans to work for the sale.

The work of the Milo Baker Chapter depends on the success of our plant sale. Our members are our best customers. Please tell your friends to attend and buy plants.

Fall is planting season in California. The soil is still warm and the roots will grow slowly through the rainy season. The following spring, the plants are ready to survive the summer heat. A plant planted in the spring does not have a well-developed root system and will have difficulty surviving through the summer.

Liz Parsons
Gardening with Natives

THROUGH THE GARDEN GATE
October is a good time to remind us all about gardening for wildlife by NOT doing autumn or winter cleanup. Try an experiment: Leave your gardens untrimmed, unraked, and basically “untidy” until the light and warmth of spring initiate new growth. An entire panorama of activity will ensue. The idea is to give spiders, butterflies, and other insects a secure hiding place from the cold and wet during their dormancy or egg stages. Further, the debris gives birds productive areas in which to forage when much of their food supply is at its most meager. It’s a rather revolutionary thought…however, lots of gardening columnists are advising just this.

I have found it to be a successful experiment. Flocks of sparrows, finches, and pine siskins pick away at seed heads that to my eyes look unproductive. Perhaps insects hide down inside the empty pods. Towhees, juncos and sparrows scratch and forage all day under the debris. I myself went on my own foraging excursion. Getting down on hands and knees, and wearing my strongest magnifying glasses, I discovered egg cases everywhere, some even suspended on webs between dry stems. I would have unwittingly destroyed that entire productive habitat if I had trimmed and raked it all away. You might ask, aren’t there non-beneficial insects hiding out as well as beneficials? True, I’m sure there are, but from the abundance of birds in the garden, most of the insects are being found anyway.

A walk in the woods or in a wild meadow shows that Mother Nature does no tidying up. The leaves litter the ground, the brown stems ultimately tumble over, the dead branches fall, and the wild lands are still beautiful and provide all the food and shelter necessary to keep the ecology in balance. It’s only when we humans try to outwit our Mother that we end up out of balance. So here’s to a brown winter garden!

Please write me at: joodbrink@comcast.net
Judy Brinkerhoff

Invasives Corner
Spying on Dave's Garden
Tower of Jewels, etc., Echium pininana

I follow Dave's Garden, a website which comes up in my e-mail once a week. It's a very informative and attractive site, although sometimes contributors aren't aware of invasive plant problems. If I notice some featured plant is a problem plant, I will add a comment. Of course I’m tempted to be offensive - to use terms for the ignorant such as "you silly turnip head," but I desist. Since many Echium species are invasive, I decided to see if I could pounce upon any of the comments following an article featuring Echium pininana. But I wasn't prepared for what follows. Silly turnip head just didn't seem harsh enough!

From Dave's Garden:
On Nov 1, 2008, Marconi from Moss Beach, CA wrote: “This is a gorgeous plant. We have one in our backyard that is 18 feet tall at this time although it has bloomed and is looking a little worse for the wear. We only water it occasionally. Once established it needs next to no care which is great since, we sow seeds from this lovely plant all over Montara Mountain and Milagra Ridge near Pacifica hoping that this plant becomes firmly established here. So far it looks like we're winning over "nativists" that pull them with hundreds of new plants on the slopes over the last three years that we have been working on our project. I can recommend this plant highly in the coastal areas of San Mateo, Santa Cruz and Marin counties. A magnificent centerpiece of a garden here Coastside.”

On June 3, 2003, lupinus wrote: “This plant is invasive along the coast of northern California, and I recommend against using it in landscaping in that region. A single garden planting in Pacifica resulted in a population of hundreds of individuals of this species becoming established in a nearby national park, requiring many days of labor to remove.”

From CNPS member/ botanists: “It isn't about "native versus non-native" or "hating" non-indigenous plants. Montara Mountain contains a unique assemblage of species, many of which cannot grow just anywhere.” Lori Hubbard

"Very familiar! I've been pulling it frantically around my neighbor's house where it is threatening to escape into coastal chaparral and open forest understory. Comes up like a carpet after a burn pile and the seed seems to be viable for at least ten years. It is spectacular & good for pollinators which..."
is why I can’t convince him to get rid of it. I think it could be a horrible pest.” Kathleen Kraft

These people who plant invasives are responsible for hundreds of hours of labor to remove these invaders. I wonder how many worse than silly turnip heads are out there. And I wonder how many plants are going to have to be removed before their work is undone, if it can be. I hope they are in their eighties and will soon run out of energy. I wonder if there is any law that could penalize this kind of activity. Certainly they are harming us all, whether we are aware of it or not.

M.L. Carle

State news

The 2012 Conference Silent Auction Committee is looking for donations and committee members! The 2009 Conference Auction raised almost $10,000 for CNPS’ Conservation Program; let’s beat our own record in the name of California’s native plants! Ideas for donations include: plant themed and handmade artwork, books, gardening accessories, jewelry, and other items of beauty, value, or interest. If you would like to donate, please fill out the Auction Donor Form available at the www.cnps.org website. If you do not have something special to donate please consider donating your time by joining the Silent Auction Committee and soliciting donations or volunteering at the conference. For questions about donations or volunteer opportunities please contact silentauction2012@cnps.org.

Upgrades to CNPS Website

CNPS has recently upgraded our Web interface, the technology that provides visitors to our main website the ability to join CNPS, make a donation, or get information about our planned giving program online. This upgrade will provide new and existing CNPS members with additional options to view their gift records, register for statewide events such as the 2012 Conservation Conference, and sign up for professional workshops, all through a secure member login and password. Eventually we hope to send special messages, newsletters, and alerts tailored to our members’ interests through this new interface. Existing members can register online by going to www.cnps.org and clicking on the Join/Renew or Support CNPS buttons. Existing and new members will navigate to a new page to register a user name and password.

Immediately upon registering, members or visitors can make a donation, view an event calendar, sign up for a new membership, or register for statewide events. After 24 to 48 hours of completing the registration process, new or existing members will receive a confirmation email and can log back into the site to view their giving history, renew an existing membership, and receive special messages. If you have any questions or feedback about the new site, please email cnps@cnps.org.

Events and Items of Interest

Pepperwood Offers Oaks Class
October 1, 2011, Saturday, 9:00 am-3:00 pm

Students will explore groves comprised of many oak species onsite at Pepperwood Preserve with botanical expert Steve Barnhart. Barnhart is Pepperwood’s Academic Director and an expert on California’s oaks. He will lead students on a walk to discover the biology, ecology and identity of this exceptionally diverse plant community. Students will also learn about oak management, pests and diseases, regeneration and wildlife issues. The class is $10.00 and students can register online at http://www.pepperwoodpreserve.org . Steve instructed for 37 years at Santa Rosa Junior College. On the Pepperwood staff since 2006, Steve maintains a research interest in oak biology and oak woodland dynamics.

Pepperwood provides unique open-space access to nature lovers, volunteers, students, and scientists from the Bay Area and beyond. The Preserve is located at 2130 Pepperwood Preserve Road, off Franz Valley Road, approximately midway between the towns of Santa Rosa and Calistoga, and adjacent to Safari West. To find directions and more information about Pepperwood Preserve and its programs, visit http://www.pepperwoodpreserve.org.

Cotati Creek Critters Fall Trash Pick Up
October 15, 2011 Saturday, 9 am – 12 noon.

Help clean up the Laguna de Santa Rosa in Cotati and Rohnert Park before trash gets washed downstream into the rest of the Laguna, the Russian River and the Pacific Ocean! Wear old clothes and rain boots if you have them, and dress for the weather! Gloves, trash grabbers and buckets provided. There are two meeting places, both in
Cotati. See www.CotatiCreekCritters.info for details, directions, and maps. Contact: jenny@creeks.cotati.info or 707 792 4422

Graton Community Club Fall Flower Show
Oct. 21 and 22, 2011, Friday and Saturday
8 am to 4 pm
The Graton Community Club will hold its fall flower show, "Moonshine and Mischief." The show is free and will be held at the historic clubhouse at 8996 Graton Rd. in Graton. There will be a large selection of locally grown plants, including many natives, and visitors can enjoy the many floral displays arranged by club members.
In addition to plants, there will be hand crafted items, unique collectibles for sale, a raffle, and much more. A wonderful lunch will be offered for $10.00 from 11am until 2 pm. Dessert and beverages are available all day for $5.00. This semi-annual event is held for the main purpose of raising money for scholarships to SRJC, and a portion goes to the building maintenance fund.

Live Oaks Ranch Stewardship Workday
October 22, 2011, Saturday, 9am–2pm
Please join Sonoma Land Trust on our inaugural workday at the new Live Oaks Ranch Preserve.
We’ll be gathering to cut and pull doug fir saplings that, if left unchecked, will displace oak woodland and riparian vegetation on the property. We’ll break for lunch under the trees so bring a bagged lunch to enjoy.
After lunch we can spend some time exploring this beautiful piece of Sonoma County and be finished by 2pm. For more information or to sign up, please email: volunteer@sonomalandtrust.org.

Wildcare’s Family Adventures
Saturday October 29/ Sábado 29 de Octubre
Halloween at Deer Park / Halloween en Deer Park
Free to the public, these programs will be conducted in both English and Spanish.
Estos programas son en español e ingles y gratuitos para el público.
Programs begin at 10:00 a.m. at the trailhead and end around 12:30 p.m. If you would like to carpool, meet at 9:15 a.m. at the Canal Alliance headquarters at 91 Larkspur Street in San Rafael.

Questions? Preguntas en español: Contact Juan-Carlos Solis at 415.453.1000, ext.17 juan-carlos@wildcarebayarea.org.
For directions to program sites, visit www.wildcarebayarea.org/adventures

The CNPS 2012 Conservation Conference
January 10-14, 2012
Early Registration now until Oct. 31, 2011
The upcoming statewide CNPS 2012 Conservation Conference in San Diego is an opportunity for all of us to come together and celebrate everything we do as a leading plant conservation organization in California. Our membership includes top level scientists and decision-makers in agencies, universities, consulting firms, and non-profit environmental organizations as well as the grassroots activists working hard on the front lines.
Hundreds of CNPS volunteers from chapters throughout the state have contributed to the planning and execution of this event over the last two and a half years. There are sessions and activities for everyone from career botanists to garden enthusiasts.
The committees have planned 5 days of non-stop workshops, talks, and social and art events. You could learn how to start a plant restoration nursery at a workshop, listen to talks on a particular rare plant or invasive species, or contribute to a conversation about CEQA or desert energy projects.
There will be five sessions focusing on regional issues from north to south, including those of Baja California. To nourish your appreciation of our native landscape you may choose to take a drawing workshop with John Muir Laws, read a poem, submit a photograph, admire botanical art, or sing and play music. There will be opportunities to take action on your subject of interest and numerous social events where you will see and meet CNPS members and other experts from all over the state and beyond.
Registration is now open for both the conference events and the hotel. Early registration discounts are available until Oct 31, 2011 with additional discounts for CNPS members and students. Special CNPS conference discounts are available at the conference hotel, the Town and Country Resort, until Dec 16 or until all rooms are taken. You may register for the conference and/or the hotel through our website at www.CNPS.org/2012.
There are a million ways that you can participate in this conference from presenting or attending talks to taking tickets at the door. We need scores of volunteers during the days of the conference. We
North Bay Climate Adaptation Summit November 3 and 4, 2011, Thursday and Friday 9 am-4:30 pm
Pepperwood Preserve’s Dwight Center for Conservation Science
North Bay residents, policy makers, and scientists are invited to learn more about how a changing climate will impact Sonoma County, what can be done to prepare for these changes, and about the evolving arena of climate adaptation as a response to climate change. The North Bay Climate Adaptation Initiative will host a community summit titled “Sonoma County Taking the Heat—Adapting Our Communities and Environment for Climate Change” This event is free to the public but registration is required. Participants can register online at http://northbayclimatesummit2011.eventbrite.com Thursday, November 3, will feature scientific presentations focused on potential impacts to our watersheds, flora and fauna, and protected habitats. Friday, November 4, will feature interactive panels on how climate change may impact local communities in terms of critical services like food production and public health. The event will close November 4 with a keynote lecture by watershed expert Brock Dolman at 7 p.m.
Lunch will be provided both days and a reception will be held each afternoon following the presentations. The summit will be held at Pepperwood Preserve, an ecological institute dedicated to educating, engaging, and inspiring its community through science-based conservation, leading-edge research, and multidisciplinary educational programs. To find directions and more information about Pepperwood and its programs, please visit http://www.pepperwoodpreserve.org/. The North Bay Climate Adaptation Initiative (NBCAI) is a coalition of natural resource managers, policy makers, and scientists committed to working together to create positive solutions to the problem of climate adaptation for the ecosystems and watersheds of Sonoma County. Our goal is to pilot an approach in Sonoma County that can be extended throughout the North Bay as a whole. Key partners involved with the North Bay Climate Adaptation Initiative include the Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation, Sonoma Ecology Center, Gold Ridge Resource Conservation District, Pepperwood Preserve, and Sonoma Land Trust. Generous support for this event has been provided by Community Foundation Sonoma County, Global Genesis, and the Fledgling Fund. To learn more about the November summit and NBCAI, please go to http://northbayclimate.org/.

Creek Stewardship Day November 5, 2011 Saturday 9 am – 12 noon.
Help plant native trees and shrubs alongside the Laguna de Santa Rosa channel in Cotati. We’ll be starting at a new site this fall: off Gravenstein Way, near Falletti Park. Dress for work and weather. See www.CotatiCreekCritters.info for Creek Stewardship Day Guidelines, directions and maps. Contact: jenny@creeks.cotati.info or 707 792 4422

Riverkeeper Stewardship Park Volunteer Days
Everyone and all ages are welcome to visit or volunteer. No experience necessary. Enjoy time on the Russian River every Wednesday except when there is enough rain to need a raincoat. Please join us from 8:30 am - 11:30 am, for all or part of the time. Please bring your own drinking water and wear sturdy footwear. The Park is located at 16153 Main St., Guerneville on the north bank of the Russian River directly upstream of the pedestrian bridge. Access is down a driveway in front of Sonoma Nesting Co. At the bottom of the driveway look for the blue and white sign that says, “Russian Riverkeeper Demonstration Riparian Restoration Project Future Community Park.” Parking is available near the sign.
**We need more newspapers and cardboard. Please drop off in or near the sheds.** For more information contact Victoria Wikle at 865-2474 or VictoriaWikle@usa.net. Visit our new website at www.russianriverkeeper.org.

Cunningham Marsh 2011 - The State of...
2011 was a banner year for Cunningham Marsh. Several exclosures had wonderful displays of Pitkin lilies in July, joined by the sweet smells of the native Azaleas. With much thanks to Kate Symonds and a U.S. Fish and Wildlife grant, we were able to
buy rolls of wire fencing to protect small plants and new oaks, extendable hedge shears for cutting the blackberries and bales of pine shavings for weed suppression within the lily exclosures, and for small oaks and hawthorns and other small plants. The Marsh was mowed twice by Ken, The Gentleman Farmer, helping to keep the very invasive Holcus lanatus (Purple Velvet Grass) at bay. For the first time, grasses around most of the hedgerows were weed whacked by Tom and Antonio. They also pruned the leaning Monterey pine to prevent damage to one of the exclosures and to provide more light for the Azaleas. Catherine Cumberland from the Laguna Foundation, had four great interns, Kevin, Dakota, Travis and Eric, from the Sonoma State Environmental Studies Program (two most every week) removing the last of the weed mat, cutting blackberries around the exclosures, and keeping the trails open.

Researchers from the University of Toronto returned to the Marsh twice in 2011 to continue a study on Crataegus (western hawthorn) leaf tissue and fruit as part of a larger west coast hawthorn genetics research project conducted by Tim Dickinson. They will continue to be welcomed in the future.

Four two hour workdays were held this year, cutting blackberries, weeding the lilies, freeing small plants from weeds and putting down pine shavings within the lily exclosures. The Laguna Keepers use this technique for weed prevention, and we are hoping this will keep the Holcus down. Also, an area of approximately 20 feet by 10 feet outside one of the exclosures, was covered with weed mat and cardboard as a test plot. When removed in a couple of years, it is hoped that Juncas plugs will replace the non-native blackberries and the encroaching Holcus. A few bull thistles were pulled this year. The area, which has always had very heavy bull thistle invasion, was devoid of any plants in 2011. A lily capsule count continues to be done by Kate Symonds and John Herrick. Years of statistics are critical for the health of the lily population.

Continued thanks go to John Herrick and Betty Young who are always available to help, answer questions and make suggestions. Help by ML Carle and Judith Rousseau is also appreciated. Thanks also go to Ralph Johnson who is here to help when needed. His new trail map with 4 of the hedgerows and all of the lily exclosures by number has been very useful and greatly needed. Ralph repeatedly mowed a path to the Marsh, which has made access much easier.

A poor acorn year will delay a planned planting in the big field this year. It is a priority for next fall. For all those who helped in 2011, thank you…it is greatly appreciated.

Marcia Johnson
Steward, Cunningham Marsh

SLT’s Water Consumption Drops Dramatically

Taking out the lawn and installing new landscaping last year dropped our water consumption at Bolton House from 41,000 gallons last July to 8,000 gallons this July. What a difference! Reprinted from the August, 2011 Sonoma Land Trust newsletter

Field Trips

October 15th, 2011 Saturday, 10 am
Shell Beach/Pomo Canyon Trail
Meet at the Shell Beach Parking Lot, parking fees apply
Hike Distance approx 6.5 miles
Join us for an autumn hike. From the redwood forest to ocean views, this is the time to enjoy the trees, shrubs, and the vast views. We will meet at Shell Beach and car pool to the trailhead for Pomo Canyon Trail. From the trailhead we will hike west toward the ocean and the expansive views, then return via the Red Hill trail, a wonderful loop. Bring a lunch to eat along the way at a picnic site. Bring binoculars as this is a favorite hunting ground for red-tailed hawks and black-shouldered kites. Bring water. Heavy rain will cancel. Any questions? Contact Cindy at 528-9225 or cindytancreto@pacbell.net.

Photo Credits:
Sidalcea calyosca rhizomata -Doreen L. Smith 2005
**We invite you to join CNPS**

Name ____________________________________________________________

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Chapter affiliation:
☐ Milo Baker (Sonoma County)
☐ Other county ______________________

Membership category:
☐ Student or Limited Income…… $25
☐ Individual………………………………. $45
☐ Family, Group or Library……………… $75
☐ Plant Lover……………………………… $100
☐ Patron…………………………………… $300
☐ Benefactor……………………………… $600
☐ Mariposa Lily………………………… $1500

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