

# diversity equity & inclusion newsletter

july-august 2023

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## solidarity diaries

by Maya Samuels-Fair  
IB Graduate Student

IB, ESPM, MCB, PMB, Neuro, NST, ARE, ERG—during the strike, acronyms became real people. **West Crescent** was one of the biggest picket lines in the state, and we were a picket line of scientists. Whereas science always felt like my fundamental niche, I became a union steward because someone asked me and I couldn't think of a reason to say no. I became a picket lead because that's what union stewards did, and I became a chant leader because it was the last available role. A thousand unfamiliar faces parading around me, the chant sheet wilted in my palms. There were only ten chants on the

sheet, and we'd done them all. It was only the first hour in what would be six weeks.

Then a man in a straw hat appeared with a kick drum. "Where should I set up?" he shouted over the chanting and honking.

I had no idea who he was. "Here is good?" We couldn't really introduce ourselves through the torrent of marchers. "Want to give me a beat?"

Just like that, a djembe, a Persian hand drum, a mandolin, and a guitar appeared in the hands of four more scientists. "What do I play?" the guitarist shouted.

"Anything!"



uaw rally at sather tower

photo: Ian Castro

The drummers waited for him to lead, and he shifted from foot to foot as he sifted through his mental catalog. Every musician has a fallback song that their fingers can play automatically. This scientist's, apparently, was "Smells Like Teen Spirit." It boiled my blood as much as it did when I first heard it at fifteen.

"WHEN I SAY UNION, YOU SAY POWER!" we bel-lowed. Bringing ourselves into the chants was what sent the marchers into a frenzy. The few familiar faces that were in the march - I couldn't look them in the eye. I didn't feel like myself, but they recog-nized me each time they passed.

At work there is often no backup band. Colleagues get evicted from their homes, they struggle to support or start families, they lose their **Title IX** cases, all with a regularity that makes these things mundane. I was lucky to learn what to avoid in graduate school as an undergraduate. My senior fall, a professor offered me a graduate-level teaching assistant position and promised graduate-level pay. Two weeks into the semester, he admitted he could only pay me eight dollars an hour, and I had no offer letter and no union to defend me. It was some comfort that the belittling things he would say to me made the students cringe. We can give each other sym-pathetic side-eye, we can console and encourage, but we don't gather in the thousands each time one of us gets knocked down. Although my experience has improved drastically since then, movements of this magnitude are rare, and regardless of whether the timing is convenient, we have to maximize our brief time together to make sure each of us is safe when we are apart. The picketers were making one loop for every time in each of our careers that no one intervened. I clocked fifty miles a week.

Paper bags started appearing at West Crescent. Eventually I spotted subtle interlopers—Berkeley bakers delivering their bakery day-olds, everything swept into giant grocery bags where they melded into sesame-donut-muffin-bagels in the sun. They didn't advertise their bakeries or ask for tax write offs. On our marching breaks, we gathered around



the bags and tore hunks from the clumps.

"Um, has anyone else watched Les Mis lately?" some-one croaked as we chewed with hoarse throats.

"Yeah, I shouldn't be in the grocery store debating whether I can afford a pineapple this week!"



the author pictured at center.

We were soon desperate for new chants. I stared into the sun setting over the Bay, trying to rhyme anything with pay, contract, wage, fair, negotiate, rights, strike. The winter days were getting shorter. The faces swirling around me had grown familiar and they shouted suggestions. Eventually we gave up and simply danced around the well-trodden loop. We played music we would never play in our labs. While I was adjusting our soundsystem, a random woman walking by held out a ten dollar bill.

"I'm an alum. I get it," she said with a shrug.

As the days progressed at West Crescent, a coffee urn turned into a coffee and tea bar turned into a continental breakfast, complete with a sign: West Crescent Café. Then competition opened up across the plaza, Café FAFO, which offered a full hot breakfast with oatmeal, eggs, sausage, and pancakes, as well as a rotating lunch menu like burgers and nachos. From community businesses, alums, faculty, family, and faraway union supporters cheering us on, we had enough donations to sustain a village.

"I'm going to start running this like a New York joint," the head chef at FAFO said. "You don't know your order, get out of my line!"

Amongst those marchers, our pay varied by tens of thousands of dollars, as did our financial needs. Pay disparity among us will only increase throughout our careers. We are led to believe that always needing to compete for the most prestigious next position, whether that be a fellowship, a postdoc, or what lies beyond, is good meritocracy. But the same workplace issues exist at every level. I will never be promoted out of needing a community, so I need conditions that allow us all to succeed. Multiple dedicated colleagues passing by me in the march that day will have quit by the end of the academic year.

Spongebob and Squidward were drawn in sidewalk chalk at West Crescent underneath the words "Krusty Krab Unfair". It was almost a self portrait. Except, Spongebob was able to buy his pineapple at a very young age with a fast food job and no degree. Then rain washed it away and pushed us indoors, where picketing was unlawful. I was told to meet at an assembly point if I wanted to participate in our first direct action. An arrest contingency team collected my personal information and asked what snacks I would like when they picked me up from jail.

We occupied California Hall, and when we weren't arrested, decided to spend the night. I texted my



“Just a chalkboard,” one of them replied. “Good chalk is really expensive though.”

I laughed in disbelief. “Why not dry erase? And what makes one chalk any better than another?”

He schooled me. “Chalk creates no plastic waste. Chalk comes in more colors. Chalk boards last longer.” He ticked off the list on his fingers. “And you always know exactly how much chalk you have left. The **finest chalk** in the world is actually made in Japan. It doesn’t get all over your hands. It draws a crisp line. And, if you angle it just right, you can draw a dashed line in a smooth stroke. Really impresses the students.”

The best interdepartmental conversations about research and teaching I’ve had happened that night. My strike identity became indelible from how I saw myself as a scientist. As the disparity in pay, benefits, and job security widens amongst tenured and non-tenured academic jobs, and conservative politicians insidiously undermine tenure and academic freedom, unionization has become a **powerful tool for faculty as well**. My dad, a civil rights law professor in Alabama, has watched a niche term coined by his graduate advisor be weaponized against educators from elementary schools to higher ed. Defending critical race theory requires them to stand together regardless of job prestige. While humanities scholars might seem like the natural leaders in these institutional battles, STEM greatly outnumbers and wields vital financial and political power. I gladly anticipate the need for organizing and collective action will continue **throughout our scientific careers**, and as a result, keep us more creative and collaborative scientists.

“WE WILL ROCK YOU” booming in the background, a friend of mine found a quiet spot to plan a lesson for the elementary school at which he volunteers. If he asked his students to draw a scientist, I wonder if they would draw us as we were there that night.

mom a selfie of my sleeping arrangements on a green hallway bench. Years ago, my mom left graduate school with an MA instead of an MFA because of department politics, becoming an art teacher until she lost her job because she needed more family leave than they would allow. Then the pandemic took her job again just as I was starting graduate school. I regretted choosing a career path that would not offer my family financial stability for another decade. She’s wisened me to the perils of the American workplace, and she’s glad that unlike her I don’t have to go it alone.

Some mathematicians rolled out their sleeping bags next to mine.

“So, what do you think about all day?” I asked them.

They looked at each other and shrugged. “Shapes, numbers.”

I tried a different tack. “What kinds of tools do you need to do your research?”

## word for word

### *EEB Language Project, an interview with Dr. Alex Moore and Cesar Estien*

*Words matter, and in the life sciences there are a seemingly inexhaustible number of words to describe the many facets and subtleties of what we study. Developing fluency in this discipline begins with mastering nomenclature and how that nomenclature pieces together to form fundamental biological concepts. Practicing precision and clarity in scientific communication becomes a constant exercise throughout the careers of many who work in biology, whether that is the back-and-forth of peer-review, or the development of curriculum for an entry level course. Yet the conventions of language and our vocabulary are not static. Terminology may evoke new meanings in the context of our politics or social discourse, may carry prejudicial or moral undertones, or simply prove to be spurious or vague. The vocabulary and definitions we agree upon as a scientific community shape how we think, approach our work, and the world around us.*

*The **Ecology and Evolutionary Biology Language Project**, unites a multidisciplinary team working across the United States and Canada with a common interest in identifying and revising language in EEB that otherwise limits both inclusivity and impact of this field of study. In spring of 2023, the team published their first **paper** outlining a path toward culturing a more inclusive environment in the sciences. *DEI Newsletter* discussed the EEB Language Project and the importance of words with founding members **Dr. Alex Moore**, assistant professor in the Department of Forest and Conservation Science and the Department of Botany at the University of British Columbia, and **Cesar Estien**, a PhD candidate in Environmental Science Policy and Management.*

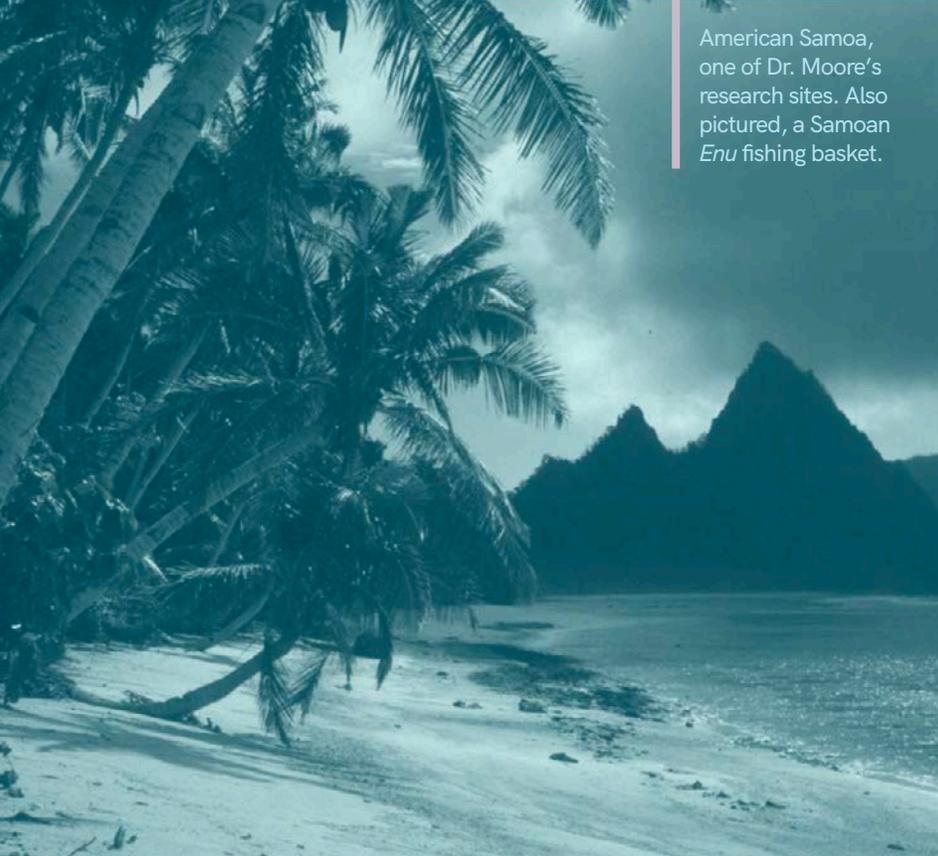
top: Dr. Alex Moore  
below: Cesar Estien



**How did the EEB Language Project develop and why did you decide to specifically focus on the intersection between language and inclusion?**

**Estien:** For me, language is really important when I first enter a space, whether that space is science oriented, or not. That I personally feel

photos courtesy of the interviewees.



American Samoa, one of Dr. Moore's research sites. Also pictured, a Samoan *Enu* fishing basket.

*"Conservation work often talks about the impacts on the environment, and other species, which is really important. But not to the exclusion of folks who are also impacted by that work."*

—Dr. Alex Moore



photos: NPS

welcomed or safe, I can know what parts of my identity to mask or not mask. When the conversation was first starting it was just me and Alex and four or five others. Alex pointed out that we needed more people, more voices, because community means different things to different people, and language impacts everyone so unevenly. We hope this project opens conversation and questions. How does the language we use impacts people outside of science, or trying to get into science? Does it hinder how safe someone feels in a space? Does that translate into the progress they will make in their research and who they feel they can work with?

**Moore:** I feel there is still a strong public misconception that science is a very neutral endeavor, that the things that happen in science or that are developed through science are not harmful. People are aware of the harmful legacies of science, but I think that the sort of general idea is that these days science is an entity without negative impacts that target specific communities more than others. The reality is that it does.

Part of the way that this project came up, was through an organic discourse on Twitter, between the original founding members. There was a recognition that some of the words we use and the work that we do hurts people, without intention. That led to a broader discussion around what other things present within the discipline, specific to language, are harmful. Modifying the words that we use felt like low-hanging fruit. We're not necessarily changing a system or a structure, but this is changing behavioral patterns that scale in really important ways.

**Western cultural biases have long colored how scientists interpret and interact with natural processes and people. How do you imagine an examination of implicit assumptions in EEB will redefine the way we do our work, and how we understand the natural world?**

**Moore:** I think a lot of it starts with a willingness to reflect on the ways that you have propagated harm without intention. My focus in particular, is identifying the best choices I can make towards harm reduction. That motivates a lot of the choices I make in my work and in my ethics in the ways that I engage with students and colleagues. As a person with many marginalized identities, I'm very aware of what me occupying space is like. And I recognize that there are other shared experiences of folks with shared and different marginalized identities. Part of my position in all of this is leveraging my institutional power. I am in a position of power and privilege, and trying to make the best use of that in addressing inequities, the culture of the spaces that we occupy, and the way that we do the work that we do.

It's a lot of effort. It's kind of like a second job on top of the job you're already tasked with doing. Oftentimes, they tell you that this "second Job" is not as important as the first. But, at least for me, I find that the only way I'm able to do my work, is if I'm also doing these other parts in tandem. If you're able to bring your full self into the work you are doing, and you are in a space with folks who will support you, then you can collectively shift the culture of that space. These are things that take time, but I try to embody this

in my practice, and hope that it brings in more people who will feel comfortable in that space and want to create that same culture.

**Estien:** Being trained in biology or ecology, I don't think we're ever properly taught how quintessential the person is to a system. How everything people do can change the landscape and environment. For me, and urban ecologists, we're working over this curve. Even though a lot of the social parts are recognized, I think a lot of the *individual* is not. There are a lot of people in a landscape making different decisions, taking different actions, and often differently oppressed. What does that mean for an ecosystem?

We're setting up cameras in people's backyards, and really talking to residents. That means placing value on their knowledge and what they have to share. I'm not from the Bay, I'm not from California. I'm from Florida. So I have to work collaboratively with folks who have worked and lived in these areas for years if I want to fully understand these spaces. I can't just get a couple of permits, show up, and set up cameras. Some people may do that, but I don't think it's the best way to do the science or understand the system you're working in. This means field work can go a bit slower because you're spending a lot of your

photo: jitze couperus



Estien's work explores the coyote in an urban landscape.



photo: blurry world



photo: NPS

*"To me, this project is calling for more specificity. It just makes for better science, by not conflating different ideas or using terms that may not have any biological relevancy."*

—Cesar Estien

time just talking with people, hearing their stories. It's about finding community with the people I'm working alongside. I don't think that academia or ecology really values this work, but building community partnerships takes years. Think of how the process of getting tenure takes around five years. If it takes multiple years to build relationships and trust, before you can even begin maybe three years of research, you're not going to have a product [for tenure]. So academia doesn't really incentivise that work.

**Moore:** Folks that end up doing a lot of work with a community engagement element are either folks who feel drawn to community, and recognize the value of community in their work.

Or, they are folks who come to recognize that community is essential to doing the work well. So there are different kinds of ways that people come into that space, and different ways you can rethink your training towards inclusive practices. The pathways to getting to thoughtful, engaging **community research** are diverse. But the struggles are quite similar: more effort is required to do that work, and how little that work is valued at the institutional level.

**You've both mentioned some of the challenges with creating space for community engagement and social discourse in EEB. What do you bring to the classroom or your mentorship that you felt wasn't present in your own training as a scientist?**

**Estien:** I think the first answer is me, or more people that look like me. Pulling all my identities into the work I do, drives why I ask the questions I ask and feel excited about those questions. I didn't see non-white graduate students in my undergrad until my last year. And I never had a non-white biology professor in undergrad. My journey with language started when I made friends in the social sciences department. When I was starting my work on what is considered to be an invasive parrot, my [social scientist] friends said "oh,

I didn't know you all still used the word invasive." I just used that word because that's how other people were talking about the parrot. But that was when I started to think: what does this word mean? How does it impact people? This language project is not just about inclusivity and better language. To me, this project is calling for more specificity. It just makes for better science, by not conflating different ideas or using terms that may not have any biological relevancy.

**Moore:** The question is too big to dive into here, but as Cesar said, I also never had faculty members when I was in my undergrad or even as I got my graduate degrees (that I can recall) who weren't white or somehow trying to be perceived as white adjacent. So that was my lived experience and something I had been fairly accustomed to. I think that seeing me walking into a classroom is a novelty for a lot of students. In terms of the content and the approach, one thing I also didn't have as a student were professors making connections between the classroom and people's lived experiences. My ecology and conservation classes were always rooted in science, and not necessarily people. Conservation work often talks about the impacts on the environment, and other species, which is really important. But not to the exclusion of folks who are also impacted

by that work. So that's something that I also try to bring into the classroom. Students often think: conservation is a great thing, and people who are anti-conservation are bad people. And I'm like: no, sometimes people just need to make enough money to pay their rent and feed their kids. And sometimes that does come into conflict with conservation goals. That doesn't make these people bad. People are forced to make choices based on their real life circumstances. So when I'm teaching, I share how the impacts of our work are differentially experienced by communities. You might value conservation, but the conservation work you are doing may be causing harm in other spaces. This was a way of thinking that I wasn't exposed to when I was a student and I think it's really important to bring these perspectives into plain view in the classroom.

**Right now, basic biology is being co-opted and weaponized by small-minded politicians to promote anti-trans and LGBTQ agendas in states like Florida and Texas. Science is sometimes described as a pursuit of truth. What responsibility do you think scientists owe the public in making sure their findings are not misrepresented or misleading?**

**Estien:** Something I've learned in my work with **coyotes** is that it is a really polarizing animal.



Fiddler crabs, who make their home in the salt marshes of New England, have been a focus of Dr. Moore's work in predator competition.





Mangroves in American Samoa provide immense ecological and social value.

Maybe someone's pet was killed by a coyote or they are a rancher who is convinced that coyotes are going to kill their sheep, which may not be necessarily true. But this perceived risk of the coyote is based on what they have been told or grew up seeing. So I think that sometimes, using different words to talk about the same thing gets people to understand or be open to what you are saying. Politicians are clinging to these hot words, like critical race theory. [Critical race theory] is a really big idea and I don't think many people know what it means. But if you talk about aspects of what critical race theory offers, people who claim to be against it would probably find many things to agree with. So I've learned to think more about what words to use for different scenarios, to more appropriately reach that audience. And sometimes it doesn't matter and they won't listen, and that's okay too.

**Moore:** I think that part of the answer to this question requires an acceptance that some people are never going to take your science at the intention behind the work. So I think that there is a value in recognizing who you'd be wasting your time on. There are going to be folks who see the information, and think "how can I spin this

towards my particular benefit." I don't spend any time trying to convince people to believe something that I already know that they are not going to believe. What's more important is to make sure that the science, the work that I'm doing, the folks I'm engaged with, are people who can leverage [the science] to the maximum potential. That can look like connecting with people who have a vested interest in the outcomes of my work, who are place-based, who are community members living in these areas, who are particularly impacted by the outcomes of certain actions. Those are folks who have the most leverage, power and commitment to making impactful changes.

On the flip side, I do feel very strongly about mentorship. The people in power now, came through school at one point or another, and ended up getting shaped in various capacities through their life experiences. But the education system and the role that we play as instructors, are vital to imparting the value of the work that we are doing.

## Where do you see this project going next?

**Moore:** A big part of what led to the paper was a survey that was conducted of the [EEB] community on harmful or offensive terms they have experienced in the discipline. Some of that data has been included in the paper and is also on the website. That survey was very robust. We got lots of feedback. We're in the process now of trying to digest that data and taking the suggestions and ideas for rethinking some of the terms that have come up repeatedly. Secondly, we're in the process of putting together a workshop. That workshop will be targeted toward academics, practitioners, generally editors—folks who have a lot of power in shaping terms that are used within the field.

**Estien:** In terms of how to get involved, what's really great about this project is that there are various levels to this work. There are these larger issues that require discussion at an institutional level—should we change species names, journalistic norms for language. But there are also so many things on the individual level in terms of teaching and mentoring. We can be more conscious about the language we use in the classroom, or in a paper

we are publishing. Examine the words that you use and ask yourself, how can I make the point I am trying to make without causing harm? At a department level this can include reevaluating our language or our out-dated approaches in the application process, or our teaching practices.

### reflection questions:

1. Is there terminology or jargon you have encountered in your work that is erroneous or harmful? What are some alternative words you can use?
2. What makes you feel valued or a sense of belonging in your workspace? How does the inclusion of other's voices and perspectives shape your work, or create new possibilities?

*If you are interested in learning more, or collaborating with the EEB Language Project check out their **website**. You can also contact the project at [eeblanguageproject@gmail.com](mailto:eeblanguageproject@gmail.com). Or, submit a **term** you would like to see revised.*





## a rising tide lifts all boats, if you have one. *personal essay on climate change*

by Gregory Arena  
IB Graduate Student

Between the deep sway in the floor, a peeling tar-papered exterior, and what the neighbors apologetically refer to as “cowboy carpentry” there is an urgent sense of entropy about the place I have called home for the past five years. Sit still long enough and you can feel it all returning to marsh. After answering a Craigslist ad back in 2018 for a cheap rental in unincorporated Marin County, I was greeted by Jerome, a long-time tenant, who guided me down the dock to a dilapidated gray structure with mismatched windows, perched above brackish water on flimsy heron-legs. He looked tired and sun burnt as he told me about all the work he and his son put into the place over the years. “Last winter the toilet fell right through the floor into the bay, and at king-tide the kitchen has been known to flood. Gets cold too. No insulation,” he explains, testing to see if this information will scare me off. When it doesn’t, he adds, “anyone who’d

think to live here for the rest of their life would be crazy”.

But Jerome has called *Pelican*—the house only recently acquired a numerical address—home for 25 years. It’s easy to see why. Surrounded by marshland waters one is quickly tangled like beach-wrack in the beauty of the reeds and eel-grass, never wanting to leave. *Pelican* began as a duck blind for the members of a local rod and gun club, but no one hunts on this marsh now. The entire marsh is a federally protected sanctuary for an endangered bird called the **Ridgeway Rail**. Strangely enough, if the marsh hadn’t once been under the purview of sportsmen it’s likely it would have been turned into high-end subdivisions long ago. Today it remains some of the best preserved tidal wetlands in the nine counties. And, it’s one of the last places you can find the rails. Funny how things work out sometimes,

above: an overlay of the San Francisco Bay Area, 1915 and 1986 shows a transforming coastline.

isn't it? Because the marsh is protected it's almost impossible to renovate houses like *Pelican*, which explains the dilapidation. It also explains the grossly **affordable rent**, another reason to overlook the dereliction of the place and to never want to leave. Of course, considering the Bay Area **rental market**, it's equally hard to afford to leave.

Greenbrae Boardwalk, as the community is called, extends perhaps a half mile out onto a brackish marsh beside the wide slough of Corte Madera Creek, where commuter ferries depart at 6.00am for San Francisco and Oakland. On my first visit to the Boardwalk, as we walked from the quay toward the house, Jerome filled me in on the last 10,000 years of history I have missed:

Long ago it was just a marsh, ruled by egrets crabs and horse muscles. Then came the boats. At first those boats were the lithe Tule **balsa** of the **Miwok** peoples who fished these waters since time immemorial. By the Gold Rush, most of the **balsa** had been displaced by boats made of wood. Around that time, people started to live on those boats. And as they did, the boats became less seaworthy and more like houses with stoves, and picket fences, and laundry lines. The people who lived in this strange chimera of "house" and "boat" lived on the water and on the mud flats because they were driven off of the land. They could not afford to live on land that was already carved-up by cattle barons and wealthy

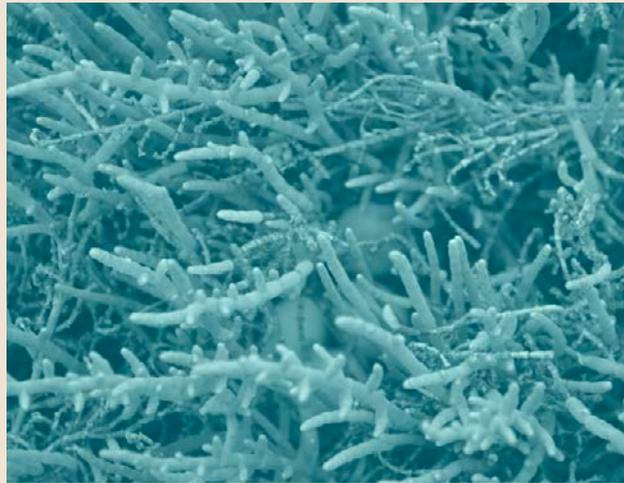
vacationers. (Little, it seems, has changed). So more of these odd, little homes were built. And almost as fast, the mud filled in around them, as it is wont to do with all things stationery. Keels were traded for stilts.

The oldest houses are called **arks**, with round shaped roofs that make them like a covered wagon or a barge, like something meant to be on the move. Ornate Victorian railings and woodworking, peeling painted shingles show the square nailed history of the place, show what the community was like before there was even a boardwalk, when the front door was whatever side of the house you could moor a skiff.

Built sometime in the early 1900's, the bones of *Pelican* are made from rough hewn old-growth redwood. The clean, tight grain of the dark wood is my favorite thing about the house. The **redwood grew** in the canyons that surround Muir Woods, where I used to work. I like to think that in finding the house I closed the circle of some long standing cosmic bargain. For \$16

an hour I sweated through three years of restoration jobs in the forests that rose up around the stumps whose wood now gave me shelter.

Each home, so unique, so vernacular, developed according to its own metric and evolved into its own character from many people and seasons, ingrown with gangplanks and pilings.



top: the endangered Ridgeway Rail.  
bottom: pickelweed conceals four rail eggs.



left: abandon ark, now home for the birds  
right: *Pelican* on the Greenbrae Boardwalk



Of course the Boardwalk has changed a lot over these years. There was a man, Lionel, I knew, who lived with his wife, Dottie, halfway down the boardwalk. Lionel was in fact born on the Boardwalk. And until he died at the age of 98 he had lived almost his whole life in the same house. A house that was always filled with many grandchildren and cousins. He told me about how when he was a hungry, skinny kid in the Depression his mother would boil a soup out of the **pickleweed** and the bivalves they pulled from the marsh. The very mud under his feet had nourished him and his family. Today that same species of pickleweed goes for \$10 a pound and is tweezed onto plates at Michelin star restaurants in the City. The shellfish and oyster beds, formerly **raided** by a young Jack London, have long since collapsed and toxified. The once plentiful delta smelt, eddying toward **extinction**.

After Lionel and Dottie passed, the family couldn't afford to keep the place. In the wide bed of a Ford, their daughter and her daughters grimly salvaged what they could of 100 years

of family history. A VW mechanic, scrappy artists, self-described "marginally employed" trades-people, stevedores, and flower children gone to seed are who remain of the high-water mark of working-class families and eccentrics who made the marsh their home. Even five years ago, it felt like a tidepool that had escaped the churning swells of gentrification. But inevitably, six-figure earners, voyeuristic tech-workers and airbnb wash in on the tide, here, just like everywhere else in the Bay.

Last year, a little house the size and demeanor of a double-wide trailer sold for close to \$2.5million. I saw that house before it went to

sale. Everything, the appliances, the furniture, was up on cinder blocks, only a few inches above a dark coffee stain that ran 1 foot above the linoleum floor. The tenant, Doreen, told me how this dark scum line was the winter high tide, how she always kept her rubber boots beside her bed in January and February. Year after year, the waterline had reached a little bit higher. She was evicted to make way for the new owner, a pleasant-enough man in his forties who works in capital finance. The place had incurred expensive maintenance costs, needed to be raised 9 feet to accommodate sea-level rise, and FEMA relief grants and permitting from the Coastal Commission are an endurance sport almost strictly for the rich.

Now I'm in that same situation. My land-lord, a septuagenarian named Ted, stopped by the other day to say that he is finally selling. "Just too much to fix and I don't even know that it's worth it," he tells me while avoiding eye contact. The

property has been with his family since words like "property" and "ownership" invaded and took root in this marsh. When he inherited the house and the tenants he had begrudgingly accepted the handshake agreement his father had made with us. But while Ted has always been quick to share his misgivings about the house, and act the part of the shrewd businessman, standing before me, I can tell the sale is difficult for him too. "How's grad school, you must be graduating soon, right?" asks his wife, trying to bring some levity to our conversation. "Close," I tell them, "maybe a year or two still." "Oh." Ted fidgets. "I'm sorry we couldn't make this last a bit longer for you." Me too.

The realtor calls *Pelican* rustic. Any pragmatist would say that it's just sinking in the mud. But both characterizations of the house and the Boardwalk describe a condition without ascribing a cause. The story of gentrification is nothing new or unique, but this story has a particularly



photo: kquedquest

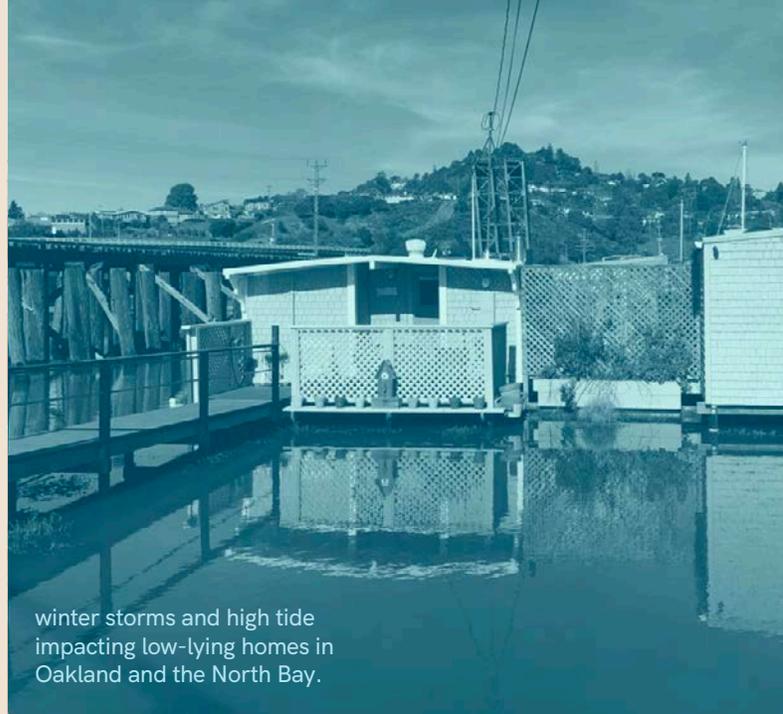


Sea level rise threatens to inundate Bayview Hunter's Point, SF, with radioactive materials and heavy metals from a former naval installation.

photo: dale cruse



photo: Brian Kranz



winter storms and high tide impacting low-lying homes in Oakland and the North Bay.

21st Century retelling. *Pelican* and places like it in the Bay Area are disappearing because of a confluence of rising cost of living and rising sea level. Each year the demographic of the Boardwalk becomes wealthier, as lower income residents are priced out by speculators and the emerging costs of climate change. Eviction is the foregone pattern on a marsh that has become evermore inhospitable for both **humans** and **wildlife**. There is an intrinsic link between social inequities and environmental degradation. In this way, the Boardwalk offers a vignette of the inevitable outcome of our present economic and ecology trajectory. It is a complex syzygy of people, organisms, and values snagged by an unrelenting undertow.

By 2040 it is **estimated** that 194,000 Bay Area residents will live somewhere regularly inundated by the tides. Already, 355,000 Bay Area residents are **directly impacted** by sea-level rise. This includes the severe winter flooding seen in West Oakland, and the **toxic waste** displaced by a rising water table that now threatens the health of San Francisco's Bayview-Hunters Point communities.

For five years I have woken every morning to the gentle wake of the ferries, wrapping delicately against the joists beneath my bed. I will miss this. But even if I were not evicted from my home, in another decade the water won't just be under the floor. Letting tide be my timekeeper, I am reminded twice daily of my own ecological and economic precarity and how the environmental crisis we face will always have a disproportionate impact on all life that is most vulnerable and voiceless. In the past decade, each year, globally, **21.5 million** people have been displaced by changing climate. Most of those stories go unreported. By 2050 the UN expects no fewer than **1.2 billion climate refugees**. For those of us who are fortunate enough to enjoy the privileges afforded by providence and opportunity we may stay buoyant through the coming swells. Even still, we are all caught in the ebb of this current.

I have heard the immediacy of dealing with climate change describe like this: "If you woke up to find your home was flooding would you still go to work, or would you throw every part of yourself into stemming the flood and saving your home?" It's a tidy analogy, and the answer is supposed to be obvious: first deal with the flooding, then everything else. But this scenario isn't a hypothetical for me and in practice, the

answer isn't so simple. I've seen homes, including my own, flood during King Tide. You can't hold back the ocean. You can lose your job. Sometimes you have only the limited agency over your circumstances to just put on a pair of rubber boots, go to work, and hope for the best when you get home at the end of the day. When I think of the many antediluvian rentals and homes throughout the Bay Area, the mental cost-benefit analysis we all must make, I am not comforted by how easily we humans can **cope** and rationalize the worst of situations. We're good at staying optimistic, but now the tide is coming in and the rent is due.

*Names have been changed in this story to preserve privacy.*

Corte Madera Creek and the Boardwalk at high tide.

## knowing your rights as a tenant:

If you are a tenant, you are guaranteed certain rights and protections. You are entitled to a residency that is legally termed as habitable and meets local and state building code. A landlord can not increase rent by more than 10% per year (not adjusted for inflation.) If you have a lease agreement or have paid rent for over 12 months you are guaranteed a minimum of 60 days notice for rent increase or termination of your tenancy. The many rights, protections and subtleties can not be easily summarized when every rental situation or dispute is unique. California and local Landlord-Tenant codes are fastidious, nuanced, and often impenetrable to those who do not practice law. Fortunately, UC Berkeley provides **free legal aid to students and staff**. Attorney Mark Lucia provides competent, confidential counsel on a host of matters pertaining to California law. This includes, but is not limited to renter's rights.

His office can also connect you with other free or affordable legal or secondary services.

## in history: Dr. Elizabeth Neufeld

by Emily Bögner  
IB Graduate Candidate

Elizabeth Neufeld is a renowned biochemist and geneticist who made significant contributions to the field of lysosomal storage diseases. Neufeld and her family immigrated from Germany to the United States in the 1930s where she would later complete her PhD in Biochemistry from Harvard and worked for the University of California, Los Angeles for over 50 years.

Neufeld's research focuses on understanding the molecular mechanisms behind these disorders, with a particular emphasis on mucopolysaccharidosis (MPS) a genetic disorder that causes a buildup of complex molecules in cells. Her work on MPS began in the 1960s when she discovered that individuals with the disease were deficient in a key enzyme that was responsible for breaking down complex sugars in the lysosome; the cellular organelle that acts as a recycling center for the cell. Without this enzyme, the sugar builds up in the lysosome, leading to cellular damage and the symptoms associated with MPS. This breakthrough led to the development of enzyme replacement therapy, a treatment that has significantly improved the quality of life for individuals with MPS.



Neufeld was a pioneer in the field of lysosomal diseases and has made significant contributions to our understanding of other diseases like Niemann-Pick, Tay-Sachs, and Gaucher diseases. Her discoveries have received numerous awards and honors including inductions into the National Academy of Sciences and American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and won the National Medal of Science in 1994, the highest scientific honor in the United States. In addition to her research, Neufeld has been known for her dedication to teaching and mentoring young scientists, many of whom went on to become leading researchers in their own fields.



## community square

**Street Spirit Newspaper**, which has collaborated with DEI Newsletter in our coverage of People's Park, printed it's **last issue** in June, after losing funding. The nonprofit not only covers important issues regarding homeless and housing in the East Bay, it also fosters direct community enagment with homelessness. Through the

sales of print editions by the members of the unhoused community the newspaper humanizes and brings dignity to an often overlooked population. Consider supporting the revitalization of the paper by making a **donation**.

Researchers, postdocs and engineers at the Univerisity of Washington, Seattle, ratified contracts ending a nine day **strike** for improved pay. You can learn more about the resolution **here**.

## upcoming events + campus resources

- 16 June–9 July—**Alameda County Fair**, Pleasanton, (\$18 adults)
- 5 July—**GLBT History Museum**, San Francisco, (Free every first Wednesday)
- 12 August–9 September—**Berkeley Art Museum & Pacific Film Archieve** (BAMPFA), outdoor film screening, Oxford Street, Berkeley (free)

Historic map of SF. Now on display at the Bancroft.

Have a story or event you would like to see featured in upcoming newsletters? Email us at [dei.news.biology@berkeley.edu](mailto:dei.news.biology@berkeley.edu)

*Supervisors—please circulate this newsletter to lab members and staff who may not be on our listserv.*