

Marsh Mailing

Madrona Marsh Preserve and Nature Center

Fridays are Fun Days for Area Preschoolers

—Suzan Hubert

Welcome to Friday Fun!

Fun Friday is an exciting new preschool science class designed by Cindy Reid specifically for children aged three to five years. Each Friday's program centers on a different theme relating to the animals, plants, habitats and ecology we can observe in the Marsh.

The morning begins in the classroom with stories and discussion about the theme for the day. There are also related crafts, art or games to help the children understand the science concept, which is followed by a tour of the Marsh.

In October we studied bats and went to see the bat houses by the sump; sadly there were no bats. In November we studied autumn leaves; happily there were a lot of them! We raked a huge pile and ran and jumped in it.

We learned about frogs and had several in the classroom for some hands-on learning. Then we searched for, *and found*, wild frogs in the Marsh! During our frog hunting we found raccoon tracks which we followed to the tules where the raccoons are living. The children are very interested in the 'holes' in the Marsh so we learned about burrows—what made them and how they are organized underground.

In December we studied succulents, and we



It doesn't get much better than this! Jeremy Whalen and friends enjoy frolicking in the Fall leaves, while envious grownups look on.

planted some to take home, and walked through the native garden where the children identified which plants were succulents and which were not. This is a wonderful experience for preschool children and complements the monthly Tyke Hike. The Marsh has something for everyone, from infants to seniors!

2009-The Year of the Scarab Hunters

—Emile Fiesler

In the spirit of the Chinese zodiac, one could name 2009 accordingly, at least from a Madrona Marsh perspective. Late winter this year the Preserve was enriched with the visit of a **Yellow Scarab Hunter** (*Camp-someris pilipes*). Scarab Hunters are large wasps that have no interest in bothering people. They are rarely seen and mostly interested in drinking the sweet nectar of our native flowering plants. In the process of feeding, they help with the pollination of the flowers.



Yellow Scarab Hunter (Camp-someris pilipes)Female.

The female I photographed in March (shown here) visited a **California Bush Sunflower** (*Encelia californica*). On a nice July day Tracy and I were delighted to find both a male and a female visiting the beautiful **Wild Heliotrope** (*Heliotropium curassavicum*) flowers on the Preserve; see page 2. As we had not seen any since March, it's hard to say whether they 'stayed around' until late summer.

Scarab Hunters obtain their common name from the fact that the female digs up ground-dwelling Scarab Beetle

"Scarab Hunters" continues on page 2.

Reminder: It's Time for the Annual FOMM Meeting- See page 2 for details.

from the president

—Bill Arrowsmith

“Elegant.” “Beautiful.” Those were the more popular descriptors used by several hundred people who attended the first Annual Art Auction of the Friends of Madrona Marsh on Saturday afternoon, November 14 (see page 8 for pictures). They describe both the setting—the impressive banquet room of the Torrance Marriott where the event was held—and the *objets d’art*—dozens of gorgeous paintings and photographs of the Marsh bordering the room. Elegant and beautiful could also describe the guests themselves, as they sipped wine while listening to soft jazz and strolling by the artworks or chatting with the artists. It was truly a day to remember!

The Friends are deeply grateful to artist Stephen West, who conceived the event and played a major role in making it a reality; and also to the other five local artists who not only participated but very generously donated 40 percent of the opening bid price (plus 100 percent of anything over opening bid)! They are: Douglas Stenhouse, Beth Shibata, Jack Ludwick, Ron Libbrecht and Mark Comon. (Note: Mark Comon donated 100 percent of his sales at the auction! Thank you, Mark!)

We want to thank the Torrance Marriott for providing the spacious banquet room *gratis*, and Manager Pam Ryan and her staff for making us so comfortable. ExxonMobil provided \$1000 to help with advertisement and publication of a beautiful brochure of the works being offered at the silent and live auction. Thanks to Jess and Donna Morton who paid for and arranged to have jazz musician Harold Green, and to Bob Shanman, who supplied his mobile credit card processor. Thanks also to event staff volunteers Robin Snyder, Yurika Nishi, Shoji Iman and Jennifer Mullikin.

Finally, our greatest thank to Suzan Hubert and her auction committee: Bobbie Snyder, Sarah Noddings, Ellen Peterson, Stephen West and Ron Libbrecht; and to Preserve Manager Tracy Drake, who acted as advisor. Your perseverance and tremendous effort made this event a wonderful showplace for Madrona Marsh and the artists who love it.

I wish you all a more prosperous New Year and hope to see you at our Annual Meeting at the Nature Center on Sunday afternoon, January 31st, at 3 p.m.

After a short business meeting to elect four directors, we will see and hear a very interesting program

Marsh Mailing is a quarterly newsletter designed to provide information about activities and upcoming events at or relating to the Madrona Marsh Preserve. Contributions are welcome and may be e-mailed to Diane Gonsalves at gonwild2@yahoo.com or Bill Arrowsmith, TheArrowsmiths@sbcglobal.net, or dropped off or mailed to the Nature Center.

by Dr. Emile Fiesler and Dan Cooper, who is an expert in bird ecology and distribution. Emile and Dan are currently conducting a two-year biological assessment survey of Madrona Marsh for the City of Torrance and the Friends. This survey will provide a detailed picture, for the first time ever, of the biodiversity on our Preserve. We will also be honoring one of our finest local birders, David Moody, with a lifetime achievement award. Please join us for this interesting meeting!

Annual Meeting of Friends of Madrona Marsh

When? 3 p.m. Sunday, January 31, 3 p.m.

Where? Madrona Marsh Nature Center

What? Election of four Board Members:

Candidates are Jeanne Bellemin, Mary Garrity, Carol Roelen and Bobbie Snyder

Program: Bio-assessment Survey of Madrona Marsh. Emile Fiesler and Dan Cooper will present an in-progress report on their exciting examination of our Preserve—from its smallest micro-organisms to its largest raptors.

Special Award: A lifetime achievement award will be presented to David Moody, one of our premier birders.

Preserve Manager Tracy Drake will present her Annual Report.

(Light refreshments will be served)

“Scarab Hunter” continues...

grubs, which she paralyzes and lays her eggs in. Their favorite 'hosts' are the chestnut-brown May and June Beetles that magically appear in surprising numbers around the time of the year their name calls for. Besides being pollinators, Scarab Hunters are also considered beneficial as they act as biological control of some pest species, including the **Japanese Beetle** (*Popillia japonica*). The Japanese Beetle, which, as its name suggests,

is a native of Japan, has been inadvertently introduced to the United States. It is a pest of Roses, Apple, Grape, Apricot, and about 200 other plant species.

The family of the Scoliid Wasps, or Flower Wasps, known as the Scoliidae, is a relatively



Yellow Scarab Hunter (Campsomeris pilipes)

small family with 23 North American species in six genera. Eight species are found in California, of which three have been recorded from the greater Los Angeles area.

Shirley's Turn

—Shirley Turner

*bird making a nest
a temple being built...
when will they finish?*

—Haiku of Kokayashi Issa, 1824

Submitted by Janis Lukstein

Amphibians

On December 18 KCET's News Hour aired "Human Health Depends upon Biodiversity." Dr. Eric Chivian pointed out extinct and endangered species on a museum tour. His point was how much human medicine was lost, or will be lost, to the world. The Gastric Brooding Frog swallows the fertilized eggs, carries them in her belly till they are tadpoles and then vomits them out into water for further development as adult frogs. If we knew what they secrete in the belly we could cure ulcers.

Dr Chivian is the founder and Director of the Centre for Health and the Global Environment at Harvard University where he teaches. He co-edited the book **Sustaining Life: How Human Health Depends on Biodiversity** with Aaron Bernstein, research associate at the Center, and a clinical fellow of pediatrics at the Children's Hospital in Boston, published in June 2008. The book was co-sponsored by United Nations Development Program. At that time the non-profit "Living on Earth" interviewed the authors of "Sustaining Life" on their show. That program is now available on the internet.

The over 100 contributing scientists believe that the earth is undergoing an even greater extinction than that which wiped out the dinosaurs. The Horseshoe Crab existed before that and has not changed much. Dr. Bernstein thinks of the crab each time he gives a shot to a child since the crab's blood is used to determine that the shot is free from bacteria. It has been used in this way since 1932.

So, how often man is changing the biosphere ultimately comes back to homespun remedies?

On "Googling" frogs I found **Wildlife Wonders** Volume 17, January-March 2008. A beautiful article, "Frogs and Friends" is a marvelous, colorful, factual, large print five pages on amphibians. There are about 6,000 amphibian species in the world seriously threatened. Half of these species may become extinct in our lifetime. They appeared 360 million years before dinosaurs—long before dinosaurs roamed the earth, 320 million years ago.

Amphibians have naked skin—no scales, feath-

ers or hair as body covering. They secrete mucus to keep the skin moist and for protection. They drink, lose water and breathe through thin skin. Unfortunately pollutants enter their bodies.

Dr. Chivian concludes the interview with, "May we have the wisdom and the love for our children and all children to come, to save the indescribably beautiful and precious gift we have been given." He dedicates the book to us Homo sapiens.

Wikipedia describes many areas of his life where Dr. Chivian's creative leadership has been recognized, such a Nobel Peace Prize with Board of Directors of the organization International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War in 1985, and one of 100 most influential world persons of the year in 2008.

Our Pacific Tree Frogs should get more recognition for the role they play in biodiversity. Would you like to learn more about amphibians and share that knowledge with the public and children?



The Art Auction was superb. I enjoyed every bit and bite and sight—and did buy later. Ruth McConnell drove me with Jack Knapp's wheel chair. Later, we met Dan Portway at the Maple gate to the Marsh and went in to look at all the work recently completed; a pleasure to see. Over time, Neil Teague has devoted most Monday and Tuesday mornings to this cause.

Tyke Hike Report

—Mary Garrity

On November 5, twelve tykes arrived with their moms in tow and we took off on their adventure into the Marsh. Several were "repeat hikers," visiting the Marsh through several seasons and viewing the changes in the landscape as summer subsides and falling leaves of the sycamore trees usher in the beginning of the winter season.

We found sycamore leaves as large as a dinner plate, and strolling headlong into a Golden Orb Weaver's web brought an educational opportunity about good spiders, webs, and how spiders weave such lovely pieces of art. Suddenly, above our heads flew a Blue Heron or Snowy Egret—it was difficult to distinguish in the morning sunshine. While we waited patiently for the possibility of a landing we explored the last remnants of "snow" upon the willows. A flycatcher amused us flitting about, and although the Harlequin Bugs were in short supply, we found a few and discovered their underbellies are also beautiful.

We returned to the Nature Center to visit with the inhabitants and had high hopes for a rainy winter season.

Perspective- A Bird's-eye View

—Tracy Drake, *Naturalist/Manager*

Life is busy. For many of us, there are phone calls to return, e-mails to respond to, projects to follow up on, staff to instruct, volunteers to work with, documents to be filed, ad infinitum. If you're a part-time student, there are classes to attend, homework to be completed, a job to maintain, technology to keep up with, and loads of studying to do. In fact, all of us are, on a day-to-day basis, buried in a sea of what it means to be living in this hectic century.

Life is fast, complicated, and there is little time to reflect. There is little time to ponder, meditate on what we are doing and why we are doing it. We seem to be in a philosophical vacuum. Sometimes though, a profound event occurs and one remembers one's purpose and passion. Yep, that is what happened one day here at Madrona Marsh, the day "Bird" provided us with perspective. Who "Bird" is will be explained in the following narrative.

The morning was balmy for late fall; I was glad to be on the Preserve so early—early enough to scout it, to find out what birds were there so that when I picked up the college biology class later in the morning, I would be able to efficiently tailor their tour to a topic they had chosen earlier: Birds of the Marsh. As I walked through the entrance I knew I had 45 minutes to scout and get to the pre-designated meeting place. I had just enough time—or so I thought.

As I started along the main path there were White-crowned Sparrows busily foraging for seeds under the bushes nearby, singing their cheerful song. A bit farther down the road I saw the Red-tailed Hawk perched high in a distant eucalyptus tree. In the open field of the upper dunes, goldfinches by the hundreds were feeding on the seeds of annual sunflowers. They too were calling to each other. I spent too much time along the main road, though, and noticed I had only 25 minutes left.

"Hurry," I thought, "I have a lot more ground to cover." Coming up at the sheds, Scrub Jays, Kingbirds and a Mockingbird were energetically feeding. As I swung west along the now thinner trail, toward the wetland, about 50 Red-winged Blackbirds rose in unison from their perch in a cottonwood tree and glided silently into the tall grass a few feet away.

Then I came upon something that did not appear to be a bird. "Is that a cat?" I thought.

By a willow tree nearly 50 feet away—whatever it was appeared hunkered down and small in the grass at the base of the tree. "Better put my binoculars on it," I thought. "Cool, it's a juvenile Black-crowned Night Heron. What a treat for the class!" These birds are

seldom on the Preserve, except in late spring! Hmm, it looks funny—"that's odd," I thought. "It lifts its foot when it raises its head—why? Better get closer to have a better look." A little closer now, with my binoculars I am able to see that the bird is bound head-to-foot, literally, with fishing line. My heart sank as I thought, "This bird will not likely survive. "But," I thought, "it flew here. Maybe it could survive with some help."

"Okay, Bird, I am going to have to pick you up," I said out loud. Moving slowly towards it, I spoke to it in soft tones so the bird would remain calm. When I was within three feet of it, the bird panicked and flew, but not far—maybe just 20 feet. "Listen to me, Bird, I do not have time to chase you—you need help. I *am* going to pick you up."

B i r d
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s o I c a r e f u l l y
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Looking at my watch, I could see that I had only seventeen minutes before the tour was scheduled to start. Quickly, I made my way back down the path toward the Nature Center. The Center was the only place I might be able to use my one remaining free hand to finally help the heron.

Thirteen minutes to go; students were now arriving at the Center and gathering in the parking lot. Fortunately, a pair of scissors was on the reception desk. Bird squawked loudly as I set him down, still carefully holding him. "Hmm," I thought, "he gets his dander up when scared—just like a cat!"

Cutting the entrapping nylon fishing line was hard. It was wound tightly around his right foot and there was a four-sided fishing hook stuck on his bottom. UGH! Bird squawked again as I removed it. That had to hurt.

Okay, nine minutes to go. I heard the students

continued ...

gathering outside. “Gotta get the line out of his mouth—gotta get into his mouth first to do this—but how?” I thought. “I need both hands; I am going to have to let go of him.” I imagined him flying from the desk right into the glass doors in a panic. “Calm down,” I thought. “He will know if I have fear and he will become fearful too.” Once Bird was free on the desk, I moved my right index finger toward his bill. He bit it. Hard. This posed a few problems: First his mouth was still inaccessible with my finger in it, and the scissors were right-handed and I am not. Besides, it hurt!

“Hey Bird, let go—I made a mistake and need to try this a different way.” Much to my surprise, he listened!

Six minutes left. Turns out that two fingers in his mouth, perpendicular to his bill, did the trick. But once I looked into his mouth, to my horror I discovered that he had in fact swallowed the other hook. Inspecting his neck, I could not see the hook sticking through his skin, so quickly as I could, I put the scissors in his mouth and cut the line. The hook remained, though. Maybe, because herons typically feed in salt water so much, it would eventually disintegrate.

Five minutes to go. Daniel, having just arrived to work, helps me drape a large white towel over Bird and over my arm.

Outside I meet the class and start the tour, letting the junior college students know they have to be rather quiet, as I have just rescued a bird and intend to release it during their tour.

Something becomes clear quickly, soon after I meet the tour group: They are not birders, nor are they particularly interested in the upcoming tour. Many would not take the binoculars offered to them.

As we made our way out to the Preserve, we started seeing some interesting birds. In the distance a Red-tailed Hawk soared, and Northern Flickers were calling. A few people showed some interest—a heart-ening sign.

Bird was getting heavy in my arms and was moving his head back and forth under the towel—it seemed like he wanted to look around. I turned back to the students so they could see him, and I uncovered his head. His long, four-inch bill opened wide as he made a reedy squawk and pulled his head back under the towel. The students fell silent. I think they were in awe—or maybe they were afraid. I could not tell.

Bird was getting increasingly agitated as he jammed himself far under the towel, back against my aching, sweating arm. “We have got to hurry,” I said to the students as we made our way toward the sump.

Five minutes later, after watching thirsty bright yellow goldfinches drink some water, we walked down the sump road to the water’s edge. Jeanne, the professor for the class, made her way up to the front of the nearly 30 students and helped me uncover the gangly, uncomfortable bird.

We carefully removed the towel, making sure to keep his large wings folded and staying away from his large, pointed bill, which was poised to strike us if we got too close.

His beautiful orange eyes watched us cautiously until I put his feet on the road near the water’s edge. From then on he did not look back. He was concerned only with being free. Within a second he opened his wings, stepped with his right, then left, foot and took to the air. I watched him fly across the water and land in tall grass on the distant shore.



With a satisfied sigh I turned to the class, ready to teach. But the students themselves were not ready. They were still looking in total silence (again) where Bird had disappeared into the tall grass. No one spoke as we made our way out of the sump. Once on the Preserve again their silence ended.

Somehow, in the instant that Bird flew, the students were not “students” anymore—they were witnesses to an almost magical event. And the event changed them. Their tendency to be reserved melted into active participation.

For the remainder of the tour, they shared their binoculars whenever a bird came into view. A few students started taking pictures. To my amazement, they started asking questions—good ones. We talked about bird migration and the amazing fact that many of the birds we were seeing came from hundreds of miles away.

As the students left that day, I heard them talking animatedly about what they had seen and learned. It seems Bird and I had awakened something deep within them. The sight of Bird flying across the water, and the silence that ensued, was profound. In that silence, Bird had provided an opportunity for all of us to connect with him, connect with his graceful beauty, and connect with the wonder of nature.

Can’t help but love my job!

Madrona Marsh Preserve and Nature Center

Schedule of Events*

January-April 2010

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. 8:45-Student Serv.Learning 10 am-12n- "Classic Climbers"/Dr. Vadheim-
3 Holly Gray Exhibit Ends**	4 CLOSED	5 8:30 am-Tour d' Torrance 10 am-12 n-Weeders 6:30-8:30 pm-"Classic Climbers"/Dr. Vadheim-	6 10 am-12 n-Habitat Restoration-Weeders	7 10 am-Tyke Hike	8 10-11:30-am-Friday Fun	9 8:45 am-12 n-Habitat Restor. 8:45am-Student Serv.Learning
10 2-4 pm-Second Sunday Science- (fee) "Understanding Earthquakes"	11 CLOSED	12 9 am-Mornings on the Marsh 10 am-12 n-Habitat Restoration-Weeders 4-6 pm-Environmental Interpretation.	13 8 am-Bird Walk /Bob Shanman 10 am-12 n-Habitat Restoration-Weeders 7:15-9 pm-FOMM Board Meeting	14 10:30 am-12:30 pm-Propagation Society	15 10-11:30-am-Friday Fun 6:30-8:30 pm-Ron Libbrecht Artists Reception**	16 8:45am-12 n-Habitat Restor. 8:45am-Student Serv.Learning 10 am-12 n-"Mystery of Mushrooms"
17 10 am- Nature Walk	18 CLOSED	19 8:30 am-Tour d' Torrance 10 am-12 n-Weeders 7 p.m.-Audubon Mtg.	20 10 am-12 n-Habitat Restoration-Weeders 5:30-6:30 p.m.-MMF Board Meeting	21	22 10-11:30-am-Friday Fun	23 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. 8:45am-Student Serv.Learning 10 am-Nature Walk 11 am-1 pm-Kids" (3-6) Art Workshop (fee) 7-9 pm-Star Party
24 FOMM Annual Mtg., 3 pm	25 CLOSED	26 10 am-12 n-Weeders	27 10 am-12 n-Weeders	28 10:30 am-12:30 pm-Propagation Society	29 10-11:30-am-Friday Fun	30 8:45 am-12 n-Hab. Restor. 8:45 am-Student Serv.Learning 2-4 pm-Cosmic Collison (fee)

JANUARY

**All activities and classes meet at the Madrona Marsh Nature Center, located at 3201 Plaza del Amo (between Maple and Madrona) on the north side of the street. For the very latest on events visit www.friendsofmadronamarsh.com. **See Artists Corner, page 8.*

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 CLOSED	2 8:30 am-Tour d' Torrance 10 am-12 n-Weeders	3 10 am-12 n-Habitat Restoration-Weeders	4 10 am-Tyke Hike	5 10-11:30-am-Friday Fun	6 8:45 am-12 n-Habitat Restor. 8:45 am-Student Serv.Learning 10 am-12 n-"Hospitable Habitat"/ Dr.Vadheim
7	8 CLOSED	9 9 am-Mornings on the Marsh 6:30-8:30 pm-"Hospitable Habitat/ Dr. Vadheim 10 am-12 n-Weeders	10 8 am-Bird Walk/Bob Shanman 10 am-12 n-Weeders 7:15-9 pm-FOMM Board Meeting	11 10:30 am-12:30 pm-Propagation Society	12 10-11:30-am-Friday Fun	13 8:45 am-12 n-Habitat Restor. 8:45 am-Student Serv.Learning 11 am-1 pm-Kids (3-6)-Art Workshop (fee)
14 2-4 pm-Second Sunday Science- "Waterfowl of Winter"	15 CLOSED Ching Ho Ex.Starts	16 8:30 am-Tour d' Torrance 10 am-12 n-Weeders 7 pm-Audubon meets	17 10 am-12 n-Weeders 5:30-6:30 pm-MMF Board Meeting	18	19 10-11:30-am-Friday Fun	20 8:45 am-12 n-Habitat Restor. 8:45-Student Serv. Learning 6:30-8:30 pm-Night Hike
21	22 CLOSED	23 10 am-12 n-Habitat Restoration-Weeders	24 10 am-12 n-Weeders	25 10:30 am-12:30 pm-Propagation Society	26 10-11:30-am-Friday Fun	27 8:30-11:30 am-Kids,(8-12) Birding Workshop (fee) 8:45 am-12 n-Habitat Restor. 8:45-Student Serv. Learning 10 am- Nature Walk
28 10 a.m- Nature Walk						

FEBRUARY

Nature Center (310) 782-3989
 Gift Shop (310) 320-8255

Brought to you by
 Friends of Madrona Marsh

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 CLOSED	2 8:30 am- Tour d' Torrance 10 am-12 n-Weeders	3 10 am-12 n-Habitat Restoration-Weeders	4 10 am- Tyke Hike	5 10-11:30-am Friday Fun 6:30-8:30 pm- Ching Ho Artist Reception**	6 8:30 am-12 n-Arbor Day II 8:45 am-12 n-Habitat Restor. 8:45 am-Student Serv.Learning 10 am-12 n- "Name Game" /Dr. Vadheim 8:30-10:30 am-Birding by Ear
7	8 CLOSED	9 9 am-Mornings on the Marsh 6:30-8:30 pm- "Name Game"/Dr. Vadheim 10 am-12 n-Weeders	10 8 am- Bird Walk/Bob Shanman 10 am-12 n-Weeders 7:15-9 pm- FOMM Board Meeting	11 10:30 am-12:30 pm-Propagation Society	12 10-11:30-am- Friday Fun	13 8:30-12n-Arbor Day Celebration 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. 8:45 am-Student Serv.Learning
2-4 pm- Second Sunday Science- "Sea Lions and Seals"	15 CLOSED	16 8:30 am- Tour d' Torrance 10 am-12 n-Weeders 7 pm-Audubon meets	17 10 am-12 n-Weeders 5:30-6:30 pm- MMF Board Meeting	18	19 10-11:30-am- Friday Fun	20 8:45 am-12 n-Habitat Restor. 8:45-Student Serv. Learning
21	22 CLOSED	23 10 am-12 n-Habitat Restoration-Weeders	24 10 am-12 n-Weeders	25 10:30 am- 12:30 pm- Propagation Society	26 10-11:30-am- Friday Fun	27 8:45 am-12 n-Habitat Restor. 8:45-Student Serv. Learning 9 am-3 pm-Environmental Fair 10 am- Nature Walk
10 a.m- Nature Walk	29 CLOSED	30 8:30 am- Tour d' Torrance 10 am-12 n-Weeders	31 10 am-12 n-Habitat Restoration-Weeders			

MARCH

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 10 am- Tyke Hike	2 10-11:30-am- Friday Fun	3 8:45 am-12 n-Habitat Restor. 8:45am-Student Serv.Learning 10 am-12 n- "Fragrant Flowers"/ Dr.Vadheim 12 n-3 pm-Garden Tea Party & Native Plant Sale
4	5 CLOSED Connie Vadheim Art Exhibit Begins	6 8:30 am-Tour d'Torrance 10 am-12 n-Weeders 10 am-12 n- "Fragrant Flowers"/Dr.Vadheim	7 10 am-12 n-Habitat-Weeders	8 10:30 am- 12:30 pm- Propagation Society	9 10-11:30-am- Friday Fun	10 8:45 am-12 n-Habitat Restor. 8:45am-Student Serv. Learning
2 - 4 pm-Second Sunday Science- "Spring Migration"	12 CLOSED	13 10 am-12 n-Weeders 9-11 am-Mornings on the Marsh	14 8 am- Bird Walk/ Bob Shanman 10-12 noon-Habitat Restoration-Weeders 7:15-9 pm-FOMM Board Meeting	15	16 10-11:30-am- Friday Fun	17 8:45 am-12 n-Habitat Restor. 8:45am-Student Serv. Learning 7:30-9:30-pm-Star Party
18	19 CLOSED	20 8:30 am- Tour d' Torrance 10 am-12 n-Weeders 7 pm- Audubon Mtg.	21 10-12 n-Weeders 5:30-6:30 pm- MMF Meeting	22 10:30 am-12:30 pm-Propagation Society	23 10-11:30-am- Friday Fun 6:30-8:30 pm- Dr. Connie Vadheim Artist Reception**	24 8:45 am-12 n-Habitat Restor. 8:45am-Student Serv. Learning 10 am-12 n-Nature Walk 8:30 am-12 n-Earth Day
10 am-Nature Walk	26 CLOSED	27 10 am-12 n-Weeders	28 10-12 n-Weeders	29	30	

APRIL

The (Very) Elegant First Annual FOMM Art Auction



Beth Shibata with Jeff Kidd, the happy new owner of Beth's photograph, "Succulent."



Ron Libbrecht with Shirley Turner, seated, and Ruth McConnell admire artwork.



Suzan Hubert, left, and Mary Garrity survey the vast array of selections available at the fund raiser auction.



Artist Stephen West, right, Fran Arrowsmith and well-known Marsh photographer Bert Weatherilt, share thoughts on art displays.



A rich and varied display of photographs and other artwork greeted attendees of the Art Auction.

Artists' Corner

Works of local artists and photographers inspired by the beauty of the Madrona Marsh are regularly on display at the Nature Center. Everyone is invited to attend each artist's reception where the artist talks about his/her work or gives a demonstration. Snacks and beverages are included.

Through February 12 - Ron Libbrecht, "An Exhibit of Paintings." Artist's Reception - Friday, January 15, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

February 16-April 2 - Ching Ho, "An Exhibit of Paintings." Artist's Reception-Friday, March 5, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

April 6-May 21 - Dr. Connie Vadheim, "A Photography Exhibit." Artist's Reception-Friday April 23, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Birds, Butterflies and Dragonflies of the Preserve

Fall 2009

This list was compiled by Tracy Drake, Ron Melin and David Moody



Birds

American Wigeon	Wilson's Snipe	<i>Bushtit</i>	Savannah Sparrow
Gadwall	Ring-billed Gull	House Wren	Lincoln's Sparrow
<i>Mallard</i>	California Gull	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Song Sparrow
Blue-winged Teal	Glaucous-winged Gull	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	White-crowned Sparrow
Cinnamon Teal	Western Gull	Hermit Thrush	Dark-eyed Junco
Green-winged Teal	Rock Pigeon	Western Bluebird	<i>Red-winged Blackbird</i>
Northern Shoveler	Mourning Dove	Mountain Bluebird	Tri-colored Blackbird
Northern Pintail	White-throated Swift	Swainson's Thrush	Western Meadowlark
Double-crested Cormorant	<i>Anna's Hummingbird</i>	<i>Northern Mockingbird</i>	Brewer's Blackbird
Great Egret	<i>Allen's Hummingbird</i>	European Starling	Great-tailed Grackle
Snowy Egret	Red-breasted Sapsucker	Cedar Waxwing	Brown-headed Cowbird
Cooper's Hawk	Downy Woodpecker	Orange-crowned Warbler	<i>House Finch</i>
Red-shouldered Hawk	Northern Flicker	Yellow-rumped Warbler	Lesser Goldfinch
Red-tailed Hawk	Red AND Yellow shafted	Audubon's	<i>American Goldfinch</i>
American Kestrel	Black Phoebe	Myrtle	<i>House Sparrow</i>
Merlin	<i>Say's Phoebe</i>	Yellow Warbler	<i>Orange Bishop</i>
Peregrine Falcon	Cassin's Kingbird	Black-throated Gray Warbler	Nutmeg Mannikin
Virginia Rail	Hutton's Vireo	<i>Common Yellowthroat</i>	
Sora	Western Scrub-Jay	<i>California Towhee</i>	<i>Italics - Bred in '09</i>
Killdeer	American Crow	Chipping Sparrow	Bold-rare on the Preserve
American Coot	Common Raven	Lark Sparrow	serve



Butterflies

Monarch	West Coast Lady	Gray Hairstreak	Umber Skipper
Queen	Cabbage White	Western Pygmy-Blue	Fiery Skipper
Gulf Fritillary	Orange Sulphur	Marine Blue	Painted Lady
Cloudless Sulphur	Acmon Blue		

Dragonflies

Common Green Darner	Variiegated Meadowhawk	Spot-winged Glider
Blue-eyed Darner	Wandering Glider	

South Bay Native Plant Corner

—Dr. Connie Vadheim, CSU Dominguez Hills



Dune Lupine
Lupinus chamissonis

Late winter/early spring is a time of reawakening on the Preserve. Plants that have resembled near-dead sticks for months suddenly come alive with new leaves and even flowers. This reawakening coincides with the fall/winter rains—and this is no accident. Native plants must respond to environmental cues so that they can grow and flower before the next summer drought.

One plant that springs to life at this time is the **Dune Lupine**, *Lupinus chamissonis*. Like all lupines, the Dune Lupine is a member of the Pea family. It shares with other peas a characteristic, complex flower structure and large seeds that develop in a pod. The lupines also share a characteristic ‘palmate’ compound leaf that looks like a hand with outstretched fingers. This type of leaf helps lupines capture moisture from rain/fog and direct it to the roots.

Dune Lupine has several characteristics that set it apart from other local lupines. Unlike our annual lupines (such as Bicolor and Arroyo Lupines) the Dune Lupine is a perennial sub-shrub. This means that the ‘old wood’ is quite woody, while the new growth is soft and succulent (herbaceous). Dune Lupine has silvery foliage—due to leaf hairs—that is common in other local plants. It grows naturally in very sandy soils—so only thrives in well-drained soils.

Dune Lupine is covered with light violet flowers from February through March. The colors appear to almost glow against the silvery foliage. If you stand quietly, you’re sure to see the large native bees that pollinate this lupine. Watch how they land on the lower lip of the flower to snap it open! In summer/fall watch doves eat the seeds from the ground.

If you’d like to grow a bush lupine in your home garden you might want to choose another native lupine, *Lupinus albifrons*, the Silvery Bush Lupine. This species does better in gardens and has the silvery foliage and showy lavender blooms.



Bush Lupines like to grow in full sun. They also are a bit persnickety about summer water. You should only water them when the soil dries out—then water them deeply. Purchase small plants and plant them in place—they don’t like their roots to be disturbed. If you want to grow bush lupines from seeds, give them a hot water soak overnight. **Note: seeds of all lupines are toxic if eaten.**

Learn more about local native plants at our “Out of the Wilds and into Your Garden” series on the first Saturday of each month. The class is repeated on the following Tuesday evening.

Plant Information Sheets and Plant Lists are also available at the Nature Center.

School Tours Introduce Students to Marsh

—Sarah Noddings

Although March through May are the most popular months for school tours following the rain, October through December has been record-setting this year.

Three hundred forty-two 8 to 10 year olds, along with 44 accompanying adults, and 20 eleventh and twelfth graders, along with 3 adults, have joined our docents for two-hour tours on the Marsh. These tours include observation of the numerous animals and plants on the Marsh and habitat around the Nature Center.

The tours often start within the Center where students can touch Scooby, the gopher snake, and feel the pelts of a fox, raccoon, opossum and skunk. A stroll through the newly-refurbished and replenished exhibit hall gives the students hands-on information and the opportunity to view numerous native animals on display. This sets the scene for some of the animals they may see on the Marsh and aids in their school curriculum which, for the younger grades, includes City Wildlife. For students in fourth grade and up, a water lab may also be provided.

Occasionally, students will write back about their experiences. One third grader wrote: "Thank you for giving us a tour. Does Scooby have an age? Why is the dad duck called a drake? Can sparrows fly more than 1,000 feet? Thank you for showing us a fly catcher."

Another wrote: "Thank you for giving us a tour. I can tell you right now I know a common yellow throat, green winged teal, red winged blackbird, northern warbler, Townsend's warbler, mallard hen and mallard drake, black crowned night heron, and a black phoebe."

It's wonderful to see students absorbing so many things in nature which, in turn, is very rewarding for the docents as well. One thoughtful student wrote: "We really had fun there and we really hope you did too." Listening to the docents talk of the tours afterwards and the enjoyable experiences they shared with the students, it is clear that they did too.

Presently, the docents leading these tours are two members from the Friends of Madrona Marsh: Bill Arrowsmith and Jack Knapp, and staff members: Daniel Marion, Bruce Brown, Chris Noddings and Beth Scott. Bob Carr conducts the water lab.

Want to Learn More About the Marsh? Become a Docent Trainee

One of the best ways to learn more about your local Marsh and the important attributes it brings to nature and the surrounding communities is to become a docent trainee. As a trainee you will tour the Marsh and Nature Center with a docent (tour leader) perhaps on a school tour including a pre-school tour (See article on School Tours), or a tyke hike. You can start with whatever age of children you feel most comfortable with and learn along *with* them and *from* them.

Being a docent is not only a very rewarding experience, it is also a most desirable and needed service. Presently we have just two active volunteer docents and the need from the schools for tours is great. If you believe that this is something you might like to train to do, please contact Tracy Drake, manager of the Madrona Marsh Preserve and Nature Center at 310-782-3989 or Sarah Noddings, volunteer in charge of school tours, at 310-532-7631.

Entomology Classes Begin at El Camino



A class in Field Entomology is set to begin Wednesday, February 17 at El Camino College. The 4-unit class will meet on Wednesdays from 6 to 10:15 p.m.

This is a survey course in insect biology, taxonomy, physiology and ecology, with some discussion of insect economic importance and control.

Major insect orders and families will be introduced through lecture with slides and live and preserved specimens. Emphasis will be placed on learning to use a key to identify insect specimens in the laboratory and recognizing them in the field.

Field trips will be taken to local sites, and local desert and coastal mountain habitats to practice collection, preparation, and recognition techniques.

For Admission Procedures call: 310-532-3670
For Natural Science Division Office call: 310-660-3343.

To Contact El Camino College on line: www.elcamino.edu; Professor Jeanne Bellemin jbellemi@elcamino.edu.

Donations—\$100 or More

—Ellen Peterson, *Treasurer*

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