

Fall 2010

Marsh Mailing

Madrona Marsh Preserve and Nature Center



"Moonlight Magic" Photo courtesy of Mark Comon

Let's Go to Moonlight Magic Because...

A magical evening awaits you on October 23 in the middle of the Preserve. The moon will be full and you will be, too, because you will dine on **Red Car Brewery** food and sip the wines of **Pernod Ricard**. Gaze at the heavens through a telescope, take an evening stroll and bid on some "available nowhere else" unusual auction opportunities.

Have you ever dreamed of a **canoe ride through the Marsh Preserve** in spring? At Moonlight Magic only, we will auction three Spring 2011 canoe trips. And that's not all; here is a partial list of more silent auction, live auction and gift basket opportunities:

- ◆ **Weekend at Big Bear Lake.** We promise there is no timeshare involved, just a peaceful weekend in a lovely house within walking distance of the lake, and we throw in a fishing rod just for fun.
- ◆ Dinner at the famous **Lomeli's** Italian restaurant in Gardena.
- ◆ Lunch with **John Bogert**, well known *Daily Breeze* columnist and author, plus a signed copy of his new book, "Grounded."
- ◆ **Pilot Boat tour** in Long Beach Harbor; ride the pilot boat and tour the pilot station. Learn how the pilots keep ships moving in the ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles
- ◆ A Red Car Brewery **tapping party**
- ◆ You pick up **your exciting flight** at the Torrance Airport Western Museum of Flight where David Bockelman will fly you into the wild blue yonder in an F-1 Rocket (airplane) around the South Bay for an extraordinary view of the place you call home. Aerobatics optional.
- ◆ Two tickets to any Torrance **Cultural Art Center** event.
- ◆ The art of **Stephen West, Jack Ludwick, Bill Wasserman** and **Connie Vadheim** plus our 2010 signature art piece, '**Moonlight Magic**' by Mark Comon (shown above)—signed, of course!
- ◆ A personal tour '**behind the gates**' at **Ballona Wetlands** with renowned birder Bob Shanman of Wild Birds Unlimited. Only at Moonlight Magic!

"Magic" continues on page 3.

Everyday is Special at the Marsh

—Tracy Drake, *Naturalist/Manager*

One day late in August, on an early morning, as I was unlocking the front door to the Nature Center, a rush of warm air blew past me. By nine in the morning, the usual bird chorus had already quieted—indicating usually that it was going to get hot. Ashley was the first person “in” this day, and she slowly started tending our live animals. Having only recently started working at the Nature Center, she was not yet confident working alone, but within minutes, Beth Scott came in and assisted her. Soon the phone was ringing and people began trickling in—most visiting for the first time. The day seemed so far to be just another “normal” day.

Though this day was normal—no day at the Nature Center and Preserve can be called ordinary. In different ways, with differing talents, every staff member and every volunteer help create a special environment. As we say so often to people on our tours, Madrona Marsh is a place where species/people can survive and thrive. For the people involved here, it is a place where they can work towards their full potential.

As the Manager and Naturalist, I do a lot of managing by wandering around or checking in with staff volunteers or programs—and I cannot begin to convey how many times I return to my office with a smile in my heart. I am truly blessed to work with so many special people. I’m not saying they are perfect or not challenging at times, but week after week, season after season, year after year, they make a difference. They make the Madrona Marsh Preserve and Nature Center special for our visitors and for each other.

E-mails or letters of gratitude are not uncommon here. I would like to share with you two gracious letters that were given to me over the past two weeks. The first is from Ashley Lawsen. She was a part of the most recent Youth Leadership Training Program conducted by the City of Torrance. The second letter is from Donna McCreadie, a former teacher, who brings her grandkids to the Preserve for the Friday Fun Program.

Thank you so much, Ashley and Donna. We appreciate your reminding us that what we do is important. And thanks to all the members of the Friends of Madrona Marsh. You continue to make extraordinary things happen.—T.D.

From Ashley Lawsen:

“The summer of 2010 has been very productive. I learned so much, gained a lot of experience, and met so many new people who made me feel welcome at my job sites. I think the thing I learned the most about is leadership. I interviewed several people about it, read a book about it, and was able to observe people to detect signs of leadership or lack of them.

“I noticed many people have great qualities that I hadn’t noticed before. For example, efficiency, integrity, vision, and drive are skills I have not recognized as leadership characteristics. I never really understood what some meant, but I looked them up and learned. *Integrity*, a word I never really fully understood before, means having adherence to moral and ethical principles; soundness of moral character; honesty.

“Other words I knew, but didn’t know the hidden definitions they had. Words like *drive* and *vision*. The vision I know means to see or be seen, but it can be used also as the act or power of anticipating that which will or may come to be. When I thought drive, transportation came to mind, but now I also see it as a synonym for energy and initiative.

“This summer really helped me grow professionally, and I learned a lot about businesses and how to lead a team. I learned how to deal with disgruntled customers properly, how to make a child comfortable in a distressing environment, how to play games with kids correctly, and how to pick teams without making anyone feel awkward or left out. Most people my age don’t know half of how to do those kinds of things, and I feel proud accomplishing the goal of putting my summer to good use. I now feel more mature knowing these things, and it’s pretty cool seeing how things work now that I’m not one of the kids, but someone who’s in charge.

Continued . . .



A magic possum-petting moment for Nikki and Ryan, grandchildren of Donna McCreadie, is one of the things that makes a Marsh visit so special.

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.

Continued. . .

"I feel that after this summer, I am more prepared to work, maybe not fully ready yet, but more ahead than I was before, and hopefully in time I can get a job that helps me reach my full potential." —**A.L.**

From Donna McCreadie

"As a retired teacher (26 years high school economics) I want to pass along my observations of the program you have for children at Madrona Marsh. I began bringing my twin grandchildren, Ryan and Nikki (who are 3) more than a year ago. We had participated in the children's program at the Botanic Garden, organized by Cindy Reid previously. When she moved the program to Madrona Marsh, I was skeptical that it could be duplicated somewhere other than the Botanic Garden. I'm delighted to tell you that Cindy and the rest of your staff have created an amazing learning opportunity for children! My husband retired after 37 years in the classroom, so we have a great deal of experience in evaluating educational experiences.

"Nature is the perfect subject for children and the way Cindy incorporates fiction and non-fiction literature into the lessons is superb. "Miss Carol" (Devore), a retired kindergarten teacher, is terrific with her interactions with the children; whether she is reading or guiding the lesson. I knew instantly, the first time I heard Carol reading that she had been a teacher, which I confirmed later; I can observe years of mastery when I watch her with the little ones. "Miss Suzan" (Hubert) is warm and engages all the children and makes every child feel special. (*Ed. Note: Suzan, and Carol volunteer, along with Debbie Ovadia. Debbie has been working the front desk for a couple of years and joined the group this summer.*)

Bob Carr is not part of the Friday Fun program but he has extended every kindness to my grandchildren, who adore him. We arrived early on our very first visit and he allowed Ryan to "help raise the flag," he speaks with them each Friday and has lent us his personal books on dinosaurs because my grandchildren showed an interest. He has gone out of his way to show them how to use a microscope and points out special things. All these gestures by your incredible staff go far beyond presenting an informational program—they change children's lives.

"As I watch from week to week I can see the children (all, not just my grandchildren) developing a respect and love for nature. On our frequent trips to the library, we often check out the books that have been selected for the Friday programs to reinforce the concepts. I love the hands-on activities that follow the reading portion, a great way to get those little people involved in learning by participating. The children adore the insects and animals that they get to see up close and personal, often having a chance to pet something

they could otherwise only read about. This past week two baby possums (Jack and Jill) were the center of attention! (See photo, page 2.)

"I must say that I am learning a great deal from the program. Thank you too for making this program available to all. Frequently, I have found the parents or caretakers don't take advantage of museums or other educational opportunities because of the cost involved.

"As you can tell, I'm a great fan. Thank you, Tracy, for all your hard work and effort to put together a spectacular program for everyone who visits the Marsh—but particularly for all the children. I'm taking this opportunity to thank you because they are too small. You and your staff have made and are making a marvelous impact on these children." —**D.M.**

"Magic" continued from page 1

- ◆ *Do you have one of those 'Honey Do' lists? We have a **contractor who will give you 4 hours** work time to check off some of those items and a honeydew melon to munch while he works. Now that's magic!*
- ◆ *A **personal tour of the Torrance Police Station**—greet our guys in blue.*
- ◆ *Lots of **gift baskets** filled with gardening tools, food, art, and more; you will be amazed!*

Enjoy the soft rock, oldies and beach music of The Vipers and laugh with our Master of Ceremonies and Auctioneer, Mr. Paul Nowatka. Come dance and celebrate. Who knows; we may even howl at the moon.

You can buy your tickets at the Marsh Nature Center, at Wild Birds Unlimited or go to our Friends of Madrona Marsh website, friendsofmadronamarsh.com, and purchase a ticket through PayPal. (See page 11 for parking information.) —**Suzan Hubert**

**WHAT TO WEAR
to Moonlight Magic???**

OMG I have my ticket to Moonlight Magic! Now what do I wear?

It's all about the shoes— Think tulle and tennis shoes, rhinestone and Reeboks, sequins and sneakers, leather and lace.

Have fun, dress to party, recycle that prom dress—then accessorize with comfortable walking shoes. . . or even boots. What a concept!

Remember to bring a warm wrap.

from the president

—Bill Arrowsmith

As we go to press it is nearly autumn of 2010 and there are two issues on which I would like to share my opinion. The two are completely separate and unrelated, but each is of critical importance to the continued use and success of the Preserve we all love. Each issue has passionate supporters, and each requires that you become knowledgeable about it. One requires you to take an action, and one requires you to refrain from action—at least for now.

Feel the Magic. . .

The first “issue” is the splendid event planned for Saturday evening, October 23, called “Moonlight Magic.” As detailed in accompanying articles, Moonlight Magic will include a delicious menu from the Redcar Brewery, along with Pernod Ricard wine, and will feature soft rock, oldies and beach music performed by popular Torrance combo, ‘The Vipers’. And then the fun really begins when former councilman Paul Nowatka takes the stage as our droll master of ceremonies—and auctioneer for an exciting array of prizes, from a week-end at a Big Bear home to lunch with columnist and author John Bogert, to artwork by Comon, Ludwick, West, Vadheim or Wasserman, including Comon’s signature photograph, “Moonlight Magic.” It will be a delightfully fun and very interesting evening, and I hope to see you all there.

Moonlight Magic has been organized by board members Suzan Hubert, Bobbie Snyder and Mary Garrity with enthusiasm and drive reminiscent of the founders of FOMM, over 35 years ago; people like Shirley Turner, Venora Lee and Grace Lear organizing bake sales and garage sales to get that critical initial capital for our fledgling organization.

“But,” you say, “we saved the Preserve; why do we need money now?” The Nature Center and the first ten years of staff and programs were supported largely with Proposition A funds. Those funds are nearly gone now and although the City has promised continued support of Marsh programs, we all know that the City of Torrance itself faces severe budget problems. That’s why we need

fund-raising events like Moonlight Magic, to build up our reserves and allow us to share in the expense of Marsh programs and maintenance. It’s not as “exciting” as fighting developers, but it’s every bit as necessary if we are to continue the high level of educational classes and programs that have been put in place under Tracy Drake’s leadership.

That’s the first decision I’m asking you to make: Will you support this event? And can you bring a friend or two? Many of you have expressed your appreciation for those of us who fought the early battles to save the Marsh. This is your opportunity to fight a ‘quiet battle’ that is no less important.

The Second Issue. . .

Issue number two: An e-mail has recently circulated saying that our “50-acre Preserve, saved from development in the ‘70’s, is under attack again.” It goes on to list several causes of concern: “the recent draining of the Marsh, right at a most sensitive time, when baby ducklings needed both protection and food,” the closing of the Preserve for almost 10 days, men with machetes hacking down an area at the end of August because “there were mosquitoes,” followed by “IN AUGUST??!! There’s no water for them to breed.”

At this point, the writer (the forwarded version I saw was not signed) finally identifies the purported villain: “Now they are saying they (Vector Control) want our trees cut back, and down.” The e-mail then encourages the reader to send it to the City Council and “all your lists.”

The author of this e-mail seems fairly knowledgeable about the Preserve, as well as recent activity there, and is probably disseminating it in what he or she considers the Preserve’s best interest, to marshal support against the “attack.” If I felt that we were truly under attack, from Vector Control or any other source, I would be at the head of the fray. But most of the ‘recent concerns’ in the e-mail were described in the Spring and Summer *Marsh Mailings* – along with explanations.

This has been a difficult year to keep our mosquito population under control. We were unable to do our usual dry season clearing in 2009 because of equipment problems, and we got behind the curve. Vector Control notified us in February that our mosquito counts were high and that we would have to do additional tule clearing to allow their mosquitofish to reach and devour mosquito larvae, our preferred method of control.

Continued . . .

More “Magic”

Overnight, breakfast for two at the South Bay Marriott—AND parking!

Every Moonlight Magic ticket purchaser has an equal chance to win this great prize!

All tickets are numbered; each number associated with a purchased ticket will be entered in a drawing. Must be present to win.

The Friends paid for the first round of tule cutting, and the City covered later rounds. Still, tule thatch remained and the City had to partially drain the Marsh so additional tules could be cut; but we left as much water as we could. The Summer Mailing reported that, to our shock, in June yet another sharp increase in mosquitoes had been observed in some of the 6 traps monitored on the Preserve.

As a precautionary step, it was the City that closed down the Preserve until we could meet with Vector Control and agree upon a course of action. That meeting took place at the end of June, as we reported. Additional action agreed upon by the City included more tule clearance so that all stands are no more than 20 feet wide, and bulldozing of the 6 feet channels between tule stands (to remove roots just below the surface; otherwise it's a recurring problem). That meant the remaining water on the Preserve would have to be drained, starting in July. As we reported, most of our fledgling birds were nearly ready to fly at that time, but we may have lost a few.

That brings us to August 25, when once again LA County West Vector Control District (LACWVCD) notified us of a sharp spike in adult mosquito counts in three of the 6 monitoring traps—in each case, to over 100. That is very unusual for August, I agree, but I have seen the trap counts. They told us they would come to the Preserve the next day to search for a water source, and that is exactly what they did, led by district supervisor Robert Saviskas. Tracy Drake and I and some other Torrance officials were there, as well. Some tules were cut in areas suspected of having water, but there was no mass destruction. No major source of water was found, either, other than the known ponding at drains along Madrona Avenue (which Vector Control monitors and treats). They did locate three small leaks in our quick-connect watering systems, which have since been fixed.

My point is that this was done in the presence of City officials and Friends, not in secret. And there was discussion at that time of what further clearing needed to be done. I admit that there have been reports of a couple later visits by Vector Control and some additional cutting and clearing without coordination with Manager Drake, which is frustrating.

But Tracy has put together a very good, detailed plan for this fall's clearing and that was sent to LACWVCD this week. We hope to get quick approval and I would urge your **inaction** on mass e-mailing until the system has had a chance to work. It is clear that better lines of communication should be established between LACWVCD and the City of Torrance, and the two recent meetings were a step in the right direction.

What's a "Beewolf?"

—Bill Arrowsmith

I asked Manager Tracy Drake what interesting insects she'd seen lately and she responded, "Well, there was the beewolf."

"What's a beewolf?" I asked. This was her emailed response:

Hi Bill,

Here is a photo and some interesting facts about this tiny wasp—which is neither a bee nor a wolf! I am not yet positive about species of the one in my photo but is likely *Philanthus multimaculatus*.

From **Wikipedia**:

Beewolves (genus *Philanthus*), also known as *bee-hunters*, *burrowing wasps*, or *philanthuses*, are solitary, predatory wasps, most of which prey on bees, hence their common name. The adult females dig tunnels in the ground for nesting, while the territorial males mark twigs and other objects with pheromones to claim the territory from competing males.

As with all other sphecoid wasps the larvae are carnivorous, forcing inseminated females to hunt for other invertebrates (in this case bees), on which to lay her eggs, supplying the larvae with prey when they emerge. The



adults collect nectar from flowers or from squeezing the bees they capture as prey; the nectar is their energy source for flight.

They are notable in stinging their prey in a membranous location on the ventral surface

where the venom quickly paralyzes major voluntary muscles, yet does not kill the prey. The prey may attempt to sting in return, but it is always grabbed in such a way that only well-armored portions of the beewolf's body are presented. The beewolf carries the prey back to a tunnel, but usually only stores it temporarily, until it is later used to provision a cell burrow, where an egg is laid.

In a nutshell, it is truly remarkable that this wasp will dig a tunnel in the ground, go catch from 4 to 20 bees, paralyze them with its sting, place the caught bees in the back of its tunnel, lay an egg on one bee only, seal off the chamber and when the egg hatches, the larva has all those other bees to feed on! Multiple chambers can be made in a single tunnel!

Amazing survival technique eh? Take care,
Tracy

Madrona Marsh Preserve and Nature Center

Schedule of Events*

October 2010-January 2011

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 10-11:30-am-Friday Fun***	2 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. 8:45am-Student Serv.Learning No Native Plants Class 10am-1 pm-Turtles & Tortoises 10am-12 n-Watercolor for Kids-fee
3	4 CLOSED	5 8:30 am-Tour d' Torrance 10 am-12 n-Weeders No Native Plants Class	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 6:30-8:30-Night Hike
10 2-4 pm-2nd Sunday Science- "Fall Migration," Ron Melin	11 CLOSED	12 9 am-Mornings on the Marsh 10 am-12 n-Habitat Restoration-Weeders	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***	16 8:45am-12 n-Habitat Restor. 8:45am-Student Serv.Learning Star Party, 7-9 pm
17	18 CLOSED	19 8:30 am-Tour d' Torrance Paul Bleiden Exhibit Begins**	20 10 am-12 n-Habitat Restoration-Weeders	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 10am-12n-Watercolor for Kids-fee 6 pm-Moonlight Magic on Madrona Marsh
24 10 am- Nature Walk	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 10 am-"Spiders,"the Bug Guy
31						

OCTOBER

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. **See Artists Corner, page 11. * No fee charged for Friday Fun, but reservations are required. For the latest event information, consult website, www.friendsofmadronamarsh.com.*

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*** Paul Bleiden Reception:6:30	6 8:45 am-12 n-Habitat Restor. 8:45 am-Student Serv.Learning 10 am-12 n- "Prudent Pruners" / Dr.Vadheim 11 am-Fall Crafts for Kids (fee) 12 n-Native Plant Sale
7	8 CLOSED	9 9 am-Mornings on the Marsh 6:30-8:30 pm "Prudent Pruners" / 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 2 pm-Calif.Condors (fee) 6:30 pm-Star Party
14 2-4 pm- 2nd Sunday Science- Tongva/ Gabrielino Native Culture	15 CLOSED	16 8:30 am-Tour d' Torrance 10 am-12 n-Weeders 7 pm-Audubon meets	17 10 am-12 n-Weeders	18	19 10-11:30-am-Friday Fun***	20 8:45 am-12 n-Habitat Restor. 8:45 am-Student Serv.Learning 7:30-9:30 pm-Night Hike
21	22 CLOSED	23 10 am-12 n-Habitat Restoration-Weeders	24 10 am-12 n-Weeders	25 CLOSED for THANKSGIVING	26 CLOSED for THANKSGIVING	27 8:45 am-12 n-Habitat Restor. 8:45-Student Serv. Learning 10 am- Nature Walk
28 10 a.m-Nature Walk	29 CLOSED	30 8:30 am-Tour d' Torrance				

NOVEMBER

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	2 10 am- Tyke Hike	3 10-11:30-am- Friday Fun*** Paul Blieden Exhibit Ends**	4 8:45 am-12 n-Habitat Restor. 8:45am-Student Serv.Learning 10 am-12 n- "Elegant Espaliers" / Dr.Vadheim 1 pm- Storytime for Kids
5	6 CLOSED	7 8:30 am-Tour d' Torrance 10 am-12 n-Weeders 6:30-8:30 pm- "Elegant Espaliers"/Dr. Vadheim	8 8 am- Bird Walk/ Bob Shanman 10 am-12 n-Habitat-Weeders 7:15-9 pm-FOMM Board Meeting	9 10:30 am-12:30 pm-Propagation Society	10 10-11:30-am- Friday Fun***	11 8:45 am-12 n-Habitat Restor. 8:45am-Student Serv. Learning 10 am-Christmas Crafts for Everyone (fee) 2 pm-Star Constellations
12 2-4 pm-Second Sunday Science- "Animal Tracks in Sand"	13 CLOSED	14 10 am-12 n-Weeders 9-11 am-Mornings on the Marsh	15 10-12 noon-Habitat Restoration-Weeders	16	17 10-11:30-am- Friday Fun***	18 8:45 am-12 n-Habitat Restor. 8:45 am-Student Serv. Learning 10 am-Christmas Bird Count Class 6 pm-Bugs of Night
19	20 CLOSED ALL DAY- Christmas Bird Count	21 8:30 am-Tour d' Torrance 10 am-12 n-Weeders 7 pm- Audubon Mtg.	22 10-12 n-Weeders	23 10:30 am-12:30 pm-Propagation Society	24 10-11:30-am- Friday Fun*** CLOSED at noon for CHRISTMAS	25 CLOSED FOR CHRISTMAS
26 CLOSED	27 CLOSED	28 10 am-12 n-Weeders	29 10-12 n-Weeders	30	31 CLOSED AT NOON	

DECEMBER

*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. **See Artists Corner, page 11. *** No fee charged for Friday Fun, but reservations are required. For the latest event information, consult website, www.friendsofmadronamarsh.com.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 CLOSED NEW YEAR'S DAY
2	3 CLOSED	4 8:30 am-Tour d'Torrance 10 am-12 n-Weeders	5 10 am-12 n-Habitat-Weeders	6 10 am- Tyke Hike 10:30 am-12:30 pm-Propagation Society	7 10-11:30-am- Friday Fun***	8 8:45 am-12 n-Habitat Restor. 8:45am-Student Serv. Learning 10 am-TBA/Dr. Vadheim
9 2 - 4 pm-Second Sunday Science- Raptors-a Closer Look	10 CLOSED	11 10 am-12 n-Weeders 9-11 am-Mornings on the Marsh 6:30-8:30-pm- TBA/Dr. Vadheim	12 8 am- Bird Walk/ Bob Shanman 10-12 n-HabitatWeeders 7:15-9 pm-FOMM Board Meeting	13	14 10-11:30-am- Friday Fun***	15 8:45 am-12 n-Habitat Restor. 8:45am-Student Serv. Learning 10 am-Watercolor for Kids (fee)
16	17 CLOSED	18 8:30 am- Tour d'Torrance 10 am-12 n-Weeders 7 pm- Audubon Mtg.	19 10-12 n-Weeders	20 10:30 am-12:30 pm-Propagation Society	21 10-11:30-am- Friday Fun***	22 8:45 am-12 n-Habitat Restor. 8:45am-Student Serv. Learning 10 am-Nature Walk 6:30 pm-Night Hike
23 10 am-Nature Walk	24 CLOSED	25 10 am-12 n-Weeders Al Hagan Exhibit Opens	26 10-12 n-Weeders	27	28 10-11:30-am- Friday Fun***	29 10 am-Watercolors for Kids (fee)
30	31 CLOSED					

JANUARY

Shirley's Turn

—Shirley Turner

"What's Up for Kids Around the South Bay" and "L.A. Parent" are now available in a digital edition. We submit the monthly Preserve press releases to these magazines. They have much to offer parents with young children, and we thank each one for its support.

THERE IS MORE IN LIFE TO WATCH THAN THE CLOCK (a catchy caption for a birding tour ad in the magazine, *Birder's World*).

Years ago one person always mentioned the health benefits of the Marsh in support of its preservation. In walking for health, there is no better place to observe the life force in the world than at the Marsh. Life force was a term used by Dr. Norman Vincent Peale in a book he wrote about solving ten difficult problems.

Observing the buds on trees in spring was one way to catch that life force feeling and use it everyday to improve what ails you. That life force in this season is exemplified by lilies that bloom now with only the stem and flower above ground. Such beauty, when yesterday there was only a dry bulb showing above the soil surface. In winter they have clusters of strap-shaped leaves that die back with warm weather. There are lilies planted at the Marsh. They are difficult to grow due to animals eating the bulbs.

Sunflowers planted by a neighbor are a sight to behold with birds feeding on the seeds. They were enjoyed by a couple walking their dog who scared two parrots to a nearby tree. Waiting in a parking lot, I saw three palm trees that made me think of life force. One at the top had a single shoot thickened at the tip. The next tree point was split. On the last were several leaves. Technical terms escape me. Other trees in the row were fully developed. One can draw on life force for health. And well being.

Another example, from *Daily Guideposts*, found on the back of Ruth's birthday card was:

When we moved to the farm, I discovered several columbines blooming in a weed-filled flower border. I was delighted. They were the same as the ones my mother had lovingly nurtured in the garden I knew as a child.

I weeded, fertilized and gave them loving care. One day an elderly neighbor told me that she, too, recalled this hard-to-find columbine hybrid in her own mother's garden.

I longed to give her some, but I had so few. I didn't want to risk losing them. Then, on impulse, I grabbed a spade and dug up the largest plant. After wrapping it carefully in damp newspapers, I handed it to her. "Here," I said, "I want you to enjoy them too."

Several years later, during an especially bitter winter, my columbines died. When the snow melted, I watched in vain for the first green leaves and searched the border for seedlings. Nothing remained.

One May morning the telephone rang. It was my elderly friend. "I understand your columbines winter-killed," she said. "I planted mine by a south wall, and they're coming up beautifully. In fact I just discovered several dozen seedlings. I'll bring some over this afternoon."

So again I have my beloved columbines because I shared." Give and it shall be given you," the Bible says. Yes, of course. Grant me the wisdom to know that sharing doesn't mean losing.

—Aletha J. Lindstrom
Reprinted with permission 1982

I think Tracy Drake manages the Preserve with life force.

I raised a blue and white columbine for many years. I was surprised and pleased to find the western red and yellow columbine planted in the shade near the north door of the Nature Center.

Tony Baker (Native Landscape, 310-377-2536) informed me that he had planted the calochortus or mariposa lily in the Native Garden and around the building. Other lilies on the property are golden stars, bloomeria and blue dick or wild haunch. Several of our members have had him design their gardens. I think he is to be commended . . . and recommended.

Connie Vadheim also needs to be appreciated and commended for all she has done for the Friends and many others. Her class resumes in November. Her accomplishments are great. A remarkable person to know and love.

****FALL SALE****

**Friends of Madrona Marsh Gift Shop
All T-Shirts and Jewelry 25% off
Sale ends December 10, 2010**

Guests--Invited and Uninvited. . .

—Emile Fiesler

Eucalyptus trees were introduced to California by Australians during the California Gold Rush in the 1850s. Over the years, many native, fire-resistant oak trees were cut down and replaced by forests of these Australian trees. Eucalyptus trees promote fire because of the volatile and highly combustible oils produced by their leaves. Their leaves are also high in phenols, which are chemicals related to alcohols, that prevent their breakdown by fungi and hence the leaves accumulate as large amounts of dry, combustible fuel.

The reason for planting Eucalyptus forests was to use their wood for making furniture and railroad ties, among other items. It turned out to be a blunder, as railroad ties made from their wood tend to twist while drying, and become so tough that it is nearly impossible to hammer rail spikes into.

Eucalyptus trees are harsh on our local environment. They are notorious for their allelopathic nature, which means that they kill off surrounding plant life by releasing phenolic acids and other chemicals into the soil to which native plants have no resistance. They also draw enormous amounts of water from the soil via transpiration, or loss of water vapor, mainly from their leaves. In some areas in the world they are planted to lower the water table.

Eucalyptus trees, like other non-native plants, are usually not palatable, or recognized as edible, by our native herbivores. Hence, they support very little of our native fauna. They do however have their own biotope, as they often harbor a variety of Australian animals, most of which were brought over as unnoticed stowaways during transportation from the land down under.

One of those Australian animals is the Red Gum Lerp Psyllid (*Glycaspis brimblecombei*). It was discovered in 1998 in Los Angeles County, and has since spread throughout much of California.

Psyllids are insects in the family Psyllidae. Psyllid nymphs, which are the immatures, and adults feed by sucking plant phloem sap through their straw-like mouthparts. The nymphs excrete a sugary substance called honeydew, like aphids do. Redgum Lerp Psyllid nymphs form a protective cover called a 'lerp,' which is a small white, hemispherical cap composed of solidified honeydew and wax. 'Lerp' is a term derived from an aboriginal Australian language describing this cover. Lerps on leaves can be up to about 3 millime-

ters (1/8 inch) in diameter and 2 mm (1/12 inch) tall; see figure 1 below. Nymphs enlarge their lerp as they grow, or they move and form a new covering. The yellow or brownish nymphs resemble a wingless aphid, and are rarely seen, as they spend most of their time covered beneath their lerp.



Figure 1

An adult Redgum Lerp Psyllid is about 3 mm (1/8 inch) long, and has resemblance to a tiny cicada. Figure 2 shows a mating pair. They can fly, occur openly on



Figure 2

foliage, and do not live under lerp covers. High Redgum Lerp Psyllid population densities lead to the secretion of copious honeydew and cause premature leaf drop. Extensive defoliation weakens trees, can increase tree susceptibility to damage from other insects and diseases affecting eucalyptuses, and contributes to premature death of some highly susceptible species.

Redgum Lerp Psyllids infest over two dozen Eucalyptus species. In California, their favorite eucalyptus is the River Red Gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*), which we have on the Madrona Marsh Preserve.

South Bay Native Plant Corner

—Dr. Connie Vadheim, CSU Dominguez Hills



Coyote Bush *Baccharis pilularis*

Fall is an interesting season in the Preserve – and in native plant gardens and natural areas throughout Southern California. At a time when many native plants are dormant, certain species in the Sunflower Family (*Asteraceae*) are coming into full bloom. Native sunflowers from the Annual Sunflower to large shrub forms brighten the landscape with yellow or white blooms. The Coyote Bush (*Baccharis pilularis*) is among the more showy examples.

Coyote Bush is a native shrub that grows wild along the western coast from Oregon to Baja California. It is a common shrub in Coastal Shrublands, Coastal Sage Scrub and Chaparral. In our area, native varieties grow as medium to large-size shrubs (6-12 feet tall and wide). Other varieties from the Northern California coast are low-growing groundcovers. All are dense, evergreen (or nearly so) shrubs with small, leathery leaves.

Coyote Bush is extremely drought tolerant. It has both deep and shallow roots that allow it to extract soil moisture efficiently. It can die back (or be cut back) nearly to the ground and still recover after a prolonged drought or fire. In short, it is one tough plant!

As a habitat plant, Coyote Bush offers many advantages. The dense foliage provides cover and roosting spots for birds and small animals. Coyote

Bush provides food to many insect species year-round. But the insect show during the fall bloom season is spectacular! Be sure to spend some time watching the butterflies, bees and countless other insects visiting the flowers. Of course, all the insects attract insect-eating birds such as Phoebes.

Coyote Bush makes a wonderful shrub for the home garden. With just a little summer water it will be a handsome shrub year-round. You can prune it into a hedge or shape it to your garden's needs after the fall bloom period. Several low-growing cultivars ('Pigeon Point' and 'Twin Peaks') make good woody groundcovers or low hedges. It does best in full sun, and thrives in any local soil from sandy to clay.



Coyote Bush is an easy to grow shrub with many excellent qualities. There are separate male and female plants - if that's important to you, ask before purchasing. The female plants form showy fluffy seeds while male plants have gold flowers. Both are showy in bloom. So, enjoy this shrub in the Preserve – and consider it for your home garden. It thrives on neglect and is an adaptable and reliable native shrub.



Learn more about local native plants at our "Out of the Wilds and into Your Garden" series on the first Saturday of each month. Plant Information Sheets and Plant Lists are also available at the Nature Center.

“Guests...” continued from page 9.

Scientists have been looking for ways to keep the number of Redgum Lerp Psyllids under control. They want to avoid using pesticides, as most pesticides are toxic to the environment in general, humans included. They travelled down under, to the land of plenty, and found a tiny Encyrtid parasitoid wasp: *Psyllaephagus bliteus*; see figure 3. This wasp appears to be an effective control agent with a life cycle closely interwoven with that of the Redgum Lerp Psyllid. The Red Gum Lerp Psyllid Wasp is very small, about 2 mm or 1/10 inch long, and is harmless to humans and other animals, except psyllids.



Figure 3

The life cycle of this parasitoid wasp is as follows. The adult male and female wasps mate, and the females hunt for psyllid nymphs of a suitable size. The adult female wasp lays an egg inside a psyllid nymph; the egg hatches and the larva consumes the psyllid. After about two weeks, the wasp immatures pupate to adults, and chew a hole in the lerp covering to emerge and continue their life cycle.

I photographed and identified the lerp many years ago. In the beginning of the biological inventory project we are currently conducting at the Preserve, I identified the adult Redgum Lerp Psyllid, and recently found and identified the Red Gum Lerp Psyllid Encyrtid Wasp. This prompted the writing of this article, which can be seen as a case study accompanying my previous Marsh Mailing article with the title “Invisible Friends.”

Sources include UC-IPM, VoA News, and Wikipedia.

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 Oct. 15 - **Beth Shibata**, *A Photography Exhibit*.

Oct. 19 - Dec.3 - **Paul Blieden**, *A Photography Exhibit*. Artist Reception, Friday, Nov. 5, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Jan. 25-March 4 - **Al Hagan**, *Various Mediums-Pacific Arts*.

“Doctor Mike” -- Friend to All

Beth Scott, Senior Recreation Leader at the Nature Center and Preserve, has responsibility for many of the activities and programs there—including care of the live animals housed in the Nature Center. Some of these animals are native to the Preserve, like the gopher snake and California Kingsnake, which we keep to allow our visitors a closer look at an animal they may get only a fleeting glimpse of on the Marsh. Many others are animals native to other habitats that have been donated or abandoned here.

They all require, and receive, tender loving care from Beth and the staff. But occasionally our animals, especially those which are abandoned at the preserve, need professional care. Beth has often raved about “Doctor Mike,” a local veterinarian who is always available to provide excellent care for our latest emergency. And that's not all. Here is a tribute to Doctor Mike that Beth asked permission to include in the newsletter:

We would like to recognize Dr. Michael Zareski and the staff at the Western Veterinary Group located at 1950 Pacific Coast Highway, Lomita, who have given us free veterinarian care for the last 4 years. During this time he has seen a wide variety of animals. He's seen a bullfrog, mouse, rat, kingsnake, and several types of turtles and tortoises. The care he has provided at no cost has been much appreciated by everyone at the Madrona Marsh -- the staff, the volunteers, the visitors and the Friends of Madrona Marsh. Thank you, Doctor Mike!

Moonlight Magic Parking

Park at the Nature Center parking lot. Please carpool if you can, as parking is limited. We will have overflow parking at the Del Amo Mall, at the old Good Year Tire store just northwest of Ralphs, with a shuttle to the Nature Center. Just take Plaza del Amo west 0.2 miles from the Nature Center, just past Madrona Avenue. We will also have a separate golf cart shuttle from the front gate of the Preserve to the event location.

The shuttles will run from 6 to 7:30 p.m. and from 9:30 to 10 p.m. See you there!

Donations of \$100 or More

DATE	WHO	DONATION
April 2010	Mrs. E.C. Barnett	\$5,000
June 2010	The Caslers	\$100
July 2010	Samuel & Adelaide Rockwood Trust	\$5,000
August 2010	Iris L. McKinley	\$200

—Ellen Petersen, Treasurer

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