

Fall 2012

Marsh Mailing

Madrona Marsh Preserve and Nature Center

Moonlight Magic on Madrona Marsh

Mix a little bit of magic and, hopefully, some moonlight, and you will have the setting for a fun-filled evening at Madrona Marsh on Saturday, September 29.

Moonlight Magic, The Friends' most important annual fundraising event, has proven to be very entertaining, and, according to Bill and Fran Arrowsmith's account on page 4, even the prizes you win can provide some magic memories. (Note: This year CNPS is having their big fundraiser on the same day, Saturday, September 29, but starting much earlier and finishing before "Magic" starts—see page 3).

Beginning at 5 p.m. and lasting till 10 p.m., there will be music, wine, excellent food (see following page for the mouth-watering menu), an unusual silent and live auction, as well as extravagant gift baskets—all for the sum of \$50 per person.

Items for the live auction include:

- * A Big Bear Cabin Weekend
- * A Week for Four at Palm Springs Tennis Club Resort (October 14-22)
- * Snorkeling off Palos Verdes with underwater Naturalist, Daniel Marion
- * Hike and Bird Watch on Mt. Pinos with Naturalist Tracy Drake and Ron Melin
- * Air Tour in Steve McQueen's biplane from Western Museum of Flight
- * Paula McKendry's Original Work, Lunar Silence, pictured here and displayed in the Nature Center Gift Shop.

Also offered will be a Science Adventure for young children with Cindy Reid, Night Hike with Tracy Drake, Artworks by local artists, Car Detailing, Torrance Cultural Arts Center Tickets, Lunch with Max Presneill, Torrance Art Museum Curator, Stained Glass by Steve Chudy, Overnight at the Doubletree with Brunch, Children's Art Lessons with Suzanne



Artwork by Paula McKendry

Gibson, a Torrance Police Department Tour for Four—and still more!

Music will be provided by The Vipers, and catering provided by the Red Car Brewery, Naked Grape Wines and Peets Coffee and Tea of Rolling Hills.

Tickets are available at Madrona Marsh Nature Center—cash or check only; at Wild Birds Unlimited in Rolling Hills Plaza—cash, checks or credit card; or www.friendsofmadronamarsh.com—Paypal.

This event is sponsored by Toyota, Exxon Mobil, Walsers, Supervisor Don Knabe and Friends of Madrona Marsh.

Moonlight Magic 2012 Menu

Catered by

The Red Car Brewery

1266 Sartori Ave Torrance, CA 90501

Main Dish

~2 pieces of Herb Seasoned Grilled Chicken~

Fresh herb marinated chicken legs & thighs
grilled to perfection served with assorted house made sauces: smoky Red Car
Ale BBQ sauce, Chimichuri sauce and Sesame Soy Ginger Teriyaki sauce

AND

~A Pulled Pork Sandwich~

Juicy, tender pulled pork marinated in smoky
Red Car Ale BBQ sauce served on fresh artisan rolls

Sides

~Gran's Southern Style Cole Slaw~

Shredded Cabbage, green & red peppers and onions in a sweet & tangy
dressing

~Garden Salad~

Crisp Romaine lettuce, cucumbers, cherry tomatoes and red onions topped
with croutons; served with your choice of Red Car Brewery balsamic
vinaigrette or ranch dressing

~ Grilled Vegetable Pasta Salad~

Tri-color curly pasta, provolone cheese, artichoke hearts, olives, peppers,
sweet onions
and grilled summer harvest vegetables tossed together with a tangy
herbed dressing.

~Grilled Red Potato Salad~

Grilled Red potatoes, red onions, celery, apple wood smoked bacon tossed
in a red wine vinegar, shallot and olive oil dressing

Desserts

Red Car Brewery mini cookies:

Triple chocolate chip, Oatmeal Raisin and Peanut butter

PLUS

Red Car Brewery's great beer

Wine donated by Naked Grape Wines and

Coffee donated by Peets Coffee and Tea Leaf from their Rolling Hills Plaza
Shop

Native Plants, Gardens and Wildlands- Making the Connection

by Dr. Connie Vadheim, CSU Dominguez Hills

Editor's Note: The Annual Native Plant Sale is the major fundraising event for our sister environmental organization, the California Native Plant Society (PV Chapter). This year it is being held at the Nature Center, and on the same day as "Moonlight Magic," but earlier in the day—so that we all can attend both events!

Gardens are the interface between the man-made and natural worlds. Ideally, they fulfill basic needs—beauty, a sense of place, and a space where people, plants and wildlife interact. Unfortunately, not all gardens live up to their full potential. For too long, California's gardens have reflected our penchant for exotic plants from far-way places. Organizations like the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) are helping to change this.

In the best of worlds, the home garden is fitted into the landscape from which it arose; it is, quite literally, part of the local ecosystem.

This 'fitting' of gardens is particularly important in western Los Angeles County, where little natural habitat still exists and where natural preserves are literally neighbors to home gardens.

The time has come for a new gardening ethos—to create gardens that are both water-wise and life-friendly.

Native plants, particularly those native to our local area, play a key role in helping home gardens reach their potential. They are suited to our climate and provide essential services in preserves and gardens alike; conserving soils and water, recycling nutrients and providing essential habitat for native creatures. They do not invade our wildlands like some non-native plants. And they are easy on the eye and good for the soul.

It's time we make the connection between gardens and wildlands.

CNPS's annual plant sale has become the South Bay source for native plants. This year CNPS partners with Madrona Marsh to provide the best selection of California native plants that thrive in our area. This year's sale has been expanded to include free educational events, planting demonstrations, and assistance loading plants.

Located at Madrona Marsh Nature Center, 3201 Plaza del Amo, Torrance, CA 90503, the hours are:

Members only (CNPS, FOMM, PVPLC): Friday September 28, 5-7 p.m;

Public: Saturday September 29, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. For more information go to sccnps.org

Shirley's Turn

—*Shirley Turner*

Brown Tree Snake Guam, U.S.A.

In this age of internet, cell phones, ipods and ipads, what will humans think of next? It was a joy to see and learn new facts with a Video Magazine Dispatch on TV during breakfast recently. The brown tree snake has invaded Guam, U.S.A.

On the CBS Sunday Morning program on September 2, I saw this nocturnal snake sleeping in tree branches—invisible until it moved. After looking for it for two hours, scientists captured the snake for removal.

How did it get here? These snakes have extirpated 10 of the 12 native bird species on the island. There are 5,000 more brown tree snakes than native people. Find out more about this snake on *Wikipedia*.

You may recall much of its history and that Guam is on the other side of the international dateline—3,300 miles west of Hawaii. An island only 30 miles long, and 12 miles wide at its widest, it has the largest K-Mart in the world. Native people were shown fire dancing. Can you Google for their name?

Other residents include the U.S. military and many tourists viewing the magnificent sunsets.

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, P.O. Box 5078, Torrance, CA 90510.

Review

Starlight Magic 2011

After an hour of travel—okay, maybe an hour and a half from Los Angeles, we are in what Huell Howser would call “California’s Gold.”

Beautiful high country. Hawks, woodpeckers, Fox Sparrows, Clark’s Nutcrackers, Townsend’s Solitaires, fast-flying swallows, hummingbirds, unusual butterflies, lizards . . . and then there are the fading, but still fun to discover wildflowers—Douglas iris, Indian paintbrush, wallflowers, lupine of many varieties. Although it was a very dry year and we scheduled the trip late in July, we still found lots of flowers.

We thought we got carried away last year at Starlight Magic, bidding on the Mount Piños

excursion led by Ron Melin and Tracy Drake. I know now that it was absolutely not a mistake. Madrona Marsh benefited, and we most certainly did.

Ron and Tracy were at their best, hearing or spotting birds we would have missed, and showing us new butterflies and flowers we hadn’t seen before. And what delightful company they both were, bursting with excitement to share with us.

It was a magical day and we would do it again in a flash!

Hint: We highly recommend going up the day before and camping, as we did, then meeting Ron and Tracy the next morning. It makes for a very relaxing trip, on both days.

Fran & Bill Arrowsmith



NATIVE PLANT SALE
featuring native plants of the Palos Verdes Peninsula

Preview Night for CNPS, FOMM and PVPLC Members:
Friday, September 28
5 - 7 p.m.

Open to Everyone:
Saturday, September 29
9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

“Fall is for Planting”

New Location for 2012:
Madrona Marsh Nature Center
3201 Plaza Del Amo
Torrance, CA 90503

Background photo courtesy of Dr. Connie Vadheim. (See page 11 for more about sunflowers.)

“Your Brain on Nature”

A Book Review by Robert Carr

This book is about how to maintain your personal, community, and global health—physical, mental, and spiritual, in an increasingly crowded, urbanized age. Science focused, it makes the claim that recent broad-based medical research indicates “immersion” in nature is a valid therapy for many of our stress—related ills.

A survey of the latest medical research on the nature-health connection, **Brain on Nature** reveals that only recently has medical science taken this issue seriously.

Although yet to be proven, human interaction with nature, the authors say, may be encoded in our DNA. Therefore, we may be inextricably linked, health-wise, to the natural physical world from which we are now distancing ourselves.

A major thesis presented is that we are increasingly detaching ourselves from nature. Related to this, and to some degree driven by it, they say, is our preoccupation with and addiction to high technology related screens—“electronics,” such as TVs, video games, PCs, tablets, and smartphones. The effects of this on our overall well-being, including our brain’s functioning, is documented—fatigue, distraction, a sense of information overload, and generalized distress. This preoccupation also is child-obesity related. **Brain on Nature** sees mindful exposure to nature as the pathway to self-restoration, rejuvenation, and balance.

Undoubtedly, technology has given us many benefits—labor-saving devices, conveniences, and such meaningful technologies as life-saving medicines, MRIs, refrigerated foods, and rapid transportation. Some aspects, however, as mentioned above, are detrimental.

This book offers scientifically proven nature-based methods for reducing these apparent symptoms and result in an improvement in our sensory awareness and a boosting of efficiency in our exercise. Further, such bonding with nature, it is claimed, is vital for childhood development, results in nutrition—dietary awareness—and produces a sense of kinship with plants and animals.

Humanity’s relationship with nature spans more than two million years. Our early ancestors learned to respect and selectively use the natural world to

promote health of mind and body. In more recent times there is abundant historical evidence that humans intuitively understood the rejuvenating, uplifting power of nature.

Science has finally turned its attention toward the evaluation of our intuitive claims relating to the medical aspects of exposure to the more benign aspects of nature. The first such studies began in the 1970’s and today this field is well-established. These studies indicate environmental factors influence various aspects of our health and that we have completely underestimated the importance of the physical environment in this relationship—in particular the influence of water, vegetation, animals, and landscapes and the influence of non-built, non-synthetic sights, sounds and aromas in as close a form as possible to that from which we came.

Less contact with nature, particularly in one’s young years, according to the research, appears to remove a layer of protection against stress rejuvenation. Japanese research suggests also that nature deprivation may have wide ranging effects on the immune system. Increasing lack of direct exposure to nature appears to be associated with less empathy and attraction to nature. The fear is this, in turn, might lead to less interest in environmental efforts related to protecting the planet. Sustainability of the planet, the argument goes, will require that we maintain an intimate relationship with nature.

Research shows that, in order to truly care about the planet, one must have meaningful, mindful exposure to nature. Also, research is presented that indicates exposure to nature-based environments is associated with lower blood pressure and reduced levels of the stress hormone cortisol, and that such exposure is responsible for higher levels of activity in the branch of the nervous system responsible for keeping us calm (the parasympathetic unit).

Reading this book helps one more fully understand the impact that exposure to nature, or its lack, has on individuals and society. It suggests some important ways in which people can bring nature back into their lives.

We are at a “fork in the road. Our present and future happiness and well-being will depend, in part, on our willingness and capacity to reconnect in a mindful way with natural features such as landscapes, creeks, rivers, lakes, canyons, mountains, meadows, forests, and the sea.

Authors: Eva M. Selhub MD and Alan C. Logan ND. Publication date: 2012. Publisher: John Wiley

Madrona Marsh Preserve and Nature Center

Schedule of Events for October 2012 through January 2013

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	<u>1</u> CLOSED	<u>2</u> 8:30 am-Tour d'Torrance 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>3</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>4</u> 10 am-Tyke Hike (fee) 10:30-12:30-Propagation Society	<u>5</u> 10 am--12 n-Friday Fun*** Lala Ragimov Exhibit Ends**	<u>6</u> 8:45 am-12n-Hab. Restor. & Student Service No Native Plants Class
<u>7</u>	<u>8</u> CLOSED	<u>9</u> 9-11 am-Mornings on the Marsh 10 am-Adult Weeders No Native Plants Class Oppen Exhibit Begins**	<u>10</u> 8 am-Bird Walk/ Bob Shanman 10 am-Adult Weeders 6:30-8:30 pm-FOMM Board Meeting	<u>11</u> 10:30--12:30-Propagation Society	<u>12</u> 10 am--12 n-Friday Fun***	<u>13</u> 8:45 am-12n-Hab. Restor. & Student Service 10 am-1pm-Turtle/Tortoise day 7-9 pm-Night Hike-fee
<u>14</u> 2-4 pm-Second Sunday Science-Fantastic Spiders"-fee	<u>15</u> CLOSED	<u>16</u> 8:30 am-Tour d' Torrance 10 am-Adult Weeders 7 pm-Audubon Mtg.	<u>17</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>18</u> 10:30-12:30-Propagation Society	<u>19</u> 10 am--12 n-Friday Fun***	<u>20</u> 8:45 am-12n-Hab. Restor. & Student Service 7-9 pm-Star Party-View Jupiter 10 am-"Mushrooms"-fee 11 am-Kids' Storytime 11:30 am-Nature Crafts
<u>21</u> 1-3 pm-Watercolor for Kids-fee	<u>22</u> CLOSED	<u>23</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>24</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>25</u> 10:30-12:30-Propagation Society	<u>26</u> 10 am--12 n-Friday Fun***	<u>27</u> 8:45 am-12n-Hab. Restor. & Student Service 10 am-Nature Walk 9 am-Make a Difference Day
<u>28</u> 10 am-Nature Walk	<u>29</u> CLOSED	<u>30</u> 8:30 am-Tour d' Torrance 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>31</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders			

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 9. *No charge for Friday Fun, but reservations are required. For the latest event information, consult website, www.friendsofmadronamarsh.com.*

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				<u>1</u> 10 am-Tyke Hike (fee) 10:30-12:30-Propagation Society	<u>2</u> 10 am--12 n-Friday Fun***	<u>3</u> 8:45 am-12n-Hab. Restor. & Student Service 10 am-"Hide That Wall..." Dr. Vadheim
<u>4</u> 1-3 pm-Van Oppen Reception**	<u>5</u> CLOSED	<u>6</u> 8:30 am-Tour d'Torrance 10 am-Adult Weeders 6:30 pm-"Hide That Wall..." Dr. Vadheim	<u>7</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>8</u> 10:30--12:30-Propagation Society	<u>9</u> 10 am--12 n-Friday Fun***	<u>10</u> 8:45 am-12n-Hab. Restor. & Student Service
<u>11</u> VETERANS DAY	<u>12</u> CLOSED	<u>13</u> 9-11 am-Mornings on the Marsh 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>14</u> 8 am-Bird Walk/ Bob Shanman 10 am-Adult Weeders 6:30-8:30 pm-FOMM Board Meeting	<u>15</u> 10:30-12:30-Propagation Society	<u>16</u> 10 am--12 n-Friday Fun*** Van Oppen Exhibit Ends**	<u>17</u> 8:45 am-12n-Hab. Restor. & Student Service 9-11 am-"Stories of Birds" 6-9 pm-Star Party/Paul Livio
<u>18</u> 2-4 pm-Second Sunday Science-"Toys of Tongva"-fee	<u>19</u> CLOSED	<u>20</u> 8:30 am-Tour d' Torrance 10 am-Adult Weeders 7 pm-Audubon Mtg. Blieden Exhibit begins**	<u>21</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>22</u> CLOSED THANKSGIVING DAY	<u>23</u> 10 am--12 n-Friday Fun***	<u>24</u> 8:45 am-12n-Hab. Restor. & Student Service 10 am-Nature Walk
<u>25</u> 10 am-Nature Walk	<u>26</u> CLOSED	<u>27</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>28</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>29</u> 10:30-12:30-Propagation Society	<u>30</u>	

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
						8:45 am-12n-Hab.Restor. <u>1</u> & Student.Service 8:30-12-Arbor Day 10-12n-"Botany..."/Dr. Vadheim 1 pm-Watercolors for Kids-
<u>2</u>	<u>3</u> CLOSED	8:30 am-Tour <u>4</u> d'Torrance 10 am-Adult Weeders 6:30- pm-"Botany" /Dr. Vadheim	<u>5</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	10 am-Tyke <u>6</u> Hike (fee) 10:30-12:30- Propagation Society	<u>7</u> 10 am--12 n- Friday Fun***	<u>8</u> 8:45 am-12n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service
2-4 pm-Sec- <u>9</u> ond Sunday Science-"Holly Jolly Critters"- fee	<u>10</u> CLOSED	9-11 am-Mornings <u>11</u> on the Marsh 10 am-Adult Weeders	8 am-Bird Walk/ <u>12</u> Bob Shanman 10 am-Adult Weeders 6:30-8:30 pm-FOMM Board Meeting	<u>13</u> 10:30--12:30- Propagation Society	10 am--12 n- <u>14</u> Friday Fun*** 6:30 pm Blieden Reception**	8:45 am-12n-Hab.Restor. <u>15</u> & Student.Service 10 am-12-Christmas Wreath Class-fee 10 am-Christmas Bird Count Class-fee
<u>16</u>	<u>17</u> CLOSED	8:30 am-Tour d' <u>18</u> Torrance 10 am-Adult Weeders 7 pm-Audubon Mtg.	<u>19</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	10:30-12:30 <u>20</u> Propagation Society	10 am--12 n- <u>21</u> Friday Fun***	<u>22</u> 8:45 am-12n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service 10 am-Nature Walk
All Day- <u>23</u> Christmas Bird Count 10am-Nature Walk	<u>24</u> CLOSED	<u>25</u> CLOSED CHRISTMAS DAY	<u>26</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>27</u> 10:30-12:30- Propagation Society	10 am--12 n- <u>28</u> Friday Fun***	<u>29</u> 8:45 am-12n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service
<u>30</u>	<u>31</u> CLOSED					

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 9. *No charge for Friday Fun, but reservations are required. For the latest event information, consult website, www.friendsofmadronamarsh.com.*

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		<u>1</u> CLOSED NEW YEARS DAY	<u>2</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	10 am-Tyke <u>3</u> Hike (fee) 10:30-12:30- Propagation Society	10 am--12 n- <u>4</u> Friday Fun*** Blieden Exhibit Ends**	<u>5</u> 8:45 am-12n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service 10 am-12 n-Native Plants- TBA,Dr. Vadheim
<u>6</u>	<u>7</u> CLOSED	9-11 am-Mornings <u>8</u> on the Marsh 10 am-Adult Weeders 6:30-8:30 pm-Native Plants-TBA/ Dr. Vadheim	8 am-Bird Walk/ <u>9</u> Bob Shanman 10 am-Adult Weeders 6:30-8:30 pm-FOMM Board Meeting	10:30--12:30- <u>10</u> Propagation Society	10 am--12 n- <u>11</u> Friday Fun***	<u>12</u> 8:45 am-12n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service 6:30-8:30 pm-Night Hike
2-4 pm-Second <u>13</u> Sunday Science-"The Wonders of Winter"-fee	<u>14</u> CLOSED	8:30 am-Tour <u>15</u> d'Torrance 10 am-Adult Weeders 7 pm-Audubon Mtg.	<u>16</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	10:30-12:30- <u>17</u> Propagation Society	10 am--12 n- <u>18</u> Friday Fun***	8:45 am-12n-Hab.Restor. <u>19</u> & Student.Service 9-11 am-Winter on Edge 11-1pm-Storytime & Crafts for Kids 6:30-8:30 pm-Star Party/ Paul Livio
<u>20</u>	<u>21</u> CLOSED	<u>22</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>23</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	10:30-12:30- <u>24</u> Propagation Society	10 am--12 n- <u>25</u> Friday Fun***	<u>26</u> 8:45 am-12n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service 10 am-Nature Walk
10 am- <u>27</u> Nature Walk	<u>28</u> CLOSED	8:30 am-Tour d' <u>29</u> Torrance 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>30</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders			

JANUARY

Is the Preserve Still Open?

—Bill Arrowsmith, FOMM President

You may have heard that question recently, or a rumor to the effect that the Nature Center or Preserve is going to be closed. The short answer is that both the Preserve and Nature Center are open Tuesday through Sunday, except holidays, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.—just as they have been since the center opened in April 2001. We've had access to the Madrona Marsh Preserve since it became part of the Torrance park system in 1986—26 years ago.

So what led to the recent concern? Following is a brief review of what happened. Hopefully, this will not only answer your questions but may also serve as a guide for the future (see 'lessons learned').

What Got All This Started?

As you know we are currently (and slowly) recovering from a nationwide (and worldwide) recession, and the effects have been felt at the state and local level, as well. We are fortunate in Torrance that our Mayor and Council have been fiscally responsible—for many years—and our budget problems are not as severe as many other cities.

But there is still a problem: We are faced with costs that are basically the same but diminished funding due to the recession (e.g., lower property and sales taxes, less money from the state, etc.). So they/we had to do what anybody with budgetary problems would have to do: Look carefully at our city budget to find ways to either lower expenses or increase revenue. Think of it as a parent who has several children to feed—all of whom you love—but you just don't have as much money to buy food as you used to. You must either find more money, cheaper food, or embark at least temporarily on a diet.

The Budget Process

What the Mayor and Council did, starting in May, was to look carefully at programs that are heavily subsidized by the City, i.e., areas that bring in less revenue than they cost. Specifically, the Citizen Development and Enrichment Committee (Tom Brewer, chair, Pat Furey, and Gene Barnett) was tasked to review three such programs: The Madrona Marsh Preserve and

Nature Center, the Senior Excursion Program and the Torrance Art Museum. The most recent meeting of the CDEC was on Monday, August 13, and it was properly advertised. The purpose of this meeting, as I see it, was threefold: (1) Examine costs to see whether there is waste or inefficiency, (2) Identify possible streamlining or reductions, and (3) Gauge community support for the program.

How the Response Got Out of Hand

Of course all three areas were informed of the meeting and each immediately began to rally its supporters. At the very least, we each wanted to have a good showing at the meeting—so the committee would know that our program had strong citizen support.

Even early on there were rumors of possible dire consequences, such as closing of the Preserve or reducing the hours. The FOMM Board of Directors tried to dispel such talk, but at the same time we were trying to make sure our members would attend the meeting—and be very visible, by wearing green. We encouraged them to say a few words in support of the Preserve, to say what it meant to them, or at least to send those thoughts to the Mayor and Council.

Perhaps we all should have taken a cue from Kathy Benz. When she heard the first rumor of possible Marsh closure, she fired off an e-mail to Pat Furey. He responded immediately that nobody on the Council had any intention of closing the Preserve, and reassured her that the council was in full support of the Preserve and our programs. This message was relayed to the Board at our August meeting and we did our best to so inform our membership.

But it took only a couple of rogue e-mails suggesting much more serious consequences might be in store to trigger a flurry of very concerned e-mails to Council and to fill half the Council Chamber with 'green' supporters.

And How All Turned Out for the Best

Fortunately, Chairman Brewer and the other committee members addressed these concerns at the start of the meeting, once again assuring

"Preserve" continued on page 9.

“Preserve” continued from page 8.

us that there was no intent to close the Nature Center or Preserve, but merely to include it in the current budget examination.

Chairman Brewer assured us we would each be allowed one minute to address the committee after a formal presentation of budget details by Community Services Director John Jones. And address the committee we did—there were supporters from Torrance, Gardena, Redondo Beach, Lomita, Manhattan Beach and Palos Verdes—underscoring what a precious community resource we have in Madrona Marsh. We thank you all for reconfirming your faith in, and support of, the Preserve and Manager Tracy Drake’s wonderful programs. Your presence may not have been necessary, but you left a clear message that support for the Preserve is as strong as it was 40 years ago. Bravo!

Council Meeting, Tuesday, August 21, 2012.

Chairman Brewer reported to the City Council on Tuesday, August 21, via Director Jones, that his committee had examined the Madrona Marsh Preserve and Nature Center

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 served.

Through October 5. **Lala Ragimov** Exhibit. Artist’s reception September 21, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

October 9 through November 16 - **Ann Van Oppen**, “*Breaking News: Marsh-ians Spotted on Madrona Marsh.*” Artist’s Reception - Sunday, November 4, 1-3 p.m.

November 20 through January 4. **Paul Blieden**, “*Bugs and Frogs,*” A Watercolor Exhibit. Artist’s Reception - Friday, December 14, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

If you would like to display your art at the Nature Center, please call for more information: 310-782-3989.

programs as well as the Art Museum, and found that each met the budget efficiencies reported by staff. Translation: No changes to either program right now.

What Lessons Have We Learned?

We can’t know the future and whether the current recovery will continue. But hopefully we’ve learned that we are all in this situation together, and that our Mayor and Council are conscientious and devoted friends, who are trying to fairly represent all Torrance residents.

And though we may still have some difficult choices ahead, it is far better to face those choices in a spirit of cooperation and open discussion. And before you get too excited about any issue, send a quick email to your councilperson and verify the facts.

—**Bill Arrowsmith**

Donations of \$100 or More

Ellen Peterson, Treasurer

DATE	WHO	DONATION
June	Hermosa Garden Club	\$300.00
July	Alice & Robert Sasaki	\$100.00
July	Joanne Thompson	\$500.00
July	Shelley Lavender	\$100.00
September	Diane Gonsalves for Palo del Amo Woods Homeowners Assn.	\$150.00



Gazing in wonder, a young “Marshan,” Jonathan, is assisted in observing the transit of Venus last June at the Marsh.

Centennial Celebration Love a Parade?

Bill Arrowsmith

When was the last time you were IN a parade?
Gee . . . that's too bad!

Then join us (the "Marshans") on Sunday morning, September 16, as we proudly participate in the official Torrance Centennial Parade! Wear GREEN... or any FOMM Tee-shirt or sweatshirt . . . or your Madrona Marsh volunteer shirt.

Mary Garrity will also have some helicopter beanie hats for the certifiably silly among us.

Wear comfortable shoes . . . or not. It's only about a 5-block walk. We'll be carrying the FOMM banner and passing out flyers for *Moonlight Magic* and generally acting crazy. The parade (but not the zaniness) will end with the dedication of the new Centennial Plaza at El Prado and Cravens—and then perhaps we can brunch at Rudy's or Red Car?

Join Mary and Suzan and Bobbie and me—and the Mayor and Council at 10:45 a.m. on Sunday, September 16. We're Group A20. Meet at staging area on Post between Cravens and Arlington.

Parking is at a premium, so best to go to either Wilson Park or Torrance High School and take a free shuttle. More info at torrancecentennial.org

How can you pass this up? It happens only once every 100 years!

Picture Perfect

These pictures taken by Dinuk Magammana show a few of the sights from a recent pelagic boat trip to Santa Cruz Island. The trip was set up by Cindy Reid for docents and staff.



Right, Red-necked Phalarope, skims across the water



Dinuk Magammana

Left, The majestic Bald Eagle watches and waits.



Right, A Humpback Whale puts on a show for happy observers

© Dinuk Magammana

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South Bay Native Plant Corner

—Dr. Connie Vadheim, CSU, Dominguez Hills



Annual Sunflower
Helianthus annuus

Fall is a time of surprises. Just when we think the bloom season is over our fall-blooming native sunflowers swing into action. And oh what a show they put on from late summer through fall. They truly light up the landscape!

Our native Annual Sunflower (*Helianthus annuus*) is but one of a group of plants in the sunflower family (*Asteraceae*) that bloom in fall. Also in flower on the Preserve are the shrubby Mule Fat and Coyote Bush (*Baccharis pilularis*) and the Goldenbushes (*Isocoma* and *Hazardia* species). But the showiest sunflower by far is the Annual Sunflower.

Annual Sunflowers can be found throughout western North America from southwest Canada to Mexico. They grow in many plant communities where bare ground—or disturbed soils—are available. Many of us like to grow them in our gardens. Interestingly, this sunflower is the parent to many of the commonly-grown ornamental and agricultural sunflowers.

Sunflowers are not just pretty, they also are wonderful habitat plants. Their sweet nectar and pollen attract a wide range of insects from native bees (many species), pollinator flies, butterflies and beetles. You may also see hummingbirds nectaring on Annual Sunflower. The seeds, of course, are an excellent food source for seed-eating birds, small animals—even humans.

One of the most attractive features of Annual Sunflowers is that they attract so many different visitors—and over a long period of time. You can easily spend hours watching the sunflower visitors.

As their name suggests, sunflowers like sun. In fact, they move their flower heads to maximize sun exposure. So, look for Annual Sunflower in the sunny areas of the Preserve. You can't miss the masses of flower heads with their bright yellow ray flowers (look like petals) and dark central disk flowers.



If you want to grow Annual Sunflowers at home, you'll need to grow them from seed. Plant just before a good rainfall in winter; then be sure the young seedlings get plenty of rain/water. These are big plants (up to 6+ feet tall) so plant where they will have room. A good place is along a fence or around a vegetable garden or compost heap. Plants will re-seed on bare ground, even though birds eat most seeds. Remove the dead plants in late fall (or earlier if you save the seeds for your feathered friends).

Learn more about local native plants at our "Out of the Wilds and into Your Garden" series on the first Saturday of each month, repeating the following Tuesday evening. (See Calendar, pages 6-7.)

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



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