

Marsh Mailing

Madrona Marsh Preserve and Nature Center

Come Share the Magic

Suzan Hubert, *President*



Suzan Hubert

It is that time of year! Summer is fading, the Preserve hopefully prepares for rains, some birds are leaving, others are arriving, the insects keep on, the sunflowers are blooming and there is Magic in the air. The Friends of Madrona Marsh, old and new, prepare to gather once again under a full moon on the Preserve and

celebrate together at Moonlight Magic.

What are we celebrating? We celebrate our existence as a nature preserve in the middle of an urban city. We celebrate the people who made the Preserve and Nature Center possible. We are thankful for and celebrate The City of Torrance for their continued support, and thankful for the support from all of you who attend *Moonlight Magic*.

Moonlight Magic is our only fundraiser and it is, without doubt, the best buy in town. For only \$50 you can enjoy a dinner from the Red Car Brewery, hosted wines, live music from The Retros, all surrounded by the magical wilderness of the Preserve. Our favorites are back, Paul Livio and his telescopes. Mark Comon of Paul's Photo will be our Master of Ceremonies and the ever charming Paul Nowatka will return as auctioneer. Once again be prepared for the glitter of Bobbie Snyder's spectacular gift baskets and our priceless auction items.

I use the term "priceless" literally because no where else can you purchase your own personal bird walk with Bob Shanman of Wild Birds Unlimited or a Night Hike with Tracy Drake, Madrona Marsh Manager and Naturalist extraordinaire. You will also have the opportunity to bid on a snorkeling adventure with underwater naturalist Daniel Marion or, if you can outbid our El Camino friends, a long weekend at a lovely Big Bear cabin. There will be new things, familiar things, much talk and laughter, plenty to eat and drink, along with a no-where-else opportunity to cut loose and really howl at the moon.

At *Moonlight Magic* we try to walk our talk with the environment which is why we avoid single use plastic wherever we can. We rent glasses instead of using plastic; we use recyclable dishes and degradable paper goods. However, the forks we have are plastic and don't recycle. This year we have a

bonus for everyone who brings their own metal eating utensils. If you bring your own and show them to the person at the reception desk when you arrive, you will receive one free basket drawing ticket and some napkins.

Just say, "No thanks, I brought my own" to the plastic forks in the buffet line. Good for you, great for the environment.

Come enjoy the magic and support the Marsh. I hope to meet you under the moonlight.

Editor's Note: At the time of this writing the Marsh has received a clean bill of health from Vector Control and we are looking forward to a wonderful evening for our annual *Moonlight Magic* celebration. Should the situation change, the event will be cancelled for this year, ticket holders will be notified and the cost of their tickets refunded. (See page 4 for a report from Preserve Manager Tracy Drake on the status of the Preserve and the procedures and precautions involved in its re-opening.)

What to Wear to Moonlight Magic?

Dress for comfort and warmth as it gets cool on the Preserve at night. Wear a long-sleeved shirt, long pants and closed-toe walking shoes with socks. It might be nice to wear a hat as we lose a lot of body heat through our heads. Layer and bring a sweatshirt and/ or a jacket.

Thank You!

Heartfelt Thanks to our wonderful sponsors

ExxonMobil

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and

LA County Supervisor

Don Knabe

Contributions from our sponsors offset the cost of *Moonlight Magic*

Remembering Jack Knapp

Tracy Drake, Preserve Manager/Naturalist

Jack's been gone a while now, but I still miss him. I can still hear his voice in my head; see the tilt of his head when he was being emphatic about a teaching point—okay, he was emphatic a lot. He loved teaching and loved sharing the Preserve with the many school children he led on tours.

Jack was no nonsense; he was going to teach the kids—seemed to want to share what he knew about the Preserve and about life. The Preserve seemed so incredibly important to him.

Being precise and accurate in the information he shared was also really important. He always stopped his groups at the map just south of the main entrance. Carefully he would point out the trails and the different habitats, mention some of the animals and plants the kids would see, and give a brief history of the area. His teaching style seemed to give his students a sense of where they were—not only as it relates to the land that is the Preserve but also the geologic history and human history.



Standing behind the new map are Betty Knapp, Jack's wife, on the right, and their daughter, Lou Ann Treher. The map was donated by the Knapp family and their friends Pamela Baal, and Robert Fisher, of London, England. (Pamela grew up in Torrance.)

Maxine Trevethen lives in the condos just north of the Nature Center, and sometimes she comes over and shares things she has been reading. Recently, she came in and read to me from a book first published in 1892. Yup, that's right, 1892!—*The Naturalist in La Plata*, by W.H. Hudson. I was so impressed that I purchased the book, once I finally found it.

Maxine also read to me the following poem. As she read it, the gentle timber of her voice and well-

timed emphatic tones she placed on certain lines made me think of Jack.

Thank you Maxine—I truly love this poem, and thank you for reminding me about how incredible Jack was, because he, like Frost, also noticed the incredible specks of life

A Considerable Speck (Microscopic)

A speck that would have been beneath my sight
On any but a paper sheet so white
Set off across what I had written there.
And I had idly poised my pen in air
To stop it with a period of ink
When something strange about it made me think,
This was no dust speck by my breathing blown,
But unmistakably a living mite
With inclinations it could call its own.
It paused as with suspicion of my pen,
And then came racing wildly on again
To where my manuscript was not yet dry;
Then paused again and either drank or smelt—
With loathing, for again it turned to fly.
Plainly with an intelligence I dealt.
It seemed too tiny to have room for feet,
Yet must have had a set of them complete
To express how much it didn't want to die.
It ran with terror and with cunning crept.
It faltered: I could see it hesitate;
Then in the middle of the open sheet
Cower down in desperation to accept
Whatever I accorded it of fate.
I have none of the tenderer-than-thou
Collectivistic regimenting love
With which the modern world is being swept.
But this poor microscopic item now!
Since it was nothing I knew evil of
I let it lie there till I hope it slept.
I have a mind myself and recognize
Mind when I meet with it in any guise
No one can know how glad I am to find
On any sheet the least display of mind.

—Robert Frost

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.

A Project Whose Time Has Come

Tracy Drake, Preserve Manager/ Naturalist

[Editor's Note: In July of 2008, The Chevron Oil Company made a very generous donation to the City of Torrance: the ¾-acre plot of land at the northeast corner of Sepulveda and Madrona which is adjacent to the deepest part of our vernal marsh. Chevron specified that the donated land was intended to be an addition to the Madrona Marsh Nature Preserve. They had allowed the City and Friends have access to it for over 20 years as a viewing platform during walks around the preserve. Nothing has been done to the area since then, other than replacing its chain-link fence with a continuation of the Preserve's wrought-iron fence, plus the installation of a beautiful Native Plant Garden on the corner outside the new fence, cared for each Thursday morning by Linda Gonzalez and the "Propagation Society" volunteers.-B.A.]



Looking south along Observation Berm (newly added berm is at far end)

How many of us have driven past the corner of Madrona and Sepulveda and wondered if it would be converted into habitat some day? Well, "someday" has finally arrived!

Late in August, in cooperation with the Public Works and Park Services Departments and the Long Beach Conservation Corps (LBCC), we are completing our final projects funded by a grant from the Santa Monica Bay Project.

As we reported last year, the primary use of our \$700,000 SMBP grant was the planning and construction of a Biological Filtration System to clean the street runoff water stored in our sump. Most of that water is pumped onto the preserve each year, starting in late spring, to provide more open water for our new ducklings and goslings, just learning to fly.

The Biofiltration system was installed next to the sump in November 2011 and is functioning very well. The City also used SMBP funds to install American Stormwater Surf-Gates at all the streetside catch basins in the vicinity of the Preserve.

And now we are ready for our final two projects:

First, we are expanding the wetlands into the Chevron Corner space by removing dirt from the north-central portion, in a graded fashion, down to the



Newly added portion of Observation Berm, taken from top of berm.

level of the adjacent vernal marsh, thus creating a lagoon-like area. This not only enlarges the area of the vernal marsh (to more nearly what it was before construction of the Chevron station), but it will bring more open water and visiting ducks, egrets and herons into view of traffic along Sepulveda Blvd.

"Project" continued on Page 5



Restoration Chairman Dan Portway, left, briefs Friends President Suzan Hubert and former President Bill Arrowsmith on recent progress.

Managing the Preserve

Tracy Drake, Preserve Manager/Naturalist

Managing the Preserve is very complicated. It is a dynamic place; it changes daily. For most of the summer, once the wetland water has evaporated or infiltrated into the ground, we are preparing for the upcoming rainy season. We prune nearly all the trees and we reduce the tule patches to about 20 feet by 50 feet. Tules are among the fastest growing plants on the planet, so keeping them in check is really important. One important reason we keep tule populations down, and trim the trees, is to keep mosquito populations as low as possible, too.

Keeping mosquito populations low is a relatively straightforward process: The local Vector Control agency, early in the rainy season, puts fish in the water that eat mosquito larvae. If the fish do not keep up with eating the larvae, then Vector Control adds bacteria called BTI to the water. We as staff assist this process by keeping our tules upright and confined to small patches, and we keep lower tree branches pruned so they do not grow into the water.

Also on the Preserve is a Sentinel Chicken flock—one of about 200 in the county. As you may know, mosquitoes are attracted to birds, including chickens, as well as humans. But chickens do not become ill after being bitten by mosquitoes infected with encephalitis or with West Nile Virus, because they are able to form antibodies which protect them from these and some other diseases. But the presence of these antibodies in the blood of the chickens alerts us to the fact that there are disease-carrying mosquitoes nearby; hence, they are unwittingly acting as sentinels – warning us of dangerous diseases.

Weekly, Vector Control biologists monitor the blood of the chickens for evidence of West Nile Virus (WNV). Also weekly, Vector Control sets out four traps for mosquitoes and then collects them and tests the insects for WNV. Over this year, our mosquito counts have been low—lower than usual. But West Nile Virus was, and still is, present throughout LA County, so it was only a matter of time before it reached us. And in late July it finally did.

In response to positive test results from both our chickens and the trap located at the coop (the three other traps were negative), as a precaution, we closed the Preserve until we received negative reports on all four traps. That has now occurred, and the Preserve is open again.

Vector Control removed our Sentinel Chickens – they had produced antibodies and thus done their job to alert us – and replaced them with new Sentinel Chickens that tested negative for WNV. Because the chicken blood test takes longer to process, as it is

processed by a State lab in Sacramento, we have not yet received any results from tests of the new flock.

But we will—within a week or so. In the meantime, because we have so little water on the Preserve, we continue to have low mosquito counts.

It is safe to be on the Preserve during daylight hours. Mosquitoes are most active between dusk and dawn. So, if you are planning to attend *Moonlight Magic*, we recommend wearing long-sleeved tops and pants. Closed-toed shoes are also a good idea. Also, wear a mosquito repellent; additional repellent will be available at the event. Why? Because, just as we are proactive in our yearlong Preserve maintenance, we are asking you to be proactive in preventing any possible problems, even though the potential for being bitten is so remote.

In the wetland management process, we have learned a lot about mosquitoes, and about West Nile Virus. One interesting fact is that, according to the integrated Pest Management Institute of North America (IPM), there are 150 different species of mosquitoes in the U.S. and only a small fraction of those actually transmit disease. So, even though mosquitoes can carry WNV, most do not. Another interesting fact, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), most people infected with WNV will have no symptoms. Only about one in five people who are infected will develop any symptoms at all, and of those, fewer than 1 percent develop serious symptoms. So that's 0.2 percent of the total population, or 2 people out of 1000 who will develop serious symptoms.

Basically, If a person is healthy, is not frail, and does not have a weakened immune system – then that person is unlikely to contract WNV, even if bitten by a WNV+ mosquito.

Because so many people have come to us to ask questions—either in person, on the phone, or via the Madrona Marsh Preserve Facebook page—we were reminded that most people know very little about wetlands and even less about mosquitoes. But, luckily there are people who do understand the complexities of managing a wetland wilderness in an urban area like Torrance.

It is the dedicated staff, volunteers, and local agencies like LA West Vector Control, that make it all work and keep us safe; and for them, we are grateful.

Volunteer Opportunities

You have skills and we would be delighted to have you share them at the Preserve and Nature Center. We are really searching for a few Friends who would share a few hours of their time. Here are some activities to choose from.

Gift Shop

Spend 3-4 hours once or twice a month in the gift shop. The shop is generally open Tuesday-Sunday and during special events at the Nature Center.

Call 310-326-2774 and leave a message for Bobbie.

Docents

Docents lead the tours for preschoolers through high school students. Training is held during the summer and fall. There are about 4-5 two hour training sessions and encouragement is offered all year long. Docent tours are offered September through May, Tuesday-Thursday, from 10 a.m.-12 noon.

Call 310-326-2774 and leave a message for Sarah.

Outreach

We need some Friends who would staff a table at various local events in the South Bay. This is usually a half day commitment to smile, hand out flyers and talk about the Nature Center and Preserve. Occasionally the event host will provide lunch and you always meet interesting people.

Call 310-326-2774 and leave a message for Suzanne.

Writers

We publish four newsletters a year and would like to include your short story about your experiences at the Nature Center and Preserve. Articles need only be a paragraph or two. We appreciate correct spelling and punctuation and are hoping for articles of interest to our readers. Your name is necessary as we won't publish anonymous articles.

Call 310-326-2774 and leave a message for Bill.

"Project..." continued from Page 3



Local birder, Lance, kneels next to the water measurement pole near the Chevron Corner, aligning the level in his camera with the rim of the new lagoon to verify that level is high enough to retain the water when the vernal marsh is at "full pond." (Note the camera is even with the highest rust marks on the pole, at about the 78' elevation mark).

Secondly, we are using the dirt that we remove from the new "lagoon" to extend the Observation Berm just southwest of the nursery. This berm overlook is used extensively by our docents, birders and visitors, especially during the winter-spring wet season, and we have wanted to extend it south for years.

There was a lot of work and earth-moving in order to create these habitat enhancements. Come on by the Preserve to take a look.



Friday Fun with Cindy Reid: The Friday Fun preschoolers made butterfly wings to wear as they tour the Native Garden with teacher, Cindy Reid. (photo by Suzan Hubert)

Madrona Marsh Preserve and Nature Center*

Schedule of Events for September through December 2013

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<u>1</u>	<u>2</u> CLOSED	<u>3</u> 8:30 am-Tour d'Torrance 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>4</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>5</u> 10 am-Tyke Hike-donation 10:30-12:30-Propagation Society	<u>6</u> 10 am-12 n-Friday Fun***	<u>7</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab. Restor. & Student Service
2-4 pm-2nd Sunday Science-"Terrific Reptiles"-fee <u>8</u>	<u>9</u> CLOSED	<u>10</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>11</u> 8 am-Bird Walk/ 10 am-Adult Weeders 1- 2:30 pm-Senior Naturalist 6:30 pm-FOMM Mtg.	<u>12</u> 10:30--12:30-Propagation Society	<u>13</u> 10 am-12 n-Friday Fun***	<u>14</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab. Restor. & Student Service 8:30-am-Fall Migration
<u>15</u>	<u>16</u> CLOSED	<u>17</u> 8:30 am-Tour d' Torrance 10 am-Adult Weeders 7 pm-Audubon Mtg.	<u>18</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>19</u> 10:30-12:30-Propagation Society	<u>20</u> 10 am-12 n-Friday Fun***	<u>21</u> 5-10 pm-Annual <i>Moonlight Magic</i> Fundraiser
2-4 pm- <u>22</u> Story Time & Nature Crafts	<u>23</u> CLOSED	<u>24</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>25</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>26</u> 10:30-12:30-Propagation Society	<u>27</u> 10 am-12 n-Friday Fun***	<u>28</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab. Restor. & Student Service 10 am-Nature Walk 6:30 pm-Night Hike
10 am- <u>29</u> Nature Walk	<u>30</u> CLOSED					

SEPTEMBER

*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> 8:30 am-Tour d'Torrance 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>2</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>3</u> 10 am-Tyke Hike-donation 10:30-Prop. Society.	<u>4</u> 10 am--12 n-Friday Fun*** Hagan Exhibit Ends	<u>5</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab. Restor. & Student. Service
<u>6</u>	<u>7</u> CLOSED	<u>8</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders Joannie Spring Exhibit Begins**	<u>9</u> 8 am-Bird Walk/ Bob Shanman 10 am-Adult Weeders 1-2:30pm-Sr. Naturalist 6:30-8:30 pm-FOMM Board Meeting	<u>10</u> 10:30--12:30-Propagation Society	<u>11</u> 10 am--12 n-Friday Fun*** 6:30 pm-Spring Reception	<u>12</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab. Restor. & Student. Service 10-12 Mystery of Mushrooms (fee) 7-9 pm-Star Party
2-4 pm-2nd Sun. Science, 'Nature's Treasurers"-fee <u>13</u>	<u>14</u> CLOSED	<u>15</u> 8:30 am-Tour d' Torrance 10 am-Adult Weeders 7 pm-Audubon Mtg.	<u>16</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>17</u> 10:30-12:30-Propagation Society	<u>18</u> 10 am--12n-Friday Fun***	<u>19</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab. Restor. & Student. Service 10 am-Turtle/Tortoise Day 10-12-Kids Illustration-fee
<u>20</u>	<u>21</u> CLOSED	<u>22</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>23</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>24</u> 10:30-12:30-Propagation Society	<u>25</u> 10 am--12 n-Friday Fun***	<u>26</u> 8:30 am-Make a Difference Day 8:45 am-12 n-Hab. Restor. & Student. Service 10 am-Nature Walk
10 am- <u>27</u> Nature Walk 10 am-12-Kids Watercolor(fee)	<u>28</u> CLOSED	<u>29</u> 8:30 am-Tour d'Torrance 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>30</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>31</u> 10:30-12:30-Propagation Society		

OCTOBER

Nature Center & Gift Shop

(310)782-3989

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					10 am--12 n- Friday Fun*** 6:30pm-Joannie Spring Recep.**	8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service 9-11am-Binocular Seminar 10 am-12 n-"Roses"-Dr. Vadheim
<u>3</u>	<u>4</u> CLOSED	8:30 am-Tour d'Torrance 10 am-Adult Weeders 6:30- pm, "Roses"-Dr. Vadheim	<u>6</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	10 am-Tyke- Hike-donation 10:30--12:30- Propagation Society	<u>8</u> 10 am--12 n- Friday Fun***	<u>9</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service 10 am-12-Botan.& Zoo. Illustrations-fee
<u>10</u> 2-4 pm-2nd Sun. Science, Tongva Culture -fee	<u>11</u> CLOSED	<u>12</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	8 am-Bird Walk/ Bob Shanman 10 am-Adult Weeders 1-2:30 pm-Sr.Naturalist 6:30-8:30 pm-FOMM Board Meeting	<u>14</u> 10:30-12:30- Propagation Society	<u>15</u> 10 am--12n- Friday Fun***	<u>16</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service 9-11 am-Bird Stories
<u>17</u>	<u>18</u> CLOSED	8:30 am-Tour d' Torrance 10 am-Adult Weeders 7 pm-Audubon Mtg.	<u>20</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>21</u> 10:30-12:30- Propagation Society	10 am--12 n- Friday Fun*** JoannieSpring Exhibit Ends**	<u>23</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service 10 am-Nature Walk
<u>24</u> 10 am- Nature Walk	<u>25</u> CLOSED	<u>26</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders PV Photo Exhibit Begins**	<u>27</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>28</u> 10:30-12:30- Propagation Society	<u>28</u> 10 am--12 n- Friday Fun***	<u>30</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. & Student.Service

NOVEMBER

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.

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<u>8</u> 2-4pm- 2nd Sunday Science- "Winter Weather" -fee	<u>9</u> CLOSED	<u>10</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders 6:30- pm, "Japanese Gardens"-Dr. Vadheim	8 am-Bird Walk/ 1-2:30 pm-Sr. Naturalist 10 am-Adult Weeders 6:30 pm-FOMM Mtg.	<u>12</u> 10:30--12:30- Propagation Society	<u>13</u> 10 am--12 n- Friday Fun*** 6:30 pm-PV High Artists Recept.**	<u>14</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab. Re- stor. & Student Service 10 am-1pm-Holiday Wreath Making (fee) 6-8 pm-Night Hike
<u>15</u>	<u>16</u> CLOSED	8:30 am-Tour d' Torrance 10 am-Adult Weeders 7 pm-Audubon Mtg.	<u>18</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>19</u> 10:30-12:30- Propagation Society	<u>20</u> 10 am--12 n- Friday Fun***	<u>21</u> 8:30-11:30 am- Christmas Bird Count Class-fee 8:45 am-12 n-Hab. Re- stor. & Student Service 9-11 am-Bird Stories
All Day- Christmas Bird Count	<u>23</u> CLOSED	<u>24</u> 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>25</u> CHRISTMAS DAY CLOSED	<u>26</u> 10:30-12:30- Propagation Society	<u>27</u> 10 am--12 n- Friday Fun***	<u>28</u> 8:45 am-12 n-Hab. Re- stor. & Student Service 10 am-Nature Walk
<u>29</u> 10 am-Nature Walk	<u>30</u> CLOSED	8:30 am-Tour d' Torrance 10 am-Adult Weeders	<u>31</u>			

DECEMBER

Madrona Marsh Preserve - August 2013

This list was compiled primarily through the observations of Tracy Drake, Mark Rubke, Jean Wilkerson, David Moody and Ron Melin

Birds

Mallard	Black Phoebe	Yellow Warbler
Great Blue Heron	Say's Phoebe	Black-throated Gray Warbler
Great Egret	Cassin's Kingbird	Wilson's Warbler
Snowy Egret	Western Kingbird	California Towhee
Green Heron	Cassin's Vireo	Lark Sparrow
Black-crowned Night Heron	Hutton's Vireo	Song Sparrow
Cooper's Hawk	Western Scrub-Jay	Western Tanager
Red-shouldered Hawk	American Crow	Blue Grosbeak
American Kestrel	Common Raven	Lazuli Bunting
American Coot	Northern Rough-winged Swallow	Red-winged Blackbird
Willet	Barn Swallow	Hooded Oriole
Western Gull	Cliff Swallow	House Finch
Mourning Dove	Bushtit	Lesser Goldfinch
White-throated Swift	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	American Goldfinch
Anna's Hummingbird	Northern Mockingbird	House Sparrow
Allen's Hummingbird	European Starling	Orange Bishop
Downy Woodpecker	Orange-crowned Warbler	Nutmeg Mannikin
Pacific-slope Flycatcher	Common Yellowthroat	

Butterflies

Monarch	Cabbage White	Umber Skipper
Queen	Cloudless Sulphur	Eufala Skipper
Gulf Fritillary	Gray Hairstreak	Fiery Skipper
Mourning cloak	Western Pygmy Blue	Sandhill Skipper
Western Tiger Swallowtail	Marine Blue	Funereal Duskywing
Giant Swallowtail	Acmon Blue	White Checkered-Skipper

Dragonflies

Common Green Darner	Wandering Glider	Blue Dasher
Blue-eyed Darner	Spot-winged Glider	
Flame Skimmer	Pacific Forktail	

In Memoriam

We extend our deepest sympathy to long-time Friends volunteer Evelyn Young and her family upon the passing of her husband, Newt Young. Newt was legendary in the Torrance community for knowing what was happening in the city and standing up for what he believed was right. Newt was an 84-year-old Korean War Veteran and an outspoken defender of veterans' rights. We are honored to receive a \$1000 donation to the Friends in honor of this loyal marsh supporter.

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.

Through October 4, **Al Hagan**, "*Showing the Beauty of the Marsh, Part III*," Various Mediums by Pacific Arts.

October 8 - November 22, **Joannie Spring**, "*Small Wonders of a Dry Marsh*," A Photography Exhibit. Artists' Reception Friday, October 11, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

November 26 - January 3 - **Palos Verdes High School Photography Class**, *Photography Exhibit*. Artist's Reception Friday, December 13, 6:30-8:30 p.m.



On the Marsh — A young family of Canada Geese in April, in photo above, and, below, in late May. What a difference a month makes!



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Madrona Marsh



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Shirley's Turn

—Shirley Turner

It was shocking to see *TIME Magazine's* August 19, 2013 cover reading, "A World Without Bees; The Price We'll pay if We Don't Figure Out What's Killing the Honeybee." This story, about *Apis mellifera*, I felt, should be reported in *Marsh Mailing*. The take-home message is that we are very close to the edge. It is a roll of the dice, says Jeff Pettis, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Bee Research Laboratory. They are working very hard to discover what is bugging the bees. Are bees a victim of viruses or pesticides?

The honeybee is not a native species. It was imported to North America in the 17th Century. It found a perfect niche in a food system that demands crops at ever cheaper prices and in greater quantities. Scientists have coined the term colony collapse disorder (CCD). Now they are dying on a scale rarely seen before. The reasons remain mysterious. One third of honeybees died this past winter, 42 percent more than the year before. Only honeybees can pollinate the almond. They can increase the crop on cantaloupe, cucumbers and cranberries.

Some beekeepers live in country that has become inhospitable for honeybees. Bees need flowers, forage, and wild spaces. Vast fields of corn or soybeans are little more than a desert to bees. They are starved for nectar and pollen. They have decreased from 8 million in 1934 to 2.2 million today. Since 2006 more than 10 million hives have been lost at a cost of \$2 billion. In southwest China all bees are lost; apples and pears require hand pollination. Bees may end up managed like cattle, pigs and chickens. **Will we have food to eat in a few years?**

Hannah Nordhaus in her 2011 book *The Beekeeper's Lament; How One Man and Half a Billion Hungry Honey Bees Help Feed America*, wrote "Honey bees are the glue that holds the agriculture system together." That glue is failing. Around 2006 commercial beekeepers began noticing no honeybees in their hives. Tim Tucker, Vice President of the American Federation of Beekeepers says that over time we can increase bees but we cannot replace beekeepers. The story of John Miller, beekeeper, is told in *Beekeeper's Lament*. Bryon Walsh in *TIME* tells the story of Jim Doan who has kept bees since age five. In college he planned to teach agriculture but became a big time beekeeper until 2006 when he suffered losses every year. Now he is selling his land and may go to work at Walmart. So many have lost the battle against the Varroa mite introduced in 1987. Jerry Hayes, head of Monsanto commercial bee work says "It is not easy to kill a little bug on a big bug. Should the government give the big commercial beekeeper a break?"

Neonicotinoid insecticides are safer for farmers, but bees are uniquely sensitive to them. In bees they attack the nervous system interfering with their flying

and navigation abilities without killing them immediately. The European Commission decided to ban them now.

Beekeeper's Lament is a cannot-put-down book dealing with many aspects of bees. About 1851, Lorenzo Lorraine Langstroth, after studying ants, turned to bees. He observed that bees needed exactly three eighths of an inch to fly and move in a hive, so he developed the hive still in use today. He published in 1853 *The Hive and the Honey-bee*. The Book is still in print.

Trevor Carson, author of *The Secret Life of Lobsters*, says Hannah's *Beekeeper's Lament* is "A rollicking buzzing, and touching meditation on mortality . . . you will never think of bees and beekeepers, or the fruits and nuts of their labors the same way again."

Betty Knapp brought me the book from Torrance Katy Geissert Library. Bees loved Jack Knapp's native plant front yard. (See Jack Knapp story on page 2.) This book is available on Kindle and Amazon. Hannah Nordhaus, an award winning journalist, has written for the *Los Angeles Times*, *Financial Times*, and *The Village Voice*. She lives with her family in Boulder, Colorado. You can learn more about her at www.HannahNordhaus.com.

In the early days at the Marsh, Anita Hall suggested we present a Second Sunday Science program. I had fun with bee programs serving clover, orange and sage honeys on unsalted crackers. I exhibited the flowers as well when I could find them. LeRoy Jackson, City Manager of Torrance, gives the program now. He keeps a hive in the sump area.



What is It? According to Emile Feisler this mystery object found on the Marsh is approximately 5 mm (0.2 inch) long. Any ideas? Let us know.

South Bay Native Plant Corner

—Dr. Connie Vadheim, CSU, Dominguez Hills



Water Smartweed

Polygonum (Persicaria) hydropiperoides

The gradual drying of our seasonal marshes ushers in an interesting group of plants that begin growth in moist soil and complete their flowering and fruiting during the fall. You may have noticed an attractive example—Water Smartweed—in your rambles on the Preserve. This wetland plant provides color, food and interest from summer through fall.

Water Smartweed is an herbaceous perennial that grows in moist places throughout California and much of the United States. It spreads via underground stems (rhizomes) and rooting stems, a common characteristic of wetland perennials. Smartweed can be a problem in some parts of the country, where it grows into lakes. The seasonality of local wetlands keeps this plant in check at the Preserve.

Water Smartweed grows rather like a garden perennial; it sends up a number of upright or leaning stems during the warm months of spring and summer and dies back in fall/winter. Its alternate leaves can be lance-like (see photos) or more linear. The leaves are bright green in summer and early fall; by mid-fall they provide one of the nicest sources of fall red color on the Preserve. They start out a brilliant crimson red and end up a nice russet brown.

The flowers are what many people notice about this plant. Smartweeds bloom anytime from June to October, depending on the season's precipitation. The small, pink and white flowers usually grow elongated clusters at the ends of branches. Before opening they look like a cluster of pastel bubbles

along the stalk. The seeds, eaten by seed-eating birds, are small, dark and shiny.



The name *hydropiperoides* means 'water pepper.' Water Smartweed is an important source of tangy summer greens. Native Californians use this plant raw or cooked as a vegetable. As with most edible greens, the young foliage is most palatable. Water Smartweed was traditionally used as a medicinal plant as well as an antiseptic for skin infections and as a cure for poisoning.

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.

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