

# Marsh Mailing

**Madrona Marsh Preserve and Nature Center**

## The Return of the Rain

—Tracy Drake, Naturalist/Manager

When the rains come, as they did in late November, the water is quickly ushered away from the City through a maze of underground passageways—a true marvel of civil engineering.

At the Preserve, though, every drop is treasured and taken in by thirsty soil and drought-parched plants. Here, the rain is welcomed and invited to stay for the season.

This invitation has amazing consequences. Within days tiny grasses sprout and leaves on several types of plants uncurl from their drawn-inward state as they soak up the pre-



*Mallard, Gadwall and American Wigeon can now be seen on the Preserve.*

cious moisture. Animals return. For example, at night some of the Pacific Tree Frogs are beginning to sing and numerous ducks can be seen gliding through the newly flooded wetland pools.

Staff works all year weeding, planting and tree-pruning in preparation for the incoming water.

It is incredibly rewarding to witness the re-filling of the wetlands and the return of so many species—the effects of the rain on the lush green grass, the rustle of the leaves in the cottonwood trees, and

the morning chorus of birds.

*Tracy's column continues on page 2.*

## Friends of Madrona Marsh Annual Meeting Set

Mark your calendars for the next annual meeting of the Friends of Madrona Marsh. **Sunday, January 25**—the Sunday **BEFORE** the Super Bowl—is the date, and the time is set for 3 p.m. The meeting will be held at the Nature Center Meeting Room, and light refreshments will be served.

### Special Guest Speaker

The guest speaker will be Mr. David Sundstrom of the South Coast Chapter of California Native Plant Society.

He will talk about the restoration of the recently opened Dominguez Gap Wetlands—50 acres of beautiful riparian habitat less than 10 miles away:

--How was it restored?

--What role does it play in storm water management?

--How is this like the new Torrance Stormwater Basin Enhancement Program?

Come see this interesting program.

### Lifetime Achievement Award

A Lifetime Achievement Award will be presented to Mrs. Shirley Turner. Come share in honoring one of our most dedicated Marshans.

### Also. . .

The Annual Report will be presented by our Preserve Manager Tracy Drake

And. . . election of four directors will be held. Candidates are:

Ellen Peterson,  
Suzan Hubert,  
Bill Arrowsmith and  
Bill Forrest.

*Tracy-continued from page 1.*

## The Gift

I really did not want to make an appointment to meet someone after five o'clock—especially since I had already worked eleven hours that day. But, over the phone, Paul seemed so polite, friendly, and kind when I made an appointment with him and his wife to come in. He said they were interested in making a donation to the Marsh.

Early evening came. The Nature Center grew quiet as visitors and Staff left for the night. Soon, the three of us, Paul, and his wife Karen, and I went into the Docent room to sit and talk.



*50th Anniversary Federal Migratory Waterfowl stamp print*

Mostly I sat and listened as Karen told the story of her father passing nearly a year ago, and about having to 'go through his things,' and about the joys of finding prints like the one pictured above. Slowly, she started to talk about the donation, and shared how much she enjoyed the Preserve, and thought it was the perfect place to honor a bit of her father's memory.

Maybe it was because it was the day of the anniversary of my father's passing, and maybe it was because her story was similar to mine, but we soon grew tearful as we recounted how our dads got their sons involved in stamp collecting and how some way we as daughters developed an interest in these things also.

We shared our stories for a while and I agreed to honor her dad, Saul Waldman, by framing and hanging the print, and matching stamp, in the Nature Center.

As I watched the red lights of their car recede down Plaza del Amo, I became aware of what an honor for us it was for them to have selected the Center as a recipient of this very special donation.

After they left, I moved the print/stamp set into

*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](mailto:gonwild2@yahoo.com) or Bill Arrowsmith, [TheArrowsmiths@sbcglobal.net](mailto:TheArrowsmiths@sbcglobal.net) or dropped off or mailed to the Nature Center.

my office for the time being, and before leaving the building I opened it again and admired it for a while. I was reminded that all of us have our stories, and we all have losses that we, for the most part, carry alone. But, at least for Karen's family, the specialness of Madrona Marsh Preserve, their fond memories, family, love and joy remain.

Thank you Karen and Paul, from all of us—for your special gift.

## The Programs of November

November was a busy month at the Madrona Marsh Preserve and Nature Center. We held our normal programs: Tour de Torrance, a Tyke Hike, Mornings on the Marsh (a walk for senior citizens), a Bird Walk, and two Nature Walks.

In addition to these programs, we provided three school tours for more than 250 students, and held the usual Saturday morning restoration programs during which more than 175 people participated, including some 50 students from Dr. Randy Wade's Harbor College Microbiology class.



*Scouts work on Preserve restoration.*

The special events of the month were well-received and attended. Joannie Spring was the featured artist of the month.

Ron Libbrecht is the next featured artist. His watercolor landscapes are well-known locally. In fact, his painting of the bridge across Torrance Boulevard is on display at our city Police Department. The huge mural in our Exhibit Hall was also done by him. Ron's paintings are presently viewable in the Nature Center until the middle of January. If you are in the area, it is well worth the effort to view it.

On November 8, Frank Navratil gave his class on the history, use, and making of biodiesel fuel. This is the fourth time he has held this class at our Center, and it continues to be popular, interesting and inspirational.

On November 18, Paul Livio held a class on the natural history of the sun. At the end of the program the participants went to our parking lot, and viewed the sun through a solar telescope. Doing so, they saw a

*Tracy-continues on page 4.*

# from the president

—Bill Arrowsmith

The *Winter Marsh Mailing* bridges the seasons of fall and winter, an exciting time of year for observers of the plants and animals, particularly birds, on the Marsh. It is a time of endings: Last year's dry, fallen leaves—sycamore, poplar and willow—and of new beginnings: The arrival of the first winter rains and the first frogs and migrating waterfowl—gadwalls, wigeons, mallards and teals.

This is also a time when we flip the 12th page of our calendars and begin a new cycle of tracking our planet's revolution about its favorite star. The Roman god Janus, for whom January is named, faces both forward and backward—reminding us of an opportunity for both retrospection of the year just past as well as contemplation of the future year's prospects.

As troublesome as the past year was for many of us personally, we reached some great milestones on the Marsh:

◆ We received a wonderful \$50,000 donation from Al Martin and Virginia Davis to start off the year. This was the largest single donation we had ever received and came at a particularly opportune time: we had just recently realized that the Proposition A State funding, which has provided staffing and program support since 2001, will run out in just a few years. Unless supplementary financing can be found it will be difficult to maintain our current level of fine programs. The Martin donation is a nice step in that direction. A new corporation, the Madrona Marsh Foundation (MMF), has been formed with the goal of building a sustainable fundraising program and ultimately establishing a permanent endowment. More information is available at the Nature Center.

◆ In April we held a grand opening to celebrate the completion of five beautiful new display cases of taxidermy dioramas and their installation in the Exhibit

Hall. This was a nearly two-year effort of the Friends, led by Fran Arrowsmith who coordinated with Manager Tracy Drake, expert taxidermist Igor Caragodin, and Split Rock Studios, our Minnesota contractor. If you have not yet seen these remarkable displays of the different habitats, seasons, and inhabitants of the Marsh, please do stop by.

◆ In July we received an extremely generous donation of land from the Chevron Oil Company. A three-quarter acre parcel at the corner of Sepulveda and Madrona, the "Chevron Corner," boosts the total area of the Preserve to 45 acres. This was a tremendous gesture by Chevron, who was under no obligation to donate the property; they received nothing in return but our good will and sincere thanks. Chevron, you didn't have to make this donation but, as Winnie the Pooh would say, "We are ever so glad that you did!" Our plans for the corner include a new filtration system to treat storm runoff water before it enters the marsh and a new sign.

◆ This year also saw the introduction to Torrance of an exciting new program by the Community Services Department, under Director John Jones, and the Public Works Department, under Director John Dettle. The Stormwater Basin Enhancement Program will greatly elevate the ability of our stormwater basins, or sumps, to reduce high levels of pollutants in winter storm runoff. At the same time, the program will improve the wetland habitats in these sumps and will even upgrade or add recreational opportunities. The cost of the enhancement program is estimated to be a small fraction of the cost of constructing a new water treatment facility near the coast. The initial three sumps targeted for the program are Amie, Henrietta, and Entradero Storm Basins in West Torrance. We are extremely proud of this innovative and environmentally sensitive step forward by the City of Torrance.

◆ Finally, I'd like to say a special word of thanks to a long-time Marsh supporter, Dale Lincoln. Dale is doing more than anyone I know to help us see and prepare for the future. He worked for years to convince people that the City's drainage basins should be considered natural habitat areas, and that many could be significantly improved. We are glad to see his suggestions finally coming to fruition with the enhancement program just described.

Dale is also very concerned with the potential financial problems that Madrona Marsh may face in the future. To that end, he researched an investment option called a Charitable Remainder Trust and made a presentation before the Madrona Marsh Foundation. Money placed by you in a trust of this type remains in your control while you are alive, and when you die it is distributed according to your previously specified wishes.

...*president* continues on page 8.

## ***The FOMM Board of Directors***

- Bill Arrowsmith, President
  - Connie Vadheim, Vice President
  - Ellen Peterson, Treasurer
  - Carol Roelen, Recording Secretary
  - Jeanne Bellemin
  - Bill Forrest
  - Bobbie Snyder
  - Sarah Noddings
  - Archie Phillips
  - Mary Garrity
  - Suzan Hubert
  - (one open position)
- Ex-officio:**
- Jack Knapp
  - Maxine Trevethen
  - Shirley Turner

*Tracy continued from page 2.*

very large solar flare that Paul claimed was at least 30,000 miles in height!



*Dr. Vadheim's California Native Plant Sale*

On November 22, the Friends of Madrona Marsh held their 3<sup>rd</sup> native plant sale. For many years now, Dr. Connie Vadheim has been working tirelessly to make Madrona Marsh the place to go for information about California native plants and drought-tolerant gardening here in the South Bay. Nearly 100 people came to learn about and purchase her plants—she is achieving her outreach goal. Thank you, Connie. You have been a tremendous asset to the City of Torrance and especially to our visitors and students.



*Early morning fog hovers over the Marsh*

Late in the month, after the rain, conditions became perfect for the return of ground fog. Early in the morning, just before sunrise, one can see it 'hanging' on the Preserve. Once the sun rises, conditions change and the sun "burns off" the fog. But, during that short time, when the fog is visible, it is indeed beautiful.

## **It Takes a Bit More Than a Village**

Sometimes one learns about a person, not so much by their words or their actions, but by the consequences of both. Such is the case as I learn about, and work with the outstanding staff of the Nature Center and Preserve.

They remind me of the ecological adage, "Diversity equals health of habitat." The Staff is very diverse. Each has his or her own gifts and all contribute to the many successes we share daily.

When you come to visit, you will likely encounter both a tremendous volunteer and a very dedicated Staff member. Our Staff at the Preserve includes:

**Ruth McConnell**, who is and has been dedicated to supporting the Second Sunday Science class for many years. She shares her knowledge about restoration to visitors and fellow workers alike.

**Robert Carr** is quiet, unassuming, extremely bright and a bit of an imp. Bob mentors our science fair students, and is our resident biologist. Kids are drawn to his caring and giving nature.

**Mark Christiansen** is dedicated, very reliable, creative and a perpetual student of science and weather. Mark works mostly on weekends, and assists with special and evening events.

**Linda Gonzales'** main responsibilities center around the plant nursery. She is gifted in the care and raising of plants. She understands them and their needs better than anyone I have ever known. She successfully grows thousands of plants a year here.

**Beth Scott's** responsibilities are administrative but she truly excels at sharing nature with very young children. Beth also creates nearly all the fliers for our many programs.

**Ron Melin** is outgoing and gregarious, passionate about life, and has with his hard work, created a following of high school students who come to the Preserve every weekend for Habitat Restoration. He also leads all our scout programs and is by far the best 'birder' on our Staff.

**Daniel Marion** is a born teacher. No matter what he is teaching, students listen and are fully engaged. Also he is an excellent writer and is developing several new brochures for the Preserve and Nature Center.

**Keith Kallonoff** is a tinkerer. With what looks like minimal effort, he keeps the Nature Center grounds very manicured. He, too, is a perpetual student—always learning and sharing.

Our team is very talented in a number of ways and has become a close-knit team in order to serve as teachers and as stewards of our shared natural history.

*Tracy continues on page 5.*

Tracy-continued from page 4.

## A Welcome Guest

David Moody found her first, but that is really not a big surprise. If it is out there on the Preserve, he will be the one to find it!

The female Black-and-White Warbler pictured below came to the Preserve before Thanksgiving, and is still here! This bird likely came from Central or Eastern Canada and normally migrates south to its habitual wintering grounds in the extreme coastal regions of the Carolinas, Georgia, Florida, and the islands nearby, including Cuba.

Some of these warblers end up wintering in Central and Southern Mexico and a few find their way to southern Baja California. It is uncommon that this species is blown by what we consider inclement weather, to the coast of California. Maybe once every five years or so, one shows up at the Preserve.

This individual is fairly easy to spot as it forages on insects in our willow trees. There seems to be adequate food present for her—and with a bit of luck, she will stay the winter, and in the spring will migrate back to her breeding region.

If you would like to come and see her, just give us a call at the Nature Center. Maybe together we will find her.



—Tracy Drake  
Manager/Naturalist

## Shirley's Turn

—Shirley Turner

The widespread popularity of pandas was demonstrated recently by the attention a pair of giant pandas received when they arrived at the Taiwan Zoo. Donated by China as a “charm offensive,” millions of people watched their arrival on TV.

The endearing pandas have been pampered and nurtured to the point that zoos have fed pandas chicken soup to boost nutrition and relieve stress. In our country one panda recently had an eye operation. The World Wildlife Fund has even chosen the giant panda for its logo.

San Diego Zoo has produced a DVD on the birth and raising of their baby panda. The DVD was shown by KCET as a fund raiser for \$75 donation at six a.m. one Saturday morning. It would be a good addition for the Marsh library.

My antenna went up since I am reading **The Lady and the Panda** written by Vicki Constantine Croke, which was published in 2006. Jean Steenson had suggested our book club read it and that I be leader of the discussion. The book is a page turner about Ruth Harkness, a New York socialite, who takes over her late husband's expedition to China to capture the most mysterious elusive giant panda.

In 1936 she battled hordes of bandits, hostile natives and determined rivals to be the first to bring back a giant panda to America. *Washington Post* called it the book of the year. *Newsday* said this adventure story deserves to be on every animal lover's bookshelf. I found the description of the countryside, her love of the people and the history of that time to be excellent.

Deidre Donahue in *USA Today*, August 8, 2005, states the book is about more than pandas:

“The live baby panda was presented to Chicago's Brookfield Zoo, and the zoo's attendance record for one day of 53,000 has never been broken. Harkness transformed the way people perceived animals. Ruth brought back Su-lin not in a cage or on leash but in her arms. Ruth told the world that this animal was not an ‘it’ but an individual with a unique personality. Croke's book makes sure that the world has not forgotten the importance of wild animals.”

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## Donations--\$100 or More

The Friends of Madrona Marsh would like to say “thank you” to the donors below, all of whom gave us \$100 or more.

October 24	The Clarks	\$100.00
December	Donated in the name of Jane Nishimura by Robert & Linda Diggles	\$125.00
December	Donated in the name of Ruth McConnell by Robert & Linda Diggles	\$125.00
December 26	Rebecca Moore	\$200.00
December 26	James Justiss	\$400.00

—Ellen Peterson, *Treasurer*

# Madrona Marsh Preserve and Nature Center

## Schedule of Events\*

January-April –2009

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				<b>1</b> NEW YEARS DAY	<b>2</b>	8:45 am-12 n-Student Serv. <b>3</b> 8:45 am- 12 n-Habitat Restor. 10 am-12 n-“Beyond the Lawn...”-Dr. Connie Vadheim
<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> CLOSED	<b>6</b> 8:30 am- Tour de’ Torrance 10 am-12 n-Habitat Restoration-Weeders 6:30-8:30 pm- ”Beyond the Lawn...” /Dr. Connie Vadheim	<b>7</b> 10 am-12 n-Habitat Restoration-Weeders 7:15-9 pm-	<b>8</b> 10 am- Tyke Hike	<b>9</b>	8-10 am-”Birding by Ear” <b>10</b> 8:45 am-12 noon- Habitat Restoration 8:45 am-12 n-Student Service 2-2:45 pm-Children-Nature Stories Around the World
2-4 pm- Second Sunday Science- Sharks <b>11</b>	<b>12</b> CLOSED	<b>13</b> 9 am-Mornings on the Marsh 10 am-12 n-Habitat Restoration-Weeders	<b>14</b> 8 am-Bird Walk/Bob Shanman 10 am-12 n-Habitat Restoration-Weeders 7:15-9 pm- FOMM Board Meeting	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	8:45 am-12 noon- Habitat Restoration 8:45 am-12 n-Student Service <b>17</b>
<b>18</b>	<b>19</b> CLOSED	<b>20</b> 8:30 am- Tour de’ Torrance 10 am-12 n-Habitat Restoration-Weeders 7 p.m.-Audubon Mtg.	<b>21</b> 10 am-12 n-Habitat Restoration-Weeders 5:30-6:30 p.m.- MMF Board Meeting	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	8:45 am- 12 noon- Habitat Restoration 8:45 am-12 n-Student Service 10 am- Nature Walk <b>24</b>
10 a.m- Nature Walk 3 pm-FOMM Annual Meeting (see page 1.) <b>25</b>	<b>26</b> CLOSED	<b>27</b> 10 am-12 n-Habitat Restoration-Weeders	<b>28</b> 10 am-12 n-Habitat Restoration-Weeders	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	8:45 am-12 n-Student Service <b>31</b> 2-4 pm-Early Life of Dinosaurs (Ages-9+)

### JANUARY

*\*All activities and classes meet at the Madrona Marsh Nature Center, located at 3201 Plaza del Amo (between Maple and Madrona), on the north side of the street. (For the very latest on events visit [www.friendsofmadronamarsh.com](http://www.friendsofmadronamarsh.com). Also, see Artists Corner, page 9.*

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b> CLOSED	<b>3</b> 8:30 am-Tour de’ Torrance 10 am-12 n-Weeders	<b>4</b> 10am-12 n-Habitat Restoration-Weeders	<b>5</b> 10 a.m.- Tyke Hike	<b>6</b> 6:30-8:30 pm- Artist’s Reception for Paul Blieden	8:45 am- 12 n- Hab. Restor. <b>7</b> 8:45 am-12 n-Student Service 10 am-12 n- “Lupines. . .” Out of the Wilds-/Dr. Connie Vadheim
2 - 4 pm-Second Sunday Science- “Aquarium of the Pacific” <b>8</b>	<b>9</b> CLOSED	<b>10</b> 9-11 am-Mornings on the Marsh 10 am-12 n.-Weeders 6:30-8:30 pm “Lupines. . . .” Dr. Vadheim	<b>11</b> 8 a.m. Bird Walk/ /Bob Shanman 10 am-12 n-Habitat-Weeders 7:15-9 pm-FOMM Board Meeting	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	8:45 am-12 n- Habitat Restor. <b>14</b> 8:45am-12 n-Student Service 11-11:55 am-Love of Bugs, Birds and Animals-fee
<b>15</b>	<b>16</b> CLOSED	<b>17</b> 8:30 am- Tour de’ Torrance 10 am-12 n-Habitat Restoration-Weeders 7 pm- Audubon Mtg.	<b>18</b> 10-12 noon-Habitat Restoration-Weeders 5:30-6:30 pm- MMF Meeting	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	8:45 am - 12 noon- Habitat Restoration 8:45 am-12 n-Student Service 6:30-8:30 pm-Night Hike <b>21</b>
<b>22</b>	<b>23</b> CLOSED	<b>24</b> 10 am-12 n-Habitat Restoration-Weeders	<b>25</b> 10-12 n.-Habitat Restoration-Weeders	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	8:45 am-12 n -Hab.Restor. <b>28</b> 8:45am-12 n-Student Service 10 am-12n-Nature Walk 7-9 pm-Star Party

### FEBRUARY

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

Brought to you by  
 Friends of Madrona Marsh

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>1</b> 10 am-12 n- Nature Walk	<b>2</b> <b>CLOSED</b>	<b>3</b> 8:30 am-Tour de'Torrance 10 am-12 n-Weeders	<b>4</b> 10am-12 n-Habitat Restoration-Weeders	<b>5</b> 10 am- Tyke Hike	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> Arbor Day-off-site-TBA 8:45 am- 12 n- Hab. Restor. 8:45 am-12 n-Student Service 10 am-12 n-"Pests. . ."Dr. Vadheim 1-3 pm-Native Plant Sale 6:30-8:30 pm-Night Hike
<b>8</b> 1-3pm-"Writing Wild" Workshop 2 - 4 pm-Second Sunday Science- "Fossils"	<b>9</b> <b>CLOSED</b>	<b>10</b> 9-11 am-Mornings on the Marsh 10 am-12 n-Weeders 6:30-8:30 pm "Pests..." Dr. Vadheim	<b>11</b> 8 am Bird Walk/ /Bob Shanman 10 am-12 n-Habitat-Weeders 7:15-9 pm-FOMM Board Meeting	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> 8:45 am-12 n- Habitat Restor. 8:45am-12n-Student Service 11 am-12 n-Bugs, Birds and Animal Activities-fee
<b>15</b>	<b>16</b> <b>CLOSED</b>	<b>17</b> 8:30 am- Tour de'Torrance 10 am-12 n-Habitat Restoration-Weeders 7 pm- Audubon Mtg.	<b>18</b> 10-12 noon-Habitat Restoration-Weeders 5:30-6:30 pm- MMF Meeting	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> 8:45 am - 12 noon- Habitat Restoration 8:45 am-12 n-Student Service
<b>22</b> 7 am-12 n- Photo Day at the Marsh	<b>23</b> <b>CLOSED</b>	<b>24</b> 10 am-12 n-Habitat Restoration-Weeders	<b>25</b> 10-12 n.-Habitat Restoration-Weeders	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> 6:30-8:30 pm-Artist Reception- Jennifer Siegel	<b>28</b> 8:45 am-12 n -Hab.Restor. 8:45am-12 n-Student Service 10 am-12 n- Nature Walk
<b>29</b> 10 am-12 n- Nature Walk	<b>30</b> <b>CLOSED</b>	<b>31</b> 8:30 am- Tour de'Torrance 10 am-12 n.-Habitat Restoration-Weeders				

**MARCH**

*\*All activities and classes meet at the Madrona Marsh Nature Center, located at 3201 Plaza del Amo (between Maple and Madrona), on the north side of the street. (For the very latest on events visit [www.friendsofmadronamarsh.com](http://www.friendsofmadronamarsh.com). Also, see Artists Corner, page 9.*

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			<b>1</b> 10 am-12 n-Habitat Restoration-Weeders	<b>2</b> 10 am- Tyke Hike	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> 8:45 am-12 n-H. S. Service 8:45 am- 12 n-Hab. Restor. 10 am-12 n-"Garden of Gourmet Seasonings"/ Vadheim 10 am-1 pm-Turtle Day 7:30-9:30 pm-Star Party
<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> <b>CLOSED</b>	<b>7</b> 8:30 am- Tour de' Torrance 10 am-12 n-Habitat Restoration-Weeders 6:30-8:30 pm-"Garden of Gourmet Seasonings" / Dr. Vadheim	<b>8</b> 8 am- Bird Walk/Bob Shanman 10 am-12 n-Habitat Restoration-Weeders 7:15-9 pm- FOMM Board Meeting	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> 8:45 am-12 noon- Habitat Restoration 8:45 am-12 n-High School Service Learning
<b>12</b> <b>CLOSED FOR EASTER</b>	<b>13</b> <b>CLOSED</b>	<b>14</b> 9 am-Mornings on the Marsh 10 am-12 n-Habitat Restoration-Weeders	<b>15</b> 10 am-12 n-Habitat Restoration-Weeders 5:30-6:30 pm- MMF Board Meeting	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b> 8:45 am-12 n-H. S. Service 8:45 am-12 noon- Habitat Restoration
<b>19</b> 2-4 pm- Second Sunday Science- Spring Migration/Jess Morton	<b>20</b> <b>CLOSED</b>	<b>21</b> 8:30 am- Tour de' Torrance 10 am-12 n-Habitat Restoration-Weeders 7 pm-Audubon meets	<b>22</b> 10 am-12 n-Habitat Restoration-Weeders	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> 8:45 am- 12 noon- Habitat Restoration 8:45 am-12 n-H. S. Service 9 am-12 n-Earth Day Expo 10 am- Nature Walk
<b>26</b> 10 a.m- Nature Walk	<b>27</b> <b>CLOSED</b>	<b>28</b> 10 am-12 n-Weeders	<b>29</b> 10 am-12 n-Habitat Restoration-Weeders	<b>30</b>		

**APRIL**



# "Writing Wild" Workshop Explores The Preserve

—Beth Shibata

The warm October Sunday welcomed those gathered for the writing workshop for an afternoon of creative exploration. After getting to know one another and sharing personal goals with our writing, we did a writing warm up to gently stretch and open our creative energies, focusing on the word "wild" and its dictionary meanings, and what they mean personally.

Our next activity was to walk outside and experience an aspect of the Preserve. This time, we wandered the gardens, observing where the shifting seasons had brought them and exploring with as many senses as possible. The gardens always surprise with their quiet, persistent being.

On returning from the garden, we captured our observations and experiences and shared them individually and in group writes, gathering more insights and seeing in which direction each writer might want to develop his or her work.

By the end of the workshop, several poems emerged in answer to the question, "How can I move closer to nature?" Their more polished shape was assisted by the workshop leader, Beth Shibata.

## How to Become One with Nature

by Midori Kamei

1. Find an empty canyon.
2. Go in the morning when it's cool  
and the breeze runs the bright yellows  
to orange and red.
3. Go alone.
4. Take notes. Write while the colors still glow  
like precious gems of memory.
5. Maybe find a friend to share this with.
6. Maybe not.

## How to Be One with the Wild

by Beth Shibata

Let go of the lists.  
Let go of the stuff.  
Let go of the things  
that clutter and distract.

Drop the sheaves of paper.  
The wind will make them fly,  
the rain will make them mulch.  
They will become earth again.

Untie the electrical cords  
that bind us to those towers.  
Return to ground and earth.  
Feel the sun on your face.

Listen to the silence.  
Listen to the wind.  
Listen to the stories  
the birds tell one another.

If you sit quietly,  
the ducks will come  
toward you.

*Beth Shibata writes the column, "From the Margins" for the **Gardena Valley News**. Her writing has appeared in **The Easy Reader**, the **Daily Breeze**, the **Los Angeles Times Calendar**, and national martial arts magazines, and she is the writing half of the collaborative team that created "Black Ink: Entering Spirit and Form," an exploration of the relationships between fine and martial arts in poetry, essay, and ink painting.*

*She has received awards for her poetry, fiction and essays and conducts writing workshops that encourage children and adults to deepen and develop their creativity through playing with the tools of language.*

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## from the president -continued from page 3.

Dale found a version of this type trust that is operated by The Nature Conservancy and which allows one to designate other recipients besides TNC. As long as you make TNC the beneficiary of at least half of your trust, the Conservancy will allow you to designate other charities (such as MMF) for the remainder, and they do all the paperwork, legal and financial, including investments.

If a hundred of us were to each designate \$10,000 to the MMF in this way, we would be \$1 million dollars closer (or about halfway) to our permanent endowment goal. Dale has started the ball rolling by opening his own Charitable Remainder Trust with TNC and designating the Madrona Marsh Foundation as a beneficiary. If you are interested, contact Dale or me or check out the Nature Conservancy website. Thank you, Dale, and thank you for showing us one more way to assure the future of the Marsh!

I hope to see ALL of you at the Annual Meeting on Sunday afternoon, January 25, at the Nature Center. We will have a very interesting speaker and will be honoring one of our finest, the "Marsh Mother," Shirley Turner, with a lifetime achievement award. Be there!

May you all have a happy and prosperous new year.

-Bill Arrowsmith



# Thank You for Thanking Us

Each year it is our pleasure to lead youngsters from local and nearby schools on walks through the Preserve and Nature Center. These walks are always fun and it is reward enough for our guides just seeing the joy of discovery on the young visitors' faces—whether they have just touched a tortoise, frog or snake for the first time, or seen their first egret or monarch caterpillar. Their excitement is contagious and we often find ourselves returning to the wonder and awe of our own grade school years. The kids are also usually very grateful, remembering to thank their guides before they climb back aboard the bus or walk back to school.

But sometimes we get an extra special thank-you as a class takes the time and effort to send us thank-you letters. We were delighted one recent week to receive four terrific illustrated books of such letters from two third-grade classes from Caroldale Learning Center in Carson, and two from Hickory Elementary in Torrance.

The books are remarkable, demonstrating that their authors really DID pay attention. In fact, one student or another seemed to hear every word that was said, to see every bird, butterfly, or ladybug. And they are learning to express themselves well, sometimes struggling with spelling new words like “harlequin bug” or sycamore tree, but their phonetic spelling is fine. It is truly refreshing to find that we have ambitious new generations who are not only observant and sharp, but also courteous and appreciative. Thank you all for making us guides feel just a little more worthwhile.

If you enjoy talking to youngsters (most of our tours

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## 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 January 16 - **Ron Libbrecht**, “*Painting Moments at the Marsh*,” a Photography Exhibit.

January 20-March 6, 2009 - **Paul Blieden** - “*Birds of Madrona Marsh*,” A Photography Exhibit- Artist's Reception - Friday, February 6, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

March 10-April 24 - **Jennifer Siegel**, “*Paintings of the Marsh*,” an Exhibit of Paintings. Artist's Reception - Friday, March 27, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

are about 3rd grade level) or if you know someone who does, please consider joining our cadre of tour guides. Give us a call at the Nature Center, 310-782-3989. We are putting together a new training and refresher course for tour guides and would love to have you join us. It would be tragic if we had to stop providing these popular tours to schools, but unless we have some new volunteers we may have to do so. We are down to four leaders, and two of those may retire soon. Please consider volunteering—you'll never regret it.

—**Bill Arrowsmith**

P.S. We would also like to thank the students and student council of Seaside Elementary School in Torrance for including Madrona Marsh as one of four charitable organizations that they supported with money raised by the students. These students are living a valuable first civics lesson by learning about, and contributing to, organizations like FOMM in our community. Thank you, Seaside!

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## Madrona Sonnet

Madrona Marsh: a dream, a miracle, eternal  
In verdant leaf-filled scented spring  
Has shed winter's drear, then is vernal.  
Flower hues delicately duel as finches sing.

Dawn's swirling fingers of ghostly mist  
Linger over ebon ponds with willows framed,  
Languid pools by damselflies kissed...  
Exploding from matted reeds, scarlet Bishop  
birds flamed.

The marsh: a sanctuary, refuge, a preserve.  
I lost a loved one, went there to mourn  
Found solace 'neath the poplar, scent of  
lavender  
Only here was I no longer so forlorn.

Cottonwoods quiver, meadowlarks call,  
hummingbirds hover.  
Sun-drenched, mist-laden, the marsh speaks  
to us—to each other.

—**Elaine Endres**  
October 2008

*Elaine Endres is a former member of the Marsh Board of Directors, and continues to organize and direct the dedicated group that folds, seals and labels each **Marsh Mailing**. She is an avid birder and world traveler.*

# South Bay Native Plant Corner

—Dr. Connie Vadheim, CSUDH



## Bladderpod - *Cleome isomeris* (*Isomeris arborea*)

Imagine a plant that looks like a large-sized bonsai tree with gnarled and interesting branches. Add exotic-looking flowers with seed pods like hanging green sacks and you're beginning to get the picture. Bladderpod (*Cleome isomeris*; formerly *Isomeris arborea*) is one of our more unusual native shrubs.

Bladderpod is our only local member of the Cleome family (Cleomaceae). Formerly included in the Caper family (Capparaceae), it is closely related to the radishes. If you taste the seed pods—which are edible—you will taste a spicy flavor with a hint of radish. The plant itself has a distinctive odor.

Bladderpod has an unusual distribution, ranging from the seacoast of Southern California to the desert and further east into Arizona and south into Baja California. Also found on the central California coast and in the Sierra Nevada foothills, it is the only native plant with this unusual distribution. What all areas have in common is coarse, sandy soils and the dry slopes and bluffs on which Bladderpod grows. Look for Bladderpod on desert dunes on your next trip to the desert—what a surprise to see them there!

Bladderpod is a medium to large woody shrub

that is usually 3 to 5 feet tall, but can reach as much as 10 feet high and wide at maturity. Beginning life as a half-woody sub-shrub, it develops its characteristic silver-barked branches only with age. It has fleshy three-part leaves that are light green in color.

Bladderpod's bright yellow flowers may appear at any time during the year, but are most abundant in spring. These flowers—which attract hummingbirds and other native pollinators—look tropical with their long, graceful stamens. You can see Bladderpod blooming now on the Preserve. While admiring the showy flowers and unusual seed pods, keep an eye out for hummingbirds and the Harlequin Bugs that eat the foliage and pods.



Bladderpod grows well in most local soils. It needs full sun (will become leggy otherwise) and little summer water once established. It is a great addition to the water-wise garden—just water several times each summer and it will be happy.

Easy to grow, Bladderpod requires little in the way of pruning and is generally disease- and pest-free. It can be used as a shrub, as a hedge plant and it does well on slopes.



**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.**

# Birds, Butterflies and Dragonflies of the Preserve

November 2008

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

## Birds

American Wigeon	<b>Allen's Hummingbird</b>	Hermit Thrush	Lincoln's Sparrow
Gadwall	Downy Woodpecker	<i>Swainson's Thrush</i>	Golden-crowned Sparrow
Mallard	<b>Northern Flicker (Red-shafted)</b>	<i>American Robin</i>	White-crowned Sparrow
Great Egret	<b>Northern Flicker (Yellow x Red-shafted)</b>	Northern Mockingbird	Dark-eyed Junco
<i>White-tailed Kite</i>	Black Phoebe	European Starling	<b>Red-winged Blackbird</b>
Cooper's Hawk	<b>Say's Phoebe</b>	Cedar Waxwing	Western Meadowlark
Red-shouldered Hawk	Cassin's Kingbird	Orange-crowned Warbler	Brown-headed Cowbird
Red-tailed Hawk	<i>Cassin's Vireo</i>	Yellow-rumped Warbler	<b>House Finch</b>
American Kestrel	Warbling Vireo	Black-throated Gray Warbler	Purple Finch
American Coot	Western Scrub-Jay	Townsend's Warbler	Lesser Goldfinch
Ring-billed Gull	American Crow	<i>Black and White Warbler</i>	<b>American Goldfinch</b>
California Gull	Common Raven	Common Yellowthroat	House Sparrow
Western Gull	Tree Swallow	Western Tanager	<i>Pin-tailed Whydoh</i>
Rock Pigeon	<b>Bushtit</b>	<b>California Towhee</b>	<i>Orange Bishop</i>
Mourning Dove	Bewick's Wren	Chipping Sparrow	Nutmeg Mannikin
<i>Yellow-chevroned Parakeet</i>	House Wren	<i>Lark Sparrow</i>	
White-throated Swift	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Savannah Sparrow	<i>Italics = rare species to Madrona</i>
<b>Anna's Hummingbird</b>	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	Fox Sparrow	<b>BOLD = Breeding</b>

## Butterflies

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

## Dragonflies

Common Green Darner	Variegated Meadowhawk
Blue-eyed Darner	Wandering Glider
Flame Skimmer	Black Saddlebags
<i>Cardinal Meadowhawk</i>	Blue Dasher

# Friends of Madrona Marsh

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Annual Membership: \_\_\_\_\_ New \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal

Individual \_\_\_\_\_ \$10    Family \_\_\_\_\_ \$20    Youth (under 18)/Senior (over 65) \_\_\_\_\_ \$5

Patron \_\_\_\_\_ \$35    Club/Organization \_\_\_\_\_ \$50    Business/Industry \_\_\_\_\_ \$100

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Please send your donation or offer of services to:

**Friends of Madrona Marsh, P.O. Box 5078, Torrance, CA 90510**

FOMM is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation. Your donations are tax free within the law.

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