

Spring 2009

Marsh Mailing

Madrona Marsh Preserve and Nature Center

Lifetime Achievement Award Goes to Shirley Turner

—Bill Arrowsmith

For everyone who knows and loves the Madrona Marsh Preserve, Shirley Turner has become legendary. Her association with the Friends of Madrona Marsh goes back to our inception in the early 1970s and in those 35 plus years she has been deeply involved in almost every facet of our organization. At the January 2009 Annual Meeting of the Friends, we presented Shirley with a Lifetime Achievement Award in an attempt to show our appreciation for all that she has contributed to the success of the Friends and to the preservation and restoration of our precious wetland.

The more you know about the history of the Marsh and the effort to save it and restore it, the more you know about Shirley's role in those efforts. Nobody but she knows everything she has done, but the following is a brief sampling:

In the early days of the Friends, just after our formation in 1972, the first task was just to familiarize people with this swamp called "Madrona Marsh"—what it was, where it was located and why it was important that it be saved. And at the same time, FOMM was trying to raise money—primarily for publicity and to start a nest egg with which we hoped to one day buy at least a portion of the marshland—which at that point was privately owned.

Shirley was involved in many of those early efforts—bake sales, rummage sales, food and game booths at the Fourth of July celebration, and others. My first memory of her was at a FOMM annual meeting in the Main Library meeting room. She and a few other women had provided the cookies and goodies for the meeting. When we discovered that our slate was one short of the 12 directors called for in our by-laws, we asked Shirley if she would like to sit on the Board. She accepted ... and became, I believe, the longest continuously serving member of the Board of Directors for the Friends, with over 25 years of service.



Shirley Turner is presented with a Lifetime Achievement Award at the recent FOMM annual meeting. (Photo courtesy of Connie Vadheim.)

Shirley became involved in many of the activities of the Friends, and for many, many years served as an advocate at Park and Recreation Committee and City Council meetings. Shirley did much more than just attend; her voice and opinion were well-known in those chambers.

Within the Friends, Shirley started a newsletter many years B.C. (before computers)—to keep us all aware of what was happening. That precursor to the current *Marsh Mailing* bore Shirley's imprint at many levels—as reporter, photographer, editor and mailer, often all in the same issue.

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Continued from page 1

In the early 1980s Shirley joined many other 'Marshans' and members of homeowners associations in collecting signatures for a referendum on the Park Del Amo development proposed for the Marsh. The success of that drive (over 14,000 signatures in just a few weeks) led to a series of negotiations between the coalition of Marsh supporters and the developers, and ultimately to a compromise in which the developers obtained slight increases in density on portions of their 160-acre development, but dedicated 35 acres for the Madrona Marsh Preserve. (Another 8.5 acres was purchased by the City with \$1.5 million which had been raised up to that point.)

Shirley continued the process of introducing people to Madrona Marsh long after the successful battle to preserve it. She continued publishing the FOMM newsletter and became increasingly involved in what we now call "outreach programs"—taking the message of the Marsh to scout troops, YM/YWCA groups, schools and fairs. Her van was always filled with the posters, pictures and literature she would use to introduce another group of children or adults to the mysterious place called Madrona Marsh.

But Shirley's van was filled with much more than her outreach materials, because once we had access to the Marsh (about 1986) she became involved in what she is probably best known for: Restoration! She has spent thousands of hours on the Marsh—working there herself and teaching others how to distinguish between Native Plants and Invasive Weeds; how to harvest seeds from the natives and grow seedlings; and how to plant those seedlings on the Marsh.

She was instrumental in getting our first native plant nursery established. And she worked with many community groups, like Boy/Girl Scouts, Eagle Scouts and the YM/YWCA to encourage them to get involved in restoration projects on the Marsh. As Tracy Drake has said, "There is probably not a square inch of the Marsh that has not seen Shirley's hand in restoration at some point."

She and Ruth McConnell organized our very

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.

popular Tyke Hike Program for pre-schoolers and their parents, and they led these monthly explorations for years, introducing yet another generation to the wonders of Madrona Marsh.

President Obama has asked us all to work together to restore our country. Shirley Turner has shown us right here in Torrance just how much one dedicated person can accomplish.

Shirley, there is no way we can ever give back to you even a fraction of what you have given to the Friends and to the Marsh, but may the Lifetime Achievement Award we presented to you this year be a small reminder that your friends from Madrona Marsh are extremely grateful for all that you have done. It has been our pleasure to work with you and learn from you.

New Gifts for the Inside And Outside

Torrance's motto is: A Balanced City—balanced, that is, among residential, commercial and industrial uses. We find that's true even with the donations for the Preserve. We were recently the recipient of two very generous gifts, one from the industrial sector and one from the residential.

In January **Dow Chemical** donated beautiful new tables for our classroom/presentation room. The new tables are narrower and lighter than the old ones — allowing us to seat more attendees for our popular classes (like Connie Vadheim's Native Plants) and also making it easier to rearrange the tables and even use them outside.

Thank you, Dow Chemical!

In April we received a very generous donation from the **Riviera Garden Club** for two new outside benches.

One of these handsome and sturdy benches will be placed at the north end of the Native Plant Garden, to allow visitors a moment of quiet reflection as they gaze out over the beautiful garden, with the Preserve and Palos Verdes hills in the background.

The second bench, located in the southeast corner of the Preserve, will provide a welcome resting spot as well as a viewpoint.

Thank you, Riviera Garden Club!

from the president

Recent Marsh Closure

"Sometimes things have to get worse before they can get better." -- Anonymous

As many of you know, about March 20 Manager Tracy Drake had to close public access to the Madrona Marsh for a couple of weeks. The closure was due to a high level of certain types of bacteria in the water which could have presented a danger to children or to people with weakened immune systems. Tracy closed the Preserve immediately after the bacteria were discovered because she (with the Friends' concurrence) takes no chances with the health and safety our visitors, volunteers and staff. The Preserve was reopened only after the source of contamination was found and removed and the water tested "clean" for several days.

Events of this type are rare at Madrona, (the only previous closure was in 2003 and lasted for three months) but we would prefer them to be non-existent. The silver lining of this cloud is that we may be closer to that goal because we are lucky in several respects. Let me explain.

How did we learn of the contamination? We are extremely fortunate to have two knowledgeable and dedicated experts in biology, Bob Carr and Tracy Drake, who carefully monitor the water at several points on the Preserve: monthly during the dry season, when water is limited to runoff into the sump; but weekly after our first seasonal rains and throughout the wet season. When they discover potential contamination, as they did in March, they send samples to an outside lab for confirmation and more extensive analysis.

I will let Tracy and Bob discuss the type and severity of the bacteria found, perhaps in the next

The FOMM Board of Directors

- Bill Arrowsmith, President
- Connie Vadheim, Vice President
- Ellen Peterson, Treasurer
- Carol Roelen, Recording Secretary
- Jeanne Bellemin
- Bill Forrest
- Mary Garrity
- Sarah Noddings
- Archie Phillips
- Suzan Hubert
- Bobbie Snyder
- Bob Shanman

issue, and will focus here on the apparent source of the contamination. Very high bacteria counts were discovered at Drain #1 in the southwest corner of the Marsh, just north of the Chevron Corner, and the drain appeared to be clogged. Large quantities of flotsam had backed up and were deposited on the Marsh, inside a fenced area there. (Note that this same area appeared to be the source of contaminants in 2003.)

To clear the material clogging Drain #1 required professionals trained in the removal of biologically hazardous waste. We are once again fortunate to have just such a company right here in Torrance, Ecology Control Industries, or ECI. ECI responded to the City's request, armed with the proper gear and equipment to quickly clear and pump out our clogged drain as well as the one across the street (near car wash) which is connected, and to remove the hazardous deposits. The composition of the removed material leads us to believe that someone intentionally and illegally used these curbside drains, or catch basins, as trash depositories. And some of the trash discarded there was biologically hazardous waste.

Torrance city authorities are pursuing leads in this case and we hope they find the culprits. But perhaps the best prospect for a cure is prevention—which brings us to our third bit of good fortune: We have another company, right here in Torrance, which produces a special mechanism which fits over catch basin openings and allows water to flow through but screens out trash. It folds down to accommodate large quantities of storm water but cannot be forced open by our nefarious trash dumpers. The company is American Storm Water (americanstormwater.com) and their product, made of stainless steel, is called a Surf Gate.

American Storm Water has installed, at their expense, a Surf Gate at the catch basin next to Madrona Car Wash, as a demonstration for the City of Torrance. Please check it out when you drive by. The Board of Directors of the Friends has offered also to purchase a gate for the drain adjacent to Drain #1, if a method of keeping it free of debris can be worked out. Normally street sweeper action keeps the Surf Gate clean, but the Drain #1 catch basin is offset from the street. We may need to add a two-minute weekly raking to our groundskeeper's duties.

But there is definite hope that a situation that has been bad for years is about to improve. Sometimes things have to get worse before they can get better.

—Bill Arrowsmith

Shirley's Turn

—Shirley Turner

In Memoriam: Angelina A. Hodgson

Angelina was a member since 1982 and loved to volunteer in our 4th of July food booth.

Mineral Magic

Sixty-five enthusiastic people were thrilled at the March Second Sunday Science program on fossils, rocks and minerals presented by Chuck Herzig of El Camino College. They saw gizzard stones of a dinosaur and its footprint in clay. They learned the earth's core is iron, the mantle is peridotite (weathers to a blue clay silicate) the ocean crust is basalt, and the continental crust is granite. Some items were observed under ultra-violet light, including credit cards.

After learning all about the many samples he brought and how to identify them, people formed several groups and were given a box of 30 items to sort out into each of three categories. The five senses were used. Mr. Herzig received a standing ovation at end of the program.

The Friends are very thankful for Chuck's wonderful presentation and his support over many years.

Airplanes and Birds

Birder's World is a bi-monthly magazine that I enjoy. The April 2009 issue arrived shortly after the US Airways jet crashed in the Hudson River, due to birds flying into it. The article "Planes, birds, microscopes, and DNA" in that issue is fascinating. Smithsonian scientists do more than investigate bird-aircraft collisions. They push the limits of bird identification.

Civilian aircraft collide with birds about 35,000 times a year, costing the industry \$650 million annually. Military aircraft strike birds 5,000 times a year. The success of avoiding collision more and more depends on identifying the species and location of a strike so that wildlife managers may make mitigation plans.

About 10 packages of bird remains are sent every day from all over the world to the Smithsonian Institution's Feather Laboratory located within the National Museum of Natural History. This is required by all military organizations, but volunteers also search for bird fragments and snarge on the plane and runway. Snarge is the bird goo that is wiped off an aircraft that has hit a bird. Stories of many unusual identifications are reported by these very persistent scientists. Jennifer A. Lynch, the author, is a biologist managing wildlife hazards at airports.

You can peruse many copies of colorful *Birder's World* in our library. The Rufous Hummingbird, record holder for longest hummingbird migration flight, is on the cover of the April 2009 issue. Bird hot spots, guided bird tours, tips on how to ID birds and birding equipment are numerous in each issue.

In *Guideposts Magazine* there was a story of a woman who walked her dog around the small airport runway near her home when flights were expected. The dog chased birds away—one good kind of wildlife management.

Long-Time Friends

Thank you to everyone for the honor that was bestowed on me at the Annual Meeting of the Friends, and to Marianne Strehler for the gift of a pencil drawing of me, a remarkable likeness, that started the ball rolling. The drawing has been hung behind the front desk at the Nature Center (see page 11).

It was wonderful to see so many of you who have also contributed so much to the Preserve along the way, over the years.

Others I have heard from are Fred and Delores Braden, now retired travelers. Jane Nishimura has sent my news around the world so we have heard from Janie Vaughn, retired, who lives back home in New Zealand—weeding and watching birds there, as she did here for three years at the Marsh with us.

Tyke Hike Report

—Mary Garrity

January 8, 2009

It was a beautiful California winter morning as we welcomed 12 tykes for the monthly hike around the Marsh. The previous night's fog had left little droplets of dew on the greenery that shimmered in the morning sun and the recent rains had created a sneaky blanket of green as we gazed upon the open space.

Luke pushed the button to cross the street. We entered the gate and gathered together to talk a little about what we might see. After each tyke chose a photo (mounted on a Popsicle stick handle) of an animal, tree, bird or flower we were off.

Beth guided us along and the children were delighted when they discovered the critter or object that matched their Popsicle stick mounted photo. We spotted the Red-tailed Hawk dismissing the crows. In rapid order acorns, bug tracks, beetles, lupines beginning to bloom and bush sunflowers all were excitedly discovered by the tykes.

We all quietly crept near the water where we

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Continued from page 4.

saw a pair of Mallards, male and female.

Returning to the Nature Center Exhibit Hall, we viewed in the display cases the specimens of animals that are present on the Marsh at this time of year and decided we had seen quite a few. Beth took the gopher snake out of his cage for the children to feel his skin.

Paul, a very educated young insect expert taught us the difference between the harlequin bug and the milkweed bug. A future for him in entomology lies ahead.

Two moms remained and lunched on the outdoor benches. One mom is planning to create a native plant garden at her home and vowed to return so that she may walk through our native garden and pen the names of the plants.

February 5, 2009

Ominous cloudy skies with a promise of rain appeared but the tyke hike proceeded. What fun as we gathered and Beth guided us to discover the ducks. We were silent (HA!) so as to not disturb the Mallards as they swam and dived for lunch.

Miles escaped his stroller and ran off on an adventure of his own liking. Mom swiftly retrieved

him and all was orderly once again. We discovered a few flitting birds but our noses were disturbed by the sweet, wonderful aroma of some flora we could not identify.

Oh, those tykes are a fun group!

March 5, 2009

Although the Marsh was closed we gathered together all of the tykes: Moms walking, strollers strolling and toddlers toddling, we set off along Plaza del Amo, peering through the fence at the blooming lupines and leafing out sycamores. Stop, stop, stopping to peer on the sidewalk at anything the tykes found interesting. As we rounded the corner and walked along Madrona we spotted "hundreds of ducks" as one tyke reported.

Returning, Beth suggested the tykes pick dandelions whereupon entering the Nature Center these delicacies were fed to the tortoises.

Moms interested in planting a native garden were given information and a tour of our garden.

Simply coloring, cavorting and discovering was a grand morning for the children. Beth's "beetle picking" and "snake handling" is an invaluable joy of discovery for the children.

Thanks, Beth!

—Mary Garrity

Donations--\$100 or More

—Ellen Peterson, *Treasurer*

The Friends of Madrona Marsh would like to say a special "thank you" to the donors below, all of whom gave \$100 or more during the past quarter.

12-26-08	Lois and Wesley Medina	\$100	
12-29-08	Maxine Trevethen	\$300	
12-30-08	Merle and Virginia Gasser	\$105	
12-26-08	Sharon Angelos	\$120	
12-31-08	Frank and Marilyn Miles	\$100	
1-26-09	New Horizons Conservation Club	\$100	
1-21-09	Kathleen and Edward Lahey	\$150	
1-18-09	Norman and Suzanne George	\$150	
2-1-09	Old Torrance Neighborhood Asssoc.	\$100	
2-5-09	Sharon Angelos/ITG	\$120	(Donated \$120 in Dec 2008 and applied for Matching Funds program at her company, ITG)
2-18-09	Joannie Spring	\$200	(Joannie creates wonderful calendars with photographs of the Marsh. She sold 20 calendars for \$15 each and gave FOMM \$10 for each calendar.)
2-9-09	Cheryl Martin	\$110	
2-20-09	Jane & Richard Nishimura	\$200	(Donated in honor of Shirley Turner)

Madrona Marsh Preserve and Nature Center

Schedule of Events*

April – July 2009

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 10 am-12 n-Weeders	2 10 am- Tyke Hike	3	4 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
5	6 CLOSED	7 8:30 am- Tour de’ Torrance 10 am-12 n-Weeders 4-6 pm-Environ- mental Interpretation 6:30-8:30 pm-“Garden of Gourmet Seasonings”	8 8 am- Bird Walk/Bob Shanman 10 am-12 n-Weeders 7:15-9 pm- FOMM Board Meeting	9	10	11 8:45 am-12 noon- Habitat Restoration 8:45 am-12 n-High School Service Learning
12 CLOSED FOR EASTER	13 CLOSED	14 9 am-Mornings on the Marsh 10 am-12 n-Weeders 4-6 pm-Environ- mental Interpretation	15 10 am-12 n-Habitat Restoration-Weeders 5:30-6:30 pm- MMF Board Meeting	16	17	18 8:45 am-12 n-H. S. Service 8:45 am-12 noon- Habitat Restoration
19 2-4 pm- Second Sunday Science- Spring Migration/Jess Morton	20 CLOSED	21 8:30 am- Tour de’ Torrance 10 am-12 n- Weeders 4-6 pm-Environ- mental Interpretation 7 pm-Audubon meets	22 10 am-12 n-Habitat Restoration-Weeders	23	24 Jennifer Siegel Exhibit Ends**	25 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
26 10 a.m- Nature Walk	27 CLOSED	28 4-6 pm-Environ- mental Interpretation 10 am-12 n-Weeders Clayton Fogel Exhibit Begins**	29 10 am-12 n-Habitat Restoration-Weeders	30		

APRIL

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

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2 8:45 am-12 n-Student Serv. 8:45 am- 12 n-Habitat Restor. 10 am-12n- “Clay & Hummingbirds”/ Dr.Vadheim 8 pm-Star Party
3	4 CLOSED	5 8:30 am- Tour de’ Torrance 10 am-12 n-Weeders 4-6 pm-Environ- mental Interpretation. 6:30-8:30 pm- “Clay & Hummingbirds”/Dr. Connie Vadheim	6 10 am-12 n-Habitat Restoration-Weeders	7 10 am- Tyke Hike	8	9 8:45 am-12 noon- Habitat Restoration 8:45 am-12 n-Student Service
10 2-4 pm- Second Sunday Science-Dinosaur Hunt	11 CLOSED	12 9 am-Mornings on the Marsh 10 am-12 n-Habitat Restoration-Weeders 4-6 pm-Environ- mental Interpretation.	13 8 am-Bird Walk /Bob Shanman 10 am-12 n-Habitat Restoration-Weeders 7:15-9 pm- FOMM Board Meeting	14	15 6:30-8:30-Artist Reception for Clayton Fogel**	16 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. 8:45 am-12 n-Student Service
17 1-3 pm-“Kill Your Lawn”	18 CLOSED	19 8:30 am- Tour de’ Torrance 10 am-12 n-Weeders 7 p.m.-Audubon Mtg.	20 10 am-12 n-Habitat Restoration-Weeders 5:30-6:30 p.m.- MMF Board Meeting	21	22	23 8:45 am-12 n-Hab.Restor. 8:45 am-12 n-Student Service 10 am-12 n-Bugs We Love 10 am-Nature Walk 2-3 pm-Storytime for Kids
24 10 am- Nature Walk	25 CLOSED	26 10 am-12 n-Weeders	27 10 am-12 n-Weeders	28	29	30 8:45 am-12 n-Student Ser. 11:55 am-Bugs, Birds & Animal Activity Songs-fee
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MAY

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

Brought to you by
 Friends of Madrona Marsh

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 CLOSED	2 8:30 am-Tour de'Torrance 10 am-12 n-Weeders	3 10am-12 n-Habitat Restoration-Weeders	4 10 a.m.- Tyke Hike	5	6 8:45 am- 12 n- Hab. Restor. 8:45 am-12 n-Student Service 10 am-12 n- Out of the Wilds,Into the Garden-/Dr. Connie Vadheim
7	8 CLOSED	9 9-11 am-Mornings on the Marsh 10 am-12 n.-Weeders 6:30-8:30 pm- "Out of the Wilds..." /Vadheim	10 8 a.m. Bird Walk/ /Bob Shanman 10 am-12 n-Habitat-Weeders 7:15-9 pm-FOMM Board Meeting	11	12 Clayton Fogel Exhibit Ends**	13 8:45 am-12 n- Habitat Restor. 8:45am-12 n-Student Service 9 am-3 pm-Environmental Fair
14 2 - 4 pm-Second Sunday Science- "Bats!" Come see a live bat	15 CLOSED	16 8:30 am-Tour de'Torrance 10 am-12 n-Weeders 7 pm- Audubon Mtg. Stephen D. West Exhibit Begins**	17 10-12 noon-Habitat Restoration-Weeders 5:30-6:30 pm- MMF Meeting	18	19 6:30-8:30 pm-Telescope Workshop	20 8:45 am - 12 noon- Habitat Restoration 8:45 am-12 n-Student Service 7:30-9:30 pm-Night Hike
21	22 CLOSED	23 10 am-12 n-Weeders	24 10-12 n-Weeders 10 am- 12 n-Junior Naturalist	25	26 6:30-8:30 pm-Artist Reception for Stephen D. West	27 8:45 am-12 n -Hab.Restor. 8:45am-12 n-Student Service 10 am-12n-Nature Walk 10 am- 12 n-What's Bugging Madrona Marsh? 10 am-12 n-Biodiesel Fuel 8-10 pm-Star Party
28 10 am-Nature Walk	29	30				

JUNE

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

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 10 am-12 n-Habitat Restoration-Weeders 10 am-12 n-Jr. Naturalist	2 10 am- Tyke Hike	3	4 8:45 am-12 n-H. S. Service 8:45 am- 12 n-Hab. Restor. 10 am-12 n-Out of the Wild & Into Your Garden/ Vadheim
5	6 CLOSED	7 8:30 am-Tour de' Torrance 10 am-12 n-Weeders 6:30-8:30 pm-Out of the Wilds & Into Your Garden/ Dr. Vadheim	8 8 am-Bird Walk/Bob Shanman 10 am-12 n-Weeders 10 am-12 n-Junior Naturalist 7:15-9 pm-FOMM Board Meeting	9	10 6:30-8:30 pm-Telescope Workshop	11 8:45 am-12 noon- Habitat Restoration 8:45 am-12 n-H. S.Learning 10 am- 12 n-Annual Butterfly Count Class
2-4 pm-Second Sunday Science- "Butterflies"	13 CLOSED	14 9 am-Mornings on the Marsh 10 am-12 n-Habitat Restoration-Weeders	15 10 am-12 n-Weeders 10 am-12 n-Junior Nauralist 5:30-6:30 pm- MMF Board Meeting	16	17 6:30-8:30 pm-Telescope Workshop	18 Butterfly Count-ALL DAY 8:45 am-12 n-H. S. Service 8:45 am-12 noon- Habitat Restoration
1-3 pm-Photography & Poetry Workshop	20 CLOSED	21 8:30 am-Tour de' Torrance 10 am-12 n-Habitat Restoration-Weeders 7 pm-Audubon meets	22 10 am-12 n-Weeders 10 am-12 n-Junior Naturalist	23	24 6:30-8:30 pm-Telescope Workshop	25 8:45 am- 12 noon- Habitat Restoration 8:45 am-12 n-H. S. Service 10 am- Nature Walk 2-4 pm-Are We Alone?
10 a.m-Nature Walk	27 CLOSED	28 10 am-12 n-Weeders	29 10 am-12 n-Habitat Restoration-Weeders 10 am-12 n-Junior Naturalist	30	31 6:30-8:30 pm-Telescope Workshop	

JULY

The Moth Mystery

—Emile Fiesler

While standing before a wall of chest-high Garland Chrysanthemums, mixed with Wild Radish, I was delighted to see a small colorful moth briefly visiting a Radish (*Raphanus sativus*) flower in broad daylight. It only allowed a few quick photos before it flew out of sight.



This photo showed enough detail to identify it as the native Flower Moth (*Schinia pulchripennis*) taken in the Spring of 2008 at the Madrona Marsh Preserve.

It turns out that the only food plant recorded for *Schinia pulchripennis* is the beautiful Purple Owl's Clover (*Castilleja exserta*) which, even though its flowers resemble clover flowers, is in the same genus as the Indian Paintbrush.



The photo at left shows a Purple Owl's Clover found in the Santa Monica Mountains.

Schinia species are strong flyers, and hence are theoretically capable of traveling distances.

Many species of *Schinia* however, are rarely observed away from the immediate vicinity of their host plant,

on which their caterpillar larvae feed. Reliable sources report that *Castilleja exserta* belongs to this homebound group.

Mysteriously, there have been no Purple Owl's Clover, nor any other Paintbrushes, recorded from

the Preserve. Given that the Preserve is only about 44 acres in size, and that the striking Purple Owl's Clover flowers are hard to miss, the question is: where did the moths come from?

There have only been a couple of historical recordings of Purple Owl's Clover in the South Bay: from Gardena in 1917, which was 92 years ago when most of the area was not paved over yet; and one record from San Pedro from 1998.

The San Pedro site is more than 3.5 miles of solid urbanized area away, as the crow—that is, the moth flies—if it would follow an unlikely straight “bee-line.”

This Spring, Tracy and I, while crossing the Preserve, were surprised to see quite a few moths frolicking ahead of us. They also turned out to be *Schinia pulchripennis*; see photo below.



It's quite amazing how different their color appears, depending on the angle of incident light, as they look more beige when photographed dorsally.

In conclusion, the 2008 sighting could have been a stray, perhaps blown in by a southeasterly wind; although the wind almost always blows from the northwest in this part of the country.

Now that we encountered a whole flock, the mystery of their origin grows:

1. Did they, the whole flock, cross more than 3.5 miles of town ('wing-in-wing'); in other words, do they follow a common migration route, or

2. Is there an undiscovered bouquet of Purple Owl's Clover near the Preserve, perhaps in a (native plant) garden? This is not very likely, as Purple Owl's Clover is a hemiparasite, obtaining some of its nutrients from the roots of other plants, and might not find suitable hosts nearby; or

3. Are there more host plants for *Schinia pulchripennis* than currently documented?

Clues toward solving this mystery are much appreciated.

Emile is a former FOMM Board Member and an expert observer of nature.

Madrona Marsh Foundation Elects New Officers

At their March 2009 meeting the Board of Directors of the Madrona Marsh Foundation elected Ms. Jill Klausen as President, replacing Dr. Jack Ludwick, who has served in that capacity since the inception of the organization in 2006.

We thank Jack for the fine work he has done getting our sister organization on its feet and congratulate Jill on her new official role. Jill, who is manager of a local business development company, has been a very active board member the last two years.

George Walker will continue as Board Secretary and Lucia Johnson will assume the post of Treasurer. President Klausen also welcomed two new board members at the March meeting: Matthew Yu, an estate planning attorney, and Kerry Townsend Jacob, President of the Townsend Communications public relations firm.

The Foundation Board has scheduled an all-day session for Strategic Plan Development in May, and has invited members of the FOMM Board to participate. We wish the new Foundation Board a fruitful and successful term!

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 April 24 - **Jennifer Siegel**, "Paintings of the Marsh," an Exhibit of Paintings.

April 28-June 12 - **Clayton Fogel**, *Photography of the Marsh*, a Photography Exhibit. Artist's Reception, May 15, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

June 16-July 31 - **Stephen D. West**, *Impressions of the Marsh IV*, An Exhibit of Paintings. Artist's Reception, Friday, June 26, 6:30-8:30 p.m.



Display your art at Madrona Marsh. Amateurs are welcome. Submit your portfolio at the Nature Center, 3201 Plaza del Amo. For more information, call 310-782-3989.

All Volunteer Positions Filled

Efforts to recruit volunteers for Friends programs and activities have been so successful that we have no volunteer opportunities left. Currently filled positions include: Front Desk Managers, Gift Shop Operators, Restoration Specialists (weekly and weekend), Assistants for Tyke Hikes, Docents and Tour Guides. Sorry. New applicants will be put on a list for future openings.

Not! Just an April 1 musing But what did you think? "How wonderful! Now they won't bother me to do it!" OR "How terrible! Now I can't be part of the fantastic success story of Madrona Marsh!"

Actually, although FOMM has a membership of nearly 600, a relatively small number of people are involved in our activities, perhaps twenty or thirty outside the current Board of Directors, Front Desk and Gift Shop Volunteers and Weekly Weeders.

For example, the goodies served at the Annual Meeting are supplied by the twelve members of the Board itself. Much of this is our fault—it's easier to cook and bring the brownies ourselves than to call and cajole a dozen members. Also we realize that many of you are just too busy, too young, too old or otherwise just not interested in helping with the Friends programs and activities. And that's fine.

But wouldn't it be terrible if there were no opportunities to help restore our beautiful wetlands or to learn of its wonders and show them to others? Think about it.

If you'd like to find out about any of the opportunities above—or ask about new ones, please call the Nature Center at 310-782-3989 or use the membership application on page 12 to tell us of your interests. Quickly! Before they're all gone!

A Spring Reminder

Membership Chairman Cliff Heise would like to ask all members of the Friends to send in your dues for 2009, if you have not already done so. Remitting your dues before Cliff has to send out a reminder notice saves the Friends 44 cents for each mailing—over \$200 total if too many of us forget.

Check the top of the mailing label on this newsletter to see if you are paid up.

And thanks to all of you who have already sent in your 2009 membership dues!

South Bay Native Plant Corner

—Dr. Connie Vadheim, CSUDH



Dune (Island) Wallflower
Erysimum insulare ssp. suffrutescens

Some of our native perennials are late winter/early spring bloomers. In general, these plants become entirely dormant during the hot dry months of summer and fall. They grow quickly with the fall rains, bloom quickly, then begin the dormant cycle again. These plants often provide an important spring food source for native bees, early butterflies and even for hummingbirds. A good example of such a perennial is our local Dune Wallflower, *Erysimum insulare ssp. suffrutescens*.

Dune Wallflower grows on sand dunes and in the coastal strand/prairie and coastal sage scrub plant communities of Southern California from Morrow Bay to Los Angeles County. You have likely seen it in the upland areas of the Preserve, where its blooms coincide with the spring rains. The plants are 2-3 feet tall and about as wide. The upright stems are slightly curved, with narrow gray-green leaves arranged uniformly along the stems. The plants provide a welcome patch of green in the winter/spring landscape—or in your home garden.

Dune Wallflower is a member of the Mustard Family (*Brassicaceae*). Its flower parts are in sets of four, which is typical for the family. The flowers are a bright golden yellow—a welcome spot of gold at this time of year. The stems can be literally covered with

blooms, making this a showy addition to the home garden. The fruit is a long pod that splits open to reveal many tiny seeds. The plant is short-lived (several years) but in many gardens—and in the wild—the plant will reseed itself naturally on bare soil.

Dune Wallflower, as its name implies, grows well in sandy soils. I've also had good luck with it in clay soils, as long as it's not overwatered in summer. 'Wallflower' refers to the propensity of European *Erysimums* to grow along warm dry walls. Dune Wallflower likes full sun, although it does fine in light shade. It has low water needs and can survive with little or no summer water. It needs no fertilizer.



It is easy to start Dune Wallflower from seed. Collect seedpods when they are nearly dry. Dry them in paper bags in a cool, dry place—they will split open naturally, releasing the seeds. You can sprinkle the seeds out and rake them in lightly with the first rains. Or plant them in pots in fall, then plant them out in the garden in spring.



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.

FOMM 2009 Annual Meeting Report

The annual meeting of the Friends of Madrona Marsh was held on January 25, 2009 at the Nature Center meeting room and was quite well attended. We elected four Directors—returning incumbents Ellen Peterson, Bill Forrest and Bill Arrowsmith to the Board, along with newcomer Suzan Hubert, who has actively participated in board meetings for several months.

Preserve Manager and Naturalist Tracy Drake presented an excellent Power Point presentation showing the extent of Preserve programs and activities as well as beautiful pictures of the flora and fauna of Madrona Marsh.

The guest speaker was David Sundstrom from the South Coast Chapter of the California Native Plant Society. Mr. Sundstrom spoke quite knowledgeably about the Dominguez Gap Wetlands Multiuse Project in Long Beach, and illustrated his lecture with pictures of this beautiful 50-acre riparian habitat—before, during, and after its recent restoration. He showed us the many uses for the wetland—from flood protection and ground water recharge to recreation and education.

Of particular interest to our audience were his

Gift Shop Hits Milestone!

Congratulations to Madrona Marsh Gift Shop Manager Linda Brown and her dedicated staff of volunteers! At the April meeting of the FOMM Board of Directors, Linda presented FOMM with a check for \$7000—thus completing repayment of the \$25,000 startup stake the Friends provided eight years ago when the Gift Shop opened.

This is a remarkable feat, given that markups in the shop are kept low in order to make the fine books, artwork, clothing, jewelry, nature toys and other gifts sold in the shop affordable for our visitors—no price gouging. Thus, it has taken eight years of hard work by Linda and her loyal assistants to “pay off the mortgage.”

As you may know, all profits from gift shop sales are to be used to support Madrona Marsh programs and projects. And now that Linda has “burned the mortgage,” we will begin to see those profits.

Thank you, Linda and Gift Shop Staffers, for a job well done!

experiences revegetating the area completely with California Native Plants. Especially appreciated were the details David gave on site preparation, plant selection and the many “lessons learned.” We look forward to watching this nearby wetlands project grow and mature.

For many who attended this year’s annual meeting, the highlight was the long-overdue recognition of one of our premier members: Shirley Turner. Shirley’s contributions are so numerous and cover so many years (see article, page 1) that she truly deserves dozens of awards, but we tried to express our appreciation with just one Lifetime Achievement Award. The Award reads: “Presented to Shirley Turner / Lifetime Achievement Award / In Appreciation for Over 35 Years / of Stewardship and Outreach / In Support of Madrona Marsh / 2009.



Local artist Marianne Strehler, right, presents her colored portrait to Shirley Turner in honor of Shirley’s longtime support of the Marsh. (Photo courtesy of Tracy Drake.)

In addition to the award, a beautiful colored portrait of Shirley was presented to her by longtime Marsh supporter and local artist Marianne Strehler. The portrait is currently hanging in a place of honor at the Nature Center, just above the reception desk. Be sure to stop in and see it.

We can never thank you enough, Shirley, for the thousands of hours you have devoted to the restoration and stewardship of Madrona Marsh and to bringing the story and appreciation of the Preserve and its plants and animals to thousands of children and adults. Thank you for all that you do.

—Bill Arrowsmith

Friends of Madrona Marsh

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We appreciate your support. Thank you!

Annual Membership: _____ New _____ Renewal

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

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Please send your donation or offer of services to:

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

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