



the Quail

Mount Diablo Audubon Society
P.O. Box 53, Walnut Creek, CA 94597-0053
www.diabloaudubon.org

Volume 61, Number 8

May 2016

May Program: Birds of Ecuador ♦ Gordon Beebe

Gordon Beebe, President of the Madrone Audubon Society, will present “Birds of Ecuador: Three Short Weeks in the Ecuadorian Andes, From East to West.”

In this presentation, you will experience the visual beauty and unique songs and calls of the birds of the varied mountain habitats of Ecuador, from Wildsumaco Wildlife Sanctuary on the eastern slopes above the Amazon basin to the páramo of



Las Cajas National Park high in the Andes, and then over to the western slopes to Maquipucuna Reserve, in the famous Mindo birding area.

Along the way, you’ll find out the meaning of *derrumbe*, a word encountered frequently on the first days of his exploration, and learn more about the bird species he saw in Ecuador, said to have the highest biodiversity per acre of any country in the world. Over 1,660 species of birds have been recorded in the country,

however, many have a very limited range. Rather than attempt to collect a huge species list in a short period of time, join Gordon as he focuses instead on two ecolodges, plus a visit to Cuenca, a World Heritage site, the third largest city in Ecuador, and gateway to Las Cajas National Park.

Revel in the sight and sound of the Toucan Barbets’ nasal honking duet. Meet over 80 other species of birds, including Hook-billed Kite, hummingbirds of every shape and color, singing antpittas, tanagers and more in photos and video. Several more reclusive species that declined the offer to appear, such as the Musician Wren and the Spotted Nightingale-Thrush, will provide the audio background for the presentation. Not to be outdone, enjoy the variety of caterpillars and butterflies encountered that rival any bird species seen.

Finally, at Maquipucuna, a locally owned and run ecological preserve, see the myriad uses for bamboo, learn how to open a cacao pod, and observe coffee production, from flower to bean to drying. (A note for prospective travelers: by visiting in June, we were able to catch the end of the (very) rainy season on the Amazonian side,

then experience drier, though still showery, weather to the west.)

Gordon Beebe lives with his wife Judy in Santa Rosa. He is the Saturday bird walk leader, the Website Editor, and outgoing President for Madrone Audubon. He is also a project coordinator for the Sonoma County Breeding Bird Atlas.



Chestnut-breasted Coronet (above) and Barred Puffbird (L), Gordon Beebe photos

Meeting Schedule

The next general meeting of the Mount Diablo Audubon Society will be **Thursday, May 5** in the Camellia Room of The Gardens at Heather Farm in Walnut Creek.

630 PM Doors open
700 PM Birding Information
725 PM Announcements
740 PM Refreshments* and raffle
805 PM Program: Gordon Beebe
**Go Green—bring your own cup for tea or coffee*

NEXT MONTH: Thursday, June 2
630 PM Potluck Dinner
815 PM Program: Birds of South Africa and Botswana ♦ Jill Hedgecock

Birding Information

Celeste Garamendi will talk about the proposed expansion of the Carnegie State Vehicular Recreation Area and the work of Friends of Tesla Park to permanently preserve the rich natural, cultural, and scenic resources of Tesla located on Tesla-Corral Hollow Road along the Diablo Range in Eastern Alameda County. **For more information:** www.teslapark.org and **Save Tesla Park on Facebook.**

For my column, I am writing about two items in particular: Wild Turkeys and cats.

Tom Stienstra, who writes about the outdoors for the *SF Chronicle*, had an article in the Sunday, March 20 edition entitled "Beware the fierce, fearless wild turkey," in which he tells about his experience of being "attacked" by a Wild Turkey. The attack began with the turkey marching toward him, then, wings flapping, racing toward him at full speed, and finally, pecking at him. He flapped a magazine at the turkey and it finally went away. In talking with a biologist, Stienstra was told the encounter was not all that rare and had been happening more frequently. Maybe you have had a similar experience.

I also learned that between 1959 and 1988 about 3000 Wild Turkeys were released in the state. They are now thought to number more than 250,000! Be on the lookout.

A couple of things regarding cats—there was a KQED special called "The Secret Lives of Cats." It was about a study done on cats in a small neighborhood in England. They put monitors on 50 indoor/outdoor cats and followed their

comings and goings. The program showed cats fighting each other, getting hurt, as well as all the birds and animals killed by cats. "Not too bad," they said. There was never a mention that it might be better to keep cats indoors. It was just a sad story to me that I found disturbing. Maybe you felt the same.

The other item of interest was a KQED radio special about feral cats in Chicago being used to kill rats. Apparently, Chicago has a big rat problem and it was known that feral cats kill rats. The article I read said, "CBC Chicago reports that Chicago's 47th Ward is working with the Tree House Humane Society where neutered, vaccinated and microchipped feral cats are being sent back out to the streets to try and deter pesky rodents." The program got a lot of praise, but the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) were highly critical. Again, I find this kind of thing disturbing.

Not all news is bad news, however. The Wild Turkey story was actually pretty funny, and the good news is, migration is upon us and many birds are headed north. I hope you will join a MDAS field trip to see what is passing by.

Good News For Ducks

In early April, volunteers joined a unique egg hunt vastly different from the more traditional Easter egg hunt one thinks of in early Spring.

The Ironhouse Sanitary District, owner of Jersey Island, a 3600-acre island in an unincorporated area of East Contra Costa County, recently enlisted volunteers to help salvage duck and ground nesting bird eggs laid in farmers' hay fields ready for harvest. Ducks are increasingly laying their eggs in farm fields due to loss of wetland habitat.

Volunteers began the "egg hunt" by ringing a cowbell to chase the birds off the nest, while other volunteers collected eggs and baby birds to ensure their safety from combines. The eggs will be incubated and the hatchlings tagged and released in safe locales on Jersey Island.

This was the first event like this on Jersey Island, but the California Waterfowl Association (CWA) has had a comprehensive program to help declining duck populations for many years. According to the CWA website,

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"The Dwight Merriman Jr. Egg Salvage and Duck Rescue Program was established to promote a coordinated effort of farmers, hatchery partners, and volunteers, who share a common goal restoring waterfowl breeding habitats and growing California's Mallard population. Hatchery partners within our network are pivotal in the successful incubating, hatching and rearing of the ducks that are the end product of egg salvage efforts." Four facilities in the Sacramento Valley have saved nearly 50,000 ducks in the past ten years.

For information and to view a video on one wheat farmer's efforts to save more than 800 eggs see:

www.calwaterfowl.org/egg-salvage.

And, *that's* good news for California ducks! ~Maren Smith

Election of Officers

The election of officers for will be held at the May 5 meeting. All members are eligible to stand for election and may submit nominations from the floor.

In accordance with MDAS By-laws, Brian Murphy, Nominating Committee Chair, presented the names of the nominees. All four of the current officers announced their willingness to serve another term. They are:

President: Jimm Edgar

Vice-President: Paul Schorr

Treasurer: Steve Buffi

Secretary: Carol Pacht

—2—

Welcome New Members

Cheryl Thompson Moraga

Our "Go Green in 2016" campaign enrolled 40 new members who elected to receive the Quail by email! Join the movement: patinococo@gmail.com

MDAS on the Web

www.diabloaudubon.org

www.diabloaudubon.org/mobile
(mobile only)

www.facebook.com/mtdiabloaudubon

www.meetup.com/Mount-Diablo-Audubon-Society/

Q

This melodic bird is the state bird of six states: KS, MT, ND, NE, OR, and WY. A member of the

Blackbird family, its yellow breast and black v-shaped bib is a distinctive field mark. To learn more, see page 7.

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May 2016

The migratory breeding birds have begun to arrive. Others are passing through on their way farther north or into the Sierras. Most are on the early side, but nothing record-breaking. Some resident songbirds are nesting or feeding young. Winter residents have left or will do so shortly.

A **Eurasian Wigeon** was at McNabney Marsh (west side) 4/4. HH

A pair of **Mallards** with 12 ducklings were in a south Canyon Lakes Golf Course pond 4/6. E&GL

DK, FS, and HH saw the **Redhead** at Heather Farm pond 3/7. HH saw it 3/23 as well. It's not known if this is the same Lafayette Reservoir bird.

A **Long-tailed Duck** was at Bay Point Regional Shoreline 3/14. LH

DK saw a **Hooded Merganser** at Heather Farm Pond 3/7. Four were in San Ramon Creek behind the Danville Library along with a **Common Merganser** pair 3/26. BR

A rare **Red-necked Grebe** was at Marina Bay in Richmond 3/15. CB

An immature **Bald Eagle** was at Lafayette Reservoir 3/22. ME, MC, WH. Another was near Briones Dam 3/27. DV

CM saw a **Swainson's Hawk** over Waterbird Regional Preserve in Martinez 4/3. (several miles west of its usual location in East CCC)

A **Golden Eagle** was over the Martinez Wetlands 3/27. IA

Pairs of **Surfbirds** were at Hercules Point and Lone Tree Point 4/6. AL

A **Eurasian Collared Dove** was near his Walnut Creek home 3/18. FS (This bird, common in East CCC, is slowly expanding its range.)

The **Western Screech Owl** discovered by IA last month was seen again by him 3/26 on the Lafayette-Moraga Regional Trail.

A **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** was seen at Blake House in Kensington 3/16 by HB, PH, SA, SM, and 3/21 EK.

HH had **Chestnut-backed Chickadees** building nests 3/9 and feeding young on 4/6 at his Walnut Creek home.

MM saw the **Peregrine Falcon** on its roost at Castle Rock in Pine Canyon (a known nesting site) 3/24.

Rufous Hummingbirds visited many feeders locally: FS in Walnut Creek 3/18; KB in Lafayette 3/24; EL 4/3 on the Lafayette-Walnut Creek border; and EL in San Ramon 4/7. A&DH had one at their Walnut Creek home from 3/26 to 4/5.

An **Allen's Hummingbird** was in Martinez 3/7. JB

DW saw a first-of-season (FOS) **Hammond's Flycatcher** at Mitchell Canyon 4/9.

A FOS **Pacific-slope Flycatcher** was at Mitchell Canyon 3/17. P&NS

An **Ash-throated Flycatcher**, FOS, was seen 4/6, EH, and by EK and BM on 4/8

The Heather Farm **Tropical Kingbird** was seen 3/7 DK, 3/9 SJ, and 3/24 GT. (see photo page 12)

A **Western Kingbird** was out of place on Inspiration Point in Tilden RP 4/6. JP, HN

A **Cassin's Vireo** was at the base of Briones Dam 3/27. DV

SH had **Oak Titmouse** feeding young in Alamo 3/30 and HH had them in his yard feeding young 4/6.

A **Red-breasted Nuthatch** was way east of its territory in Martinez 3/9. MM

A **Ruby-crowned Kinglet** was nearing the end of its winter residency at the Lafayette home of KB 3/21.

Blue-grey Gnatcatchers returned to Lafayette Reservoir 3/27 EL, and the Oursan Trail at the Briones Reservoir 4/7 IA.

By 3/19 there were at least 20 **Orange-crowned** and **Wilson's Warblers** singing in the Tilden Nature Area. WH, MC

TF saw a **Grasshopper Sparrow** 4/7 along Stage Road just after the Castle Rock boundary.

A FOS **Western Tanager** was at Black Diamond Mines RP 4/4. JPG

A **Hooded Oriole** was at JC's Moraga home 3/16 and **Bullock's Orioles** were at Castle Rock Regional Park 3/24. MM

Pine Siskins persisted. 3/9 in Martinez MM, 3/23 in Walnut Creek HH, and in Lafayette 4/7 BP.

An **Evening Grosbeak** was at the Blake Garden in Kensington 3/15. EK

A **MacGillivray's Warbler** returned to Nimitz Way in Tilden RP 4/4 AF, and two were seen on 4/8. AK (There has been at least one in this spot about ¼ mile along the walk for a number of years.)

An early **Black-headed Grosbeak** has been at the Lafayette home of BP since 3/8. The next reports were in early April. JS, SS

Red Crossbills were still in a variety of locations. 3/12 JW Redwood RP Stream Trail, 3/15 AS Valle Vista Staging Area near bridge, 3/16 TM Valle Vista Staging area parking lot, 3/20 TFr Crockett Hills RP, 3/21 DW Augusta Avenue in Moraga, and 3/29 DW near Moraga Country Club.

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SA Sara Adler, IA Isaac Aronow, KB Kristen Baker, HB Holly Bern, CB Cathy Bleier, JB Jackie Bobrowsky, MC Minder Cheng, JC Judy Cooper, TF Tracy Farrington, AF Anthony Fisher, MF Marjorie Fletcher, TFr Teale Fristoe, JPG Juan Pablo Galvan, EH Ed Harper, HH Hugh Harvey, LH Luke Hawk, WH Wen Hsu, A&DH Ann and Don Hughes, PH Penn Hughes, SH Steve Hutchcraft, SJ Sharon J., AK Alan Kaplan, DK Dave Kent, EK Elizabeth Kroll, E&GL Eugenia and Gary Larson, EL Elizabeth Leite, AL Albert Linkowski, MM Mike Marchiano, SM Sally Mathews, TM Terry Mead, BM Bonnie Mende, CM Colin Meusel, HN Harold Newman, BP Bernt Pettersson, JP John Poole, BR Brad Rumble, FS Fred Safier, P&NS Paul and Nancy Schorr, JS Judi Sierra, AS Ann Sojourner, SS Susan Stern, GT Gary Thompson, DV Doug Vaughan and wife, JW Joanne Wallin, and DW Denise Wight.

Submit Contra Costa County sightings to mbstern2@yahoo.com, call (925)-284-5980, or send to EBB sightings@yahoogroups.com. If you report sightings to eBird, please also send them to Maury Stern.

Trip Reports

Tomales Bay State Park, March 19:

The weather was very mild with a high overcast for most of the time, as 11 members or guests birded the damp, wooded hills of Tomales Bay State Park. While the trees were not dripping with birds, we did hear quite a bit of song, including some of our first Wilson's and Orange-crowned Warblers of the year. A Wrentit called elusively before making itself visible to some at the back of the group on the narrow trail. Purple Finches sang in a number of areas, and while having our lunch, we saw at least two beautiful males in a madrone tree. A Pygmy Nuthatch also showed itself at this time, while an Allen's Hummingbird was at a huckleberry bush in the other direction. A few ducks were on the water of the bay, including Surf Scoters, some Buffleheads, and a Red-breasted Merganser. We also had some Eared Grebes, one of which caught and ate a pipefish. Ospreys were quite visible and vocal, carrying both fish and nesting material. After miscounting, we added two late additions and scratched one off the list,



Osprey with fish dinner, Beth Branthaver photo

making the total species seen or heard 42. ~Hugh Harvey
Valle Vista, March 24: Twenty-two birders spent much of the first hour peering through ground fog at the lake, noting that the lake level is as high as any of us had ever seen, but not seeing many birds. As we walked back to and through the pine forest, however, the fog yielded to a gorgeous sunny spring day, showing off the green hills near Moraga. Birding was fairly slow, but we gradually built up our list including three distant Wood Ducks and a variety of the expected birds. On the way back, we turned left onto the Riche Loop trail and had nice views of a Wrentit, a newly arrived Orange-crowned Warbler and, finally, at the very end of the walk we finished with a bang and had great views of two close California Thrashers. Total species count for this very pleasant outing was 57 seen and heard. ~Don Lewis



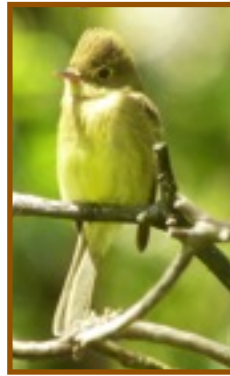
California Thrasher, Beth Branthaver photo

Lake Lagunitas, March 30: Wildflowers and birds, birds and wildflowers; it is that time of the year. Twenty-five members and guests enjoyed many of each as we visited the Marin Watershed below the peak of Mt. Tamalpais. We first walked to view a small portion of Lake Bon Tempe and the



Checker Lily, Isaac Aronow photo

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Above, Pacific-slope Flycatcher photographed by spotting scope, Herb Long photo; right, Red-breasted Merganser, Isaac Aronow photo



woods beyond. An adult Cooper's Hawk flew past us a bit over eye height, vividly flashing the large white undertail coverts. Acorn Woodpeckers seemed to be everywhere, as were a number of passerines; House Finch, Bewick's Wren, Brown Creeper, White-breasted Nuthatch, Pacific-slope Flycatcher and Chestnut-backed Chickadee were some of the birds we identified. Ascending to the top of the Lake Lagunitas dam, we found numerous Common Mergansers, a male Red-breasted Merganser, and a Pied-billed Grebe on the water. We crossed the dam and circled the lake counter-clockwise, adding a brief glimpse of a calling Pileated Woodpecker, soaring Red-tailed and Red-shouldered Hawks, a calling Sora, a Townsend's Warbler, and Violet-green Swallows. A total of 47 species were seen or heard. The flowers were also spectacular and Terry Sullivan helped us tremendously in their identification. We had two kinds of iris—Coast Iris and Douglas Iris—three sanicle species, Checker Lily, Hound's Tongue, Shooting Stars, Modesty, and many more. We also had several kinds of fungi and mushrooms pointed out to us by Terry. ~Hugh Harvey

Garin Regional Park, April 2: Thirteen birders experienced an early Spring birding bonanza on a beautiful day at Garin Park, many of us seeing more than one first-of-season (FOS) bird. Many saw the Rufous Hummingbird and House Wren, most saw Brown Creeper and a female Black-headed Grosbeak, but excellent looks were had by all of prominently-posing-for-photos Pacific-slope Flycatchers, Hutton's Vireos, Bullock's Orioles, Wilson's Warblers, and Grasshopper Sparrows. We saw four woodpeckers: Acorn, Downy, Nuttall's, and Flicker, and three swallows: Tree, Northern Rough-winged, and Barn. Also seen were Western Bluebird, Western Kingbird, Say's Phoebe, Spotted Towhee, breeding-plumage Yellow-rumped Warblers, including one definite Myrtle, for 65 total species. ~Fred Safier

Orinda Connector Trail, April 6: Fifteen birders spent a warm spring morning enjoying the varied habitats of this easy, pleasant walk along the Orinda Connector Trail to the Oursan Trail and off to the base of Briones Dam. Birding was a bit slow, but we eventually saw 48 species including a Virginia Rail at the base of the dam, Pygmy and White-breasted Nuthatches, Brown Creeper and other riparian critters, Western Bluebirds, swallows, and finally, after we had spent some time tracking it down, singing loudly, but not moving—a Pacific-slope Flycatcher. ~Don Lewis

Pine Canyon, April 9: Cancelled due to rain. (see page 8 for Peregrine Falcon update) ~Nancy Wenninger

Field Trip Schedule

By Hugh Harvey

May 2016 (Call Leader for questions or rain cancellations)

04	Wednesday	Mt. Diablo State Park
07	Saturday	East Contra Costa County
12	Thursday	West Briones Regional Park
17	Tuesday	No Child Left Inside
19	Thursday	No Child Left Inside
28	Saturday	Outer Point Reyes

June 2016

18-19	Saturday-Sunday	Yuba Pass-Sierra Valley
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July 2016

9-10	Saturday-Sunday	Lassen Volcanic NP
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August 2016

06	Saturday	San Mateo Coast
20	Saturday	Bodega Bay

2 Wednesday, May 4

Mt. Diablo State Park (MDSP)

Leader: Jimm Edgar (510) 290-8006

MDSP is a treasure trove for birders. Every season in the Park has its special qualities, but early May on the mountain has its own beauty—wildflowers add color to the vistas. **NOTE: Carpool leaves at 8 AM from La Gonda.** From I-680 southbound, exit at El Pintado, turn right and right again; park along open space on left. From I-680 northbound, exit El Cerro, turn left, then right at second light onto La Gonda; carpool point is about one half-mile north. **OR**, meet at 845 AM at the South Gate entrance after birding South Gate Road. Usually hot! Bring lunch and drinks. Entry fee required. Many migrant and nesting species are possible including Sage Sparrows, California Thrashers, woodpeckers, raptors, and warblers.

2 Saturday, May 7

East Contra Costa Country

Leader: Gary Fregien (916) 708-0636

Carpool leaves Sun Valley Mall* at 615 AM. **OR**, meet the leader at 7 AM on Cypress Road at the Marsh Creek Trailhead parking lot just east of O'Reilly's Auto Parts in Oakley. Go north on I-680, exit Highway 4 toward Stockton/Pittsburg, take right Exit 30 toward CA-160/Sacramento/Rio Vista (just past Hillcrest Avenue Exit; do NOT continue straight on Highway 4). Take exit 1-A East 18th/Main Street, turn right at the bottom of the exit onto Main Street and drive through Oakley for about 4 miles,



Yellow-billed Magpie, Jean Halford photo

Yellow-billed Magpie, and Yellow-breasted Chat.

turn left onto Cypress Road. Make a U-turn at Picasso Drive, the stoplight after the railroad tracks. May be hot! Bring lunch and liquids. Target birds include: Blue Grosbeak, Burrowing Owl, Black-chinned Hummingbird, Swainson's Hawk,

2 Thursday, May 12

West Briones Regional Park

Leader: Maury Stern (925) 284-5980

Meet at 8 AM in parking lot on the right hand side of the west entrance road, off Bear Creek Road. From SR 24 in Orinda, drive north on Camino Pablo about 2.25 miles, turn right on Bear Creek Road, continue for 4.5 miles to Park entrance. Wildflowers, spring birds, and Lazuli Buntings are usually abundant. Beware of poison oak along shaded trails. Bring lunch and liquids.

2 Saturday, May 28

Outer Point Reyes

Leader: Juan-Carlos Solis (925) 222-8573

Carpool leaves Sun Valley Mall* at 700 AM. **OR**, meet at 830 AM at Bear Valley Visitor Center in Olema. From I-80 in Vallejo, follow SR 37 19.1 miles to Atherton Avenue, exit and turn left, cross US 101 to San Marin Drive, and continue for 3 miles. Turn right on Novato Blvd for 6 miles to stop sign, then turn left on Point Reyes-Petaluma Road for 7 miles to another stop sign. Turn right across the bridge. Go 3 miles to SR 1. Turn left into Point Reyes Station. After a stop at the Bovine Bakery for coffee and pastries, continue out of town towards Olema, then turn right onto Bear Valley Road. Visitor Center is off Bear Valley Road. We're hoping for migrants. Weather is unpredictable. Bring lunch and liquids.

2 Saturday/Sunday, June 18-19

Yuba Pass-Sierra Valley

Leaders: Rosita and Hugh Harvey (925) 935-2979

This is always a productive and fun weekend trip to the northern Sierras which requires driving and walking, some of it over rough terrain. Arrive by Friday night and meet at the parking lot at the top of the pass at 7 AM Saturday. Saturday we will be in the Sierra Valley looking for basin birds and Sunday we will bird in the Yuba Pass area for mountain birds. **Make your motel and camping reservations now!** (more information page 6)



Mountain Bluebird, Isaac Aronow photo

Field trips are open to members and non-members, beginners to advanced birders, but no dogs. **Contact Leader for questions or rain cancellations.** Our MDAS Chapter is a conservation organization. As such, we encourage carpooling (riders should help with gas, tolls, or park entry fees). Bring sunscreen, water, snacks, and lunch if indicated.

Category 1: Easy, little or no walking, smooth paths

Category 2: Moderate, one mile+, possibly rough terrain

Category 3: Difficult, extensive walking on rough terrain

*Sun Valley Mall parking lot carpool location: Southwest corner of Mall parking lot at Willow Pass Road and Contra Costa Blvd. in Concord.

👁️👁️ LOOKING AHEAD-Summer Field Trips in June and July

For Saturday-Sunday, June 18-19, Yuba Pass-Sierra Valley reservations: The closest motels are in Sierra City, 11 miles west on Highway 49. Herrington's Sierra Pines (530) 862-1151/(800) 682-9848 is popular; or Yuba River Inn (530) 862-1122 with cabins and kitchenettes (cash/check only). Bassett's Station (530) 862-1297 at Highway 49 and Gold Lake Road has accommodations/meals. High Country Inn (530) 862-1530/(800) 862-1530 is across from Bassett's. Check Sierra Valley Lodge (530) 994-3367/(800) 858-0322. **For more options:** www.sierracity.com/Stay/LodgingCamp.html. Campgrounds are at Yuba Pass and Chapman Creek downhill to the west with first-come, first-served sites for three days. Longer term reservations can be made at (877) 444-6777 for an additional \$10. After June 13, please call Wild Birds Unlimited at (925) 798-0303 for information.



2 Saturday/Sunday, July 9-10

Lassen Volcanic National Park

Leader: Eugenia Larson, eklarson@comcast.net

If you are planning to participate in this MDAS birding trip to Lassen Volcanic National Park in July, let the leader know ahead of time that you are coming, and to avoid disappointment, make motel or camping reservations now. This weekend field trip is the weekend after the 4th of July. Participants should arrive by the night of Friday, July 8. Gary and I will be arriving earlier in the week and are camping in Section D of the Manzanita Lake Campground, which is tents-only and non-reservable; Sections A and C at Manzanita Lake are reservable, but B and D are not. We will start birding at 730 AM from Manzanita Lake each day.

If you prefer not to camp, I can suggest several small motels and B&Bs outside the park, or you can google "motels in the Lassen area," but please make your reservations soon as most are small motels with just 5-10 rooms each, and they fill up quickly. There are also a few sleep-only cabins at Manzanita Lake with a nearby communal bathhouse, and a private lodge in the south-central part of the Park, which serves meals and has a pool.

Birds we will be looking for are: Gray Jay, American Dipper, Osprey, Evening Grosbeak, Townsend's Solitaire, Red Crossbill, Clark's Nutcracker, and Common Nighthawk. **For information or questions:** eklarson@comcast.net

Young Birder Scholarship

Kai Mills, of Lafayette, one of the most skilled members of our MDAS Young Birders Club, is this year's recipient of one of the Central Valley Bird Club's (CVBC) annual Youth Birding Camp scholarships. Funding for the scholarships was begun in 2001 and the first award was made in 2003. The prize provides funding for a young birder and his/her parent or guardian to attend any one of several week-long, summer class/workshop offerings, in or out of state.

This year, Kai has elected to join the five-day, "in field," birding by ear workshop which will be conducted at the UC/CSU Sierra Nevada campus.



Kai Mills and friend in South Africa, family photo

This makes Kai's scholarship worth about \$800. The course will be attended primarily by students from San Francisco State University and Cornell. He will then, of course, join in the company of some serious and talented young birding biologists.

Kai first learned about the offering through a posting by John Sterling from Woodland, Vice President of CVBC, and he submitted an application. Around that time, Kai asked if I would write the required letter of recommendation. I was both delighted to be asked and eager to oblige his request.

Kai is in for a very real, and very rewarding educational experience. I know he's entirely up to the challenges before him. ~Tracy Farrington

June Silent Auction

At the June potluck meeting, Diane Malucelli, MDAS Sales Manager, has some exciting items for the Silent Auction including signed Harry Adamson prints. You won't want to miss out on the fun so be sure to bring your checkbook or cash. All proceeds benefit our MDAS projects. To donate items (gift certificates,



Diane Malucelli displays two of the three Harry Adamson prints available in the Silent Auction, Maren Smith photo

restaurant vouchers, birding scopes, binoculars, or a vacation weekend) please contact: dmalucelli@att.net.

Global Big Day May 14

Count birds for ten minutes at your feeder, a half hour in the park, or a full day in the field, as part of eBird's Global Big Day on Saturday, May 14. Every single bird, common or rare, counts in this worldwide tally. Report your sightings to www.ebird.org/globalbigday or download the free eBird app on your smart phone and submit your count on the fly. Upload pictures and look for yours in the post-count summary! ~Rosalie Howarth



Western Meadowlark ♦ *Sturnella neglecta*

This medium-sized member of the Icterid, or Blackbird family, is easily identified by its memorable flutelike song, often heard before the Meadowlark is seen.

Ralph Hoffman, author of *Birds of the Pacific States* (1927), offers this apt description of the Western Meadowlark: “There are about a dozen birds whose removal from the landscape would be noticed even by the average person...[our world] would be suddenly silent if the rich, throaty chuckle of the Meadowlark were no longer heard. Even above the noise of the motor car it explodes on one’s ear from the long uplifted bill of the bird on a post by the roadside.”

The handsome, compact bird has pale brownish-gray feathers on its back allowing it to blend in with its grassland habitat when threatened. The short tail has white edges, distinct in flight. But, it is the yellow breast with the V-shaped black bib (gray in winter) that’s the mark of the meadowlark.

Using its sharp, slender bill, it employs a feeding technique, common to all blackbirds, known as “gaping” to secure food. Using its strong bill muscles, the bird probes the earth or the bark of a tree to find food, and then, opens the beak to enlarge the hole to retrieve the hidden cache. Mainly a ground feeder, favorite foods include seeds, berries, insects, worms, invertebrates, and grains in winter or early spring.

Nests are found in a depression on the ground in open grasslands, farm fields, pastures, or meadows, often made by a cow hoof. The female, working solo, uses grass and plant matter to line the depression creating a cup. Often, the female

will weave grass to create a domed roof over the nest or to create a long tunnel runway to the nest. Nests average five eggs with two broods each year.

The male has two to three female mates and spends considerable time defending his territory, chasing out competing males in an area of three to ten acres.

While their numbers are strong in Contra Costa County, overall, their numbers have declined about 1% since the 1960s due to development and less open grassland. Their range is extensive from Canada to Central Texas, and they overlap with their Eastern Meadowlark “cousins” in the Prairie states, but rarely hybridize.

In 1805, the explorer Merriweather Lewis first distinguished the two separate meadowlark species by song and subtle markings. However, it was John James Audubon who gave the species its scientific name—*Sturnella* meaning “starling-like” and *neglecta* for having been overlooked by Western settlers and explorers all those years, in Audubon’s opinion. ~Maren Smith



*Singing Western Meadowlark,
Joy Shonfeld photo*

Antioch Dunes NWR Plant Surveys, April 20-21 and May 25-26, 830 AM-4 PM

Plant surveys will be conducted on two endangered plants, the Contra Costa Wallflower (April) and the Antioch Dunes Evening Primrose (May). Training will be done on site. **For information: susan_euing@yahoo.com, (510) 521-9717**

Annual “We Love Mother Nature” Event, Saturday, April 30, 10 AM-4 PM

This fun family event features live birds and animals, local nature, rescue, and environmental groups, and big savings in the Wild Birds Unlimited Pleasant Hill store. Expected participants include MDAS, MDIA, Native Bird Connections, California Native Plant Society, the California Bluebird Recovery Program, Mt. Diablo Bee Keepers, two artists, as well as local personalities including, Gary Bogue, Joan Morris, and Naturalist, Michael Marchiano. **For information: (925) 798-0303**

►Volunteers needed (lunch and snacks provided by WBU). Please contact Brian Murphy: b-murphy21@hotmail.com

Redbud Audubon Heron Days, Saturday, April 30 and May 7

Enjoy bird life on 90-minute pontoon boat tours of Clear Lake including nesting Great Blue herons and blackbirds and probable sightings of raptors, grebes, ducks, and woodpeckers. Boat tours are from 8 AM-115 PM. Bird guides accompany each tour. Register early as tickets sell out quickly. **For information: www.redbudaudubon.org**

Tern Watch Monitor Trainings, Alameda, April 30, May 2, 19, and 21

This US Fish and Wildlife Service program, in partnership with Golden Gate Audubon, is looking for dedicated volunteers to help protect the endangered California Least Tern from predators at VA Alameda Point. Participants must be over 19 years old, attend one training session and commit to a minimum of three 3-hour shifts per year. Alameda training sessions are 4/30 (10AM-1 PM), 5/2 and 5/19 (6-9 PM), or 5/21 (10 AM-1 PM). **For information: susan_euing@yahoo.com, (510) 521-9717**

Save Tesla Park Fundraiser, Sunday, May 22, 1 PM

Help the Ohlone Audubon Society raise money for “Save Tesla Park” by attending a showing of the movie “Pelican Dreams” at the Essanay Silent Film Museum in Old Town Niles (37417 Niles Blvd., Fremont, CA 94536). View this inspiring film about the biodiversity of our Bay Area, meet Judy Irving, the filmmaker (who also made “The Parrots of Telegraph Hill”), and purchase tickets to win raffle prizes. **To purchase movie tickets: www.eventbrite.com/e/save-tesla-park-fundraiser-pelican-dreams-screening-tickets-23531816296** . **For information about Friends of Tesla Park: www.teslapark.org**



Remembering Betts Sanderson

It is with sadness that we inform you that Betts Sanderson, our MDAS Webmaster, passed away April 5 at a Seattle hospital following extensive cancer treatment at both Stanford and the University of Washington.

Betts joined our board in 2010, assuming the position of Webmaster. She was already an active volunteer in Save Mount Diablo, Alexander Lindsey Wildlife Hospital, and other organizations related to the care of animals. According to Dal Leite, who did updates while she was in

Betts Sanderson, Scott Hein photo

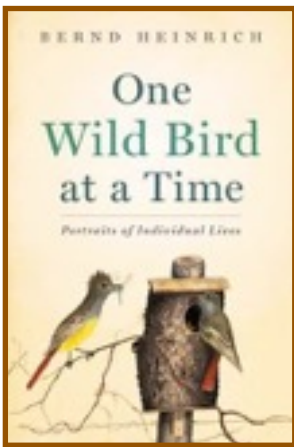
treatment, Betts did extensive work on the website prior to her illness. She continued to troubleshoot issues with the site's management as long as she was physically able to do so. "Anyone who works on the MDAS website will be aware of her presence behind the screen on every page."

Her brother communicated her death to family and friends in the following way: "The care she received at UW was wonderful, and her passing was neither hurried along nor delayed, it was truly on her time. I know that Betts would ask that you keep your families, friends and especially your pets and any animals that need help, close to you, warm, safe, and loved."

Betts' Memorial was Sunday, April 10 at Live Oak Campground in Mt. Diablo State Park, a place she loved well having spent the first night of "Four Days Diablo" there. Stories were shared by friends and family to give a picture of her joyous, generous, passionate life. Donations in Betts' memory can be made to Save Mount Diablo. ~Elizabeth Leite

Book Review:

Getting to Know a Starling



One Wild Bird at a Time: Portraits of Individual Lives by Bernd Heinrich (HMH, \$28).

In his acclaimed and beloved earlier books, *One Man's Owl* and *The Mind of a Raven*, naturalist Bernd Heinrich has written memorably about his relationships with individual wild birds, the Great Horned Owl and a Raven. In this fine new book he turns his attention closer to home, to the common wild birds—vireos, starlings, chickadees, and others—who live around his

cabin in the Maine woods.

Whether he's following the food habits of a flock of chickadees through the winter—sunflowers seeds are a favorite—or observing the "spectacular male-on-male

chases" of the common Red-winged Blackbird, Heinrich's many virtues as a scientist, a writer, and an artist are fully present. While a day-to-day account could be too dry and scientific, Heinrich makes his observations as vivid as gossip about the neighbors.

"When getting to know a bird . . . we are entering another world." Heinrich's close attention brings these other worlds into our own. There are countless books on bird behavior, but Heinrich argues that some of the most amazing bird behaviors fall below the radar of what most birds do in aggregate. It is this passionate argument that underpins *One Wild Bird at a Time*. These are *individual* birds and he comes to know them as individuals giving him a level of detail matched by few other books.

In addition to fine writing, this volume is graced by Heinrich's own vivid pencil sketches and color illustrations.

~Michael Barnard, Owner of Rakestraw Books, rakestrawbooks.com

For a 10% discount on this book, bring your *Quail* or print this page from your email *Quail* to show proof of MDAS membership. Rakestraw Books is located at 3 Railroad Avenue, Danville, CA 94526, (925) 837-7337

Peregrine Patrol



A nesting pair of Peregrine Falcons in Pine Canyon needs our help. Rock-climbing humans disturb nesting birds, often causing them to abandon the nest. In response, the East Bay Regional Park District has enlisted a volunteer patrol group who help monitor the site, educate the public, and report trespassers.

If you'd like to join trained volunteers from area Audubon chapters, MDIA, and Save Mount Diablo and become a part of the Peregrine Patrol (through July 31), please contact Maren Smith at: marensmithbkk@yahoo.com.



Castle Rock views and signage, Maren Smith photos

“Clean and Healthy Bay” Measure AA

The MDAS Board supports Measure AA for a “Clean and Healthy Bay” on the June 7 ballot. Measure AA is a \$12-per-year parcel tax on all property owners in the nine Bay Area counties.

All funds generated must stay in the Bay Area for habitat restoration and wildlife protection projects, and an independent citizens’ oversight committee will oversee funds, perform independent audits, and issue annual public reports to ensure transparency.

Whether you live on, work near, or observe birds along its shores, the Bay is a part of all of our lives. Over 150 years



Eugenia Larson led an MDAS field trip along the Emeryville-Berkeley shoreline on the SF Bay in October, Maren Smith photo

of development, diking, and filling have dramatically reduced the wetlands from over 200,000 acres to just 40,000 acres.

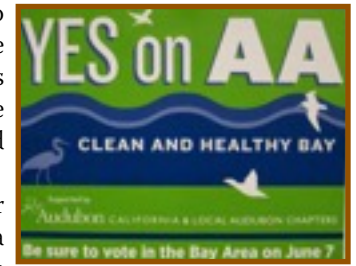
Monies generated from Measure AA will be used to restore tidal wetlands, protect wildlife habitat, reduce pollution, provide recreational opportunities, and prevent flooding throughout the Bay Area.

Wetlands are natural filters for pollutants and provide habitat for birds, fish, and wildlife. The restored wetlands will also provide a natural

buffer against flooding due to sea level rise and extreme storms. In addition, funds could be used to provide better public access and extend the Bay Trail.

It’s a chance for our generation to make a significant difference to save our beautiful Bay while there is still time. ~Maren Smith

For information: www.yesonaaforthebay.com



In March, the MDAS Board voted to endorse Measure AA, the “Clean And Healthy Bay” ballot measure. The resolution is on the MDAS website: diabloaudubon.org.

Volunteers Step Up

Thank you to all MDAS members who have volunteered their time! If you baked cookies, scouted and led a field trip, joined a committee (six signed up for the Legislative Committee in April), manned an MDAS table, or were on the Peregrine Patrol, you are appreciated.

Elizabeth Leite will coordinate the Christmas Bird Count and Michael Meacham has offered to serve on that committee with Jimm Edgar and Maury Stern as advisors. Dal Leite has agreed to become our Webmaster.

Thanks to all of you for stepping up to support MDAS.

John Muir Land Trust: Campaign to Save Carr Ranch



Scenic views from Carr Ranch, Google Images photo

The John Muir Land Trust is working to save and protect an important piece of property, Carr Ranch, and they could use the public’s help.

Located in Moraga, Carr Ranch features 604 acres of stunning ridgelines, unique rock formations, gorgeous valleys and sweeping Bay Area views. The property, owned by the Carr family for more than 100 years, is also home to an exceptional diversity of foliage including Coastal Live Oak woodlands, riparian woodlands, coastal scrub, and annual

grasslands. Endangered species find refuge here including the Alameda Whipsnake, California Red-legged Frog, Golden Eagle, Mountain Lion, Western Pond Turtle, and American Badger, all important to our local ecosystem.

Not only does protecting Carr Ranch preserve critical wildlife habitat, the property is also an important watershed that runs into the Upper San Leandro Reservoir. Protecting the ranch will prevent development that could pollute streams and the reservoir. The past four years in California have been the driest in 80 years, perhaps the past 400. Saving Carr Ranch is a one-time opportunity to protect high-quality Bay Area drinking water at its source.

In just 25 years, John Muir Land Trust has become one of the leading forces for conservation in northern California. With 2,500 acres under stewardship, many beautiful places in Contra Costa County are permanently preserved for recreation, wildlife, and spectacular scenic views.

Once acquired, Carr Ranch will be opened to the public providing an unparalleled source of recreation including hiking, equestrian activities, and bird and wildlife viewing.

Please consider making a gift to John Muir Land Trust to help protect Carr Ranch. Our wild lands are natural treasures that sustain us. We can’t take them for granted, or they will disappear. ~John Muir Land Trust

To donate online or for more information visit www.jmlt.org. Or, send your donation by check to the John Muir Land Trust, Attn: Carr Ranch, P.O. Box 2452, Martinez, CA 94553.

Audubon Climate Heroes What One Success Story Reveals About Talking to Politicians on Birds and Climate

By Liz Bergstrom

It all started in fall 2015, when Rosalie Howarth of Walnut Creek, California,



Rosalie Howarth is an MDAS Board member and long-time DJ for radio station KFOG in San Francisco, Pat Johnson photo

attended a town hall meeting hosted by her Republican legislator, Assembly member Catharine Baker. Howarth listened as many other constituents voiced concerns and questions, then she spoke up about the need to address the urgent problem of climate change. The reaction from the room was mostly eye-rolling, groaning, and dismissal, Howarth recalls. It was as if she had brought up UFOs. But Baker took the issue seriously and talked about the importance of new technologies to combat the effects of climate change.

Encouraged, Howarth followed up by emailing Baker and asking her to vote “yes” on two proposed bills to cut carbon emissions, SB 350 and SB 32. Baker sent a handwritten reply thanking her for the feedback and sharing that she had voted in favor of SB 350. (Baker opposed the other bill, SB 32, which failed to gather enough support in the Assembly and may be reconsidered this year.) SB 350 passed after a groundswell of support from advocates across the state, including a March 2015 trip to the statehouse in Sacramento organized by Audubon California. This legislation will reduce the emissions driving climate change by increasing requirements for renewable energy and energy efficiency.

Howarth was “grateful and amazed” by Baker’s response. Though

she doesn’t identify as a Republican herself, she continues to communicate with Baker via email, and the two had the chance to meet face to face [in San Ramon] later that fall. There Howarth and several other Mount Diablo Audubon Society (MDAS) members shared their concerns about climate change and other issues affecting birds, including proposed development and rodent poisons that kill raptors such as owls and hawks.

This February, Baker spoke at an MDAS meeting with more than 110 members in attendance. Recently the lawmaker hosted a “walk and talk” town-hall meeting by inviting her constituents on a hike in Shell Ridge Open Space—protected parkland with a network of trails. Howarth and other chapter members joined the hike with extra binoculars and helped point out birds such as Acorn Woodpeckers and Western Scrub-Jays, while other attendees identified wildflowers.

Learn More About Climate Change

Howarth has worked for radio station KFOG in San Francisco for more than 30 years, mainly as a DJ hosting acoustic and world music shows. She’s also a longtime birder, who describes her small yard—filled with feeders—as a “bird riot,” frequented by many species such as climate-threatened House Finches and Pine Siskins. She became engaged with the issue of climate change through her interest in meteorology and her voracious reading of newspapers, newsletters, and magazines such as *Scientific American* and *National Geographic*. Its impact on birds and other wildlife alarmed her.

“Wildlife always gets dead-last consideration,” she says of humans’ development of Earth and its resources. As she puts it, people keep saying to wildlife, “We’re going to use this now—move over ‘there.’ And the ‘there’ is forever getting smaller and smaller and more cut-up.”

Howarth has encountered other people dismissing climate change in her community, as demonstrated by a recent letter to her local newspaper scoffing at the consequences of a 2-degree Celsius temperature rise. But

she believes that more people learning about climate science could help turn the tide. She also feels energized and encouraged by her conversations with Baker. “If we can identify, cultivate, and support independent thinkers like her,” Howarth says, “there may be hope!”

Talking To Your Elected Officials

As a professional communicator, Howarth offers this advice for how to connect with legislators on conservation issues:

- Attend town halls or ask for a meeting. “Addressing representatives requires that you respect their time and come prepared to give your best elevator speech on each subject. Be brief, be powerful, be impassioned, and quote facts and statistics,” she says.

- Invite a local lawmaker to speak at one of your chapter meetings. If she or he accepts the invitation, promote the event to make sure as many people as possible are able to attend. This helps show how many people care deeply about bird conservation and other environmental issues.

- Begin building bridges early. “It’s really important to contact your local representatives not only on issues that have legislation pending, but [also] on issues you care about, just to get it on their radar,” Howarth says. That way, when they hear from another constituent, or they see something a representative is doing in another district, they will recognize it as a pressing issue.

- Be polite but persistent. It also doesn’t hurt to ask how you can help support the lawmaker’s priorities, such as an upcoming bill that could use additional public input or expertise. “Above all, get involved,” says Howarth. “Those who oppose your views and threaten what you value certainly do. And even if you get booed . . . something good might come of it.”

~

Editor’s note: this article has been reprinted from the National Audubon Society website: www.audubon.org/news/what-one-success-story-reveals-about-talking-politicians-birds-and-climate

Oriole Opportunities

In the last two or three weeks Hooded and Bullock's Orioles have been arriving. These brightly colored orange/yellow birds are a welcome sign that summer is on the way.

Hooded Oriole males (*below L*) are easily differentiated from Bullock's by the black throats and golden hoods, while Bullock's males have black hoods and a small black stripe running back from the eyes. Females are more difficult to tell apart. They are both less colorful than the males, with some yellow on the head, neck, and rump, but are muted tan with some black on the rest of the body. Bullock's have straighter, shorter beaks and Hooded Orioles have longer curved beaks.

It's very common to see orioles at hummingbird feeders because they are attracted to nectar. However, they are too large to use these feeders effectively, so there are specially designed feeders for these birds with larger openings and perches in the appropriate places. The nectar should be weaker than hummingbird nectar by adding $\frac{1}{4}$ cup water to one cup nectar. Orioles are attracted to fresh fruit—oranges or apples (*Bullock's Oriole above*)—and to grape jelly.

Hooded Orioles winter in Mexico. They are suburban preferring palm trees as nesting places since the fibers from these fronds are used to sew their nests to make a hammock.

Most Bullock's Orioles winter farther south in Mexico or in southern California near the coast. They prefer trees such as willow and native oaks near streams for nesting.

This is the time of year for orioles, if you are lucky. Put up feeders to enjoy them while they are here.

~Mike Eliot, Wild Birds Unlimited



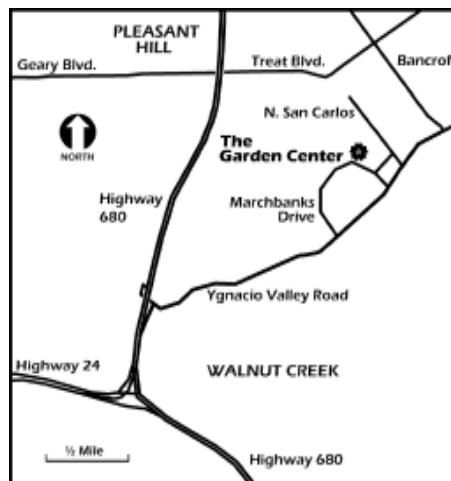
Mount Diablo Audubon Society (MDAS)

Mount Diablo Audubon Society, a Chapter of National Audubon, is committed to the sustainable balance of our community's people, birds, other wildlife, and habitat through conservation, education, and advocacy.

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The Board meets at 645 PM the second Thursday of each month except July and August at Wild Birds Unlimited, PH.



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Mount Diablo Audubon Society meets at 7 PM the first Thursday of each month except July and August in the Camellia Room of The Gardens at Heather Farm, 1540 Marchbanks Drive, Walnut Creek, CA 94598.

MDAS MEMBERSHIP/RENEWAL APPLICATION

- Please enroll me/my family in the Mount Diablo Audubon Society for \$25 for one year. (MDAS dues are tax-deductible)
- For an additional \$20 please enroll me as a first-time member in the National Audubon Society (NAS). (includes 6 bi-monthly issues of Audubon Magazine)
- Please enroll me as a lifetime member for \$500. (or 2 annual \$250 payments)
- I am enclosing an additional tax-deductible donation of \$_____.

Please send the Quail by US Mail, or "Go Green" email

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: () _____ email: _____

Send check payable to Mount Diablo Audubon Society with this application to:
 Membership Chair, 282 Firestone Court, Walnut Creek, CA 94598

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*The Tropical Kingbird at Heather Farm Park,
Cassie Tzur photo*



More than 100 people (top L) filled The Camellia Room for the April meeting. For Birding Information, Christy Sherr (top R), with a "Black-backed Woodpecker," gave a presentation on the benefits of a burned forest habitat. On behalf of MDAS, Scott Hein, MDAS member and Board President of Save Mount Diablo (SMD), honored retiring SMD Executive Director, Ron Brown (bottom L), with the MDAS Al McNabney Environmental Distinction Award. Joan Morris (bottom R), "Animal Life" columnist for the East Bay Times, entertained us with the oddest reader questions she has received and regaled us with humorous stories gleaned from her column. Maren Smith photos

