

SEQUOIA AUDUBON SOCIETY

Bulletin of the Sequoia Audubon Society, San Mateo County Founded 1949 Volume 71, No. 2 April - June 2020

We're Still Celebrating! Sequoia Audubon and the Great Backyard Bird Count 2020 – Jennifer Rycenga, President

How can you help to save our planet? It is a question many of us ask ourselves amidst the despair over extinctions, habitat loss, and climate change. What can we do that makes a difference?

At Sequoia Audubon, we encourage people of all ages and abilities to get outside and learn about nature. If we immerse ourselves in our environment, we grow to love our co-travelers on this living planet: the birds and their habitats.

In this era of computers and smart phones, there is one activity you can easily do: DOCUMENT what you see in the natural world! Sequoia Audubon has enthusiastically adopted, sponsored, and extended the local impact of citizenscience (a.k.a. "community science"). We constantly sponsor events where you can use the power of your knowledge to help scientists track changes in bird populations, or to mark when butterflies start flying, or to note anomalies like leucistic individuals or hybrid gulls.

The drive to make a lasting contribution to knowledge motivates Sequoia Audubon's ongoing participation in events like the Christmas Bird Counts, BioBlitzes, the City Nature Challenge, and International Migratory Bird Day. The annual Great Backyard Bird Count in mid-February is a particular favorite, because it focuses on local places while encouraging neophyte naturalists.

This year Sequoia Audubon invested all its weekend energy into the four-day Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC), from February 14 to 17. What a whirlwind of birds it was! Field trips were scheduled for each day, plus a BioBlitz on Saturday the 15th at Sam McDonald County Park. One of the goals was to see as many birds as we could from Donna Pomeroy's popular illustrated guide to the 70 most common birds of San Mateo County. The field trips alone snagged 60 of the 70, and other birders in the county found seven more. The only three birds from the list that were missed – Caspian Tern, Wilson's Warbler, and Barn Swallow – are spring/summer species, so not expected this time of year. In other words, our amazing field trip leaders, participants and bio-blitzers ACED the test!

As a county, San Mateo accumulated a total of 184 species of birds in this year's GBBC. This reflects equally the avian depth of our county, and the broad swath of enthusiastic birders who live and visit here. Perhaps even more significantly, all these records uploaded to the shared eBird data base

Monthly Meetings

2nd Thursdays 7:00 pm San Mateo Garden Center 605 Parkside Way, San Mateo

April 9

California Center for Natural History

Damon Tighe

May 14

Audubon's Climate Change Strategies

Juan Pablo Galván

June 11

Audubon Conservation Ranching

Matt Allshouse

Upcoming Field Trips

<u>April</u>

Wed. 1st Lower Windy Hill OSP

Sun. 19th Burleigh Murray

Sun. 19th Redwood Shores Library

Wed. 22nd Pinnacles NP

Fri. 24th Montara State Beach and

McNee Ranch

Sat. 25th BioBlitz - Devil's Slide CP

May

Sat. 2nd Don Edwards NWR

Sun. 3rd Lower La Honda Creek OSP

Wed. 6th Pulgas Ridge OSP

Sun. 17th Burleigh Murray

Sun. 24th Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve

<u>June</u>

Wed. 3rd Lower La Honda Creek OSP

Sun. 21st Burleigh Murray

demonstrate our local commitment and leadership in community science initiatives. Our eBird contributions are disproportionately hefty given the small land area of our county.

The four field trips and the BioBlitz were ingeniously planned by Sequoia's field trip coordinator, Casey Girard, to visit favorite spots in four distinct habitats. Donna Pomeroy led a trip to Pillar Point Harbor to nab the coast; Ginny Marshall's expedition went to the popular song-bird habitats in Burleigh Murray State Park. Casey's own venture, to Windy Hill Open Space Preserve, included the oak hills and pond areas of the foothills, while Leslie Flint's trip to the always bird-y Coyote Point brought Bayshore habitat into the mix. With the BioBlitz being held in the mixed Redwood forest and elevated open meadows of Sam McDonald County Park, this sweeping habitat suite was complete!

Our BioBlitz partnership with San Mateo County Parks continues to be another way that Sequoia Audubon is leading the way in 21st century birding. The Great Backyard Bird Count Blitz at Sam McDonald was done differently – we spread out into the higher reaches of the park's southern half, in small dedicated teams. Eschewing the usual wrap-up, people were invited to stay in the field for as long as they wanted. The results were stunning: Nineteen observers who uploaded their data to iNaturalist observed 319 species across all taxa. Each observer made, on average, 63 individual observations! That is a remarkably high number compared to most blitz efforts. Twenty-five bird species were documented on iNaturalist. This particular location also gave us the opportunity to celebrate Black History Month, as Sam McDonald is a towering figure of accomplishment and generosity in our county's history. If you are intrigued to learn more, we'll have County Park Ranger Katherine Wright speak at our February general meeting next year about him!

Keep on keeping on with eBird, with iNaturalist, with discussions online, and all the other platforms where we can show our love and attention to the natural world. Your efforts, many now spanning over a decade, are starting to make a longitudinal impact. If our planet is saved, all of us will have played a part.



Eager BioBlitzers at Sam McDonald County Park, photo by Jennifer Rycenga



California Thrasher at Windy Hill Open Space Preserve, photo by Casey Girard



Lower Windy Hill Open Space Preserve-Portola Valley Wednesday, April 1, 8:00 am - 11:30 am

We will meet at the Windy Hill parking lot on Portola Road to explore this mixed oak woodland habitat for some of the oak specialties like White-breasted Nuthatch, Oak Titmouse and Nuttall's Woodpecker. Our hike will cover about two miles of trail with easy to moderate grades. One of the specialties of this park is the shy Wood Duck, which we hope to sneak up on with our early start. Bring fluids, sunscreen, hat, etc.

Leader: Donna Pomeroy Contact: dpom@comcast.net

Burleigh Murray Ranch State Park Sunday, April 19, 8:00 am – 12:00 pm

Join us for a leisurely 3-4 hour walk in this bird-rich gem on our coast. The trail is a one-mile former ranch road leading to a historic barn. Plan layers for cool temps, morning fog and sunshine. Heavy rain cancels. **Directions:** We will meet at the lower parking lot to the Johnston House, located on Higgins-Purisima Road in Half Moon Bay. Higgins-Purisima Road begins just off of SR1, going east where Main Street ends. The Johnston House is the big white 1850s farmhouse on the hill. We will caravan to Burleigh Murray, which is 1 ½ miles up Higgins-Purisima Road from here. Leader: Ginny Marshall Contact: ginnybirder@gmail.com

Redwood Shores Library Program Bird Walk and Educational Talk Sunday, April 19, 1:00-4:00 pm

Join us for this bird education program, for adults and families with older children, at the Redwood Shores Library. We will have a 30min presentation about local/migratory birds, followed by a 30-45 min. walk along the Bay Trail around the Belmont Slough. This will give us great views of bay mudflat birds, such as American Avocets, Blacknecked Stilts, Willets, Long-billed Curlews, peeps, gulls, and some raptors. Directions: The Redwood Shores Library is at the junction of Bridge Parkway and Marine Parkway in Redwood Shores. This can be reached via the Holly St or Ralston Ave exits off 101. Leaders: Casey Girard and Sonny Mencher

Contact: casey.girard@gmail.com or fpotter@redwoodcity.org

Pinnacles National Park - Reservations Required (Max 12 participants) Wednesday, April 22, Whole Day Trip, 8:00 am - 3:00 pm

Pinnacles National Park lies just south of Hollister and affords the opportunity to see California Condor in the wild. We'll also look for canyon wren, Lawrence's goldfinch, prairie falcon and more. RSVP Required to Leslie Flint (info below) as there is a maximum of 12 participants for this trip. Directions: Take Hwy 101 south through the city of Gilroy to Hwy 25 south. On Hwy 25, go through the town of Hollister and continue about 30 miles to Hwy 146. Turn right on Hwy 146, then turn left into the Pinnacles Campground and Visitor Center. Allow 2 hours driving time. \$30.00 entrance fee (per car). Bring a flashlight for walking through the caves. Contact Leslie for no-host carpool. Leader: Leslie Flint Contact: lflint@earthlink.net

Montara State Beach and McNee Ranch Friday, April 24, 8:00 am-5:00 pm

This miniature BioBlitz will be part of the 2020 City Nature Challenge. We will be observing and documenting all forms of life at these two contiguous parks. The field trip is divided into two distinct parts. First, meet at 8:00 am at Montara State Beach (the parking lot located off SR 1, about 1/2 mile north of Second Street), and walk the newly extended areas of beach and terrace west of SR 1. This part of the trip will end at about 11:00 am. The second part of the field trip will meet at the entrance to McNee Ranch State Park on the east side of SR 1. We will hike up Montara Mountain here, to canvass the unusual flora and fauna of this unique habitat, and to search for migrating birds. This part of the trip will last until about 5:00 pm.

Check our website and Facebook page for updates and new listings.

BioBlitz at Devil's Slide County Park

Saturday, April 25 8:45 am

This trail, a bit over a mile in length, contains many gems of avian and botanical wonder. This BioBlitz - another chapter in the successful partnership between San Mateo County Parks, California Academy of Sciences, California Lichen Society, and Sequoia Audubon - will start at 8:45 in the south parking lot (Moss Beach side of the tunnel). Sign up with Eventbrite; link here - https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/devil-s-slide-bioblitz-april-2020

Pacific Flyway - Don Edwards NWR Ravenswood Salt Pond SF2 Saturday, May 2nd, 10:00 am - 12:30 pm

In partnership with the San Francisco Bay Wildlife Society we will check out our wetlands as they are an important stop on the Pacific Flyway, a major bird migration route. Stroll with docent Laurel Stell and Doug Brown, SAS field trip leader, to learn why birds migrate, why they stop along the San Francisco Bay, and to spot the birds in action. Trail is easy and level. All ages and abilities are welcome. **Directions:** The trailhead is located on the side of the Dumbarton Bridge. From Menlo Park: drive Highway 84 toward the Dumbarton Bridge, exit at the Ravenswood Unit sign and drive east on the frontage road. From the East Bay: Cross the Dumbarton Bridge and exit at the Ravenswood Unit sign near the PG&E substation. Drive the frontage road east, under the bridge and back west. Coordinates: 37°29'43.7"N 122°07'55.6"W Questions? Email: watershedwatchers@sfbws.com; Call: 408-262-5513 ext.104.Follow this link to register: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/pacific-flyway-registration-15305578397

Lower La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve Sunday, May 3rd, 8:00 am -3:00 pm

Join Jennifer Rycenga and Simon Westley on a long hike exploration of this relatively new park, with an eye to preparing the park's entry for the San Mateo County Birding Guide. We will hike 3-6 miles depending on trail access. Species observed and photos taken will receive preferential consideration for being featured in the San Mateo County Birding Guide. Bring lunch, liquids, and walking sticks. Meet at the Sears Ranch Road Parking Area at 8:00 am. Email Jennifer for more information at gyrrlfalcon@earthlink.net. Heavy rain cancels.

Pulgas Ridge Open Space Preserve Wednesday, May 6, 8:00 am - 12:00 pm

Pulgas Ridge OSP is not as well-known as its neighboring park, across the road, Edgewood Preserve. We will explore this oak woodland and grassland in search of birds, wildflowers and butterflies. **Directions:** From Edgewood Road (near I-280), go north on Crestview Drive, then take an immediate left at Edmonds Road. The parking lot is clearly marked on Edmonds. The trail is moderately strenuous, but the slow pace should allow everyone to keep up. Bring fluids, sunscreen, hat, etc. **Leader:** Donna Pomeroy **Contact:** dpom@comcast.net

Burleigh Murray Ranch State Park Sunday, May 17, 8:00 am – 12:00 pm

Join us for a leisurely 3-4 hour walk in this bird-rich gem on our coast. The trail is a one-mile former ranch road leading to a historic barn. Plan layers for cool temps, morning fog and sunshine. Heavy rain cancels. **Directions:** We will meet at the lower parking lot to the Johnston House, located on Higgins-Purisima Road in Half Moon Bay. Higgins-Purisima Road begins just off of SR1, going east where Main Street ends. The Johnston House is the big white 1850s farmhouse on the hill. We will caravan to Burleigh Murray, which is 1 ½ miles up Higgins-Purisima Road from here. **Leader:** Ginny Marshall **Contact:** ginnybirder@gmail.com

Check our website and Facebook page for updates and new listings.

Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve

Sunday, May 24th, 8:00 am – 10:00 am (limited to 15 people)

Get a chance to visit the Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve of Stanford via this docent-led tour. Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve has a long history with Stanford and the Bay Area Community. It used to be used as a recreational area and pasture for cattle. Then through the 50's and 70's use became limited to ensure it could be used for research to teach students and add to the collective knowledge of what an undeveloped specifically California habitat range does over time. With numerous habitats to explore, Oak Woodland, Riparian, Chaparral, and Wetland birds as we hike around, carefully remaining on the trails through Jasper Ridge. Please be aware: 1) There is the possibility of encountering poison oak, ticks, and other hazards. 2) there is one bathroom at the start 3) you cannot leave until the walk is over 4) bring a hat, sunscreen, water and a snack that works on a trail. **RSVP** Required to Casey Girard (info below) as there is a maximum of 15 participants for this trip. Directions will come with rsvp confirmation email. Leaders: Sonny Mencher and Casey Girard

Contact: casey.girard@gmail.com

Lower La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve Wednesday, June 3, 8:00 am - 11:30 am

La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve (lower section) is one of the newest preserves in San Mateo County, but it has quickly become established as a favorite among the birders who go there regularly. We will make a leisurely 2-mile round-trip hike along an old dirt road, searching the skies for raptors, the grasslands for breeding birds, and the woodland along the hiking trail for migrating passerines. Bring fluids, sunscreen, hat, etc. and your camera for the extraordinary views. Directions: We will meet at the parking lot at the end of Sears Ranch Road in La Honda. Visit the park map if you are unfamiliar with this area, at https://www.openspace.org/sites/default/files/ map LH.pdf. Leader: Donna Pomeroy Contact: dpom@comcast.net

Burleigh Murray Ranch State Park Sunday, June 21, 8:00 am – 12:00 pm

Join us for a leisurely 3-4 hour walk in this bird-rich gem on our coast. The trail is a one-mile former ranch road leading to a historic barn. Plan layers for cool temps, morning fog and sunshine. Heavy rain cancels. **Directions:** We will meet at the lower parking lot to the Johnston House, located on Higgins-Purisima Road in Half Moon Bay. Higgins-Purisima Road begins just off of SR1, going east where Main Street ends. The Johnston House is the big white 1850s farmhouse on the hill. We will caravan to Burleigh Murray, which is 1 ½ miles up Higgins-Purisima Road from here. Leader: Ginny Marshall Contact: ginnybirder@gmail.com

Sawyer Camp Trail Date To Be Announced

Sawyer Camp Trail is a beautiful hike along the Crystal Springs Reservoir. It is one of the bay area's only consistent spots for Bald Eagle, and is also a favorite spot for Wood Ducks, Wild Turkeys, and others. The trail is flat and paved and covers a wide variety of habitats. We will be starting at the main trailhead, which is at Skyline Boulevard and Crystal Springs Road in San Mateo. There is a restroom at the beginning of the trail and another around the 1 mile mark. The amount of trail we walk depends on how fast we go, as it isn't a loop trail (I expect we will go a couple of miles altogether). Bikers use this trail; dogs do not. Bring sunscreen and sun protection. Heavy rain cancels. Directions: If coming from North, take 280 to exit 36 for Hayne Road/Black Mountain Road. Get on CA-35/ Skyline Boulevard due South. If coming from South, take 280 to exit 34 for Bunker Hill Drive. Turn left on Bunker Hill and then right onto CA-35/Skyline Boulevard due North. Park on street on either Skyline or CrystalSprings near trailhead--there are parking spaces. Leader: Simon Westley. Contact: swestley518@gmail.com

MEETING PROGRAMS

605 Parkside Way, San Mateo

April 9, 7 pm Damon Tighe, California Center for Natural History

The California Center for Natural History strives to foster a shared admiration of the natural world and improved access to natural history for all people. They are building a vast network of experienced naturalists to visit K-12 classrooms and inspire the next generations with a passion for the outdoors. Damon Tighe, one of the co-directors of the California Center for Natural History, is a graduate of St. Mary's College in Moraga with a degree in Biology and Chemistry, and since working on the Human Genome project, has continued to pursue interests in biotechnology. He is happiest when engaging in citizen-science and outreach. He will speak with us tonight on the history and aspirations of the California Center for Natural History, and how their mission can dovetail with the interests of a birding organization like Sequoia Audubon.





May 14, 7 pm Juan Pablo Galván - Audubon's Climate Change Strategies

The National Audubon Society's current science shows that two-thirds (389 out of 604) of North American bird species are at risk of extinction from climate change. The good news is that our science also shows that if we take action now we can help improve the chances for 76% of species at risk. We will learn the details of Audubon's new report on the impacts of climate change on birds from Mt. Diablo Audubon Society's Young Birders Club Chairperson Juan Pablo Galván. He'll show us the drastic impacts that climate change is already having on the Bay Area and other parts of the world, attempt to explain why it's been so difficult to make progress against a drastically warmer climate caused by humans, and make a provocative case for who is responsible for this tragedy. Most importantly, every person in the audience and everywhere on the planet must ACT NOW to prevent catastrophic climate change.

Juan Pablo leads the Mt. Diablo Young Birders Club. He grew up in Benicia, but since high school has lived and worked in Costa Rica, Mexico, Washington D.C. and different parts of California. Juan Pablo has always loved animals and been interested in learning about and protecting them and the habitats they live in, ever since he brought an octopus in for kindergarten show and tell. Juan Pablo graduated from the University of California, San Diego, with a B.S. in Ecology, Behavior, and Evolution, and a minor in Political Science. After working for a year in Mexico, he received an M.S. in Sustainable Development and Conservation Biology at the University of Maryland, College Park. He's been back and forth to Mexico, Sacramento, and other places, but has lived in the Bay Area the past six years hiking the mountains and checking out the beaches.

June 11, 7 pm Matt Allshouse – Audubon Conservation Ranching

Matt is the Program Manager for Audubon's Conservation Ranching (ACR) program in California. Prior to joining Audubon he worked for an environmental engineering firm as a reclamation/restoration ecologist throughout the intermountain west and as a field biologist for The Peregrine Fund in Central America. He enjoys any time outdoors and has a passion for science, culture, and preserving wild places and the species that utilize them.

Birds are an important indicator of overall ecosystem health and grassland bird population trends show that our grasslands are in trouble. A recent study led by Cornell showed a 53 percent decline in grassland birds in North America. This is due in large part to the loss and degradation of grasslands across North America. Here in California, much of our remaining grassland habitat is found on our 62.9 million acres of rangelands. These rangelands provide habitat, food production, carbon sequestration, as well as water infiltration and storage. However, this historic California landuse is under threat with an average of 20,000 acres a year being lost to development or crop conversion. The Audubon Conservation Ranching (ACR) program is working to stem the loss of grassland ecosystems, improve the ecological functions of rangelands by assisting rancher transition to more regenerative grazing approaches, increase soil carbon sequestration, and help grassland birds rebound.

Best eBird practices from Malia DeFelice and the recent Great Backyard Bird Count

A basic understanding of how eBird works is essential. From the home page at eBird.org the link to the **Help Center** is the right most link on the same line as the green and black eBird logo. https://support.ebird.org/support/home. I strongly encourage everyone to read ALL the eBird Help Files. They will help you make the best of all your bird sightings!

Getting started:

Create or use an existing account through eBird https://ebird.org/. Your bird sightings will be entered in the form of a checklist, either into the website, OR by using the eBird App on your smartphone or digital device.

Every checklist must have these FOUR key elements:

Date - a single calendar date. Do not create one checklist for multiple dates.

Location - Use a known hotspot or a specific location selected on a map. If you visit different places, use different **hotspots** or specific locations.

Observer - At least one observer must be noted on the checklist.

Birds seen or heard - As long as you were able to confidently identify the bird. Enter it regardless of whether you heard or saw it. But don't guess at the ID. Count Fledglings, nestlings, and baby birds of all types. Count Introduced species. Count Living birds. Do not report Eggs, Captive birds, Dead birds.

Other important checklist elements:

Start and End time - of your birding session. Make sure you have AM or PM checked correctly

Distance traveled - if you are traveling, please record **ONE-WAY distance only** if your route is in and back the same trail, but count all birds – add birds you observed on the way out even if you did not observe them on the way in. If your route is a large loop that starts and ends in the same spot but covers different ground the entire loop route is one-way.

Submit COMPLETE checklists - the most useful checklist to science and researchers includes all the birds you can ID in one birding session, not just the ones that interest you most. The fact that you cannot ID every bird seen or heard is OK. It is still a complete list, even if you were not able to ID every bird you saw.

Incidental Checklist – use this protocol if your primary activity was not intentionally birding, but happened to see a bird of note while you were doing something else.

Document Rare Birds

If you report a bird and you are prompted to add details, that means the bird is either rare for the time of year or is simply rare. SAS has a checklist of birds of San Mateo County which will help you understand seasonality or what is rare. Link to checklist here http://www.sequoia-audubon.org/SMClist.pdf. Try to get a photo or audio of the bird. Please add notes in your checklist comments providing details of the bird, describing what the bird looked like, add field marks that confirmed the ID, and what physical characteristics you used to uniquely ID the bird and separate it from similar species.

Counting large numbers of birds

"X"s are OK.....But It is best to use real numbers rather than "X". If you want to report a large group of shorebirds, waterfowl, or a large gull flock, try to count 10, then from 10 figure 100, then from 100 figure 1000 etc. Please indicate in your checklist notes how you arrived at your estimate.

Working with the eBird Reviewer – If the eBird reviewer requires more information about your sighting, please don't be alarmed or dismayed. It is the job of the reviewer to ask questions and engage in conversation with the ultimate goal of ensuring that the data in eBird is reliable and useful not only for other eBird users, but for scientists, researchers and conservationists, now, and for many years to come. Your contributions are greatly appreciated and it is exciting to work together to achieve these goals. Please feel free to email me with any questions.

Most importantly – Get out and go Birding!

Malia DeFelice – eBird – San Mateo County maliakai@coastside.net

OFFICERS

Acting President: Jennifer Rycenga

Vice President: Open Susan Stratton Secretary: Treasurer: Julie Dull

At Large: Doug Brown, Marshall Dinowitz, John Epperson, Barbara

Kossy, Nelle Lyons, Chris MacIntosh, Doug Pomeroy

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Alvaro Jaramillo

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MISSION STATEMENT

Sequoia Audubon Society protects native birds and other wildlife and their ecosystems in San Mateo County by engaging people of all ages in conservation, education, advocacy and enjoyment.

Seguoia Audubon Society

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Support our Chapter's Work - Donate

Please consider an extra donation to your chapter in support of the work we do to provide birding trips, monthly programs, monitoring conservation concerns around the county, education and outreach. Thank you!

Give a Gift Membership or in Recognition

Has someone inspired you, or just done something kind for the world or for the birds? A donation in recognition gives toward supporting our Chapter's work.

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A percentage of your purchase can be donated to support the work of SAS whenever you shop on Amazon. You get the same products, prices and service and support our work to protect native birds and other wildlife and their ecosystems. The only difference is that, to support SAS through Amazon Smile, you must access the site: http://smile.amazon.com/ch/94-60929053.

We're looking for Volunteers! Get Involved! Take Action!

You can make a difference! We're looking for a website monitor and publicity coordinator. Join our team! For more information, email: office@sequoia-audubon.org

Make Sure Your Coffee Supports Birds – Buy Bird Friendly SMBC Certified Coffee

Does your daily coffee support bird habitat or contribute to the demise of Neotropical landscapes? If it doesn't have the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center (SMBC) Bird Friendly certification seal your money does not support farming practices that support resident and migratory birds. During our monthly public meetings Sequoia proudly serves Certified Bird Friendly coffee, 100% organic and shade grown from Birds and Beans, The Good Coffee (https://www.birdsandbeans.com) and generously donated for each monthly meeting by Susan Rowinski.



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Senior or Student membership		\$15.00
ndividual membership		\$20.00
Family membership		\$25.00
Supporter		\$100.00
Donation to SAS		\$
	Total	\$
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Yes, I am interested in volunteering ____

Newsletter Preference:

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E-mail address _____

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