

SANTA CLARA VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

June, 1949

THE REGULAR JUNE MEETING will be held next Monday evening, June 13, in Alum Rock Park. For those who can come to the Park in the afternoon, there will be an hour of birding, followed by a picnic supper. Meet at the Lodge at 4 o'clock for the birding. The supper will be at 5:30 o'clock at picnic tables near the Lodge, each one bringing his own supper. There are grills for those who want to cook, and Grace Brubaker will see that there is a big pot of hot coffee, with sugar and cream—but bring your own cup and spoon.

At the evening meeting, at 7:30 o'clock in the Lodge, there will be reports of bird observations, and then Dr. Matt Vessel will show a colored motion picture film entitled "Camouflage in Nature." After the program Lester Sleeper, in the absence of Neil Dickinson, will conduct a business meeting of the Society to consider and vote upon the Branch Plan, as presented in the enclosed letter. If you can not attend the meeting, do not forget to appoint a proxy to vote for you, using the proxy form at the end of the letter.

Members who want transportation from the end of the Linda Vista City Bus line into the Park, phone Emily Smith in Los Gatos.

THE JUNE FIELD TRIP will be taken the following Sunday, June 19, to the egret herony on the Guadalupe Creek, near the Montague Road; and in the afternoon, to Alviso to look for birds which summer in the salt marshes. Ann Peterson and Jim Peterson will be leaders. The meeting place will be the S. P. Station at Agnew, Santa Clara-Alviso Road, and the time, 6 a.m.! San Jose members who want transportation meet at the corner of East San Carlos and Fifth Streets promptly at 5:40, and Palo Alto members at the S. P. Station in Palo Alto at 5:30. Those who want to come later, will find the party near the eucalyptus grove on the Guadalupe Creek, where the herony is, at 8 o'clock. From the Santa Clara-Alviso Road, turn east into the second driveway south of the Montague Road. An Audubon Society sign will be posted at the entrance to the driveway.

Bring lunch. Ann has invited us to picnic at her home, on the grounds of the Commercial Solvents Corp., near Agnew.

B. Neil Dickinson, Pres. - 1135 Crane St., Menlo Park
Emily Smith, Corr. Sec. - 387 Glen Una Dr., Los Gatos

KARL S. HAZELTINE MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP. At its meeting in April, the Society voted to make its Audubon Nature Camp scholarship a memorial to Dr. Karl S. Hazeltine. Dr. Hazeltine helped found the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society twenty-four years ago, and for several years he served as the Society's president. Always he gave much time and thought to help carry on the work of the Society. Although in recent years he was able to attend the meetings only occasionally, he kept up his membership and was always warmly interested in the Society's welfare.

When Mr. Baker, president of the National Audubon Society, was planning for the Audubon Nature Camp in California, he came to San Jose to consult with Dr. Hazeltine, who was professor of Nature Study at San Jose State College, and also a member of the staff of the West Coast School of Nature Study. During last summer Dr. Hazeltine was much interested in the nature and conservation program which was being carried on at the new Audubon Nature Camp in California.

Mrs. Dorothy Wool, chairman of the scholarship committee, is glad to report that Mrs. Ruth Feiring, Sixth Grade teacher in the Saratoga School, will receive the scholarship. In applying for the scholarship, Mrs. Feiring wrote: "I have organized Junior Audubon Clubs for the last four years. This year's club is especially active and interested. We have a bird house and feeding tray outside our window, and maintain an active bulletin board. We have had two outside speakers, and we use available movies and slides. Our greatest difficulty is my own lack of knowledge. The children want to know so many more things about birds and other nature subjects than I can tell them or assist them to find out for themselves. The Camp offers an opportunity to acquire the information I need." Dr. Hazeltine always wanted every elementary school teacher to have such an opportunity as this, so that everywhere boys and girls could have nature study in school.

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Our beloved Dr. Gayle Pickwell died May 29. The memory of his rich, inexhaustible enjoyment of birds and his gay comradeship on field trips will be always with those of us who knew him when he was an active member of our Society. A busy professor of ornithology and zoology at San Jose State College, and a writer of many books on birds and other nature study subjects, Dr. Pickwell found time to share with the members of the Audubon Society his profound knowledge of birds and his delightful enthusiasm for bird watching.

On his fiftieth birthday, last March, lying almost completely paralyzed on a hospital bed, he was made very happy by the letters of love and appreciation which came to him from his Audubon Society friends, and from many, many other friends from everywhere he ever lived.

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MAY 8 FIELD TRIP REPORT. A group of eighteen Audubon Society members met at Linda Vista, to spend the morning in Alum Rock Park. Although the day which began fair, became cloudy, chilly, and even a bit showery, it did not interfere with an eventful half-day of birding.

At Linda Vista, before going on into the Park, we watched two brilliant Bullock's orioles disputing, apparently, territory rights. Then we saw a pair of Brewer's blackbirds fly into a pine with food in their bills.

While we watched, the male went to their nest and fed the young, but the female was more cautious and would not take her green worm to the nest until we had moved farther away. In another pine, a bush-tit, paying no attention to us, slipped into its bag-shaped nest with food for its family. From the top of an oak a mockingbird was singing exuberantly, often throwing itself up into the air and displaying the white in its wings and tail. Other birds we noticed at Linda Vista were two mourning doves, several acorn woodpeckers, California jay, a pair of robins, loggerhead shrike, two or three Western meadowlarks, several house finches, a pair of Arkansas goldfinches, Lawrence's goldfinch, and several brown towhees.

In Alum Rock Park we stopped at the service road bridge. As soon as we were out of our cars we heard black-headed grosbeaks singing on every side. Knowing that male grosbeaks sing while taking their turn at incubating, we nest-hunted by looking for the singing grosbeaks (one "grosbeak song" proved to be the song of a Western tanager). Along the horse trail, between the bridge and the watering trough—a distance of perhaps two hundred yards—we located five grosbeak nests, with an incubating bird on each nest. Three of the nests were high in live oaks, and the two others were in tall toyon bushes. This short stretch of trail, with picnic tables and the creek on one side and a wooded slope on the other, proved to be the home of many kinds of birds. Here we found a concentration of nesting birds to delight any bird lover. At the bridge a house wren carried food into a knot-hole in an oak. Under the bridge there was a new black phoebe's nest and a black phoebe singing nearby. A Western flycatcher was nest-building in a niche in the trail bank, and a Western wood pewee was binding nesting material to a branch of an oak. A pair of orange-crowned warblers were dropping down frequently to a nest hidden under leaves on a sloping bank, attempting to satisfy the insatiable appetites of their brood. On the other side of the trail parent titmice were carrying food into a hole in a dead sycamore, and in the same tree a pair of ash-throated flycatchers were courting. Twice a hairy woodpecker flew across the trail, carrying food in its bill. The song of a solitary vireo led us to an alder where we found not only the singer but also his mate and the nest she had just been working on. The nest was about six feet above our heads, and we could see that a lot of tissue paper had gone into its making. Discarded Kleenex tissue on the ground not far off was evidently the source of the paper. Just beyond the alder, the persistent singing of a warbling vireo started us on another nest-hunt. The song came from the top of a maple, but we could not see the singer. We suspected the vireo was singing in his nest while taking his turn at incubating, like the grosbeaks. Finally we found a nest. Our binoculars showed that a bit of white in a cluster of leaves was tissue paper which had been worked into the bottom of a pensile nest. But proof that the singer was in the nest came only when we saw him fly out as his mate arrived to change places with him.

When we returned to our cars at noon, we had seen twenty-eight species of birds in the short distance between the bridge and the watering trough. In addition to those birds which have already been named, there were two red-tailed hawks, several California quail, two mourning doves, downy woodpecker, two Nuttall's woodpeckers, six violet-green swallows, Steller's jay, pair of bush-tits, California thrasher, russet-backed thrush, pileolated warbler, two or three lazuli buntings, pair of Arkansas goldfinches, pair of spotted towhees, pair of brown towhees, pair of song sparrows.