



THE AVOCET

The Newsletter of the Santa Clara Audubon Society

May - June 2003

East Texas birding bonanza

South Bay refugee hits the jackpot with songbird fallout on Gulf Coast

by John Mariani

John Mariani is a San Jose native and long-time member of the local birding community who recently relocated to Texas. Many SCVAS members know John through his stint as Calero-Morgan Hill Christmas Bird Count co-founder and compiler, and as a friendly and knowledgeable field trip leader. He sends the following birding report from his new home near Beaumont in the "Big Thicket" area of East Texas:

Greetings to all my friends in the South Bay. Just wanted to fill you in on my first real day of birding since I moved to Texas—it was worth the wait!

Monday afternoon, April 7, I got off work early enough to have a quick look around the yard before it got dark. There was a storm looming but maybe it helped push some birds my way—I added seven new species to the yard list, more new birds than I got in the months of Feb. and March combined! They included Broad-winged Hawk, Chimney Swift, Purple

Martin, Tree Swallow, Little Blue Heron, and a Baltimore Oriole that appeared to be following a flock of Red-winged Blackbirds north (?).

I had Tuesday off, and took a break from chores to visit Sabine Woods Sanctuary, which is on the coast about an hour away from home. Sabine Woods very closely resembles the famed High Island, but it's farther from Houston, less popular, and doesn't get the big crowds of birders. Still there were plenty of cars there when I arrived; even some Brits leading a tour group. Just as the Weather Channel had predicted, the wind had shifted to the north, and a modest songbird fallout was occurring. As soon as I got out of the car I could see that the trees and undergrowth were full of birds.

Some people I met told me that even greater numbers of birds were in a patch of woods at nearby Sabine Pass, but I didn't want to leave with things so good right where I was. I spent about three hours walking through the woods, and among the migrants I saw were 2 Broad-winged Hawks, 2 Eastern Wood-Pewees, 1 Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, 1 Eastern Kingbird, 1 Great Crested Flycatcher, 1 Swainson's Thrush, a few Brown Thrashers, about 10 Northern Parulas, 3 Tennessee Warblers, 1 Ovenbird, 1 Yellow-throated Warbler, 1 male Blackburnian Warbler, 6+ Common

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**General Membership Meeting
"Birds of Cuba"
with Alvaro Jaramillo
Palo Alto Arts Center
Newell & Embarcadero Rds.
Wednesday, May 21
Doors open 7:30; program 8:00**

Most Americans have never been to Cuba, so few American birders have been able to experience the superb avifauna of this island nation. Cuba fortunately maintains some large areas of forests and marshes and, unlike other Caribbean nations, it is relatively well protected. The availability of good habitat such as the famed Zapata Swamp, which is more forest than swamp, is the crown jewel for the birder. Alvaro (Al) Jaramillo will show you the swamp and various other spots in the west and central part of Cuba. Of the Caribbean Islands, Cuba has the largest number of endemic bird species.

Although Cuba is an island, its geographic placement has created a crossroads of sorts, with the avifauna having components from North America, Central America and the Caribbean itself. The latter is epitomized by the wonderful Cuban Tody, a tiny, colorful bird that appears like a mix between

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**Annual
Potluck Dinner
June 18
See Page 4**

◆ *Int'l. Migratory Bird Day
May 10—Page 4*

◆ *Late winter sightings
—Field Notes, Page 6*

◆ *Kelly Crowley leaves SCVAS—
to pursue gold?—Page 8*

◆ *Los Altos Hills fundraiser
a huge hit —Page 9*

May-June 2003 Field Trips

Please carpool if possible; bring binoculars, field guides, layered clothing.

LO = Lunch optional

RC = Heavy rain cancels

Saturday May 3, 1:00 PM

Butterfly Watching, Hidden Villa Ranch

Half day. Leader: Garth Harwood (650) 879-0724. From I-280 in Los Altos take El Monte Rd. past Foothill College, turn left at Moody Rd and after approx. 1.7 miles, left into Hidden Villa. Meet at first parking lot beside entrance. \$5 fee per car. Close-focusing binoculars helpful. Children under 12 should have a strong interest. "Local Butterflies" guide available at McClellan Ranch Park for under \$10 is recommended. Moderate walking. RC

Saturday May 3, 8:00 AM

Stevens Creek County Park

Half day. Leader: TBD (questions - Call Bob Reiling (408) 253-7527). From I-280 in Cupertino take Foothill Expwy exit south 2.1 miles, becomes Stevens Canyon Rd., turn left into first (Chestnut) park entrance and meet in first parking lot. Prime riparian birding spot in the South Bay for migrants and local breeding birds. Possible \$4 entrance fee. LO

Sunday May 4, 7:30/8:15 AM

South coastal San Mateo County

Half day plus. Leader: Al Eisner (650) 364-3686, days and voice mail (650) 926-2018. Trip will begin with a "sea watch" at Pigeon Point until at least 8:15 AM. Spotting scope helpful. Meet at large pullout on Pigeon Point Rd. immediately north of lighthouse (about 28 miles north of Santa Cruz, 22 miles south of Half Moon Bay.) Other Pescadero habitats should produce a variety of breeding (and singing) songbirds, resident marsh birds, migrating seabirds and shorebirds. LO

Saturday May 10, 8:30 AM

Mines Rd. and vicinity

Full day. Leader: Don Schmoldt (916) 739-8821. Trip starts in Del Puerto Canyon, working west to San Antonio Valley, ending up in Livermore. From I-580 go east over Altamont Pass to I-5, south on I-5 to Patterson exit, then west on Del Puerto Canyon Rd. Meet at first pullout (look for Don's "BAJA OWL" license plate). Highlights include possible Costa's Hummingbird, Phainopepla, Lewis's Woodpecker, Rock Wren and Lawrence's Goldfinch.

Sunday May 11, 8:30 AM

Charleston Slough

Half day. Leader: Phyllis Browning (650) 494-6360. Meet at Terminal Way at end of San Antonio Rd. north off Hwy 101 in Mt. View. Trip designed for beginning birders but all are encouraged to attend. A good trip to checkout your spotting scope.

Wednesday May 14, 8:30 AM

Calero Reservoir, McKean Rd

Half day. Leader: Alan Thomas (408) 265-9286. Meet at Ranger Station about 1 mile south of boat dock. We'll skip the lake to concentrate on breeding woodland species instead. LO, RC

Saturday May 17, 8:00 AM

Alum Rock Park

Half day. Leader: Kirsten Holmquist (408) 747-0988. From Hwy 101 or I-680 take McKee Rd. northeast toward hills then left on Toyon Ave, right on Penitencia Creek Rd and into park. Drive left through overpass, meet at far end of parking lot. Moderately strenuous 3 to 4 mile walk. Possible park fee. Rufous-Crowned Sparrow, Lazuli Bunting. LO

Sunday May 18, 8:00 AM

Almaden Quicksilver County Park

Half day. Leader: Ann Verdi (408) 266-5108. A short loop of 1.5 miles taking Mine Hill, Guadalupe and Senador Mines Trails while the birds are most active, before hikers and joggers get going. Target species: W. Woodpecker, Ash-throated Flycatcher, W. Tanager, as well as newly-fledged birds (Oak Titmouse, C-B Chickadee, juncos, woodpeckers, etc.). Take Almaden south past Blossom Hill Rd and Coleman Rd; turn right at next exit (McAbee Rd.) and follow it until dead-end at park entrance (Pierce dairy farm will be on right; parking is along the street). Meet at trailhead entrance. RC

Saturday May 24, 9:00 AM

Arastradero OSP, Birding by Ear

Half day. Leader: Garth Harwood (650) 879-0724. From I-280 take Page Mill Rd. west, turn right on Arastradero Rd. and meet in the parking lot about a half mile on the right. Moderate walking. RC

Sunday May 25, 7:30 AM

Upper Grant Ranch, Birding by Ear

Half day. Leader: Grant Hoyt (650) 969-7892. From I-680 take Alum Rock Ave east, turn right on Mt. Hamilton Rd. Continue past main Grant Ranch Co. Park entrance another 2 + miles to Twin Gates parking area on left. Possible Lark & Grasshopper Sparrows, Lazuli Bunting, Horned Lark, other oak woodland breeding species. Moderately strenuous 3-mile hike. LO

Wednesday May 28, 8:00 AM

Montebello Open Space Preserve

Leader: Rita Colwell (650) 949-1869. Meet at large Montebello OSP parking area on left side of Page Mill Rd. about 7 miles southwest of I-280. Possible Grasshopper Sparrow, Lazuli Bunting, Black-throated Gray Warbler, Ash-throated Flycatcher. Be prepared for any kind of weather. Moderate, hilly walking. LO

Saturday May 31, 8:30 AM

Stevens Creek Park

Half day. Leader TBD (Questions? Call Bob Reiling (408) 253-7527). See directions under May 3 listing.

Sunday June 1, 8:00 AM

Skyline Ridge Open Space Preserve

Half day. Leader: Bob Reiling (408) 253-7527. Meet at northeast corner of Skyline Blvd. (Hwy 35) and Page Mill Rd (corner nearest San Francisco and the Bay). (Note: Do not park in Russian Ridge parking lot!) Moderately strenuous walking with some elevation change. Possible Chipping Sparrow, Black-throated Gray Warbler, Western Tanager. Bring extra layers of clothing; temperatures can vary even at this time of year. LO

Saturday June 7, all day

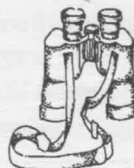
Palo Alto Summer Bird Count

Details not available at press time; contact your area leader from last year for info or call SCVAS office.

Sunday June 8, 8:00 AM

Monte Bello Open Space Preserve

Half day. Leader: Rita Colwell (650) 949-1869. From I-280 in Palo Alto take Page Mill Rd west, toward Skyline Blvd (Hwy. 35), for approx. 7 miles and meet at Monte Bello OSP parking area on left. Possible Lazuli Bunting, Black-throated Gray Warbler, Chipping and Grasshopper Sparrows. Be prepared, it can be cold, wet and foggy. LO



Field Trips *cont'd*

Saturday June 14, 8:00 AM

Charleston Slough

Half day. Leader: Nick Yatsko (408)247-5499. For directions see May 11th write-up.

Sunday June 15, 8:00 AM

Russian Ridge OSP

Half day. Leader: Frank Vanslager (408) 257-3647. Meet at northeast corner of Skyline Blvd (Hwy 35) and Page Mill Rd (corner nearest San Francisco and the Bay). (Note: Do not park in Russian Ridge parking lot!) Bring extra layers of clothing in case it's foggy and cold. Possible Grasshopper Sparrow and Lazuli Bunting.

Wednesday June 18, 8:30 AM

Russian Ridge OSP

Half day. Leader: Shirley Gordon (408) 996-9863. Note—this is the 3rd Wednesday. Meet at Preserve parking lot. At junction of Page Mill and Skyline Blvd (Hwy 35), go southwest on Alpine Rd. approx. 1 block to parking lot. Grasshopper Sparrow, Lazuli Bunting. *LO*

Saturday June 21, 8:30 AM

Rancho del Oso (Big Basin State Park)

Half day plus. Leader: Grant Webb (408) 578-0409. Take Hwy 17 to Santa Cruz, then go north on Hwy 1. Meet at beach parking area along Hwy 1 just north of Waddell Creek Bridge (at MP 36.30, 2 miles south of Año Nuevo State Reserve, 7 miles north of Davenport). Long but fairly level hike (approx. 5 miles) along Skyline-to-the-Sea Trail looking for Swainson's Thrush, Winter Wren, Wilson's Warbler, and woodpeckers. Be prepared to carry lunch and liquids (in backpack if possible) and dress in layers.

Hazel Tilden

The local birding community lost a true friend when long-time SCVAS member Hazel Tilden passed away in March. Hazel was a staunch field trip participant for many years and a regular general meeting attendee. She had a keen interest in birding, a deep appreciation for natural history and the sciences, and loved the outdoors. We will miss Hazel's cheerful presence at Audubon events and remember her with deep affection.

Sunday June 22, 8:00 AM

Almaden Lake Park/Alamitos Creek

Half day. Leader: Ann Verdi (408) 266-5108. Meet in west parking lot of Almaden Lake Park. From Hwy 85 take Almaden Expwy south. Park is on east (left) side of Almaden Expwy. Continue just past Coleman Rd (and park) and return northbound on Almaden Expwy to park entrance on right. 3 miles of easy walking. We will bird the lake and the trail upstream looking for waterfowl, raptors, variety of riparian birds and their young. *LO*

Saturday & Sunday June 28 - 29

Yuba Pass/Sierra Valley

Leader: Clay Kempf (831) 761-8260. Meet at 7:00 AM Saturday at Yuba Pass parking lot on south side of Hwy 49. From South Bay take Hwy 80 to Truckee, go north on Hwy 89, then west on Hwy 49 to Yuba Pass. Saturday will be spent exploring the Yuba pass area for Williamson's Sapsucker, Black-backed Woodpecker, Dipper, Townsend's Solitaire, Evening Grosbeak, seven species of warbler, four species of flycatcher and more. On Sunday the group will bird east of the pass in drier habitat where Mountain Bluebird, Green-tailed Towhee, Sage Thrasher and other Great Basin specialties occur. Last stop is the high-country Sierra Marsh, where Black Tern, Wilson's Phalarope, Common Snipe and possibly Sandhill Crane breed. Hotels are available in Sierra City and Downieville; camping at a number of sites throughout the region and near Yuba Pass. **Trip limited to the first 20 people to call Clay and reserve a space.**

Plan Ahead:

Saturday July 12, 8:00 AM

Charleston Slough

Half day. Leader: Nick Yatsko (408) 247-5499. Directions: see write-up for May 11th.

Saturday August 9, 8:30 AM

Ano Nuevo State Reserve

Half day. Leader: Bob Reiling (408) 253-7527.

Saturday August 23, 8:00 AM

Charleston Slough

Half day. Leader: Phyllis Browning (650) 494-6360.

Note: *The Avocet* has changed to an every-other-month publication schedule. Full details for summer field trips will be printed in the July/August *Avocet*.

Events Calendar

Tuesday May 6, 7:30 PM

Board meeting, McClellan Ranch Park.

Wednesday May 7, 7:30 PM

Bay Area Bird Photographers presents Eleanor Briccetti with slides of birds and mammals of East Africa. Lucy Evans Baylands Interpretive Center, E. Embarcadero Rd., Palo Alto.

Thursday May 8, 4:00 PM

Education Committee meeting, location TBA

Friday May 9, 7:00 PM

International Migratory Bird Day evening bird walk and coffee tasting, Alviso Environmental Ed Center. Clyde Morris will lead the bird walk.

Saturday May 10, International Migratory Bird Day, 10 - 4, Alviso Environmental Ed Center (see Page 4).

Tuesday May 13, 9:30 AM

Eve Case Bird Discussion Group will meet at the home of Pat and Jean Dubois, 17150 Buena Vista Ave., Los Gatos (408) 395-4264. Topic: Yellow-headed Blackbird.

Wednesday May 21, 7:30 PM

General meeting, Palo Alto. Program begins at 8:00 (see Page 1).

Wednesday May 28, 7:30 PM

Environmental Action Committee meeting, McClellan Ranch Park.

Wednesday June 3 6:00 PM

Birdathon awards dinner, McClellan Ranch Park.

Tuesday June 10, 9:30 AM

Eve Case Bird Discussion Group will meet at the home of Pat and Jean Dubois, 17150 Buena Vista Ave., Los Gatos (408) 395-4264. This will be a picnic. We'll set up the bird discussion schedule for the next session. Sit under the trees, enjoy the lake and the birds.

Thursday June 12, 4:00 PM

Education committee meeting, location (TBA).

Wednesday June 18, 6:00 PM

Annual potluck dinner, McClellan Ranch park (see Page 4).

Volunteer Ventures

by Jennifer Peritz
SCVAS Programs Coordinator

One of the greatest joys of my job is watching our wonderful volunteers in action! Whether leading field trips, writing conservation letters, staffing the Nature Shop, monitoring a bluebird trail, or participating in any of our many volunteer programs, SCVAS volunteers are helping to make a difference in the world around them. Our volunteers had a strong presence throughout last month's numerous Earth Day events. A BIG THANK YOU to all of you who represented SCVAS at local events and, of course, at SCVAS Earth Day Celebration in Gilroy (a big success despite the rain!). Altogether our volunteers participated in: 4 fairs, 2 presentations, 3 classrooms visits, 2 scouting events, and numerous field trips!

With the weather warming up, the demand for our programs is increasing and so is the need for volunteers—both behind the scenes and leading the pack. I've listed here a few of our current volunteer needs—take a look and call me to discuss which one is best for you!

McClellan Ranch Program Development

SCVAS' office and Nature Shop is fortunate to be located on 23.5 acres of natural beauty. Our locale, adjacent to Stevens Creek, is an ideal setting for Environmental Education for both adults and children. While we have led informal activities here for years, organizing a more structured program would greatly enhance our outreach efforts. This job could be as simple as updating our Trail Guide or as elaborate as creating multiple "Trail Talks" for future docents.

Special Events Outreach

Throughout the year SCVAS is invited to attend fairs and special events. These are excellent opportunities for us to increase membership, share our programs, and sell Nature Shop items. These events often include art and wine festivals, conservation fairs, and other fun outdoor events. Volunteers are needed to represent SCVAS, distribute information, and often pick up and set up materials. This is a simple way to help the organization, while having fun out in the community.

Conservation Programs

With the recent loss of our Environmental Advocate, the organization has a greater need for volunteer support of our conservation programs. Tasks include letter writing, attending meetings, researching projects, etc.

Resource Indexing

As you may know, SCVAS has numerous valuable resources, such as slides, videos, and posters. In order for these resources to best serve the public, we are in need of a volunteer who can organize and create an index of the various materials. The index may then be used to advertise the resources to teachers and other community members

Interested? For more information on these or other volunteer programs, please contact Jennifer at (408) 252-3740 or <programs@scvas.org>.

Don't Miss International Migratory Bird Day

on May 10 from 10 AM to 4 PM at the
Don Edwards National Wildlife Refuge
Environmental Education Center in Alviso.



Activities for children and adults include a variety of workshops and presentations, birdwalks, and a bird-banding demonstration. Please call ahead for a schedule of events and field trip reservations.

Contact Sharon at (408) 262-5513 ext 102.

Annual Potluck Dinner Wed. June 18, 6 PM

All members are invited to attend the annual membership dinner and general meeting on Wednesday June 18, 6 PM at McClellan Ranch Park in Cupertino. A great opportunity to socialize with your SCVAS friends, hear about what we've accomplished this year, and enjoy a fantastic meal. You can birdwatch during the whole evening, too!

Please bring a main dish, casserole, or salad to share. We will provide beverages and desserts. Bringing your own utensils, plates and cups helps reduce use of wasteful plastic and paperware.



**Support our
SCVAS Nature Shop**
See details for buying
Birding at the Bottom of the Bay
on page 11.

Help Shape the Future of SCVAS!

by Leda Beth Gray

Serving on the SCVAS Board has been an enriching and enjoyable experience for me. It's given me a real sense of accomplishment and teamwork, as I work with other board members to develop plans for SCVAS' future and make decisions on courses of action for various issues. I have great respect for the other board members and the staff of SCVAS, and I've learned a lot about myself, about working as a team and guiding a non-profit.

I am pleased with the direction that we are taking, and I feel like an important part of the effort. SCVAS is a great organization that provides many valuable services to our community—and it is a great place to make new friends who share your ideals and your commitment to wildlife and conservation.

I'm sharing these thoughts with you because I am sure some of you would enjoy serving on the SCVAS Board of Directors. We are currently looking for new board members with some specific skills to complement those that current board members already possess. If you have skills or interest in one or more of the following areas, I hope you will consider applying to join the Board.

The particular skills needed to round out our team are member development; environmental education; diversity

building; major donor development; grant writing; and environmental activism. A common myth is that board members have to be expert birders. In reality a board candidate can be a birder of any skill level, but should have a strong interest in birds and their habitat, environmental education, and/or environmental advocacy.

SCVAS has recently embarked on a carefully planned path of expanding our services to the community, especially in the areas of environmental education and increasing our involvement in South Santa Clara County. South County members are especially encouraged to apply.

Board members serve three-year terms, with the option of serving longer. The suggested time commitment is 8 to 16 hours per month depending on your time and interest. Board members are encouraged to join at least one committee and to occasionally participate in public outreach events such as Earth Day.

If you are interested in learning more about this outstanding opportunity and to obtain an application, please contact Grant Hoyt at (650) 969-7892, Craig Breon (408) 252-3748 or Board President David Drake (831) 336-1127.

May General Meeting *cont'd.*

a hummingbird and a kingfisher (it is related to the latter). Some Cuban species are in a class of their own, such as the Zapata Sparrow, Zapata Wren, the Yellow-headed and Oriente Warblers, and the Cuban Green Woodpecker. All are endemic to the island and distinct enough to be classified in their own genera. Other species, such as flickers and American Kestrels, are more familiar but with a distinctive Cuban style. The Cuban Bee Hummingbird is considered the smallest bird in the world, while the Zapata Rail may rank amongst the most elusive. From

familiar to the greatly unfamiliar, Cuban birds are surprisingly diverse. Join Al tonight for an exploration of Cuba from a birder's perspective, and see that its birdlife is as warm and colorful as its people and music.

Al leads tours for Field Guides throughout the Americas. He also holds a post as biologist at the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory. Al has just finished writing a field guide to the birds of Chile and previously authored a book on orioles and blackbirds (*New World Blackbirds: The Icterids*, Princeton University Press).

General meetings for March and April will be held at the Palo Alto Cultural Center, Newell & Embarcadero Rds., Palo Alto. Doors open at 7:30; programs begin at 8:00.

Spring classes

The following classes are sponsored by SCVAS' Education Committee. To sign-up, please contact our office at (408) 252-3747. All cancellations require 72-hour prior notification for refunds.

Beginning Birding by Ear

Instructor: Les Chibana

This course is designed to improve your approach to birding by ear and will help you hone your skills. Class discussions will focus on the various methods used to identify bird sounds, such as the use of word and notation, and will be supplemented with slides and recordings. Both common and unique birds will be covered. A discussion about non-prescription hearing aids will be included. An optional field trip is available through BirdNUTZ at a 40% discount for class participants.

Classes will be held at McClellan Ranch in Cupertino from 7:00-9:00 PM on Mon. May 19 and Fri. May 23. Optional add-on 6-hour field trip on Sunday, May 25. Minimum: 12 students. Maximum: 16 students. Fee: \$25

Les Chibana has taught birding for over 8 years. His 25+ years of birding avocation has been fed by 9 years of migrant bird banding and over 10 years photographing birds. His bird guiding and field trip business, BirdNUTZ, provides Bay Area and visiting birders with opportunities to discover our exceptional birding areas.

Pen and Ink Bird Art

Instructor: Edward Rooks

Learn to draw birds with pen and ink, starting from penciled sketches and stick figures. Classes will be held, both in the classroom and in the field. Participants will learn basic bird anatomy for artists, correct proportions and placement of parts of birds, field sketching, composition, and inking techniques. This course is designed for beginners, but artists are welcome, as well.

Classes will be held at McClellan Ranch in Cupertino from 7:00-9:00 PM on Wednesdays, May 14 & 21 and June 4 & 11. Field session dates will be determined by availability of class participants. Minimum: 6 students. Maximum: 12 students. Fee: \$125, plus materials.

Edward Rooks is a full-time naturalist and wildlife artist who gives drawing workshops, leads nature tours, and creates artwork. B.F.A. in Illustration, Syracuse U., 1983. Edward's illustrations appear in biological journals, nature magazines, booklets, newsletters, calendars, and on a brochure depicting 37 birds of the Asa Wright Nature Centre in Trinidad. He holds many honors including the 1st place award in the California Department of Fish and Game's Native Species Stamp Contest in 1994.

Field Notes

by Bill Bousman

Bitterns through Gulls

An **American Bittern** in the Palo Alto FCB on 27 Feb (JP, JB) was the only late winter report. The adult **Greater White-fronted Goose** at the Arzino Ranch appears to have remained through 9 Mar (m. ob.). Additional birds joined the geese here in early February and a peak count of seven was noted on 11 Feb (WGB). The immature White-fronted wintering at Cottonwood Lake at Hellyer CP was seen again on 15 Feb (MJM). An adult **Ross's Goose** was found at the Sunnyvale Baylands Park on 5 Feb (MJM) and was seen there through mid-month (m. ob.). The same bird or perhaps a second adult was seen over the Alviso EEC on 8 Mar (MJM et al.) and joined the Canadas at the Arzino Ranch at least through 18 Mar (m. ob.). The Arzino bird had a noticeable limp. The large duck flock on Salt Pond A9 in Alviso had at least three male **Eurasian Wigeon** on 2-3 Feb (JiD, DB, WGB, PD). As expected, the Palo Alto Flood Control Basin (FCB) continued to be the best spot for late-winter **Blue-winged Teal**. One to four birds were found in the vicinity through 16 Mar (m. ob.) with two males and two females seen on 6 Mar (JP). A single male was in the channel west of the Stevens Creek Tidal Marsh on 27 Mar (WGB). The male **Eurasian Green-winged Teal** remained in the vicinity of the Stevens Creek Tidal Marsh in February and March (m. ob.). At least three male **Redheads** were seen on Salt Pond A9 in Alviso on 2-3 Feb (WGB, PD, JiD, DB). A flock in Crittenden Marsh varied from 13 to 18 over the period 15 Feb to 2 Mar (MJM, ViT). The **Bald Eagle** that wintered at Calero Reservoir was last seen on 15 Feb (MJM). The adult **Ferruginous Hawk** wintering near New and Rucker in Gilroy was last seen on 15 Feb (BB-W). Another Ferruginous was seen over Monterey and Bernal near Morgan Hill on 9 Mar (ND). Late winter **Prairie Falcon** sightings from the valley floor include a bird in Santa Clara on 2 Feb, one still at Calero Reser-

voir on 15 Feb, and possibly the same bird nearby at Almaden Reservoir on 9 Mar (all MJM). An immature **Lesser Golden-Plover** was seen at the Stevens Creek mouth on 14 Feb (MMR) and is likely the same bird that wintered in the vicinity. **Lesser Yellowlegs** have been found north of the Alviso Marina with some regularity. A single bird was first seen on 1 Feb (DVP, MB) and at least three birds were there on 2 Feb (JiD et al.). Single birds have been found at least through 11 Mar (v. ob.). Another Lesser Yellowlegs was at the Palo Alto Baylands on 16 Feb (MJM). The impoundment north of the Alviso Marina has also held

again on Salt Pond A16 on 8 Mar (RT *fide* MMR).

Roadrunners through Grosbeaks

The amazing **Greater Roadrunner** found on Crothers Road on the San Jose CBC continued in this area and was last seen on 18 Feb (RWR, FV). Another bird was heard calling in San Antonio Valley on 25 Mar (WGB). Two **Long-eared Owls** were found roosting at Ed Levin CP on 1 Feb (DB) and one or two birds were seen irregularly through 26 Mar (m. ob.). Three birds were observed on 9 Feb (MMR) and 11 Feb (WGB). Persistent evening visits to the Bay side from Byxbee Park to Charleston Slough rewarded many with views of **Short-eared Owls** continuing in this area (m. ob.). Although generally only one bird was seen, two owls were found on 5 Feb (CIW) and 30 Mar (SEM). **Northern Saw-whet Owls** were heard in a number of places in the Santa Cruz Mountains where they are resident (v.ob.). Of more interest was a bird banded at the Coyote Creek Field Station on 5 Mar (CMS). This is likely either a wintering or migrant and hints at the movements of owls that breed well

Late winter specialties included a one-day Franklin's Gull and the continuing Pacific Golden-Plover and Rusty Blackbird

unusual numbers of **Sanderling** this winter (m. ob.). Twenty-nine were counted there on 2 Feb and 30 on 20 Mar (both MJM). Birds have also been found at other locations with four on Salt Pond A13 on 3 Feb (WGB), two on Salt Pond A16 on 11 Feb (RWR, FV, RK, PK), and one at the Stevens Creek mouth on 14 Feb (MMR). A female **Ruff** was found in the impoundment north of the Alviso Marina on 1 Feb (AME) and was seen there through 20 Feb (m. ob.). A 1st-winter **Franklin's Gull** was found in the San Jose-Santa Clara drying ponds on 18 Mar (RWR, FV). This is the first Franklin's in the South Bay since the fall of 1999. Our first **Glaucous Gull** of the winter was found north of the Alviso Marina on 1 Feb (DVP, MB). Possibly the same 1st-winter bird was found on Salt Pond A16 on 9 Feb (MMR), Salt Pond A18 on 11-13 Feb (RWR, FV, RK, PK, MJM), and

to the north of us. A male **Rufous Hummingbird** along San Francisquito Creek near El Camino on 6 Feb (RF) was early. Migrant birds were seen at Ed Levin CP from 7 Mar (AV) through at least 19 Mar (m. ob.). Another migrant was in Alum Rock Park on 7 Mar (LCh, LB). **Lewis's Woodpeckers** returned to the San Antonio Valley in February and March and five were seen there on 22 Mar (MMR, MJM) and seven on 25 Mar (WGB). More surprising was a single bird in Deer Valley in Joseph Grant CP on 24 Mar (RK). Few birds are found on the west slope of the Diablo Range, although at least two pairs nested south of here in the spring of 2001. Although we see a number of intergrade flickers each winter, few birds show all the characteristics of a pure **Yellow-shafted Flicker**. A male of this subspecies was seen at Smith Creek on 22 Mar (MMR, MJM). **Pileated**

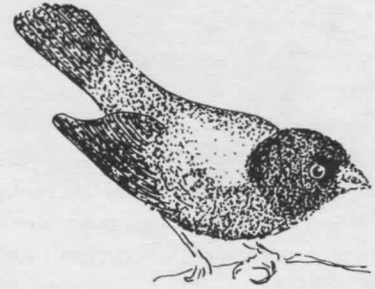
Field Notes *cont'd*

Woodpeckers have continued to be found in the upper Stevens Creek Canyon (v. ob.) in February and March with at least three seen at Monte Bello OSP on 15 Feb (MJM). One to two birds have also been found in Sanborn-Skyline CP 27-29 Mar (RWR, FV, JP et al.). **American Dippers** were found again in Alum Rock Park, this time three birds were there on 2 Feb (JP, JB). At least one was found here through 12 Mar (v. ob.). One to two dippers continued to be found along Stevens Creek above Mt. Eden Road in February and March (m. ob.) and birds were observed carrying moss for a nest on 21 Mar (JR, PM). A **Townsend's Solitaire** was seen along Mines Road by one of the highway maintenance workers in late February. This is the only observation we've had this winter. The female **Phainopepla** seen occasionally at Guadalupe Oak Grove Park this winter was last seen found on 2 Feb (BH). Three to five birds were seen in San Antonio Valley on 22-25 Feb (MMR, MJM, WGB), an area where they normally nest. One of the female **Western Tanagers** wintering at Edenvale Garden Park in San Jose was seen again on 9 Feb (AVd). Three **Grasshopper Sparrows** were found at Ed Levin CP on the early date of 23 Feb (TO, DW) and one to two birds have been found there regularly since (m. ob.). Two birds were seen in Hall's Valley on 22 Mar (MMR, MJM) and singles were along the ridge north of Twin Gates in Joseph Grant CP on 24 Mar (RK) and one was in Santa Teresa CP on 30 Mar (JiD). A decade ago we rarely found this species before the second week in April. Perhaps more birds are overwintering or we're just getting better at finding them. **White-throated Sparrows** were found at Hidden Villa in December. Two were there sometime before 13 Feb (GHa) and one was seen on 2 Mar (MDd). Single birds were found on Sobrante Way in Sunnyvale on 16 Feb (CIW), in two different locations in Ed Levin CP on 9 and 10 Mar (RWR, FV), in Guadalupe Oak Grove Park on 20 Mar (LSu), and west of the CDF station at Smith Creek on 25 Mar (WGB). A bird

at a San Jose feeder was last seen on 1 Feb (JAC) and the one or two seen in a Saratoga yard on 21 Feb (MJM) had been present for some time (JH *fide* MJM). A female **Lazuli Bunting** seen in Stevens Creek CP on 5 Mar (CJC) was four to five weeks early. It is likely that this bird wintered somewhere nearby. The female **Rusty Blackbird** wintering in the shopping center near El Camino and Lawrence was seen regularly in February and into early March (m. ob.). A male **Great-tailed Grackle** was seen at Parkway Lakes on 23 Mar (MJM) in an area where two or three pairs nested last year. Many **Lawrence's Goldfinches** were found scattered in Henry Coe SP on 22 Feb (JY, AL). A single bird was seen at San Felipe Road at Pacheco Creek on 19 Mar (MP), and two were in San Antonio Valley on 22 Mar (MMR, MJM). An **Evening Grosbeak** was in a Saratoga yard about 14 Feb (JH *fide* MJM). This appears to be the first record locally since December 1998.

Observers: Lou Beaudet (LB), Bonnie Bedford-White (BB-W), Dusty Bleher (DB), Bill Bousman (WGB), Jack Cole (JAC), Chuck Coston (CJC), Dennis Braddy (DB), Matt Brady (MB), Joan Brauch (JB), Les Chibana (LCh), Jim Danzenbaker (JiD), Natasha Dehn (ND), Matthew Dodder (MDd), Peggy Don (PD), Al Eisner (AME), Richard Ferrick (RF), Barbara Harkleroad (BH), Garth Harwood (GHa), Jane Hodge (JH), Roland Kenner (RK), Pat Kenny (PK), Amy Lauterbach (AL), Peggy Macres (PM), Mike Mammoser (MJM), Steve Miller (SEM), Tadd Ottman (TO), Janna Pauser (JP), Mark Paxton (MP), Bob Reiling (RWR), Mike Rogers (MMR), Jennifer Rycenga (JR), Cheryl Strong (CMS), Linda Sullivan (LSu), Ryan Terrill (RT), Vivek Tiwari (ViT), David Vander Pluym (DVP), Frank Vanslager (FV), Andrea Vedanayagam (AVd), Ann Verdi (AV), Claire Wolfe (CIW), Debbie Wong (DW), and James Yurchenco (JY).

RARITIES: Please drop me a note: Bill Bousman, 321 Arlington Way, Menlo Park, CA 94025, or: bousman@merlin.arc.nasa.gov



*A male Painted Bunting (try to visualize brown wings and tail, an intense blue head, green back and bright red breast and rump) keeps his "gaudy" colors all year. A bird we would wish for in California was easily seen by John Mariani on his first Texas birding trip after moving there earlier this year.
-sketch by Bonnie Bedford-White*

Texas birding

cont'd from Page 1

Yellowthroats, maybe 50 Yellow-rumps, 3 Kentucky Warblers, 50+ Hooded Warblers (they were everywhere!), 2 Prothonotary Warblers (1 came too close to focus my bins on it!), 1 male Cerulean Warbler, about 8 Worm-eating Warblers, 5 Northern Waterthrushes, 2 Louisiana Waterthrushes, 8+ Black-and-white Warblers, about 10 Blue-winged Warblers, 3 Indigo Buntings, 1 male Painted Bunting, 2 Eastern Towhees, 2 Lincoln's Sparrows, 5 Summer Tanagers, and a half dozen Orchard Orioles. I heard what sounded just like a Pacific-slope Flycatcher calling several times, but never saw the bird that was vocalizing, and the only empid seen was an unidentified "something else," probably Acadian.

I'll be getting very few days off in the coming weeks, so this may be the only good fallout I see this season. Hope you are all enjoying a beautiful spring in California and all the returning birds!

Birdathon update

IT'S NOT TOO LATE— SUPPORT ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION IN YOUR COMMUNITY!

The SCVAS Spring Birdathon window continues through May 12th and ALL of the proceeds will support our youth education programs in Santa Clara County. It's a great cause and it is really easy to get involved. Visit our website <www.scvas.org> or call Susan Bell (408) 252-3747 for complete information on how to do it, then go out and have fun birding!

Mark this date on your calendar: join us at the Birdathon awards dinner on June 3rd at McClellan Ranch, when we'll give out the scopes, binoculars, and other great prizes to all the winners!

Birdathon proceeds are already starting to roll in. We're especially grateful to the following **GOLDEN EAGLE SPONSORS** (\$500 and up) and we urge you to support these Audubon-friendly local businesses:

- ◆ Birdnutz Birding Trips
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- ◆ Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris
www.cheesemans.com
- ◆ Kowa Optimed, Inc.
www.kowascope.com/top.html
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- ◆ The Wild Bird Center, Los Gatos
www.wildbirdcenter.com/los/
- ◆ Wild Birds Unlimited, San Jose
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Kelly Moves On

by Craig Breon

Kelly Crowley, who took over our Environmental Advocate's position after I became Executive Director, has left SCVAS to take a job as Volunteer Coordinator for the Ulistac Natural Area in Santa Clara. Kelly was with us for a little more than a year and a half, and I want to acknowledge all the good work she did with SCVAS in that time.

Avocet readers will no doubt miss Kelly's pen on these pages. I heard from readers on numerous occasions that Kelly's work in *The Avocet* was both appreciated and admired. Kelly is an excellent writer, with an engaging ability to convey information and opinion in the same piece. I hope she continues to find an outlet for those talents, and perhaps she can even do a guest piece for *The Avocet* on occasion.

The Advocate's job is a difficult one, as I well know after doing it for my first seven years here. There's always too many issues to handle and too many people asking for your time; you feel like you're taking on so many tasks that you can't do your best on any of them. And, of course, the job is inherently one of conflict, with a fair amount of losses, which is tough to take. Kelly represented the chapter and the hearts and minds of our members well on a wide range of issues.

Kelly's report investigating the impacts of construction sites in San Jose on local creeks can still be seen on our website <www.scvas.org>. It represents an impressive amount of time and talent, and has had a positive, tangible impact on both San Jose and our Regional Water Quality Control Board. We will continue to follow up on this work, thanks especially to a grant from the San Francisco Estuary Project.

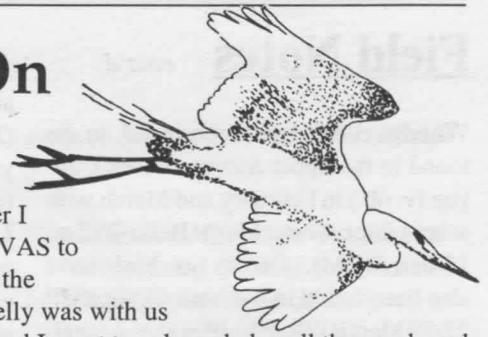
Birds of the South Bay have a good deal to thank Kelly for as well. She led an effort—along with the US Fish and Wildlife Service—to defeat a proposal for a massive transmission tower near sensitive wetlands at the mouth of Coyote Creek. She also rallied Santa Clarans to protect Burrowing Owls from proposed new transmission lines in the Arzino Ranch area of Alviso. Even heron nests in Los Gatos received Kelly's attention and thus were spared from construction activities during the nesting season. I mention these because they were previously covered in *The Avocet*, but you would have to have seen Kelly's periodic advocate reports to realize all the work going on in the background, all the small accomplishments making things a little better here or there: Coyote Creek, Moffett Field, the Water District, Mountain View, Stevens Creek, Morgan Hill.

Kelly can be reached at kcrowley@scu.edu. In her current position, Intel has granted funds to Santa Clara University to create the Volunteer Coordinator's position. So contact her if you want to work on the restoration or education opportunities out there.

Kelly will, it appears, be a strongly competitive swimmer at the Paralympics in Greece in 2004. Her new position requires fewer hours than her work for the chapter, allowing her more time to train. Given her two bronzes and a silver medal at the World Championships last year in Argentina, we have high expectations that her face will be gracing the local papers just two summers from now.

One of the services our chapter can provide that few people would think about is our ability to help launch conservationists on their careers. Newly graduated adults need good jobs working for a good cause. If their experience is rewarding, they will commit to the cause long-term. For the moment, the SCVAS Board has not decided whether to fill the vacant advocacy position. Before too long, we hope to have the funds to hire another enthusiastic environmentalist, and perhaps launch another career.

Thanks, Kelly, for your outstanding work, and our best wishes go with you.



Enthusiastic turnout at Los Altos Hills event

Good cause, good people and a couple cool birds to boot!

Following on the heels of their successful initiative to preserve the public parks and open spaces of Los Altos Hills, town activists decided to throw a party/fundraiser to both celebrate the victory and thank Santa Clara Valley Audubon for our support.

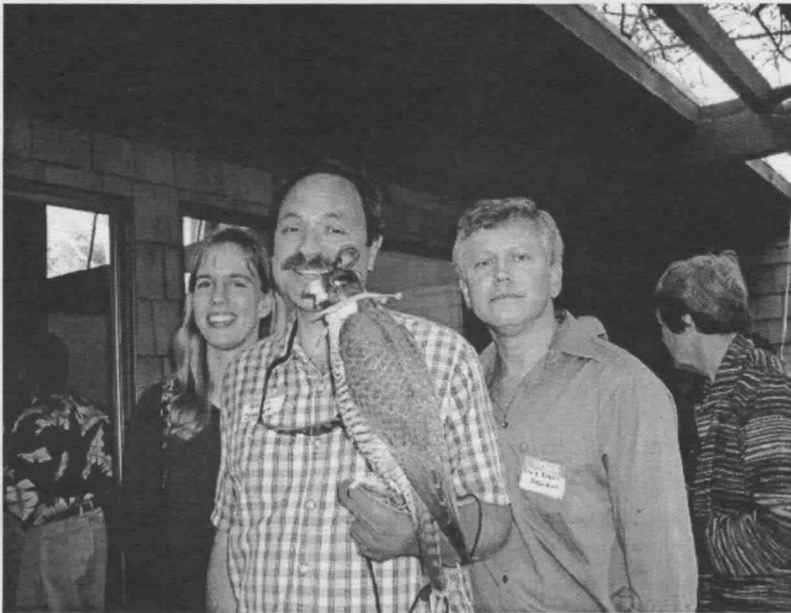
As previously reported in *The Avocet*, SCVAS helped the community organize to oppose the threatened sale of open space parcels in town. We worked with attorneys in San Francisco to draft the initiative, which eventually gathered the requisite number of signatures and then was approved by the Town Council. In addition, SCVAS set up a dedicated account for "LAH Open Space," allowing supporters of the cause to give a tax-deductible donation that they knew would be used entirely for expenses of this campaign.

LAH residents Sue and Tim Chou graciously agreed to host the event, which took place on March 8. At first we were thinking small, hoping to raise about \$2000. Then SCVAS member and LAH activist Diane Cassam seemingly became possessed! All of a sudden, she had gathered a stunning array of donated products and services to be auctioned off, and we were looking at a much bigger and better event than originally envisioned.

More than 100 people showed up over the course of the afternoon, and the day went by quickly, with people mingling, chatting, bidding, and even birding. Glenn Stewart brought Sophie the Peregrine Falcon. Oracle (Tim Chou's employer) gave Glenn and Sophie a grant to visit classrooms around the South Bay, and SCVAS helped Glenn find the classes, so there was a nice connection there. Long-time SCVAS volunteer Karen Hoyt brought Socrates, her rehabilitated but unreleasable Great Horned Owl, a veteran of local classrooms and educational events. The birds spent the afternoon in the back yard and were a big hit with the crowd, especially the children.

The event brought in nearly \$10,000, which, after expenses, will mostly come to SCVAS, with some funds going to the LAH Open Space group for future projects. As an update, Los Altos Hills now has an official town open space committee working on habitat restoration, acquiring conservation easements, and dealing with the proposed Adobe Creek flood control project.

There are way too many people to thank here, so we'll focus on just a few. Many thanks to Sue and Tim Chou and their family for hosting this fun and productive event. A big "thank you" to Diane, who worked furiously and well to see that the day was productive. SCVAS members Laurie West Roberts and husband Rick provided excellent food for the day. Our thanks also to the businesses (listed at right) that donated products or services to the event. We encourage SCVAS members to patronize the businesses that support our conservation, education, and birding services.

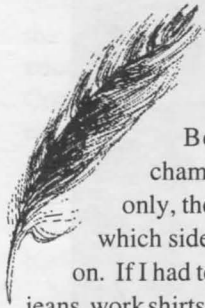


From left: Los Altos Hills open space supporter Nancy Couperus, Glenn Stewart with Sophie the Peregrine Falcon, and SCVAS Executive Director Craig Breon at the Los Altos Hills fundraiser on March 8

- Oracle
- Fast Frame of Los Altos
- Cosmetique of Germany
- Skin Care Studio
- Cranberry Scoop
- Peet's Coffee
- Los Altos Training Studio
- Los Altos Golf Company
- Natural Health Associates
- J Floral Art of Menlo Park
- Artsong Music
- Bowers Bites
- Akane
- Cambric LTD
- Leaf & Petal
- Vintage Bath
- Maria's Antiques
- Atalanta Corporation
- O'Brien Family Vineyard in Napa Valley
- Sweet Light Images
- A.G. Ferrari Foods of Los Altos
- Naturopathic Health Care
- Whole Foods Market
- Gleim Jewelers
- Tiedown
- Cavalo da Peninsula
- Earthworks
- Di Pietro Todd Salon
- Los Altos Nursery
- Kids Only
- Eye Lite Optometry
- The Runners High
- BK Collections
- Laurie West Roberts Artworks

Recycled activism—the curious route from Coyote Valley to Pajaro watershed

by Craig Breon
SCVAS Executive Director



Tuesday, April 1—
Hollister, CA

As I write this, the San Benito County Board of Supervisors chambers is standing room only, though it's tough to know which side of the issue people are on. If I had to guess, I would say the jeans, work shirts, and belt buckles crowd are likely farmers and ranchers, and they seem to make up a little more than half the room. Many of them stand in the back, talking among themselves in somewhat angry tones. Toward the front of the room sits a mixture of casually clothed men and women, a few suits, a range of ages but tending towards middle age. These are likely the activists and supporters of the county's growth control initiative, which is the topic *du jour* of this town—Hollister—and the small hamlets, scattered farms and ranches that make up the remainder of San Benito County.

I recognize Rebecca McGovern, an elderly woman who dresses in an old man's clothes. Today sporting a black navy cap atop her grey hair, Rebecca hails from San Juan Bautista (second largest town in the County at a scant 1,500 citizens), where she shepherded that town's growth control initiative through the process of drafting, signature gathering, and adoption by the town council last year. Somewhere in the crowd must be Mandy Rose, a local Sierra Club activist and part of "the Committee," meaning those who were the driving force behind this growth control movement. Across the aisle from me sits Professor Robert Girard—retired from Stanford Law School, Robert now seems to devote his life to the subject of growth. He drafted much of the controversial initiative for San Benito, as he has participated in

the drafting of nearly a dozen other growth control initiatives over the last two decades. Seated to the Professor's right are Ernie and Claire, my carpool buddies on this day and the inspiration and focal points of PLAN, People for Livable and Affordable Neighborhoods, which formed to fight the Cisco Systems project in Coyote Valley. Why Ernie, Claire, and I are here takes a little backing up from the tense vote to come this day.

When life gives you lemons...

As SCVAS and the Loma Prieta chapter of the Sierra Club led the opposition to Coyote Valley development in 2000, PLAN formed to join the cause. Besides the loss of a beautiful agricultural valley, we feared even more the lurching movement of Silicon Valley southward and the inevitable loss of farmland and open space, with pavement crowding out wildlife from Gilroy to Hollister to Los Banos to Salinas and Watsonville, bigger roads with bigger traffic jams, and the threats to community identity that come with tract homes and prefab shopping centers.

PLAN sponsored the referendum against Cisco's Coyote Valley project, now long-dead thanks to a slow economy. You may recall that Cisco's goal was to pave 500 acres of prime farmland to build a banal campus for 20,000 employees and 22,000 cars. Under the guidance and tenacity of Ernie, Claire, and a dozen or so other committed activists (including myself and some SCVAS Board members and volunteers), PLAN collected more than 50,000 signatures in 30 days from San Jose residents opposed to Cisco and Mayor Gonzales' ambitious vision of sprawl to the horizon.

Then the referendum was challenged in court by Cisco and the city. About a year later, that lawsuit was settled. PLAN agreed to drop the referendum, which by

then, for reasons too complicated to cover here, we didn't really want to pursue. In return, PLAN was reimbursed all costs of signature gathering, legal fees, and expenses accrued in the referendum effort. This came to a tidy sum of nearly \$120,000, and the PLAN steering committee now took on the task of spending those funds in a manner that held true to the cause for which they had been raised.

After a series of PLAN meetings, we decided to use the funds in the Pajaro watershed, which covers southern Santa Clara County, most of San Benito, and parts of Monterey and Santa Cruz counties. These lands are some of the most threatened by the expansion of Silicon Valley, thus justifying the use of PLAN funds. We then held a series of meetings down in the Pajaro region to ask local activists what projects warranted funding.

Through this somewhat convoluted route, PLAN became the financial backer of the San Benito County Growth Control Initiative. Thus, our as yet unsuccessful efforts in Coyote Valley have been recycled into shiny, new activism.

Back to the County chambers

There's a somber mood to this room. No shouts from the farmers, no cheers or applause from the growth control advocates. Everyone seems to understand that serious decisions are about to be made, affecting tens of thousands of acres of lands, the land values of many people, and the quality of life for a region that has seen 40% growth in the last decade. Perhaps news from the wider world is also at play. Certainly, the pledge of allegiance took on a sense of gravity I had not expected.

The county's staff members and a consultant go through an analysis of the

cont'd next page

Citizens divided on San Benito growth limit plan

initiative. 1,200 signatures were needed to qualify for the ballot; more than 5,600 were collected. The County Elections Commissioner—a heavysset, ruddy-faced man with a handlebar mustache and grey tweed jacket, seeming uncomfortable with his task—announces the obvious: “More than enough signatures qualified to make the petition sufficient.”

County Planner Rob Mendiola then outlines what the initiative would do: lock into place the County’s existing 1% annual growth limit, with some additional allowances for affordable housing. Rezone farm and ranchlands to allow for far fewer homes. Where farms before could subdivide into five-acre lots, now the lots must be forty acres. Where ranches could subdivide down to forty acres, now they must be 160-acre lots. These numbers come from what the American Farmland Trust and others say is needed to keep farming and ranching viable. In addition, a system of Transferable Development Credits is authorized, allowing the County to focus growth toward towns like Hollister while preserving larger tracts of farms and ranches. All in all, Mendiola says the County can still meet its housing requirements, and may even benefit financially, since Proposition 13 has made home building a money loser for most local jurisdictions.

The people have their say

Then the public comment sessions starts. Three minutes a person, and strict rules on behavior set by County Supervisor and Chair Richard Scagliotti, who has the sheriff standing by to toss out the unruly. I will just excerpt a few statements:

• **Susan**—Tres Pinos rancher
“An emotional and economic issue for many people in the agricultural community . . . This initiative was brought forward without a lot of input from those who it would affect.”

• **Tom**—President of the Cattleman’s Association
“Morally and ethically wrong . . . Most farmers and ranchers depend on the equity in their land for retirement, education,

and the future needs of their families.”

• **Jennie**—Fifth-generation San Benito resident

“Five acres parcels are not viable or compatible with agriculture . . . Planting houses is not a sustainable agricultural activity.”

• **Dera**—lifelong resident of San Benito County

“Special interest groups chip away at the property rights of landowners in the west.”

• **Robert**—Tres Pinos rancher

“I’m not in favor of growth, but no matter what you think of growth or farming, I think you should allow this to go to the voters . . . This will have devastating effects on agriculture. It’s extreme, deceptive.”

• **Richard**—resident

“I grew up in the beautiful cherry orchards of Saratoga, then moved my family to the orchards of Morgan Hill. All that is now gone . . . We need a rate of growth that does not threaten the county’s viability . . . Preserve our wonderful, rural way of life.”

• **Joe**—San Juan Bautista rancher

“In one generation, the last 20-30 years, virtually all the family ranchers are no longer in the business . . . I regret to be here in opposition to something which is ostensibly good . . . We absolutely must safeguard the health and integrity of our land base, for health reasons, for wildlife reasons, and the watershed.”

• **Mark**—San Juan Bautista resident

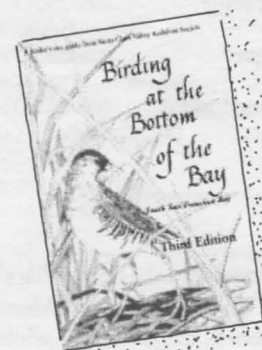
“What’s going on in the county today? Crowded schools, roads, and similarly strained infrastructure . . . Things will only get worse if the rapid growth continues.”

Perhaps most poignant observation came from Ann-Marie, of the Indian Canyon Nation of the Cienega Valley: “We [Indians] were once 100% of this country, and are now less than 2%. Same with the farmers—now they are less than 2%. Welcome to the club. I would like to see as much property as is left preserved.”

I used to work on cattle and goat ranches in Arizona. I certainly can feel for people who work the land. Clearly,

this initiative will hurt their property values, and perhaps make what can be a tough living a little tougher. At the same time, I look at Santa Clara County, where growth was entrusted to the local politicians, and as a result our valleys and farmlands have been paved—a terribly short-sighted strategy. Compare that to the San Mateo County coast, where growth control initiatives have kept farming alive, for now. In the end, growth control measures imposed by the people on the politicians may be the best answer, if a tough one to swallow at times. At the very least, the farmers and ranchers should have realized that the explosive growth rate that they helped to fuel would likely lead to a backlash.

Nearly three hours into the meeting, and in a remarkably short time, nearly devoid of debate among themselves, the San Benito County Board of Supervisors adopted the initiative by a 4-1 vote rather than calling for a special election. The goal of slowing the march of Silicon Valley southward took a substantial stride forward, and SCVAS, through our work with PLAN, played an important supporting role.

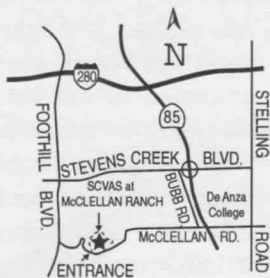


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BOARD OF DIRECTORS meetings are open to all members. Call the office at (408) 252-3747 for times and directions.

RARE BIRD ALERT: (415) 681-7422

KEEPING CONNECTED: E-mail us at <e-network@scvas.org> so we can send informative brief notes of special concern.

SCVAS welcomes gifts, including those made in honor of or in memory of friends or relatives. Such gifts will be used at SCVAS' discretion for its programs and activities unless specified otherwise by the donor. Tax-deductible donations may be made in the form of a check made out to SCVAS and sent to our Cupertino address. In addition, we gratefully accept bequests, which should specifically identify Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society as recipient. Gifts and bequests will be recognized by the Chapter in *The Avocet* unless the donor prefers otherwise.

The Avocet is published bi-monthly (except for July and August) by the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society, address is above. Deadline is the 25th of two months prior. Send submissions to *The Avocet*, c/o SCVAS at the above address.

SCVAS is the chapter of the National Audubon Society for Santa Clara County.

2003 Volume 50, Number 3

Chapter Members in the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society (SCVAS) receives the SCVAS newsletter, *The Avocet*

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