Join Us for the Yokuts Group of the Sierra Club Program, 7p.m. Friday, March 11, 2016

ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVISM ON THE WEST SIDE

John and Rosenda Mataka of Grayson will be the speakers at the March 11th Yokuts Meeting. The meeting should be quite thought provoking as it introduces us to these two environmental activists and social justice advocates. John and Rosenda have been actively involved for more than 20 years in their Stanislaus County communities. And they were awarded the Cesar Chavez Legacy Award in March of 2015 by the Latino Community Roundtable in recognition of the value of their work. Come to our meeting and get a personal introduction to these two committed community leaders.

Contact Linda Lagace at 863 9137 for any questions about the program.

Location: College Avenue Congregational Church • 1341 College Avenue, Modesto, CA
Refreshments and socializing begin at 6:45 p.m. and the meeting starts at 7:00 p.m.
Non-members are always welcome! The program is free and open to the public.

“Gloryland”, a novel by Shelton Johnson

A review by Steve Tomlinson, Yokuts Treasurer

This was an enjoyable and informative read. It’s a simple but apt and accurate description of this book. I assume many of you recognize the author’s name from Ken Burns documentary “National Parks, America’s Best Idea”. The author presents a narrative by Elijah Yancy who was born on Emancipation Day, 1863, in Spartanburg, South Carolina. The narrative presents a vivid picture of a sharecropper family living under conditions of poverty and racism. I felt I was experiencing the thoughts and feelings of a black person under said conditions. Elijah eventually embarks across the country and, along the way, joins the cavalry as a “Buffalo Soldier”. All the while the author writes rather poetically, enhancing one’s ability to walk in Elijah’s shoes. In the early 1900’s Elijah is on his way to Yosemite National Park and reaches, “the foothills, which ain’t the right word for a sea of flowers blooming wherever the ground’s never known a plow.” Elijah is a sergeant in command of a small detachment of black soldiers. Their job is to patrol and protect Yosemite National Park. This enables Elijah and his peers to experience great beauty and spend some time without the constant and cruel burdens of racism. In this way the high country seems a great blessing for Elijah and his detachment. As I consider this and my own wilderness experiences, a woven realm of mystery and beauty emerges. Words to describe this do not come easily but the author does an admirable job. I would not hesitate to read this book again.
RECENT SIGHTINGS OF RARE OR UNCOMMON BIRDS

MERCED COUNTY
George Folsom had two EURASIAN WIGEONS at San Luis N.W.R on January 17; Kent Johnson had two EURASIAN WIGEONS on Santa Fe Grade Road on January 18. Al DeMartini found a first-winter male SURF SCOTER at O’Neill Forebay on January 21. John Sterling saw a RED-BREASTED Merganser at the O’Neill Forebay on January 28. A second RED-BREASTED Merganser was found there on January 29 by Linda Pittman and Frances Oliver. On February 6, Jim Gain had a HORNED GREBE at Merced National Wildlife Refuge. At that same location, Rusty Scalf and Bob Lewis had two MOUNTAIN PLOVERS amidst a flock of Black-bellied Plovers on February 7.

STANISLAUS COUNTY
*under committee review
John Harris and eight other participants of an Audubon field trip had a TOWNSEND’S SOLITAIRE at Del Puerto Canyon on January 9. Ralph Baker had a fly-over of three RED CROSSBILLS* near Knights Ferry on January 18. Harold Reeve, Ralph Baker and Sal Salerno had a PACIFIC GOLDEN-PLOVER at the newly named Modesto Wastewater Services Division on January 24. Xavier Sandoval saw twenty-five MOUNTAÍN BLUEBIRDS on Rock River Road on February 2. Jim Gain saw one EURASIAN WIGEON at Dawson Lake and another EURASIAN WIGEON on Sonora Road on February 6.

Birding Class
MICL, The Modesto Institute for Continued Learning, will present a beginning birding class at the El Capitan Center at the west campus of Modesto Junior College. The class will run five consecutive Tuesday mornings from ten to noon beginning March 29. In addition to the ten hours of class time, there will be field trips to local birding areas each weekend. If not already a MICL member, the cost is $40 and you can sign up at the first class. For more information contact the instructor, David Froba, 521-7265, froba@comcast.net.
There are two biological imperatives for birds. The first is to stay alive no matter what, which involves finding food for themselves and striving to avoid being food for others. The other is to be fruitful and multiply, which includes finding mates, establishing territories, building nests, and caring for their young, all for perpetuating the cycles of life. There is, however, no straight and narrow line of breeding behavior for the thousands of bird species on earth. The love lives of birds have at least these features in common with those of humans—they’re complicated and often unstable, but ultimately the practitioners manage to make more types of themselves.

The first ornithologists were influenced by their cultural biases to simplify the complex social lives of birds. When these men strove to understand how birds reproduced, they concluded that what they wanted to believe to be true was what actually happened. They harbored the Victorian notion that if monogamous, lifelong marriage is the ideal for humans, then that must therefore be played out in the avian world. Darwin and others of that age conceded that certain gallinaceous birds strayed from ‘the norm,’ but they insisted that such infidelities were in the minority. When they observed a single male and single female bird building a nest and raising chicks, they were steadfast in their complacent belief that such birds formed a loyal pair. This unquestioned view prevailed for several decades into the last century. The influential ornithologist David Lack claimed as late as 1968 that 92% of the 9,700 species of birds were monogamous.

As often happens, though, advances in technology lead to tools for groundbreaking discoveries, which then lead to fresh insights. In the 1980’s, blood typing of birds became possible, and the 1990’s ushered in the use of DNA fingerprinting of genetic material. With these techniques, the true parentage of eggs and chicks in the nest could be determined. By 2002, the ‘old wisdom’ had been reversed. Among passerines, which comprise 60% of all bird species, true genetic monogamy only occurs in 14% of that large order of perching birds. That single male and single female seen at the nest are most likely not the parents of record with every one of the chicks in that nest.

When we examine the reproductive strategies of birds more closely, we encounter a bewildering complexity. There may not be “Fifty Ways to Leave Your Lover,” as Paul Simon once sang, but there are variations on the theme of the single pair.

Even simple monogamy, by which one male will mate with one female to form a pair bond, is a tricky concept. There are two broad categories of monogamy. First, there is social monogamy, which is actually common. This is the case in which a male bird ‘wins’ a female for a single breeding season, and then stays with that mate through several broods. During that same season, however, the male or female may occasionally mate with other birds. After dispersal or migration, then that mostly loyal social bond is dissolved, and the search for a partner begins again with the next breeding season.

Even social monogamy can get complicated. Some species, like the House Wren for one example, will form a pair bond with females only for a single nesting, and then often will find other partners for other broods within the same breeding season. Some common species such as American Robins and Mourning Doves will form pair bonds that will last for a few breeding seasons, but they may find new partners, making them mostly, but not entirely, loyal to their primary mates.

Second, there is sexual monogamy, in which the pairs mate for life. Ornithologists believe that such pair bonding has evolved to avoid the time-consuming process (Continued on page 6)
AUDUBON FIELD TRIPS

March 20 and April 18. The San Joaquin River National Wildlife Refuge near Modesto is huge and offers the most diverse habitats in the area, including mixed species transitional areas, riparian forest, oak woodlands, grassland, and seasonal wetlands. Trip leader, Ralph Baker (sharks_hockey_maniac@yahoo.com) chooses the particular habitats to visit each month based on conditions and season. Meet at the Stanislaus County Library parking lot (1500 I Street, Modesto) at 7:15 a.m. We will return to Modesto mid afternoon.

March 12. Turlock Lake Campground. Situated in the largest stand of old growth riverine forest on the lower Tuolumne River, this unique location is pleasing to many species of birds, and to birders. Trip leader, David Froba, 521-7265, froba@comcast.net. Meet at the Stanislaus County Library parking lot (1500 I Street, Modesto) at 7:15 a.m. We will return to Modesto early afternoon.

April 30. Del Puerto Canyon runs just outside of Patterson up to the county line at 2400 feet. The combination of altitude and spring migration makes this a dynamite place to bird at this time of the year. Trip leader, to be announced. For info call David Froba, 521-7265, froba@comcast.net. Meet at the Stanislaus County Library parking lot (1500 I Street, Modesto) at 7:00 a.m. We will return to Modesto early afternoon.

Audubon Field Trip Email List

If you would like to be on a group email to advise you of all Audubon field trips, please email: Dave Froba at froba@comcast.net.
Sierra Club Spring Hikes along the Tuolumne River - 1st Saturday of the month
March 5, April 2, and May 7th

Four mile easy hike along the Tuolumne River from Legion Park. Meet at the parking lot by American Legion Hall(1001 S. Santa Cruz Avenue) at 9 am. Dogs and children are welcome. For info contact leaders Sandy Wilson and Jerry Jackman and 209 577-5616.

Thursday, March 31, 7pm
Climbing Around the World
A Life of Wandering
With Dave Harden
(from John Kinnear, Tuolumne Group)

Come join us on Thursday, March 31 for an evening of vicarious adventure as local climber David Harden presents a new slide show of his climbs and travels around the globe. He will share stories and pictures from his many journeys, vertical and otherwise, wandering about our lovely planet. From Australia to Alaska, New York to New Zealand, Harden will take us with him as he explores scenic mountainous regions around the world. The Dolomites, Kilimanjaro, and Cochamo are just a few of the places names with which you will become familiar as you watch his program which could be subtitled, "How I Wasted My Life Walking Uphill."

Longtime Tuolumne County resident David Harden started wandering in the mountains as a teen in the 1960s. He began rock climbing soon after that and it has remained a lifelong passion. He has climbed throughout the western U.S. and around the world but the California High Sierra remains his favorite place. Harden retired from the fire service in 2005 after a thirty-two year career with CDF (now CAL FIRE) and lives in Sonora with his wife, Pamela Blair.

The meeting will be held on Thursday, March 31st, 7:00 P.M. at the T.U.D. boardroom at 18885 Nugget Blvd., Sonora, just off of Tuolumne Road. Refreshments will be served and the public is always welcome.

Mark your calendars for Earth Day in the park, Saturday April 23 from 10AM to 4PM, Graceada Park, Modesto CA.

We hope you can come out and enjoy a beautiful day in Graceada Park on April 23. This is your opportunity to spread the news about the Sierra Club. It is troubling to realize that some people have never heard of the Sierra Club. We will need volunteers to help at this event. We will have our booth setup and will be engaging youth and adults in various educational activities. There will be hundreds of people attending. It will offer you an opportunity to inform others of the reasons we believe it is important to conserve, recycle and protect nature and farmland in our Valley. Please contact Milt at our Friday meeting.

Earth Day 2015, Graceada Park

Science Colloquium Schedule, Spring 2016, 3-4 pm
Science Community Center, Room 115, MJC West Campus

Mar 2 Bobby Hutchison, MJC Behavioral Science, Biologist, “Our Viral Planet: Evolution and Biodiversity of Viruses”
Mar 9 "MJC Zoology Students: How are animals around the world faring?"
Mar 16 Shawn Jenkins, MS Athletic Trainer and Strength and Conditioning Specialist, “Fast Food and Your Health”
Mar 23 Michael Kennedy, “China: The Three Gorges Dam & other environmental impacts"
Mar 30 Jim and Kathy Clarke, "Mono Lake: the Past; the Present and the Future"
of finding new mates yearly. Nevertheless, sexual monogamy is surprisingly rare among birds. As biologist Amy Amos wryly observed, “Evolution is not influenced by the sanctity of [human] marriage.”

Several disparate species of large birds such as Bald Eagles, Laysan Albatrosses, Black Vultures, Mute Swans, and Barn Owls mate for life. Fewer passerine species will mate for life, but they do occur. One example of such lifelong loyalty is the Carolina Wren, which contrasts with the more promiscuous House Wren, proving that members of the same family will still vary greatly. We may regard our own unassuming, often overlooked California Towhees with more respect if we knew that their pairs are also loyal only to each other.

Birds that mate for life may not take vows as we know them, but they certainly behave that way. Sexually monogamous birds will stay together for successive years, enduring all the seasons together, until they are parted by the death of one partner. The remaining bird will choose another mate or live out the remainder of its life alone. Such loyalty is impressive, considering how prevalent the other strategies for reproducing birds are, and how successful those techniques have proven.

(Next Month: Variations on the Theme)

New Trail, the Los Banos Wildlife Area Birding Trail

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) Central Region’s Los Banos Wildlife Area will open a new birding trail on Feb 20. The trail will open annually on the third weekend in February and remain open each year through mid-June. Funding for the trail was provided by the Wildlife Conservation Board.

The new trail is comprised of 2.5 miles of paths that wind through six habitat types -- seasonal wetlands, old growth riparian, restored riparian, sloughs, managed uplands and irrigated pasture. At this time of year birders could expect to see numerous species of waterfowl; ducks, geese and swans as well as a wide variety of arriving song birds as they continue their winter/spring migration. Each area contains interpretive signs in both English and Spanish that feature bird illustrations donated by artist John Muir Laws. Easy access benches and cans are placed beside the trail. Maps of the trail area with locations of benches and signs are available at the registration kiosk.

The trail is located on Wolfsen Road, near parking lot No. 11 -- the closest street address is 7985 S. Wolfsen Road, Los Banos (93635). Salt Slough check station is adjacent to the trail entrance and contains extra parking and public restrooms.

Access to the Los Banos Wildlife Area birding trail is free to those possessing a valid hunting, fishing or trapping license. All other visitors 16 years of age or older must be in possession of a CDFW Lands Pass, available online or at license agents. The CDFW Lands Pass is available as an annual ($24.33) or day pass ($4.32) which can be purchased online but can also be purchased at Big 5 Sporting Goods (2200 Pacheco Blvd) or Wal Mart (1575 W Pacheco Blvd). At the entrance of the trail is a self-registration kiosk and registration cards; fill-in the card with the Lands Pass number but keep the pass with you.

Rio Ranch Community Restoration Work Days : (Tuolumne River Trust)

Saturday February 20, Saturday March 5 and Saturday April 16

Time: 9am to 12pm  Location: Dos Rios Ranch, 3559 Shiloh Road, Modesto, CA 95358

If under 18 and not accompanied by a parent, please request a Liability Release form in advance and bring it signed to the event. Work gloves and water bottle recommended. contact: Meg Gonzalez meg@tuolumne.org (209) 613-2672  The Dos Rios Ranch serves as an important refueling area for migratory birds.
### Yokuts Group of the Sierra Club

#### Membership Committee
- **Chair**: Candy Klaschus (cklaschus@gmail.com)
- **Vice Chair**: Kent Mitchell
- **Treasurer**: Steve Tomlinson (stomlinson015@gmail.com)
- **Secretary**: Sandra Wilson (swilson0902@yahoo.com)
- **Programs**: Linda Lagace (linda.lagace@att.net)
- **Conservation**: Milt Trieweiler
- **Membership**: Anita Young (ayyoungbooks2@gmail.com)
- **Hospitality**: Candy Klaschus (cklaschus@gmail.com)
- **Publicity**: Dorothy Griggs (dorothygriggs@att.net)
- **Outings**: Randall Brown (rbrown@csustan.edu)
- **Newsletter**: Chelsea Feeney (chelseafeeney1984@gmail.com)
- **Mailing**: Kathy Weise (kweise@ssica.com)
- **Population**: Milt Trieweiler (magictrain@aol.com)
- **Fundraising**: Leonard Choate (magictrain@aol.com)
- **Website**: Jason Tyree (jason.tyree@gmail.com)

#### Yokuts Sierra Club Joins Meetup
The Yokuts Sierra Club group, along with the Delta Sierra and Tuolumne groups, have formed a Stockton-Modesto-Sonora Meetup group that includes Sierra Club outings and events. It’s easy and free to join this Meetup, just go to the link below and sign up. It’s not necessary to be a Sierra Club member to join. Once you sign up, you will automatically be sent announcements of new and upcoming Meetup events. [http://www.meetup.com/Stockton-Modesto-Sonora-Sierra-Club/](http://www.meetup.com/Stockton-Modesto-Sonora-Sierra-Club/)

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**Sierra Club Membership Enrollment Form**

- Yes, I want to be a member of the Sierra Club!
- Yes, I want to give a gift membership!

**NEW MEMBER NAME(S)**

**ADDRESS**

**CITY**

**STATE**

**ZIP**

**TELEPHONE (optional)**

**EMAIL (optional)**

From time to time, we make our mailing list available to other worthy organizations. If you prefer your name not be included, please check here.

**MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES**

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Contributions, gifts and dues to the Sierra Club are not tax-deductible; they support our effective, citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts. Your dues include $7.50 for a subscription to SIERRA magazine and $1 for your Chapter newsletter.

**PAYMENT METHOD**: (check one)

- CHECK ☐
- VISA ☐
- MASTERCARD ☐
- AMEX ☐

**CARDHOLDER NAME**

**CARD NUMBER**

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**GIFT MEMBERSHIP**: A gift card will be sent for your use. Enter your name and address below and the name and address of the gift recipient above.

**YOUR NAME(S)**

**ADDRESS**

**CITY**

**STATE**

**ZIP**

**TELEPHONE (optional)**

**EMAIL (optional)**

Enclose payment information and mail to:

P.O. Box 421041, Palm Coast, FL 32142-1041


To send stories to the Habitat, e-mail: Chelsea Feeney: chelseafeeney1984@gmail.com
March 26, 2016, 9:30 am to 1:30 pm

Pacheco State Park

Thirteenth Annual Wildflower Day

Pacheco State Park will celebrate the 13th Annual Wildflower Day March 26th from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Visitors will be able to go to tables staffed by local volunteers from the California Native Plant Society, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and State Parks, etc. to learn about this beautiful wilderness state park as well as other recreational opportunities in the area. There will be free arts and crafts for children.

The event will also include a Nature Hike at 10:00 a.m. and noon. These hikes are for a limited number of hikers who sign up first come, first served, the day of the hike. Visitors can also take self-guided tours.

The weather at Pacheco State Park can range from cool and windy to hot, so bring a range of clothing and sunscreen. Families are encouraged to bring their own picnic lunch. Also, there is no drinking water of any kind, so bring your own beverages.

There is an entrance fee of $10.00 per vehicle. For more information, call 209-826-6283 or e-mail bwong@parks.ca.gov with the subject “Wildflower Day.” Visit www.parks.ca.gov/events.