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THE SACRAMENTO AUDUBON SOCIETY  
THE FIRST 25 YEARS  
BY  
MARTORIE RYALL

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COVER PICTURE

The art work is a copy of the cover of the March-April, 1952  
OBSERVER by Celeste Johnson Kirsher. The lettering is by  
Frances Thompson.

A PUBLICATION OF THE SACRAMENTO AUDUBON SOCIETY  
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## FORWARD

The first credit for this history must go to William K. (Bill) Kirsher. Having been an active Audubon member in Washington D.C., he was surprised not to find an Audubon Society in Sacramento; so he sought out people with like interests. From then on a group worked, but Bill was the one with the determination, and thus the Audubon Society was formed in 1950.

All credit for the research and writing goes to Marjorie Ryall. Her interest was aroused when she was Historian for the Society. She recorded interviews with charter members. Along with this she went through all records including the minutes and OBSERVERS for twenty-five years. We all thank you, Marjorie.

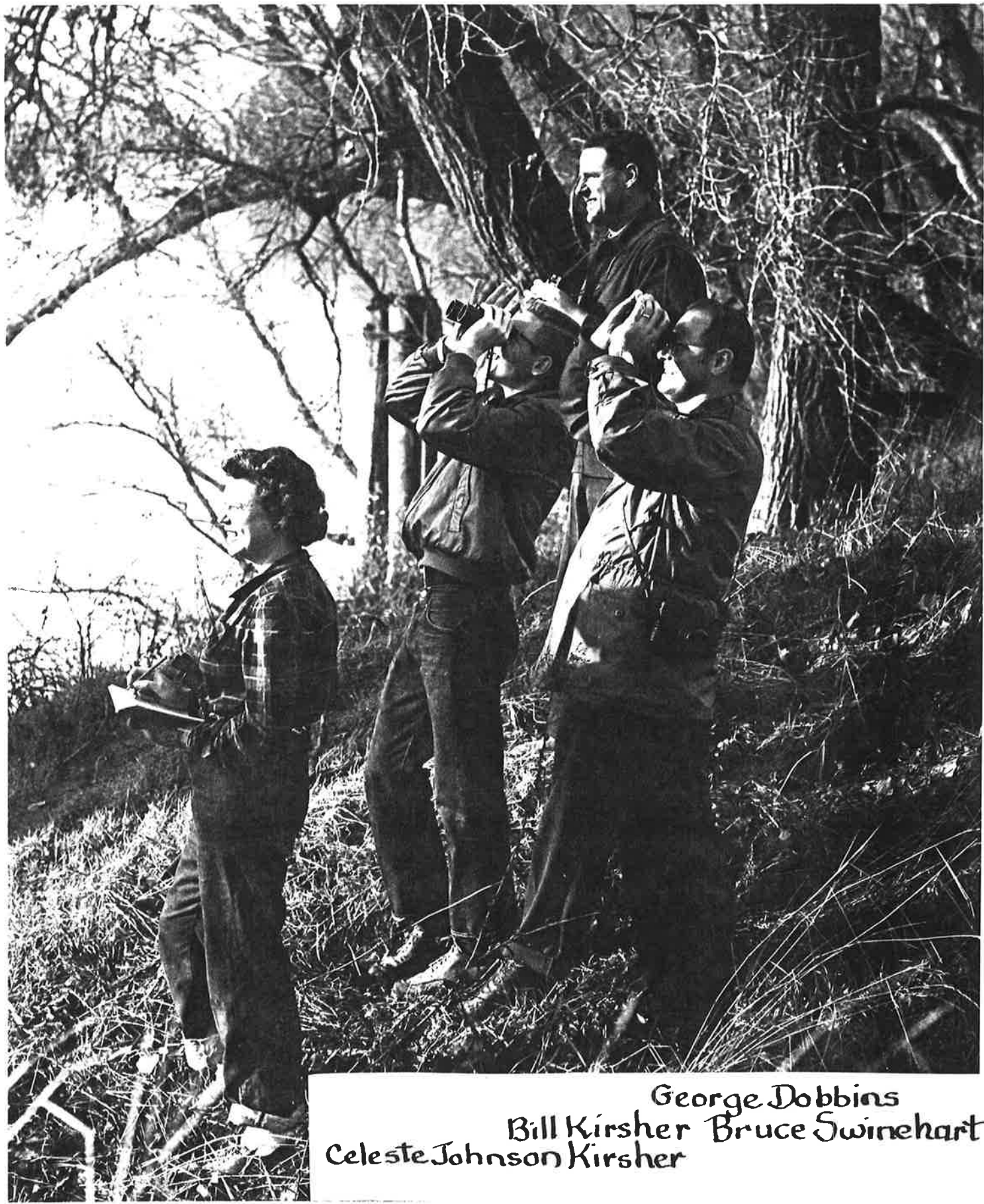
Thanks must also go to Elmer Aldrich who, when he was president, felt that the history of the Sacramento Audubon Society should be written.

Final thanks go to Del and Alta Tura who brought us into the modern world by means of their computer; so at last we are ready to publish this history.

Many other people have read and given helpful suggestions. It would be impossible to name them all.

We all hope that at a future time someone will continue this history.

Phyllis Thompson, Historian and Editor of  
Sacramento Audubon Society  
The First 25 Years



George Dobbins  
Bill Kirsher Bruce Swinehart  
Celeste Johnson Kirsher

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The Sacramento Audubon Society was formally organized in September 1950 by a group of some twenty-five people who met at the Girl Scout House at 2430 N Street in Sacramento, California.

As this small group elected officers and adopted the proposed constitution, they probably never dreamed that the fledgling society which they were launching would grow within a quarter of a century to encompass over two thousand members. For that evening marked the beginning of what has become a huge and very vocal association dedicated to the conservation of all of our natural resources.

That meeting was the result of an increasing awareness of ecology, nature, and bird life that had been building up for several years among the schools, youth organizations, and the people of the Sacramento community in general.

Miss Esther Guthrie, Science Supervisor for the Sacramento City School System, had been sponsoring field trips for her teachers for some time. The trips were under the leadership of Dr. Hubert G. Jenkins, Professor of Life Sciences at Sacramento State College. As a science teacher in the city schools, Phyllis Thompson naturally participated, along with her sister Frances, also a teacher.

Many Girl Scout leaders, among them Muriel Kaminsky and Willie Argante, who were interested in nature, also went along on these field trips. Muriel and Willie, together with Sam Argante, had been birding together since the early 1940's. During those post-war years binoculars were difficult to obtain. Mrs. Argante recalls that they had to share one pair and hope that a bird wouldn't fly away before all three could have a look at it.

The catalyst that was to bring these individuals together and provide the spark that would result in a formal organization was William Kirsher, a photographer with the U.S. Geological Survey. He arrived in Sacramento sometime late in the 1940's from Washington, D.C., where he had been active in the Audubon Society. He had enjoyed his membership so much that he thought all the nature and bird lovers in Sacramento would derive equal enjoyment from such a society.

It was at the Camp of the West, which the National Audubon Society had established at Sugar Bowl in the Sierra in 1948, that he first met some of the foremost bird and nature lovers in Sacramento.

Muriel Kaminsky saw the camp as a chance to obtain additional training amidst surroundings that she had known in her girlhood -- training that would help her in leading her nature-oriented group of Girl Scouts. She surprised everyone by being the only housewife at the first session that year.

On Sunday, July 4, 1948, Phyllis Thompson and Sally Carden drove up to attend the second session. Miss Thompson was using a scholarship originally given to Esther Guthrie by Dr. Charles M. Goethe, a local philanthropist. When a bad knee forced Miss Guthrie to forgo this offer, she passed it on to Phyllis. Sally was using the reservation which Dr. Goethe had made for himself but which he was unable to use.

Mr. Kirsher attended either a later session of the Camp that year or one of the 1949 sessions. However, "it took two years for the seeds to germinate," as Genevieve Trousdale says in her review of the early days of Sacramento Audubon ("The President's Page," The Observer, Mar-April 1952, p. 1).

It was at the first Western Regional Audubon Conference, which was held at Asilomar in the spring of 1950, that Mr. Kirsher sought out his fellow Sacramento alumni from the Camp of the West and suggested that they get together back in Sacramento the next week to discuss starting an Audubon Society.

Many meetings of the three -- Phyllis Thompson, Muriel Kaminsky, and Mr. Kirsher -- followed at the home of the Thompson sisters, as they made plans for implementing a local society and arranged for field trips for the observation of birds. In reminiscing about these early days, Mrs. Kaminsky spoke of Mr. Kirsher's thoughtfulness, for he, the lone man, always appeared with a quart of ice cream to share.

Dittoed notices prepared by Phyllis Thompson were mailed out to people who they thought might be interested. Miss Guthrie furnished more names, and, as those people provided names of others who were also interested, the nucleus for a local organization kept growing.

The first birding trip was announced for April 23, 1950 -- a field trip to the Folsom Game Refuge. At 5 A.M. on the first day of Day Light Savings Time that year nearly thirty people showed up. Sam Argante, who had been recruited as leader, was overwhelmed by the crowd and nearly sneaked away. He and Willie were able to help everyone see all twenty-eight birds on the list they had prepared. They also took the group to the nests of western bluebirds, tree swallows, and woodpeckers. As a consequence, they earned a reputation as expert birders -- a reputation they have maintained through the ensuing years.

That field trip created quite a sensation among the local populace. No one had ever before seen people peering into a tree through binoculars. A curious motorist stopped and got out of his car. "What's going on?" he asked the nearest birdwatcher. "We're looking at an ash-throated flycatcher," was the response. "Oh! Is that all?" he scoffed. "I thought you had a flying saucer!" and he got into his car and zipped away.

After a second successful birding trip, a meeting was held at the Marshall school on May 23. Muriel Kaminsky showed color slides of the Audubon Camp of the West, and plans were made for a pelagic field trip with the Golden Gate Audubon Society in San Francisco. People were asked to

indicate their interest in forming a local Audubon Society.

In June the first Sacramento Audubon Society Newsletter was issued. Membership was offered in both the local and the National Audubon Society at an annual fee of \$5.00. Affiliation with the National Society, it was explained, would include many privileges, and would give direction and purpose to local activities.

More field trips followed during that summer. There are records of one to the Calaveras Big Trees State Park and of one to Echo Lake in August.

Finally, on September 23, 1950, the formal organizational meeting toward which William Kirsher, Muriel Kaminsky, and Phyllis Thompson, with the help of many others, had been working was held. Mr. Kirsher was elected the first President, Mrs. Kaminsky the first Vice-President, Phyllis Thompson the first Secretary, and Sam Argante the first Treasurer.

Unfortunately, no accurate record was kept of all of the twenty-eight people who were present on that memorable evening. The minutes of the meeting do mention a few who were to become very active in furthering the objectives of the newly created society.

The members immediately initiated a very active program. Once a month night meetings were held. The members and their guests heard such outstanding speakers as E. Z. Rett, Curator of Birds and Animals at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History; Dr. Lloyd Ingles, Director of the Audubon Camp of the West at Sugarbowl; and John Ripley Forbes of the Hornaday Foundation.

Field trips were made to the Farallon Islands, Joice Island, Gray Lodge Waterfowl Refuge, Willows Game Refuge, Folsom Lake, and Tomales Bay, with weekend trips to Dillon's Beach, Yosemite, and Calaveras Big Trees State Park.

To help everyone become more proficient at spotting birds, Dr. Hubert Jenkins offered the use of his facilities at Sacramento State College. Several study sessions in the field identification of birds were held.

Mr. Kirsher prepared and published a "Check List of the Birds of Sacramento and Vicinity." This was sold for a nickel (\$.05). But there were only scanty records of observations in the region on which to base it. Almost immediately work was begun on the correction of this list. Many members participated in the project, with Barbara Graham serving as the official recorder. Plans were made to bring out a new Check List in the fall of 1954. Unfortunately no copy of this List has been preserved. But it soon became outdated.

In May 1959, Mr. Kirsher published a "New Comprehensive Check List for Sacramento and Vicinity," at \$.25 each, with autographed copies available for a dollar. The new List contained 216 species of birds. In deciding which species to include, Mr. Kirsher relied upon hundreds of field records which had been kept by the local Society over a period of nearly ten years. He was also aided by a committee of six

other expert bird observers -- Earl Albertson, Willie and Sam Argante, Fred Evenden, Ed Pickett, and Alice Williams. In addition to showing the approximate time when each of the species could be observed locally, bars of different widths were used to indicate the relative numbers of each species.

This 1959 Check List was not regarded as the final word. As more and more knowledge of local birds has been gained through more observations, changes in migration patterns, etc., the Check List has been revised many times.

Plans were made for the publication of a more elaborate and informative newsletter than the one or two-page multigraphed or typed brochure that was being sent out to members and other interested persons. This would become The Observer.

On December 31, 1950, the Society participated in the Annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count. The newsletter of mid-January of 1951 cited it as a "big success." Twenty-one members took part. Working in five groups, each under a competent leader, they counted ninety-four species of birds, and more than 14,000 individual birds.

This was actually the second Bird Census in Sacramento. The previous winter Gene Christiansen, with the aid of Gary Stone, had made a count. On January 2, 1950, they reported a total of fifty-nine species and a total of 6,604 individual birds.

This Annual Bird Census, or the Christmas Count, as it is more commonly known, became a yearly event. By 1953 the area to be covered had been divided into nine sectors, and two years later into ten, each under the leadership of an outstanding birder. This area, centered at the confluence of the Sacramento and the American Rivers, is fifteen miles in diameter, and covers roughly fifty square miles.

In preparation for this annual event, since 1960 the December monthly meeting has been devoted exclusively to the subject of bird identification, with color slides, bird silhouettes, and discussions by expert birders in identifying birds and on how to quickly estimate numbers in large flocks.

Before the group leaders assemble at the end of the day to tally their data to be forwarded to the National Audubon Society for editing and publication in the Audubon Field Notes, all the participants share a buffet or a potluck supper. There has always been much good-natured rivalry among the different sectors, with each group striving for the honor of observing the greatest number of bird species.

During the 1972 Christmas Count, on December 23, a ceramic peregrine falcon was discovered on a steel power tower west of the Yolo By-Pass. Later it was learned that Jim C. Anderson, a young art instructor at Sierra College, had made the falcon and placed it there. ("Falcon Mystery Solved," The Observer, May 1973, p. 28.) This falcon was donated to the local Society by its creator; it has become a trophy awarded annually to the group of census takers which observes the greatest number of species of birds on Count



Day.

A detailed statistical record of the Sacramento Valley Audubon Society's Bird Censuses from 1949 through 1970, complete with notes on weather, has been compiled. Sec. I, for the years 1949-1963, has been bound with the January 1964 issue of The Observer; Sec. II, for the years 1964-1970, is included with the February 1971 issue.

During the Society's first year plans were also made to bring the Audubon Screen Tour Series to Sacramento with the beginning of the next club year, under the joint sponsorship of the Audubon Society and of the Junior Science Museum. The Series consisted of five all-color outdoor action pictures on a variety of wildlife subjects.

Mr. Kirsher appointed John Ripley Forbes Chairman of a committee to be made up of representatives from the Society, the city schools, the Girl Scouts, the Boy Scouts, and many other local organizations.

Many of the local Audubon Society members -- the Argantes, Muriel Kaminsky, Celeste Johnson, and innumerable others -- had helped John Forbes of the Hornaday Foundation to set up the Junior Science Museum in Sacramento. The Museum was officially opened to the public on August 30, 1951.

For many years the Junior Museum and the Audubon Society of Sacramento worked together to interest youth in nature. The Audubon Society held many of its general meetings in the Museum's auditorium. The Museum gave the Audubon Society space for a cabinet for their supplies. Notices of Museum programs and happenings were a regular part of The Observer. In 1959 the Board voted to make an annual donation to the Museum at the end of each fiscal year in memory of any of its members who had passed away during the year.

By the end of the first club year, in June of 1951, the original charter membership of fifty had grown to a total of sixty-three members. The Society had been set up to correspond with the school year, with the summer vacation months as a period of relative inactivity.

However, before disbanding for the summer, the officers held a special meeting, on June 8, 1951. With the help of five specially invited members who had been very active during the past year, they worked out techniques for the improvement of field trips. Among suggestions made for that purpose were the following: advance information on what birds might be seen on a specified trip; encouragement of the making of life lists; trips for beginners; classes for leadership training, and for bird study.

President William Kirsher appointed a Nominating Committee, with J. O. Wanzer as Chairman, to select a slate of officers for the new club year. A decision was made to hold a picnic during the summer.

The Society began its second club year in October 1951, with Genevieve Trousdale, a local nature lover from the staff of the Travel Aid Society, as President.

Henceforth, to avoid burdening this narrative with a

monotonous listing of new names with each new club year, only the new president's name will be given. A complete chart of all of the Presidents, Vice-Presidents, Secretaries, and Treasurers who have served the Society from 1950 up to the present time has been attached for easy reference.

The second club year saw many changes in policies and techniques -- changes that are still being followed in many cases. In November, the Executive Board Meetings were held separately from the General Meetings for the first time. The members decided to use the period from July 1 to June 30 of the next year as the basis for their fiscal year. A total budget of \$225.00 was adopted.

Also during November the first of the Audubon Screen Tour Series, a color motion picture on the wildlife of Lake Michigan, was presented to the school children and adults of Sacramento. This was the culmination of many weeks of planning, making arrangements, getting out publicity, etc. The entire series of five were shown twice; once at a free children's matinee at a senior or a junior high school, and again that same evening, at a charge of \$.60 (or \$2.48 for a season ticket). The Treasurer reported a total profit of more than \$450 for the season. This was divided between the two sponsoring organizations.

This cooperative sponsorship of the Screen Tours was continued for a second year. The third year the local Audubon Society continued sponsoring the Series alone, eliminating the matinees and making a gift to the Museum from the profits. As the fourth year (the 1954-55 season) drew to a close and it became evident that profits from the season's venture would be approximately \$100, the Series was discontinued. However, for the benefit of those members who wanted to see the pictures, information concerning the dates each would be shown in the nearby cities of Marysville and Lodi were printed in The Observer each autumn.

The third momentous event of November 1951 was the appearance of the first issue of The Observer. This bi-monthly, edited by William Kirsher, was dedicated "to the principles of wildlife conservation, with emphasis on nature near at home." Many participated in the preparation of this handsome publication. Jeanne Swinehart typed the stencils; Perry Baker did the mimeographing; Celeste Johnson, the art editor, prepared the illustrations for the heavy paper covers.

Perry continued to mimeograph The Observer through 1967. He and his wife Cora spent many hours seeing The Observer was always ready for mailing.

The Observer contained news and information about the wildlife and flora of the Sacramento area, what could be seen, and where and when, plus news of nature activities. Natural history books were reviewed by the librarians among the membership. Many interesting and highly informative articles on birds, plants, animals, stars, and other nature topics appeared on its pages.

With the third issue, that of March-April 1952, a new

feature, "Recent Observations" of birds in and around Sacramento became a regular feature. Either under that heading, or as "Field Observations," or simply "Observations," it continued until the November 1959 issue. Then it became "Seasonal Observations," and as such still appears today in every issue. Since no credit is given for the first four of these columns, we can only assume that the editor, William Kirsher, was responsible. With the first column in 1953 (The Observer, 1953, p. 7), Edwin Pickett began reporting the data.

"Seasonal Observations" has been and continues to be a valuable record of the arrival dates of migrating birds in the Sacramento area, of birds appearing out of season, and of other unusual occurrences, as well as a source of information concerning the indigenous birdlife of the locality. The column was an invaluable aid in the preparation of Check Lists of Birds in the Sacramento Valley, as indicated earlier.

During the first years many people were responsible for receiving and publishing the observations. However, in September 1967 Mrs. H. M. Kimball (Betty) took charge of the Seasonal Observations and at the close of this 25 year history she was still continuing. All of the records have been preserved and from these records a scientific knowledge of the birds of this area has been gained which is proving useful in showing changes that take place.

The mimeographed Newsletter was still used to disburse information to members about meetings, field trips, etc. -- at least through the beginning of the third club year, for a copy of the September 1952 Newsletter has been preserved. Eventually its use was discontinued, and Audubon members and friends received all information concerning outings, meetings, and other official business through the pages of The Observer.

In November 1954, The Observer was changed to a monthly bulletin, to be issued eight or nine times a year, with an occasional summer issue. It received a new format, with a calendar of coming events as a regular feature, and included write-ups of recent field trips. By the next year a listing of new members became another more or less regularly appearing feature which has been continued up to the present time. The first of these listings appeared in the Jan-Feb. 1955 issue.

At the first Western Audubon Conference at Asilomar, Sacramento had been represented by only the three who were responsible for the founding of the Sacramento Audubon Society -- Muriel Kaminsky, Phyllis Thompson, and William Kirsher. At the April 1952 Conference (April 5-8), the fledgling society was in charge of registration for the event.

At the end of the second club year, in June 1952, the Society had grown to a total membership of 84.

In her farewell message, outgoing President Trousdale neatly summarized the ideals and aims of the Sacramento

Audubon Society. Her article appeared on the "President's Page" in the Sept-Oct. 1952 issue of The Observer. She said, in part, that, like The Observer, the Sacramento Audubon Society is dedicated to "the principles of wildlife conservation with emphasis on nature near at home." But nature close to home is not limited to birdlife. It encompasses all wildlife -- wildflowers, reptiles, butterflies, insects, animals -- and also involves the conservation of soil and water. Audubon has room for everyone, no matter what his or her nature specialty.

In keeping with this wide range of interests, the field trips program included many things in addition to opportunities for the observation of birds.

For ten years an annual event for Audubon members and their children was a weekend trip to Dillon's Beach on Tomales Bay on the coast. Under the leadership of Dr. Louis Heinrich, a biologist, and Dr. Francis Canales, a geologist, both of the Grant Technical School, they had an opportunity to study the marine life and the geology of the region. As many as ninety people, Audubon members and their children and friends, attended this annual excursion.

A special excursion to view the wildflowers of the foothills and the vernal pools continues to be a very popular spring event and learning experience for many. During the early years, special ecological study trips were made to the Fisher Ranch above Fiddletown.

For birdwatching, each trip would be centered upon birds frequenting a particular type of environment -- the ocean, the shores of lakes and ponds, the marshes, the foothills, or the mountains. There were always many excursions for local birds in and around Sacramento. Special trips were on the program year after year, such as those for migrating warblers, those to the Sugar Ponds near Woodland for shore birds, and always a trip in the late winter to see the sandhill cranes wintering at nearby Thornton. The Gray Lodge Waterfowl Refuge and the Sacramento Wildlife Refuge were other popular field trip areas.

Though Audubon activities practically ceased during the summer months, special field trips were sometimes planned, such as one to the Kinsey Aviary in Marin City in 1952, and a camping trip to Silver Lake in 1956. In recent years trips have been made to Klamath Falls in Oregon (1972), to Mono Lake, and to Mt. Pinos to see the condors.

The leaders for most of these varied and challenging trips were found within the membership of the Society. They included, during the earlier years, Mr. and Mrs. Argante, William Kirsher, Dr. Hubert Jenkins, and Edwin R. Pickett. Many others -- Cora Baker, Alfrieda Meuser, Helen Grant, Bruce Swinehart, Alice Williams, Earl Albertson, and countless more -- have provided capable leadership through the years.

The third club year began in October 1952, with Bruce Swinehart, an undergraduate student at Sacramento State College, as President. Mr. Swinehart later became a

biological science teacher at American River College and a trainer of young people in bird identification and in conservation education. He was also an avid bird bander.

At some time during the first year in the life of the newly formed local Society, Mr. Swinehart, together with William Kirsher, Muriel Kaminsky, Willie Argante, Barbara Graham, and Cora Baker, had become involved in bird banding. They worked under the authority of the Federal Fish and Wildlife Service, under the tutelage of Paul Steele, an Audubon member and president of the Western Bird Banders Association. They were able to contribute valuable data for use in studies of birds, their migration patterns, habits, longevity, and life histories. For several years in the early fifties, they were involved in a cliff swallow banding project. In the spring of 1955 they were called upon to aid the State Fish and Game biologists in their study of the migratory movements of mourning doves. There are still Audubon members who are contributing toward ornithological knowledge through bird banding activities.

This third club year saw more changes and innovations. The first membership roster, listing a total membership of 93, was published in November 1952, as part of The Observer. Every autumn thereafter a new membership roster appeared, until the increasingly heavy costs of producing it forced the Society to discontinue its annual publication after the November 1974 issue.

Under the sponsorship of the Society, a class in ornithology was offered at Sacramento State College, with Dr. Fred Evenden, a biologist who had done his Ph.D thesis on bird ecology, as instructor. This class was a tremendous help to all who were endeavoring to keep a Life List of the birds they observed. While recognition is not the end and aim of ornithology, the ability to readily recognize and identify many species of birds is a valuable asset, as well as a fascinating sideline to birdwatching. It was an appropriate hobby for members of a society which had originated as a bird watching group.

The previous winter, a committee, headed by Willie Argante, had laid down certain ground rules by which Sacramento Audubon Society members could measure their own progress. To earn the title of a Junior Observer in Birdwatching, one needed at least 75 birds on his Life List. If one's List grew to 160, he (or she) could claim the title of Senior Observer; at the 250 mark, the watcher was considered an Expert Observer. Anyone with 400 or more species on his Life List was an Honor Roll Observer.

The first listing of Senior and Expert Observers appeared in The Observer for Jan-Feb. 1953 (p.15). There the subject rested until 1958, when eight members qualified for the Honor Roll and seventeen had become Expert Observers. They were listed in the April issue of the periodical (p.33). In the March 1960 and November 1961, listings of Senior, Expert, and Honor Roll Observers were published in The Observer for the last time. Since then Life Lists are kept

by individual bird watchers solely for their own gratification.

The first Annual Audubon Dinner was held in 1952. It was a catered affair at a local church, with Dr. Lloyd Glen Ingles, author of the book, "The Mammals of California," as the guest speaker. The second Annual Dinner was held on March 19, 1954, with Dr. Robert I. Bowman of the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology of the University of California, and a member of a scientific expedition to the Galapagos Islands, as guest speaker.

The third Annual Dinner was moved nearer to the end of the club year, to May 7, 1955, and became the Annual Banquet. In that year, the installation of the new officers for the next club year, which had previously taken place at the first meeting in the autumn, became a regular part of this annual spring event. This enabled the incoming officials to get a head start on the next year's activities.

President Swinehart placed special emphasis on the importance of legislation upon the preservation and conservation of natural resources. On the "President's Page" in The Observer for Mar-Apr. 1953, he urged members to let their legislators know, by letter, postcard, or telegram, how they felt about the bills affecting natural resources. This had been triggered by a discussion at the Asilomar Conference about the widening of a highway through the redwoods.

In September 1953 the Society began its fourth club year, again under new leadership. Helen Grant (now Mrs. Helen Davis), a local schoolteacher who had been an avid birdwatcher since her Girl Scout days in Texas, agreed to serve as President.

Because of the tremendous increase in membership and the resultant difficulty in getting to know everyone, questionnaires were sent to the members, asking them to indicate their special interests, talents, and skills. Since then this procedure has been utilized frequently to provide a reservoir of manpower for committees and for the Society's special needs, and as a help in charting future programs and plans.

As a result of this questionnaire, several changes were made in policies and in the procedures at general meetings. Reports of field trips, as well as suggestions concerning where individuals could find good birding, became a regular feature of The Observer. Midweek field trips were initiated, and a special chairman was appointed to schedule and supervise them. For the first time the Vice President also served as Program Committee Chairman.

A momentous event of this club year was the first TV show put on by the Society. On December 21, 1953, prior to the fourth Annual Bird Census, Edwin Pickett served as Master of Ceremonies for a program on "The Christmas Bird Count," on a local station. He was assisted by Helen Grant, Willie Argante, Muriel Kaminsky, and Paul Steele. The discussion was highlighted by an explanation of the trapping and banding of birds by Mr. Steele, an enthusiastic bird bander, and by

slides of birds common to Sacramento.

The Audubon Society has always been very much concerned with the education of young people in all aspects of nature and in the conservation of natural resources. From its beginnings, the Sacramento Audubon Society members had emphasized participation of their children and other youth in their activities. In an interview on her years with the Audubon Society, Helen Grant (Davis) spoke especially about the family outings, such as the weekend trips to Dillon's Beach. She said that they were one of the nicest things about the early days of the Society.

As President, she urged more active cooperation with the Junior Museum. She was one of the first teachers to introduce the Audubon Junior Clubs into the city schools when she started an after-school club of twenty enthusiastic youngsters.

At the last Board Meeting of the third club year (May 3, 1954) the first mention is found of the giving of scholarships to the Audubon Camp of the West. It was at Helen Grant's suggestion that the Directors decided to offer half scholarships (\$50 of the \$95 fee) to enable a youth leader to attend a session of the Camp. Mrs. Viola Craig was chosen as the recipient that year for her outstanding work with the Campfire Girls. The following year Willie Argante, an outstanding youth leader, was awarded a half scholarship.

The annual presentation of half scholarships to the Audubon Camp of the West has continued. Early in 1956, as the Junior Audubon clubs continued to grow, the criteria were changed. A decision was made to award half scholarships to teachers involved in nature study or to persons in a supervisory or consultant capacity in the intermediate school grades, and the scholarship for that year was offered to Mike Weber of the Sacramento County Schools. Until 1962, when the Camp was closed for a year, one or two half-scholarships were awarded each year.

Mrs. Elizabeth McGilvray, a local attorney and nature lover, was President during the Society's fifth club year (1954-55). This year saw the addition of an Assistant Secretary to help take care of the Society's increasingly heavy secretarial duties. Three years later, in 1957, the Secretary's position was divided into two parts -- a Recording Secretary and a Corresponding Secretary.

This year a Youth Activities Committee was set up. The purpose of this was to cooperate with local youth organizations by assisting them in their nature programs and by inviting them to participate in regular Audubon activities. Because of Helen Grant's work with youth, it seemed appropriate that she should become the first Junior Club Chairman.

Children's interest in nature and their involvement in the out-of-doors world grew rapidly. Willie Argante, who succeeded Helen Grant as Junior Club Chairman the next year, reported at the end of the third year of the Youth Program (in The Observer, May 1957) that seventy-five or eighty

junior clubs had been formed. In addition, there was an unknown number of Cub dens and Scout groups who were engaged in nature-related activities. Effie Yeaw, a member of this Youth Committee, had alone been responsible for the formation of sixteen Junior Clubs in her school district.

The fifth club year also was notable for the beginning of a library of 35 mm. colored slides of the birds, wildflowers, trees, and shrubs of the Sacramento area. This collection was to be available for the Society's own programs, for programs put on by the Junior Museum, and for members of the Society who would be giving programs to other groups and organizations. Fred Evenden served as Chairman of the Slide Committee, which consisted of Willie Argante, Lucy Jane Labhard, Georgia Borchert, George Dobbins, and William Kirsher.

To start the collection, members were asked to donate either originals or copies of their best slides, or else to give permission for the Committee to have copies made. By the end of the next year the question of the purchase of slides of very high quality was considered, and an amount up to \$15 was made available for that purpose, with the final selection to be approved by the Board. By early 1956, a well-rounded collection had been assembled and efforts could be concentrated upon filling in subjects in which they were deficient.

Another project this year was the Photography Tours. Four sets, each consisting of twenty excellent nature photographs, had been ordered to be displayed in the county, city, and parochial schools. When the first set was received in October 1955, Helen Grant immediately made arrangements for as many groups as possible to have a chance to view them. Previously, in the autumn of 1953, the local Society had sponsored an Art Tour Collection of Louis Agassiz Fuertes' paintings of birds, which were displayed at the Crocker Art Museum.

Yet another important contribution this year was the purchase of the very latest model projector for showing slides and filmstrips. This was to be used for the screen tours, general meetings, and by the Junior Museum for their programs.

At the April 1955 general meeting, a display of wildflowers was set up to augment the talk and slide show on "Wildflowers of the Sacramento Area," given by Nicholas Doudnik, a local naturalist. This display was prepared and arranged by Lucy Labhard, a local science teacher, and Georgia Borchert, a botanist who taught in the city high school. It was so popular that it was repeated at the same time the following two years, when the program was again on wildflowers.

Interest continued to grow in these live exhibits. In 1959, Mrs. Borchert arranged displays of native wildflowers and plant materials at three spring meetings. For the benefit of Audubon members, the list of the species displayed, with their common and scientific names, were



published in The Observer, in the issues for March, April, and May 1958. Mrs. Borchert also received recognition from the National Audubon Society for her excellent displays in their publication, "The Flying Egret." Through the years Mrs. Borchert continued to supply displays of shells, dried materials, pressed wildflowers, etc.

The autumn of 1955 saw the growing Society off to a flying start on its sixth year, under the leadership of Robert A. Cunningham, a hospital administrator who was interested in nature. Since the new officers had been installed at the Annual Banquet in May, they had been able to hold their first Executive Board Meeting in August to plan the year's program.

September 1 had been set as the publication date for the first issue of The Observer for the club year. This year two new and important committees were formed: a Conservation Committee, with Edwin Pickett as Chairman, and a Legal Committee, with Mrs. Elizabeth McGilvray as Chairman.

For the seventh club year (1956-57) an even earlier start was made on the year's activities. Jack Dennison, who had moved up from a successful two-year term as Treasurer to become President, held his first Executive Board Meeting in June.

The policy of having general meetings on the third Friday of each month was initiated -- a policy that was to continue until the late seventies. The second Tuesday of each month was reserved for the Executive Board Meeting. However, this policy was not always followed until it was formally voted upon and passed at the Board Meeting in September 1964.

The custom of introducing and acknowledging new members and guests at general meetings was begun. Two years before, in November 1954, the Executive Board had set aside the sum of \$7.50 to be used for refreshments to be served during a fellowship hour following each general meeting. This fellowship hour is still an important part of the monthly meetings.

For the second time questionnaires were sent out to all members asking their preferences on topics to be covered at the meetings and for field trips. The immediate result of this was, in October, both a general meeting and a field trip devoted to the subject of nature photography, a combination of theory, examples, and practice. Now photographic workshops and opportunities for taking pictures on field trips are part of the Society's regular activities.

The next club year (1957-58), Leonard B. Penhale, a State Park Naturalist and bird taxidermist, moved up from the Vice Presidency position to be President. Perhaps Mr. Penhale's most important contribution to the Society was the creation of the position of Historian. Olivette Dennison, whom he appointed to this office, was to serve in that capacity until 1974.

Mrs. Dennison immediately began to collect and put in order the minutes, newsletters, letters, etc., that had been

stashed away in odd corners by past officers of the Society during the previous eight years. Unfortunately, some valuable data had already been lost, but it was largely through her efforts that much of the story of the early days of the Sacramento Valley Audubon Society has been preserved. She also set up a permanent file of The Observer and indexed each issue. In the spring of 1958 the first four years were permanently bound. Since then back issues are bound in five-year accretions.

At the beginning of the next club year, Mrs. Dennison's position was labelled Curator. For until 1975, the Historian was also charged with the responsibility of keeping account of the sound projector, slide viewer, spotting scope, slide boxes, and other properties which the Society was acquiring through the years for use in its activities. This task was rather a difficult one, as the various items were kept in the homes of different members of the Society. It was not until 1976 that a separate Properties position was created.

Mr. Penhale also formed several new committees. One in particular, Public Relations, under the leadership of Willie Argante, became an active spokesman for the Audubon Society and for nature and the conservation of natural resources. During the previous two years, as Chairman of the Junior Audubon Clubs, Mrs. Argante had been bringing the Junior Program to the city and county pupils and teachers.

Now, with the aid of a large group of willing and capable Society members, she began bringing Audubon ideals and concepts to the community at large. The Committee kept a full schedule of talks to garden clubs, senior citizens, lodges, and other groups. They held training sessions, and gave slide shows and talks to schools, to school administrators, to Scout and other youth leaders on birds, flowers, and other natural subjects. They made TV appearances and arranged exhibits of Audubon materials and of nature materials at local festivals and science fairs.

A detailed partial list of the activities of this dedicated Committee during two club years -- January 1958 through May 1959 -- can be found in The Observer for May 1959 (p.33). The following year, Mrs. Argante presented a series of "bouquets" to many of the active members of her "speaking bureau" who went time after time, to talk to various groups. (See The Observer for May 1960, p.40.) In one two-year period alone, as detailed in The Observer for November 1965 (p.52), Mrs. Argante alone gave a total of 38 talks, plus a 15-minute radio interview. In addition, she kept the log of speaking engagements for her entire corps of more than 12 volunteers who were always ready to address groups whenever she called upon them in response to a request for a speaker.

For many years, Mrs. Argante represented Audubon and conservation in Sacramento and the surrounding communities. As the seventies drew to a close, a wide search was being made for someone who could replace her and do what she had been doing single-handedly for so many years.

The Sacramento Audubon Society had continued the active

interest in legislation concerning natural resources that former President Bruce Swinehart had espoused. In the spring of 1958, two members of the Society were named as coordinating Chairmen of two committees being set up by the National Society's Pacific office to keep members informed of current activities in legislative matters and in recreational activities. Edwin Pickett was assigned to the Legislative Information Committee, and Fred Evenden to the California Public Outdoor Recreation Plan Committee.

A Conservation Committee had first appeared among the Society's Committees in the spring of 1956. Now, two years later, it became very active and began publishing a "Conservation Corner" regularly in The Observer. Through this means, members have been given the opportunity and have even been urged to express their opinions to legislators and to other influential persons concerning such varied items of national interest as the "Wilderness Bill," the "Golden Eagle Bill," the saving of Alaska's fabulous natural features, etc.

Fred Evenden, a Wildlife Research Biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Executive Director of the Junior Museum, was selected to be the 9th President of the Society. He was the first President to serve for two terms.

The Society's ninth year (1958-59) was initiated in July when a potluck dinner meeting was held at the George Difani Carmichael residence on a bluff overlooking the American River on July 31, 1958. The first summer get-together for members had been a picnic in the summer of 1951. There are no records of further social summer events until this potluck. A second potluck followed the next August, again at the Difani home. These were so successful that a summer picnic has been held almost every year since.

At the first potluck dinner, the new officers and committee chairmen were introduced, as well as new members and guests. Gil Thompson of the State Department of Fish and Game explained the purpose of a Dove Census which the Department was asking the local Audubon Society to undertake. At that time doves were the most important game bird in the United States and the second most important in the state of California; the Department needed a check on increases or decreases in the dove population to use as a guide in setting seasons and bag limits.

The first Annual Dove Census was conducted under the leadership of Earl Albertson on August 16, 1959. A Dove Count differed from the Annual Bird Census conducted during the Christmas season in that it was a running road count done entirely from cars. The cars were driven along specifically selected routes ranging from fifty to a hundred miles in length. A total of sixteen people counted a total of 779 doves along 486 miles of highways.

After the fifth Annual Dove Count on August 11, 1962, Fred Evenden prepared a "recap" for the Fish and Game Department which analyzed the Count for its value and applicability. After the sixth Annual Count, this census was discontinued as being of no further benefit.

A first this year was the establishment of a "Bird Alert" system through which local Audubon members could report the sighting of a rare or an unusual bird. Ida Belle Craig was appointed Chairman to receive and relay calls concerning these sightings. Alice Williams was the first one to use the new system when she reported a Glossy Ibis "down Davis way." The "bird alert" is still active. Unusual sightings are now verified by a committee before they are sent on to the "Audubon Field Notes" publication.

Work was started on a set of By-Laws to serve as a guide for the Society's operation. Earlier in the year, in February 1958, President Penhale had appointed a committee to study and adopt a constitution in preparation for incorporation. It was thought that incorporation would be a protection in case of accident. However, Elizabeth McGilvray, a Past President and an attorney whom the Committee consulted, said that she did not consider it advisable to incorporate "at this time."

Leonard Penhale was Chairman of the new Constitution and By-Laws Committee appointed by President Evenden in November 1958; Robert Cunningham, Edwin Pickett, Jack Dennison, and Elizabeth McGilvray served as members. In January 1959 they reported to the Executive Board. Mrs. McGilvray's advice was that incorporation, at a cost of \$30, would not be necessary in order to receive bequests. As the Committee recommended the adoption of a set of By-Laws as soon as possible, they were asked to draw up a set.

The following year, at the March 1960 Board Meeting, the Committee, under the leadership of Lynn Bramkamp, the new Chairman, presented the By-Laws. They were read and accepted, thus ending many months of discussions, rephrasing, debates, etc. After publication in the April 1960 issue of The Observer, the By-Laws were formally approved by the entire membership of the Society at the General Meeting on May 20, 1960.

The new By-Laws provided that all officers of the Society, except the President, should serve one-year terms, and that none should serve more than two successive years in any one position. The President should serve a two-year term. The Vice-President would automatically become Chairman of the Program Committee.

Howard Leach, who was Vice-President at that time, and who would become the second President to serve a two-year term, said that he believed that a two-year term for a President was too long, especially when it was coupled with a possible two-year term as Vice-President. There was also some dissatisfaction with the two-year term limit for the other elected officials, especially that of the office of Treasurer, as a result, Section I of Article III of the By-Laws was amended to allow elected officers of the Society to serve beyond two years. This amendment was drafted, passed, and became a part of the By-Laws at the Annual Dinner meeting on April 27, 1962.

It was not until 1970 that the By-Laws were again

changed, this time to allow a one-year term for the President, and to relieve the Vice President of the duties of chairing the Program Committee so that he could more efficiently assist the President.

On March 28, 1959, Charles M. Goethe, who had been a "fairy godfather" to the local Society even before it became a reality, was honored on his 84th birthday. A grove of trees at Sacramento State College was dedicated to him.

Mr. Goethe, a conservationist, naturalist, and philanthropist, had paid the fees which allowed Phyllis Thompson and Sally Carden to attend the Audubon Camp in 1948. It was this excursion that had eventually led to the formation of the local Audubon Society.

Throughout the years he had frequently sent what he dubbed "widows' mites" -- small sums of money (\$10, \$15, or \$20) to be used for refreshments at meetings, for expenses of publishing The Observer, and for many other items, including a new coffeepot. The rental fee for the Fuertes Art Tour in 1959, student memberships, scholarships, and \$100 for expenses of the Committee appointed to select a new site for the Audubon Camp of the West were also among his many contributions.

Under the Chairmanship of Warner L. Marsh, the Goethe Grove was planted with approximately forty trees donated by over thirty local, state, and national organizations. John M. Baker, President of the National Audubon Society, one of the notables participating in the ceremonies, commended Mr. Goethe for his work in conservation.

The Goethe Grove became the nucleus for a permanent C. M. Goethe Arboretum Society, which was organized the following spring, and plans were made to add four or five hundred woody herbaceous plants. Mr. Goethe was further honored with a second tree-planting ceremony on March 26, 1960.

As the Society entered its tenth club year (1959-60), again under the leadership of Fred Evenden, the membership totaled 176.

This autumn three of the most prominent and active members were missing; William and Celeste Johnson Kirsher, and Earl Albertson had been sent to Menlo Park by their employer, the U.S. Geologic Survey.

Finances now became a serious consideration, as the members realized that the money derived from the Audubon Screen Tours of the early years and from Mr. Goethe's "widow's mites" had been their chief source of income and that they had been consistently spending more than they had been taking in. When the books were audited in the autumn of 1959, it was discovered that those "widow's mites" totaled \$350. At its October meeting, the Board elected to keep the Goethe Fund separate from the General Fund.

At the November General Meeting various ideas for fund raising projects vs. the idea of local dues were advanced and discussed, with the idea of local dues the winner. As the National Society Headquarters protested the use of the term

"local dues," in January this was changed to "a voluntary contribution." These contributions helped to increase the Society's finances. The Conservation and Education Committee had now grown sufficiently that the Society was able to use \$100 of the funds therein for Audubon Camp scholarships.

Plans were made to change the Annual Banquet to an afternoon American Natural History and Conservation Conference on April 30, 1960, with discussion groups and a guided tour of the natural resources area of the American River College campus. This was to be followed by dinner in the college cafeteria. Planned for the benefit of local elementary and high school teachers and the college staff and students, the program ranged from field records through Mexican birds and watersheds for conservation.

Though this Conference was successful, attendance was not as great as had been anticipated. Hence, in lieu of a conference, the next Annual Dinner at the American River College cafeteria was preceded only by an hour-long nature walk. These were an annual event until the yearly Banquet was moved elsewhere in 1970.

The Society's eleventh club year (1960-61), under the presidency of Howard Leach, a wildlife biologist with the State Department of Fish and Game, began with efforts to solve financial problems. At an August Board Meeting, the costs and benefits of again sponsoring the Audubon Screen Tours were discussed. A committee under the chairmanship of Vic Herman was appointed to study the pros and cons.

A preliminary sample of the Tours to show the people of Sacramento their beauties and advantages was presented on March 11, 1961, with Roger Tory Peterson's film "Wild Europe." It was viewed by 900 people and was very successful financially. Soon after a contract was signed for the 1961-62 Screen Tour Season, to begin in October 1961. Season tickets for the series were \$3.50 for one person, or \$6.00 for a family. Approximately 600 people attended the first film, "Teton Trails," by Charles Hotchkiss. The Society's books showed a profit of \$223.58 for the season.

However, with the exception of the 1968-69 season, the profits became increasingly less, and soon changed into a deficit, even though ticket prices had been increased twice. When Werner Jochimsen, Chairman of the Screen Tours Committee, reported at the April 1976 Board Meeting that there was a deficit of over \$1,000 on that season's Screen Tours, a motion was passed to cancel them. The general feeling was that their time had come and gone.

The monthly "Seasonal Observations" column in The Observer was becoming increasingly important as data reported therein began appearing elsewhere, including the nationally distributed Audubon Field Notes. In order to present as authentic a record as possible for the Sacramento area, the Executive Board appointed a Documentary Committee to screen all "unusual" bird observations. In November 1960, under the Chairmanship of Fred Evenden, the Committee began work on this task. Any observations were to be published in an "off-

the-record" section following the regular observations. Though the sightings of rare and unusual birds were the most thrilling, Mr. Evenden stressed that data for the birds normally seen in the Sacramento area were the most useful and provided the greatest contribution to bird lore.

At its December meeting, the Executive Board took exception to the damage being inflicted on the levees along the Sacramento River by the civil engineers, who were stripping them of all vegetation. A resolution protesting this wanton destruction was drawn up and presented to the Corps of Engineers at their public hearing in January 1961. They responded by suspending further cutting until studies of the situation could be made. The Resolution was published in their national magazine, "Conservation Guide."

To back up their protest, the Society initiated a year-long study of riparian flora and fauna in the Delta area, under the leadership of Fred Evenden. It was designed to draw attention to the ecological importance of riparian habitat areas which are common along California rivers.

As a result of the protests, studies, and other actions taken by the local Audubon Society, in October 1964, the State Reclamation Board ruled in favor of state purchase of land along the Sacramento River where a new levee was needed. Further, the river side of the new levee would become part of a recreation-wildlife preservation system.

President Leach was especially interested in wildlife research and conservation and was conducting extensive studies in the San Joaquin grasslands area in preparation for a report on the importance of preserving part of California's grasslands as a place where migrating shorebirds and other waterfowl could stop for rest and food. In April 1961, he introduced a new element into the Society's field trip schedules when he and Len Penhale led the first field trip to the grasslands of Western Merced County. This two-day trip became an annual event that continued for several years and is still held occasionally.

The society's twelfth year saw the saving of another local river as an historic feature and wildlife habitat. On January 24, 1962, the County Board of Supervisors approved the American River Parkway Plan, a 23-mile long strip along the River to be incorporated into the County Park System. This long-time dream of Effie Yeaw came about largely through the efforts of many Audubon Society members who played a predominant role in organizing the Save-the American-River Association in March 1961, and in lobbying for a park along its borders.

The spring of 1962 saw some changes in the Society's procedures. In order to have the new film on the Bald Eagle which had been newly issued by the National Society always available for use in its educational program, the Society decided to purchase it outright. When this film had been shown at the monthly meeting in February, Vic Herman, Chairman of the Screen Tours, had been so impressed by its message on "the inter-relation between various living

creatures" that he immediately pledged 10% of its price of \$210 toward its purchase. His action triggered more contributions.

In order to better acquaint strangers with the Audubon Society and its objectives, Bernice Baker, Membership Chairman, designed and prepared a brochure entitled "Invitation to Membership," to be distributed to prospective members along with the regular membership leaflets of the National Society. First issued in April 1962, this brochure has been re-designed and re-issued several times in the years since then.

Sad news was received this spring when word came that the Audubon Camp of the West would be closed during the summer of 1962, as no new site had been decided upon. Mr. Bill Goodall, Western Representative of the National Audubon Society, had been commissioned to look for a new location and assistance from the local Audubon branches was requested.

No action had ever been taken by the National Society on the report made by the Committee appointed by President Evenden in August 1956 to look into the possible locations for a new camp. Under the Chairmanship of Dr. Hubert Jenkins, the committee of seven had examined several sites in the Tahoe area. The executive Board decided to re-submit that material.

By the following summer (1963) a new location had been selected in the Wind River Range of Western Wyoming, and the Camp was offering three two-week sessions. However, it was not until 1965 that facilities were available to accommodate all who wanted to attend. There is no record of any camp scholarships awarded by the local Society again until 1967, when Bill Griffith and Dave Zeiner were selected as recipients. Since that time at least two half-scholarships have been given each year to Audubon members and to others who are active in conservation.

With the installation of Donald Fry as President at the Annual Banquet on April 27, 1962, the thirteenth club year was off to the earliest beginning ever. At both the Executive Board Meeting and the General Meeting in May the coming year's program was discussed and plans were begun for field trips and meeting programs.

Mr. Fry, a biologist with the Fish and Game Department, and his family had joined the local Society in 1960, soon after their arrival in the Sacramento area from a tour of duty in Uganda.

During his presidency, the Sacramento Valley Audubon Society became an incorporated organization. Back in 1958, when the By-Laws were being drawn up, the subject of incorporation had been discussed and dropped.

Upon the advice of the Treasurer Rodney Reynolds, it was re-opened in late 1960. It was not until the following December (1961) that Edwin Pickett was assigned the task of drawing up Articles of Incorporation. The next spring President Leach, Treasurer Reynolds, and other officers as designated by the President, were empowered to incorporate



the Sacramento Audubon Society. On March 15, 1963, the Articles were filed with the California Secretary of State for approval. They were signed but not dated.

The only reference to the fact that the Society was now an incorporated society appears in the minutes of the Annual Dinner Meeting on April 20, 1963. After citing the re-election of Mr. Fry as President and the election of his fellow officers, the statement is made that "The election of the same officers was held for the newly incorporated Sacramento Audubon Society."

The following year, at the February 1964 Board Meeting, Treasurer Rodney Reynolds reported that the Society's non-profit status had been accepted by the Secretary of State; that the Sacramento Audubon Society had been so registered by the Registry of Charitable Trusts of the State of California on January 16, 1964.

The Society began its fourteenth year (1963-64) in May again, with several new ideas implemented by the Executive Board. The members decided that the Conservation Committee, which had been chaired by Effie Yeaw for the past three years, should continue conservation work in the Sacramento area and should inform elected authorities of locations in the area that the Society felt should be saved.

As the Checklist of Birds of the Sacramento Area was becoming increasingly obsolete with the observation of new birds and new knowledge gained about local birds, the Documentary Committee was assigned the task of revising it. In July 1963, before this revision could be completed, Chairman Fred Evenden left for a new position as Executive Director of the Wildlife Society in Washington, D.C. However, his Committee completed the revised edition; by October 1963 it was available at \$.15 each, or two for \$.25.

At the May 1963 Board Meeting already mentioned, Ex-President Leach spoke of the need to save the San Luis Island area in Western Merced County as a natural preserve. The more than 1000 acres, part of the San Joaquin Valley flood plain, was a natural meeting place for many species of shore and water birds. Mr. Alvara Sousa, a non-professional conservationist of Los Banos, had requested the aid of the Sacramento Audubon Society in preserving the area before it could disappear under a plow or under industrial buildings.

Again the local Society rallied to the cause of saving another important wildlife habitat. Five years of work and endeavor, of letters and meetings were required on the part of Audubon members, as well as of many others, before federal acquisition of this wildlife area was accomplished. It was dedicated as the San Luis National Wildlife Refuge on April 3, 1968.

William Grenfell, a local businessman with an intense interest in nature, served as President during the Society's fifteenth and sixteenth club years (1964-65, and 1965-66). Later he returned to college for a Ph.D. in Animal Ecology, became a biology and conservation teacher, and Executive Director of the Sacramento Science and Junior Museum.

During the spring of 1964, the Society's Slide Library of Flora and Fauna of the Sacramento area, which had been begun in 1954, was rejuvenated. Through years of constant use by the Education Committee members and others, many of the slides had been lost. At the Board Meeting of October 1961, Georgia Borchert, Chairman of the Displays Committee, had asked for help in re-building the collection; a request went out via the November 1961 issue of The Observer to members for replacements.

At the March 1964 Board Meeting, she again requested help, this time with the addition of new bird pictures. With the appropriation of \$25, she and Willie Argante were able to report the following spring (1965) that 92 new slides duplicated by Rodney Reynolds at a nominal cost, had been added to the slide education library. A later audit, in August 1967, showed a total of 196 bird slides and 100 flower slides on hand. As the Society received an increasingly large number of requests for illustrated nature talks, Ex-President Fry was kept busy making replacements and copying new slides. Maintenance of this useful reference Library has continued to be an ongoing project.

In his first President's Message in The Observer (Sept. 1964, p. 32), President Grenfell reported that local Society members had given generously of their time to aid the California State Department of Fish and Game in its Delta Fish and Wildlife Protection Study. The members had already participated in a fall migratory season count (October 1963), a winter population count (January 1964), and a nesting season count (May 1964). Mr. Grenfell observed that, though birdwatching or bird identification is in itself of little scientific value, possibly the local Audubon Society had made a breakthrough in making use of bird watching as an aid to scientific studies of wildlife.

Both the local Audubon Society and the natural history department of American River College were honored when a movie, "Open Your Eyes," which had been made along the College's nature trail, was selected from 500 other films as one of the Semi-Golden Eagle Award Winners and was sent overseas in the spring of 1966. It had been made under the guidance of Professor Bruce Swinehart, the Argantes, and other Audubonites.

Some significant advances were being made in conservation education. Largely through the efforts of Mrs. Argante, during the spring of 1965 adults involved with youth leadership in the field of conservation were able for the first time to receive credit for Prof. Swinehart's Natural History Survey Courses.

Effie Yeaw's call in the spring of 1964 for volunteers to help with the Interpretive Program for school children being sponsored by the City Schools and the County Department of Parks & Recreation had evoked a large response. That autumn Mrs. Yeaw reported (The Observer, Sept. 1964, p. 33) that during the school year and the ensuing summer months more than 7200 children and their teachers had been

introduced to nature and to conservation through the participation of local Audubonites.

The possibility of the Sacramento Audubon Society hosting the 1966 Annual National Audubon Convention now became a reality. Discussion concerning the possibility of bringing the Convention to Sacramento had begun in October 1963. In November 1963 Mr. and Mrs. Sam Argante had extended an invitation at the National Convention in Miami, Florida. At that time Bill Goodall, the Society's Western Representative, had discussed hotel accommodations and field trips with the Executive Board, and the dates of November 11-16, 1966, were tentatively decided upon.

In January 1965 President Grenfell appointed Mr. C. M. Goethe Honorary Chairman, and Willie Argante Local Chairman of a Convention Committee, and plans were soon under way. When Mr. and Mrs. Jack Dennison attended the 1965 Annual Convention in Boston, Massachusetts, they took along materials showing Sacramento Audubon's plans for the convention.

Under the enthusiastic and inspired leadership of Willie, the Sacramento Audubon Society hosted a very successful National Audubon Society Convention Nov. 11-15, 1966 at the Woodlake Inn. This was the first Audubon convention held on the west coast. It was also the first convention at which a local society made and carried out the hosting arrangements. Twenty-four committee chairmen and their committees worked and enjoyed participating. Pre and post convention trips planned under the leadership of Trip Chairman Sam Argante, were held plus local trips during the convention. Over 1300 people attended. The Sacramento Audubon Society and Willie received praise and thanks for their work.

Walter Luke, an engineer employed by the Aerojet plant, served as President of the Society during its seventeenth and eighteenth club years (1966-67, and 1967-68). Mr. Luke had grown up in the outdoor world of Western Montana, where he developed a keen interest in wildlife.

On July 10, 1966, Mr. Goethe, who had been the "fairy godfather" of the local Society, passed away. He was to have been Honorary Chairman of the National Convention. Instead, during the opening of the Convention, on Sunday morning, November 13, 1966, he was honored by the dedication of an 18"x24" bronze plaque mounted on granite and placed in the Goethe Park within the American River Parkway South. This plaque, a joint project of the National and the Sacramento Audubon Societies and of the Save-the-American-River Association, was formally dedicated by the presidents of the three organizations.

The following autumn (1967) word came that the Junior Science Museum, whose facilities the Sacramento Audubon had been utilizing for its general monthly meetings, would be closed permanently within a year. Since March 1964 the Society had been reimbursing the Museum for use of these facilities. By March 1969 the Society had secured another

place for its general meetings. However, the Museum indicated that it would like to continue its services of acting as the Society's official telephone and of giving out information concerning the Society. For this purpose the Society had been paying \$5.00 per month.

On April 10, 1968, a ground-breaking ceremony was held for the new Western Regional Office of the National Audubon Society. The headquarters of this office were being moved to Sacramento from El Monte in the Southland. Sam Argante, a Realtor who had been active in the local Society since its beginnings, worked closely with Paul Howard, the new Western Representative, in finding land and a building plan within the budget allowed by the National Society. Early in September, Mr. Howard, who was taking over upon the retirement of William Goodall, was in business in the new Headquarters. The building was dedicated in October 1968. Members of Sacramento Audubon donated native plants, and many hours of volunteer labor went into the landscaping. The local Society immediately began holding its monthly Executive Board Meetings, which hitherto had been in the homes of individual members, in the new Headquarters.

Forest E. (Gene) Boucher, a landscape architect with the California State Department of Parks & Recreation, was selected as the Society's fourteenth President, to serve during its nineteenth and twentieth years (1968-69, and 1969-70).

An important change in the Society's procedures was inaugurated with the publication of "Notes from the September 1968 Board Meeting" in the October 1968 issue of The Observer. Hitherto, there had been only an occasional report of actions taken by the Board. These "Notes" from the preceding month's Executive Board Meetings are still being published in each issue of The Observer as an efficient method of keeping the increasingly large membership of the Society informed about policies, changes in procedure, and other important matters.

In August 1968, the membership rolls had totaled 367. By June of 1969, as the Society prepared to embark on its twentieth year, membership had grown to 512.

Another item -- one of historical interest -- first appeared in the October 1968 issue of The Observer, when Historian Olivette Dennison started her column, "Who's Who in Audubon." This appeared each month through December 1975, when Mrs. Dennison gave up her position after eighteen years of service.

A new and outstanding policy was initiated at the Annual Banquet on May 17, 1969, when the Sacramento Audubon Society presented conservation awards to Edwin Pickett and to Mrs. Effie Yeaw for their long, continuous, and outstanding work in conservation in the local community. This policy was inaugurated at the suggestion of Mrs. Helen (Grant) Davis. At the February 1969 Executive Board Meeting, she had suggested that the local Society recognize Audubon members in the community who had been doing outstanding work in

conservation with ceramic tile plaques decorated with silk screen art.

An Art Committee, consisting of Jo Smith, Roger Franke, and Kathy Zedekar, was immediately appointed to plan the design. They selected the white-tailed kite on a triangular design. Later an Awards Committee, with Walt Luke as Chairman, was appointed to select the two honorees, who would be recognized at the Annual Banquet.

At the same time that Mrs. Davis made her suggestion, Dr. Bruce Swinehart suggested that teachers who were doing outstanding work in conservation education be recognized. Hence, at the May 17, 1969 Dinner, Robert Bone and Norman Marsh of the Sacramento City School District, who had developed a nature area and an outdoor classroom at the Bowling Green Elementary School, received the Society's first Conservation Education Awards, certificates recording their accomplishments.

The following spring the procedures were changed to allow the awarding of two plaques to Audubon members and two plaques to outside educators or teachers, with provision also made for the presentation of plaques to the two teachers who had been honored the previous May. In January 1974, at the suggestion of the National Society, the Executive Board voted to include an award to a worthy local industry or organization in order to encourage environmental betterment in the community. This annual recognition of Audubon members, educators, and industries and organizations for outstanding work in the field of local conservation has been continued to the present time.

Sometime during this year a permanent Memorial Fund was established, for references are made to it in the July and the September 1969 issues of The Observer (pp. 33 & 36 respectively). The purpose of this Fund was to pay tribute to Audubon members and friends who had passed away by providing scholarships, camperships, and other projects reflecting the conservation policies of the Audubon Society, in their memory.

Robert Mallett, a wildlife management biologist with the State Department of Fish and Game, was elected to serve as President during the Society's twenty-first and twenty-second years (1970-71 & 1971-72).

The twenty-first year marked the expansion of the field trip program to include other states and distant lands. In February 1971, Kathy Zedekar, Field Trip Chairman, and her experienced travel-leader husband, Robert, escorted a group of 16 Auduboners to the Hawaiian Islands for ten days of bird watching and nature study. This tour was so successful that Mrs. Zedekar repeated it the next year, increasing the time to two weeks. Since then she has conducted, and is still conducting, Audubon related tours to Arizona, Oregon, Florida, and the New England states, and to many far away lands, including Portugal, Spain, Africa, England, New Zealand, and the Caribbean Islands.

During the years of work with the Conservation Education

Program, Willie Argante had been recruiting college students to help with field trips, slide shows, etc. For the first time the Sacramento Audubon Society officially recognized their invaluable aid when, in December 1970, gift memberships for one year in the National Society were presented to eight of these young people. The following year, in December 1971, six college students were again presented with gift memberships, as well as with certificates of appreciation. No further record has been found concerning the continuation of this policy.

On January 7, 1971, the Sacramento Audubon Society expressed their thanks to four members of the State Legislature for "the development of legislation related to Audubon ideals" with the presentation of plaques honoring their accomplishments. Senator Robert J. Lagomarsino was recognized for his efforts in promoting conservation education and for his efforts to protect the California condor and California's watercourses; Senator Anthony C. Beilenson for his work on the protection of endangered and threatened species; Assemblyman Pete Wilson for his promotion of regional and statewide planning in the development of coastal resources; and Assemblyman Edwin L Z'berg for his long interest in Audubon ideals and for his committee work which provided a basis for constructive environmental legislation.

Through the years the Society had continued to be concerned with environmental issues, both locally and nationally. Though there was a limit to the involvement of the Society as a whole, because of its tax-exempt status, individual members continued to be deeply involved in many national and local issues, such as the American River, Ancil Hoffman Park, Bushy Lake, Harrison Creek, the Delta Area, etc. Bruce Swinehart, as one of the local Society's first presidents, had been the first to stress the importance of legislation. He was the first target when, in the spring of 1972, George McKeon, a local developer, frustrated by the opposition to his plans to build a new town on Stone Lake, named Bruce Swinehart and Bruce Kennedy, along with others, in a lawsuit, charging that they had made false and misleading statements. This threat to everyone's civil rights to speak out on any issue was answered by the defendants when they sued the developer and his lawyer for "malicious persecution." It was not until late 1979 that the case was settled out of court. (The Observer, December 1979, p. 72)

Harry Hurlbert, an experienced truck mechanic who spent his spare time in Sierra Club and Audubon outings, was elected to lead the Society during its twenty-third and twenty-fourth years (1972-73 & 1973-74).

This year saw the first split in the local chapter's area, when a group of members from the nearby city of Davis requested permission to form their own chapter and to take in the territory around Woodland, Dixon, Winters, Esparto, and Davis. Upon the approval of the Executive Board in May 1971,

congratulations and an offer of help were sent to the new chapter. Though this new chapter absorbed about 30 of the members, the Sacramento Chapter's membership rolls still stood at around 1000.

The local Society was entering the publishing field in a small way. In September 1971, Audubon member Edwin Pickett's new book "Birds of Central California," had been published by the Sacramento Bee. Though labeled as a reprint of his columns in the newspaper, many other members had helped with the editing and photography.

In late 1973 the results of a study of a two-year survey of the flora and fauna of Folsom State Park, which Mr. and Mrs. Sam Argante had been conducting, was published by the State Department of Parks and Recreation. Many other Audubon members had also worked with the Argantes in the survey and had helped to make "The Plants and Animals of Folsom Lake" a possibility.

The Society was saddened by the death of Sam Argante in June of 1974. Willie is now Mrs. Ben Eizinger. Ben is also an active Audubon member.

A compilation of articles on "Birding in the Sacramento Area" which had appeared in The Observer was begun in early 1972, with new write-ups to include local areas not already covered. Compiler Robert Mallette reported at the April 1974 Executive Board Meeting that the proposed publication would comprise some 35 pages of maps and descriptions and was almost ready for publication. This material was published either in 1974 or 1975; it has been revised and reprinted since that time.

Since the local chapter was receiving many requests from commercial firms preparing environmental impact reports for data regarding wildlife in the area, John Anderson, Brian Bell, and Bruce Swinehart were appointed a committee to set up criteria by which these could be evaluated and reviewed. By the end of 1974 the Committee was making regular reports to the membership on the Environmental Impact Reports (EIR's) which they had reviewed.

In response to a proposal made at the Executive Board in January 1974, each officer and committee chairman was asked to prepare a list of duties and guidelines for their respective offices. These would be passed on to the succeeding officers and committee chairmen, along with a copy of the Society's By-Laws.

As the Sacramento Society embarked upon its twenty-fifth year (1974-75) under the leadership of Edwin Warner, a retired junior high school science teacher from Woodland, membership had reached 1738; 298 of these had enrolled in the short span of thirteen months (from May 31, 1973 through May 31, 1974). The responsibilities of the membership chairman had now become so enormous that, in December 1974, the Board appointed Karen Zumwalt as Assistant Membership Chairman to help the Chairman, Frances Thompson.

On May 18, 1974, a picnic was held at Calaveras Big Trees State Park to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the

Sacramento Audubon Society.

During this month also the local chapter held the first workshop on first aid to injured birds, under the leadership of M. B. Goodier, whose special interests were bird rescue and public education towards responsibility for our local native wild creatures. Mrs. Goodier had received her early training in caring for injured birds and animals under Effie Yeaw. She was active in the formation of a Wildlife Care Association a few years later.

But the most momentous news in the chapter's history occurred in January 1975, when Robert Crandall, a retired rancher of Yuba City, deeded 430 acres of the Feather River floodplain to the National Audubon Society as a wildlife refuge. He had been managing this property as an unofficial sanctuary for the last thirty-three years. The National Society leased the property to the Sacramento Audubon Society for management purposes. The Executive Board appointed Don Fry chairman of a committee consisting of Robert Crandall, Philip Simmons, Paul Madison, and Edwin Warner to manage the sanctuary. On May 31, 1975, the new sanctuary, which had been named the Bobelaine Audubon Sanctuary, was officially dedicated.

The rest of the story of this new addition to the roll of Audubon sanctuaries belongs to the second quarter century of the Sacramento Audubon Society's history.



Willie Argante Eizinger  
and Bob Crandall  
at the Bobelaine Sanctuary  
dedication---May 31, 1975



OFFICERS - SACRAMENTO AUDUBON SOCIETY  
1950 - 1975

	<u>PRESIDENT</u>	<u>VICE-PRESIDENT</u>
<u>CORRES</u>	<u>SECRETARY</u>	<u>SECRETARY</u> <u>TREASURER</u>
<u>50-51</u>	William K. Kirsher	Murial Kaminsky
	Phyllis Thompson	A.J. (Sam) Argante
<u>51-52</u>	Genevieve Trousdale	Bruce Swinehart
	Phyllis Thompson	Sam Argante
<u>52-53</u>	Bruce D. Swinehart Jr.	Willie Argante
	Betty Kimball	Robert Sanders
<u>53-54</u>	Helen Grant	George Dobbins
	Betty Kimball	Robert Sanders
<u>54-55</u>	Elizabeth McGilvray	Dr. Hubert O. Jenkins
	Margaret Emigh	Jack Dennison
<u>55-56</u>	Robert A. Cunningham	Bernice Tisdale
	Alfreda Meuser	Jack Dennison
<u>56-57</u>	Jack Dennison	Leonard Penhale
	Cora Baker	Earl Albertson
<u>57-58</u>	Leonard Penhale	Rodney Reynolds
	Betty Kimball      Cora Baker	Jean Pond
<u>58-59</u>	Fred Evenden	Rodney Reynolds
	Betty Kimball      Eleanor Eggersgluess	Jean Pond
<u>59-60</u>	Fred Evenden	Howard Leach
	Margaret Emigh      Eleanor Eggersgluess	Bettag      Bernice Baker
<u>60-61</u>	Howard Leach	Donald Fry Jr.
	Ecks Nesbitt      Marcia Lyons	Rodney Reynolds
<u>61-62</u>	Howard Leach	Donald Fry Jr.
	Eleanor Bettag      Alfrieda Meuser	Rodney Reynolds
<u>62-63</u>	Donald Fry Jr.	Jack Dennison
	Eleanor Bettag      Ellen Munson	Rodney Reynolds
<u>63-64</u>	Donald Fry Jr.	William Grenfell
	Alfrieda Meuser      Letha B. Howard	Rodney Reynolds
<u>64-65</u>	William Grenfell	Arvil Parker
	Ida Belle Craig      Frances Thompson	Rodney Reynolds
<u>65-66</u>	William Grenfell	Walt Luke
	Ida Belle Craig      Frances Thompson	Rodney Reynolds
<u>66-67</u>	Walt Luke	Forest E. Boucher (Gene)
	Jo Smith      Doris Leiser	Rodney Reynolds
<u>67-68</u>	Walt Luke	Gene Boucher
	Kathy Zedekar      Doris Leiser	Rodney Reynolds
<u>68-69</u>	Gene Boucher	Jack Wilburn
	Kathy Zedaker      Doris Leiser	Rodney Reynolds
<u>69-70</u>	Gene Boucher	Jack Wilburn
	Mrs. Ralph Gunderson      Mrs. Delbert Allen	Doris Leiser
<u>70-71</u>	Robert Mallett	Edward Yeaw
	Mrs. Ralph Gunderson      Mrs. Delbert Allen	Bernice Baker
<u>71-72</u>	Robert Mallett	Harry Hurlburt
	Mrs. George Pokorny      Louise McCullough	Doris Leiser Baxter
<u>72-73</u>	Harry Hurlburt	Dr. Jack Yardley
	Mrs. George Pokorny      Louise McCullough	Doris Baxter
<u>73-74</u>	Harry Hurlburt	Edwin Warner
	Mrs. W.C. Berry      Dorothy Harvey	Werner Jochimsen
<u>74-75</u>	Edwin Warner	Ed Harper
	Camille Harper      Dorothy Harvey	Werner Jochimsen

