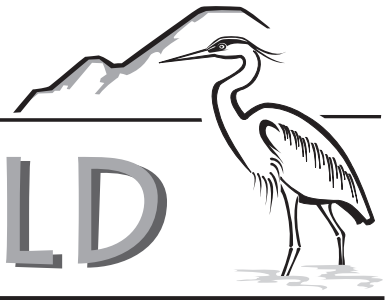


THE HERON HERALD



Rainier Audubon Society

April 2010

Monday, April 19, at 7:00 PM
Rainier Audubon Presents

TAPPED

*The Award-Winning Documentary
on the Big Business of Bottled Water*

Is access to clean drinking water a basic human right, or is clean drinking water a commodity that should be bought and sold like any other article of commerce?

Stephanie Soechtig's debut feature is an unflinching examination of the big business of water. From the producers of *Who Killed the Electric Car?* and *I.O.U.S.A.*, this timely documentary is a behind-the-scenes look into the unregulated and unseen world of an industry that aims to privatize and sell the one resource that ought never to become a commodity: our water. From the plastic production to the ocean in which so many of these bottles end up, this inspiring

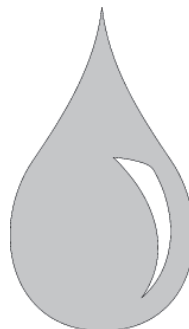


documentary trails the path of the bottled water industry and the communities which are the unwitting chips on the table.

A powerful portrait of the lives affected by the bottled water industry, this revelatory film features those caught at the intersection

of big business and the public's right to water.

Please join Rainier Audubon in the airing of this documentary. It will be an informative and thought-provoking evening. As always, good conversation and refreshments available before, during and following the program.



Rainier Audubon programs are held at
FEDERAL WAY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
29645 - 51st Ave. So. 98001
(in unincorporated Auburn)

Directions:

In Federal Way, take 320th St. EAST
past The Commons, crossing over I-5
and Military Rd. At 321st St, turn left.
Stay on 321st as it becomes 51st Ave.
So. Follow 51st Ave. to 296th. Church
will be on your left.

Thais Bock, 1917-2010



Founder of Rainier Audubon

By Adele Freeland

Thais was born in Pennsylvania on September 1, 1917. Soon afterwards, the family moved to Mt. Vernon, Ohio, where she began taking piano lessons at the age of six. Although she was a talented young musician, times were hard and her parents found that they had to discontinue her lessons – but Thais' piano teacher kept her on as a “no-fee” pupil because of her talent. Thais and her mother, Mae Dora Webster, enjoyed playing Haydn and Beethoven duets on the piano together.

Moving to the San Francisco Bay area in 1943, Thais met and married James Bock. The two of them relocated to Federal Way in the 1960s. They had two children, Djana (presently of Lynnwood), and James (Tennessee). Here in Washington, Thais volunteered with the Seattle Symphony, attended concerts with friends, and took advanced piano lessons at the Cornish School of the Arts, University of Puget Sound, and Pacific Lutheran University. A lifelong student of music, she practiced and played every day right up until her final illness.

(continued on page 6)

President's Message by Nancy Streiffert

By the time you get this, Spring will have officially sprung, we'll be on daylight savings time to take advantage of the longer days, and hopefully, you will all be enjoying the yearly miracle of migration. With the beauty and speeded-up pace of nature around us, we are also reminded of the true cycle of life in losing our chapter's founder, Thais Bock, at age 92. As Carol Schulz pointed out, Thais was active and hiking trails until weeks before her death — may we all enjoy such a long, productive, enjoyable life.

Many field trips and birding festivals are happening in the next few weeks and months. Every birding magazine and the web have advertisements for trips near and far to see exotic species and meet the people who study and know about them. I'm sure they vary in quality and quantity, expertise and experience so it's always a good idea

to check with friends who have used some of these resources for their opinion before making your decision. As we are all hearing more and more about global climate change (despite the naysayers) and becoming aware of our personal "environmental footprint," we are all facing choices when it comes to making even small life choices - recycled paper or new, take the big trip but donate to causes that offset our carbon use, enjoy exotic locations while supporting the local people's co-op, ride the bike for errands or get in the car. The choices can seem overwhelming and no one can be "environmentally pure" but becoming more aware of our choices is a first step we can and should (in my opinion) take! As a less than enthusiastic traveler, I am content to stick around home and garden and enjoy (or not!) the creatures that come

around but even that is fraught with difficult choices: whether to spread peat moss (from diminishing Canadian peat bogs) or spray elemental sulfur (a highly toxic substance deadly to fish and soil biota) to enhance the acidity of my blueberry patch! I guess humans have been making choices since time began - I hope we are getting better at it!

The Tukwila Wildlife Fair will be May 8th - a fun, local, educational event on the banks of the Duwamish River featuring a bird walk led by Carol Schulz. It coincides with International Migratory Bird Day so many interesting activities to enjoy and very kid and family friendly. Enjoy the outdoors!



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*Also serves as Board member

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Mewsings from Millie

Hello and welcome back to my monthly musings! To begin with, a few store customers have had some interesting tidbits to share. One lady from Seahurst has a Golden Pheasant visiting her yard every morning. Another customer's cat caught a hummingbird, brought it into the house to show it off, then took it back outside and let it go! I'd like to meet that kitty — seems like a real cool cat, if you know what I mean. Lastly, a woman came in to tell us that safflower seed is keeping the magpies off of her bird feeder in WYOMING! I'm sure she qualifies for the customer who travels the farthest!

Well, the Great Backyard Bird Count is over for 2010. Last time I checked, 91,000 checklists had been submitted, with more still coming in. The Northern Cardinal was the most reported bird across the United States and Canada. In Canada alone, the Black-capped Chickadee was number one. It was also reported that a roost of American Robins topping one million birds had taken up residence near St. Petersburg, Florida. That's a lot of robins!

In Washington state, 203 species had been reported as of February 26th with a total of 506,428 birds counted. The two biggest counts for a species were 73,172 American Robins and 175,973 American Crows.

Have you ever heard of commensal feeding? According to my favorite radio show, KPLU's Birdnote, it is when more than one species of bird feeds together. This enhances success as one species assists the foraging of others. For example, a woodpecker pecks off bark and moss from a tree, exposing grubs for itself, but the pecking also stirs up insects for chickadees to snatch up. Because the birds are not seeking the same food, the result is cooperative or commensal rather than competitive. Extra eyes also help look out for predators.

Theodore Roosevelt signed into law the first fifty-one federal bird sanctuaries. He was an avid student of birds, studying them in detail and he was very knowledgeable about bird song. The National Audubon's oldest songbird sanctuary is the Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary in Oyster Bay, New York. Established in October 1923, it is twelve wooded acres surrounding Roosevelt's grave. The sanctuary protects a wide range of wildlife including 125 species of birds. The sanctuary is also home to many conservation projects, winter and waterfowl census projects, endangered species work, a museum and nature



center, and a wildlife care center for injured animals.

During this time of year, many people come into the store concerned about woodpeckers pecking on their homes and chimneys. All this drumming and drilling done in late winter is to make noise to court mates. This is how they "sing" a song to declare territory. Speaking of woodpeckers, did you know that Pileated Woodpeckers mate for life?

I had mentioned in an earlier column that birds need gravity to swallow. Most birds must gulp, then throw their heads back to drink. Rock Doves, however, have the ability to use their beaks like a straw to drink water.

To conclude, here are some more collective nouns used to describe bird groups:

DOLE or DULE of doves
DESCENT of woodpeckers
MUSTER of crows
NIDE of geese

Until next time, keep enjoying our little feathered friends.

Millie is the big, beautiful cat who hangs out at the Wild Birds Unlimited store in Burien. Millie is very observant and writes this monthly column to pass on to us what she sees and hears while supposedly sleeping on the big bags of seed in the corner.

Field Trips — by Carol Schulz

Ellensburg to Yakima Canyon
Sunday, April 11

6:30 AM to Early Evening

Leader: Roger Orness

Assistant Leader: Carol Schulz

We will travel roads and visit trails near Ellensburg and Yakima Canyon that are featured in *A Birder's Guide to Washington*. We'll look for hawks, falcons, eagles, sparrows, bluebirds, and more. This is a chance to see beautiful country and lots of bird species. A hike up Umtanum Creek Trail from the suspension bridge in Yakima Canyon will be a special treat. We may walk up to one and a half miles on a rocky trail. If you don't wish to hike, there are good birds and nice scenery at the Umtanum Recreation area by the suspension bridge.

BRING: Lunch, snacks, and drinks. Hiking boots or sturdy shoes are recommended. Scopes are welcome.

MEET: BEFORE 6:30 AM at the Auburn Safeway store at Auburn Way and Main St. We will leave at 6:35!

DIRECTIONS: Take Hwy. 18 to Auburn and exit at Auburn Way (Hwy 164). Turn north (right) on Auburn Way and drive three blocks. Safeway sign and gas station will be on the left. Park in the Safeway lot just beyond the gas station and straight out from the Safeway door. We will meet and carpool (promptly) from there.

SIGN UP: Contact Roger at r.orness@comcast.net or by phone at (253) 922-7516. Email is preferred.

Soos Creek Areas

Saturday, April 24

8:00 AM to Early Afternoon

Leader: Carol Schulz

This should be a wonderful time of year to bird in Soos Creek Park areas in the east part of Kent. We will also visit Linda Bartlett's large feeder yard located on the east side of Soos Creek Park. We will seek out migrant song birds including flycatchers, vireos, and warblers. We will walk about a mile and a half on paved trails and in Linda's yard.

BRING: Lunch, snacks, and drinks. Those who wish to leave early may do so.

MEET: At 8:00 AM at the Soos Creek Park Maintenance Shop and Barn. Soos Creek Park/Trail, 24810 - 148th Ave. SE, Kent.

DIRECTIONS: Take James St. east from Kent. To reach James St, exit I-167 at Willis, turn east to Central, and north to James. Travel east on James as it becomes SE 240th St. After about four miles, 240th dips and turns downhill. Turn right (south) on 148th Ave. near the bottom of the hill. The Soos Creek maintenance yard will be down the road about a quarter-mile on the left at a barn and chainlink-fenced parking lot. SIGN-UP: Contact Carol at carol.schulz50@gmail.com, or (206) 824-7618.

ALTERNATE MEETING PLACE: Those who wish to meet Carol down in Kent at 7:30 AM to carpool to Soos Creek may call for directions to this alternate meeting spot.

Grays Harbor Shorebird Festival

Friday - Sunday

April 30 - May 2

Many field trips long and short are offered at this festival in Hoquiam. More details at 1-800-303-8498, or www.shorebirdfestival.com

Tukwila Backyard Wildlife Festival

Saturday, May 8

Bird walk in the park and along the Duwamish River — 9:45 to 10:45 AM

A bird walk in the park and along the river will be offered during this Tukwila festival on Migratory Bird Day. Programs and activities will be presented by several groups including Rainier Audubon, Seattle Audubon, retail stores, and nature groups. This is a fun, local festival! Birdwalk starts near Rainier Audubon booth at 9:45. More info and directions at <http://backyardwildlifefair.org>



Field Trips — by Carol Schulz

Weekly Bird Walks at Nisqually
Wednesdays 8:00 AM to Noon
Leader: Phil Kelley

Bird watching has been good at Nisqually. There is a NEW DIKE out past the Twin Barns. It is over half a mile long, and goes toward McAllister Creek, but not quite all the way to it. Join Phil on his weekly bird walks as he counts the birds at Nisqually. The group walks over to the new area near the Visitors Center to view the entry road estuary, and then takes the boardwalk/trail loop out to the Twin Barns

and the Nisqually River overlook area. From there, the group



walks the new dike, and back to the riparian forest. The walk totals about two miles.

BRING: Good walking shoes or boots, raingear, water, snacks, and \$3 for entry fee unless you have a pass. Scopes are welcome.

MEET: At the Visitors Center pond overlook.

DIRECTIONS: Take I-5 south from Tacoma and exit to Nisqually NWR (Exit 114). Take a right at the light.

SIGN-UP: Call or email Phil Kelley to confirm details. (360) 459-1499, scrubjay323@aol.com.

Nisqually NWR has been doing a 3-4 year estuary reconstruction project. For more information, go to <http://www.fws.gov/nisqually/> and click on Events and News.

Capitol State Forest
Saturday, May 1
6:30 AM to Approx. 4:00 PM
Leader: Jeff Cohen
Co-Leader: Shep Thorp



This is the first time we have offered a field trip to Capitol State Forest, a 90,000-acre DNR area located southwest of Olympia in the Black Hills. Join Jeff and Shep as we travel back roads to view specialty birds of the area. Target species will be: warblers including Hermit Warbler, Townsend's, Wilson's, MacGillivray's, and Black-throated Gray warblers! We also hope to see and hear Northern Pygmy-owl and returning flycatchers. We will seek out other species in the lowlands near saltwater, before we climb on forest roads to Capitol Peak, elev. 2,659 feet. Trip will be limited to 10 people in three cars. We will carpool. High clearance vehicles are not required, but cars may get dusty on dirt and gravel roads.

Meet: Park & Ride at the junction of Hwy. 512 and I-5, at So. Tacoma Way south of Tacoma at 6:30 AM.

MEET: Near McDonalds.

DIRECTIONS: Travel on I-5 to exit 127 south of Tacoma, the exit to Hwy. 512. Turn right, and immediately get in the left lane. Turn left on So. Tacoma Way, go half a block, and turn left into the Park & Ride lot at McDonalds.

BRING: Lunch, drinks, snacks, clothes for the weather at higher elevation, shoes or boots for walking on back roads. We probably won't walk far. Scopes not necessary, but may be useful at times.

SIGN UP: Contact Jeff Cohen by email at kokobean2@hotmail.com or (206) 354-5542 if email not available. (Email is preferred.) This trip is limited to three cars! SIGN UP EARLY!

2010 Great Backyard Bird Count Results

www.birdsource.org/gbbc

In this year's Great Backyard Bird Count, 203 species were reported in Washington state. The top 26 most often reported were:

American Crow (175,973)	House Sparrow (6,610)
American Robin (73,172)	Dunlin (5,430)
European Starling (22,244)	Glaucous-winged Gull (5,174)
Candada Goose (18,348)	Bufflehead (4,408)
Dark-eyed Junco (16,951)	American Goldfinch (4,287)
American Coot (16,474)	Trumpeter Swan (4,063)
American Wigeon (14,125)	Western Grebe (4,030)
Mallard (13,799)	Rock Pigeon (3,866)
Red-winged Blackbird (8,393)	Double-crested Cormorant (3,658)
Pine Siskin (7,400)	Chestnut-backed Chickadee (3,608)
Brewer's Blackbird (7,059)	Northern Pintail (3,276)
Black-capped Chickadee (6,895)	California Quail (3,262)
House Finch (6,626)	Bushtit (3,018)

After her husband's death in 1964, Thais tried going back to "being a secretary," which she had done once before for a few years, but hated it so much, she decided to take the plunge and try to make a living teaching piano. She purchased her dream piano, a Steinway baby-grand, began with just a handful of students, and went on to teach full-time for the next 30 years, until 1998.

Thais organized two recitals for her students each year, one in June and the other at Christmas. Her daughter Djana recalls the Christmas programs as some of the most enjoyable times of the year. All the students and their families were invited. The house was full of the spicy scent of warm Christmas punch, and multitudes of candles glowed. There were duets galore, often with bells and tambourine effects provided by the littlest pupils, and the program would end with the pupils playing carols and all would sing along. Then they would adjourn to the other room to enjoy cookies and the wassail bowl full of Christmas Cheer, and to admire the table-top Christmas tree decorated with musical ornaments.

Christmas was a busy time of year for Thais, because at the same time she was organizing and hosting the Christmas recital for her pupils, she was organizing and participating in area Christmas Bird Counts – for Thais had discovered another passion, ornithology, when she joined a Seattle Audubon field trip in 1968. Through Audubon activities, she met Zella Schultz. In later years, Thais always credited Zella, a noted ornithologist, teacher, writer, and artist, with being the key influence that got her into birding. Along with Zella and Eleanor Stopp, Thais became an advocate for the preservation of bird nesting habitat. Her discovery and monitoring of the Great Blue Heron colony on Peasley



Thais at Salty's with friends Michele Carbery and Adele Freeland

Canyon Rd. inspired her to mount a campaign to stop the Hwy. 18 and 167 interchange that was in the works at the time and which would have cut right through the colony. Her campaign was successful and the interchange at Peasley Canyon Rd. was redesigned, preserving the herons' nesting habitat. As the colony lay halfway between Seattle Audubon's territory and Tahoma Audubon's territory, the momentum from Thais' efforts to preserve this marsh led to the carving out and founding of a South King County Audubon chapter, which came to be known as Rainier, in 1984.

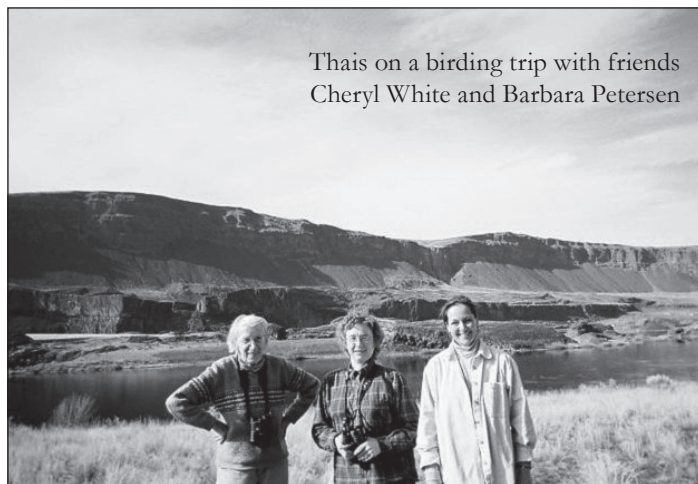
Thais also joined Zella in working to preserve a place now known as Protection Island Refuge near Port Townsend, which provides nesting habitat for 21,000 pairs of sea birds. Other of Thais' conservation efforts led to the preservation of Dumas Bay Park, Gog-le-hi-te wetland, and West Hylebos Wetlands.

Thais became a charter member of Tahoma Audubon in 1969, volunteering countless hours leading field trips, teaching bird identification

classes, and coordinating and participating in annual Christmas Bird Counts and Breeding Bird Surveys. She coordinated the Tahoma CBC Area 2 until 2007 when she finally retired at age 90.

Thais was a prolific writer and record keeper. She wrote many articles and letters related to birds. In 1975, she started the monthly sightings column, "Words on Birds," for the Tahoma Audubon *Towhee*, and continued to write it for 22 years. She was a sub-regional editor for *North American Birds* from 1975-1985. She enjoyed challenging our knowledge of birds with her birding quiz, "The Quizzical Owl," published monthly in both the Rainier and Tahoma Audubon newsletters. She kept detailed journals of her birding field trips and travels to places all around Washington state, the west coast, Alaska, the Rockies, Michigan, Ohio, Texas, and the southwest, the Florida Keys and Dry Tortugas, Canada, and England.

The mark of a great teacher is one who has a passion for learning and the gift for sharing that knowledge in a way that engages the student in the process. Thais Bock had this gift. She was a friend, mentor, pianist, master birder, and teacher who enjoyed sharing her passions for classical music, birds, and nature with everyone around her.



Thais on a birding trip with friends Cheryl White and Barbara Petersen

Remembering Thais — by Linda Bartlett

Thais was a special person I had been waiting all my life to meet! As a child growing up in the Pacific Northwest, I would often hear different bird songs but didn't know what bird was singing, nor did I meet anyone who knew any more than I did. Going on a field trip led by Thais, I was absolutely fascinated that she not only knew ALL the birds by vocalization, but could even coax them out sometimes by 'pishing' or playing a tape of their song. I remember a Virginia Rail walking right up to our little group out of the cattails, after Thais had played a tape of its strange call! And the wonder of seeing my first Barred Owl down in Wildwood Park in Puyallup — right where she said it would be — calling its young, with a frog dangling from its beak! And the Orange-crowned Warbler she recognized by song and then made sure

we all got a good look at. Whenever I hear an Orange-crowned Warbler singing, I think of Thais.

Her field trips took me over to the water, where she pointed out such strange little birds of the alcid family I'd never even heard of, and she even showed us a nest of Pigeon Guillemots under a bridge.

She was my 'walking bird encyclopedia' and knew so much about our local birds, their nesting and migration patterns. When she came regularly and faithfully to my home to help get the *Heron Heralds* ready for mailing for a number of years, her many wonderful stories fascinated us all. One I'll never forget was about a Marbled Murrelet that she found in her yard, apparently on its way to the Sound. She loved imparting her knowledge and encouraging beginning

birders, and listened attentively as they shared their discoveries with her. Her responses were always full of delight and amazement, as if it were the first time she had ever heard of such a thing!

Her knowledge of plants was remarkable as well -- something that I always appreciate in trip leaders. She was happy to lend my husband and me her trip report to Alaska, when we drove up to Anchorage. It helped us search out and find many things that she had seen in the same places on her trip there. And I will always remember her positive comment of encouragement to me that "ferreting out for yourself and finding birds on your own was a good thing rather than just relying on a guide to do all the work for you."

Thais will indeed be missed by so many of us.

Timeline of Thais' Life

- Born in Sewickley PA in 1917
 - Began piano lessons in Mt. Vernon OH at age 6 in 1923
 - Graduated from high school in Detroit MI in 1936
 - Married James Bock in the Lady Chapel of Grace Cathedral, San Francisco, in 1943
 - Years of being Wife & Mum and doing lots of volunteer work (including for the Seattle Symphony) until Jim's death in 1964
 - First Audubon trip, with the Seattle chapter (met Zella Schultz) in November 1968
 - Discovery of marsh with nesting herons, and commencement of battle with Army Corps of Engineers and State Dept. of Transportation to re-route planned highway exit and save marsh, winter 1968
 - Participant in Seattle and Tahoma Christmas Bird Counts from 1968 on until 2005
 - Involvement with founders of Tahoma Audubon to work on the Save the Nisqually Delta campaign in 1969
 - Taught piano full-time, September 1969 until 1998
 - Involvement with Ilene Marckx and campaign to preserve the Hylebos Wetlands starting about 1975
 - Began writing "Words on Birds" column for Tahoma Audubon newsletter in 1975 (continued for 22 yrs)
 - Became a sub-regional editor for *North American Birds* from mid-1970s to mid-1980s.
 - A founding member of the Rainier Audubon chapter
 - Christmas Bird Count Coordinator for Rainier, 1979 until 2005
 - Began Midwinter Bald Eagle count for State Dept. of Fish & Wildlife in 1979 (continued until 1989 in her area, west side of Hood Canal)
 - Began Breeding Bird Atlas 5-yr project for State Dept. of Fish & Wildlife, in charge of Pierce County in 1988 (continued until 1993)
- Plus ...*
- Instructor of birding classes for Highline Community College, senior centers, schools, clubs, etc.
 - Field trip leader for hundreds of birding trips
 - Intrepid traveler on birding trips all over North America
 - Promotor of Zella Schultz's ornithological paintings
 - Host of two major recitals per year for her piano students, in June and at Christmas
 - Prolific writer of articles and letters on environmental and nature topics
 - Dedicated attendee of Seattle opera and symphony and other area concerts
 - Keeper of detailed journals on bird sightings which have been consulted many times by writers and researchers



Rainier Audubon Society
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