

YELLOWSTONE VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

- FROM THE PRAIRIES TO THE PEAKS.

Mission: Building on the tradition of special interest in birds, Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society is organized to promote enjoyment and protection of the natural environment through education, activism, and conservation of bird habitat.

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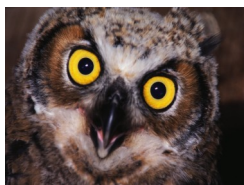
CHAPTER MEETING MONDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 7:15PM

The Passage of Rights In Africa: The Role of International Wildlife Organizations on Wildlife Conservation and Management in Kenya

Having lived and worked in east Africa for nearly 4 years over the past decade and a half, Dr. Stella Capoccia has seen wildlife policies and human population growth ebb and flow. Her experience living within tribal communities offers a unique insight to African wildlife conservation, and the multiple players that are involved in the day-to-day management.

Her talk will diverge somewhat from the normal avian discussions and local conservation concerns, as she will focus on the conservation and management of the wildlife of Kenya. Dr. Capoccia spent some 5 years studying the management of wild animals there. She will take us back through the history of the region and show how Kenya's wildlife management developed and diversified. In doing so, she will bring us to the more recent decades of management, during which international interests have played a major role in how wildlife policies are formed. Dr. Capoccia will address questions, such as: "what does the international ban on ivory mean for local farmers in Kenya?".

She is an assistant professor of biology at Montana Tech in Butte. Her keen intellect and sense of humor made her a popular speaker on pigeon research at the YVAS Chapter meeting in March of last year. Dr. Capoccia recently won the Montana Tech Rose and Anna Busch Award. The award honors those with outstanding teaching skills, including classroom effectiveness, collegiality, and accessibility; extensive campus or community service; and/or distinguished research/scholarship.



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YVAS MEETINGS

All YVAS Meetings are at Mayflower Congregational Church, corner of Rehberg Lane and Poly Drive, Billings, MT unless otherwise noted. The public is welcome, there is no admission fee and ample free parking is available.

Monday, February 10, 6:00pm: Board of Directors Meeting

Monday, February 17, 7:00pm: Chapter Meeting

We will hold a YVAS fundraiser dinner at 5:45, before the Chapter meeting. Dinner donation: \$6. Shelia McKay has generously volunteered to host. Please contact her at 652-7175 or wjhbird@yahoo.com before February 14 to make reservations and tell her what dish you will bring.

☞ We're on the web! yvaudubon.org





FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS: The Board wants to be sure that members stay informed about how YVAS funds are used. At the annual Chapter meeting in May, there will be a posting and discussion of expenditures over the past year.....please plan to attend.

The Board recently purchased two wireless headphones, to be used in conjunction with the speaker system at the monthly programs, at a cost of \$135; one for the presenter and one that can be used by members asking questions. In addition, the Board has approved funding a YVAS conservation grant in the amount of \$1,000, to be applied to the cost of a nest cam for a bald eagle nest in Miles City. The project is supported by supported by Fish, Wildlife and Parks partnering with ROCKS (Raising Our Community Kids Safely).

YVAS JAN 2014

JOE BIRDER
18 MEADOWLARK ROAD
BILLINGS, MT

YVAS CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP AWARE- NESS MONTH

Be sure to check the mailing label on your Flyer so you know when to renew your YVAS Chapter family membership. Above your name will appear 'YVAS MONTH 2014', which indicates if you are a YVAS supporting Chapter member, and the month and year that membership expires. To become a YVAS supporting Chapter member or renew your membership, complete the application on page 7 of the Flyer and send it along with a check for \$20 to YVAS, P.O. Box 1075, Billings, MT 59103-1075. You can also give the mem-

Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society Officers:

President: Steve Regele, 962-3115, sregele@juno.com
Vice-President: open
Secretary: Dorothy Bartlett, 252-0757, dpadanyi@live.com
Treasurer: Deb Regele, 962-3115, dregele@juno.com
Board of Directors:

Donn Bartlett: 252-0757, donnbartlett@msn.com
Cameron Sapp: 406-702-1138, csapp@wildmontana.org
Steve Linder: 406-380-0073, becon1@bresnan.net
Bill DeMeyer: 671-7501, bademeyer@gmail.com
Shelia McKay: 652-7175, cell 694-7918, wjhbird@yahoo.com
Jeanette Tasey: 669-3169, jtasey@gmail.com
Nancy Wiggins: 651-0218, nwiggin83@gmail.com

Montana's Congressional Delegation:

Sen. Max Baucus: U.S. Senate, Wash. D.C. 20510
website: <http://baucus.senate.gov>
email: max@baucus.senate.gov
Billings: 657-6790 Wash. D.C.: 1-800-332-6160
Sen. Jon Tester: U.S. Senate, Wash. D.C. 20510
website: <http://tester.senate.gov>
email: senator@tester.senate.gov
Billings: 252-0550 Wash. D.C.: 1-866-554-4403
Rep. Steve Daines: U.S. House of Rep. Wash. D.C. 20515
website: www.rdianes.house.gov
email: steve.daines@mail.house.gov
Wash, DC: 202-225-3211

Committees and Special Assignments:

Audubon Adventures: Jeannette Davis, 656-7618
Bird Questions: George Mowat, 656-7467 or
Helen Carlson Cummins, 248-8684
Christmas Bird Count: Jim Court, 259-5099, C: 860-0450,
custertours@gmail.com
Conservation Chair: Steve Regele, 962-3115,
sregele@juno.com
Editor: Nancy Wiggins, 651-0218, nwiggin83@gmail.com
Field Trip Chairs: George and Bernie Mowat, 656-7467,
gmowat@bresnan.net
Hospitality: Phyllis Holt 252-7373, Audrey Jurovich 656-2748
Injured Raptors: Jeanette Tasey 669-3169, jtasey@gmail.com
Membership Secretary: Joel M. Bowers, 534-3672,
cell: 591-5635, jmba@jmba.com
Osprey Project: Deb Regele, 962-3115, dregele@juno.com
Publicity: Dorothy Bartlett, 252-0757, dpadanyi@live.com
Program Chair: Shelia McKay, 652-7175, wjhbird@yahoo.com
Recycling (aluminum): Larry Handsaker, 406-855-9832
Website: Tom Lyman, Tomglyman@gmail.com

Meetings are held September through May at Mayflower Congregational Church, corner of Poly and Rehberg, Billings, MT:

- Board Meetings are held the second Monday of each month at 6:00pm. Board Meetings are open to the entire membership.
- General Chapter Meetings are held the third Monday of each month at 7:00pm. All meetings are open to the public.



FIELD TRIP NOTES



TUESDAY, APRIL 8 Field Trip: Sharp-tailed grouse viewing with Bruce Waage of the NRCS. Don't miss this special opportunity to witness these declining species that are unique to western plateaus and prairies. The trip will depart from Rocky Mountain College parking lot on Rimrock Road adjacent to the Billings Studio Theater at 5AM. Bring the usual warm clothing, plan to carpool and maybe a stop for breakfast. Further details will be in the March Flyer.

CBC ROUNDUP Thanks to Jim Court for rounding up always generous YVAS volunteers to help our neighbors in Roundup with their Christmas Bird Count. They totaled 36 species in all making it a great day for everyone!

NEW YEAR'S DAY FIELD TRIP New Year's Day dawned not so bright but beautiful nonetheless, with 5 - 6" of new snow. The group of seven hardy souls who braved the early morning storm assembled at Rocky Mountain College parking lot at 8 am and jointly concluded that a trip to the Yellowtail Afterbay would be too dangerous considering the weather. It was decided the better option would be a shorter trip around west and southwest Billings to look for the elusive snowy owl, and see what else we might see. I might add that two of the participants drove down from Red Lodge and one from Miles City, so we thought we had to do some birding!

We drove out to S 64th St W to visit the home of a birder who has about 30 feeders on his property. My earlier visit there resulted in sighting over a dozen species. Strangely nothing but collared doves were seen in our walk around the property on New Year's day. It soon became evident after seeing a sharp-shinned hawk and another hawk nearby, why the absence of birds. We continued south, turned left on Danford Road and spotted a rough-legged hawk and probably a Harlan's Hawk, a few bald eagles and some horned larks. We continued to S 56th St W to look for snowy owls (no success), and then returned to Sheila McKay's bird rehabilitation center (WJH) where we spent over two hours tromping through the snow looking at all manners of ducks, swans, geese including some wild ducks - ring-necked and golden-eye, and of course mallard. We had a chance to feed shrimp to some of the birds which was a real treat. It is a great area for people with some interest to volunteer helping birds. We continued down S 56th St W and crossed the Yellowstone River at Duck Creek. We drove up Duck Creek several miles and were lucky enough to see some Townsend Solitaires, American Robins, a few more hawks, but most impressively a gorgeous Golden Eagle. We may not have made it to the Afterbay, but the day turned out to be gloriously sunny and the birding and camaraderie were great. Thank you to Jim Court

THE EAGLE COUNT 2014, SATURDAY JANUARY 4/11

At least seven intrepid birders showed up at Rocky at 8 am on Saturday, January 4, for the 2014 eagle count. After braving the wind and near blizzard conditions for nearly two hours, our leader George Mowat sent everyone home and rescheduled it for Saturday, January 11.

On January 11th the group reassembled at Rocky and took off to Two Moon Park to check out the Yellowstone River from a high vantage point. Our Route observes the River from near Eagle Cliff Manor to Columbus. We stop at the same 14 spots in this mid-winter survey in order to keep the route consistent each year. We had 21 people in about 7 cars and most stayed all day. Lunch was at a restaurant in Laurel. We had a total of 20 Bald Eagles: 12 adults, 5 immature, and 3 of unknown age, and we reported that 1 Eagle was unidentified as to species.

No Eagles were sighted at the KOA campground. There was thick ice on part of the River and it was on the ground where we walked as well, but driving conditions were reasonably good. At one viewing point east of Columbus, we saw three Bald Eagles. One picked up a duck on the water, then dropped it. At Itch-Kep-Pe Park, we checked a couple of spots. No Eagles were sighted there. Though the temperatures were near freezing in the morning, by the end of the day it was 50 degrees and very windy.

Thank you to Bernie Mowat



MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE AND PARKS DRAFT OF 'MONTANA'S STATE WILDLIFE ACTION PLAN' is available for review and comment at:

<http://fwp.mt.gov/fishAndWildlife/publicComments/2014actionPlan.html>. A lot of important information and statewide plans are contained in the document. Read it or read selected portions - it is important to make your thoughts and opinions known to Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks. The comment period ends February 9, 2014. If you would like a MSWORD version of the document, email Steve Regele at sregele@juno.com.

SCIENTIFIC SOCIETIES CALL FOR PROTECTION OF PUBLIC LANDS AND WILDLIFE FROM FERAL CATS

The Wildlife Society (TWS) and Society for Conservation Biology (SCB), in a letter to Department of the Interior Secretary Jewell dated 7 January 2014, have requested that the Department develop a "clear, comprehensive management plan that will protect public land and wildlife from feral cats."

Despite overwhelming scientific evidence that feral domestic cats, a non-native invasive species, negatively impact native wildlife in the United States, the Department has no official management policy. New research by scientists from the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has estimated that domestic cats kill approximately 2.4 billion birds and 12.3 billion mammals every year in the United States. Un-owned (e.g., feral) cats were estimated to be responsible for nearly 70 percent of the estimated bird mortality and nearly 90 percent of the estimated mammal mortality. SCB recognized the clear imperative for effectively managing feral cats and that trap, neuter, release (TNR) fails to eliminate feral cat populations. See www.abcbirds.org for more information.

NATIONAL AUDUBON SCIENTISTS have developed a new climate model that predicts the future ranges of North American birds under the entire range of possible future climate scenarios by using 100 years of Christmas Bird Count data. The result is a dazzlingly specific picture of future bird ranges in an uncertain climate future. Read more www.audubonaction.org.

NESTING MATERIALS

INTRODUCING MERLIN BIRD ID: A NEW KIND OF BIRDING APP

Information overload is the bane of the beginning bird watcher—as anyone knows who has ever flipped through 40 species of sparrows in a field guide. What if an app could quickly tell you which birds are most likely based on your location, date, and a brief description? Not just which birds theoretically could occur near you, but which birds are actually reported most often by other birders. That's what Merlin Bird ID does. And it's free. Merlin Bird ID covers 285 of the most common birds of North America (with more on the way). In addition to help with ID, it contains expert tips, more than 1,400 photos, and sounds for each species. It's available now for iPhone and other iOS7 devices, and it's coming soon for Android. See www.birds.cornell.edu.



BIRDING CLASSES ON-LINE

These new online tutorials are designed to help beginning birders learn how to identify birds on their own time at their own pace. These sessions help build skills introduced in the "Inside Birding" video series. The tutorials feature interactive exercises, engaging media, self-paced learning, and access for 6 months following registration which costs \$29. Part I: Be a Better Birder—Size & Shape Part II: Be a Better Birder—Color & Pattern. Links to the classes can be found at www.birds.cornell.edu.

HOW TO CREATE A NATIVE WILDFLOWER MEADOW

Taking on the task of creating a native wildflower meadow is a fun, simple, and sustainable way to not only enjoy the aesthetics that wildflowers offer, but also allows for one to enjoy the abundant wildlife species that are often drawn to these sort of habitats for things such as food and shelter. Hummingbirds and butterflies

(Continued on page 5)

are known frequenters of these spaces, and can benefit substantially from the inclusion of such a habitat in one's backyard. Visit <http://blog.nwf.org/2014/01/how-to-create-a-wildflower-meadow>

ALL ABOUT HUMMINGBIRDS by Kim and Kenn Kaufman includes tips on attracting and gardening for hummingbirds..The course is \$35 brought to you by *Birds and Blooms* magazine at www.backyardbirder.com.

100 BIRDS AND HOW THEY GOT THEIR NAMES, Diana Wells Algonquin books, 2002.

How did cranes come to symbolize matrimonial happiness? Why were magpies the only creatures that would not go inside Noah's Ark? Birds and bird imagery are integral parts of our language and culture. With her remarkable ability to dig up curious and captivating facts, Diana Wells hatches a treat for active birders and armchair enthusiasts alike. Meet the intrepid adventurers and naturalists who risked their lives to describe and name new birds. Learn the mythical stories of the gods and goddess associated with bird names. Explore the avian emblems used by our greatest writers--from Coleridge's albatross in "The Ancient Mariner" to Benjamin Franklin who didn't want the bald eagle on our National Seal because of its "bad moral character," (it steals from other birds); he lobbied for the turkey instead.

Chaffinches, whose Latin name means "unmarried," are called "bachelor birds" because they congregate in flocks of one gender. Since mockingbirds mimic speech, some Native American tribes fed mockingbird hearts to their children, believing it helped them learn language. A group of starlings is called a murmuration because they chatter so when they roost in the thousands.



CALLING ALL BIRDERS

Three YVAS community events that contribute to citizen science are the

- CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT 2014 (to be scheduled)
- BACKYARD BIRD COUNT February 14-17
- BIRDATHON May 31-June 1

MAY 31-JUNE 1, 2014 is right around the corner, and it is time to mark those dates on your calendars. In the height of the spring migration, YVAS will hold its annual **BIRDATHON**. We need to recruit teams now to participate in that event.

BIRDATHON is competitive birding and a fundraiser, wherein teams of two or more birders compete to find the most bird species and to raise the most money. Prior to the actual birding, teams solicit pledges to donate money to YVAS. Pledges may be a dollar amount or be based on the number of species identified by all teams combined. Pledges may be sought from businesses and organizations and/or from individuals. Pledge forms are available to facilitate the process. Typically, 120-140 species are identified by all groups combined each year. The birding begins at 5p.m. on Saturday, May 31 and continues to 5 p.m. on Sunday, June 1. The teams meet to share their bird lists and activities at the close of the period. There is often much laughter and discussion of the experience as refreshments are shared and lists tallied. Now, identify members of your team, ask questions and plan strategy. Let Ruth Vanderhorst know of your interest, questions or desire to participate at acr@bresnan.net or 245-5118. More information, rules and forms will be published in later issues of the Flyer and on the website at www.yvaudubon.org

FEBRUARY 14-17 GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT (GBBC) It may be mid-winter but it can be the start of migration as well. So join the GBBC. Even if it is in your own yard, do a 15 minute (or more) count of birds and take part in one of the largest, single event citizen science counts. Watch as birdwatchers around the world submit their reports over the February 14-17 event. The website is easy to remember: www.birdsource.org.



Events at the Audubon Conservation Education Center

7026 South Billings Blvd, Billings, MT, 59101

406-294-5099 www.mtacec.org

Winter 2014

February 3 Hands-on Homeschool Science Class 12:30 – 2 PM. Lessons geared to 6 – 12 year olds, \$10/child. Call 294 – 5099 to register.

February 10 Hands-on Homeschool Science Class 12:30 – 2 PM. Lessons geared to 6 – 12 year olds, \$10/child. Call 294 – 5099 to register.

February 14 School Break Camp 8:30 – 4:30. For 5 – 11 year olds, \$45/child. Theme is “Hibernation Station”. It’s the heart of winter, and many of our animal friends are deep in hibernation. We’ll learn about some of the fascinating changes that help animals survive winter, and we’ll go on a hike in search of awake wildlife. Visit www.mtacec.org to register.

February 14 Nature Night from 6 – 8 PM for 5 – 11 year olds. Cost is \$15/child or \$12/Friends of the Center. Drop your child off for an evening of outdoor adventures with our Teacher Naturalists. Visit www.mtacec.org to register.

February 15 Weekend Wonders Family Program, 7 – 8:30 PM. Open to all ages! Fee is \$2/person or Free for Friends of the Center. Special Program tonight is the annual “Owl Prowl”: Go for a hike in search of the resident great-horned owls on Norm’s Island. We’ll return to the Audubon Center for cocoa and tea. Register by calling 294 – 5099.

February 16 Weekend Wonders Family Program, 1:30 – 3 PM. Open to all ages! Fee is \$2/person or Free for Friends of the Center. Theme this month is “Ice Fishing”: Learn to ice-fish on Audubon Center’s ponds with Naturalist Neal. Bring your own pole if possible. Call 294 – 5099 to register.

February 17 School Break Camp 8:30 – 4:30. For 5 – 11 year olds, \$45/child. Theme is “Snow Science”: The magic of winter comes alive as we learn how igloos, icicles, snowflakes, snowmen, and other cold-weather wonders are made. We’ll even make our own snow fort (weather permitting)! Visit www.mtacec.org to register.

February 24 Hands-on Homeschool Science Class 12:30 – 2 PM. Lessons geared to 6 – 12 year olds, \$10/child. Call 294 – 5099 to register.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS! 15th Annual Montana Audubon *Wings Across the Big Sky Festival* June 6 - 8, 2014 Bozeman, MONTANA

Montana Audubon’s 2014 Bird Festival is coming to the spectacular Gallatin Valley! Partnering with Sacajawea Audubon, Montana Audubon is planning diverse field trips, a fun Friday evening kick-off event, dynamic speakers, and more activities to engage bird enthusiasts. The festival will be headquartered at Bozeman’s Best Western GranTree Inn. Mark your calendars, and stay tuned for details! Please call the Montana Audubon office at 406.443.3949 with any questions and a current list of activities and field trips or visit mtauduon.org.

*****UPCOMING BIRD FESTIVALS AND EVENTS*****

A great way to enjoy bird watching is by going to festivals—they’re organized to get you to great birding spots at a great time of year, and they’re a great way to meet people. Experts and locals help you see more birds, and you’ll meet other visitors who share your hobby. Visit www.allaboutbirds.org to locate events on their interactive map, nearby or in any part of the country where you are traveling.

National Audubon Society
Recruitment Code: C0ZN500Z
Application for New Membership

Please enroll me as a member of the National Audubon Society. I understand that I will receive the Audubon Magazine and Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society Flyer. Make check payable to **National Audubon Society**.
*Renewals will be sent to you through National Audubon.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Email Address _____

One Year Membership

☐ \$20 One year new membership

Send this application and your check made out to **National Audubon Society** to:

Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society
Attention: Membership Secretary
P.O. Box 1075
Billings, MT 59103-1075

Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society
Recruitment Code: C0ZN500Z
Application for New & Renewal Membership

Please enroll me as a supporting member of Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society. I understand I will be supporting local chapter activities and receiving the local newsletter. I will enjoy full Chapter family benefits. Make check payable to **Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society** for \$20. If applying for a new or renewing student membership, make check for \$10 and indicate academic affiliation.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Email Address _____

Do you want to receive the Flyer electronically?

☐ YES ☐ NO

Send this application and your check to:

Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society
Attention: Membership Secretary
P.O. Box 1075
Billings, MT 59103-1075



WHOOPS!!

Is it time for you to become a YVAS member or renew your chapter membership?

PLEASE CHECK THE MAILING LABEL ON YOUR FLYER. IF IT SHOWS "YVAS JAN 12" BELOW YOUR NAME, THEN YOU ARE A SUPPORTING CHAPTER MEMBER WHOSE MEMBERSHIP EXPIRED IN JANUARY 2012. IF YOU ARE NOT A SUPPORTING MEMBER OR YOUR MEMBERSHIP HAS EXPIRED, HELP US OUT BY JOINING OR RENEWING NOW WITH YOUR CHECK FOR \$20, USING THE FORM ON THE RIGHT. YOUR MEMBERSHIP HELPS FUND THE PUBLICATION OF THE FLYER ALONG WITH OTHER ACTIVITIES RELATED TO THE MANAGEMENT OF OUR CHAPTER.

Membership Information

Although the National Audubon Society gives complimentary membership in our chapter as a benefit, no dues come to us. We strongly encourage you to join YVAS as a Supporting Chapter Member, which is offered for families \$20 a year. Use the application form above to join as a Supporting Chapter Member or to renew your Chapter Membership.

1. **Moving???** Let us know as early as possible when you plan to move. The Post Office does charge us a fee for returned flyers. Include your old address as well as your new address so we can track you. You may write, call, or email the information to the Membership Secretary.
2. Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society offers Supporting Chapter student memberships for a reduced rate of \$10 a year. If you applying for a new student membership or are renewing a student membership, make sure you indicate your academic affiliation in your application. Joel Bowers, Membership Secretary



YELLOWSTONE VALLEY AUDUBON FLYER

P.O. Box 1075
Billings, MT 59103-1075


RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-Profit Organization
PRST STD
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PERMIT NO. 27

Field Trip Calendar:

All field trips depart from Rocky Mountain College parking lot on Rimrock Road, adjacent to Billings Studio Theater, unless otherwise noted, and will be by car. **PLEASE DO NOT BRING PETS.** All field trips are open to the public. Passengers will share gas costs with driver when car- pooling. Do make sure you check all field trips with listing in flyer each month for any changes.

FIELD TRIP CHAIRS: George and Bernie Mowat 656-7467

Apr 8 	Tues	SHARP-TAILED GROUSE VIEWING. 5 a.m. to 10 a.m.	See details in the March Flyer
Apr 12	Sat	EXXON PONDS AND EMERALD HILLS. 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.	Sack lunch. <u>One Mile Walk.</u> Ron Kuhler and George Mowat, leaders.
May 3	Sat	LAKE BASIN 8 a.m.	Sack lunch. Mike Weber, leader.
May 10	Sat	MEET AT RIVERFRONT PARK at 8:00 a.m. S Billings Blvd, 1st parking area on right,. Half day.	Half day. George and Bernie Mowat, leaders.
May 15	Thur	MEET AT RIVERFRONT PARK. 5:30 p.m.(See above location)	Mike Weber, leader.
May 17	Sat	STILLWATER AND WOODBINE AREAS. 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.	Sack lunch. Ruth Vanderhorst, leader.
May 24	Sat	POMPEY'S PILLAR. 7 a.m. to early afternoon.	Sack lunch optional. Ruth Vanderhorst, leader.

