

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.

VOLUME 44, NUMBER 1

JANUARY 2014

CHAPTER MEETING MONDAY JANUARY 20, 7:15PM

'OUR MONTANA'

The January 20th program will feature representatives from **'Our Montana'**, a not-for-profit association of people who cherish the state of Montana. The organization comprises a broad representation of individuals who work to steward irreplaceable outdoor and historic values for this and future generations, which is best achieved when people work together.

They will explain their program with the State Parks in general, and the role technology plays in enriching natural experiences in state parks. **'Our Montana'** is participating in a nature venture called Pocket Ranger, an application that can be downloaded on any Apple Device, Droid or Smart phone. It has a built in GPS application to allow visitors to track their sightings and other data. The device is unique because it allows visitors access to information even in areas where there is no mobile reception. These functions would allow a birding group to share bird sightings, record trails, and export data to Face book and Twitter. For members who are using birding technology like birdcall applications or bird identification applications, this would be an excellent opportunity to discuss the benefits of and the trend toward technology-led birding.

No presentation by **'Our Montana'** would be complete without including a discussion of the Yellowstone River. The Crow name for the Yellowstone was Elk River, while French fur traders called it LaRoche Jaune. The headwaters of the Yellowstone River are in Wyoming, Montana and Yellowstone National Park, the world's first national park. This river has the distinction of being the longest free-flowing river in the lower 48 states. The River's 700 mile long journey takes it through wilderness mountains, beautiful valleys, open prairies and cottonwood bottoms to join with the Missouri River. **'Our Montana'**, with support for Cinnabar, has proven public ownership of riparian areas to provide Billings the potential of a system of green natural parks. River observers understand that the future seems to approach rapidly; there may be little time to linger if we are to sustain the benefits of this great river and that is the challenge of cooperation. Visit www.ourmontana.org and conservemontana.org.



YVAS MEETINGS

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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, January 13, 6:00pm: Board of Directors Meeting

Monday, January 20, 7:00pm: Chapter Meeting

We will hold a YVAS fundraiser dinner at 5:45, before the Chapter meeting. Dinner donation: \$6. Nancy Traeger has generously volunteered to host. Please contact her at 252-5236 before Friday, January 17 to make reservations and tell her what you will bring.



☞ We're on the web! yvaudubon.org

THIS FLYER IS PUBLISHED ON SFI CERTIFIED PRODUCT



THE YVAS BOARD OF DIRECTORS IS PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THAT STEVE LINDER HAS ACCEPTED A POSITION ON THE BOARD.

Steve is a welcome and familiar face among YVAS members. Originally from Oregon, he graduated from EMC (now MSUB) in biology and worked for US Fish & Wildlife in Hatcheries and Refuges, in addition to the MT Department of Health as an epidemiologist. Now retired, Steve also brings extensive

business experience to YVAS.

\$\$\$\$\$ YVAS Conservation Grants Offered \$\$\$\$\$

For 2013-2014, YVAS is offering a conservation grant of up to \$1000.00. The grant will be awarded to individual(s), or group(s) engaged in some project which supports the YVAS mission: **“to promote enjoyment and protection of the natural environment through education, activism and conservation of bird habitat.”**

Grants can be awarded to help fund a variety of conservation projects including, but not limited to,

- research on birds, plants, habitat, alternative energies, effects of CO₂, etc.
- field work projects such as habitat restoration, building/establishing bird/bat boxes, monitoring bird/wildlife populations, etc.
- travel, continuing education, advocacy for natural resources, etc.

Applications must be received by February 1, 2014, and the award winner will be expected to submit a written report of their project and its success within one year of the initial award date. They will also be asked to present their results at either an YVAS Board meeting or at a general membership meeting.

For more information and application forms, visit yvaudubon.org or contact Nancy Wiggins nwiggins83@gmail.com or (406) 651-0218. Address grant applications to YVAS Board, P.O. Box 1075, Billings, MT 59103-1075.

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, battie@bresnan.net

Shelia McKay: 652-7175, cell 694-7918, wjhbird@yahoo.com

Jeanette Tasey: 669-3169, jtasey@gmail.com

Nancy Wiggins: 651-0218, nwiggins83@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: 860-0456

Conservation Chair. Steve Regele, 962-

3115, sregele@juno.com

Editor.....Nancy Wiggins, 651-0218, nwiggins83@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

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.



Bob Landis, holding his gift, a raven, crafted by artist Dave Torrence. Dave created the pattern in this unique piece using 46 pieces of wood, mostly wenge with maple & ebony for the eye.

A NIGHT TO REMEMBER!

It started out with rain in the afternoon, and by the time the doors opened for the event, it was snowing hard. Inside Harvest Church, all was ready. Tables with white linen cloths were decorated with pine boughs and owls made of birdseed and fruit to delight the birds, donated by Wild Birds Unlimited. Dessert tables, coffee and punch were at the ready.

Auction tables were filled with a variety of attractive things, including wood carvings, clothing items, paintings, and pottery. Art works were displayed around the room on easels.

Would anyone brave the elements on this blustery night?

About fifty hardy and supportive folks came, covered with snow, carrying goodies and wearing smiles. The evening was a wonderful success, with generous bids on the live and silent auction.

Top live auction items were \$500 for a day with Marco Restani banding osprey, donated by Marco; \$400 for 12 months of delivered flower arrangements, auctioned in honor of Helen Carlson, and donated by Gainan's and a board member; \$350 for a Behind the Scenes Tour of Zoo Montana guided by Jeff Ewing, donated by Zoo Montana; and \$300 for a stay at a fishing lodge on the Big Horn River, donated by Rick and Starr Stevens. A favorite raffle was for individual bottles of wine.

The desserts were popular and plentiful, giving people an opportunity to sit at the tables and visit.

Bob Landis was presented with a "thank you" gift from YVAS for the generous contribution of his time and videos of Yellowstone Park Wildlife over the years. Many thanks go to Bob Landis for a program that is always enjoyable, and to Jeff Ewing for his lively and entertaining MC and auctioneering talents.

A regretful spelling error resulting from changes made by the printer on the postcards that were sent out to members before the event, reminded us that, hard as we work, it is sometimes difficult to cover all the bases. After expenses were paid, YVAS raised a total of \$4,158.50

It's not possible to adequately express thanks to the YVAS Board of Directors, especially Dorothy Bartlett, Chairwoman, and to volunteers who generously donated their time and talent! THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU!

- | | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| • Jennifer Baretta | • Dorcas Halverson | • Karen McBride |
| • Jean Boone | • Rita Harding | • Jacob Meisner |
| • Joel Bowers | • Phyllis Holt | • Bernie Mowat |
| • Jon Brunn | • Bob Jones | • The Cletis Orthman Estate |
| • Helen Carlson | • Carolyn Jones | • Kayla Radke |
| • Cummins | • Audrey Jurovich | • Nancy Traeger |
| • Will Crain | • Alicia Lee | • Sue Weinman |
| • Janette Davis | • Dan Mazel | |

YVAS is also grateful to the Billings Business Community for their support. THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU!

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|-------------------------------|---|
| • AceHardware Grand Avenue | • Montana Silversmiths |
| • Billings Art Alliance | • Sandstone Gallery |
| • Cedar "N Sage | • Stonefly Studios |
| • DXP | • Walmart in the Heights |
| • East Rosebud Fly and Tackle | • Wild Birds Unlimited |
| • The Laurel Trading Post | • The Filson Company also worked with us. |



For the information of our chapter members, the following is a copy of correspondence from the YVAS Board of Directors intended to address the recent issues involving MT Audubon, the ACEC and the Yellowstone River Parks Association, as published in the Billings Gazette on December 3, 2013: please visit:

http://billingsgazette.com/news/local/separation-anxiety-conservation-groups-split-over-use-of-riverfront-center/article_426f6848-9b4b-5433-ab2d-1238fc7e4c18.html#.UrEUiKLDHqY.email or address any questions to a YVAS Board Member.

To: Fred Weisbecker, President Montana Audubon Board of Directors

Steve Hoffman, Director Montana Audubon

Roger Williams, President Yellowstone River Parks Association

From: Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society Board of Directors

Date: December 6, 2013

Re: Montana Audubon vs Yellowstone River Parks Association Dispute

In light of recent circumstances involving the Montana Audubon/Audubon Conservation Education Center and the Yellowstone River Parks Association, the Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society Board of Directors feels it is important to provide some clarification and to state our position on this issue.

- Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society is an independent organization and is affiliated with the National Audubon Society. Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society has been in Billings since 1953. It was organized by Professor William Hoheisel, professor at Eastern Montana College of Education (now Montana State University at Billings).
- Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society, National Audubon Society, and Montana Audubon/Audubon Conservation Educational Center share the name "Audubon"; however, we are separate organizations.
- Montana Audubon, which directs the Audubon Conservation Education Center, is not affiliated with the National Audubon Society. Montana Audubon's independent state office opened in Helena in 1989 and has been in Billings since 2004, when they officially signed the Lease Agreement and the Memorandum of Understanding with the Yellowstone River Parks Association.

While Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society supports the valuable work that both the Yellowstone River Parks Association and Montana Audubon/Audubon Conservation Education Center are doing, we are not involved in their dispute. Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society has worked effectively with both organizations and plans to continue that into the future.

cc Yellowstone Valley Audubon Flyer, a monthly publication of Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society



CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

The Christmas Bird Count is a perfect example of the important work Audubon does. Remarkable studies emerge every day from 113 years of bird counts. Congratulations to all who participated. Thanks to Jim Court and his 12 teams, comprised of 34 volunteer observers, 14 areas were covered and reported on by YVAS on December 14. With temperatures in the mid 30's, they drove 359 miles and covered 20+ miles on foot, seeing 65 species and 22,913 individual birds. Mark your calendars to sign up for a team next year next year!



The Exxon Ponds on Area # 9 were covered by Avian Rangers. A three mile "walk" thru 4 inches of crusted snow with the intent of discovery was rewarded. It was worth every step. Capt Mike Weber, seen pointing is also the amazing acoustics coordinator, called the Virginia rail right out of the Exxon Pond swamp. Thank you to Will Crain



Events at the Audubon Conservation Education Center

Winter 2013

7026 South Billings Blvd, Billings, MT, 59101

406-294-5099 www.mtacec.org

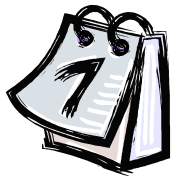
January 6 Registration opens for the winter session of Adventure in Nature Afterschool classes, Nature Nuts and Fledglings Preschools, and Hands-on Science Home school! Visit www.mtacec.org or call 294 – 5099.

January 10 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.

January 19 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 “Stories in the Snow”: Learn how to identify animals by the tracks and signs they leave in snow. We’ll make our own track guides to take home. Call 294 – 5099 to register.

January 20 School Break Camp 8:30 – 4:30. For 5 – 11 year olds, \$45/child. Theme is “Nature’s Heroes”: we’ll spend Martin Luther King, Jr. Day learning about some dedicated folks that volunteer their time to make the world a better place. Our explorations and projects today will help you make a positive impact on the world too! Visit www.mtacec.org to register.

January 27 The Audubon Center’s winter session of Adventure in Nature Afterschool classes, Nature Nuts and Fledglings Preschools, and Hands-on Science Homeschool begins TODAY! Call 294 – 5099 to register.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR: WINGS ACROSS THE BIG SKY FESTIVAL

June 6-8, 2014 Bozeman, Montana

The time has arrived! Begin planning and spreading the word that **Montana Audubon’s Wings Across the Big Sky Festival**, co-hosted by **Sacajawea Audubon Society**, is June 6-8 in Bozeman. We anticipate a fantastic turnout, but as always, not without your help and enthusiasm. Invite your out-of-state and nearby friends, birders and non-birders alike, to visit the Gallatin Valley and surrounding areas where you can participate in abundant festival activities.

Featured in this year’s activities are close to 20 field trips scheduled each of two days. These include trips into Gallatin and Madison Valleys, grasslands, wetlands, forest and field, some local flair, with the excitement of seeing a varied array of species.

Montana Audubon is also looking forward to festival artwork by Andrew Guttenberg, a local Bozemanite. He will be featuring a male Calliope Hummingbird in the bright sun at the top of a foothills thicket, with the Bridger Mountains in the background.


Festival headquarters will be located at the Best Western GranTree Inn at 1325 North 7th in Bozeman. Working with Sacajawea Audubon and the GranTree team on event logistics and service, we are pleased to know this venue will provide excellent opportunities to host an expanded display area, concurrent Saturday afternoon presentations, a fun Friday night festival kickoff event hosted by Sacajawea Audubon, our keynote speaker (see below), and a Saturday evening banquet dinner.

Montana Audubon is particularly pleased to announce that John Marzluff, Professor of Wildlife Science at the University of Washington, will be the keynote speaker on Saturday afternoon. His research on the social behavior and ecology of crows and ravens highlights the exceptional intelligence of this avian family known to recognize human faces. He is the author of more than 100 scientific papers, and his book written with Tony Angell, *In the Company of Crows and Ravens*, blends biology, conservation, and anthropology to suggest that human and crow cultures have co-evolved.

For more information contact Bird Festival Coordinator, Cathie Erickson at cerickson@mtaudubon.org.

HOW IMPORTANT IS YOUR CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP SUPPORT TO YVAS PROJECTS? When you are renewing your membership, remember that financial support for local activities comes from your YVAS family membership dues of only \$20.

CONSERVATION UPDATES

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• abcbirds.org **News on Birds and Wind Energy: Eagle Rule Weakens Current Protections and Sanctions Eagle Deaths.** ABC spoke out against the recently announced 30-year eagle take permit rule, asserting that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) plan may mark a setback in protecting Bald and Golden eagles, two species that have inspired Americans for centuries. In its previous comments on this rule, ABC asked for more transparency and adaptive management through improved siting, mitigation, and compensation to minimize the impact of wind energy development on eagles. The revised rule attempts to accomplish these goals through five-year reviews of the extended 30-year permits, as well as mitigation and compensation when sites surpass their agreed-upon eagle take quota. ABC also asked for better public access to data on eagle fatalities.

Study Shows Newer Wind Turbines Still Killing Hundreds of Thousands of Birds: A new study shows that in spite of updated designs, U.S. wind turbines are killing hundreds of thousands of birds annually—a number that may balloon to about 1.4 million per year by 2030, when the ongoing industry expansion being encouraged by the federal government is expected to be fully implemented. The study, “Estimates of bird collision mortality at wind facilities in the contiguous United States,” was based on a review of 68 studies that met rigorous inclusion criteria and data derived from 58 bird mortality estimates contained in those studies. See <http://www.abcbirds.org/newsandreports/releases/131210a.html>.
- <http://www.sagegrouseinitiative.com> Montana Launches First “**Fence-marking Partnership Project**” in Ekalaka. YVAS awarded a Conservation Grant to an Eagle Scout working on this Greater Sage-grouse project!
- wildmontana.org **The Rocky Mountain Front Heritage Act**, which would permanently protect over a quarter million acres of the Front and create the first new acres of Wilderness in Montana in 30 years, recently cleared a major legislative hurdle. On November 21st the bill passed the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee by unanimous consent.

NESTING MATERIALS



<http://www.audubonmagazine.org> **How Birds Cope With Winter:** When the weather outside is frightful, we stay inside, where it's warm and cozy. But birds that overwinter in cold climes don't have that option. Find out how they survive frigid conditions, and what you can do to help them make it through the winter.

<http://www.audubonaction.org> **Online Guide to Winter Bird Feeding** Renowned Audubon ornithologist Steve Kress offers tips and advice for making your backyard a haven for overwintering birds. Kress covers feeder types, feeder placement and the best foods for birds when the weather gets chilly. Here's the bottom line if you're just getting started: focus on tube feeders and black oil sunflower seeds.

<http://www.birds.cornell.edu> **The Best Binoculars of 2013** Good binoculars are a great way to get more out of bird watching. There's just nothing like a bright, crisp image that's bursting with color, whether you're looking for rarities or simply enjoying the birds you see everyday. And fortunately, even some lower-priced binoculars are truly outstanding these days. In their first full review in eight years, Cornell rounded up 102 binoculars ranging from \$55 to nearly \$3,000, and will tell you which ones made their eyeballs the happiest.

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 at \$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

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| Jan 1 | Wed | NEW YEAR'S FIELD TRIP 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. | Sack lunch. Yellowtail Dam Afterbay. George Mowat, leader. |
| Jan 4 | Sat | ANNUAL EAGLE MIDWINTER SURVEY in Lower 48 States. 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Yellowstone River: Billings to Columbus | No Host Lunch. George Mowat, leader. |
| Apr 12 | Sat | EXXON PONDS AND EMERALD HILLS. 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. | Sack lunch. One Mile Walk. 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. |

