# Living the dream, learning to hover like a hawk

By Crista Videriksen Worthy

Every kid watches birds and then dreams of actually flying. I had vivid dreams in which I pumped my arms and flew like a bird. But every time I jumped off something in another attempt to actually fly, I hit the ground. Later I became a pilot and so achieved part of my dream. I'd rather fly on my own like a bird, but flying

a plane is pretty fun too.

Even though airplanes don't fly by flapping their wings like birds, there are a number of similarities between birds and airplanes. Some of my favorite birds to watch are kites and kestrels, or sparrow hawks, as they hover. I frequently see a sparrow hawk hovering above the sage canyon just past my backyard. Today as I watched one, I was reminded

Hovering American kestrel

of a fun exercise I used to do in our airplane.

We all know how, when birds land, they flare upward, change the angle of their wings, and extend their legs, all of which produce drag while also adding lift, so they can slow down to land without falling out of the sky. Most airplanes have flaps, which perform a similar function. We had a Cessna 210, which weighed nearly 4,000 pounds when fully loaded, but it also had extra large flaps to help it fly slowly without stalling. This comes in handy when you want to land at the short grass airstrips here in the Idaho mountains. Back when we lived by the ocean in Southern California I sometimes practiced flying so that I could hover like a hawk. Several thousand feet above the shoreline, I'd pull the power back, put the landing gear down, put in all the flaps, pull back on the yoke, and watch the indicated airspeed go down as the plane slowed.

With a nice onshore breeze you could point the plane right into the wind, hovering hawks do this, with all the flaps out like the hawk's angled wings, and by pulling back farther and adding power so as not to stall, akin to the hawk pumping its wings rapidly as it hovers, I could look down and see that I held steady over the shoreline, while the GPS showed zero groundspeed. I was hovering like a hawk!

Occasionally, if the breeze slowed, the air moving over the wings would slow and begin to separate from the wing, and the plane would begin to stall. Then you simply push the nose down,

maybe add a bit of power, and the plane starts flying again as soon as air moves over the wing with sufficient speed. If you watch a hawk, they do this too. The hawk will hover but sometimes suddenly dip down and then zip back up. This is because the breeze slows momentarily, so the hawk quickly drops down to get airspeed so it won't fall out of the sky.

Photo by Steve Jones

Pilots have to learn all this and then practice so it becomes second nature. Young birds can't read a book about flying; they just have to jump, put out their wings, and do their best. It's fledgling season in Idaho now, and the birds around us are learning, but they do so quickly. I'm always surprised when I see very young quail chicks fly. We have one family with 16 chicks, and they all took off like bullets the other day when I came out with the birdseed. Still, especially for raptors and other larger birds, it may be months before that momentous first flight, and then it will take several more weeks to learn how to wring every trick possible out of those amazing wings.

I'm one of those who firmly believe that animals are conscious beings. They may not be able to do calculus or read books, but they think, and they feel emotions. If I could really fly, I'd be "over the moon" happy. Sometimes, watching a hawk or a raven zipping up, down, and around, I am sure that bird is experiencing the pure joy of free flight. I watch those finely-tuned wings twist a bit, and as the bird swoops and rolls, part of me is up there doing it too.

#### President's Message

By Liz Urban

I was lucky enough to attend the National Audubon Convention in July, along with half of our GEAS board members.

It was very encouraging to have so many people come together who want to work to protect birds, conserve habitats, advocate on behalf of our environmental laws, and to prioritize diversity and inclusion in our mission.

It was during these three non-stop days filled with learning and networking that I paused to reflect on who birders are. As more than 400 people listened to the National Audubon's president talk about our challenges and successes as a powerful network of more than 500 chapters across the country, I was surprised to learn that Audubon members straddle the political divide in nearly equal portions across our country. In a time when many elements of our society feel polarizing right now, it is uplifting to think birds are something that are a part of what brings us together.

As I looked around the auditorium and thought about our own members and volunteers, I felt like some characteristics probably describe many of us that profess ourselves birders. We are likely active observers. We are always listening and watching, even as we go about our daily lives. We are curious and eager to learn. We find the world around us exciting and generally want to share our passion with others.

I want to venture to say that if you are a birder you likely aspire to make the world a better place. If you care about these relatively small life forms flying above our heads and sometimes hiding invisibly in the bushes, it means you are probably someone who wants to see these creatures live and thrive. And as David Yarnold said, "what is good for birds is good for people."

Birds are a piece of the puzzle and so are the birders who care about them. It was nice to feel re-energized and inspired surrounded by people who value birds and life and are working on so many creative approaches to make change. Thank you to all the birders, past, present and future, who want to make this a better place for birds and for people. I think those of us who were able to attend the convention feel a renewed commitment to our mission, and I, for one, have never been prouder to call myself a birder and an Audubon member.

Liz Urban, president

GEAS now accepts payments online for membership dues for local GEAS members via our "Join/Renew Audubon" page on our website; http://www.goldeneagleaudubon.org/donate.

## GEAS CALENDAR September-October 2017

September 9
September 10
September 19
September 24
September 29, 30
September 30
October 6
October 17
October 29

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## News From the Board: July and August

- The Conservation Committee, on behalf of the Board, submitted a letter supporting the comments submitted by Karen Steenhof, Michael Kochert, and the Idaho Conservation League for the Draft Environmental Assessment for the establishment of a sustainable water supply for the Mountain Home Air Force Base. This proposed project would run through the Morley Nelson Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area. We agree that the current assessment is insufficient for a number of reasons: we do not support Alternative B as our preferred action.
- GEAS hosted a Native Plant Network stakeholder meeting in late July. GEAS, Land Trust of the Treasure Valley, the City of Boise, College of Western Idaho, Idaho Botanical Garden, Borah High School, Edwards Nursery, Liberty Elementary, and individuals were in attendance. The Land Trust is keeping a database of the in-kind contributions from partners for the network. The first year of the Native Plant Network

- produced about 1,000 plants for restoration work and engaged four area classrooms in the process.
- At the July meeting, board members discussed offering in-kind support to the Idaho Climate Summit, scheduled for November 16-17, at BSU.
- The July meeting also was our semiannual review for our Small Grants Program. We received two applications and chose to fund both proposals. Please see elsewhere in this newsletter for additional details.
- The ad hoc audit committee (Alexander Sapiens, Alex Takasugi and Liz Urban) preformed an audit of the 2016-17 fiscal year in quick books and reconciled transactions with our bank records. Everything was found to be in order, and the committee is satisfied with our treasurer's procedures and record keeping. Thanks to Lew Ulrey for his diligent work.
- The Conservation Committee is in contact with the Natural Resources

- Conservation Service to try to help prevent bluebird box destruction during the large-scale juniper removal projects underway.
- Cabela's donated a pair of binoculars for use in our educational programming and field trips. Thanks to them for their support!
- Stop by the Hyde Park Street Fair, September 15-17, and visit us at the Golden Eagle booth this year! Shifts are still available if you'd like to help out by sharing your enthusiasm for birds. It's easy and fun. E-mail amysilver819@ gmail.com for details.
- The board posted its Outreach & Development Associate independent contractor position in late June. We received more then 25 applications and conducted interviews the last few weeks of July. The board members will make a hiring decision at their August meeting and hope to bring on the associate by September 1.

## **GEAS** awards two grants

Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge applied for \$500 to apply toward the development of the Fourth Grade Environmental Education curriculum for the Caldwell School District.

Staff members at the refuge are working on 35 lesson plans that correlate to standards that will be piloted this coming school year. The environmental educators will participate in the school district teacher training days and offer multi-day experiences at the refuge and in schoolyard habitats. Funds provided by GEAS will be used to buy tools, field guides, and additional supplies to create an effective, interactive curriculum.

BSU's Intermountain Bird Observatory requested \$500 to help buy a shipping container that will be used to host presentations, provide workspace, and semi-permanent storage space for their River Site banding station beginning in fall 2017.

The container would also serve as a community art project with visitors adding to a wrap-around mural focused on birds. IBO has agreed to provide GEAS outreach

materials on site to let visitors know about our many field trip offerings and additional education materials. We support increasing the capacity of the River Site for IBO, and a board member offered an additional \$1,000 to help see this site expansion happen this year.

## Save money, help GEAS

If you do not already have a Fred Meyer Rewards card, you can go to the service desk and apply for one. Every time you shop, you will accumulate reward points when you scan your card at the checkout.

Once a quarter, you will receive coupons for items you regularly purchase, and a cash rebate card if your point total is high enough. Program details are at https://www.fredmeyer.com/topic/rewardsfaq-s. But wait—it gets better! You can link your Rewards card to Golden Eagle Audubon Society.

After you have your Rewards card, go online and link the card to GEAS by visiting www.fredmeyer.com/ communityrewards You will need to log in to your account, then enter the number 85197, or type "Golden" into the search box to see us. After this one-time action,

every time you shop with your Rewards card, some additional points will go to Golden Eagle Audubon; Fred Meyer will then send us a check every quarter whose amount is based on the number of points we all accumulated. Please note that this does not reduce your personal rewards points in any way.

#### Thanks to our volunteers

We appreciate all the work our volunteers put into GEAS. Thanks to those who submit content to the newsletter, edit it, and get it into the mail: Niels Nokkentved, Sue Norton, Suzanne Woodcock, Lew Ulrey, Jessica Fusek, Teresa Sabala, Crista Videriksen Worthy, Alex Takasugi, Sean Finn, Liz Urban and more.

Thank you to Alexander Sapiens for arranging all of our monthly presentations and speakers. Thanks to Todd Katzner and Terry Rich for their wonderful presentations in July and August.

Thanks to Alex Takasugi for coordinating most of our field trips. Please see the New Roots update for a belated list of thank you to the volunteers who make that program possible as well.

### **GEAS EVENTS** for September and October, 2017

**Field trip information is subject to change.** Please check the Calendar and Field Trips section on the website <a href="http://www.goldeneagleaudubon.org">http://www.goldeneagleaudubon.org</a> for the latest information or contact Alex Takasugi at 484-9132 or geasfieldtrips@gmail.com and Kristin Gnojewski at kgnojewski@cableone.net.

**Field Trip Etiquette:** We set up car pools to take as few cars as possible, while making sure everyone has a window. Please give the driver of your ride gas money and arrive 10 minutes early

#### Saturday, September 9

Field Trip: Intermountain Bird Observatory at Lucky Peak Time: 8 a.m.

Location: MK Nature Center Parking Lot

We will meet at the MK Nature Center to car pool up to Lucky Peak. Songbird banding will be in full swing until around 11, while hawk watching and trapping start at 11. Bring food and water and a lawn chair, as we will eat lunch in the forest and can take a bird walk to see the higher altitude birds and enjoy the scenery if you would like.

#### Sunday, September 10

Field Trip: Family Bird Walk

Time: 9 to 11 a.m.

Location: DeMeyer Park, 5100 N. Tumbleweed Place, Boise Contact: Alex Takasugi geasfieldtrips@gmail.com, 208-484-9132 or Kristin Gnojewski, kgnojewski@cableone.net, 208-860-3658. We will check out this neighborhood park, walking the paths and seeing what birds are in the trees and on the pond. Bring the whole family, especially the young ones. We have binoculars and field guides to loan. Sign up the kids in our Frequent Flyer Club where they earn rewards for birding. We will finish by 11 a.m.

#### Tuesday, September 19

GEAS Program Meeting: New Roots Program, Liz Urban Time: 7 p.m.

Location: Trophy Room, 600 S Walnut St., Idaho Fish and Game Headquarters.

Liz Urban will make a detailed presentation on the New Roots Program. The program involves refugee students enrolled in the sixth-eighth grade in local Boise public schools for a 10- to 12-day summer camp in the area. This program provides food, water, materials and transportation at no cost to the student. Students will be exposed to the outdoor environment, ecology and conservation of the Treasure Valley. Urban will also talk about a follow-up program called "WOW"—Wild Outdoor Week—for graduates of the New Roots Program. She created and coordinates the New Roots Program.

#### Sunday, September 24

Birding on the Bethine and Litter Patrol

Time: 9 a.m.

Location: Park at the Greenbelt parking area SE of the Bown Crossing Library

Contact: Alex Takasugi geasfieldtrips@gmail.com 208-484-9132 We'll walk the Bethine Church Nature Trail going down river, birding as we go, then pick up whatever bits of litter we find on the way back. Birds abound in the pond/river/riparian wooded habitat. We usually finish around noon. Bring water, binocs and maybe a plastic grocery bag in case we see any trash. No public restrooms are available.

#### Friday and Saturday, September 29 and 30

Work Days at Blacks Creek

Time: 9 a.m. to noon.

Location: Blacks Creek Bird Reserve

Activities will include restoration planting, habitat monitoring, clean up, trail marking, fence repair and lots of bird watching. Check the calendar at goldeneagleaudubon.org for updates. Please RSVP to info@goldeneagleaudubon.org if you want to attend.

#### Saturday, September 30

Field Trip: Intermountain Bird Observatory Riverside Site for

Songbird Banding

Time: 8:30 a.m. to 12:40 p.m.

Location: IBO Riverside site across Highway 21 from the end of

Warm Springs Avenue.

Join us at the IBO site on the Boise River and watch songbird banding. We'll get there just after the first net run, to see the first batch of birds banded. The nets will be up until 12:40, but the number of birds captured drops as the morning wears on.

#### Friday, October 6

Field Trip: Intermountain Bird Observatory on Lucky Peak for owl banding

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Location: MK Nature Center Parking Lot

We will meet at the MK Nature Center to car pool up to Lucky Peak. We will arrive at IBO at sunset and view a presentation on owls. The first net check is at 8 p.m., and we can stay until 11 or later if the owl action is hot. Bring drinks (think hot cocoa and tea), snacks, a lawn chair, blankets and dress appropriately for a cool (cold) night of hootin' tootin' owl banding.

#### Tuesday, October 17

GEAS Program Meeting: Great Gray Owls, Leon Powers

Time: 7 p.m.

Location: Trophy Room, 600 S Walnut St., Idaho Fish and Game Headquarters.

Leon R. Powers, Ph. D., will present his work on the Great Gray Owl in Valley County, Idaho. He will have also have copies of his books for sale and signature following the presentation. Powers is a professor emeritus at Northwest Nazarene University in Nampa, Idaho. He is the author of *Dead Owls Flying* (2008) about the great gray owl and *A Hawk in the Sun* (2003) about the ferruginous hawk.

#### Sunday, October 29

Birding on the Bethine and Litter Patrol

Time: 9 a.m.

Location: Park at the Greenbelt parking area SE of the Bown Crossing Library

Contact: Alex Takasugi geasfieldtrips@gmail.com 208-484-9132 We'll walk the Bethine Church Nature Trail going down river, birding as we go, then pick up whatever bits of litter we find on the way back. Birds abound in the pond/river/riparian wooded habitat. We usually finish around noon. Bring water, binocs and maybe a plastic grocery bag in case we see any trash (it's usually minimal). No public restrooms are available. This will be our last cleanup of the year, as we patrol on the last Sunday of the month between March and October.

#### Audubon convention draws a crowd

What's In a Convention? When it's the National Audubon Society's National Convention, the answer is a lot.

More than 440 Audubon National staff members and members from around the country gathered in Park City, Utah, from July 14 to 17, to hear outstanding speakers, learn about advocacy for birds, attend great field trips, and enjoy time for networking and getting to know the other GEAS members.

Anyone interested can listen to one of the keynote speakers, J. Drew Lanham, Ph.D., here: <a href="http://www.audubon.org/news/">http://www.audubon.org/news/</a> listen-drew-lanhams-keynote-speech-2017-audubon-conventionutah. It is worth the time.

GEAS was well represented: Amy Silver, Liz Urban, Sean Finn, Alexander Sapiens, Lew Ulrey, Libby Burtner and Michele Crist spent time at the 2017 Audubon convention, learning and representing GEAS. Urban's poster during the poster session outlined the New Roots Program. She educated folks from around the country, Idaho and the GEAS on the program.

The two tag lines I took away, repeated often so everyone

would remember:

"You are what hope looks like to a bird."

"National Audubon; the most effective conservation network in America."

But I brought home much more. New friendships, a better understanding of how Audubon works at the National level, and how to advocate for birds. I learned about water issues to the south in Utah and about important bird areas across the country, and much more.

I also brought home memories of birding with

Photo by Liz Urban. GEAS secretary, Libby Burtner, pens a letter to her Idaho congressman in support of sage grouse during an advocacy workshop.

Ken Kaufmann and my

friends from here in Boise. Seeing bison on Antelope Island and thousands, hundreds of thousands of phalaropes. It was educational, inspirational and fun. Conventions are every two years. See you in 2019?



Photo by Crista V. Worthy Tree swallow

## **GEAS**, partners to work on Hyatt Lakes

A diverse local partnership, including Golden Eagle Audubon Society, acquired a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant to restore upland habitats at Hyatt Hidden Lakes Reserve.

The Boise Multicultural Habitat Enhancement Project will create a pioneering multicultural volunteer stewardship program that engages youths and adults in developing and implementing a five-year plan to restore sustainable bird and non-game wildlife habitat on weed-dominated upland shrub and grassland at the easily-accessible city-owned urban reserve in west Boise.

The project's scientifically-sound restoration work will advance many conservation plans that seek to restore native vegetation by removing weeds and cultivating and planting native plants and help meet short and long term goals of the partner organizations by creating and sharing knowledge of restoration and refugee-friendly approaches that can be easily transferred to other restoration projects throughout the lower Boise River watershed.

The partnership, led by the Land Trust of the Treasure Valley and Boise River Enhancement Network, also includes the Intermountain Bird Observatory, the City of Boise and Idaho Department of Fish and Game. The project will engage existing and new volunteers, including refugees who live nearby, and create a restoration work plan, a vision for community-based native plant nurseries and a stewardship program designed for Boise's diverse urban population; establishing stepping stones of engagement that can be used to achieve more habitat enhancement along the Boise River. We invite you to join us in creating bird habitat at one of Boise's birding gems. Contact us at info@goldeneagleaudubon.org.

#### **GEAS** plans work days at Blacks Creek Reserve

In recognition of National Public Lands Day, GEAS is partnering with the Bureau of Land Management, New Roots Program, Liberty Elementary School, Intermountain Bird Observatory, and Land Trust of the Treasure Valley to spruce up Blacks Creek Bird Reserve on Friday and Saturday, September 29 and 30. Activities will include restoration planting, habitat monitoring, reserve and road clean up, recreation trail marking, fence repair and lots of bird watching.

Details are still under development but tentatively we expect to work from about 9 a.m. to noon on Friday and Saturday. Check the calendar at goldeneagleaudubon.org for updates. We will also send out an e-mail as plans firm up. We ask anyone who wants to attend to RSVP so we're prepared with assignments and snacks. RSVP at: info@goldeneagleaudubon.org.



The Golden Eagle September-October 2017

## Fourth annual New Roots Program for youths a success

By Liz Urban
June 2017 marked the fourth
year that GEAS and our many
partners offered the New Roots
Program, engaging refugee and

Program, engaging refugee and immigrated youth in a place-based environmental education experience.

Thanks in large part to Boise National Forest and individual donations, we were able to take 27 youths from around the world and introduce them to many of our area's amazing places through 12 days of field trips. We participated in stewardship activities, such as planting sagebrush at Blacks Creek Bird Reserve, helping to install a pollinator garden in Garden City, and more.

We learn through a great

and Amy Thomsen.

number of activities and
experiences, reflect through art
projects, and have a blast while
doing it. This year's leadership team
was amazing at keeping our largest
group of kids ever engaged throughout our two weeks. Many
thanks to Megan Jones, Godefroid Ntawuyamara, Jillian Hanson,
Eric Willadsen, Serena Rasmussen, and Anne Sylvaine Godard.
We also want to thank our volunteers: Bill Brudenell, Ingrid
Brudenell, Kim Churra, Ann DeBolt, Sean Finn, Genny Gerke,
Becca Ruth, Amy Silver, Jim Snow, Judy Snow, Alex Takasugi



The community and partner support for this program is immense and inspiring. Our partners host us at their sites, teach about their area of expertise, and share their personal experiences of how they came to have the jobs they do. In 2017 our partners included: the Boise National Forest, Idaho Botanical Garden, BSU's Intermountain Bird Observatory, Idaho Center for Outdoor Education, Boise Urban Garden School, College of Western Idaho, Jim Hall Foothills Learning Center, College of Idaho, Bee City USA-Garden City, the Four Rivers and Morley Nelson



Photos by Liz Urban

Birds of Prey National Conservation Area, the Bureau of Land Management, Yellowstone Wolf Recovery Project, Celebration Park, the Walla Walla District of the Army Corps of Engineers, Wild Lens Inc., the Land Trust of the Treasure Valley, and the Idaho Office for Refugees.

This year additional support came from Zen Riot Yoga Studio and the Idaho Forest Products Commission. Our collaboration is creating a lasting impact on these youths, and we are thankful for all that we have accomplished together. Over the past four years we have spent more than 3,000 hours in nature with more than 60 youths. Join the GEAS monthly speaker series on September 19 to learn more about this year's program, or visit our Facebook page to learn more: https://www.facebook.com/NewRootsProgram/.

#### **GEAS** receives North Face 2017 Explorer Grant

GEAS's New Roots Program has received a \$10,000 grant to help fund our 2018 program.

The North Face selected 43 nonprofits from around the country that create opportunities for people to develop a passion for the outdoors and desire to care for local parks and public lands. Selected programs use outdoor exploration as a catalyst for positive personal or societal change, to encourage healthy lifestyles, and promote environmental stewardship.

"A desire and willingness to explore and care for our outdoor playgrounds is part of our brand DNA," said Ann Krcik, senior director of Outdoor Exploration at The North Face. "We are proud to support these outstanding programs that expose participants to benefits of the outdoors. Through The North Face Explore Fund grants, we are building a community of outdoor explorers and inspiring people to love and protect the places where we play."

#### Wildlife photographer to highlight banquet

Paul Bannick, an award-winning wildlife photographer specializing in the natural history of North America with a focus on birds and habitat, will highlight the GEAS annual banquet March 10, 2018.

Bannick will present a program featuring video, sound and stories from the field and several dozen new images from his new book, *Owl: A Year in the Lives of North American Owls*. He uses



Photo courtesy Paul Bannick

intimate yet dramatic images to follow owls through the course of one year and in their distinct habitats. Audiences will witness the four seasons on territory, as each stage in an owl's life is chronicled through rare images: courtship, mating and nesting in spring; fledging and feeding of young in summer; dispersal and gaining independence in fall; and finally winter's migrations and competitions for food.

His program shows how owls use the unique resources available to them in each habitat to face those challenges. All 19 species found in Canada and the United States are featured in photos, video and narrative throughout the book, with a special focus on the northern pygmy owl, great gray owl, burrowing owl and snowy owl.

*Owl* is a stunning follow-up to Bannick's bestselling title, *The Owl and the Woodpecker*, giving bird lovers yet another gorgeous photographic tribute, engaging natural history, and a compelling call to preserve the habitats that sustain these most iconic of birds.

Nearly 10 years of working in some of the most remote parts of the continent, at the darkest hours of the day, tracking owls as they move through their lives has rewarded Paul with striking images that he uses in his book and presentations.

Be sure to save the date for this fascinating presentation, March 10, 2018.



### **GEAS** to launch T-shirt fund-raiser

GEAS has launched its first T-shirt fund-raiser, and anyone interested can buy a shirt or sweatshirt online now at www.

bonfire.com/ golden-eagleaudubon/, or visit the GEAS website for a link.

The geometric feather design was contributed by Liz Urban, and can be ordered on a number of T-shirts, both long-sleeve and short-sleeve, tank tops, or sweatshirts in a variety of colors. The campaign will end on September 11, so be sure to order a T-shirt soon!

A portion of the proceeds from each shirt will benefit GEAS, and the shirts should arrive in the mail by the end of September.

Thank you for your continued support and we

hope you enjoy the design and shirts!







Brown pelican

Photo by N.S. Nokkentved

If you are receiving a paper copy of The Golden Eagle and you would like to help save GEAS some printing and postage expense, please sign up to receive our "new newsletter" e-mail message every month by sending an e-mail so stating to: admin@goldeneagleaudubon.org

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- For membership/subscription information, renewals, or change of address, e-mail membership@goldeneagleaudubon.org.
- For newsletter submissions, send an e-mail to Niels S. Nokkentved at sparre47@gmail.com. The deadline for newsletter submissions is the second Sunday of the month.

#### We invite you to join the Golden Eagle Audubon Chapter

Membership in the local and support local activiti	1	ubscription to The Golden Eagle,	and all my dues remain with the local chapter
Name:			☐ Student membership \$15
E-Mail:		(allows for website login)	☐ Individual membership \$20
Address:			1
City:	State:	Zip:	☐ Family membership \$35
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