

Phainopepla



Published by the
San Fernando Valley Audubon Society
A Chapter of the National Audubon Society



October 2011

Volume 62 No.8

MONTHLY PROGRAMS:

General Membership Meeting **Thursday, October 27, 2011, 7:00 p.m.**



Join us to see Dave Weeshoff's photographs and hear his presentation about his recent trip to Midway Atoll, home of two million amazing birds. Dave will discuss the effects of the recent Japanese tsunami, WWII, and modern day pollution on the island. Midway is the only accessible National Wildlife Refuge within the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument, home to the world's largest albatross colony.

Midway Atoll, 1,100 miles northwest of Honolulu, consists of three islands (1 ½ square miles) and a shallow white sand lagoon, sheltered from the surrounding Pacific Ocean by a coral reef. The atoll supports over two million seabirds, including the world's largest colonies of Laysan and Black-footed Albatross, the only breeding pair of Short-tailed Albatrosses outside of Japan, and many other sea and shorebirds. The lagoon teems with colorful fishes and the endangered Hawaiian Monk Seal, Hawaiian Green Sea Turtles, and Spinner Dolphins.

San Fernando Valley Audubon's monthly General Meetings and Program Presentations are held on the fourth Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m. (except July and August). We meet at the Encino Community Center, 4935 Balboa Blvd. Encino. See October 27 under Calendar of Events for directions.



Friday, November 4, 2011 Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology A Special Fieldtrip replacing General Meeting

The Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology, (WFVZ), sometimes referred to as “The Camarillo Bird Museum,” hosts a natural history collection specializing in eggs and nests of birds in addition to 56,000 bird study skins from around the world and a good number of mounted specimens. The Western Foundation is a research and education institution dedicated to bird conservation. SFVAS participants have the opportunity to come early (at 6:30 pm) to be treated to a brief private introduction to the collection and a chance to view some of the wonders contained therein. At 7:30 pm the evening’s program will begin.

The WFVZ’s Executive Director, Dr. Linnea Hall, will present a seminar on the Foundation’s long-term research project in Guatemala. Guatemala has been little-studied ornithologically, and was especially neglected during the country’s 30 plus years of civil war, which only ended in the late 1990s. As a consequence, Rene Corado, the WFVZ’s Collection’s Manager, started working in the country in 2001 with two primary objectives: to document and describe breeding by resident Guatemalan birds, and to describe the distribution of species throughout the country. Starting in 2005, Dr. Hall expanded the project to include monitoring birds in central Guatemala, and to describe breeding and population changes in an area that is ravaged by severe environmental contamination. Results from both the first and second phases of the project will be presented and discussed with lots of birds and egg pictures to ensure that everyone comes away know-

ing something about the birds of this small but mighty country!

Dr. Hall has been studying habitat use and population dynamics of wildlife, especially bird, since 1989. She has directed and conducted fieldwork on more than 50 original studies of wildlife of the western U.S. and now Guatemala, and has mentored more than 20 graduate students on their own projects, both as Assistant Professor of Avian Ecology at CSU Sacramento (1996-2000), and as Director of the WFVZ. She co-edited two books on birds (on condors and cowbirds), and is the sole or co-author of over 35 journal articles on wildlife, as well as numerous reports. She also recently co-authored the book, **Egg and Nest** with Rene Corado. She has been working at the WFVZ since 2002, teaching bird ID and other ornithology classes, conducting research, coordinating staff and volunteers, and fundraising to run the WFVZ.

If you have never been to the Western Foundation, you are in for a treat. First time visitors are always amazed and delighted!. For information on carpools to the Western Foundation for this program, please contact: Heather Medvitz at

Heather.Medvitz@sfvaudubon.org (818)222-4430.

Directions to the Western Foundation: From the San Fernando Valley, take Hwy. 101 to Pleasant Valley/Santa Rosa Road exit, turn left at the end of the off-ramp, going back over the freeway. Follow Pleasant Valley west for 2 miles to where it crosses Lewis Road (at a signal). Move to the right lane and continue heading west on Pleasant Valley to the second street on the right, Calle San Pablo. (If you cross the railroad tracks, you have gone too far.) Turn right on Calle San Pablo. The foundation is the fifth building on the left (439 Calle San Pablo). †

PHAINOPEPLA Photo of the Month: Black-Hooded Parakeets, by Louise Rishoff



Photographer info: Taken by Louise Rishoff with a Canon Rebel EOS, with a 70-300mm lens and 1.4 teleconverter

I tripped on some stairs in February and broke my foot, so hiking was out for a while and all I could do was photograph what I could see from my car. This picture was taken in the Peter Strauss parking lot from my car window. I was actually monitoring an Acorn Woodpecker nest when I heard a major racket and in came a flock of screeching parakeets that then lined up on that board fence rail and proceeded to feed on the spring oats.

Louise Rishoff is a retired lawyer, former Mayor of Agoura Hills, and now the District Director for State Assembly member Julia Brownley.

Please submit your photos to Lynn.Maddox@sfvaudubon.org. Only one picture per photographer per month please! Ideally, the picture will be taken within our area and the information will include the location and the date it was taken, what camera and lens was used, a short account of how the picture was taken, and profile of the photographer. Good shooting! Thanks, Lynn. †



Programs for Kids, Families, and Adult Beginning Birdwatchers

by Muriel Kotin,

In addition to its broad menu of public bird walks and the Sepulveda Basin Environmental Education Program (SBEEP) for classrooms in grades 4–6 from LAUSD, SFVAS offers a variety of other programs.

The Youth Activities Committee leads bird walks for families and beginning adults at the Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Reserve on the Second Saturday of the month, October through March only. The fall and winter is when the presence of plenty of easily viewed water birds can be relied on. There are usually several leaders at each of these walks to provide small groups and individual attention to participants. The walks start at 9 a.m. and last from an hour and a half to considerably longer, depending on the needs of each group.

The Youth Activities Committee also leads bird walks for youth groups and classrooms that are not able to participate in the SBEEP program. Usually these walks are for grades three through twelve. Committee Chair Muriel Kotin will be happy to discuss the possibilities. Her home phone is (310) 457-5796.

One of our special walks was a field trip last fall for the third grade from Campbell Hall, a private school. Although our walks are free, sometimes the students or parents make a voluntary donation to our education programs. After its field trip, Campbell Hall was so generous as to host a bake sale on behalf of our education programs and its organizing parents wrote a thank you note on most creative stationery,

as you can see from the accompanying image.

For information about SBEEP field trips, please contact Sepulveda Basin Education Chair, Carolyn Oppenheimer. If you wish to have a speaker visit your school, youth group or adult group meeting, please contact our President Dave Weeshoff who is Classroom Education Chair.



Second Saturday Bird Walks For Families and Beginners

9:00—11:00 a.m.

October through March

Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Reserve (FREE)

The San Fernando Valley Audubon Society will lead **FREE bird walks for families and beginners on the second Saturday of the month, October 2011—March 2012.** (Saturdays: Oct. 8, Nov. 12, Dec. 10, Jan. 14, Feb. 11, and Mar. 10.)

Stroll through the lovely Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Reserve, enjoying its trails and lake. Many birds come here in winter. Learn about the birds and why they come here.

These Walks are for

- People trying their first bird walk
- Beginning birdwatchers
- Families with school-age children.

Time and Meeting Place: The Wildlife Area entrance and amphitheater are in the southeast part of Woodley Park. Meet at the amphitheater at 9:00 a.m.

Directions: Turn north from Burbank Blvd. onto Woodley Ave., which is ½ mile west of the San Diego Freeway (I-405). Travel about ½ mile to the second possible right turn and turn east (right) at the sign for the Wildlife Reserve. Bear right at the fork in the road and go east ½ mile to the Wildlife Area parking. Walk south past the monumental rocks and restroom building to the amphitheater.

Equipment and Clothing: Wear sturdy shoes and layered clothing. A cap or hat with a brim is suggested. We have binoculars to loan or you can use your own.

More Information: Muriel Kotin at 310.457.5796 or Linda Jones at 818.831.6061. Reservations are not needed except for large groups. Rain cancels. Please visit our website www.sfvaudubon.org. ♪





Calendar of Events

Calendar of Events—October

Saturday, October 1. Season Opener! Upper Las Virgenes Canyon Open Space Bird Walk. 8:00–11:00 a.m. Directions: Exit the Ventura Freeway (U.S. 101) at Las Virgenes Canyon Road and proceed north to the trailhead parking area at the end of the road. Please bring plenty of water and wear proper shoes. No toilets are available on site. Leader: Jim Hardesty (818) 346-6712, Jim.Hardesty@sfvaudubon.org.

Saturday, October 1. Castaic Lake Bird Walk. 8:00–10:00 a.m. Directions: Take closest freeway to I-5 North and exit at Parker Road. Turn right and proceed to stop sign (Castaic Road), proceed to next stop sign (Lake Hughes Road), proceed to next stop sign (Castaic Lake Drive) and turn right. Entrance to the park is on the right. Parking is in Lot 4, so make a right turn after the kiosk, then an immediate left turn into the lot, parking to the left. Leader: Roger McClure. For information, contact the staff.

Sunday, October 2. Sepulveda Basin Bird Walk. 8:00 a.m. Directions: Exit the San Diego Freeway (I-405) on Burbank Blvd. Go west about one-half mile to Woodley Avenue and turn right (north). Travel about one-half mile to the second possible right turn (at sign for the Water Reclamation Plant and Japanese Garden). Turn right and go east about one-half mile to Wildlife Area parking at the end of the road. Leader: Kris Ohlenkamp. Contact him at (818) 986-7785 or kris.ohlenkamp@sfvaudubon.org.

Saturday, October 8. Season Opener! Beginners and Family Bird Walk. 9:00–11:00 a.m. Come on out for a fun bird walk at Sepulveda Basin! These popular walks, designed for beginning birders and school-age children, are resuming for the current cool season. Directions: Exit the San Diego Freeway (I-405) on Burbank Blvd. Go west about one-half mile to Woodley Avenue and turn right (north). Travel about one-half mile to the second possible right turn (at sign for the Water Reclamation Plant and Japanese Garden). Turn right and go east about one-half mile to Wildlife Area parking at the end of the road. Meet across the road from the parking lot at the low buildings. Leader(s): Muriel Kotin, (310) 457-5796 or Linda Jones, (818) 831-6061. Reservations are not needed except for large groups. Rain cancels. Please visit our website www.sfvaudubon.org.

Saturday, October 8. Placerita Canyon Nature Center Docents' Bird Walk. 8:00 a.m. NOTE: New start time. Directions: Take the 405 or 5 Freeway north to the 14 Freeway. Exit the 14 at Placerita Canyon. Turn right at the end of the off ramp and continue about 1.5 miles to the park entrance. Turn right and park at the Nature Center. Various leaders. For more information, call the Nature Center at (661) 259-7721.

Sunday, October 9. Descanso Gardens Bird Walk. 8:00 a.m. Meet at the first wide place after entering the gardens. Admission is FREE for early birders. Located at 1418 Descanso Drive, La Cañada. Leader: Karen Johnson or Nancy Herron Knode. For more information, contact Dottie Ecker, (818) 790-0659.

Saturday, October 15. Monthly Field Trip to El Dorado Park in Long Beach. 8:00 a.m. Directions: Take the 405 Freeway to the Studebaker Road exit in Long Beach. Go north on Studebaker to Spring Street, then turn east (right) on Spring to the park entrance. The parking fee is \$7. Meet in the Nature Center parking lot. Leader: Richard Barth (310) 276-0342.

Saturday, October 15. Santa Monica Mts. Conservancy Bird Walk at Towsley Canyon. 8:00–10:00 a.m. Directions: Go north on I-5 through Santa Clarita, exit Calgrove and turn west (left) under the freeway and then left again on the Old Road. Watch for the sign, "Ed Davis Park at Towsley Canyon." Turn right and park in the back lot. Meet at the kiosk. Leader: Roger McClure. For further information, call (661) 252-6187.

Sunday, October 16. Malibu Creek State Park Bird Walk. 8:00 a.m. Meet at the second (lower) day-use parking lot. Entrance to the park is on the west side of Las Virgenes Road, just south of Mulholland Hwy. Entrance fee is \$12 per car. Leader(s): Muriel Kotin, muriel.kotin@sfvaudubon.org, (310) 457-5796, and/or Art Langton, (818) 887-0973.

Tuesday, October 18. O'Melveny Weekday Walk at O'Melveny Park, Granada Hills. 9:00 a.m. Directions: Take the 118/Ronald Reagan Freeway and exit at Balboa Blvd. Turn north, driving two miles to Sesnon, turn left going west 0.6 miles, turn right at park entrance. Meet in the parking lot. **RAIN CANCELS.** Contact Carolyn Oppenheimer at, (818) 885-7493, with any questions (before 7 p.m.) or carolyn.oppenheimer@sfvaudubon.org.

Sunday, October 23. Descanso Gardens Bird Walk. 8:00 a.m. See October 9 for details.

Thursday, October 27. SFVAS General Membership Meeting. 7:00 p.m. Encino Community Center, 4935 Balboa Blvd., Encino. Located between Moorpark and Ventura Blvd., on the west side of Balboa just south of the Presbyterian Church.

Dave Weeshoff, SFVAS President, will share his photos and stories of his trip to Midway Atoll. For more information see Monthly Program, page one. ♪



Calendar—November

Friday, November 4. SFVAS General Membership Meeting. 6:30 p.m. SPECIAL Field Trip to the Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology. Directions:

From the San Fernando Valley, take Hwy. 101 to Pleasant Valley/Santa Rosa Road exit, turn left at the end of the off-ramp, going back over the freeway. Follow Pleasant Valley west for 2 miles to where it crosses Lewis Road (at a signal). Move to the right lane and continue heading west on Pleasant Valley to the second street on the right, Calle San Pablo. (If you cross the railroad tracks,

you have gone too far.) Turn right on Calle San Pablo. The foundation is the fifth building on the left (439 Calle San Pablo). See page two for more information.

Saturday, November 5. Upper Las Virgenes Walk.

8:00–11:00 a.m. See October 1 for details.

Saturday, November 5. Castaic Lake Bird Walk. 8:00–10:00 a.m. See October 1 for details.

Sunday, November 6. Sepulveda Basin Bird Walk. 8:00 a.m. See October 2 for details.

Future Field Trips: (Details later)

October 15. El Dorado Park (Long Beach)

November 19. Ventura Harbor and Water Treatment Ponds (No field trip in December due to Christmas Count)

Monthly Fieldtrip Report by Richard Barth

Our first montane birding trip of the summer was to Mt. Pinos on July 16. We covered the Iris Meadow area at 8300 ft. and then hiked to the 8800 ft. summit.

The most exciting find of the day was a family of Golden-crowned Kinglets. This species is not easy to find in July in southern California, and discovering evidence of breeding was a real treat for us. Clark's Nutcracker is often missed on this trip, but this year we spotted eight individuals scattered here and there on our trek. Green-tailed Towhee, White-headed Woodpecker, "Thick-billed" Fox Sparrow, Cassin's Finch, Mountain Chickadee, Hairy Woodpecker and Dusky Flycatcher are target birds on this trip and all were tallied. Brown Creeper was readily seen this year as were White-breasted and Pygmy Nuthatches. Pine Siskin, Purple Finch and Rock Wren are always nice finds on the mountain. Other species of interest: Western Wood-Pewee, Chipping Sparrow, Violet-green Swallow (many), Steller's Jay, House Wren, Western Bluebird, American Robin, Orange-crowned Warbler and Yellow-rumped Warbler. Surprisingly we saw no hummingbirds despite the many wildflowers on hand.

On August 20 we birded along the Angeles Crest in the San Gabriel Mountains---visiting Charlton Flat, Chilao, Buckhorn and Grassy Hollow.

White-headed Woodpecker, Mountain Chickadee, Green-tailed Towhee, Brown Creeper, Clark's Nutcracker (seen in flight only) and Olive-sided Flycatcher were present and accounted for. We tallied Cassin's Vireo and a possible Plumbeous---PLVI would be a pretty special record up here in August. White-breasted Nuthatch, Pygmy Nuthatch, Steller's Jay, Western Scrub-Jay, Wrentit (heard), Oak Titmouse, Western Wood-Pewee, Pacific-slope Flycatcher, Wilson's Warbler, Orange-crowned Warbler, Lawrence's Goldfinch (not often seen on this trip), Band-tailed Pigeon, Black Phoebe, Spotted Towhee, Northern Flicker, Nuttall's Woodpecker, Acorn Woodpecker, Dark-eyed Junco and American Robin kept us occupied. Western Bluebird was the most abundant species we found. Among our misses this year were Purple Finch, Cassin's Finch, Dusky Flycatcher and "Thick-billed" Fox Sparrow. ✚

Audubon-at-Home Mailbox by Alan Pollack

Please e-mail Alan Pollack, our Audubon-at-Home Chair, with any questions you have with regard to creating a wildlife-friendly garden that can be used for publication. Alan offers FREE consultation/landscape design to help you make your yard wildlife friendly. He also gives a FREE, PowerPoint slide show/lecture to community groups, high school, and college classes on attracting wildlife to your garden and sustainable gardening practices. He can be contacted at (818) 340-2347 or at alan.pollack@sfaudubon.org. ✚

NEW DISCOVERY ABOUT GYRFALCON –Submitted by Linda Jones

This largest and possibly most beautiful of falcons has been discovered overwintering at sea, living and hunting on pack ice. This is the first time any falcon has been found spending long periods at sea. They are believed to prey on other sea birds such as gulls and guillemots. Gyrfalcons in Iceland and the low Arctic are considered to be residents, staying in the same general area all year. In the high Arctic, however, they are known to be migratory, although little was known about where they overwintered. For full article on BBC Nature by Matt Walker (June 20, 2011), go to www.bbc.co.uk/nature/13791688. ✚



ROLL OVER, ARCHAEOPTERYX—Submitted by Linda Jones

On July 27 a paper published in the scientific journal *Nature* described a new species of feathered bird-like dinosaur from northeastern China which they named Xiaotingiazhengi. This fact alone is exciting enough, but the addition of the animal to the dinosaur family tree has produced the startling conclusion that Archaeopteryx, the so-called “first bird,” was not in fact a bird at all. A summary of the paper, including illustrations of how the newly discovered first bird and Archaeopteryx may have appeared in life, can be found in the blog, Field of View. The article, “New Research: Archaeopteryx Was Not a Bird” was written by Matt Mendenhall, Associate Editor of *Birdwatching*. <http://bit.ly/oAtThG>

The above was based on a posting in BirdChat also by Mendenhall. Let’s hope somebody comes up with a pronounceable nickname for the discovery.

Bird Myths —Submitted by Dave Weeshoff

Taken from: “**How do you separate the myth from the reality? It’s not always easy!**,” by Eirik A.T. Blom, *BirdWatcher’sDigest.com*

Bird watching has its own set of myths. No matter how many times certain myths are debunked, they continue to appear, and there are always a few folks ready to believe them and pass them on.

What they all have in common is that they are not true. Entertaining for sure, but not true. If you hang around bird watchers you are going to hear at least a few of them. If you hear any of these, jump right in and set the record straight. If you believe that one of these is true, track down the information. My bet is that it will be a dead end, but I’ve been wrong before.

1. You should not throw rice at the bride and groom at weddings because birds eat it and it swells up in their stomach and kills them. Sometimes the myth goes that it causes them to explode.

Not true. If it were, there would be exploding bird stories all over the national press every June. Think about it. Lots of birds feast in rice fields every year, irritating rice farmers to distraction. If eating rice caused birds to explode, most rice fields would look like a popcorn machine in the harvest season, with little puffs and explosions providing constant entertainment. Quite a vision, and one that the press would never miss.

And there is no difference between rice in fields and rice in bags from the supermarket. Birds have no trouble digesting rice, or any other “expanding” vegetable. I am all in favor of throwing birdseed at weddings, which is what proponents of this myth urge as a solution. I like the symbolism of throwing birdseed. But rice is fine, too.

2. You should take down your bird feeders in the fall because they keep birds from migrating and these birds will freeze to death.

This one will not go away. I have seen it raised on the same discussion group as many as five times in two months in the fall. It makes a little more sense than most other myths because most of us who feed birds have seen a lingering individual at one time or another. From that we leap to “If the feeder weren’t here, the bird wouldn’t be either.”

The problem is that the leap jumps over the facts about bird migration. Virtually all long-distance migrants, at least all the ones that cannot survive the winter in North America, move in response to genetic and environmental forces. Warblers and vireos and flycatchers pack up and head for the tropics every year not because they are running out of food, but because winter is coming. Their migration happens at a time when there is a wealth of natural food available, enough to fatten them up for the rigors of the journey.

The ones that stay do not do so because there is food to be had; they stay because there is a glitch in their genetic makeup. If, having failed to follow the rest of their tribe, they don’t go, they may end up at a feeder because there is no other food to be had. The hard truth is that the vast majority of the birds that fail to migrate die. But it is not because of feeders. Feeders probably extend, briefly, the life of a few of them.

This is also true of hummingbirds, a favorite group among proponents of the “take down the feeder” philosophy. Look at it logically. If feeders were so powerful a magnet that they could undo uncounted years of evolution, there would be tens of thousands of ruby-throated hummingbirds trying to winter in the eastern half of the continent because there are that many feeders.

So keep those feeders up if you enjoy watching the birds. You are not “seducing” any bird to linger beyond its time. ♪



JOIN THE SAN FERNANDO VALLEY AUDUBON
To get started with your membership,
 use the following form and mail to:
 SFV Audubon Society
 Attn: Membership
 P.O. Box 7769
 Van Nuys, CA 91409
 Make all checks payable to SFV Audubon.

SFVAS Membership

Regular 1-yr Chapter Membership....\$20 \$ _____
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 Optional First-Class Postage.....\$5 \$ _____
 Contributions to SFVAS..... \$ _____
 Total..... \$ _____

New Member ____ Renewal ____ School ____
 Name _____
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 Email _____
 How did you learn about SFVAS? _____

Save a tree! I DO NOT want to receive a hardcopy of the *Phainopepla*; I'll get my news online

The PHAINOPEPLA, published ten times a year, is the newsletter of the San Fernando Valley Audubon Society, P.O. Box 7769, Van Nuys, CA 91409, 818-347-3205. San Fernando Valley Audubon Society is a chapter of the National Audubon Society, a non-profit conservation/education organization, and is dedicated to "the conservation of wildlife and natural resources."

Articles, letters, drawings, and photographs concerning conservation, the science and ecology, birding, chapter activities, and articles of interest to the membership are welcome for publication in the PHAINOPEPLA.

Material from other newsletters or newspaper should include the source and date. Copy for the PHAINOPEPLA should be in the hands of the editor by the 3rd of the month to be included in the following month's newsletter.

An introductory membership to the National Audubon Society is \$20 and should be sent separately to:
 National Audubon Society, Membership Data Center
 P.O. Box 422250, Palm Coast, FL 32142-2250. Be sure to write "C1ZC120Z" on the form to assure assignment to our chapter. For renewals, use the form in the National Audubon magazine, "Audubon".

If you have any questions about membership, renewals, change of address or any other membership concerns, please contact Rose Leibowitz at (818) 990-5405 or e-mail her at rose.leibowitz@sfvaudubon.org.

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For Chapter leaders' email addresses, see our web site:

www.SFVAudubon.org



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Phainopepla October 2011

San Fernando Valley Audubon Society
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Please visit our website
to see this issue in full color!
www.sfvaudubon.org



Dated Material

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INSIDE THIS MONTH'S ISSUE:

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Membership

SFVAS is pleased to welcome the following new members. We hope you will get involved with our many field trips and activities. Please contact Rose Leibowitz, Membership Chair, with any questions at rose.leibowitz@sfvaudubon.org.

Local:

Keith & Joan Evans
Barbara Heidemann

National:

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Patricia Anderson
Nani Barnes
Lewis Barth
Gerald Bell
Donna Bion
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John Ruocco
George Ryan
Samborsky
Leota Schmidt
Susan Schultz

Alvin Shafer
Marsha Shaftel
Gail Shaw
June Shelby
William Sheridan
Stuart Silverman
Carmena Smith
Beulah Sorenson
Tania Spire,
Alex Turpinseed
Vincent Varsh
Judith Vergun
Maryamber Villa
Andrew Volpe
Ann Vorn Cleff
David Warren
Colette Weiss
Pauline Wihlborg
Leora Wilson
Margaret Wilson
Gail Yockey
C. Zeccardi