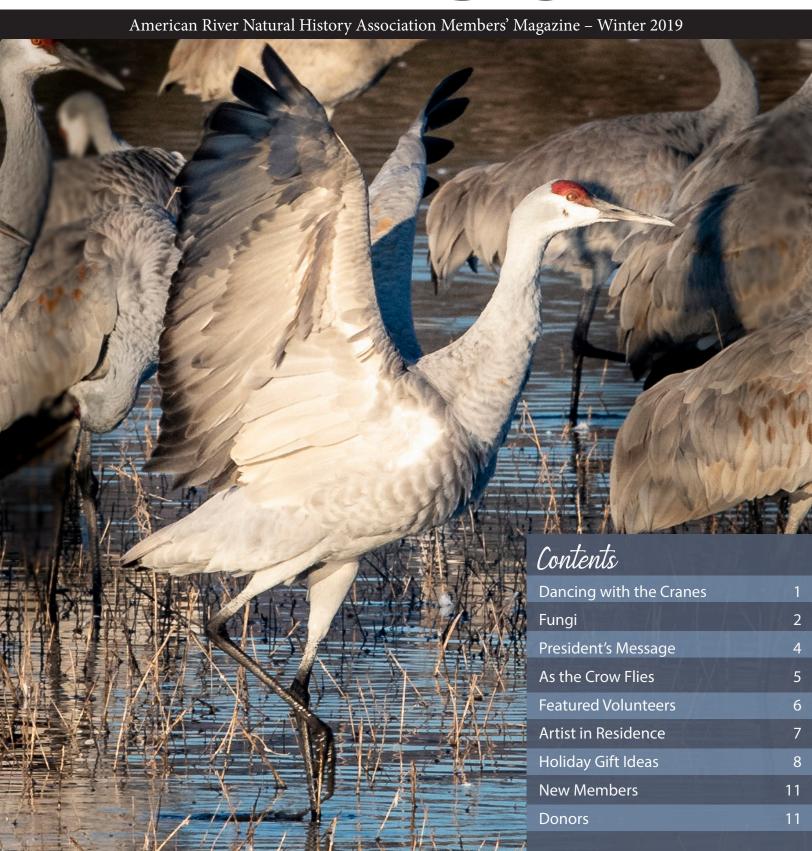


THE ACORN



Dancing with the Cranes

Joey Johnson

The American River Natural History Association (ARNHA) sponsored travel experience to view the Sandhill Cranes and the Bosque del Apache Wildlife Refuge in New Mexico was a great success!



Crane Watching by Betty Malmgren

Fourteen travelers and our fabulous guides, Paul Tebbel and Tim Dice, migrated out to Socorro, New Mexico from the Albuquerque airport on Friday, November 15th. After settling into our lodging and layering up, we piled into the van and headed out to the Bosque to see the cranes and snow geese fly in for the night.

Saturday morning, we set out into the darkness in order to arrive at our special viewing spot in time for the sunrise and to see the cranes take off for their day of foraging. All at once, lines of snow geese appeared in the sky, also coming into this wetland area. It was quite the sight as they covered the water.

After getting fortified at the hotel with some breakfast and coffee, we made our way to Ladder Ranch, which is one of the ranches owned by Ted Turner.



Morning Scene by Joey Johnson



This was primarily a motor tour with some stops along the way. The ranch is immense, so we only toured a portion. They have an active bison breeding program. We visited the stockyard and saw bison out in the wilds of the preserve. One of our stops along the Palomas stream included remnants of the Mimbres culture, including petroglyphs.



Bison on the Ranch by Joey Johnson

Sunset found us back at the Bosque for the evening fly in. There were just enough clouds in the sky to create a magnificent sunset as a backdrop to the cranes, geese and ducks, all communicating in their own way.



Bosque Sunset by Joey Johnson

On our last day of the trip, we watched the cranes and geese take off one more time. This viewing area is very popular with photographers with their big lenses. It is quite an amusing sight to see everyone lined up and aimed.

After breakfast and check out, we took a motor tour of other areas of the Bosque. We met up with our crane and goose friends feeding in a field maintained for this purpose. We also were treated to three roadrunners along the way.

This adventure was enriched by our two expert guides, Paul Tebbel, who is an expert in sandhill cranes and Tim Dice, who is a long time resident of New Mexico and experienced guide. Everyone came away with new knowledge and amazing memories.

This was the first travel adventure sponsored by ARNHA. ARNHA is currently considering a trip to Yellowstone national Park, June 4-7 2020 and perhaps a return to Bosque del Apache fi there is enough interest—so be sure to let us know if this is something you would like to do: info@sacnaturecenter.net

Everything Has Its Season — Even Fungi

Mary K. Hanson

Just like flowers, many fungi have a season during which they "bloom". In September and October, you no doubt saw the large yellow-orange brackets of Sulphur Shelf fungus throughout the Effie Yeaw Nature Preserve. They show up early because that particular kind of fungus doesn't really like to get its feet wet. It appears as the temperatures drop but before the rains come in.

Many of the other fungi you might see in the preserve like it wet, however, so the best time to see them is a day or two after a heavy rain between the months of November and February. In this article, we'll touch on three of more odd and interesting fungi: the Barometer Earthstar, Witches Butter, and the Jack-o-Lantern mushroom.

The Barometer Earthstar (*Astraeus hygrometricus*) is usually found in areas where there isn't a lot of really tall grass, like along the edges of the Meadow, Natoma and Woodland Trails in the preserve. These fungi have scaly-looking rays that surround a pale dome-shaped spore sack. When the earthstars first emerge, the rays are all folded up like a closed fist. Then when it rains, the rays open, bend back and flatten to expose the spore-bearing puffer belly in their center to the sun. When passing insects, deer or squirrels step on the earthstars, spores puff out from the sack like brown smoke and settle onto the ground where they'll stay until the following year when the emergence, unfolding and puffing starts again.





Left: Barometer Earthstar standing up on the tips of its rays, showing its spore sack to the sunlight. Right: This photo shows how the spores are ejected from the belly of the fungus.

Witches Butter (*Tremella mesenterica*), also commonly called Yellow Brain Fungus, is a kind of jelly fungus, and these guys need a lot of rain to get them to swell into their best, most impressive forms. You can usually find them growing



Witches Butter

on the limbs of oak trees, and on the surface of the branches that have fallen to the ground. They're comprised of over 60% water, and when they're dry, they look like thin, hard bundles of tissue paper. Jelly fungi do dou-

ble duty as both decomposers (breaking down the organic matter of trees) and parasites (feasting when they can on other fungi, like False Turkey Tail). Look for them along the Riverview and Woodland Trails along the shadier parts of the trail. Watch out, too, for Brown Jelly Fungus (Tremella foliacea) and Black Jelly Roll Fungus (Exidia glandulosa) which are often found alongside the Witches Butter.

The Jack-o-Lantern mushroom (*Omphalotus olivascens*) is often confused by inexperienced mushroom hunters with the chanterelle mushroom because both mushrooms have gills that run down the stipe (the stem of the mushroom). But the confusion can result in painful consequences because whereas chanterelles are edible, Jack-o-Lanterns are not. These dark orange mushrooms, which can take on an olive tint as they age, are poisonous and contain a toxin known as illudin. Although illudin has been linked to anti-cancer drugs created for humans, in its pure natural form it can be lethal. What's extra interesting about this particular mushroom is that its gills are bioluminescent, that is they glow a very pale green in the dark. You may be able to find these mushrooms along the Woodland Trail in the preserve. Look, but don't touch.





Left: Jack-o-Lantern mushroom. Right: The Jack-o-Lantern mushroom showing some of the dark olive tint the fungus can take on as it ages.



Other fungi you should be able to find during the winter months:

- 1 Lion's Mane (Hericium erinaceus) found near the Nature Center.
- 2 Oak Mazegill (*Trametes betulina*) found along the Pond Trail.
- False Turkey Tail (*Stereum hirsutum*) found throughout the preserve, which you can differentiate from true Turkey Tale (Trametes versicolor) by looking at its underside. True Turkey Tale is a polypore fungus and has a white porous underside, whereas False Turkey Tail is a crust fungus and has a smooth brown underside.
- 4 Elfin Saddle (*Helvella lacunose*) found along the Riverview, Pond and Natoma Trails.
- 5 Yellow Field Mushrooms, also called Egg Yolk Fungus (*Bolbitius vitellinus*) found in areas where there is a lot of wet grass.
- 6 Red Thread Mushrooms (*Marasmius plicatulus*) found throughout the preserve in grassy areas.
- 7 Brown Jelly Fungus (*Tremella foliacea*) usually found along the Woodland Trail.
- Haymaker Mushrooms (*Panaeolus foenisecii*), also called Mower's Mushrooms because they're often found on urban lawns. They're very common and can be found almost everywhere. They change a lot in color as they go through they're growing stages from dark brown or pale tan-gray.



On your treks through the Effie Yeaw Nature Preserve in the winter months, keep an eye out for local fungi, and share your photos of what you find with us.

Mary K. Hanson is an author, nature photographer and Certified California Naturalist. She got her naturalist certificate from the Effie Yeaw Nature Center and serves as a volunteer trail walker and member of the media committee. All of the photos shown with this article were taken by Mary at the preserve.



President's Message, Winter 2019

Hello! It is exciting to increase my involvement with the American River Natural History Association Board of Directors. I have found my new role as President to be full of new experiences, learning opportunities, and friendships. The work is stimulating and fulfilling – and sometimes the pace is fast and furious.

I am inspired by the number of people who visit, attend educational programs, and participate in special events at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center! All of our board members and staff are filled with gratitude when you open your hearts to give of your time and hard earned dollars to support our mission to educate our community about the natural environment. Thank you for your new and continuing support for the Effie Yeaw Nature Center.

I am constantly surprised that people from all over the seven-county Sacramento metropolitan region visit the Effie Yeaw Nature Center! We are one of the largest nature educators in the area. We have more demand for our educational programs than we can meet. It is our continuing goal to realize full program potential based on our community needs. The primary use of your donated dollars goes to support our educational programs. Our Winter Appeal should have arrived in your mailboxes and in-boxes. Please include us in your end-of-year giving plans.

Our staff and volunteers are remarkably kind and helpful. They jump into projects large and small. They are responsible for the success of our programming and events. Heather Gabel is an example of a wonderfully helpful staff person that regularly raises her hand to work on all sorts of projects – including stepping in as Acting Executive Director when the necessity arose. When the need has been great, Heather has not failed to show her dedication to the Nature Center. The American River Natural History Association Board thanks Heather for her extraordinary support for this organization.

We strive to put you and all members of our community first and foremost in our efforts at the Nature Center. Please come visit us soon and don't hesitate to say hi to me, and our amazing staff and volunteers.

-Laurie Weir

"Children are born naturalists. They explore the world with all of their senses, experiment in the environment, and communicate their discoveries to those around them."

~ The Audubon Nature Preschool





As the Crow Flies with Christy Berger

Tova Fleming

Blue light from the full-moon lit up the sky and poured down through the branches of the trees as visitors began arriving for "As the Crow Flies: Getting to Really Know Crows" with wildlife rehabber and co-founder of Sacramento Heron and Egret Rescue, Christy Berger. Guests told tales of seeing large groups of deer standing in the moonlight upon their arrival. As the few last folks trickled into the assembly building, which had been adorned with an impressive murder of paper crow cutouts, the coyotes began to yap and sing. The room grew quiet.



Students who attended the field study got to see two stages of the fly-in of the massive flock of crows as the made their way into downtown Sacramento for the night. Photo by Christy Berger.

Crows have fascinated the human imagination for thousands of years, Christy began. From the Norse to the many unique tribes of North America, crows (and ravens) have been the subject of human stories and art. The dozens of crow comics that slid across the screen while people waited for the program to begin spoke to this ongoing fascination. Crows may draw equal parts admiration and irritation depending on who you ask. Whether you see them a nuisance or a wonder, it is difficult to deny their intelligence. But what is intelligence, exactly?

Crows have long and intergenerational memories, grieving processes, and complex body and vocal languages. They solve problems, play, anticipate the future, and make tools. If you aren't already enamored by crows, you will be by the time the presentation is over.



Christy Berger with Onyx by Jennifer McKernon

The best bit, of course, is Onyx, the crow. Onyx was born with an eye condition that limits his vision so he is unable to survive in the wild. Christy Berger is licensed by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to care for Onyx as a wild life rehabber and brings him out to classrooms and educational events throughout the year.

Make no mistake, despite appearances, Onyx is a wild animal. If you want to know why crows don't make good pets (besides the fact that is illegal), be sure to read Effie Yeaw's story, "Carlyle the Crow" which appears in the ARNHA publication Effie Yeaw, Teacher Naturalist Visionary: A Sketch of Her Life available in the Discovery Store or online: www.sacnaturecenter.net/arnha/shop-books/

There is nothing like meeting a wild animal like Onyx up close. It is a powerful experience that can change people's perceptions and misconceptions about animals, and forge strong emotional ties to wildlife and the natural world. Onyx did his job well and the audience focused intently on him and his story.

Together, Christy and Onyx are helping people reconnect with the living breathing world that moves all around us each and every day. Onyx reminds us to pay attention, to use our senses, to ask questions and to be curious. Just being in his presence for a few minutes helps us rediscover the unbelievable wonder that can be found in the seemingly mundane.

Don't miss a chance to see these two in action!

"As the Crow Flies" is a part of the Nature of Things Series, a science-based program for adults who want to expand their knowledge of the natural world.

Learn more: www.sacnaturecenter.net/education/adult-programs/nature-of-things/



Featured Volunteers

By Margaret Leavitt, with invaluable assistance from Rachael Cowan

If you have visited the Effie Yeaw Nature Center on a Thursday, you have most likely been greeted by a smiling and enthusiastic Marilyn Escobar, ready to share with you her knowledge about and love for EYNC and the animals that call it home. If you have made a contribution to ARNHA through an appeal or "just because," you have received a warm thank-you note written in Elaine Hujambojoie's lovely cursive writing. And you have no doubt seen both Marilyn and Elaine working hard at special events.

But what you may not know about these two delightful women is that they are sisters, and volunteers at EYNC with a combined contribution over the last ten years of almost 10,000 hours! According to EYNC Volunteer

the city and its trees. Marilyn remembers hiking the EYNC preserve trails to the river and watching the Nature Center building being built, but it wasn't until she took a break one day from her work as a veterinary laboratory courier to get coffee in a local café and read the paper, that these sisters became involved with EYNC. In the paper she read that day, Marilyn noticed an announcement for an upcoming adult education program on owls at EYNC. She encouraged Elaine, recently retired from her job as a Directory Assistance Operator at AT&T, to accompany her to the owl program. At the program, which both enjoyed immensely, Elaine, who had been looking for a place to donate her time, picked up a volunteer application and began the sisters' long and valuable association with EYNC.



Sisters and dedicated EYNC volunteers Marilyn Escobar (left) and Elaine Hujambojoie spot birds in the EYNC Nature Study Area at a recent Bird and Breakfast. Photo by Kari Bauer

Coordinator Rachael Cowan, Elaine alone has over 5700 hours of volunteer service, the most hours of all currently active volunteers, and second only to Liz Williamson in the history of the volunteer program. Several years ago, Elaine's volunteer work was honored at the ARNHA Annual Meeting, and she celebrated her tenth anniversary as an EYNC volunteer this year. Marilyn, who retired a couple of years after Elaine and then became more involved in EYNC's volunteer program, has over 3600 hours, putting her among the top ten volunteers in terms of hours. She also marked ten years of volunteering at EYNC this year.

In 1971, Elaine, Marilyn and their mother, all newly single, relocated to Sacramento from Southern California following a visit in which, according to Elaine, they fell in love with

Elaine signed on as a Clerical Assistant in the EYNC office, doing data entry and writing the wonderfully personal thank-you notes that many of us have received. But her volunteer activities don't end there. She has volunteered in Animal Care, Trail Walking, Wildlife Count, Reception, and many special events and projects. Rachael notes, "I have the pleasure of working closely with Elaine, and her assistance makes so many aspects of volunteer coordination seamless. Thanks to Elaine's beautiful penmanship and thoughtful writing, our donors really feel appreciated when they receive a thank-you card from Effie Yeaw Nature Center."

When Marilyn retired, she joined her sister as an EYNC volunteer, taking on the role of receptionist all day on Thursdays. Most volunteer receptionists work a half-

day shift, but Marilyn started her reception career with volunteer Ethan Glass, who worked the desk all day, and Marilyn saw no reason not to do the same. On Thursdays, says Rachael, the EYNC staff "has the pleasure and reassurance of hearing Marilyn welcome visitors to the Nature Center and hear her tell the stories of our Animal Ambassadors." Marilyn has contributed to many other efforts at EYNC as well: Maidu Village Assistant, Habitat Restoration, Community Outreach tabling, Wildlife Count and special events. Marilyn has also served on the Preserve Management Committee, spending many hours, along with her sister, watering and caring for oak saplings.

One EYNC event really makes both sisters' eyes light up: Bird and Breakfast. Enthusiastic birders, and long-time participants in the event, they decided several years ago to give others the opportunity to attend the space-limited event as guests, and instead participate as volunteers. As Rachael observes, "Marilyn is noted for her wonderful cooking and baking skills, which have been on display at Bird and Breakfast" and other special events. At Bird and Breakfast, Marilyn has taken on responsibility for the gluten-free table, making sure that guests on special diets have the choice of something wonderful to eat.

Both women have an active life outside EYNC. Marilyn enjoys doing arts and crafts projects at home, participating in EYNC's adult education classes, and, of course, cooking!

Not surprisingly, Elaine loves the intimacy of handwritten letters and has several long-time pen pals. She also likes to travel, and has in recent years enjoyed trips to Costa Rica, New England Eastern Canada, and Hawaii. Both sisters mention a circle of dear friends with whom they celebrate holidays and birthdays.

It is a challenge to convey in an article the warmth and joy that these two sisters bring to EYNC and to everyone they encounter there. Rachael sums it up as: "Their dedication and passion for EYNC and the natural world makes you feel good about humanity and glad to be in their company." The uplift that you get from spending time with Elaine or Marilyn is reflected in Elaine's unusual last name, a name she created for herself, but the essence of which applies to both sisters. As Elaine explains it, "Hujambo" is Swahili for "Hello!" and "joie" is the French word for "joy" – hence, "Hello to Joy!" And joy, indeed, is what these two sisters bring to their work at EYNC.

A conversation with either sister about their volunteerism inevitably circles back to their love for EYNC. Both say it is the people who are drawn to EYNC who make the place so special for them, and both emphasize how much EYNC has become a home to them. "Once you belong to EYNC," says Marilyn, "you have a place here." How grateful we all are that Marilyn and Elaine found their way to EYNC.

Make 2020 a huge success by making a year-end gift to the Effie Yeaw Nature Center!



We know you love Nature! Spread the passion to a new generation of environmental champions! Thank you for your ongoing support and dedication to bringing hands-on environmental education and experiences to our community. In 2018-2019, at the Nature Center:

- 42,115 people explored, discovered, and learned in the Visitor Center
- 35,358 people walked the trails and experienced wonder and solace
- 16,322 students were served in environmental and Nisenan Maidu cultural education programs
- 4,049 of students were from Title 1 and underserved schools who received programs free of charge through our Urban Nature Program Grant
- 29 rescued animal ambassadors provided unique up-close encounters for our community

Consider a regular, recurring gift which helps us year-round! Gifts of lower amounts on a monthly basis allow you to have a bigger impact.

Make your gift online at www.sacnaturecenter.net/, over the phone: (916) 489-4918, or by mail: Effie Yeaw Nature Center, 2850 San Lorenzo Way, Carmichael, CA 95608

Did you know that you can also make a gift through your business? Bring nature to families and visibility to your organization through sponsorships and matches (starting at just \$1,000!). To find the best fit for your business, contact Heather Gabel at 916-489-4918 or HeatherG@SacNatureCenter.net



Molly Keller — Artist in Residence at Effie Yeaw Nature Center By Jackie DeLu

Have you noticed the beautiful bright colorful background paintings of our "Raptor of the Day" and songbird enclosures? Thank you goes to Molly Keller who dismantled the old background, cleaned out the "gooey gunk" etc. from years of bird activity, and installed her vision of a natural background.

The background is filled with bright colors and has lightened up the entry at the nature center. In addition, if you look closely you will see our own beloved kestrel ambassador, Rocky, peering out of the trees, among other critters hidden amidst the thoughtfully crafted habitat.

In addition, Molly designed the iconic acorn woodpecker that adorns the Nature Center's logo, and the beautiful map of the Nature Study Area. Love her work? She's got greeting cards of birds and other wildlife captured in lively and often playful action that can be purchased in the Discovery Store!

Molly is not only a painter, but she is also sculpture artist. She made the male and female acorn woodpeckers seen attached to the tree stump in the museum. She learned a paper mache technique to build the bird bodies, painted the appropriate acorn woodpecker colors (notice the headband on the female), and then fastened them onto the trunk.

Please take some time to appreciate her work. We are certainly lucky to have such a talented and dedicated volunteer!



Looking for Holiday Gift Ideas?

Look no further! Effie Yeaw Nature Center has something for every nature lover on your list-kids, craft lovers, and minimalists alike!







ANIMAL AMBASSADOR ADOPTIONS

Symbolic Animal Ambassador Adoptions make great gifts!

The Nature Center takes care of nearly 30 non-releasable animals native to the American River system. These animals cannot be returned to their native habitat. In many cases they have been injured, orphaned or grown too accustomed to people.

These animals have found their forever home at the Nature Center where they serve as ambassadors to their species by giving people the opportunity to develop a personal connection to these wild animals through up-close encounters.

Through our "Adopt an Animal" program your gift can help us provide for their care, food, vitamins, vet visits and medicine in the name of a loved one! They will receive an adoption certificate, information about the animal and more depending on the level of adoption.

Adopt Today!

www.sacnaturecenter.net/visit-us/resident-animals/

WINTER NATURE CAMPS

Consider giving the kid on your list a wonder-filled experience they will remember forever!

Our hands-on nature camps teach children about science and nature through hands on experience, up-close encounters with animal ambassadors, hikes, crafts, games and more! Ages 5-11. Registration is now open!

www.sacnaturecenter.net/education/nature-camps/winter/

GIVE NATURE

The perfect gift for those folks who don't really want more "stuff". Make a monthly recurring donation of \$8 or more in their name.

They'll receive the knowledge that they are helping bring people to nature through hands on and up close experiences that foster wonder, curiosity, peace of mind, and stewardship. They'll also receive free parking in the Nature Center lot, discounts on programs, and more!

Learn more about the benefits of membership

www.sacnaturecenter.net/support/join/

Become a Live Oak Sustainer with a monthly recurring donation of \$8 or more:

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Shopping on Amazon?

Use Amazon Smile: American River Natural History Association https://smile.amazon.com/





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- Jim Bennett help support EYNC and our rattlesnake population!
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Sacramento Valley Chapter California

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- Charles Saydah & Dean Conrad
- Samuel & Pat Scarlett
- Renee Schaffer
- · Gilbert & Joanne Schoefer
- Gwenda SchoenJoseph Schofield
- Brian SeckLanna Seuret in honor of Charlie Klinger

- Matson Sewell
- Steven Sewell
- · Francis Sheehan & Paula Huber
- · Martine Shelley
- · Sandra Shubb
- · Sierra Health Foundation
- · Patricia Simms
- · Edward Smith & Mary Lou Fairweather
- · Smoothie Patrol
- SMUD
- · Julie Spezia
- · Anne Spies
- · Norma Springsteen
- Carrie Stafford
- · Jane Steele
- · Morna Stephens
- Rebecca Stone
- Robert & Sherry Stuart
- Sai Archana & Naresh Sukumar in memory of Unborn Children and Our Dog Snoopy
- · Robert Sydnor
- Sharon Tapia
- · Jaclyn & Jon Teofilo
- · Laura A. Thompson
- · Dale Tilton
- · Tamara Todd in honor of Kirana Todd
- · Bohdan & Motria Tomkiw
- · James & Joyce Trawick
- · Brett & Teresa Trimble
- · Warren & Mary Truitt
- · Majorie Tuckerman
- · Del & Alta Tura
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- · United Way California Capital Region
- Usborne book & More
- Linda Vallin
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- · Lorene Vanzandt
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- William White
- · William White Jr.
- Kate Williams & Tom Gohring
- · Liz Williamson

- Rachel Womack
- · Nathan Woods
- · Lucinda Woodward
- · Nanci Lee Woody
- · Tommy & Ingeborg Wright
- · Jacob Wypasek
- Suzanne Yackey in memory of Jack & Zilpha Hiele
- · William Yeates
- · Ray & Carol Zelinski
- · In Memory of Pete Hayes
 - · Paula Baldi & Simone Worsham
 - Ann Doersch & Stephanie Monzon
 - Edward Harper & Susan Scott
 - · Claudia Hulbe
 - Peggy & Bruce Kennedy
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