



THE CHAT

February 2021 VOL. 50 #6

Due to the global Coronavirus pandemic, all ASC planned in- person programs and meetings through March, 2021 have been cancelled or postponed. But we are safely continuing online. For the latest info, please visit our website at auduboncorvallis.org.

ASC General Meeting

(via Zoom Webinar)

February 18, 2020 at 7 pm

Todd Katzner, “Raptor Migration and Tracking”

Dr. Katzner is a Research Wildlife Biologist at the Snake River Field Station of the U.S. Geological Survey, Forest and Rangeland Ecosystem Science Center, in Boise, Idaho. He has over 25 years of experience in the fields of ecology and conservation biology and his recent work focuses on understanding and mitigating human threats, such as wind energy, toxicants, and illegal take, for wildlife in North America and globally.

Katzner has an international research program focusing on raptors in central Asia. He has more than 145 peer-reviewed scientific publications, and he is a co-editor and author of the book “The Eagle Watchers.” He received his B.A. from Oberlin College, his M.S. from the University of Wyoming for research on pygmy rabbits, and Ph.D. from Arizona State University for work focused on ecology and conservation of eagles in the Republic of Kazakhstan. Katzner was a co-founder of the wildlife telemetry company Cellular Tracking Technologies, LLC.



Todd Katzner and Wedge-tailed Eagle

Future Speakers:

March 18 – James Sumich, Marine Mammals

April 15 – Steve Perakis, Forest Biogeochemistry and Ecosystem Studies

May 20 – Matt Lee/Sue Powell/Carla Olson/Mark Baldwin – Birding in Kenya

If you have questions or suggestions for future speakers please contact me at audubon.corvallis@gmail.com.

Check the ASC website for updated information at: auduboncorvallis.org

Mark Baldwin, Vice President & Program Chair

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Our Website Connects You

Small changes are added almost every day to the website. Upcoming speakers, ASC associated events, cancelations, new birding (and other) resources, and more keep you up to date. Want to identify a bird call, learn more about local dragonflies, volunteer for the

upcoming Winter Wildlife Days or other education and conservation projects? Check it out on the website. And if you are lucky enough to spot an error, contact me and win my undying gratitude!

Sue Powell, ASC Website

Corvallis Audubon

Facebook

Learn about what's new with ASC and share more Backyard Spotlights, questions, photos and exciting bird sightings: at Audubon Society of Corvallis or tag us on Facebook at [Facebook@corvallisaudubon](https://www.facebook.com/corvallisaudubon).

Want to see an inspiring video about Corvallis Audubon by our teenage board member, Kai Frueh? See it on ASC's [Facebook page!](#)

Kai Frueh and Nancy DeMasi, ASC Facebook

Audubon Corvallis

Instagram

Or check us out on Instagram at [auduboncorvallis](https://www.instagram.com/auduboncorvallis).

Christina Linkem, ASC Instagram

Conservation News

Oregon Audubon Council Priorities

Oregon Audubon conservation leaders meet each fall to discuss their collective environmental concerns for the coming year. We met virtually for the first time, which made attendance from around the state more feasible than we've accomplished in many years.

The following priorities were chosen as important to all, or most, Oregon Chapters and are within our capacity for positive influence during this calendar year. Our Oregon Audubon Council list this year is impressive. For all these issues, we see an advantage in the change in Presidential leadership, and control of the Senate. Still, none of these issues will be automatically resolved, and indeed given this

opportunity we should act with an even greater sense of urgency.

- # 1: **Defense of Federal Lands and Laws:** While some administrative rule changes by executive order are being rescinded, many more will not be so easily reset. Education, participation, advocacy, lobbying and litigation when necessary.
- # 2: **Klamath National Wildlife Refuge:** Chronic water shortages still lead to massive waterfowl die-offs; develop statewide and local constituencies.
- # 3: **Malheur National Wildlife Refuge:** Direct and indirect Chapter support of interns, financial, and in-kind contributions, group visits.
- # 4: **Forests:** Participate in Forest Plan development across regions and ownerships; regulatory reforms are now center stage along with salvage logging within the extensive West Cascades wildfire areas.
- # 5: **Oceans:** Monitor and enhance marine reserve system, rocky shore habitats, offshore wind energy development proposals.
- # 6: **Marbled Murrelets:** Advocate for marine and terrestrial habitat protections, federal and state “endangered” listing.
- # 7: **Greater Sage-grouse:** Continue supporting collaborative and regulatory solutions to land use conflicts; advocate for “endangered” species listing.
- # 8: **California Condors:** Educate and support efforts towards reintroduction in southwestern Oregon; reduce lead exposure in proposed reintroduction areas.
- # 9: **Streaked Horned Larks:** Support education and advocacy for better protections of western valley populations and habitat; support research and monitoring; “endangered” listing.
- # 10: **ODFW Reform and Funding:** Recommend new commissioners when vacancies occur; improve fee schedules; legislative funding support.
- # 11: **Climate Change:** Ensure appropriate renewable energy facility siting; oppose new fossil fuel facilities; support atmospheric carbon mitigation and reduction programs.
- # 12: **Beavers:** Ensure adequate regulatory protection for beaver; reestablish beaver as a strategy for restoring ecosystems.

- # 13: **Dark Skies Initiative:** Develop Lights Out Programs for metropolitan areas; establish and expand dark sky sanctuaries for critical migratory times and locations.
- # 14: **Cats and Birds:** Reduce number of free-roaming cats in Oregon; maintain a downward trend over time.
- # 15: **Columbia River Hydropower System:** Assist or lead efforts to recover salmonids in the face of continued dam-induced losses.
- # 16: **Predator Control:** Develop clear, science-based decision-making framework to inform positions involving decisions to kill one species to protect another; include consideration of ethical, ecological, policy implications.
- # 17: **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion:** Ensure OAC Initiatives are considered through DEI lens and OAC participation reflects the diversity of Oregon and the communities in which Chapters operate.

Lighting Issues in Corvallis

I appreciate ASC Facebook manager Nancy DeMasi bringing the City of Corvallis street lighting policy and problems to our attention.

I recently wrote the following into the Corvallis City Council website meeting comment form, as Conservation Director for ASC:

Evaluation of street lighting must consider all impacts of their placement, performance, and renovation. Audubon fully supports Dark Sky Initiatives in order to lessen the impact of unnecessary ambient lighting, upward facing lighting, brighter than necessary light use, and higher Kelvin temperature lighting colors. All of these practices have measured adverse impact on wildlife populations, most especially on birds during migration. Night lighting of buildings alone already contributes to the precipitous decline of bird populations worldwide.

The specification of LED street lighting for new developments and light renovations should be applauded for their much-improved energy performance. Currently higher wavelength, colder “blue” LEDs are the most energy efficient. This saving

comes with a far greater disruptive cost to wildlife. Warmer LEDs are also available, with only a fractional reduction in energy performance. Not only are warmer light wavelengths less disruptive to wildlife, their slightly less transmissibility through air also reduces light pollution.

Corvallis can afford to adopt “smart” lighting ordinances without requiring maximized energy efficiency with its costs to wildlife. Far more energy savings could be gained by having more lights off more often, to the benefit of the livability in Corvallis. We don’t need to accelerate the rush to be alone on this planet.

Jim Fairchild, Conservation Chair
alderspring@peak.org
 Audubon Society of Corvallis
www.auduboncorvallis.org

Education News

Join Us for Virtual 2021 Winter Wildlife Field Day(s)

This year, Winter Wildlife Field Day will be a “virtual” event over two weeks, March 1-14. This means that

most, but not all activities of the event will be held online. ASC is one of 17 partners led by US Fish and Wildlife Service staff from Finley Refuge, preparing for the 2021 event to explore “Nature in Your Neighborhood.” All participants can earn a Wildlife Explorer Patch featuring a raccoon. How appropriate that this year’s mascot wears a mask!

All of the activities will be posted at the special event website, www.WinterWildlifeFieldDay.org on March 1st. In late winter you will be able to download the Passport to guide you to all the activities of this celebration of wildlife. And in the meantime, check out the event flyer and share it as much as you can.

This year ASC volunteers have worked hard to prepare three stations and we thank them for their enthusiastic and skilled efforts to help our community learn about birds and their environment:

- 1) A fun scavenger hunt by Christina Linkem, Liz Hogan and Dodie Wilson
- 2) A mini field guide to favorite local birds by Mikaela Lea and Teri Engbring, and
- 3) Tips on how we all can help local neighborhood birds in winter and spring by Nancy DeMasi and Teri.

These three activities will all be on the ASC website March 1. Thanks as well to Tricia Bowlby, Gail Nickerson, Bob Murray, and Dale Mitchell for their support in exploring other possible WWFD programs we hope to use in future years. It’s hard to develop lively, interactive education programs in a pandemic!

Education Team Co-Coordinator Needed by this April

ASC Board member and active education volunteer Dodie Wilson has graciously agreed to co-chair our education efforts in the coming months. So now we just need one more person to help coordinate our popular education efforts after this spring. It should be so much easier after we return from pandemic life, and we have a strong team of active volunteers who just need some communication and coordination help. Please talk with me or Dodie about it ASAP! Thanks!

Teri Engbring, ASC Education Team

Backyard Spotlight

Please share how you encourage and shelter wildlife in your yard and have fun doing it. We ask that you submit a photo or two and accompany the photo with a paragraph or two explaining what you do to make your yard, or part of it, a mini refuge for wildlife around us. Or feel free to share a poem or journal entry describing your special natural world. We won't disclose your address or any other personal information, only what you wish to share. Your entry may appear in the Chat and/or ASC Facebook page and Instagram.

Thanks to ASC Education team member Sue Powell and her spouse, Matt Lee, for sharing their superb backyard habitat with us this month.

Phyllis Bailey, ASC Backyard Spotlight Coordinator

Matt and Sue's Backyard

Photos by Matt Lee

We moved into our newly constructed house in north Corvallis in January 2014. Six months earlier, the vacant lot on which the house now stands had no plants except poison oak, Himalayan blackberry, wild garlic, and grass, all of which we removed. That left us with a blank slate when it came time to plan the garden that would surround our house. We decided not to have a lawn and its associated maintenance chores (mowing, edging, fertilizing, etc.), leaving more of our yard available for vegetable beds, blueberry bushes, and plants that we hoped would attract wildlife.

When selecting the plants for our garden, we tried to use Oregon natives as much as possible. These plants include cascara, bigleaf maple, vine maple, chokecherry, Pacific wax myrtle, ceanothus, red-flowering currant, Oregon grape, evergreen huckleberry, Douglas' spirea, salal, Oregon sunshine, yarrow, deer fern, and sword fern. We bought many of them at annual native plant sales run by the Benton Soil and Water Conservation District. Some of the plants, such as cascara and wax myrtle, produce fruits that are favored by a variety of birds.



Bushtits on cascara

We also chose other plants that aren't Oregon natives to attract butterflies and bees and to provide additional food and cover for birds. For example, the flowers of our Rudbeckia (black-eyed Susan), Echinacea (coneflower), rosemary, lavender, and heather keep the bees buzzing during the spring and summer. In the fall and winter, the seeds in the cone-shaped flower heads of the Rudbeckia and Echinacea are a magnet for finches and Dark-eyed Juncos. The fruits of our beautyberry and dwarf crabapple are eaten by thrushes and Cedar Waxwings.



Lesser Goldfinch on Rudbeckia



American Goldfinch on Echinacea (Rudbeckia in background)



American Robin on beautyberry



Cedar Waxwings on dwarf crabapple

We supplement these living food sources with seed feeders and a hummingbird feeder, and we provide a

bird bath that is kept filled with water from our drip irrigation system during the summer. Four nest boxes mounted under the eaves of our house have been used by Western Bluebirds and Violet-green Swallows.

Sue Powell and Matt Lee

Gardening for Birds

Anna's Hummingbird and the Winter Garden

Photos by Bill Proebsting

One of the really remarkable stories over the last 30 years has been the range expansion of Anna's Hummingbirds. What was essentially a California endemic has now become a year-round resident as far north as Alaska and east to the Rocky Mountains. Imagine a tiny bird that must go into torpor simply to survive the night making a living in Homer, Alaska (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1. Anna's Hummingbird in author's garden.

A major factor in this expansion has been this bird's association with human development. That in itself is remarkable, because we generally think of structural development as a habit destroyer, but the Anna's seems to have benefited enormously.

It is often assumed that Anna's find feeders for subsistence to survive the winter. I'm curious how many feeders were still up and filled during the winter

pre-Anna's. Especially east of the Cascades or in Alaska. In milder, coastal climates, winter-flowering shrubs are an important source of nectar. How many flowers can one find in Homer or Bend this time of year?

My take is that since the birds can't survive on nectar alone, in any circumstances, there must be a source of insects. This must be the key to the association of Anna's Hummingbird with human development. Structures presumably create a microclimate where insects can overwinter. Further, as they have become established in our area, Anna's have spread away from town or even from rural houses. I encounter them fairly regularly at E.E. Wilson, in clear cuts, even near the summit of McCulloch Peak in McDonald Forest. There are no feeders or winter-blooming plants at these sites.

Nonetheless, winter is mild in western Oregon and we can grow a number of shrubs that flower and are used by Anna's. The winter color is nice, but the extra benefit of supporting hummingbirds is a major plus.

The clear favorite in my experience is Chinese Mahonia (*Mahonia lomariifolia*) (Fig. 2) and the closely related *Mahonia x media* a hybrid of *M. lomariifolia* and *M. japonica*. Chinese Mahonia typically blooms in January and February but in some years will start in December.



Fig. 2. Chinese Mahonia flowering in winter.

I first encountered this association in the 1990s when Anna's were still a novelty here. I typically encountered one posted on a utility line outside of Cordley Hall on campus. One day, I saw it feeding on the large

specimen of Mahonia there (Fig. 3). It spent most of its time either feeding or guarding the plant. Intruders were rudely dispatched. It happens that stem cuttings of Chinese Mahonia propagate easily, so I began to use it in some of my garden projects. In each case, a new protectorate was established.



Fig. 3. Anna's Hummingbird feeding on Chinese Mahonia recently.

At least three other winter flowering shrubs can be grown in Corvallis and are used by Anna's, though not so avidly as the Mahonia. Manzanita species typically flower in the winter and are common in Anna's traditional range (Fig. 4). Rufous Hummingbirds visit Manzanita flowers if they are still blooming on their arrival. Manzanita comprises a large number of species in the western U.S. that vary somewhat in size, form and foliage. All are drought-proof, quite ornamental and require full sun.



Fig. 4. Manzanita species flowering in winter.

Ribes malvaceum, Chaparral Currant (Fig. 5), is a California endemic that some biologists describe as having co-evolved with Anna's. Reminiscent of our own Red-flowering Currant, Chaparral Currant blooms in mid-winter and is visited by Anna's.

Viburnum x bodnantense 'Pink Dawn' or 'Dawn' flowers in winter over about a two-month period on deciduous branches (Fig. 5). Hard frost will kill open flowers, but the buds are hardier and will proceed to open.



Fig. 5. Chaparral Currant flowering in winter.

While not native to Benton County, this group of plants provide welcome color to the winter garden and provide an additional source of food for our remarkable new winter hummingbird species.

William Proebsting

Airlie/Albany CBC Results

With complete adherence to COVID-19 protocols, 40 people participated in the annual Airlie-Albany Christmas Bird Count on January 3. The final tally was 125 species, exceeding the highest previous total for the 24 years of this count. Good weather and access permission from several private landowners helped. Some of the more notable species included Nashville Warbler, Tree Swallow, Say's Phoebe, Redhead, Sora, Western Gull, Prairie Falcon, and 7 owl species.

Paul Adamus

Hesthavn News

Welcome, Olivia and New Bluebird Trail Exhibit

Olivia Ozguc, a senior in Biochemistry & Molecular Biology at OSU, will work with Sue Powell on a new trail guide for Ray's Trail. A win-win situation, Olivia will complete a conservation project for a class, and ASC benefits from her experience interpreting science for the general public. As an added bonus, Olivia is an amazing nature artist and will add a rich diversity of flora and fauna embellishments to the guide. Thanks for choosing ASC for your class assignment!



Display case from the Benton County Historical Society, the Bluebird Trail exhibit is taking shape.

Photo by Sue Powell

The new Bluebird Trail exhibit at Hesthavn is nearing completion. Kate Mathews, Dodie Wilson, and Sue Powell will add the final 25 photographs, descriptions, and displays to the cabinet this week. A tribute to Elsie Eltzroth, the Bluebird Lady, the exhibit features birds that nest in cavities in competition with Western Bluebirds, and also monitoring, banding, egg comparisons, chick development, prey items, and predators.

Thanks to Matt Lee for his masterful trimming of 40 printed exhibit signs and photos!

Sue Powell

Work Parties and an Update

A pandemic is raging, but we are continuing to work at Hesthavn to maintain the facilities for the inevitable day when we can once again hold events. We are working with a contractor to replace the ramp on the south side of the building and to replace rotting boards on the creek-side steps. The composting toilet, which is over 15 years old, will likely need a new roof and the lid to the back compost box needs to be replaced. The barn is in need of a staining. Kim is scraping an accumulation of algae off of the bridge over Oak Creek. We hope to be adding a second kiosk down by the barn for information in Spanish.

Inside the building, members of the education team have put together a display case highlighting the work of “bluebird lady” Elsie Eltzroth. COVID or no COVID, there’s always work to do.

Meanwhile, we still get a regular stream of visitors walking the trail. The word is, we recently had visitors walking their cat on a leash. We are looking forward to the day when we can once again have more than just a few people at a time come and visit with us.

Due to the latest COVID restrictions, Hesthavn work parties remain cancelled for the time being. Check the ASC website for up to the minute info.

Ray Drapek, Hesthavn Chair

Our Trails Are Still Open to Enjoy Nature

Hesthavn’s trails and outdoor facilities are still open to our guests during daylight hours, as long as you observe social distancing and wear a mask if you are within 6 feet of others.

Directions to Hesthavn

8590 NW Oak Creek Drive, Corvallis. Take Harrison west from downtown Corvallis; after you cross 53rd, it becomes Oak Creek Drive. Pass Bald Hill farm and follow the brown signs for ‘Nature Center.’ Hesthavn will be on your left shortly before the end of Oak Creek Dr.

Field Trip Schedule

Second Saturday Field Trips Are CANCELLED Until Further Notice

We’ll be back out there with groups as soon as it is safe to do so. Take care!

[Check the ASC website and CHAT for updates.](#)

Duncan Evered & Caryn Stoess

Weekend Field Trips

2021 Extended Field Trips Will Not Occur Unless Pandemic Situation is Resolved

We are still not in a position to plan for ASC’s multi-day field trips as they entail long rides in enclosed passenger vans. COVID-19 conditions don’t allow that yet. If that opportunity opens, we will plan for 2021: Bandon; Klamath Basin; Rogue Valley with Shakespeare; Malheur NWR; Summer Lake; Wallows; Steens Mtn.; and a Shorebird Search. If not, we will try to find other venues and/or other transportation, so that we may enjoy this great state of ours. Stay tuned and keep up to date on our website. Suggestions are welcome.

Fred Ramsey, Weekend Field Trips Chair

Community Notes

OSU Bird Nerds Seminars

ASC members are invited to participate in weekly seminars with bird scientists sponsored by our partners, OSU Bird Nerds, this winter term. Here’s the remaining schedule. All meetings start at 5 pm.

Week 6: Tuesday 2/9/21

Sarah Davis – University of Texas at Austin

Estimating evolution of carotenoid pigment evolution in integumentary tissues

Week 7: Tuesday 2/16/21

Dr. Tara Kate – Independent artist

Birds and Art

Week 8: Tuesday 2/23/21

Dr. Katie Sieving – University of Florida
Noise effects on birds or the Parid vocal complexity

Week 9: Tuesday 3/2/21

Dr. Mathys – Ohio Dominican University
Central Ohio Owl Project

Interested? Join us on Zoom, Tuesdays at 5:00 pm
PST using this link:

<https://oregonstate.zoom.us/j/97751906240?pwd=WjB4SE1lbjBOYTg5SVNvQTlkXAxUT09>

Password: NERDS

Caleb Centanni, Bird Nerds

Gladys Ruiz: Inclusive Birding

On February 3rd at 6:00 pm, the Corvallis Benton County Public Library, NAACP Corvallis-Albany, Greenbelt Land Trust, and the Audubon Society of Corvallis, present Gladys Ruiz in a free virtual workshop. She is a bird loving, Portland-based equity and inclusion-focused youth programs consultant. Ruiz will discuss how she became a birder, her work nurturing a connection to nature in youth of color, and the importance of harnessing what you love. She will share how to get started with birding yourself and talk about ways to cultivate an inclusive community through nature. All ages welcome. Please register for this free event at: bit.ly/ruizevent

The Corvallis-Benton County Public Library will also briefly demonstrate how to get involved in the Great Backyard Bird Count (February 12-15 www.birdcount.org); a community science project and fun way to exercise the birding skills you learn in this workshop.

This event was made possible by a Resilient Communities: Libraries Respond to Climate Change grant, a pilot program of the American Libraries Association.

Dodie Wilson

OR Audubon Council Inclusion Group Seeks Volunteers

Dear Members,

At our Oregon Audubon Council meeting last fall, Audubon Society of Lincoln City agreed to facilitate the development of a brief, welcoming, inclusionary statement that OAC chapters could use in their membership brochures, on their Web and Facebook pages, and in other materials.

Our first step is to form a working group to craft the statement. If you are interested in participating in this effort, please email me at sgoregon@gmail.com or give me a call on my cell at 415-290-1016.

Much thanks in advance!

Steve Griffiths
Audubon Society of Lincoln City

Board Meeting Summary for January 14, 2021

The Board addressed multiple issues and upcoming events that are covered in other articles in the CHAT. Hesthavn exhibits are being upgraded and will be available for visits by the general public once the pandemic is over. Volunteers are working safely behind the scenes and Corvallis Audubon Society is continuing to be as active as possible under the current circumstances. The website is a good place to check and keep up with the programs if unable to attend Zoom meetings and hear firsthand.

Susan McNutt, ASC Secretary

Open Board Meetings

ASC Board of Directors meetings are open to all ASC members, and the board encourages you to come and see what we do. Our monthly Board meeting is on Thursday, one week before the General Meeting. See the Board meeting minutes or [ASC website](#) for location and time.

Membership Corner

Welcome New Members:

Debra Higbee-Sudyka
Ana Rosales
Melissa Carr
Hilma Kaye
Andrew Ould
Marianne Vydra

General Membership Renewal Information

For membership renewal online go the ASC website (<https://auduboncorvallis.org/membership/>) and renew via PayPal. To renew by USPS, mail a check to ASC, PO Box 148, Corvallis, OR 97339.

Email Notifications/Meeting Cancellations

We encourage members to join the ASC listserv to receive emergency email notifications about meeting cancellations related to weather conditions, updated information about ASC events, fieldtrip locations, and volunteer work parties. Send an email to the administrator (Karan Fairchild, alderspr@peak.org) and request to be added.

Have You Changed Your Contact Info?

If you have moved recently or changed your email/mail addresses, please update your information by emailing it to adamus7@comcast.net.

Thank you for your generosity and support!

Paul Adamus, Membership Chair

Contributors to this Chat

Paul Adamus, Mark Baldwin, Don Boucher, Caleb Centanni, Nancy DeMasi, Ray Drapek, Teri Engbring,

Jim Fairchild, Steve Griffiths, Christina Linkem, Susan McNutt, Dave Mellinger, Sue Powell, William Proebsting, Naomi Weidner and Dodie Wilson

Chat Articles

The Chat editors, Teri Engbring and Naomi Weidner, welcome articles from all members of the Audubon Society of Corvallis. Please submit articles to the Chat editor by the fourth Thursday of the month, unless another date is indicated in the CHAT calendar the previous month. Submit text using Microsoft Word and photos to: chateditors@gmail.com.

Calendar

- Feb 11 ASC Board Meeting on Zoom, 7 pm
- Feb. 18 ASC Members Meeting on Zoom, 7 pm
- Feb. 25 Submission deadline for March 2021 CHAT
- March 1-14 Winter Wildlife Field Days (online)

Due to increased COVID restrictions, Hesthavn work parties in February are cancelled. Check our website for the latest scheduling info in 2021.



*A male Golden-crowned Kinglet displaying his crest.
Photo by Lisa Millbank*

Officers

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** temporary until filled

The Chat is published 10 times a year by the Audubon Society of Corvallis, PO Box 148, Corvallis OR 97339. Annual ASC memberships are \$25 for an individual; \$35 for a family; \$15 for students; \$15 for Chat-only subscriptions (email delivery only); \$50 for Supporting Level; \$150 for Patron Level; and \$250 for Benefactor Level.

Interested in volunteering?

Please let us know:

volunteerasc@gmail.com

Find us online



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