



# Sun City Center Audubon Club

April 2023

## *Prez Ponderings -- April 2023*

Wow! It's hard to believe this is our last monthly meeting before our summer break!

Please plan to attend!

**DATE:** Saturday, April 1st  
**PLACE:** FLORIDA ROOM  
**TIME:** 9:15 AM Social  
10:00 AM Meeting & Program

**“Attracting Birds and Butterflies”**  
**Speaker: Teri Brockway**

**BRING A SNACK, JACK!** (and Jill, too!). Additional refreshments are needed for this meeting. Simply bring your *pre-plated* snack to the meeting before 9:15 AM and place it directly on the refreshment table. Refreshments Chair Pat Dean says, *Thanks!*

**Earth Day Raffle Basket tickets** will be on sale at our April 1<sup>st</sup> meeting. Take a peek at each basket and decide which you like best! The drawing will be held at the Earth Day at SCC Nature Trail event on Friday, April 21<sup>st</sup>. Ticketholders *do not* need to be present to win.

**Our Club has 172 paid 2023 members**, equal to 89% of our 2022 total. Our Saturday, March 4<sup>th</sup> meeting had exactly 100 attendees.



**SCC Audubon Club memberships are due at this time.** Dues continue to be \$10 per year. Membership applications are available:

On our website.  
Attached to our newsletters.  
At monthly meetings.

You may check the status of your membership at the check-in table at each meeting – just ask!

**New way-finding posts were installed** at our SCC Nature Trails on Wednesday, March 22<sup>nd</sup> which will improve the safety and hiking experience for everyone. Thanks to Audubon Club Conservation Chair Melanie Higgins for coordinating this improvement project. Also, our thanks to The SCC Men's Club which on March 13<sup>th</sup> donated \$772 toward the purchase and installation of the trail posts.

**Additional improvements are coming** soon to our Nature Trails, such as *new* signage, *new* cameras, and a *new* map. Be looking for these things as you hike our Trails.

**FRIDAY, APRIL 21<sup>st</sup> is Earth Day at the SCC Nature Trails.** Registration begins at 8:30 AM, with Trail Tours departing regularly until 11:15 AM. We hope to see you there!

**The John Costin etching raffle was held** at the March 4<sup>th</sup> meeting, with Mariclaire Jones as the winner. Many thanks to Melanie Higgins who donated the etching for the raffle, and to Co-Treasurers Pam and George Viner for coordinating the sale of the tickets.

**Our Audubon Club tables at Fun Fest** were a huge success! The 10 volunteers present were very busy for the entire event, answering birding questions and handing out literature. Sales Co-Chairs Jo Ann Wilkinson and Laura Butler had one of their best days yet marketing items. Thanks to Patsie Ginley and Betty Giles for chairing this successful event!

**At our April 1<sup>st</sup> meeting**, a scheduled vote will be held concerning bylaw changes, which were published and reviewed at our March 4<sup>th</sup> meeting. Also, the installation of re-elected officers will occur.

And last, but not least . . . you are reading . . .

**The best Club newsletter in Sun City Center**, which is emailed to each of us a few days before each meeting.

Just as regularly as the sun rises and sets.  
Month after month – without fail.

A big shout-out to our Audubon Club Newsletter Editor Denise Rosen, who supervises the entire process of keeping you informed of Club News.

Looking forward to seeing you at our April 1<sup>st</sup> monthly meeting!

Dennis Morris, President  
5w3d15h80y@gmail.com



## *April Program*

### *Garden to Attract Bird/Butterflies* Teri Brockway



Florida Master Gardener Teri Brockway will be the featured speaker at the Sun City Audubon Club's April 1<sup>st</sup> meeting in the Florida Room at the Atrium Building. Her presentation will be about "Attracting Birds and Butterflies" in our area of Hillsborough County.

Teri received her certification as a Master Gardener from the University of Florida in 2017. She has been a gardening aficionado since she was a young girl growing up near Buffalo, NY. She has lived in Florida for 23 years and been a Sun City Center resident since 2004. She is a member of the SCC Audubon Club and is past president of the Elegant Gardener's Club here as well.

Most residential landscapers prefer to plant trees, shrubs and flowers that are not indigenous to Florida. "Our native plants are not showy or as beautiful as the more colorful flora from Asia, Africa, or South America," Brockway said. "Native plants are grown in our yards more for their benefit to sustain Florida wildlife and the environment."

The SCC Audubon Club's April meeting is scheduled from 9:15am to 11:30am. Refreshments will be served and socializing encouraged prior to Teri's lecture at 10am.

Brockway's presentation and attendance at the meeting are limited to SCC Community Association members and residents of Freedom Plaza, Aston Gardens and Kins Point Gold Card Holders.

## Successful Fun Fest



Dennis stands with the SCC Audubon Club's newest member, Ann Verth of Paris, Ontario, Canada. Ann and her husband Tom are "snowbirds" and drive down to Sun City Center every year to enjoy the fine winter weather. Dennis said that Ann won the \$70 door prize at the March 4th meeting but donated it back to the club. "I just thought that the club deserved the money," she said.

Although April's meeting is the last one for the season, Ann said she is looking forward to participating again next year. The SCC Audubon Club was one of more than 50 Community Association clubs and sponsors, that participated in the annual Fun Fest Day program this year.

SCC Audubon Club Master Birder Ray Webb and Vice President Patsie Ginley enjoy a conversation with some of the Sun City Center residents and their friends, who attended the Community Association's annual Fun Fest Day activities on the grounds of the North Campus March 11th. The SCC Audubon Club staffed three tables at the day's event.



### BYOM

In an endeavor to support our conservation beliefs, please bring your own mug to our Saturday morning meetings. We appreciate your cooperation.

For those of you who use the recycle water bottles, the CA has installed water fountains in the atrium to conveniently refill your water bottles.





## NATURE TRAIL DONATION BY SCC MENS CLUB TO DENNIS MORRIS, March 11, 2023



SCC Audubon Club President Dennis Morris accepts a donation from Men's Club President Bob Sullivan for the purchase and installation of new way-finding posts for the Audubon Club's Nature Trail. Sullivan handed over a check for the way finding posts at a brief ceremony at the Trailhead off West Del Webb Boulevard Monday afternoon, March 11th.

Sullivan said one of the goals of the community's Men's Club is to promote camaraderie among its male residents. "Another goal," he said, "is to offer our community as much support as we can." Morris said the donation will go a long way towards making it easier for SCC residents who visit the Trail, to find their way along its pristine walking paths.



Attendees at the ceremony include from left to right, SCC News Reporter Kai Rambow, George Viner, Ray Webb, Dan Meier, Men's Club VP of Communications, Bob Sullivan, Men's Club President, Dennis Morris, Pam Viner, Patsie Ginley and Melanie Higgins.



## News from our Master Birder

Ray Webb

Our March field trip was very popular, as 22 people joined us at Sweet Bay Nursery in Parrish. Tom Heitzman led us around his 24-acre facility. We saw lots of birds and learned about the nursery's native plants. Tom maintains a bird feeder behind the office; we were delighted to see several painted and indigo buntings there! Afterwards, 13 of us enjoyed a luncheon at Butterfield's Family Restaurant, also in Parrish.

Our next and last regular season field trip will be on April 19, to Fort Desoto County Park in Pinellas County. This trip coincides with the peak of spring bird migration. We should see a lot of colorful songbirds in the park. You can sign up for the trip at our April 1 membership meeting, or on our website at [sccaudubonclub.com](http://sccaudubonclub.com).

We will have field trips throughout the summer as well; plans for these are in progress. The May trip will be to Snook Haven barbecue restaurant in Venice and includes entertainment and a boat ride with Logan River Tours, on site. We plan to visit Latitudes Tours in Ruskin for a boat ride in June, and to visit the Tampa History Museum in July. please visit our website for updates on all our summer trips, and to sign up for them.



Members of SCC Audubon Club listen to Tom Heitzman Sweetbay Nursery owner discuss some of the birds that visit and the plants he sells to attract them and butterflies.



Sweetbay Nursery owner, Tom Heitzman, gave the group some background about the nursery and its plants and birds. He sells mainly native Florida plants. We saw Indigo and Painted Buntings and red bellied woodpeckers and cardinals.



SCC Audubon Club member Deb Perian tries to decide which flowers she wants to buy today, to add to her butterfly garden. She and about 16 other members visited the Sweetbay Nursery in Parrish to observe the latest avian migrants on their way north. The nursery has several feeders on the property and a rainwater catch pond, that attracted two pairs of Mottled Ducks that day.

# SCC AUDUBON CLUB EARTH DAY FESTIVITIES

Friday, April 21, 2023

*“Special Edition”*

The Sun City Center Audubon Club will host its third annual Earth Day festivities at its Nature Trails Preserve Friday, April 21 from 9am to 12 noon. The event will be open only to residents of Sun City Center and Kings Point. This year's local event takes place one day before the nationally recognized Earth Day Celebration on April 22<sup>nd</sup>.

The club's Nature Trail entrance is located at 1624 West Del Webb Blvd., between Seton Hall and Vincennes Drives. A large sign identifying the Trail sits to the west of the boulevard, in an open space between two private residences.

The highlight of Friday's event will include several different guided nature walks through the preserve by noted club naturalists. Registration for the interpretive walks begins at 8:30am.

Club Master Birder Ray Webb will lead interested guests at 8:45, 9:45 and 10:45. Ray has been an avid birder all his life. He has been active with the Audubon Society in his home state of New Jersey and joined Tampa Audubon and the Sun City Center club, after he moved to Florida in 1990. Ray has identified more than 100 species of woodland species of birds along the trail. During the 45-minute walks, he will discuss the birds that are usually found in various nearby habitats.

If you are more interested in insects and plants that line the pathways in the preserve, you will want to sign up for Naturalist and acclaimed Nature Photographer John Lampkin's interpretive tour. His guided walks are scheduled for 9, 10 and 11am. John has contributed numerous photographs and articles to many field guides, books and journals, websites and blogs. In 2020, he won the “American Butterflies” Magazine photo contest. Along the pathways of our local Nature Trail, John has photo documented 50 species of butterflies, 40 species of dragonflies and 276 plants. Some of the insects and flora are so small, they are nearly invisible to the untrained eye.

To give visitors a clearer perspective of the SCC Nature Trail, Florida Master Naturalist Melanie Higgins will describe the history of this pristine oasis in the middle of Sun City Center, the Audubon Club's involvement in it and its value to the local community. Her discussion will be shared at 9:15, 10:15 and 11:15. Melanie has been a Floridian for thirty years and has been an avid wildlife enthusiast and educator. She is chairperson of the club's Blue Bird Project in SCC. She has traveled all over the world and recently returned from a Photo Safari in Africa.



After signing up for a Nature Trail tour, complimentary “healthy snacks” including a beverage and fruit will be offered to everyone, by the Sun City Center Community Association. SCC Manager Lyn Reitz personally coordinates this generous donation to the club's annual affair.

Earth Day Raffle tickets will be sold at the SCC Audubon Club's April 1<sup>st</sup> meeting and at the local celebration on Friday, April 21<sup>st</sup>. The Sweet Bay Nursery in Parrish and the Keep It Green Nursery in Apollo Beach have generously donated several plants for the raffle. Audubon Club members donated three beautifully themed baskets full of surprises, which will also be raffled off. The baskets will include “Gardening is Growing,” “Coffee, Tea, You and Me,” and another basket of “Everything's Fine With Wine.”



## *Earth Day Cont'd*

A sanitary “Port-a-Potty” will also be available for everyone's convenience outside the preserve entrance.

While you are enjoying the peace and solitude of the trail's small slice of wild Florida, be sure to keep your eyes and ears open for a nearby nesting pair of Ospreys. Their nest sits atop a pole donated by Florida Power and Light and sits just outside the Nature Trail entrance. The birds don't look that big from the ground. But, adult “Fish Hawks” have a 5–6-foot wingspan. And their chicks are very loud and always hungry.

In addition to the guided tours of the preserve's pathways, guests will be among the first visitors to see and experience the new Trail Markers to keep everyone on track. The trail signs are color coded, and easy to see and follow. Even though the looping trail is only 0.7 of a mile long, it was easy to get disoriented with the earlier direction signs. A new color-coded map is in the offing to help make traversing the trail easier and more pleasurable. There are also park benches located along the route, for visitors to sit and enjoy the solitude and wildlife.

The Audubon Club is delighted to have been able to partner with the SCC Men's Club and the Community Association Board of Directors, in order to obtain the sign posts, graphics and related improvements for the trail. Both associations donated funds to cover the cost of materials and labor for the signs and posts. A Trail Camera or two are planned to be added in the future, to document what birds and other wildlife are visiting the preserve.

The late Wisconsin Democratic U.S. Senator, Gaylord Nelson, created Earth Day in the Spring of 1970. It was a time when there was no EPA, no Clean Air Act and no Clean Water Act. Before he took a stand on environmental activism, there was no governmental regulatory mechanism to help protect the myriad of environmental issues facing the nation at that time.

Today, more than a billion Earth Day participants in more than 193 countries help highlight the problems and dangers that the planet still faces. Illegal clear cutting of forests in the Amazon and dumping toxic waste into the world's rivers and oceans are just a few of the issues that are still a major threat to all life on Planet Earth.



The SCC Audubon Club, the Community Association, Men's Club, and other local organizations are all contributing to ensuring that this year's local Earth Day activities focus on those environmental concerns.

The SCC Nature Trail encompasses close to 16 acres of pine forests, flatwoods, hardwood hammocks, small wetland meadows and a cypress swamp. The current groomed Nature Trail sits on the south side of a storm water canal, that bisects the entire preserve. This small waterway is home to turtles, fish and an alligator or two. An Anhinga was seen drying its feathers on a low branch jutting over the water not too long ago. And, in the sky above the preserve, a bald eagle and a couple of red shouldered hawks were also spotted soaring above the preserve.

A SCC Community Association maintenance crew periodically grooms the walking paths on the southern end of the Nature Trail. There is very limited Golf Cart Parking at the Trail Head. All visitors should plan to park on West Del Webb Boulevard.

See you all there soon!

# HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

April  
2023

Laura Butler  
Elaine Dow  
Mary Duncan  
Barbara Durant  
Sandra Kepley  
Mohsen Khalifa  
John Kosin  
Sally Lamp  
Deanna Lansberry  
Dottie McCann  
Joseph Mederios  
Deborah Pfeiffer  
Clare Roberts  
Rita Tibetts  
Joe Togger



## Officers & Committee Chairs 2023-2024

<i>President</i>	<i>Dennis Morris</i>
<i>Vice-President &amp; Programs</i>	<i>Patsie Ginley</i>
<i>Secretary</i>	<i>Betty Giles</i>
<i>Co-Treasurers</i>	<i>Pam &amp; George Viner</i>
<i>Immediate Past</i>	<i>Mary Duncan</i>
<i>Greeter</i>	<i>Linda Floyd</i>
<i>Refreshments</i>	<i>Pat Dean</i>
<i>Membership</i>	<i>Dennis Morris</i>
<i>Name Tags</i>	<i>Jo Ann Wilkinson</i>
	<i>Laura Butler</i>
<i>Historian</i>	<i>Clara Clancy</i>
<i>Master Birder &amp; Field Trips</i>	<i>Ray Webb</i>
<i>Newsletter</i>	<i>Denise Rosen</i>
<i>Conservation</i>	<i>Melanie Higgins</i>
<i>Publicity</i>	<i>John Perian</i>

