Dark-eyed Junco

They’re not just for winter anymore! Dark-eyed Junco is one of the most common winter visitors to the Los Angeles Basin, but some of them are remaining year-round. In occasional visits to a large office park in Santa Monica, I have seen and heard the species all year. Most juncos migrate northward, or to Southern California’s high mountains, in spring. But an eBird range map from June and July of 2014 (below) shows that there is still a small, breeding suburban presence throughout the summer.

An adult Dark-eyed Junco is almost unmistakable, but the occasional juvenile spotted in spring can be confusing to beginning birders because it is so heavily streaked. The general body form, traces of rich brown on the back, and traces of white outer tail feathers provide clues to what these juveniles will become.

Sibley mentions studies showing that juncos migrate different distances depending upon age and gender. Females go farthest south, where winter survival prospects are best. Older males go next farthest south. Young males migrate the shortest distance, perhaps in a bid to return quickly to breeding grounds in the spring and secure a good territory.

President's Perch

We have a great deal to be proud of here at PAS. We’re in the enviable position to have enough funds to give grants and gifts to those folks and organizations who further our cause of bringing excitement to birding. We have stepped up to the plate to defend our local bird habitat in the Hahamonga Watershed. In the fall, we plan to do some hands-on conservation work at Peck Pit (Peck Road Water Conservation Park in Arcadia) to further increase our influence on local birding habitat.

With our membership at an all-time high, we continue to look to social media as a place to expand our reach. Facebook, Twitter, and our web site have brought in a host of new members who are showing up and getting active. Birding 101, led by Ron Cyger and Mark Scheel, continues to engage, instruct, and excite birders from every level to get on board with a pair of bins. One phenomenal leader, Susan Gilliland,
**Annual Dinner**

That's a Wrap

Saturday, June 13, 2015
6:00 pm—9:00 pm

The PAS fiscal year starts July 1 and ends June 30 each year. Come celebrate another very successful year of our chapter reaching out to the community, defending our local habitat, and supporting outstanding birders. The dinner features delicious catered food from Stonefire Grill, beer and wine, great conversations, prize drawings, and a chance to meet the slate of officers who will govern the chapter in the next fiscal year. Bring your bird photos on a USB drive (limit: 5 minutes’ worth) for viewing by your fellow members. It’s the best deal in town at $10 per person. You must RSVP; to reserve your spots, mail a check to PAS, attention June Dinner, at the address shown on the back cover of the newsletter.

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**Summer Vacation**

PAS goes on a reduced schedule of events during the months of July and August. Note, however, that this July there will be a Birding 101 session – see the announcement at the bottom of this page. This is an invaluable class for beginning birders. Monthly trips for the Huntington Library and Hahamonga are suspended, but will resume in September. The other monthly trips, to the Arboretum, to Eaton Canyon, and to Chilao, continue through the summer.

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**Conservation**

Restoring the Arroyo Seco

The Army Corps of Engineers is doing a feasibility study for restoring the Arroyo Seco from the base of the mountains to the confluence with the LA River, addressing “almost complete loss of stream conditions (structure and function) that support aquatic species & their habitats,” a problem we recognize as well. Their goals are to

- Restore quality and quantity of aquatic, wetlands, and riparian habitats
- Restore natural channel sinuosity
- Improve aquatic habitat
- Enhance recreational opportunities (compatible with restoration; passive; example – nature trail, educational signage)

Pasadena Audubon submitted a letter asking them to

- Not neglect Hahamonga because of the Big Dig program
- Analyze the most comprehensive approach to stream and habitat restoration
- Recognize sediment management is a key part of stream and habitat restoration throughout the Arroyo Seco
- Recognize Pasadena's Lower Arroyo Seco as an ideal site for channel removal
- Integrate Los Angeles' parks in the Arroyo into Arroyo River Parks.

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**Education**

Birding 101

Birding provides enjoyment and challenge throughout life. Birding gets you outdoors in your neighborhood or around the world. Birding increases your ability to observe and appreciate the world around you. And finally, Birding is just gosh darn fun! So, why would you put-off learning how to be a better Birder any longer?

This class is designed for beginners, but all are welcome. We will cover identification, optics, field guides, note-taking, habitats, birding ethics, and many other topics. Class size is limited so don’t delay!

Classroom sessions: July 15, 22, and 29 at 7:00 pm.
Field trips: July 18 and 25, from early morning to early afternoon. Location of the class and field trips will be sent to the class participants.

Cost: $50 for Pasadena Audubon members, $70 for non-members (but will include membership in Pasadena Audubon Society). This fee will cover all three classes and two field trips. Payment is payable to “Pasadena Audubon Society” and is due at the first class session.

Ron Cyger and Mark Scheel

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**September Program**

Building ID Skills

Wednesday, September 16, 2015
7:30 pm—9:00 pm
Jon Fisher and Mickey Long

Whether seen poorly or well, in birding there’s perhaps nothing more frustrating than being unable to identify what you are looking at. Many species are distinctive enough that they are simple to name. But others can confuse us and challenge us. These challenges range from common birds to the rarest vagrants. Though we may at times be perplexed, this does keep things interesting.

In this program we’ll take a look at a number of these similar species and discuss how to tell them apart. We’ll also cover the vocalizations, seasonal status and behavior that often offer clues to identification. Almost all birders strive to maintain “clean” lists and to make accurate eBird entries. To that end, it’s always helpful to review field marks and perhaps learn some new ones.

General meetings are held at Eaton Canyon Nature Center (address on back cover). Refreshments and socializing begin at 7:00 pm and programs are presented from 7:30 pm to 9:00 pm. Occasionaly programs for kids begin at 7:00 pm; check the announcements.
Birdathon: Team Verdin

Team Verdin decided to do a big photo day within the L.A. Basin. A big photo day involves photographing as many species as you can in a 24-hour period. The day started at the Los Angeles River, moved to the coast, and then inland to the Santa Monica mountains and San Fernando Valley and into the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains.

Dessi was able to photograph 118 species of birds. The money Team Verdin raised, and all funds raised by the Pasadena Audubon Birdathon teams, will go towards saving the Hahamonga watershed in Pasadena.

Great work by all those who participated in and contributed to Pasadena Audubon Society's Birdathon!

_Dessi Sieburth and team_

Birdathon: Kind of Green

The birdathon team Kind of Green — consisting of Christopher Stevenson, Nathan Osborne, and Darren Dowell, and inspired by our mascot Ron “Jazz Man” Cyger who had to sit this one out, and with key logistical and baked good support by Jon Feenstra — spent a full day out in local habitat Sunday and counted 95 species in nearly ideal weather conditions.

Nathan, Christopher, and Darren started at dawn at Hahamonga Watershed Park, which was loaded with birds and nesting activity. We counted 74 species total there. Ten of those species were warblers, including California Species of Special Concern: Yellow Warbler and Yellow-breasted Chat. A male Green-winged Teal (likely continuing from winter) near the dam was a bit of a surprise, given the reemergence of the small lake there only the afternoon before.

Next, Christopher and Darren hiked the Sunset Ridge trail/Mt. Lowe Road overlooking Millard Canyon from the top of Chaney Trail to Granite Gate at 4000 feet. Chapparral, montane, and nocturnal species there added 20 to the day’s count, with some highlights being a vagrant Mountain Bluebird, multiple Mountain Quail, two Hairy Woodpeckers, and abundant singing Lazuli Buntings.

A further highlight was 2 Calliope Hummingbirds: a male feeding in Indian paintbrush around 3600’ elevation, and a female feeding in black sage around 3900’ high. We almost achieved the “hummingbird slam”, but a maleSelasphorus in the mountains zing’ed by too fast and could not be refound, leaving us with no Rufous Hummingbird for the day.

Other notable misses for the day: White-crowned Sparrow, Hermit Warbler, and Olive-sided Flycatcher.

Kind of Green thanks you for your financial support of the protection of Hahamonga!

_Darren Dowell_

Birdathon: Irritable Owl Syndrome

Whoever said "The weather is always nice in southern California" wasn't on a birdathon with us. On Saturday April 25, team "Irritable Owl Syndrome" was frozen, rained on, and pummelled by gale force winds as we undertook a 21-hour mission to identify (by sight or sound) as many species of birds as possible in a single day in Los Angeles County.

Team "Irritable Owl Syndrome" was Ron Cyger, Darren Dowell, Janet Scheel, and myself. We started at midnight, and birded parks, streets, marshes, mountains, lakes, deserts, and sewage treatment plants through the day until after dark.

Highlights included White-winged Scoter (a first for me on Birdathon), Wandering Tattler, Horned Grebe, Golden-crowned Sparrow (most are gone already), Northern Pygmy-Owl, a very friendly Chukar (ok, so it's not ABA...), and a Yellow-breasted Chat that was literally singing in the rain. We got all the (non-rare) warblers and wrens, and all the possible hummingbirds except Calliope.

The weather was a challenge. Perhaps the cold in the mountains was what kept some of the owls quiet at night, and the hour or two of rain during the day made it difficult to hear (not to mention decreasing our comfort level). But the wind was the key player. By the time we escaped the desert, we were being blasted hard enough that our tripods wouldn't hold our scopes still. We stayed inside the car at the Lancaster Sewage Ponds to avoid the blowing dust from the road and the blowing spray from whitecaps (browncaps) on the ponds. At the ocean it was just as windy; we had trouble hearing each other calling out birds. The upside: in a few places (like Apollo Park) the wind concentrated the birds, and traffic at the coast was much better than usual because nobody wants to sit on the beach in a gale.

Despite the weather we did quite well, and managed to find lots of birds in most places we went. We ended up with 195 ABA species, plus two non-ABA birds (Nanday Parakeet and Chukar), for a total of 197 species, slightly surpassing last year's count of 195 (194 plus 1 non-ABA).

I cannot end without mentioning the "list of shame": the few "easy" birds that we missed because of haste, running out of time, or just plain bad luck. This year our most embarrassing misses were Great Horned Owl, Pacific Loon, and American Goldfinch, none of which we have ever missed before on Birdathon.

We thank our sponsors very much (and so does Hahamonga), and we had a great time.

_Mark Scheel_

More Birdathon on page 6!
Mt Pinos and Environs
Saturday, June 6, 2015
7:30 am – early afternoon

Mt. Pinos is one of the best places in Southern California to enjoy a wide variety of montane birds. We’ll hear singing Yellow-rumped Warblers along with other species of warblers, thrushes, raptors, woodpeckers, flycatchers and finches. We will visit Iris Meadows and other nearby areas.

We will meet at the city park in Frazier Park. Take the Golden State Freeway (I-5) north to the Frasier Park turnoff and continue west for about 5 miles to the stop sign in Frazier Park. Take a left at the stop sign then a right into the park. Don’t forget lunch, water, and sunblock.

Larry Johnson & Ron Cyger

C'est Chouette: Owls in the San Gabriel Mountains
Saturday, June 27, 2015
7:00 pm — midnight

Join us as we search for owls and nightjars in the higher areas of the San Gabriel Mountains. We’ll start shortly before sunset when we’ll look for Northern Pygmy Owl and diurnal montane species, and then after dark we’ll look for Flammulated Owl, Northern Saw-whet Owl, Spotted Owl, Western Screech Owl, Great Horned Owl, and Common Poorwill.

This trip concentrates on high elevations primarily to find Flammulated Owls, which do not usually occur below about 6000 feet in the local mountains.

Limited to 10 people. Please email the leader to reserve a spot.

Lance Benner

Eaton Canyon Monthly Walk
Sunday, June 21, 2015
Sunday, July 19, 2015
Sunday, August 16, 2015
8:00 am — 11:00 am

Pasadena Audubon and Eaton Canyon Nature Center are cosponsoring monthly walks at Eaton Canyon. The walks are led by Hill Penfold, who has been leading them at ECNC for many years. Hill is wonderful with birders of all levels and Eaton Canyon is one of the best locations to learn the birds of the Pasadena area.

The walks are held on the third Sunday of each month. Meet at the flagpole: bring water, binoculars, hats, but no dogs.

Hill Penfold

Hahamongna Monthly Walk
Saturday, September 5, 2015
7:30 am — 11:30 am

This monthly bird walk is for birders of all ages and experience. A good variety of birds should be in residence. Bring binoculars, birding guide, water and wear walking shoes. No dogs.

Exit the north 210 at Berkshire and make a right, then a left at Oak Grove. The Hahamongna Watershed Park entrance is on the right at the next stop light. Take the first left after entering Hahamongna, and park by the ballfield.

Leaders vary; see calendar

Lower L.A. River
Saturday, August 8, 2015
8:00 am — noon

Mid-August is about the peak of shorebird migration as wintering birds return and transients pass through. Be prepared for anything, but if your shorebird ID skills are rusty we will spend as much time as necessary on the more common species to get everyone comfortable with them.

Take the 710 (Long Beach) Fwy south to the Willow Street offramp, head east across the L.A. River, and take the first left on Golden Ave, the first left again on 26th, and follow 26th past the pump station onto DeForest Ave. Park near the river access by the bridge and meet the group along the river at 8:00. We will bird until noon and may visit the Dominguez Gap Wetlands if time permits.

Larry Allen

Monrovia Canyon
Saturday, August 22, 2015
7:15 am — 10:30 am

Please join us to explore the road leading up and into Monrovia Canyon. It has been a few years since we birded this area and we expect to find the common foothill birds for this time of year. And, maybe a few surprises!

We will initially meet on Canyon at Ridgewise Dr. Take the Myrtle off-ramp in Monrovia from the 210, a right on Huntington Dr., Then a left on Canyon. Head up Canyon past Hillcrest, then a right staying on Canyon. In a couple of blocks is Ridgewise Dr. and you should park along Canyon. From this point we’ll consolidate into as few cars as possible to head up into the canyon.

Bring along water, and skin safety and comfort items for

Field trips continue on page 6!

Huntington Library Monthly Walk
Sunday, September 27, 2015
8:00 am — 11:00 am

A special benefit for Pasadena Audubon Society members is the chance to bird the Huntington Library grounds. Attendance is by reservation only and limited to 15 participants. Members may bring one non-member guest, space permitting. We thank our member and Huntington curator, Dan Lewis, for making these trips possible.

For reservations contact me (see bottom of calendar page) by email (preferred), or by phone. Trip leaders vary.

Mark Hunter
### June 2015

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<th>Organizer/Contact</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Field Trip</td>
<td>Mt. Pinos</td>
<td>Larry Johnson &amp; Ron Cyger</td>
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<td>13</td>
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<td>County Arboretum</td>
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<td>Descanso Gardens</td>
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### July/August 2015

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<td>27</td>
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<td>Field Trip*</td>
<td>Huntington Library</td>
<td>Mark Hunter</td>
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* Trip Leader Information

Mark Scheel (chair)  (626) 785-5408  scheel@tapir.caltech.edu
Larry Allen         (626) 797-1810  larryallen@earlymusic.aol.org
Lance Benner        (626) 791-1197  lbenner@charter.net
Ron Cyger           (626) 449-3825 (before 9:00 pm) roncyger.org (preferred)
Darren Dowell       (626) 344-4003  dowell.darren@yahoo.com
Kathi Ellsworth     (626) 524-0652  pandionsky@yahoo.com
Jon Fennisstra      (626) 319-4723  feenstra@alumni.caltech.edu
Jon Fisher          (818) 890-2776  jonf60@hotmail.com
Frank & Susan Gilliland (626) 441-8487  gilliandsusan@gmail.com
Sid Heyman          (626) 571-5991  sidheymann@sbcglobal.net
Mark Hunter         (626) 344-8428  mark.hunter@pasadenaaudubon.org
Mickey Long         (626) 285-8878  mlongbird@charter.net
Hill Penfold        (618) 352-4954  hpenfold@gmail.com
Julie Ray           (818) 315-5127  jraymusic@att.net
Ed Stonick          (626) 796-0595  edstonick@att.net

* - reservations required, PAS members only
Birodath, continued

Birodath: The Big Sit

Another Big Sit triumph! For once, our fearless leader (that would be me) was sorta kinda on time, so we began at 7:30ish at Legg Lakes near restroom #7. Our intrepid group included Mickey & Jan Long, Elaine “Best Big Sit Ever!” MacPherson, Liz Cordero, Deni Sinott, and some new Big Sitters: Eileen Burton, Ira Blitz, and the brand spanking new Katy Mann. Oh yeah, and me.

The weather was perfect: cool and cloudy, with a light breeze. While other teams tramped all over LA County, we saw 67 species in just a few hours, all while sitting on our chairs, drinking our coffee/tea, eating our snacks, and blissfully close to the restroom. (See photo).

We delighted in an abundance of warblers—11 species, including a gorgeous Palm Warbler—as well as a surplus of Warbling Vireos—8. We enjoyed watching the nesting Great Blue Herons feeding their chicks, and we were surprised to see an Osprey, as they usually leave this time of year to nest somewhere else. Our best bird of the day, and our only contribution to America’s Birdiest County, was a Least Bittern that kept calling. Yes, we know it wasn’t a Pied-billed Grebe.

We checked!

If you’d like to help with Birdathon next year but aren’t too keen on driving 450 miles or being up all night or being far away from a restroom, please join us. We’d love to have you.

Many thanks to our donors. You rock!

Laura Garrett

Field Trips, continued

a summer morning. There will be bathrooms along the way. The walk will be about three hours and is all uphill (except for the part returning to the cars). We should be out of the canyon before the heat of the day sets in.

L.A. County Arboretum

Second Saturday of every month
8:00 am — 10:00 am

This easy walk is for birders of all ages and experience levels. Meet on the steps leading to the entrance of the Arboretum. Even non-Arboretum members get in for free!

Julia Ray

Birodath: Team Who

Catherine Hamilton, David Bell, Brittany O’Connor and I (the individuals that made up Team Who) had a fantastic and fun day out in Los Angeles County looking for birds using an experimental route. After carefully going over our list, in total we tallied 207 bird species (209 including non-countable birds: Yellow-chevroned Parakeet and Red-whiskered Bulbul).

Probably the two main highlights happened before and after dark: an amazing mixed shorebird feeding frenzy on Gurneon eggs in the Playa Del Rey half light and a Mojave Rattlesnake sidling across the road in the gloom at Ptue.

Best birds on our day were two Common Ground Doves seen under bizarre circumstances along the San Gabriel River. Other goodies included latish Horned Grebes and Ruby-crowned Kinglet and an earlyish Swainson’s Thrush. Another highlight was tracking down four owls during daylight. Until fairly late in the day every team member had seen or heard every bird until one of us was distracted by a jogger who was keen to know what we were up to!

Of course there were plenty of misses including the two best birds the team dug up on scouting missions: Palm Warbler and White-winged Scoter. That said the one that really hurt was California Gnatcatcher (just because it is such an emblematic local species) and let’s not talk about the White-crowned Sparrow that someone forgot to mention they had at one of our first stops.

Our other big adventure on the day was having to change a tire halfway through our day while out of cell range somewhere in the San Gabriel Mountains.

Congrats to all the teams who took part. A lot of hard work, and meeting in pubs, goes into the planning and undertaking of this kind of adventure!

You can still make a contribution towards PAS’s fundraising online here: http://www.pasadenaaudubon.org

Luke Tiller

Chilao Visitor Center

Second Sunday of every month
8:00 am — 10:00 am

The Chilao Visitor Center walks continue each month, weather and roads permitting. (If looks thing rain, snowy or brush fire-y, check first.)

Chilao, 26.5 miles north of I-210 on Angeles Crest (State Hwy 2), is a good place to see woodpeckers and we often see four or more species on a walk. Mountain Quail are somewhat elusive but still seen or heard about half the time. You can also expect Purple Finches, Steller’s Jays, Dark-eyed Juncos and several species of nuthatches and others totaling about 30 species during the 2-hour walk.

Hill Penfold
single-handedly got our Young Birders club up and running, and in the process, helped Dessi Seiburth become the Young Birder of the Year!

I think this is the best place to in all of LA to become involved in birding; how lucky we are to have it right here in our backyard. Such a combination of talent, dedication and enthusiasm is the envy of many chapters around the country!

I look forward to continuing on as President for one more year – let’s keep the momentum going into 2016 and beyond. I encourage you to become a part of PAS – and to step forward to help in any way you can.

Happy Birding,
Deni Sinnott

Young Birders Club

There are no general PAS meetings in the summer. Please check the Kid’s Corner on the PAS website http://www.pasadenaaudubon.org/?q=nod e/120 to find out what’s happening! We hope to have several workshops, including basic bird identifications, study skins, feathers, plant identification, bird conservation projects, learning about bird beaks, bird game day.

Bird walks suitable for young birders are available in June, July, and August at Chilao Nature Center, Eaton Canyon, and the L.A. Arboretum, – see pages 4 and 6 or the Field Trip section on the PAS website: http://www.pasadenaaudubon.org/?q=fiel

trips

Want to sign up to be a member of the Young Birder Club? Please email Susan Gilliland for more information. gillilandsusan@gmail.com

Birds 'n Beers
Second Wednesdays of Each Month
5:00 pm – 8:30 pm
A continuing series! David Bell, Catherine Hamilton, and Luke Tiller invite birders, and anyone who can tolerate birders, to a very casual session of food and drink. Occasionally we even talk about birds!

The venue will once again be the Lucky Baldwin's, 1770 E Colorado Blvd, Pasadena, CA 91106 near Colorado Blvd and Allen Ave. This is the one near the City College, not in Old Town.

Magpie Bird Study Group

The group meets the third Tuesday of most months. We bird 9:00 am to about 11:30 am, have a sack lunch, and have a short business meeting. All PAS members welcome!

Tuesday, June 16, 2015
Rancho Santa Ana

Tuesday, September 15, 2015
Legg Lakes

Meet in the parking lot on Santa Anita Ave

Trip leaders: Sid Heyman, Julia Ray

DONATIONS TO PAS

These PAS members and friends have recently made donations to our chapter: Lance Benner, Renatta Buerner, Harlean Carroll, Denise Castillo, Lew Hastings, Christine Hessler, Judy Howell, Chrystal & Claire Watson. Special appreciation goes to all the supporters of our 2015 PAS Birdathon. Thank you all!

Become a Chapter-only Member of PAS

Local chapters of the National Audubon Society, such as Pasadena Audubon, receive only a small share of NAS membership dues. In order to finance our programs and services, including publication of The Wrenlit, PAS offers Chapter-only memberships.

When it’s time to renew your National Audubon membership, we invite you to instead become a Chapter-only Member of the Pasadena Audubon Society, or make a donation to our Chapter to support our programs. Chapter-only dues are $20 per year, per family, or $15 for seniors and students, all of which remains with our local chapter to fund our programs. We thank you all for your support!

Chapter-only Membership Application

Name __________________________ Phone __________________
Address __________________________
City __________________________ State ______ ZIP ________
Email __________________________

If this is a gift, please also provide donor's information below:
Name __________________________ Phone __________________
Address __________________________
City __________________________ State ______ ZIP ________

Yearly dues:
[ ] $20 (individual or family) [ ] $15 (senior or student)
[ ] $35 (T-shirt or Birding Guide, plus a PAS pin)
[ ] $_______ (donation)

Make checks payable to, and mail to:
Pasadena Audubon, 1750 N Altadena Dr, Pasadena, CA 91107

Photo: Susan Gilliland
Caption Contest

This photo of David Bell was taken by Luke Tiller during Team Who’s epic Birdathon trip. Send in your suggestion for a caption. A panel of impartial but weird judges will vote for the best one. (I’m entering, too, but I won’t be a judge.) The winner will receive a prize at the September general meeting. Send submissions to pas.wrentit@gmail.com, or mail to PAS at the address above.

Mark Hunter