Volume 21 Issue 8 April 2014

Pygmy Owl The Newsletter of the



April 9th Program:

Gonzaga University Environmental Studies Student Presentations

And now for something completely different...

This month we depart from our usual speaker series to host a group of Gonzaga University students who will present their senior projects as part of their environmental studies capstone course.

Each of these projects will be of interest to Spokane Audubon members and the greater community.

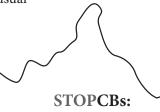
Spokane Audubon's April program will be held at the

Riverview Retirement Community, Village Community Building

Please join us at 7 p.m. for refreshments and friendly conversation.

The program will begin at about 7:30 p.m., after announcements.

2015 Calendar
Photography Contest
Announcement,
page 4



Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs) are a harmful chemical that is persisting in the environment. STOPCBs hopes to strengthen ongoing efforts in Spokane, Washington to reduce PCB pollution in the Spokane River and connected water sources. We recognize a loophole in current federal legislation (Toxic Substances Control Act) that allows for dangerous pollution in our environment. Mainly for economic reasons, there are still allowed uses for PCBs that contain concentrations of less than 50 ppm. The regulatory discrepancy makes it hard for companies to reach water quality standards.

Our presentation will provide general background on inefficient and insufficient legislation, and the harmful effects of PCBs. Finally, we will discuss what's happening in Spokane and encourage widespread recognition of the issue nationwide.

Students for Mt. Spokane

Spokane Audubon Society

This group will discuss the proposed ski area expansion on Mt. Spokane. The proposed expansion requires the deforestation of 82 acres of land. This area contains old growth forest, and the rich sub-alpine forest ecosystem is home to at-risk species. This expansion directly threatens the habitat of mammals like the Marten, Lynx, and Wolverine as well as birds like the Boreal Owl, Northern Goshawk, and Pileated Woodpecker.

Friends of Salmo-Priest Wilderness

Our mission is to create a short, three to five minute video depicting the history and landscape of the Salmo-Priest Wilderness. Once our video is complete, we hope to hold a celebration in honor of the 50th anniversary of The Wilderness Act. This event will allow us to spread awareness and education about local wilderness to Gonzaga and its surrounding communities. 2014 also marks the 30-year anniversary of the Salmo-Priest Wilderness. With these two large anniversaries occurring in the same year we hope to compile a few different short films and keynote speakers in addition to our own video. This will allow for a broader spectrum of interest and also permit us to highlight areas other than just Salmo-Priest.

Polly Judd Food Forest

A food forest is a strategically designed ecosystem that provides a low maintenance, sustainable food source as well as many valuable bioservices and community benefits. The goal of the Polly Judd project is to take the unused south facing slope of Polly Judd Park and establish an edible, self sustaining ecosystem. The Spokane Parks and Recreation Department will be working in collaboration with the local community (neighborhood council, community members, Spokane Permaculture Club, Gonzaga University students) to design, develop and implement the Polly Judd project. This project, if successful, will serve as a model for future food forest projects throughout the greater Spokane community.

The Pygmy Owl

Volume 21, Issue 8 ~ April 2014

The Pygmy Owl, the newsletter of the Spokane Audubon Society, is published monthly, September through June.

Spokane Audubon Society P.O. Box 9820 Spokane, WA 99209-9820

Owl illustrations on pg. 1 and pg. 8 © Jan Reynolds.



Officers President

Fran Haywood

birders13@gmail.com

Vice President

Tim O'Brien

kertim7179@yahoo.com

Treasurer

Lindell Haggin

lindell4118@comcast.net

Secretary

Ed Reynolds

edndaisy@aol.com

Elected Board of Directors

Joyce Alonso jbalonso3@msn.com
Bob Cashen mjaycashen@aol.com
Marlene Cashen mjaycashen@aol.com
Brad Haywood birders13@gmail.com
Gary Lee bird_fan@aol.com
Jan Reynolds edndaisy@aol.com

Committee Chairs

Field Trips

Jon Isacoff@gonzaga.edu

Programs

Gary Lee

bird_fan@aol.com

Education

Joyce Alonso Lindell Haggin jbalonso3@msn.com lindell4118@comcast.net

Conservation

Greg Gordon

fightingbull63@gmail.com

Hospitality

Jan Strobeck

jandeerpark@aol.com

Membership

Dave Plemons

davep_nublado@me.com

Publication

John English

jhe230@yahoo.com

Publicity

Kim Thorburn

kthorburn@msn.com

Pygmy Owl

Carmen Yount

carmen@floreo.com

Volunteer Coordinator

Joyce Alonso

jbalonso3@msn.com

Website

Alan McCoy

spokaneaudubon.org

President's Message

by Fran Haywood

Change, a fact of life. Everything changes. Our jobs, our passions actually, are to try to make changes for the better, protect all we can, and to accept what we cannot change. I watch open space disappear faster than I can blink. One day there is a field where children pick the first buttercups of spring and present them to their moms, where they catch tadpoles and watch them become frogs, where they net butterflies and dragonflies, and one day I notice that field is now a strip mall or an apartment complex. What happened!! I wasn't paying close enough attention. Where are tomorrow's children going to learn to love nature, if there are no open spaces accessible to them, if all they know are malls, cement and asphalt?!

It makes me appreciate all the more the heroics of Tom Rogers and Michael Hamilton, who worked for over 40 years to protect and add to the Dishman Hills Natural Area. Mike and others are continuing this effort as the Dishman Hills Conservancy. Everyone should visit in the spring with your children and grandchildren. Picture it as a housing development! That very nearly happened.

At our last meeting Kim Thorburn, who has spent countless hours over many years tracking, transporting and studying Sage and Sharp-tailed Grouse made an impassioned plea to people to help protect the shrub-steppe, sage-brush areas in central Washington. Without habitat protection, despite all the effort, we will lose these amazing birds... another tear in the web of life!

The answer, hopefully, will be the next generation. I am so excited about the students from Gonzaga University who are going to show us some of the projects they are working on. Their teacher is none other than our environmental chairman, Greg Gordon. This shows that Gonzaga teachers have passions for other things besides basketball (by the way, I am a big fan. Go Zags!). Please come to the meeting to meet and support these students, the hope of the future.

In the meantime, everyone, take your children and grandchildren outdoors. Play in the mud, look at bugs and worms, catch tadpoles, spot birds and animals, listen, and encourage them to notice things. Trust me, a grandchild is a great excuse to experience nature.

May Newsletter Deadline:

Friday, April 25

Please send material to: carmen@floreo.com

Sights & Sounds

Bird Sightings for the Inland Northwest

by Tim O'Brien

Hello, fellow birders! It is officially Spring now and new arrivals are showing up daily in and around Spokane County. As of March 21, our cumulative total for the year so far is up to 115 species. As we all know, many more species will be showing up through June.

Swallows are always a great indicator of Spring's arrival. **VIOLET-GREEN SWALLOWS** showed up on February 26 and **TREE SWALLOWS** were first reported on March 5.

The color of bluebirds was added to our scenery in early March with the first **Western Bluebirds** reported on March 5 south of Cheney. The first **Mountain Bluebird** was reported shortly afterward, on March 7, near Eloika Lake.

TUNDRA SWANS began to flood the county with sightings beginning on March 1 with a flock sitting on the ice of West Medical Lake. Now, they can be seen just about anywhere that standing water is present.

Waterfowl diversity also increased in early March, with **Canvasback** being found on March 1 at West Medical Lake. **Horned Grebes** were reported on March 4 at the Central Premix pond. Several **Eurasian Wigeons** were reported, starting on March 7 all around the county. Philleo Lake had the first reported **Ruddy Ducks** on March 8. An **Eared Grebe** was just reported on March 21 from Turnbull NWR.

SPOTTED TOWHEES are back in force, with the first reported one on February 27 on the South Hill. Now they just seem to be in every brush thicket!

The southwest part of the county seems to be an area less visited, but a foray on March 5 found **SAY'S PHOEBE**, a very early **TURKEY VULTURE**, and **WESTERN MEADOWLARKS** along Martin Road.

A couple of sightings of **GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GEESE** in the Philleo Lake/Spangle area filtered in on March 6 and March 20. So keep looking; there surely will be more moving through while waterfowl migration is on.

March 15 was a great day when three new arrivals were reported including **SAVANNAH SPARROW** at Slavin Ranch, **WILSON'S SNIPE** from the Spokane area, and **CALIFORNIA GULL** at Turnbull NWR.

An early **Yellow-Headed BlackBird** showed up at Peone Prairie wetland on March 19.

Early mornings and late evenings will be prime birding time since the longer days are already upon us and many of our local breeding birds are setting up territory. I know the **KILLDEER** in my neighborhood are already running down the middle of our streets and can be heard calling well after dusk.

Our bird of the month for March is a rare find in Spokane County. On March 13, Terry Little chanced upon a **BLACK-BACKED WOODPECKER** at the parking area of the Deep Creek overlook which is part of Riverside State Park. The bird was not found again, so it most likely was just moving through, but still proves that our regular birding sites can provide an amazing find when you least expect it. So get out and bird!

I would like to thank the following individuals for their reports used in this column: Terry Little, Greg Falco, Will Young, Michael Woodruff, Jon Isacoff, Michael Irving, and Allan Wylie. Keep those reports coming in!

A Screech Owl Story



On March 4th at around 10 p.m., while funneling water away from his back door, Ron Dexter heard a Western Screech Owl calling from the area below their house where he has a number of nests. Ron says, "They have nested in three different ones over the past five years, so it appears they will be repeating this year. Some of the nests are standard Wood Duck boxes, but the one used last year was a Screech Owl nest. I cut the opening so that either species can use the nest. It is an oval 3" x 4" wide. Occasionally, a Hooded Merganser or Flying Squirrels will nest in them."

2015 Spokane Audubon Calendar Photograph Contest Guidelines

Submission Period: May 1 - May 30

Eligibility Requirements

- Spokane Audubon Society member in good standing
- Electronically submits **up to three** 9.25"-wide and 6.75"-height digital photographs. The photographs shall not have the © symbol with the photographer's name or other inserted script.
- If photographer has photographs(s) selected, he/she
 maintains copyright and agrees to provide perpetual
 use of the photograph(s) to Spokane Audubon Society
 for the calendar and other promotional and educational
 purposes.

Call for Entries

- Photographers may submit entries starting May 1.
 The deadline is Friday, May 30.
- No entries will be accepted after the deadline.
- Unselected photographs from previous years will not be automatically submitted. The photographer may resubmit photos not previously selected for use.

Judging and Selection

- Selection will be made by a panel of three to five impartial judges, at least one of whom is a Spokane Audubon Society board member or committee chair. It is preferred that some panel members have moderately advanced bird identification skills and experience with bird photography.
- Photographers who submit entries cannot be judges.
- The bird must be focus of the photograph. Preference is given to unusual species and hard-to-see species or behaviors.
- Judging criteria are photo composition and quality.
 Submissions must comply with the size requirement.
- The panel will select 14 photographs for each calendar month and additional photographs that might be used in smaller form on the date pages.
- Following selection, entrants will be notified of the decisions.

Publication

• Each photograph will be published with the common name of the bird species and © with the name of the photographer.

Speaking of photography...

Bob Griffith, one of Spokane Audubon's accomplished photographers, has a photo of a praying mantis featured on the back cover of this month's issue of **National Wildlife** magazine.

Congratulations to Bob, and a big thanks to Marian Frobe for calling it to our attention!

March 2014 Board Report

by Ed Reynolds

The March Board meeting dealt with National, State and local issues.

We voted for a member of the newly established National Pacific Flyways Board, and we contributed \$2,000.00 to funding for the State office, the same amount we gave last year. Our support of national and state activities helps keep the Audubon Society an effective organization.

Locally, a group of senior citizens enjoyed a field trip, led by Fran Haywood, to Kalispell Lake to see the swans. Our efforts to support Turnbull NWR with their upcoming dinner auction and educational programs continue. Board members are participating in Bobolink surveys and surveys of shrub-steppe habitat. Lindell continues to gather information on our possible purchase of property adjoining Audubon Lake in Reardan. She's found that there isn't enough wetland on the property to attract funding from Ducks Unlimited and that \$500.00 per acre price is higher than the assessed value of the land, so we need to know the fair market value of the land and the amount that WDFW would reimburse us. Like all such transactions, it's complicated; but preserving wildlife habitat is an important goal for us.

2014 Shorebird Festvial April 25 - 27 Hoquiam, WA

http://www.shorebirdfestival.com/

EACH SPRING, many thousands of shorebirds stop to rest and feed in Grays Harbor estuary on their migration northward. Coming from as far south as Argentina, these Arcticbound shorebirds are among the world's greatest migrants. Some travel over 15,000 miles round trip! Tens of thousands of shorebirds feed on the open mudflats in the estuary. This concentration offers people a great chance to view a number of shorebird species, and, with luck, to see the birds fly together in beautiful formations while trying to escape the fastest creature on earth, the Peregrine Falcon.

Coeur d'Alene Audubon Presents Raptor Expert Kate Davis Tuesday, April 8th, 7 p.m.

On Tuesday, April 8th, nationally known raptor expert, Kate Davis, will be the guest speaker at Coeur d'Alene Audubon Society's April program. Davis is the executive director of Raptors of the Rockies in Florence, Montana, where she operates a non-profit dedicated to raptor care and public education programs to protect wild birds. Currently, her "team" consists of 15 species raptors in various stages of rehabilitation.

Davis is an award-winning author and photographer and a high energy speaker who brings live raptors to her presentations. Her book, *Raptors of the West*, won the National Outdoor Book Award. Over the years she has presented to more than 120,000 audience members. For her Coeur d'Alene presentation she will bring four live raptors, including a Peregrine Falcon and a Great Horned Owl.

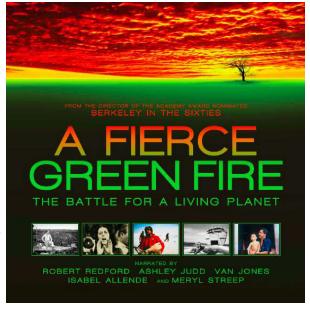
For more information about Davis and her work check out her website at *www. raptorsoftherockies.org.*

The program, which begins at 7:00 pm, is open to the public. It will be held at the Lutheran Church of the Master, 4800 N. Ramsey Road, which is on the northeast corner of Ramsey and Kathleen Avenues in Coeur d'Alene. We hope to see you there!

Celebrate Earth Day with PBS: A FIERCE GREEN FIRE: THE BATTLE FOR A LIVING PLANET

Tuesday, April 22, 9 - 10 p.m.

A FIERCE GREEN FIRE: The Battle for a Living Planet is the first big-picture exploration of the environmental movement: grassroots and global activism spanning fifty years from conservation to climate change. Directed and written by Mark Kitchell, Academy Award-nominated director of Berkeley in the Sixties, and narrated by Robert Redford, Ashley Judd, Van Jones, Isabel Allende and Meryl Streep, the film premiered at Sundance Film Festival 2012, and has won acclaim at festivals around the world.



Field Trips and Events: April & May

April 19, 2014, Saturday Sprague Lake Field Trip Leader: Fran Haywood

This is an all-day trip to the Sprague Lake area, open to all birders. We will look for migrating and early resident species, especially ducks. We hope to find Swainson's Hawks, American White Pelicans, and if we get lucky, Long-billed Curlew. We will meet at Spokane's Coeur d'Alene Park at 6:30 am. Contact Fran Haywood (484-8666, birders13@aol.com) by April 12 if you plan to attend.

Target Species: Migrant ducks and geese, American White Pelican, Swainson's Hawk, American Avocet, Black-necked Stilt, Caspian Tern, Say's Phoebe, Yellow-rumped Warbler, White-crowned and Savannah Sparrows

April 24-29, 2014, Thursday-Tuesday Point Reyes, California Field Trip Leader: Kim Thorburn Limit: 6 Birders

This six-day trip is for intermediate and advanced birders. Kim Thorburn will provide lodging for up to six participants and lead field trips on Bolinas Lagoon and beach, Point Reves Bird Observatory, Point Reyes National Seashore, Mt. Tamalpais State Park, and the Marin Headlands. This region is a year-round birding hot spot, site of the filming of Alfred Hitchcock's "The Birds," and home of elite birder and artist Keith Hansen. There is a variety of pelagic and other waterfowl, migrating shorebirds and warblers, and lots of land natives that we don't often see here. Participants will be responsible for their own air travel to Oakland and we'll split the cost of land transportation and food. We'll need to coordinate

arrival and departure in Oakland. Contact Kim Thorburn by April 1 if you're interested in learning more. 465-3025, kthorburn@msn.com.

Target Species (examples): Acorn Woodpecker, Nuttall's Woodpecker, Black-throated Gray Warbler, Wrentit, Allen's Hummingbird, Whimbrel, Snowy Plover, Western Gull, Common Murre, Red-throated Loon, Redshouldered Hawk, White-tailed Kite, Rufous-crowned Sparrow.

April 27, 2014, Sunday West Plains Early Migrant Trip Leader: Alan McCoy Limit: 15 Birders

This all-day trip is for all levels of birders. We'll stop at Reardan's Audubon Lake where we will look for waterfowl and shorebirds. We will check out the Davenport Cemetery, which can be great for migrants. Then we'll go north to the Little Falls Dam, follow the Spokane River upstream and finish up at the Indian Canyon Springs area. We will meet at 6:00 am at the Rosauer's parking lot in Browne's Addition (near 2nd Avenue and Sunset Highway) and plan to return about 6:00 pm. Contact leader Alan McCoy at 448-3123, 448-8861 or ahm2352@gmail.com by April 20 to reserve your place.

Target Species: Migrant ducks, raptors, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, Bewick's Wren, Black-necked Stilt, American Avocet, Red-necked Grebe, Calliope Hummingbird, Orange-crowned, Nashville and Yellow warblers, Say's Phoebe, Western and Mountain Bluebirds

May 5, 7, 9 Monday, Wednesday, Friday Bird Identification Workshops Leaders: Gary Blevins and Kim Thorburn

OK, novices and beginners, this is your chance. Two instructors will teach a

series of three classes on beginning birding and bird identification by sight and sound. Workshops will be held at a site to be determined from 6:30 to 9:00 pm. Slides and computer programs will be used to introduce you to many of the bird species commonly observed in the Spokane area. A \$20 donation to Spokane Audubon is requested. A field trip for workshop participants to Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge will be held on International Migratory Bird Day, May 10. For more information or to reserve your place for the workshop, contact Gary Blevins at (533-3661 or GaryB@spokanefalls.edu) by May 1.

May 10, 2014, Saturday Bird Identification Workshop Field Trip to Turnbull NWR Leaders: Gary Blevins and Kim Thorburn

Come celebrate International Migratory Bird Day by birding. Although the trip is specifically designed for the Bird Identification Workshop participants, other birders are welcome. We will meet at Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge, near Cheney, in the parking lot across from Pine Lake at 7:00 am and bird the refuge until 2:00 pm. Contact leader Gary Blevins at (533-3661 or garyb@spokanefalls.edu) by May 3 to register for the trip.

Target Species: Wilson's Snipe, Yellowheaded and Red-winged Blackbirds, Virginia Rail, Marsh Wren, American Bittern, various waterfowl, Great Horned Owl, Osprey, Northern Harrier, Cassin's Finches

May 10, 2014, Saturday Turnbull NWR Planting Party 9 a.m. - noon

HELP US CELEBRATE INTERNATION- AL MIGRATORY BIRD DAY! Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge and Spokane

Audubon Society will host a community work party on Saturday, May 10.

Numerous partners and individuals participate in our semiannual community planting events held during the spring and fall. This ongoing community effort restores native riparian habitat to benefit birds and other wildlife species. We have hundreds of native saplings to plant. We will also erect fencing at the project site to protect the trees from deer, elk, and moose browsing. Everyone is welcome to participate!

There will be a potluck at noon, with hamburgers provided by Friends of Turnbull.

Where: Turnbull NWR Headquarters, 5 miles south of Cheney on Cheney-Plaza Road: turn left on Smith Road and drive 2 miles on gravel road to headquarters.

Clothing: Long-sleeved shirt, work pants, sturdy boots or shoes, gloves.

Equipment: (If you can) shovels and pliers, labeled with your name.

May 11, 2014, Sunday Slavin Ranch Wetland Trip Leader: Alan McCoy

This is an annual trip to Slavin Ranch for Spokane Audubon. It is a half-day walking trip along a primitive trail through open Ponderosa Pine scab rock country with many views of seasonal wetlands. All levels of birders are welcome. The Slavin Ranch is a Conservation Futures acquisition located about 10 miles south of downtown Spokane and a mile west of Hwy 195. We will start at the Slavin Ranch parking lot at 7:00 am and end about 1:00 pm. Please call leader Alan McCoy at 448-3123 or 448-8861, ahm2352@gmail.com by May 4 if you plan to attend.

Target Species: Breeding ducks and geese, Sora, Killdeer, Wilson's Snipe, breeding Black Tern, woodpeckers, six swallow species, Western Wood Pewee, Eastern and Western Kingbird, Marsh Wren, Song Sparrow, Yellow Warbler, Common Yellowthroat

May 25, 2014, Sunday Mosquito Springs Trip Leader: Kim Thorburn

This trip is for birders of all levels. It is a half-day walking trip over rough terrain. Experience this little-known BLM shrub-steppe riparian area brimming with arriving breeding birds. We will also check for sagebrush and grassland species. Contact Kim Thorburn, 465-3025 or *kthorburn@msn. com* by May 18 if you're interested.

Target species: Willow Flycatcher, Black-headed Grosbeak, Lazuli Bunting, Warbling Vireo, Bullock's Oriole, Grasshopper Sparrow, Brewer's Sparrow, Sage Thrasher

Local Membership Dues:

May 31, 2014, Saturday Turnbull NWR Spring Festival: Flooods, Flowers & Feathers 8:00 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Enjoy spring by experiencing and learning about the exceptional wildlife, habitats, and geology of the unique Channeled Scablands landscape. Come join the fun on May 31st at Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge. In partnership with numerous organizations/agencies we are offering the 3rd annual FREE Spring nature festival with activities for families and individuals of all ages. Take a walk on the wild side and discover birds, wildflowers, insects, other wildlife, and catch a glimpse of remnants of the ice age floods that created the diverse Scablands habitat. Nature hikes, tours, live raptors from the West Valley Outdoor Learning Center, kids activities (such as a water critter search and the "Find That Bird" hunt, etc.) and informational booths provided by a number of organizations will make for a wonderful spring day outdoors in this remarkable environment.

Spokane Audubon Society Membership Form

•
Individual: \$20/year
Couple & Family: \$25/year
Student: \$10/year
Lifetime: \$300
National Membership Dues: \$35/year
Individual + National Dues: \$55/year
Couple + National Dues: \$60/year
Your local membership provides you with <i>The Pygmy Owl</i> and supports your local chapter's many conservation and education activities. You wil also be eligible for website privileges.
Name:
Address:
City: State:
Zip Code: Phone:
E-mail:



Please make check payable to: **Spokane Audubon Society**Send this form and your check to:

Audubon Membership Attn: Dave Plemons 1224 W. Riverside #1101 Spokane, WA 99201

Current members may renew memberships from our web site::

http://spokaneaudubon.org

Receiving duplicate newsletters? Errors or other changes needed on your mailing label? Contact Dave Plemons at davep_nublado@me.com, or 413-1524.



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The Spokane Audubon Society provides resources and services to educate people about birds, wildlife, and the importance of habitats, and to advocate and support public policies and actions that conserve and restore wildlife habitats.

Visit our website: http://spokaneaudubon.org

Directions to the General Meeting:

Riverview Retirement Community, Village Community Building 2117 E. North Crescent Avenue

To get to Riverview Retirement Community:

From West Spokane & South Hill

- I-90 East to Exit 281 toward US-2 E/US-395 N/ Newport/Colville
- Follow US-2 E/US-395 N to E. Mission Ave.
- Turn Right at E. Mission Ave.
- Turn Left at E. Upriver Drive

From Spokane Valley

- I-90 West to Exit 282A
- Follow N. Hamilton St. to E. Mission Ave.
- Turn Right at E. Mission Ave.
- Turn Left at E. Upriver Drive

From North Spokane

- Take US-395 S to E. Mission Ave.
- Turn Left at E. Mission Ave.
- Turn Left at E. Upriver Drive

Once you're on E. Upriver Drive (see map below):

- Follow E. Upriver to Drive to N. Crestline Street
- Turn Left at N. Crestline Street
- Turn Right on E. North Crescent Drive
- Proceed to entry on left showing numbers 2105-2145

Limited parking is available by the Village Community Building. Overflow parking is along E. North Crescent Ave.

