

T H E

Western



Tanager

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NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

Volume 27

MAY - JUNE, 1961

Number 9

SEA BIRD COLONIES IN NORTHWEST ALASKA

Ernest J. Willoughby
(Concluded)

LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

PLUMMER PARK

7377 SANTA MONICA BLVD.

LOS ANGELES 46, CALIFORNIA

The Horned Puffins nest within cavities on the cliffs. At certain times of day, especially evening, the puffins stand at the entrances to their holes, peering out at the sea and thus showing by their white breasts and faces the locations of their nests.

The Glaucous Gulls nesting at the cliffs choose grassy areas limited to a few slopes part way down from the tops of the cliffs. The eggs and chicks are thus probably afforded some protection from the Red Foxes (*Vulpes fulva*) which forage around the cliffs (and occasionally fall to their deaths). The Glaucous Gulls are the major predators on the murres, and patrol the cliffs watching for chances to snatch unguarded eggs and chicks. Added to this they dispose of murres and kittiwakes injured and killed in accidents and rock falls, and find thousands of dead and dying murre and kittiwake chicks which fall from the cliffs before they are old enough to leave the ledges.

Pelagic Cormorants nest in isolated spots along the series of cliffs, building nests high up near the tops of the cliffs.

Both Pigeon and Black Guillemots have recently been found nesting within rubble piles and crevices at the base of the cliffs. A nest of each species was found in 1960. Each nest had two eggs and, as with the two murres, the eggs of the two guillemots were identical in appearance. In breeding plumage the two guillemots are nearly of the same appearance, the only apparent difference being the dark feathering slicing across the white wing patch of the Pigeon as opposed to the unmarked pure white wing patch of the Black.

With so many thousands of murres and kittiwakes concentrated at the cliffs one might well expect the place to be noisy; and so it is. The murres have loud voices and use them, especially at the times when great numbers of birds are returning from the sea and seeking to alight on the crowded ledges. Then the growls, grunts, maniac laughs, quacks, bellows, etc. rise to fortissimo and, combined with kittiwakes' barking and loud, penetrating kiddyak call, give rise to a roar that can be heard from a distance of over a mile.

Among the land birds that live at the cliffs are occasional pairs of Snow Buntings (*Plectrophenax nivalis*) which nest in crevices in the rocks, Ravens (*Corvus corax*) and Peregrines (*Falco peregrinus*). The ravens find abundant food consisting of murres' eggs and dead birds. The Peregrines, a pair of which nested at Cope Thompson in 1960, prey upon the adult kittiwakes and murres. Golden Eagles and Rough-legged Hawks have been known to nest on these sea cliffs.

These are the "bird bazaars," a Russian term for such sea-bird rookeries, as I saw them.

THE WESTERN Tanager

Free to members....Others \$1.50 annually
 Editor Emeritus.....George T. Hastings
 Editor.....Hubert H. Weiser
 3749 Shannon Road, L.A. 27.....NO 4-2753

THE LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY
 Organized 1910.....Incorporated 1951
 "To promote the study and protection of
 birds and other wildlife, plants, soil
 and water."

MEMBERSHIP

Joint with National Audubon Society in-
 cludes subscription to Audubon Magazine.
 Regular - \$6.50, Husband & Wife - \$10.00,
 Sustaining - \$12.50, Sustaining-Husband
 & Wife - \$20., Active - \$25.00, Support-
 ing \$50., Contributing-\$100., Life-\$300.

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Headquarters, Library and Nature Museum,
 7377 Santa Monica Blvd., Los Angeles 46,
 HO 7-9495. Hours: 2-4 p.m. Monday, Wed-
 nesday, Thursday and Saturday. Groups
 by appointment. Open for members and
 guests before and after each meeting.

* * * * *

MARCH 26TH FIELD TRIP

Although many of our members were at
 Asilomar, we had a good turnout for the
 Sunday Field Trip to Irvine Park, Tucker
 Sanctuary and O'Neill Park. The weather
 was perfect and the birding good. Of
 special interest were the Warblers and
 the Hawks. We saw the Orange-crowned,
 Nashville, Yellow, Audubon's and Wil-
 son's Warblers. Of the Falconiformes,
 the Turkey Vulture, Cooper's Hawk, Red-
 tailed Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Swain-
 son's Hawk and Sparrow Hawk were observ-
 ed. Our eastern visitors became better
 acquainted with some of our western
 birds and even this Californian added
 two birds to his list.

Bill Lehmann

ROGER TORY PETERSON

An ample supply of the new edition of
 "A Field Guide to Western Birds" is on
 hand. They can be had at Audubon House
 Monday, Wednesday, Thursday from 8:00
 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.; on Saturday 2:00 to
 4:00 p.m.; or before and after meetings.

SPRING FLOWER SHOW

On Friday, May 19th, the Floral Art
 Group of the Los Angeles Garden Club
 will present its annual spring flower
 show at the home of Mrs. R. D. Brown,
 237 South Hudson Avenue, Los Angeles,
 1:00 to 5:30 p.m. All Los Angeles Audu-
 bon members are invited.

THURSDAY MORNING MEETING

Mr. Edward Baker, who will be speaker
 for the Thursday Morning Meeting in May,
 is a well known naturalist and youth
 teacher. A man of many interests, Mr.
 Baker is qualified to speak with author-
 ity on many subjects; an Audubon member,
 and past president of Conchological So-
 ciety. Besides being conversant with so
 much that goes on in the world of nature,
 Mr. Baker and his wife Irene do much
 good work among the Hopi Indians of the
 Southwest.

I will not kill or hurt any living
 creature needlessly, nor destroy any
 beautiful thing, but will strive to save
 and comfort all gentle life, and guard
 all natural beauty upon earth.

John Ruskin

NEWS FROM CONSERVATION GUIDE

HEARINGS ON THE WILDERNESS BILL, S. 174, were held as scheduled Feb. 27 and 28 by the Senate Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs. Conservation organizations, among them the National Audubon Society, gave the measure strong support. President Buchheister testified in person at the hearings. Spokesmen for the lumbering and mining industries and some irrigation groups also were there in force with the usual opposition arguments. The committee now can meet any time and vote to report the bill favorably to the Senate floor. (For membership of Senate Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, see April Western Tanager).

In order that important legislation may move toward passage also in the House, conservationists are asking the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, or its subcommittee on Public Lands, to schedule early hearings. A number of House Bills similar to S. 174 have been introduced, among them H.R. 293 by John F. Baldwin (Calif.), H.R. 299 by Charles E. Bennett (Fla.) and H.R. 776 by John P. Saylor (Pa.).

CAPE COD NATIONAL SEASHORE PARK legislation was endorsed by the National Audubon Society in a statement sent to Congressman J. T. Rutherford (Texas), Chairman of the House Subcommittee on National Parks. The occasion was hearings held March 6 and 7 by Mr. Rutherford's subcommittee, which is a unit of the House Interior Committee listed here.

Our statement urged prompt action on H.R. 66 or similar measure; pointing out that "further delay might very well mean additional encroachments upon the remaining unspoiled seashore that is available and suitable for this kind of park."

The great sweep of Nauset Beach, together with the inside flats it has created are, like Monomoy Point (already a refuge), essential to the conservation of the hundreds of thousands of shore birds and waterfowl that use them almost the year round, but particularly in a magnificent migration spectacle that has made them a mecca for nature lovers from the whole eastern United States. Even the ponds well inland from the great beach are important to waterfowl. A considera-

ble segment of the east coast population of Black Ducks and Canada Geese makes Cape Cod a wintering terminus.

A POINT REYES NATIONAL SEASHORE hearing was scheduled March 24 by Mr. Rutherford's subcommittee. Bill under consideration is H.R. 2775 by Congressman Clem Miller (Calif.). The National Audubon Society will back California groups in supporting the legislation.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON INTERIOR & INSULAR AFFAIRS -- All can be addressed at the House Office Building, Wash. 25, D.C.

Wayne Aspinall (Colo.) Chairman
Walter Rogers (Texas)
Hjalmar Nygaard (N.D.)
Mrs. Gracie Pfost (Idaho) Chairman, Subcommittee on Public Lands
James H. Haley (Florida)
Ed Edmondson (Okla.)
J. T. Rutherford (Texas) Chairman, Subcommittee on National Parks
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John Kyle (Iowa)
Wm. H. Harrison (Wyo.)
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Peter H. Dominick (Colo.)

LACK OF STATE ENABLING LAWS HOLD BACK REFUGE EXPANSION. Before government can acquire refuge lands under the Migratory Bird Conservation Act, using Duck Stamp money or other funds, there must be state legislation consenting to federal acquisitions. Certain key areas of wetlands are now unavailable and likely to be lost because the legislatures of seven states have failed to pass the necessary law. The seven dilatory states are Alaska,

Arizona, Hawaii, Florida, Massachusetts, Montana, Wyoming.

Conservation groups in Florida are now working for an enabling act. They are having difficulty due to the political posture that is currently popular in the south, of being against anything the Federal government wants to do.

Since 1929 sixteen states have adopted enabling acts and most of the others have laws that serve the purpose. A few have tacked on conditional provisions that make federal acquisition difficult. Two bad examples are California and Nevada, both of which require specific consent for each proposed land purchase both by the State Game and Fish Commission and by county authorities. State Game departments are usually cooperative but the local county boards often pose an insurmountable hurdle.

The Utah law requires county consent but not approval by a State agency. Prior approval by either the Governor and/or another State agency is required by Minnesota, Mississippi, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and Oklahoma.

DRASTIC "CONTROL" BILLS OPPOSED. The Connecticut legislature is confronted with a rash of "bird control" bills as a result of the current psychology, encouraged by agricultural agencies, that some kind of chemical poison or mechanical device can and should be employed to remove any animal population that poses either a nuisance or an irritation to farmers or fruit growers. Audubon leaders and other conservationists have had to apply the brakes and the State Board of Fisheries and Game has interjected a sane point of view.

Latest reports from E. Alexander Bergstrom, chairman of the Conservation Committee of the Hartford Bird Study Club, indicates a substitute bill is being considered that will provide regulated control of fruit-eating birds under permit when necessary, and will further authorize State employment of a control specialist who will work pursuant to an agreement with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

One drastic Connecticut bill would have removed protection from "any birds...when in the act of or when attempting to destroy cultivated crops." Such a proposal is clearly illegal, going beyond limits of state jurisdiction under the migratory

bird treaties with Canada and Mexico, which make federal law supreme with respect to migratory birds.

ALL MEMBERS HAVE THE RIGHT AS CITIZENS TO WRITE TO THEIR CONGRESSMEN AND REPRESENTATIVES EXPRESSING CONCERN ON CONSERVATION MATTERS, URGING THE PASSAGE OF BILLS THAT ADVANCE THE CAUSE OF CONSERVATION AND STRONGLY PROTESTING THOSE WHICH DO NOT.

* * * * *

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

MRS. HELEN N. COMSTOCK
504 So. Lucerne Blvd.; Los Angeles 5
MISS POLLY HARMON
2341 Canyon Drive, Los Angeles 28
DR. AND MRS. MOULTON K. JOHNSON
421 - 25th Street, Santa Monica
MRS. AGNES G. KING
1735 Malcolm Ave., Los Angeles 24

* * * * *

RECOMMENDATIONS OF NOMINATING COMMITTEE FOR OFFICERS 1961-1962

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1st Vice President . . . Mr. Arnold Small
2nd Vice President . . . Mrs. Olive Alvey
Exec. Secretary. . . Mrs. Russell Wilson
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Registrar. Mrs. Rose Bussey
Recording Secretary. . Mrs. Donald Adams
Curator. Mrs. Mary V. Hood
Election of officers will be held at the Tuesday night meeting, May 9 and installation at the annual dinner in June.

BUNTINGS

About the most beautiful sight during the 1960 Florida visit of Mrs. Beebe and me was at the home of Dr. Ernest J. Brown and wife, 2350 S.W. 16th Ave., Fort Lauderdale. Dr. Brown was confined to bed over a year and became interested in getting the painted and indigo buntings to visit him outside his bedroom window. The Browns have fed the birds daily the past 6 years. Consequently when the buntings come from nesting in Canada around Sept. 1st, they make a bee line for their Brown Free Boarding House. Every day at 3 P.M. they listen for Mrs. Brown to ring a dinner bell around the yard. Down they swoop for the wild bird seed, chicken scratch and other delicacies. (Cont'd)

The method of feeding them and shutting out the jays was new to me. Mr. Brown has constructed a cylindrical cage, two feet across and three feet high of 1 x 2 vertical galvanized wire. This 1" wire will let buntings through - some of them have to squeeze.

The painted buntings don't seem real - mostly red with lots of blue and green - a rainbow of color. About 20 painted and indigo buntings at a time fly in and out of the cage. Cardinals hang around but soon tire of trying to get at the feed.

At various heights 2" wide tin troughs hold feed and of course on the floor many buntings pick up the seed flirled off the troughs. To discourage English Sparrows, the bottom row of mesh has a string running around up 1" which reduces the mesh to 1" x 1".

No English Sparrows appeared during the hour that we sat by the window in the house and saw this vivid change of color. When Mrs. Brown put out an apple, a cat bird appeared immediately. Then a beautiful red-bellied woodpecker scared the buntings away while he lingered several minutes.

The Browns say the birds start coming about two o'clock and wait in the trees for the bell. At the first of the season the new ones are scared; but before the end of April when they start back north they welcome the bell's sound. The Browns are very hospitable and seeing this great beauty from September to April should be a "must" for all Florida visitors although few know of it.

It brings to my mind the fact that our birds can be enjoyed much more if they are attracted by regular feeding as at our Tucker Sanctuary. They can be observed quietly and carefully. The Browns were much interested in Tucker hummers and said that after they planted shrimp plants, ruby-throated hummingbirds were always on the blossoms.

The Florida pink flamingos are a sight but I'll put at the head of the list the Brown's painted and indigo buntings.

Hiram E. Beebe

1961 NATURE WORKSHOP

Los Angeles City Department of Recreation and Parks held its annual nature workshop for youth leaders at Hollywood Playground on the evenings of April 6th, 13th and 20th. In the absence of John Peebles, recovering from a successful spine operation, Mel Carlson was in charge.

Bill and Mary Hood showed slides from their inexhaustible and marvelous collection while Mary spoke on three subjects:

- "This Changing Earth" - Geology for everyone."
- "Wild Plant and Animal Foods of the Indians."
- "Camouflage and Other Devices used by Animals to Survive."

Those with fascinating and instructive displays were Olive Alvey, Marion Wilson, Esther Johnson, Gudrun Pepke, Edward and Irene Baker.

These meetings were delightful, full of information for those interested and deserved a far larger attendance.

* * * * *

Western Tanager wishes to thank the many people who have helped in various ways to bring our Bulletin before our members the past two years. We are especially grateful to Bess Phillips, without whom the Tanager would have been an amorphous mass which would never have met a deadline. The generous donation of her time when she had so many calls upon it is deeply appreciated.

Hugh Weiser

HOOTS, COOTS & GALLINULES

On Sunday afternoon, April 16th, a small flock of warblers was working its effecient best in the tops of acacia trees in Barnsdall Park near the Arts and Crafts Building. In 1959 at about this time the flock was composed of Yellow Warblers. This year it was composed of Nashville Warblers.

NAS MERGER WITH NATURE CENTERS FOR YOUNG AMERICA, INC.

The Board of Trustees of Nature Centers for Young America, Inc. voted February 14 to approve and recommend to their members a plan for merging with the National Audubon Society. Previously, in a February 3 meeting attended by 14 of the 18 directors, the Board of the National Audubon Society endorsed the plan. These actions represent a preliminary step and a recommendation to the members of the two organizations who, under New York corporation law, must give the final stamp of approval.

Notices will be mailed shortly to all members of the Society of a meeting to be held at Audubon House April 21.

The NCYA was incorporated in the spring of 1959. Its purpose was to aid American communities in setting aside areas of natural land, establishing living museums, exhibits and natural science workshops, and developing dynamic outdoor educational programs for the youth of America, their families and the generations to come.

The aims of the NCYA and its record of performance have been consistent with the purposes of the National Audubon Society. This fact was recognized by the Board of Trustees of NCYA in approving the merger plan. By the same token it was recognized by the Board of Trustees of NCYA that their goals in conservation education could be advanced more efficiently by pooling the resources and manpower of the two organizations.

NCYA has in the past two years assisted in the establishment of nature centers or junior museums at Westport and New Cannan, Conn.; Bay Village, Ohio; West Palm Beach and Naples, Fla.; Tenafly, N. J. and Macon, Ga. Its staff has lent technical guidance and personal assistance to local groups interested in starting nature centers in several other New York state communities. In some instances the local leadership and principal corporation have been supplied by Audubon Societies. All along the ideal of NCYA has been the establishment of centers that would provide the kind of educational services being performed so well by the Audubon Center of Greenwich, Conn. Aullwood Audubon Center at Dayton, Ohio, and the Audubon Center of Southern California at El Monte, Calif., all operated by the National Audubon Society.

When the merger is finally consummated, it is our purpose to operate the Nature Centers program as one of the major extension arms of the Society. It will be coordinated closely with the Society's other educational activities. The staff of NCYA is made up of able, dedicated people.

With the stimulus of the support that can be given the program by NAS branches and affiliates throughout the nation, we shall look forward to a steady growth in the Nature Center movement. No other device or program appears to hold so much promise of giving millions of urban children an understanding of their affinity with nature and of their dependence upon the natural resources of America.

DR. HOWELL TO TALK AT EVENING MEETING

The films which Dr. Thomas R. Howell will show with his talk at the Tuesday Evening Meeting on May 9 on the "Breeding Behavior of Pelagic Birds" were taken for a serious purpose. They were intended to document the behavior of black-footed and Laysan albatrosses at Midway Island. This they successfully do. However, many of the scenes are also highly amusing, as for example those depicting the reactions of a parent bird to an assortment of odd objects substituted for the eggs in the nest.

Dr. Howell is in the Dept. of Zoology at U.C.L.A. His ornithological research has taken him to Nicaragua and the islands off the west coast of Mexico as well as Midway. He is active in the Cooper Ornithological Society, having been president of the southern division. On many occasions he has proven himself to be deeply concerned with conservation. Those who heard Dr. Howell's talk on "Hibernation and Torpidity in Birds" at one of our evening meetings two or three years ago, will be looking forward to hearing him again.

Bob Blackstone

SUMMER FIELD TRIPS

Several requests for summer field trips have been made. They are under consideration. Anyone interested in going on them, please leave name, address and phone number at Audubon House or phone them in.

LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY a branch of the NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY, New York
Headquarters, Nature Museum, Library located in Audubon House in Plummer Park
7377 Santa Monica Blvd., Los Angeles 46, - HO 7-9495
President: James W. Huffman Registrar of Members: Mrs. Robert Sandmeyer
2912 Manhattan Ave., Manhattan Beach 355 W. Elm Ave., Burbank

CALENDAR FOR MAY, 1961

- May 4 - THURSDAY, EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING, 7:30 P.M., Audubon House.
- May 6 - SATURDAY, JUNIOR NATURALISTS, 9:45-11:15. PET SHOW at Griffith Park Boys Camp. For details call Director, Fern Dell Museum, HO 7-1661.
- May 9 - TUESDAY EVENING MEETING, 8:00 P.M. Great Hall, Plummer Park. Dr. Thomas R. Howell of the Department of Zoology, U.C.L.A., will speak on the "BREEDING BEHAVIOR OF PELAGIC BIRDS." His talk will be illustrated by 16 mm motion pictures taken at Midway Island. Many interesting, and sometimes highly amusing, aspects of behavior of black-footed and Laysan albatrosses will be seen in this film. Chairman: Robert Blackstone, CR 6-3879.
- May 13 - SATURDAY FIELD TRIP to Tapia Park. Meet at 7:00 A.M. Jim Huffman will be on hand to give instruction in identification of the oak and riparian woodlands. Emphasis will be on warblers, vireos and finches and on identification by song and call. Take Pacific Coast Highway to Malibu Canyon Road, turn right and continue through canyon to Tapia Park, or Ventura Freeway west from Hollywood to Tapia Park turnoff. Turn left to Park. Leader: Jim Huffman, FR 2-7124.
- May 17 - THURSDAY BUS FIELD TRIP to Rancho Santa Ana Botanical Gardens, 1500 No. College Ave., Claremont. Bus leaves Grand Avenue entrance to Biltmore Hotel at 8:30 A.M. sharp. Fare \$2.50. On display are outstanding California shrubs and flowers. Many birds are also found here. Bring lunch to be eaten at San Dimas Park. Make reservations May 15th, 16th, 17th. Edna Burt, PL 5-1044.
- May 25 - THURSDAY MORNING STUDY CLASS. "MARINE LIFE ZONES IN INTER-TIDAL WATERS." Mr. Edward Baker, all round naturalist, will have pictures and shell exhibit. This will be the last morning meeting until October. Olive Alvey, NO 1-8036.
- May 28 - SUNDAY FIELD TRIP to Mt. Pines for mountain birding and Condors. Meet at 8:00 A.M. on Highway 99 at the Frasier Park turnoff, beyond Gorman. Those wishing to camp for the week-end will find good camp grounds on the road from Frasier Park to Mt. Pines. Among the 48 species seen last trip were Red Crossbills which nest there. For information about camping, call HO 7-9495 or PO 1-7635. Leader: Jim Huffman, FR 2-7124.
- June 1 - THURSDAY, EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING, 7:30 P.M., Audubon House.
- June 3 - SATURDAY, JUNIOR NATURALISTS. Marine life--Cabrillo Beach field trip. Call Director of Fern Dell Museum for time and details. HO 7-1661.
- June 6 - ANNUAL DINNER AND INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS. Carolina Pines Banquet Hall, 7315 Melrose Avenue. Roast sirloin of beef dinner, \$3.50 per plate. Ample parking. Special guest speaker will be Dr. James E. Crouch, Department of Zoology, San Diego State College, who will present his color motion picture "MOUNTAIN INTRODUCTIONS," portraying wildlife of the High Sierras. Make reservations early. Deadline June 1. Chairman: Robert Blackstone, CR 6-3879.
- June 10 - SATURDAY FIELD TRIP to Buckhorn Flats. Meet at parking area at entrance to Buckhorn Campground on Angeles Crest Highway beyond Upper Chilao. Many birds should be nesting, among them the purple martins. Those wishing to camp may do so at Chilao or Buckhorn. Leaders: Marion and Russ Wilson, PO 1-7635.

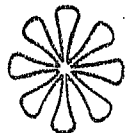
Those wishing to attend the summer pot luck dinner and other field trips planned for the summer, please call or write Headquarters, leaving your name, address and telephone number, so that you may be contacted as soon as plans are formulated. Call between 8:00 A.M. and 4:00 P.M., Mon., Wed., Thurs., through June 8. HO 7-9495.

MEMBERS, GUESTS AND OTHER INTERESTED PERSONS ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND ALL ACTIVITIES

LOS ANGELES AUDUBON SOCIETY
.....

5th ANNUAL DINNER

AND INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS...



CAROLINA PINES BANQUET HALL
7315 Melrose Avenue.....Free Parking

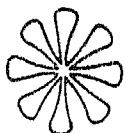
ROAST SIRLOIN OF BEEF \$3.50

6:30 P.M.

TUESDAY, JUNE 6th.



PROGRAM.....



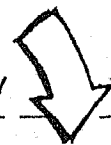
Dr. James E. Crouch

Professor of Zoology
San Diego State College

"MOUNTAIN INTRODUCTIONS"
...wildlife of Sierra Nevada

DEADLINE
FOR
RESERVATIONS
JUNE 1st. !

TEAR OFF AND SEND TODAY!



Mr. Donald Adams
705 26th. Street
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Please reserve _____ places for me at the Annual Dinner, June 6, 1961

Enclosed payment \$ _____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____