



UPWIND

from the Arcata Marsh
Interpretive Center
Vol 20, Issue 4, Fall 2013

Our Mission: To stimulate understanding of the Arcata Marsh & Wildlife Sanctuary, its relationship with Arcata's integrated wastewater treatment system, the surrounding watersheds and bay, and their link with the Earth's water cycle

In This Issue: Annual Meeting & Election... Seeking Board Members... Holiday Tours... WOW... Recruiting HSU Students... Day of Caring... Research Grants... Photobirding Lecture... Annual Report... Artists... Plant Book... Duck Day... Calendar... Visitor Log... Members & Donors



2013-14 FOAM Board of Directors. (From left) David Couch, Mary Burke, Elliott Dabill, George Ziminsky, Janet Zich, John McNeely, Katy Allen, Sue Leskiw. Not shown: Betsy Elkinton. Photo by Richard Kreis.



City Naturalist Denise Homer (right) congratulates volunteer Jane Wilson. Photo by Richard Kreis.

2013 Annual Meeting & Election Results

On Sunday, September 29, FOAM held its 20th annual meeting at the Interpretive Center. Around 30 people attended the albacore barbeque lunch by David Couch, with Board members providing side dishes.

President Sue Leskiw reviewed highlights of the 2012/13 Annual Report (see pages 5&6). She also reported election results. Thirty-nine ballots were returned. Elected to 3-year terms were Mary Burke, David Couch, and George Ziminsky. Elected to 2-year terms were Katy Allen, Elliott Dabill, and Sue Leskiw.

Megan McCue and Lance Torgerson ended their terms, as did long-time treasurer Art Barab. Two open seats remain on the Board.

Officers selected at the October 10 Board meeting were Mary Burke (president), Elliott Dabill (vice-president), Katy Allen (secretary), and Sue Leskiw (treasurer).

Jane Wilson and Virginia Jimenez were selected as Volunteers of the Year. Jane was cited for her desk staffing, tour leading, and initiating a monthly Marsh "slower-speed tour," while Virginia was recognized for 80 hours of desk staffing. Alex Stillman received a certificate recognizing her help with special Marsh projects.

FOAM Seeking 2 Board Members

If you are a FOAM member who would like to take your affiliation with the organization to a higher level, consider becoming a member of our Board of Directors. If you are interested in setting policy and selecting projects for FOAM to undertake, please join us at our next Board meeting (November 14) or send a candidate statement to info@arcatamarshfriends.org.

2013-14 Board of Directors

Officers

President: Mary Burke (also Education)

Vice-President: Elliott Dabill (also Education; Computer)

Secretary: Katy Allen (also Education; Exhibits; Membership)

Treasurer: Sue Leskiw (also UPWIND Editor; Mailing; Publicity; Exhibits; Scrapbook; Website)

Other Board Members

David Couch (Special Events)

Betsy Elkinton (Education; Habitat Concerns)

John McNeely (Education)

Janet Zich (Membership; Exhibits; Website; Facebook)

George Ziminsky (Habitat Concerns)

FOAM website: www.arcatamarshfriends.org



Two Holiday Sojourns

FOAM is pleased to confirm the continuation of two special walks at the Arcata Marsh.

Veteran tour leader Art Barab will lead his 14th annual Thanksgiving morning meander on Thursday, November 28 at 10 am. Meet on the Interpretive Center porch (building will be closed for the holiday) for a 90-minute appetite builder.

Naturalist Jenny Hanson will, for the sixth time, help you celebrate the New Year with a 2-hour ramble starting at 2 pm on Wednesday, January 1. Meet on the Interpretive Center porch (building will be closed for the holiday).

HSU Students Still WOWing

By Katy Allen & Jenn Tarlton

This fall, 25 students from HSU's Environmental Education and Interpretation degree program option continued the FOAM-developed "Wonders of Wetlands" program. Fifth-graders from Pacific Union School (3 groups), Coastal Grove Charter, and Union Street Charter were treated to a 1-hour classroom presentation that consisted of a PowerPoint show (developed by FOAM Board member Mary Burke), followed by game-like activities that reinforced understanding of how wastewater becomes "fresh" water, how birds are adapted to different ecological niches, etc. After the in-class session, the kids came out to the Marsh for a 2-hour field trip.

According to HSU environmental science and management professor Jenn Tarlton, "This year's WOW program was really successful. I've never seen the kids so engaged with the program and the resource." She especially would like to thank the Guy Kuttner Fund, which paid for the bus so the Pacific Union students could visit the Marsh.



*Sue Leskiw shares some literature with an HSU volunteer/agency fair attendee.
Photo by Richard Kreis.*

Recruiting HSU Students

By Sue Leskiw

FOAM participated in the Fall 2013 Agency/Volunteer and Community Involvement Fair at HSU on September 4. Sue Leskiw and Milt Boyd staffed a table on the University Center Quad that gave students information about the various volunteer opportunities at the Marsh (as well as free cookies, postcards, and magnets). Some 40 students expressed interest by giving us their emails. Many who stopped by were new to the area and appreciated our handing out Marsh maps. Several of the students helped out at the September 21 Day of Caring (see article below) and a few have contacted us about staffing or leading tours. All in all, it was a worthwhile four hours spent on campus.

Day of Caring at the Marsh

By Dennis Houghton

More than 60 volunteers showed up to work at the Marsh on September 21 as part of a combination United Way Day of Caring-Coastal Clean-up Day. They dug out invasive cordgrass (*Spartina*) and other weeds as well as performed general trash pickup. Besides FOAM, participating groups were the US Fish & Wildlife Service, Friends of the Dunes, People for Pickleweed, Humboldt Fish Action Council, the Northcoast Environmental Center, and City of Arcata, although most of the volunteers came from Humboldt State (see photos, page 3).

In all, 15-20 cubic yards of *Spartina*; 5-7 cubic yards of fennel, periwinkle (*Vinca*), and other assorted invasives; and a bunch of garbage were removed. Volunteers polished off 10 pizzas courtesy of People for Pickleweed and the City.

The next Marsh work day co-sponsored by FOAM and the City will be on Saturday, December 7 between 9 am and 1 pm. Meet at the first parking lot on South I Street. Snacks and tools provided; dress to get dirty and bring gloves, if you have them. For more info, call Dennis at 707-825-2163.



(Left) Day of Caring volunteers pile Spartina. (Right) FOAM Board member George Ziminsky (kneeling) with some of the 61 volunteers. Photos courtesy of Dennis Houghton.

FOAM Research Grants Available

This is the ninth year that FOAM has offered grants to support research projects that are broadly or specifically related to the Arcata Marsh & Wildlife Sanctuary.

Grants will be awarded based on each project's relevance to wetlands ecology, processes, and habitat concerns. At least \$1,000 is available. Proposals will be evaluated in the order they are received. Undergraduate and graduate students at Humboldt State University are eligible. Application packets were e-mailed to over 60 HSU professors in related disciplines and are available by e-mailing info@arcatamarshfriends.org.

Past grants have supported investigation into carbon sequestration by marsh plants, genetic variation and dispersal of northern California's coastal river otters, metal accumulation in steelhead, effects of antibiotic concentrations on nitrogen uptake in duckweed, microbial fuel cell technology using Arcata Marsh water, role of nutrient limitation in determining eelgrass shoot density in Humboldt Bay, winter roost site fidelity by Dunlin, and tidal seed dispersal of *Spartina densiflora*.

Funding is made possible through a donation from Richard Sanborn and Calista Sullivan.

Photobirding Tips & Tricks

By Darlene Marlow

Nearly 50 people attended the photobirding lecture on October 3 by Mike and Leslie Anderson. Many of them I knew from FOAM or the Photoshop group. It was an interested and congenial bunch.

Mike and Leslie's presentation was just great. It started with some technical comparisons and recommendations (which I didn't understand very well, but a number of other people were excited about), then moved into slides of their FABULOUS bird (and insect and animal and scenery) pictures.

Mike's explanation of how he set up a feeder in their yard, with the alternate posts sawed off so he wouldn't photograph birds' butts, was hilarious. He also stabilized the feeder so it wouldn't swing. For non-feeder birds, he puts a cardboard baffle on one side of a water source so they'll come to the side he's focusing on. Sometimes, this doesn't work: he showed a shot of a Chestnut-backed Chickadee sitting on the baffle.

But Mike's explanation of how many photos he took that particular weekend—22,000!—showed me why they are professionals and I never will be. He discarded almost all of them, but considered that 50 were okay and two (!) were pretty good. No wonder their work is fabulous:

they spend money on equipment and travel, plus invest time, energy, and patience on the images.

[NOTE: The Andersons' Powerpoint will be posted on the computer at the Interpretive Center, as are most of the presentations from the FOAM lecture series.

See page 4 for more bird photography pointers from Mike and Leslie, compiled by Elliott Dabill.]



Lecture organizer Elliott Dabill's pants reflect the Andersons' work. Photo by Alex Stillman.

More bird photography tips from long-time Marsh lovers Mike and Leslie Anderson:

☛ Gear: It isn't always best to get the camera with the highest pixels, since there is a tradeoff with the ISO settings. The Andersons prefer to work with RAW files because all the information is retained. Editing software is essential.

☛ Variables: Learn to attend to sun position, wind conditions, and the background. There are many ways of using them, such as blurring out the background to better set off the birds.

☛ Blinds of many kinds, starting with a simple poncho and a willingness to endure rain, were used to capture the incredible parade of birds shown. A blind can be part of a prepared world for the birds to enter, setting a landing at the right angle to the sun and at a set distance from the camera. Experiment with shooting from water level or from your vehicle.

**OCTOBER ARTISTS
STUDENT BIRD ART
CONTEST WINNERS**

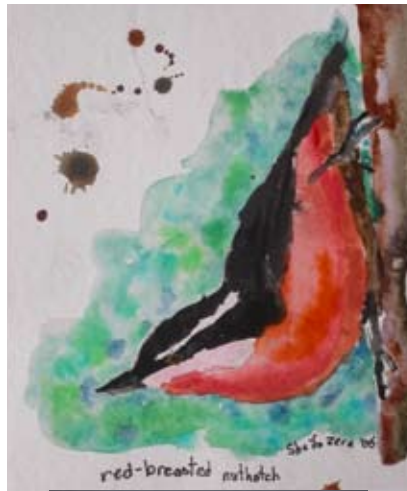
*“Ten Years of Student Bird Art:
Evolution of Excellence”*

The exhibit features those few Humboldt K-12 students who have won at least three times (1st, 2nd, or 3rd place) during the decade of student bird art competitions co-sponsored by FOAM and Redwood Region Audubon Society. Over the first 10 years of the Godwit Days contests, the judges have evaluated more than 4,700 pieces of avian art.

The show spotlights She'ifa Punla-Green, a girl from Trinidad who took home seven awards over her eight years of entries.

Two families with three sibling winners each also are showcased: the Opalach sisters (Natalie, Tessa, and Jacqueline) and the Carter brothers (Marcos, Aidan, and Roland).

Individual multi-year winners who are part of the show are Margo LaClair, Mina Mayer, Lindsey Maher, and Finn Murphy.



Art by She'ifa Punla-Green.
(Top) *Red-breasted Nuthatch*, 2005.
(Bottom) *Spotted Owls*, 2012.

**NOVEMBER ARTIST
PATRICIA SUNDGREN SMITH**

I moved to Eureka in 2012 after a 40-year residence in San Francisco. There, I was highly active in the printmaking community, including a stint on the board of the California Society of Printmakers. My prints have been displayed in a number of shows and galleries in the Bay Area, as well as across the US and internationally in Belfast and Amsterdam. As an active artist, I have won a number of awards, including one from the prestigious Museum of Modern Art in New York City for one of my mezzotints.

My early years were spent on the East Coast, where my passion for drawing began as soon as I could hold a pencil. My formal art studies began in high school when I won a prize and stipend to study at the Museum of Fine Arts School in Boston. This experience gave me a taste of the wide array of possibilities for a

future in art. My interest was quickly pulled to the drawing of natural forms, such as the human figure, animals, and nature studies. I studied further at the Rhode Island School of Design in my home state.

In my attempts to find suitable daytime work, as most artists must do to be able to exercise their artistic imaginations during nights and weekends, I sought entry into the field of construction work. As I found my path blocked to women on the East Coast, the promise of a more female-friendly construction work environment brought me to San Francisco, where I was soon supporting myself and my art as one of the first three woman union electricians in the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local 6.

I continued in this work until my recent retirement, which allows me to do my artwork full time. I now have the time to explore and work in other media such as painting, photography, and collage. Since moving to the North Coast—and having vacationed here over the previous 10 years—I have frequented the Arcata Marsh and Wildlife Refuge to enjoy the beauty of nature, as well as photograph shorebirds and the Marsh itself. This show represents a few of my mezzotints, as well as photographs that I have taken along the North Coast and at the Marsh.



“Great Egret” by
Patricia Sundgren Smith.

2012/13 FOAM Annual Report (Issued 9/29/13)

Tours: Some 20,262 adults and children visited the Arcata Marsh Interpretive Center between September 2012 and August 2013, up 152 from the previous 12-month period. Some participated in the weekly 2 pm tours offered rain or shine by FOAM docents. FOAM also provided docents for 105 special-request group tours.

Education: In December, FOAM offered a bilingual bird walk to the McKinleyville Ecoclub. Frank Anderson, Katy Allen, Alex Stillman, and Betsy Elkinton served as docents, while George Ziminsky supervised the group on an hour-long invasive plant removal effort. In October, FOAM welcomed students in grades 2-5 from Arcata's Fuente Nueva Charter School for a first attempt at incorporating Spanish into a bird walk. Tom Leskiw, Katy Allen, Betsy Elkinton, and Elliott Dabill served as docents, while Sue Leskiw took photos and kept the bird sighting list.

FOAM's free lecture series, coordinated by Elliott Dabill, continued with speakers Milt Boyd on North Humboldt Bay ecology, Betsy Elkinton on brant and eelgrass, Hilary Cosby on otters, Lori Dengler on earthquakes and tsunamis, Dave Couch on oysters, and Mike Wallace on salmonids.

In July, for the 6th year, FOAM and Redwood Region Audubon Society partnered to offer a day-long session for children age 10-12 at the Arcata Marsh. The module was part of the Wildlife Biology week of the Arcata Recreation Department's Natural Resources Science Camp. The curriculum consisted of a bird walk, a "Mud Walk," and viewing of invertebrates collected from the Bay. FOAM instructors were Melinda Bailey, Betsy Elkinton, and George Ziminsky. Sue Leskiw pulled together the schedule, brought lunch, and took photos.

In March, for the 8th year, FOAM funded awards at the Humboldt County Science Fair. A \$50 prize for the best project related to wetlands went to Alia Issa, an 8th-grader at McKinleyville Middle School. Her project, entitled "Swimming in Acid," investigated how rising carbon dioxide levels affect calcium carbonate structures of sea animals. Sue Leskiw and Elliott Dabill served as judges.

FOAM's Wonders of Wetlands (WOW) was presented to three 5th-grade classes in fall 2012: Coastal Grove Charter School, Union Street Charter School, and Pacific Union School.

FOAM paid to replace two badly faded exhibit panels: an Arcata Marsh scene by Larry Eifert and "How Marshes Treat Wastewater" by Gary Bloomfield.

FOAM awarded a \$761 research grant to HSU graduate student Kelsey McDonald for her project to student tidal seed dispersal of *Spartina densiflora*, an invasive cordgrass.

Jenny Hanson and Tanya Wold completed an update of the Marsh plant photo album started by Melinda Bailey. Sue Leskiw compiled three decades of Marsh newspaper clippings into three scrapbooks on display at AMIC.

Leslie Anderson, Jenny Hanson, Rich Ridenhour, and Sue Leskiw began a collaboration to produce a companion guide to FOAM's common birds of the Arcata Marsh book that will feature 100 plants. The book should be available at Godwit Days in April 2014.

Public Events: In May, FOAM hosted a 20th anniversary party for the Arcata Marsh Interpretive Center. Nearly 100 people from the community came to the gala reception and panel discussion that had to be moved to the Arcata Community Center on short notice. Sue Leskiw coordinated the food, while Alex Stillman interfaced with the seven invited speakers: Bob Brown, Dave Couch, Bob Gearheart, Stan Harris, Dan Hauser, Frank Klopp, and Sam Pennisi. The event was videotaped and will someday be posted on the FOAM computer and shown on Access Humboldt.

In February, Jane Wilson and John McNeely began their monthly "Slower-Speed Tours" of the Marsh. These shorter routes are intended for people whose physical abilities require a slower pace. They leave from the Klopp Lake parking lot at 2 pm on the last Tuesday of each month.

In February, FOAM cosponsored with the HSU student chapter of the California Waterfowl Association a Duck Day at the Marsh. It included crafts, educational presentations, and guided walks for ages 5-12. Approximately 80 kids and parents attended. Betsy Elkinton and artists Louise Bacon-Ogden and Tim Clewell were among the volunteers.

In February, FOAM cosponsored an "I Love Mud" bilingual event with Friends of the Dunes. Over 100 people attended, with FOAM represented by volunteers Dave Couch, Elliott Dabill, and Betsy Elkinton.

In partnership with Redwood Region Audubon Society, FOAM sponsored the 10th Student Bird Art Contest at Godwit Days. Over 570 entries were received from grades K-12 throughout Humboldt County. Thirty-five cash prizes and 30 honorable mentions were awarded at Godwit Days in April. For the first time, FOAM hosted a reception at AMIC in May for the winning artists.

(continued on page 6)

In April, FOAM continued its participation in the Godwit Days Spring Migration Bird Festival. Approximately 80-100 children and parents took part in FOAM's free family nature activities coordinated by Sue Leskiw. The kids made water cycle bracelets, pinecone bird feeders, fish prints, bird sticker refrigerator magnets, bird callers, and hanging paper birds. A tour of the wastewater plant by David Couch and two children's bird walks by Mary Burke were offered as part of the festival schedule. FOAM volunteers also staffed an information/sales table in the vendor area, coordinated by Janet Zich, and helped hang bird art entries.

In October, FOAM continued its participation in Arcata's "Pastels on the Plaza" fundraiser, sponsoring a sidewalk square. In November, Art Barab led his 12th consecutive Thanksgiving Day morning "leg stretcher" for 14 people, with George Ziminsky leading part of the group. Jenny Hanson for the 5th year led a New Year's Day walk that attracted 15 attendees.

In September, FOAM staffed a table at HSU's Biodiversity Conference. In January, Katy Allen and Betsy Elkinton staffed a FOAM booth at the North Coast's Environmental Education Teacher Fair. Katy Allen attended a February meeting about possible expansion of the Volunteer Trail Stewards group to patrol the Marsh. Mary Burke went to a meeting about *Spartina* eradication in Humboldt Bay.

Marsh and Wildlife Through the Eyes of Local Artists: Since December 1998, FOAM has sponsored monthly art shows representative of the scenery, plants, birds, and animals that inhabit the Marsh and Humboldt Bay. This past year, Cynthia Noble, Jim Lowry, Susan Pence, Sara Starr, Greg Smith, Paul Rickard, The Marsh Project (grades 6-12, through Arcata Recreation Department), and Louise Bacon-Ogden were featured. Lance Torgerson scheduled and helped hang the shows.

Publicity & Communication: We would like to thank newspapers, radio, and TV stations for helping us get the message out about our weekly tours, docent training, art exhibits, and other special events at the Marsh. FOAM continues to publish its quarterly newsletter, UPWIND.

Using grant money from the Arcata field office of the BLM, FOAM produced a poster outlining where people could take their dogs off-leash. Leslie Anderson incorporated a map created by Friends of the Dunes into text from FOAM's dog brochure.

Sue Leskiw created a full-color brochure illustrating the various volunteer opportunities open at the Marsh.

City Relations: In December, July, and September (United Way Day of Caring), FOAM co-sponsored invasive plant workdays at the Marsh.

FOAM funded two "Volunteer of the Year" awards, presented to John Claggett and Katy Allen, at the September 30 Annual Meeting.

FOAM awarded \$100 from its vandalism fund to a local birder who called police about two youths spray-painting graffiti along South H and I Streets in and around the Marsh.

FOAM sent a letter to the California Coastal Conservancy supporting a grant to the City of Arcata for completing the McDaniel Slough Restoration Project. FOAM also donated \$750 to the project.

Membership: As of August 30, FOAM had 149 members in good standing, 73 of which were Life Members and 4 were Honorary Life Members.

Fiscal Accounts: As of August 30, FOAM had a checking account balance of \$41,908. Expenditures totaled \$9550 and revenues totaled \$6931. The largest expenditures incurred in the past year were a one-time outlay of \$1486 for an office storage remodel, \$1290 for insurance, and \$1272 for UPWIND newsletters. Major revenue sources were membership dues (\$3789) and donations (\$2685). Overall, organization expenditures exceeded revenues by approximately \$2600. The organization's financial situation is excellent and FOAM members can be sure of its capacity to fund its programs in the years ahead.

Board of Directors: Three current Board Members will be continuing: Betsy Elkinton, John McNeely, and Janet Zich. Elliott Dabill and Sue Leskiw need to run to confirm their Board appointments. Art Barab is retiring as treasurer after many years of service. Megan McCue and Lance Torgerson are leaving the Board. The FOAM Bylaws were amended to remove term limits for Board members.

— Sue Leskiw, President



"Mud Flat at Sunset"
by Thomas Allen Bethune.

**DECEMBER/JANUARY ARTIST
THOMAS ALLEN BETHUNE**

*"Magical Moments at the Marsh,
One Photographer's Viewpoint"*

I am a landscape photographer who lives in the redwood forest. I love living in the forest, but sometimes I miss the expansiveness of more-open areas. Where I live, the views to the south and north are limited by the forest that surrounds my house, and by the hillsides to the east and west that hide sunrises and sunsets.

The Arcata Marsh is open. That is what draws me here. I love the expansive nature that the bay provides to the landscape. It is here that I realize and experience the "big picture." My images reflect that aspect of the Marsh. I find something unique to photograph every time I come to the Marsh. The tide may be in; it may be out. The sun may shine; it may be foggy. There may be other folks here; I may be alone.

The Marsh means different thing to different people. It offers opportunities for bird watchers, walkers, runners, and artists. It is important in its function as a vital part of the sewage treatment facility.

I think my imagery conveys better than my words my experiences with this asset. Please enjoy them.

Plants of the Marsh Book

FOAM volunteers are working on a pictorial guide to 100 or so plants found at the Arcata Marsh and Wildlife Sanctuary. The volume will be modeled on the successful "Common Birds of the Arcata Marsh & Wildlife Sanctuary" book, published by FOAM in 2011.

Once again, Leslie Anderson will be providing the photographs and designing the layout. Sue Leskiw is busy distilling plant descriptions from Rich Ridenhour and Jenny Hanson into a standard format.

The book will include trees, shrubs, wetland and saltmarsh plants, and upland wildflowers. FOAM expects to have it ready to unveil at next year's Godwit Days (mid-April 2014).

Duck Day Redux

FOAM plans to collaborate again this winter with the HSU student chapter of the California Waterfowl Association on a "Duck Day" at the Arcata Marsh. Around 80 kids and parents took part last February in arts and crafts, hands-on educational stations, and guided walks. Watch local media for an update.

Calendar of Upcoming Events

[Docent tours leave the Interpretive Center every Saturday at 2 pm]

October—"10 Years of Student Bird Art: Evolution of Excellence," highlights from first decade of Godwit Days contest

November—Marsh photos and more by Patricia Sundgren Smith

November 14—FOAM Board Meeting, 6:30-8 pm

November 28—Thanksgiving Meander, 10 am (see page 2)

December/January—Marsh photographs by Thomas Allen Bethune

December 7—Marsh Invasive Plant Work Day (see page 2)

December 12—FOAM Board Meeting, 6:30-8 pm

January 1—New Year's Day Ramble, 2 pm (see page 2)

January 9—FOAM Board Meeting, 6:30-8 pm

Visitor Log

The Interpretive Center had 2793 visitors in July, 2619 in August, and 2513 in September.

Recognition & Thanks, August through mid-October 2013

- ☛ Best Friends (\$100): Dan Staudenmaier; Brett Watson* (\$110)
- ☛ Sponsors (\$50): Margaret, Paul & Jason Abels*; Katy & Tom Allen
- ☛ Friends: Roberta Allen; Melinda & Mark Bailey; Richard & Chris Beresford; Karen Cunningham; Betsy Elkinton; Francis & Frances Ferguson; Bill Knight; Cindy Kuttner; David Ledger (Redding, 2-year membership); James Lindberg & Sandra Renshaw* (Des Moines); Christine Lyons* (Watsonville); John McNeely; Anne Merryfield; Susan O'Connor; Bev Post; Barbara Reisman*; Jean Santi & Whitney Buck; Chuck Swanson; Will Troxler (Salisbury, NC); George Ziminsky
- ☛ Special Donations: Life Members Milt Boyd (\$200), Chris & Lee House (\$200), Bill Thompson (\$100, including \$50 in honor of Thea Gast's 80th birthday), Barbara Barratt (\$100), and Richard & Carol Laursen (Carmichael, CA, \$50); Paul & Nancy Rickard (\$50); Louise Bacon-Ogden (\$30 from art show sales); Sharon Levy (2 pairs of binoculars)