



UPWIND

from the Arcata Marsh
Interpretive Center
Vol 14, Issue 3, Fall 2007

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Judy McKinley (second from left) of the local branch of the American Automobile Association (AAA) presents checks for \$2,270 each to Beverly Prosser (far right) of the Manila Community Center and Sue Leskiw (third from left) of Friends of the Arcata Marsh (FOAM). The money represents \$2 for each dead car battery brought in for recycling between April 11 and 21 at 19 locations throughout the county. Both non-profit organizations plan to use the funding to support children's educational or recreational activities. Humboldt's total of 2,270 batteries collected during the AAA's "Great Battery Round-up" campaign was the highest in the United States for the fourth year in a row. Also shown (from left): Bob Fox, owner of John's Used Cars & Wreckers (which collected 250 batteries), Karen Sherman of the Humboldt Waste Management Authority, and Rick Fox, manager at John's.

2007-08 Board of Directors

Officers

President: Sue Leskiw (also UPWIND Editor; Mailing; Publicity; Exhibits; Website) — 442-5444

Vice-President: Elliott Dabill (also Education; Computer) — 445-3836

Secretary: Janet Zich (also Membership; Website, Bylaws) — 822-4660

Treasurer: Art Barab (also Saturday Tour Coordinator; Exhibits) — 826-7017

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Ken Burton (Habitat Concerns; Education) — 839-5179

David Couch (Special Events; Bylaws) — 839-4253

Lumei Hui (Education) — 677-3164

Robert Rasmussen (Education; Bylaws) — 822-5305

Lance Torgerson (Education) — 826-1525

Marsh Needs Volunteers!!

This year has been particularly difficult to find volunteers for AMIC staffing, as well as to lead weekday tours for school classes and other groups and FOAM's Saturday 2 pm tours. Did you know that 185 tours were given in the last year?

Denise Homer can give individual instruction on how to staff the AMIC; call her at 826-2359. Volunteers are needed from 9 am-1 pm and 1-5 pm on weekends and occasional shifts on weekdays.

Some of you already know enough about the Marsh that formal docent training could be waived. Borrow a docent manual to fill information gaps about history, birds, plants, etc. Do a "shadow tour" with a Saturday docent, to get an idea about points of interest and how others lead tours. Call Elliott Dabill at 445-3836 to work out how we can make you feel comfortable enough to help educational efforts at the "Magic Marsh."

Grass Seed Collection & December 8 Work Day

In August, volunteers recruited through FOAM and the local chapter of the California Native Plant Society collected thousands of tufted hairgrass seeds from the Marsh for planting on Mt Trashmore after undesirable plants are removed. The City will mow the area in advance of its December 8 volunteer work day, when the root crowns will be dug and pulled out. The grass seeds will be sown immediately thereafter in the hope that they will gain a foothold and help keep invasives from returning. Many thanks to Ken Burton, Carol Ralph, Spring Garrett, Lew and Judie Norton, Kate McClain, Jan Andersen, Robert Nelson, Elias Elias, Jennifer Berman, and Nancy Marie for helping collect seeds.

FOAM is co-sponsoring the Marsh work day on Saturday, December 8. Dress to get dirty and bring work gloves. The City will provide tools, bags, and snacks. If you can help, call Dennis at 825-2163.

2007 Annual Meeting & Election Results

On Sunday, September 30, FOAM held its 13th annual meeting at the AMIC. Approximately 30 people attended the albacore barbeque lunch by David Couch, with FOAM Board members providing salads.

Board president Sue Leskiw reviewed highlights of the 2006/2007 FOAM Annual Report (see pages 5&6). Secretary Janet Zich reported the results of the election: 29 ballots were returned by members in good standing. Elected (or confirmed) as board members were Ken Burton, David Couch, Lance Torgerson, and Janet Zich. Founding Board member Bob Rasmussen agreed to be appointed after receiving several write-in votes. One open slot remains on the Board.

City naturalist Denise Homer selected Leslie Anderson and Darlene Marlow as Volunteers of the Year. Leslie was cited for staffing the AMIC, leading tours, serving on the FOAM Board, and generously giving of her artistic talent and design skills, while Darlene's award was in recognition for AMIC staffing, serving on the FOAM Board, and creating an interpretive program for very young children whereby she became known as "The Princess of Poop." Each received a certificate and \$25 credit in the AMIC bookstore.

FOAM would like to share a note from members Bill and June Thompson: "The Marsh lunch is one of the highlights of our year. We look forward to joining you on Sept 30. Thanks for all your good work. The Marsh was one of the first introductions to this wonderful community."

[Editor's note: At the October 11 board meeting, the following officers were chosen: President — Sue Leskiw, Vice-President — Elliott Dabill, Secretary — Janet Zich; Treasurer — Art Barab. Committee participation is listed on page 1.]

Sue "Kin to the Earth" Leskiw

FOAM president Sue Leskiw was honored to be selected as the Northcoast Environmental Center's "Kin to the Earth" in October. Sue was recognized for her 9 years of volunteer efforts not just with FOAM, but also with North Group Sierra Club, Redwood Region Audubon Society, Godwit Days, Humboldt Watershed Council, and Six Rivers Planned Parenthood. An article appeared in the October ECONews, plus Sue was interviewed on KHSU for broadcast September 27.



New FOAM Board Members: (Back row, left to right) Lance Torgerson, Elliott Dabill, Art Barab. (Front row) Sue Leskiw, Ken Burton, Leslie Anderson, Robert Rasmussen, David Couch. Not shown: Lumei Hui, Janet Zich.



AMWS naturalist Denise Homer presents Volunteer of the Year awards to Leslie Anderson (left) and Darlene Marlow (right).

Computer Resources

Slowly, FOAM is building the biology education resources in the Interpretive Center. Thanks to the know-how of Jeff Craig of Compuhelp, three interactive programs — Birds of the Marsh, Wastewater Treatment Tour, and a game — were transferred from the ancient computer to the new machine purchased by FOAM.

FOAM bought the software program, "Birds of California," which contains color photos, songs, maps, ID tips, and more for the 458 species regularly seen in the state. We had to wait until the Windows Vista version was created by Thayer Software this summer!

Also loaded on the computer is a "Photographic Guide to Plants of Humboldt Bay Dunes and Wetlands." Pictures of plants, birds, and Marsh landscapes by Board members Leslie Anderson and Art Barab should soon be available. We are looking for contributions of photos of fish and invertebrates.

If you have Marsh photos to share, please contact Sue Leskiw. Some of the photos could also be used on our website currently being designed.

FOAM is in the process of writing user instructions for all the programs. So, check back to view our progress!

Thanksgiving Leg Stretcher

Join veteran tour leader Art Barab on Thursday, November 22 from 10 am-noon for his 8th annual Thanksgiving morning walk around the Arcata Marsh. Meet on the porch of the Interpretive Center (building will be closed for the holiday) this 2-hour appetite builder.



Goodbye, Jeffrey, Sean & Gwen

By Sue Leskiw

FOAM bids a sad farewell to long-time board members Jeffrey White and Sean Craig, who both reached the 6 years of consecutive service term limit specified under our bylaws, plus Gwen Thoele, who resigned before completing her term due to health reasons.

Jeffrey was the guiding force behind the rejuvenation of the Wetlands on Wheels (WOW) program. He put in many hours trying different ways to recruit instructors. He also served on the Website committee.

Sean was always there to teach the Invertebrates section of docent training. He helped judge the science fair and evaluated research grant proposals. He led a popular "Mud Walk" onto the Marsh mudflats and served on the Website and Habitat Concerns committees.

Gwen used her artistic talent to judge the student bird art contest. She also was a frequent AMIC staffer and helped in the FOAM booth at Godwit Days.

The enthusiasm and energy of these stalwart volunteers will be missed.

Research Grant Results

FOAM is pleased to report that Jesse Conklin, recipient of a \$300 research grant in fall 2004, has published two scientific papers on his investigation of winter roost site fidelity by Dunlin. Jesse's coauthor was his advisor, Dr Mark Colwell, of the HSU Wildlife Department.

One paper appeared in *The Auk*, a publication of the American Ornithologists' Union (citation at 124(2):677-689, 2000). The researchers radio-tagged Dunlin wintering on Humboldt Bay to determine day and night-time use of high-tide roosts.

The other paper was published in the April 2007 issue of the *Wader Study Group Bulletin* (112:57-59). Conklin found that Dunlin were killed by collisions with a fence wire following raptor attacks at a single winter roost at Humboldt Bay. "If raptor-related collisions occurred at the observed rate over an entire winter, fatalities at the site represented approximately 4% of the local Dunlin population." The fence wire may have promoted behavior by Peregrines and Western Gulls to exploit the situation.

According to Dr Colwell, two more papers are expected from the research. Copies will be put in the FOAM library.

WOW in 2007

A successful season of Wetlands on Wheels (WOW) concluded in June with 9 schools, 29 classrooms, and 690 students served. Four instructors — Erica Laugalis, Shauna Lavi, Ali McCall, and Kathy Yeager — handled presentations for Lafayette, Pine Hill, Cutten, Maple Creek, Washington, Lincoln, South Fortuna, and Ambrosini Schools. WOW also participated in a well-attended Science Night held at Ferndale Elementary.

Teachers who hosted WOW in their classrooms were asked to complete a survey. Some of their comments: "WOW is a very thorough program that highlights the importance of wetlands/animals in our area..." "Excellent, grade appropriate, engaging..." "Fast-paced so students stayed involved and interested, activities were simple but inviting..." "I really enjoyed the presentation, activities, and presenters. I felt it was a very worthwhile experience for my class."

FOAM especially appreciates its collaboration with the HSU Redwood Science Project. The WOW program could not have operated this year without coordination efforts by Jeffrey White and Julie Van Sickle.

Wildflower Walk Enjoyable & Informative

By Lance Torgerson

On July 4, the California Native Plant Society and FOAM co-sponsored a plant walk led by naturalist Jenny Hanson. The weather was great and a huge crowd gathered around the AMIC in anticipation. The tour bordered the log pond, as we identified plants as a group. Discussions were lively and much interest developed around native and non-native species of plants seen around the Marsh.

Plant classification and differences between exotic and native species were the major foci. Many differences were clearly identified and well taught by Jenny. Early history of the Arcata Marsh was also covered during the tour, as we pondered ideas of agricultural use and modification of the landscape for commercial use. Historical uses of plants for healing, as well as the type of environments where particular plants are commonly found, were part of the presentation.



FOAM Square on Arcata Plaza

FOAM participated in Pastels on the Plaza on October 6. Board member Leslie Anderson created a square featuring five birds: Great Egret, Great Blue Heron, American Avocet, Long-billed Curlew, and Red Knot. The event functioned as both a fundraiser for North Coast Children's Services and publicity for FOAM.

Christmas Bird Counts Just Around the Corner

Redwood Region Audubon Society invites UPWIND readers to participate in the 108th Christmas Bird Counts. Two counts will occur nearby:

- Arcata (includes McKinleyville, Bay-side, Samoa, Manila, Eureka) — Saturday, 12/15, contact Kerry Ross, 839-4365, kerry@madrivervio.com
- Centerville (includes Elk River, Loleta, Fields Landing, King Salmon, Fortuna, Ferndale) — Sunday, 12/30, contact Stan Harris, 822-3802

If you don't want to be on a counting team, you can still participate by signing on as a feeder watcher, keeping track of the birds that visit your yard that day. Those with "birdy" yards can also invite counters onto your property. RRAS has posted maps on its website (www.rras.org/cbc/cbc_full_extent.htm) of the Arcata and Centerville count circles imposed over major streets.

As a prelude to the counts, RRAS will sponsor a bird identification brush-up session on Friday, December 7 at 7:30 pm at the Humboldt Office of Education near the intersection of Myrtle and West Avenues, Eureka. A potluck dinner at 6:30 pm will precede the slide show. Bring a dish to share and a cup for coffee.

Seasonal Changes Around The Marsh — Winter

By Denise Homer

"I'm looking for chey-lel, the kingfisher," he said as he walked into the Interpretive Center. I assured him he could see kingfishers here. They have been flying around calling out their rattle-y call all month. I told him I have never heard that name for kingfisher. "Chey-lel is the Yurok name for kingfisher," he said.

"I know 53 bird names in Yurok. I am trying to learn the language of my ancestors." He told me several names in Yurok and had me try them out. Great blue heron is merk. Raven is kwey-gokw. Robin is ser-yer-kert. Then he said, "Ter-ker-kue, what is that?" "I don't know," I replied puzzled. "Yes, you do, listen, ter-ker-kue, ter-ker-kue." Suddenly, I could hear it clearly. "Valley Quail." "Yes."

I too am trying to learn the language of my ancestors, Scots Gaelic, where birds are named for the sound they make. So it should have been no surprise that, even in Yurok, I could recognize a valley quail.

I thought about the names we give birds and wondered how much does it matter if I call it kingfisher, biorra cruidein, or chey-lel? What difference does a name mean to my knowledge of the bird? What difference does it mean to the bird?

Alan Watts said "The experience of water is not the word." For the bird, what I call it means nothing. It just goes on being what it is, no matter what I call it.

Docents think they can't lead a tour until they "know" enough names of birds and plants. But what people remember is not the name, but the experience of watching the bird.

In college, I took a class from a National Park Ranger on presenting slide programs. He had lots of pretty pictures of flowers, and people started asking their names. He said "I don't think names are important. I don't use them on my walks." Here I was slogging through my course work learning not only the common names but the Latin ones, too.

Is a name important? Should I learn the names or not? What do I already know by name? From a distance, I can recognize the jizz of my friends and I call them by name. Ah, maybe there's the answer. I could walk through nature as a stranger, or I could walk through nature recognizing my friends by name.

Names are a way of communicating with each other, or as Alan Watts puts it, "Matter is spirit named." I think that is

why a Yurok man and a Scots woman work hard at learning the language of their ancestors, to honor the ancestral spirit that is also our spirit and to hear the world as our ancestors named it.

If I had to choose between a tour that shows you where the birds are, what they are doing, what they are eating, the essence of what it is like to be that bird, or a tour that names lots of birds but doesn't spend any time beyond identifying them, I'd pick the experiential tour every time. Experiences are what we are naming when we say "That's a curlew." The longer we watch something, the more we know about it and the richer our world becomes. Naming is just an introduction. Now, when I hear the kingfisher, I also think "There's chey-lel."

Plants of the Marsh

A series by Melinda Bailey

THE TROUBLE WITH TEASEL

As a kid, I remember driving down the road with my mother, pulling over, and helping her harvest the dark brown dried flower heads of Common Teasel. We took them back to our house, spray painted them gold, and turned them into Christmas ornaments. This is a fairly common use of Teasel (*Dipsacus fullonum*) by folks who enjoy making crafts, but it will hardly make a dent in populations of this very invasive plant. Brought over to North America in the 1700s, Teasel has been a very successful foreign invader. It loves disturbed places like ditches, pastures, and roadsides. At the Marsh, there are patches of them along many of the trails and some effort to remove them near the Interpretive Center.

The Dipsacaceae or Teasel family consists of many species, but only two or three are found on the North Coast. The one most often seen is Common Teasel. It is not easily overlooked or difficult to identify. It is unusual because it can grow up to 6 feet tall and its tough stalk and flower head can survive for many years. Sometimes, it is mistaken for a thistle.

Teasel is a biennial. During the first growing season, green leaves emerge, usually in early spring. They form a rosette close to the ground and may be entire or toothed. The leaves will be slightly curled with little hairs and bumps on them. At this stage, the plant sends down a long taproot that is very difficult to pull out completely, no matter what time of the year you try. In the second year, Teasel sends up a long stem. Both the stem and leaves have prickles. The leaves are paired along the stem and clasp it, forming little cups that hold water. Next, the flowers emerge. Upon closer inspection, the bristly flower head is a calyx of tiny, four-petaled flowers. The egg-shaped flowering part looks like an odd, pinkish thistle head resting upon spiny, upwardly curved bracts. As the tiny flowers emerge, they form a circular pattern up the flower head. Each flower forms a single dry fruit or seed in the fall. Because the flower head is a composite of many flowers and each one produces a little seed, one plant can boast up to 2000 seeds. This is one of the reasons why Teasel is so widespread.

When the seed head is brown and dry, it is very coarse to the touch. American pioneers used the tough, prickly flower heads to card wool and raise nap on woolen textures. However, in my opinion, there is a much more important use for



Teasel Bride & Groom from FOAM President Sue Leskiw's wedding cake.



the flower heads: seed storage for wild-life. Teasel seeds are a favorite of small passerines, especially goldfinches. As a matter of fact, niger seeds for bird seed can be teasel seeds. In winter, when food is scarce, Teasel can be a real treat. So, the next time you are troubled by Teasel being another invasive, non-native plant, remember that at least the birds like it.



NOVEMBER ARTIST JAN RAMSEY

My favorite place to draw when I was 7 years old was on a platform I built in the olive tree in my front yard. I used the black olives to stain my paper light gray to make secret messages for the scrub jays that nested above me. Trees and birds have followed me in my dreams from those days in Playa del Rey.

I have painted on location most of my life. I attended college at USC, then Rocky Mountain College in Montana. Montana landscapes made way for Lake Superior seascapes, then a BFA from Cardinal Stritch University in Milwaukee. In 1990, I moved to Arcata, where kayaking the lagoons has captured my heart and sketch book. I also visit Mono Lake in the spring and autumn.

This exhibit, entitled "On the wings of dawn," is comprised of acrylic paintings that I have done in the last 3 years from my sketchbooks, photos, and dreams.



DECEMBER ARTIST AMANITA MOLLIER

I handpaint on silk fabric with brushes using traditional silk dyes, dye thickeners, no-flow treatments, wax, and gutta serti (a rubber-based resist). There are many techniques to use while silk-painting, making it a challenging and fun medium. There is a wonderful balance of spontaneity with the dye flowing around, yet I'm able to achieve detail by building up layers of dye, protecting areas as I go. When the piece is finished, I steam-set the dye, making it permanent and washable. I can then turn the painting into framed art, hangings, scarves, ties, clothing, pillows, and custom lighting.

I am primarily self-taught in the media of silkpainting. I have been taking art classes in all media, including photography, throughout my life. I graduated from Art Center College of Design in Pasadena in 1995 with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Photography. I have participated in group and solo shows around Arcata and Eureka and international silk painting shows. Custom orders are the bulk of my business. I teach art part-time at three local grade schools.

I am inspired by my daily surroundings: light, fog, water, flora, fauna, etc. Being able to paint from my own photos and from real life makes it a more-personal experience. I want my paintings to evoke peaceful and beautiful thoughts. I feel lucky to live in the pristine drainage of Red Cap Creek, a tributary of the Klamath. Creating for me is a necessity.

JANUARY ARTIST Yael BENTOVIM

I received an MA at UCLA in Environmental Fiber Art. My graduate show consisted of several large room-sized fiber-constructed environments. I used crochet, weaving, wrapping, and knotting.

In the late 1970s, I devised a technique of shredding raw sisal, then dyeing it with bright colors. These small brilliant "pieces of color" were then glued on to canvas. It was a "Pointillistic" technique that allowed me to "paint" with fiber. The canvas became three-dimensional as layers of shredded fiber projected from the surface.

In the mid 80s, I began to incorporate handmade paper, then clay and more recently, glass and mosaic. I was moving away from a more "purist" approach to fiber. I enjoyed contrasting different textures, the shimmering quality of glass and glazed clay along side the more-muted surface of fiber.

Visitor Log

The AMIC had 2001 walk-in visitors during August and 1489 in September.

Calendar of Upcoming Events

[Docent tours leave the Interpretive Center each Saturday at 2 pm; wastewater tour last Saturday of each month]

November --- paintings by Jan Ramsey

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

November 22 --- Thanksgiving Leg-stretcher, Art Barab, 10 am

December --- Silk paintings by Amanita Mollier

December 8 --- Work Day at the Marsh, 9 am-1 pm (see page 1)

December 13 --- FOAM Board Meeting, 6:30-8 pm

January --- Fiber art by Yael Bentovim

January 10 --- FOAM Board Meeting, 6:30-8 pm

Thank You to Donors, August-October 2007

- **Sponsors:** Pam & Bruce Kessler; Marian Perry; Tim Stewart (Santa Rosa); Bill & June Thompson
- **Friends:** Donna Marie Ayala; Mark & Melinda Bailey; Harvey & Jeannette Carroll; Kathryn Corbett; Karen Cunningham (Coos Bay); Frances & Francis Ferguson; Jenny Hanson; Lumei Hui; David Ledger; Fred Leissler (Reno); Robert Lockett & Adrienne Wolf-Lockett (Portland, OR); Carol Moné; Thomas & Doris Montgomery; Frank Schmidt; Judy & Jack Shaffer; Patty Siering & Mark Wilson