



The Rookery



Docent Profile-Andy Fleming '06

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Andy retired from 30 years at H.P./Agilent just a couple of years ago. He spends a lot of his time with his independent 89 year old mother and running his synagogue, Beth Ami (which he became President of about 2-3 years ago). Andy was not born Jewish but he converted about 15 years ago. He says it took at least another 10 years before he felt Jewish even though he still considers himself a "raw student."

When Andy is not working on the Synagogue or hanging out with his mother who lives in Santa Rosa, he likes to do Yoga, bicycle ride, or participate in Learning Laguna. He and his wife Nancy (who has scaled back to teaching English part time at the J.C.) have taken several cycling trips in different parts of the world. They have traveled three times to Ireland, once to the Yucatan, and also have cycled in the Canadian Rockies, Nova Scotia, Cape Breton & Newfoundland. They enjoy exploring the new territory by day and partaking in local food & drink at night. Andy hopes to travel some day to both New Zealand and Iceland on other bicycle trips.

Andy grew up in Minnesota & went to college at Williams in Massachusetts, a small liberal arts school. He played Ice Hockey all throughout High School & College. He was surprised that he made the team in college but he had a great time! It was a job with the U.S. Public Health Service (just out of college) which lured him to San Francisco in the early 1970s. He had an interesting job in a clinic as an investigator tracking and helping folks with com-

municable venereal diseases in order to help prevent epidemics. After a few years he was offered a position in Atlanta but by that time he was rooted in the West Coast culture and had met Nancy, the love of his life.

Andy and Nancy moved to San Rafael and then later settled in Sonoma County where they raised their children who are now grown. Andy and Nancy have a new hobby taking classes together in their free time. They're currently studying Jane Austin at the Junior College and Jazz at Sonoma State. He has always loved to read but finds the homework to be a bit more demanding that what he bargained for.

Andy was attracted to the Learning Laguna program after hearing Mary Abbott interviewed about it on KRSH. The interview resonated with him. The idea of getting to know your environment and then sharing it appealed to Andy. He had camped, canoed and hiked as a youngster, backpacked a lot in college, and then shared some of those same activities with his wife and his children as they were growing up. One time, when his daughter was just 4, the whole family went on a burro pack trip. The environment had long been a part of his life so he signed up with LL to learn more.

Changing our perspective by thinking about how we hold the environment makes us look at the landscape so differently. That's what Andy told me when we were discussing his volunteering for the Laguna Foundation. He has enjoyed making new connections and he is pleased that the Learning Laguna program

Continued on page 4 . . .



Andy Fleming '06 at the Bungalow Coffee & Tea House on a rainy January morning

Well, we are fully geared up for another rousing round of Learning Laguna! There are a couple bits of information I'd like to share to keep everyone in the loop! First, just before the spring season starts, we will be moving all the classroom and field trip materials to the milk shed at Stone Farm. Hopefully, this will make the schlepping of materials much easier for Day Leaders and our "Materials Team" will have easy access for fluffing and restocking the kits. Also, beginning this spring, we will no longer charge the \$2.00 per child "fee." This money has been feeding the bus scholarship fund and we will still be able to offer buses to schools that need them. I/we feel it is deeply important to offer a no-cost Laguna educational experience for all kids. We will invite teachers, parents and students to donate to the bus scholarship fund, but the money will no longer be a "requirement." The Delta Pond Fund Raiser and the sale of Snapys should do the trick to keep the bus fund stocked.



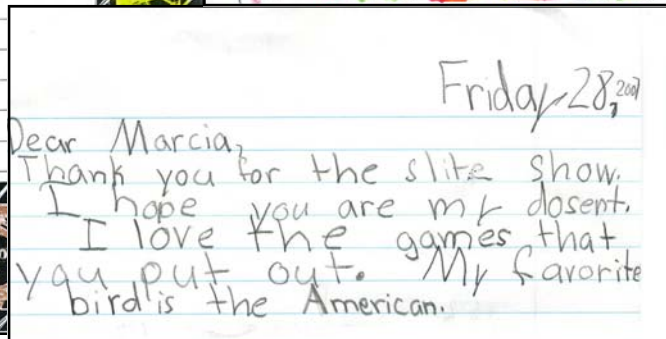
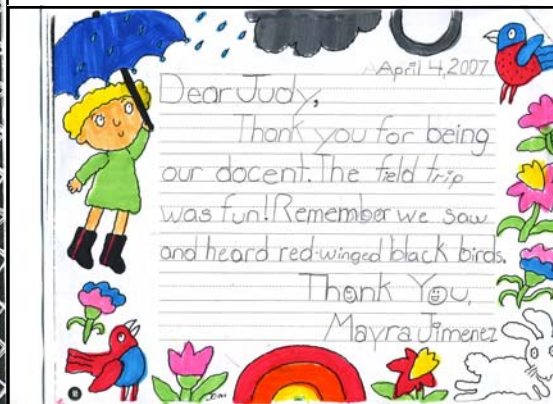
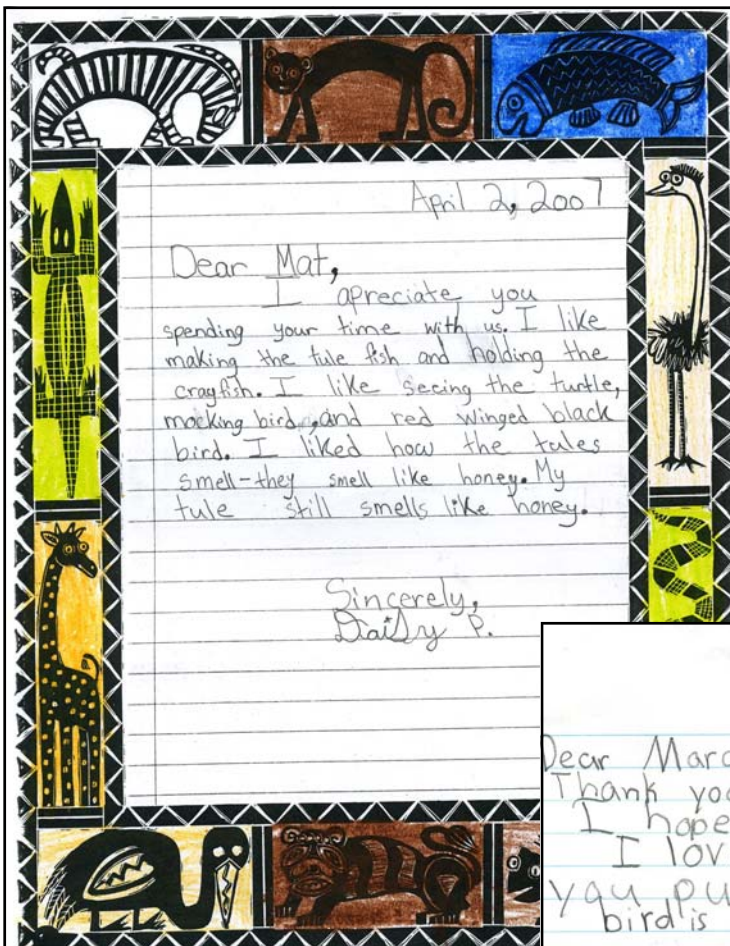
Joany Goodwin '04

I hope you've had a chance to review the descriptions of the Docent Leadership Teams. Many thanks to those who have expressed their interests! The teams are now being formed but there is still time to let me know if there is a place where you would like to join in. Please know that this is an invitation—that no arm twisting is involved! The thought is that everyone is skilled and talented and has even more great things to contribute to this wonderful program that we are all dedicated to. The red carpet lies before you to follow your own interests and plug-in to an additional team—only if you have the extra time, energy and the inclination, that is!

Orientation evenings for prospective docents are coming right up and training begins Monday, March 10th. Now is the time to have your friends fill-out their applications and join us on February 12 @ Cotati/Rohnert Park Library or Wednesday, February 27 @ Santa Rosa Central Library from 6:30-8:00 p.m. Training this year promises to be as exciting as ever! Planning is currently underway with strengthening what works well and filling in some gaps.

There are some exciting changes in store for the Community Walks program. We will be visiting more sites and expanding the program to include some expert-led seminars. The whole public education program is slated to be called *Laguna Learning Adventures* and you will soon see a brochure that outlines all the classes. One of the goals of the program is to provide more people with opportunities to learn about and connect to the Laguna. And, in addition to the docent-only activities, these new classes will be great continuing education opportunities for docents as well. While the classes will all be fee-based, there will be at least two spots for docents to attend, free of charge! Free spots will be available on a "first-come" basis. Keep your eye out for the brochure and watch your email for the Laguna Foundation e-newsletter.

Happy Trails!
Chris



*Children's
Comments
to Docents
After the
Field Trips*

Winter Laguna . . .

The Laguna reveals itself in the winter, becoming more visible, more apparent. The strong autumn winds have stripped the last leaves from the trees. It is now possible to see through the branches into previously shrouded reaches. The Laguna has grown larger after a few good storms, approaching roads and crossing fields. The Laguna fills, spreading out like an enormous lake, covering the floodplain. Every inch of rainfall, arriving by storm adds about a foot of water depth to the Laguna. A large storm can have the Laguna covering fence lines and sometimes roads. The Laguna continues filling after the rain stops; runoff from fields and paved surfaces reaches tributaries that feed the Laguna. After a week or more of no rain the Laguna will slip quietly back within its bank, falling almost as quickly as it rises.



Photo by donor: Al Martin

River otters have their run of the Laguna and all its tributaries this time of year. The world is an interconnected network of waterways and otters take advantage by moving from location to location. They often hang around one area for two or three days before moving on. I watched a group of three on the bank of a reclamation pond recently. Initially, they were invisible, blending in seamlessly with the muddy brown bank. They took to the water when they saw me but didn't go far. Two of them began to hunt and one made a quick catch, devouring the fish as it swam. The third climbed back up on the bank where it began to preen its fur and magnificent whiskers. The whiskers, long and many, seem excellent for feeling the way through murky water. Otters give the impression of reaching the pinnacle of adaptation. They are so adept at navigating aquatic and terrestrial worlds that there appears to be extra time available after the work of surviving is finished for having fun, sliding and socializing as they frolic in and out of the water.

One of my favorite times to watch birds is following a winter storm. Today is a sunny day with big, fluffy, white clouds moving through a deep blue sky. This clear, bright day follows a heavy rain of several inches over the last day and a half. Where did the birds shelter during the wind and rain? They have probably eaten little and are busy this morning. A chipper group of sparrows scuttles across the grassy ground, searching for food; jerky little hops, punctuated by chirps. A red-tailed hawk soars on the strong, cold breeze from the north. A tiny hummingbird sits on the bare limb of an ash. This little jewel, glittering emerald back and ruby throat, seems too fragile and delicate to endure the wild wind. Yet he survived the storm and does not look at all inconvenienced as he begins calling and preening. The soft feathers of a black phoebe land nearby. A thoughtful look and off, hawking invisible insects out of the clear air.

Denise Cadman '99



Photo by donor: Al Martin



Photo by Joany Goodwin '04



Photo by donor: Al Martin

Continuing Education provides lots of opportunities to explore. Note the sense of wonder in the observers from left to right: Steve Barnhart-Education Director at Pepperwood , Jenny Blaker '07, Tom Pringle '07, Patty Newland, '06, Jim Dempsey '04, Sheila Handley '06, Bob Murnane '06, & Nancy Dempsey

Pepperwood Preserve 10-30-07

Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria

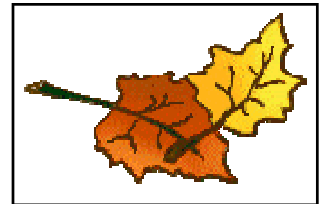
“Using Traditional Environmental Knowledge to Restore the Landscape” was the title of a series of three workshops held during 2007 between members of the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria (FIGR) and Occidental Arts and Ecology Center (OAEC). The year-long certification program was designed for Tribal members to enhance and reclaim traditional environmental knowledge. The curriculum was designed in a collaborative process to explore the principles of ecology and indigenous wisdom. Tribal members increased their skills as practitioners of cultural regeneration and biological restoration.



Twenty members of the Tribe (ranging in age from 22 to 78) began with a three day overnight at OAEC in April to learn about water and watersheds, fire ecology, soil ecology, native plants and animals and systemic problems. Participants learned in the “classroom” and walked OAEC land to observe the landscape in spring. It glorious and abundant last year! The organic food prepared from the OAEC gardens for our meals was superb. The meals were so nutritious that several diabetics noted their blood glucose levels lowered significantly in just three days! What a testimony to good organic food, healthy hikes and sleeping in yurts.

During the second three day workshop in August, Tribal members and OAEC instructors shared knowledge of native plant identification, use and management. Medicinal native plants, invasive plants and basketry plants were identified and their use discussed, and in some cases demonstrated. Our walks into the back country at OAEC during summer were instructive in that we were able to observe plants during a different season. We took a field trip to the Dogbane Open Space Preserve in Santa Rosa. We saw the sad state (unattended) of the site and how the playing fields changed the landscape. Several Tribal members signed up to help restore and “steward” this property in conjunction with the Open Space District. We also visited Stone Farm on the Laguna. We sat in a circle, observing what the vision might be to develop an interactive learning center. The whole group’s brainstorming included a vision of language information, history of Native Americans, cultivating medicinal plants, using the center for gatherings, demonstrations, definitely a place for intergenerations. Stories were shared about the “lights over the Laguna”, as older Tribal members remember. Some overarching thoughts came out--- to have a living classroom, to honor the Laguna’s uniqueness, to tell the Native story, to revive the spot that was once a meeting and trading place for Miwok and Pomo Indian tribelets, to map old trade routes and reclaim the place names.

We met at OAEC in October for the third time to learn to identify the plants in the autumn. Participants learned about plant seed saving and propagation. Members harvested bay nuts, yampa, pepper grass and acorns. The focus of the last workshop was to determine individual restoration project interest. After a field trip to Tolay Regional Park in Petaluma, the twenty Tribal members again brainstormed what members would like to see happen at the site. Members signed up to implement a partnership with one of the three sites visited during the year. Five of us signed up for the Stone Farm Learning Center.



The Tribe allowed a professional film crew to film most of the classroom learning, including in the back country. The Tribe will use this tool to instruct others who cannot participate in the way this first group did. The Tribe plans to continue the TEK workshops. Future plans may include a book reading and discussion group. They already discussed “Mabel McKay; Weaving the Dream”. Participants are anxious to read and discuss with Kat Anderson, her book “Tending the Wild”.

Finally, what is a certification project without a graduation ceremony? All TEK participants, including OAEC instructors, were honored in December in front of 275 Tribal members and families at the Flamingo Hotel. Each participant received a group photo and a certificate. This is the beginning and continuation of something great and I was privileged to be a part of it.

---Jeannette Anglin, Laguna Docent, Class of 2006 and

Tribal Council Secretary, Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria

Continued-Docent Profile-Andy Fleming '06

is always looking to improve and involve people in a variety of ways. Andy feels like he has been educated by many of the other docents (for example: birders). He says that we’re using the Laguna de Santa Rosa as a good “be here now” experience for both ourselves and the students who go through the program. “We’re helping them make a connection and giving them a potential life changing long term investment which may impact how we care for the environment.” Andy feels like the “oh, wow” experience can be spiritual because it increases ones awareness of the connectedness of everything.

Volunteer Appreciation Party - 2007

A wonderful time was had by all 120 in attendance, including: Learning Laguna docents, Community Walks docents, Education Committee members, Laguna Keepers, Gala Committee and other Gala Volunteers, Annual Fund Committee, Construction Volunteers, Laguna Learning Center Campaign Committee, Muddy Mappers, Summer Interns, Science Advisory Committee, Vernal Pool Monitors, Bird Monitors, Volunteer Consultants, office volunteers, Cotati Creek Critters, Laguna Foundation Staff, board members, family & friends.

Many docents were recognized for years of service including 2 year grads who received a LL ball cap (Barnee Alexander, Sandra Bodley, Jeanette Doyel, Kathy Gilliam, Joany Goodwin, Lanny Keyston, & Virginia Strom-Martin) & 5 year grads who received a Great Blue Heron Pin (Dana Blake, Bob Caricato, Denise Cadman, Linda Hanes, Jennifer Joel, Marcia Johnson, Sharon Mansfield, Fanny Minervini-Zick and Raini Vallerino). Day Leaders (Dana Blake, Sandra Bodley, Jim Dempsey, Kathy Gilliam, Linda Haynes, Raini Vallerino, Franny Minervini-Zick, & Chris Engel (leading the Community Walks Program) were recognized. Special thanks were also given to John Condon for supplying the program with crayfish for students to examine and for supplying the staff with kayaks for their annual paddle.

Raini presented the Raini Vallerino award and the proud recipients were Marcia Johnson and Chris Engel for all of their time put in to a variety of programs throughout the foundation. They are both amazing volunteers!!!



Delicious



Entertaining



Fun



Dusting off my Bag of "Tricks"

Aside from Day Leading, it had at least 3 years, since I had lead a group of students on a field trip. Feeling that I should stay current and dust off my backpack of "tricks" I signed up for a 3rd grade at Kelly. A combination of nervousness and excitement washed over me as I greeted a group of 5 boys and the chaperon, who happened to be their teacher. After quick introductions, I pulled out my shakers. Within 30 seconds, one of the boys, Eric, had opened the little can and poured out the contents. I knew then that it was going to be a challenging morning!

Before we got very far from the gate, each boy had a job. I stressed the idea of being detectives and using the scavenger hunt, they were all looking or listening for something as well as being in charge of recording on the clipboard or holding binocs, magnifiers and snapys. Arriving way ahead of schedule at the Aquatic, had me worried as I envisioned us racing through the wetlands in record time! John C. was on vacation so there were no crawdads, which added to my worry; how was I going to get them to slow down and enjoy this place?



Eric solved my problem. As we were heading away from the aquatic, he spotted a praying mantis. It was right on the edge of the trail, completely camouflaged, climbing a blade of grass. Our observations of the praying mantis were fabulous. For 10 minutes we discussed its camouflage, what it ate, who were its predators, why it lived here, what would life be like as a praying mantis, would it fit in the snapy? (NO!) The praying mantis brought us together, slowed us down and helped the boys realize that there was much to experience at Kelly and that they needed to walk slowly and quietly or they might miss something. The rest of the morning was full of discovery and even though I did use all of my "tricks" including riddles, T.V. Game, color chips and alone walk as well as everything along the trail(Eye Spy and spotting scopes); it was a good day to be in the wetlands!

Raini Vallarino, class of '99

Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation's Docent Circle Continuing Education Winter-Spring 2008

A series of enrichment classes and experiences for docents to keep your learning alive!

Details and/or changes will be emailed prior to date. Reservations required for each event unless otherwise noted.

New-There will also be 2 free places available to docents on each Learning Laguna Adventure or Community Walk. First come first served. Call the office to reserve your spot! Look for the schedule of Spring-Summer classes soon . . .

March 28 – May 29 Learning Laguna Spring Season—PLEASE Sign up by February 15

All field trips at the Sebastopol Wetlands Preserve

-February 8th, Friday-Tour of the Fish Hatchery at Lake Sonoma.

Meet at 1:00, explore the visitor center and be ready for our tour which starts at 2:00. We will walk up Dry Creek, following the fish up stream to the ladder then see the fish being fed in the raceway. Plan to walk only about ½ mile. Tour will be over by 3:30-4:00. Carpool/Caravan from the Coddington Library. Meet at 12:20.

-March 13th, Thursday-Field Trip to Point Reyes

Come see and learn about some Coast Miwok & Southern Pomo artifacts from the Museum collection, plus we'll have a ranger-led interpretive walk to Kule Loklo. We will also visit and learn about the Native Plant Garden.



-April 5th or April 19th, Saturday -Join Christine for a hike at Bouverie Preserve in Glen Ellen

Start at 10 am, end by 1:00 pm. Bring sack lunch and be prepared for up to a 4-mile hike. Of course, we may not hike *that* far because, from wildflowers to newts, there is so much to explore along the way! Each day limited to 8 people so sign-up early!

-May 8th, Thursday

Docent-led tour of **Bodega Marine Lab**. Tour starts at 2:00 and lasts for one hour but let's meet at noon for a tailgate brown bag and birdwatching before hand! Tour costs \$5.00 per adult.

-May 30th, Friday

Docent graduation party at the Alexander's. 6:00-8:30 pm.



2007 was another exciting year for the Laguna Foundation and we expect 2008 to be more of the same. After the completion of our ambitious Restoration and Management Plan for the Laguna in 2006, we began last year to implement its recommendations. Near the top of the list was the “Conceptual Model” project we completed with a grant from the City of Santa Rosa. This technical study is the precursor to a much more elaborate analysis of the water quality impairments in the Laguna, a study that has been called for by the Clean Water Act but which the Regional Water Quality Control Board has not had the staffing to undertake. Our study has jump-started that process and we now have confidence that this long-awaited regulatory study will be launched and completed in the next few years. The pace is sometimes frustratingly slow for these studies, but without them we cannot hope to address the severe water quality issues that plague the Laguna, and our efforts aimed at accelerating the process seem to have borne fruit.

We also were proud to host the State of the Laguna Conference last spring, the first such gathering in 18 years. While it was gratifying to see all the interest and the scientific inquiry in the Laguna, we know it’s just a start of the work we need to do in studying the Laguna so our better scientific understanding of it will hopefully lead to the restoration activities required to improve its functioning. Coming out of the conference, we’ve initiated two important activities: the development of a formal research program lead by Christina Sloop, Ph.D., and the convening of a Laguna Stakeholder Council to maintain the necessary ongoing discussions and networking necessary to successful restoration programming.

Our most ambitious restoration project yet, the Middle Reach Restoration Project, proceeded at an amazing pace last year as we now have planted nearly 4,000 trees in and around the Laguna’s reach between Highway 12 and Occidental Road. This project will continue in the next few years and be joined by the Open Space District’s trails being developed in the same area.

And, of course, we made significant progress on the Learning Center with most of the “heavy lifting” being completed on site.

2008 should be another exciting year as we expect to see many of the research program’s projects under way. Many of the other restoration projects we envisioned in last year’s planning will be proposed for funding to a number of funding sources that are expected to open up this year. With any luck, we’ll be starting work on some of the big improvements that have only been dreamed of in the past. All our hard work of the past few years in planning and partnering with the most influential stakeholders in the watershed is starting to pay off and the next few years should be a thrilling ride for those of us who’ve waited so long for serious progress to be made on healing the Laguna’s most vexing challenges.

As always, we thank the incredible crew of docents and volunteers who help make it all possible with their on-the-ground work and their spreading of the educational messages of appreciation and care for the Laguna. Here’s to another great year in 2008!

Dan Schurman, Executive Director



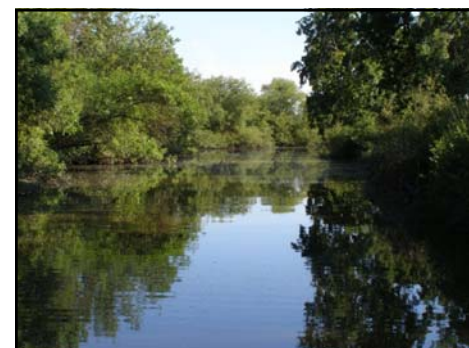
Looking west across the Laguna near Occidental Road 10-07 Nancy Dakin ‘03



Dei Dairy near Sebastopol Preserve on walk to Kelly Wetlands 11-07 Nancy Dakin ‘03



Walking towards Kelly Farm from the Sebastopol Preserve 11-07 Nancy Dakin ‘03



Looking north from the floating bridge in the Sebastopol Preserve 6-07 Nancy Dakin ‘03