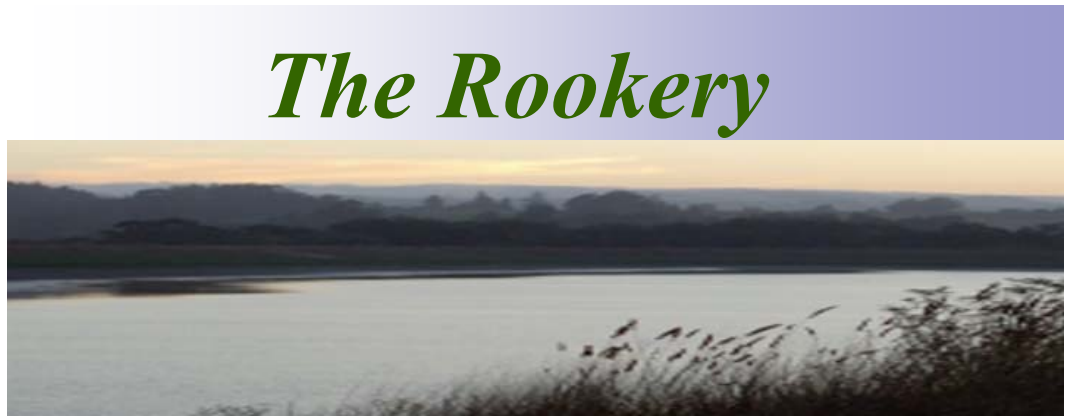


Fall/Winter 2006

Docent Newsletter



# The Rookery



## Docent Profile-Patrick Woodworth '03

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**CONGRATULATIONS  
DOCENTS, WE  
SURVIVED THE RAIN !**

Since retiring in 2002, Patrick has had his fingers in a lot of volunteer pies. His newest interest is birding and when he's interested in something, he learns as much as he can about it. He used to go on the weekly birding hikes with Madrone Audubon and Marin Open Space District. Patrick has taken both a class on Animal behavior and field courses at San Francisco State. He's currently taking an on line course in ornithology from Cornell University.

The Golden Gate Raptor Observatory is happy to have Patrick help them with bird counts and telemetry. He said that many people think it's nothing but fun but that sometimes you don't even get to see the bird that you're tracking. Many of the volunteers who travel to track birds pay their own way to stay in hotels in far away places and Patrick is no different. Not too long ago he traveled to Redding to track a juvenile Red Tail Hawk. Soon, he may be involved with a long term bird study for PRBO and the Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation.

Patrick also serves on the board of Audubon Canyon Ranch which has been helping to preserve both Bouverie Preserve and Bolinas Lagoon since the early 1960s. They do preservation and education and they have a research facility called the Cypress Grove Research Center on Tomales Bay.

He sees parallels between that organization and the Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation. Patrick says that he was volunteered to be elected to their board because he happened to be at one of their monthly board meetings and no one else stood up when they asked who wanted to be a board member. He was involved with the local Audubon society and had just completed training with the Leadership Institute.

Before becoming a full time volunteer, Patrick was a creative writing and literature teacher in a small high school in Tomales. In the summers he volunteered to take intercity kids on outings and he also spent several summers as a River Guide. He backpacked in the Rockies, the Sierras and Southeast Utah in the four corners area. One time he took a group into the Arctic Refuge in an effort to help stop drilling for oil. Patrick currently enjoys both kayaking and hiking. Some of his favorite local places to hike are: Point Reyes, Willow Creek Extension, Armstrong Woods and Annadel.

In the 1980's Patrick made a lot of new discoveries. It was at that time that he met his wife, Lee. He played in a Samba band and traveled to Africa to the People's Republic of Congo. The trip to Africa opened his eyes to some of the despair throughout the world.

Patrick is a longtime poet too. He told me that one of his first childhood memories was looking at a honeysuckle flower and watching a bee fly right in to it. He couldn't believe that the bee could disappear like that. He wrote a poem about it (I'm hoping that we'll get to put it in the next issue). He also told me a story about an experience as a young child at Sunday School. He arrived late on this particular Sunday. He walked into the classroom and the door closed behind him. He looked back only to see a large wolf (the substitute teacher) glaring at him. He was so scared that he ran out and never returned to Sunday School. He feels that this experience was one of his first meaningful visions of nature.

Patrick likes being connected to nature and he believes that Nature Deficit Disorder is a growing problem. He enjoys working with children and giving back to his community. Patrick likes "having more of an understanding of the beauty and potential of our local environment." He says that he used to travel to other places to enjoy nature but now he enjoys it all around where he lives which has included Dillon Beach, Petaluma and Sebastopol. Patrick enjoys being a docent for the LDSRF because it is not just about working with children but it's about personal growth too.

Patrick seems to live happily in his life in the present. I asked if he had any future goals. He mentioned that the largest Hawk Migration in the world is in Vera Cruz and he might like to count raptors or even live there in the future.



*Patrick Woodworth '03, looking relaxed even after spending the morning in the rain with a group of students from the Village Charter School.*

## Notes from Mary

The Fall Learning Laguna season seemed to fly by! Maybe that was because things ran so smoothly – even though day leader Jim Dempsey and crew had their first field trip in the pouring rain. Of course, the kids loved it! We have a few challenges with Spring scheduling, mainly due to STAR testing and the State mandated requirements to schools on what they can and cannot do during the testing period. The tests run for three weeks now, beginning right after the week long April break. This makes for new scheduling challenges. Our plan is for docent registration to be the week of January 2 – so, we will keep you posted.

So many changes over the past few months! This month, we bid sad adieu to Carolyn "CJ" Johnson '99 who came to the Laguna Foundation as an early board member. She was instrumental in helping to develop and run Learning Laguna and the docent training. CJ served as a guiding light for the Education Committee as chairperson, developed lots and lots of curriculum, hosted many docent extravaganza's and was always

ready to lend a helping hand – anything from making coffee to speaking to potential funders. A longer article appears in this month's *Meanderings* (Foundation newsletter). Flocks of Thank You birds, CJ! You will be missed.

We have a new brochure to promote our docent program. It is similar to the Learning Laguna brochure which you received this Fall in your packet. If you know anyone who may be interested in becoming a docent, let us know! We would like to invite them to the new docent orientation February 12th and to attend some of our continuing education events.

Last but not least, we are so excited to introduce Linda Wilson, our newest Education Program assistant.

If you have had experiences in the classroom or the field that you would like to share give me or Dana Blake a call, or if you want to write your reflections – please do! We are always open to including your stories in the *Rookery*. Isn't Dana doing a great job?

Yours for the Laguna,

Mary



Our annual volunteer appreciation party on Fri, November 18 was a memorable evening. Over 120 LF volunteers (mostly docents and partners!) enjoyed a festive dinner, camaraderie and some surprise awards. Docents who completed their two year commitment (many of them qualified a few years ago!) were given baseball caps with the new Learning Laguna logo, the otter.

They are: **Denise Cadman, Carolyn Johnson, Raini Vallarino, Franny Minervini-Zick**, Jennifer Joell, Marcia Johnson, **Dana Blake**, Bob Caricato, Susan Churchill, **Linda Hanes**, Sharon Mansfield, Pam Moskovitz, Veronica Bowers, John Condon, Nancy Dakin, Beth Haylock, **Cheri Johnson**, Joan Prezkop, **Anne Stephens**, Patrick Woodworth, Mary Abbott, **Jim Dempsey**, Chris Engel, Daught Geiger, Betsy Sanville, Sue Shea and Erin Sheffield.

Day Leaders (in bold above) were also given fleece vests with the Learning Laguna otter. And those docents who put in many hours behind the scenes or participate in multiple programs also were given vests. They are: John Condon, Chris Engel, Jeanette Doyel, Marcia Johnson and Virginia Strom-Martin.

Denise Cadman was honored with the "Raini Vallarino" award and was given a beautiful print of a bittern, donated by artist Molly Eckler.



### Welcome: Linda Wilson!

We are delighted to announce that Linda has joined our growing Ed program staff. Linda received training as a docent, in Marin where she grew up, with beloved Mrs. Terwilliger at the Terwilliger Nature Education Center (now Wildcare). From her experience there, she was instrumental in launching the Spring Lake program for Terwilliger, and was the docent site coordinator for over 4 years. Linda also worked as a Sonoma County librarian and has a background in graphic and home interior design. Linda is a "Coastwalker" and friends with Linda Hanes! We can't wait for docents to meet Linda and for her to become part of the family.

## Summer Workshop Energizes the Education Program

In August, Day Leader Dana Blake, Board Member Denise Cadman and staffers Catherine Cumberland and Mary Abbott traveled to the Marin Headlands to participate in an Environmental Educators Teacher Training. For five days, at the Marin Headlands Institute, we were immersed in all kinds of creative, fun, new activities that can be used in our docent training, in developing new classroom and field activities and sprinkled throughout our contact with docents. We networked with teachers and other environmental educators from all over the State. We are excited to return for a reunion in February to learn more strategies and to continue energizing our own program.

Because we were sharing a room at the training, we were constantly discussing the Education Program and all the possibilities for new activities we could use. The first we shared with you was the "Steelhead Challenge" which we did at the Breakfast in the Laguna. This was adapted from an activity we learned at the Headlands Institute. Since that was so well received, we were on a roll. We have begun to redesign the docent training to incorporate more hands-on learning, more teaching each other, and more reflection time, among other things which we will share with you over time. Be sure to watch for the docent training schedule early next year as you may want to come and participate in the new format and new material and meet the newest class too.

Because of this workshop, we are now planning the first ever "class reunion" of the docents who graduated in 2006 (scheduled for January, 2007) and we hope this will be a new tradition. As our docent circle grows larger, we will continue to make the time to get to know and appreciate each other.

## “We Day Leaders and Docents

### Love what we Do with the Laguna Foundation” . . .

Sometimes I feel that the classes are a lot to handle but in the end, it's the look on some, if not all of the childrens' faces that "they get it." By the time they have completed both the classroom activities and the field trip they have learned how important it is to save the Laguna. More importantly, they come away with a much greater appreciation of all the pieces in the puzzle that are part of nature and why we want to preserve this beautiful place.

We had a unique experience with a Santa Rosa charter school this season: Village Charter School. The classroom teacher is Ms. Elsie Batten and she has been teaching a 1st thru 8th grade class for three years. We had some apprehension initially on how we could make the classroom modules and slide presentation fit for this span of ages when in actuality, the kids did that for us!! It was so refreshing to see this group of twenty children (nine from 1st to 3rd, eight from 4th to 6th and four from 7th and 8th grade levels) work with each other and respond in such a way that made our activities and presentations much easier than we had imagined.

During the slide presentation, the older kids would encourage the younger ones to respond, not giving them the answers, but encouraging them to raise their hands and speak up. It was almost like we were in a family of twenty siblings, each very connected to the others and genuinely interested in what we were presenting and what they were going to come away with at the end.

I had a great group of docents to work with as usual, and this time they included Franny Minervini-Zick, Jeanette Doyle, Patrick Woodworth, Helen Heal, Barnee Alexander, Gretchen McIndoe and Tara Henteleff. These people are true professionals (even though they're volunteers)! I believe I can speak for all that we were really moved by this group of kids and their teacher. At our closing when we shared what we had learned and discussed how to prepare for the field trip, most of the kids wanted to "share a thought of appreciation." More than half of the group of children had wonderful things to say about us. It was an emotional closing and one which we will cherish for a long time.

I sometimes struggle to make the trip to docent from Lake County but every single time I am so rewarded by what we are doing, the teachers that I meet, the students and the wonderful docents in this program. It is a privilege to be working in this foundation and to see how far we have come.

Cheri Johnson '04





*Teacher Pat Brigham & some of her students from Sonoma Country Day School show off their Tule Fish with docents Betsy Sanville '04, Patty Newland '06, and Andy Fleming '06,*

November 4, 2006

Dear Learning Laguna,

This was my third year participating in the Learning Laguna education program. It continues to be the highlight of all our classroom speakers and field trips. Since we have this experience in October, it is a wonderful way to launch interest and enrich our nature studies: birds (adaptation), ecosystems, landforms and changes in our county.

Enthusiasm took hold after your classroom visit. The slide show was really outstanding, and they enjoyed the four well organized centers. After your visit, the kids were eagerly investigating nature books, especially about birds, from our classroom library. As my other third grade colleagues and I were discussing our field trip experience, "over the top" was the description we gave. We were impressed with the docents' knowledge and ability to interact with the kids, especially our distracted or high energy kids...just a few of course .

The materials you gave us have been very helpful and fun. We used the nifty brochure to record information on the day we got back from our field trip. The children are really enjoying coloring in the Laguna scenes of plants and animals as well. They like the challenge of using accurate color. We are also using this experience to write a narrative of our field trip. Due to the positive hands-on experiences of the classroom visit and field trip, the discussion and high interest materials, I am seeing their best writing.

Thank you again for making teaching and learning fun.

Sincerely,

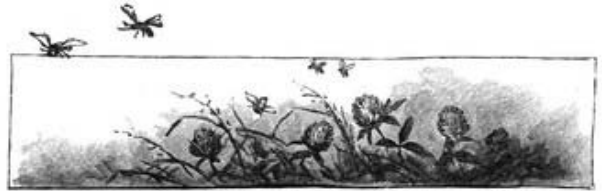
*Pam Murnane*

Hahn Elementary School, Rohnert Park

### Fun Quote

Docent: Beth Haylock: Does anyone know what "Migration" means?

Student: Lupita: It's when you don't have papers!



*Docents Bob Caricato '02 & Jeannette Anglin '05 with students from Guy Tillotson's 5th grade class at R.L. Stevens*

*Dear Frank and Lana,*

*Thank you for being the best docents in North America. You guys showed us so much stuff about the environment. I hope Kelly Wetlands will grow (grow, grow,) and grow all the way across the entire world. So we all across the entire world will love animals and no one shoots any more animals. I hope you guys will love the years at the Laguna de Santa Rosa!*

*From Ethan D.*



*Docent Virginia Strom Martin '05 and a parent with students from Susanna Yavorsky's 3rd grade class at R L Stevens*

## How do we keep our students engaged in the Field?



What do you do when you have a group of children in the field and one of the students wants to do her own thing instead of sticking with the group, listening to, observing and/or experiencing the exciting things you have to teach her?

Well, docent Jeanette Doyle '04 gave that student the job of seed collector. She put her in charge of something special and by the end of the field trip she had something to share with all of the other students in the group. Jeanette gained a helper and the little girl was able to enjoy the wetlands and learn about something with a specific focus. She'll probably be a scientist some day.

Another docent gave the child a scat ID card and asked him to try to look for different types of scat and figure out what type of animals might have left them and why. Then, she asked the parent in the group to stay at the back and herd the child along at a safe distance behind the rest of the group.

We have a lot of extra tools in our backpacks and good ideas in our heads. The tricky part for a docent is how to appropriately incorporate the extra tools into the field trip in order to challenge and excite different types of children. Some children are visual learners, some are auditory learners, and still others are primarily tactile learners. Part of our job is to recognize different learning styles and to respond to it the best way that we can.

How do you corral a high energy on the move type of group? One docent said that when the group loses focus, that's when she brings out the little rubber lizard (or snake or frog) for the Turkey Vulture Game. It allows the children to be active but with a specific focus. Another docent said he likes to bring out the shakers at that point and again, it allows the children to participate and move around but centered around a particular activity. Franny Minervini-Zick '99 likes to sing with her group.

Docents need to be masters of flexibility. We can help create amateur birders by sharing the binoculars and looking through the scopes or by simply being thrilled when we see a Black Crowned Night Heron or a Violet Green Swallow or a Turkey Vulture flying in to a kettle. We have a group of evidence seekers yearning to find a home or some scat or a track to substantiate that a creature of some sort has been nearby. Pass out a snappy and you have an entomologist. Give out the color tiles and let the students employ the concept of camouflage. Read a riddle and enable them to use their minds to figure out the clues. Encourage them to use as many of their senses as possible.

Our mission is to help the children increase their curiosity about life in the Laguna and to formulate possible answers themselves. I can still hear Raini telling me numerous times to answer a question with a question. Who do you think made this hole in the ground? What type of bird do you think this feather came from? Why don't all feathers look alike? How do these little animals survive in the water? I wonder why these bones are here? What do you think? If we're asking our students a lot of questions, then we're doing a great job as docents!

Dana Blake '02

## Docent News

**Your Continuing Ed Calendar, 2007 Volunteer Log & Docent Circle dues reminder will be sent via USPS in early December**

**Education Program Grant received from Wells Fargo \$1,500**

Our Spring 2007 Learning Laguna calendar is full !!! We have 11 classrooms on the waiting list.

**Docent Registration week for Spring Learning Laguna will be January 2 – 6, 2007** Watch your emails.

New Docent Orientation will be held Feb 12 at the Santa Rosa Library, downtown branch. Mark your calendar to help out.

Docent Migrations: Fond Farewell and Thanks to: CJ (see article, pg 2), Calvin Strobel '04, Chris Kennedy '05, Lynn Renn '05 and (temporarily) Jymmey Purtill '04; Welcome Back to: Anne Stephens '03 and Nancy Dakin '03.

Kathy Gilliam '05 and Sandra Bodley '05 will begin receiving training this Spring to become new Day Leaders. Way to go Kathy and Sandra!!

**Thank you Barnee Alexander '05 for the donation of 4 ponchos !!!**

## Continuing Education

-Fri, December 8, 1:30-5:30 at the water treatment plant: Native Skills of the Laguna: making a soap root brush with Julia Parker and Jeannette Anglin.

-Fri, Jan 5: Docent Lilith Rogers '05 performs, "Rachel Carson."

-Tues, January 8: Evening class. Peter Leveque – Beginning Birding.



-Weds, January 17, Feb 7, Feb 21, 8:45 – 9:45 am: Our annual series of short birding mornings in and around the Laguna.

-Fri, February 9: All about amazing *Corvids*. Watch and discuss the video: Ravens.

