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Green Jacket Happenings

What docent duties will be when the Reserve reopens

By **Melissa Gobell**

June is quickly approaching and the Monterey County “stay at home” mandate is due to expire. We are cautiously looking forward to the reopening of Point Lobos, but who knows what to expect?

Luckily, we have a reopening task force working to identify risks and come up with options for docents who are ready to return to service. There is a lot to consider: health and safety is of primary concern but also how and where on the Reserve will docents best be able to interpret?

The co-leaders of the task force, **Don McDougall** and **Betty Maurutto**, are working extremely collaboratively with team members **Ann Pendleton**, **Nancy Bryson**, **Peter Fletcher**, **Diane Salmon** and **Deborah Ju**.

In addition to considering all the comments submitted by docents, each member of the team was assigned an area to research. They contacted key leaders from the council and reported back with recommendations. A survey was sent to all docents capturing critical information to determine how many docents will be ready to return and when.

After many hours of hard work, the task force has prepared a report outlining their recommendations. They will be presenting the report to

Continued on next page

the Docent Cabinet for review and then it will be sent to California State Parks for approval.

The following summarizes some of the highlights proposed by the task force in Phase 1.

1. Based on information gathered from the survey conducted with about 200 docents with 137 responses, 68 percent of docents are willing to return to service in Phase 1.
2. Docent activities will be extremely limited.
3. The Information Station/Pelt Shed and Whalers Cabin station will remain closed.
4. Initially, visitor cars will not be allowed on the Reserve; however, docents may drive onto the Reserve to serve at shifts at either a designated location called a Sector Watch (see below) or Trail Watch.
5. Docents will be asked to provide feedback of their experiences to inform next step decisions and stages.

The intent of Sector Watch is to provide a system that covers the major areas of visitor activity in the Reserve. Each docent is free to make their own decisions as to where to be in the sector and what to do during their shift as they observe what areas might need more attention. The following sectors were created:

1. **Gate Greet** – at the Reserve entrance, providing directions, information and/or reminders of recommended current Reserve etiquette and State Parks guidelines.
2. **Whalers Cove Sector** – the perimeter of Whalers Cove from Cannery Point to Coal Chute Point.
3. **Info Station/Cypress Cove Sector** – Info parking area, Sea Lion Point Trail, and to Allan Memorial Grove sign on Cypress Grove Trail.
4. **South Shore/Weston Sector** – from Piney Woods entrance to Hidden Beach.
5. **China Cove/Bird Island Sector** – from Bird Island parking around Bird Island Trail.

Sector Watch will be similar to Trail Watch but within defined sectors. Docents are asked to stay in their sector but are free to wander or stay stationary (protected by cones) as they choose. To help with the logistics of Phase 1, **Chris and Karen Wagner** will be making temporary modifications to the website to accommodate the Phase 1 plan. Although details have not been finalized, in general:

The Info Station and Whalers calendars will be removed from view as these will not be used for signing up for shifts.

Docents will sign up for Sector Watch on a very flexible “temporary” transition calendar.

Phase 1 guidelines will be posted on the website along with a new FAQ section. This process has been a heavy lift for the members of the task force and they should all be congratulated. The team will continue to gather data and remains committed to drafting proposals for the next phases. Docent safety has been their mantra and docents certainly have the option of not volunteering until they feel comfortable.

Please consider sending items for Green Jacket Happenings to Melissa, Docent Coordinator/School Groups Coordinator, at melissa.gobell@parks.ca.gov.

**POINT LOBOS
DOCENT NEWS**

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Contributions are due on the third Wednesday of the month for the next issue. Contributions may be edited for length and clarity.

Ask the DA

Amid uncertainty, work continues at the Reserve unabated

By Jim Rurka, Docent Administrator

Dear DA:

When?

Answer:

Soon, we all hope! At this writing (Tuesday after Memorial Day weekend), there was a mixed picture. Andrew Molera, Garrapata and Carmel River State Beach were all open, while Pfeiffer Big Sur, Julia Pfeiffer Burns and Point Lobos State Natural Reserve remained closed. Throughout California and nationwide, large crowds in close proximity have created concerns about further loosening of restrictions.

In preparation for our reopening, a small task force of seven Point Lobos docents was created on May 7 to craft a detailed plan to safely resume docent activities, whenever each, individual docent decides to return to service. Initial guidelines from the task force were shared with all docents on May 15, and the team remains hard at work. See **Melissa's** Green Jacket Happenings for a deeper look at this process.

In the meantime, I want to share with you an impressive (even amazing!) amount of good work going on in and for the Reserve. In no particular order:

- Sea Lion Point Trail restoration and overlook construction continues; fingers are crossed for completion by the end of June.
- Keep an eye out for the Spring/Summer issue of the Point Lobos Magazine – it's a great otter fix!
- Troika continues to "Zoom-meet" weekly; the Point Lobos Foundation board and its committees remain active; the Docent Cabinet is meeting virtually with the Troika and task force.
- Monterey District California State Parks staff – **Melissa, Daniel** and **Vanessa** – continue posting

to Slack and PL Docent News, giving us all welcome peeks into the Reserve; much appreciated!

- Docent Training Class 42 with its 13 members are undergoing final assessments; **Donita**, the training team and mentors have all done a remarkable job; last class is Saturday, May 30!
- Melissa recently posted on the excellent roadwork accomplished by the Monterey District on the Reserve's main entrance road – a much-needed and welcome improvement.
- The district trails crew crafted and installed four new directional trail signs in the Reserve – a great upgrade – see Melissa's (and **Fred's**) postings on PL Docent News. The crew has also been working their way through all Reserve trails, and will continue until all are "brushed," hopefully by the time the Reserve reopens!
- The district maintenance crew has power-washed all of the restrooms, and will now be repainting them, inside and out. When we reopen, they expect to be able to clean all restrooms twice daily. How good is that?!
- Work on the exciting new interpretive panels for Info Station continues; meeting virtually, and moving it forward.
- **Chris** and **Karen** continue to design, program and install upgrades to the docent website, adding and refining capabilities.
- This newsletter continues unabated, through the dedication and hard work of **Reg**, Karen and contributors.

Give them all a shout-out! Stay healthy and be well; continue to support each other, your families, your neighbors and communities. Hang in there; when you're comfortable returning, we'll be back together – looking forward to it.

Best, Jim

jimrurka@sbcglobal.net

Editor's Desk

Flightless birds deserve more respect

By Reg Henry, Newsletter Editor

When we look back at sheltering-in-place years hence, we may remember this experience as a time of excessive TV watching, wine drinking and thus random, idle thoughts giving rise to silly irritations. All of these animate my column today, except the wine drinking. You will have to provide your own if you wish to be entertained.

Of course, I would rather write about the Reserve but I am starved for fresh anecdotes, as we have been in exile for weeks and only now contemplate a return. But I do have a point to make about wildlife, which I am hoping will justify this short essay. It concerns a particular bird, so at least **Stan Dryden** will be interested: The emu.

Emus are seldom seen in Point Lobos, so you new docents should not be alarmed if you don't remember them in your training. They normally live in Australia, where I grew up, but are used in America to sell car insurance.

This I know from the excessive TV watching mentioned above. The Liberty Mutual insurance company has employed LiMu Emu and Doug to sell their plans with ubiquitous ads promising that "you only pay for what you need."

For all I know, this may be a very good deal. Perhaps I am paying for the right to drive a backhoe as well as my regular sedan and could save a bundle if only I paid for what I need. I am prepared to give Liberty Mutual a break for the bad taste of dressing wild birds up in silly costumes for mercantile purposes. But ...

My problem is that they can't pronounce the word emu. Americans and their insurance companies think

they are called ee-moos (rhymes with LiMu). No, they are eem-yews.

This may seem a small difference. Not to me. Did I mention that these trying times give rise to silly irritations? I readily concede that among the forlorn list of sufferings caused by the virus the mispronunciation of emu is not chief among them. Still, how would you like it if Aussies went around calling Bald eagles Bald Eggles? The emu is on the Australian coat of arms, along with a mate, the kangaroo. A little respect, please.

And, so, a silly irritation caused by excessive TV watching stirred in me random, idle thoughts about "you only pay for what you need." While this may be a good maxim for car insurance in particular, it is a terrible idea for life in general.

I submit that the lack of ventilators, masks, protective clothing, testing kits and labs during this pandemic is a direct consequence of only paying for what you need. The trouble with only paying for what you need is that you don't know what you need until you need it.

You should ask emus about that. They would have flown away if someone forced them to sell car insurance if only they hadn't long ago evolved into flightless birds. You see, at the time, they only paid for what they needed.

Hey, pass your wine over and I'll tell you how to pronounce Melbourne.

My email address is regwriter43@gmail.com.

June Docent Meeting

Docent meeting to return in a new way

The June monthly docent meeting will be a virtual experience. The Troika will once again record a Zoom video which will include docent business updates and a conversation with the new PLF President **Karin Stratton**.

This video will be posted to the docent website on Saturday, June 6, along with a presentation from our very own **Jerry Loomis**. His presentation, titled the “Underwater World of Point Lobos,” is a compilation of the plants and animals commonly seen by divers.

When Jerry first started diving at Point Lobos, he was often asked “what do you see down there?” This prompted him to start taking photos to help tell the story of what life is like under the water at Point Lobos. Since only a limited number of divers can dive here each year, the vast underwater world remains hidden from the average visitor.



Photo by Jerry Loomis

State Parks diver.

Sunny-Side Up

By Paul Reps

On May 15, I was trying to walk off the “new wine weight” I had taken on during the Shelter in Place with Enzo, my pit bull, in the hills of Carmel Highlands.

As we were walking – sorry, no mask, as at first there was no one there – a couple came toward us from another direction trying to get some exercise. We said hello from each side of the street and they told me they were confused about where they had parked their car to get back home. After I quizzed them about what they remembered, I was able to direct them successfully. They then turned around and said: “Don’t you work at Point Lobos? Thank you for what you do!”

And, thanks to all the docents for what they and Park Aides do, too!

By Stan Dryden

Muchos años ago, I was walking down to the parking lot after a Whalers shift when an otter popped to the surface for a moment and quickly disappeared under water again.

This time he came up holding a block of concrete (not your basic otter tool, but big and square) and balanced it on his tummy. Then he dove again briefly and came up with what appeared to be an old abalone shell, and commenced to pound it against the block.

I was about to call the Marine Mammal Center to see if they could send out an otter psychiatrist but decided to inspect the shell with my binoculars first, and saw a tiny abalone lodged inside the shell. The otter’s perseverance paid off, as he soon had a tasty morsel.

This feature focuses on the positive or amusing experiences that docents have at the Reserve. Please contact Paul Reps – preps@sbcglobal.net – if you have a story that he can serve Sunny-Side Up.

A Whale of a Tale

What we learned to say to visitors is not true

By Ed Clifton

When the conversation with visitors to the Whalers Cabin swings to the whaling industry, I typically attribute its demise to the late 19th century replacement of whale oil as a lighting fuel by the petroleum product kerosene – common wisdom, but apparently wrong.

John Lienhard is a highly respected professor emeritus in the Department of Engineering at the University of Houston. He established a radio presentation called “The Engines of our Ingenuity” that explained how science and engineering have shaped our modern world. I always enjoyed listening to it during my stay in Houston during the 1990s. He continues to publish articles in the University of Houston’s School of Engineering Magazine and this spring had an article on the end of the whaling industry. It was not what I thought.

In his words, “The cost of whale oil had risen as we killed off whales. It had always been too costly for most ordinary users. And only the wealthy could afford it by the end of the Civil War. We lit most lamps with far cheaper oils – oils that derived from coal as well as from plants and land animals. Then camphine became popular during the Civil War. That much-used witches brew was a mixture of camphor oil and turpentine derivative. So the market ended whale oil use before petroleum oil became important.”

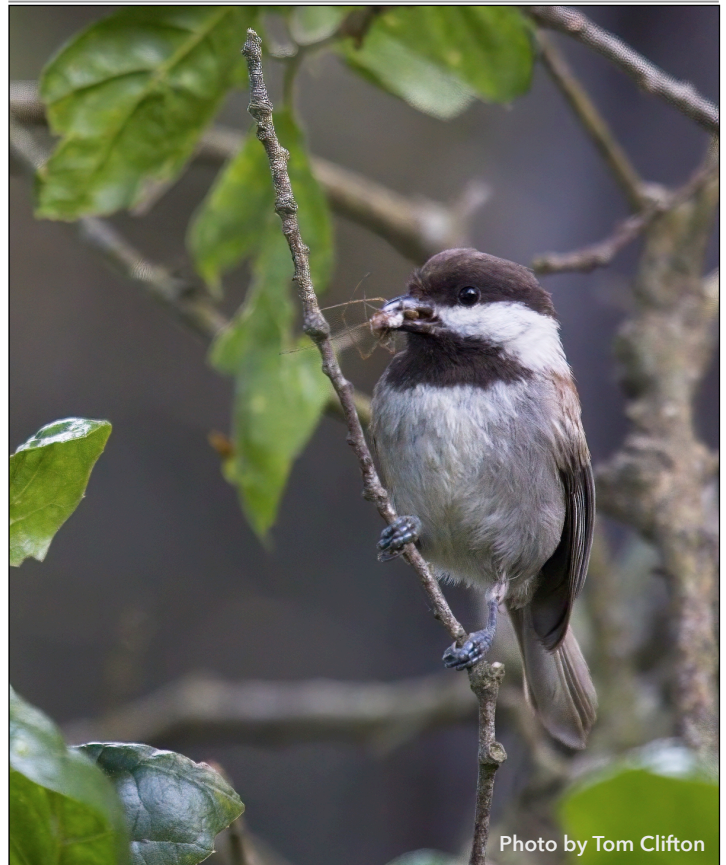
Bottom line, whale oil was replaced for lighting by a variety of cheaper alternatives. It had priced itself out of competition long before petroleum began to light the lamps.

This conclusion flies in the face of what we have been taught as docents and the description of whaling at Point Lobos on the Point Lobos

Foundation website. But confirmation of Lienhard’s thesis can be found in the 1923 California Fish and Game Commission Fish Bulletin No. 6, which features “A History of California Shore Whaling” by E. C. Starks. This article states on page 14 that the oil produced in the tri-pots was used in soap making, painting, leather dressing and various other industries. There is no mention of lamp oil.

Point Lobos Tweet

By Tom Clifton



While we couldn't be in the Reserve to observe nesting and feeding, it was probably going on. In my backyard, a pair of Chestnut-backed Chickadees were collecting bugs and dropping them in a hole in an oak. When the bugs didn't climb out, I assumed the birds were feeding nestlings.

Docent Dossier

What you don't know about Katie Spitz

By Trudy Reeves

You probably know that **Katie Spitz** is a landscape architect, fearless leader of the Plant Interest Group, and Plant Patrol contributor to the docent newsletter. But did you know that Katie isn't just a professional lover of plants? She considers herself part of the plant community.



Katie Spitz

Katie thinks of the Latin monikers of her beloved native plants as their first and last names, easily remembering them from first introduction. In the great tradition of all true plant lovers, she talks to plants. But do they talk to her? We now know that trees communicate with each other, so why not with *Katinothus Spitziflorus*?

Katie grew up as a city girl in Brooklyn Heights. When she was 10, Katie arrived in Pebble Beach on the west side of her family's cross-country road trip. Along 17-Mile Drive, wide-eyed young Katie gazed at the mansions, the forest and the ocean, and proclaimed, "One day I will live here!"

Before that could happen, she moved to Santa Barbara to study art and painting at UCSB. At age 23, with no real experience in nature, Katie, the city girl, climbed a U.S. Forest Service tower overlooking the Sespe Condor Sanctuary and Ojai. She spent six blissful months as a lookout musing above the treetops. In the ever-changing light and shades of green and brown, she never once felt bored or lonely. She was hooked.

Katie went on to study architecture at UCLA. In 1993, she founded her landscape design firm. Success followed as her award-winning creations blended native plants with Los Angeles cityscapes and suburbs. In 1998, Katie's dream of living in Pebble Beach finally came true when she and her husband, Dan, purchased their second home in the upper forest.

Now as a full-time resident, Katie digs in the dirt among her newer friends, the native plants of the Central Coast. Of course, she knows them all by their first and last names, but addresses her BFF, Ceanothus, by first name only.

Katie envisions Point Lobos as a healthy living exhibit of native plants thriving in their communities. By working tirelessly on restoration and invasive plant removal, she brings her vision to life. While gathering native seeds, Katie whispers, "One day YOU will live here!"



Website Tips and Tricks

New TRANSITION calendar, procedures and FAQ's

By Karen & Chris Wagner

As docents transition back to the Reserve, we have created a new Transition menu on the docent website. The new **Transition Calendar** replaces all of the old calendars and provides a place for docents to sign up to monitor one of the five sectors identified by the transition task force. The **Procedures** and **FAQ** sections will provide up-to-date content on everything from how to sign up, where to park, how to log hours, and answers to other questions that come up as we get back in action.

New TRANSITION Menu

- Profile
 - My account
 - Upcoming Events
 - Announcements
 - Logout
- Transition**
 - Transition Calendar
 - Transition Procedures
 - Transition FAQ
 - Old Calendars -
- Community
 - PL Docent News
 - Share your photos
- Resources
 - Interpretive Resources
 - Meeting Videos
 - Administration
 - Training
- Reference
 - Roster
 - Contacts/Help
 - Search

POST AN ACTIVITY +

Week of May 24 (click for month view)

« Previous Next »

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
				8:00am - 10:00am SOUTH SHORE & WESTON (s otter)	10:00am - 12:00pm INFO STATION & CYPRESS GROVE (D McDougall)	
				3:30pm - 5:30pm CHINA COVE & BIRD ISLAND (J Rurka)		

Karen and Chris are the website administrators. They can be reached at webadmin@plsnr.org.

Class 42 Docent Training

Learning and making friends at a distance

By Kim Kaplan

When I started docent training in January as a member of Class 42, I was filled with excitement, nervousness and the thrill of making new friends. Learning all that I needed to share this beautiful Reserve with visitors was a dream come true. January, February and the first part of March fulfilled all my expectations.

Then came COVID-19 with all of its unknowns and the full stop in training. Just about the time that our class of 13 eager trainees had started to get to know each other and begun to harmonize, we were abruptly pulled away from classes, shadowing, and exploring the Reserve by a specter that none of us could have anticipated.

While hands-on and in-person experiences were abruptly put on hold, I was impressed by the training team's ability to shift gears quickly. They made some difficult decisions that led to all of our precious training and knowledge-gathering being moved to an online, distance learning format. The presenters who spoke on various topics did a fantastic job of learning on the fly to present remotely.

I was still able to enjoy their presentations and glean copious amounts of information even though I was sitting at my desk at home. **Donita Grace** was wonderful at figuring out logistics and making sure we were well informed about the changes taking place due to the shelter-in-place order.

In regard to trainee comradery, it was tough at first, given that most of us had only spent two Saturday classes together. Time was limited for us to create that personal connection. Sensing this, I made the suggestion, with encouragement from **Melissa Gobell**, to host our own Zoom calls as a group, without the training team in attendance. This proved to be the silver bullet!

We held multiple Zoom calls together and exchanged a wealth of group e-mails. These distant

but personal team connections, coupled with our unique circumstance, really pulled us together and quite possibly brought us closer than other training classes.

My docent training experience has been a rich and satisfying one. While certainly not business as usual, I feel that I have learned much about this beautiful place and the docents who enrich the visitor experience all while being flexible. I am humbled to have been chosen to join the ranks and look forward to continuing learning for a long time to come.

Discover Point Lobos

As Point Lobos reopens, **Fred Brown** wants docents to tell as many people as they can about the Discover Point Lobos Tablet App for exploring the Reserve, as a way to prepare for a visit.

He says that spreading the word about the App has been difficult and he believes the best way is by word of mouth, especially coming from those in the know – our docents. This fun and feature-packed App provides an interactive experience on a virtual walk to learn about the animals, plants and geological features found at the Reserve. Exceptional videos and detailed photos provide a personal connection with all the natural wonders of Point Lobos, including the striking geological formations that form the boundary with the sea.

The free Discover Point Lobos App can be found on the Google Play Store or Apple's App Store – for tablets. Recommended for ages 7 to 107.

