



POINT LOBOS

DOCENT NEWS

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Issue 8



Photo by James Monson

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Green Jacket Happenings

The new Info Station is part of a storied history

By **Melissa Gobell**

Renovation of the Information Station is now complete and – wow! – what a success. Many may not realize that the project first started back in 2018 with the realization by **Dan Turner** that the heavy metal roll-up door needed replacing and the cost would be significant. Rather than simply replace the door we decided to renovate.



Photo by Paul Repts

Kim Fraser, Donita Grace, Robert Grace and Loren Hughes opening the new Info Station.

Physical work on the two-step process began in February 2019 with the construction of a new Pelt Shed in **Robert Grace's** home shop. The new shed was installed in April and served as a temporary visitor contact station.

The existing roll-up door on the old station was removed back in March and demolition of the Info Station began. Robert could be seen daily working on the construction of the reclaimed wood doors, drawers, panels and

Continued on next page

Green Jacket Happenings (cont.)

internal storage. And this, like so many other examples of projects at Point Lobos, saw docents standing by, ready to lend a hand. The new Info Station officially opened for business on Aug. 20, 2019.

Loren Hughes served as project manager and, as the work proceeded, interpretive and merchandise activity followed along. The Interpretation Interest group, led by **Pat Sinclair** with strong support from **Sue Addleman, Karen Wagner** and **Peter Fletcher**, mapped out the interpretive themes and messages that would guide future displays and panels.

Meanwhile, **Kim Fraser** coordinated the merchandise team with support from **Donita Grace**, working to configure storage and placement of new merchandise. Needless to say, there were so many details behind the scenes, all involving a long list of willing and helpful docents.

But there is more to this story and **Reid Woodward**, Class of 1981, tells us how it all began:

“In honor of the new Information Station and Pelt Shed, it is noteworthy to look back at the humble beginnings of it all. In 1981, the first docent group went to head Ranger **Glen McGowan** and asked if they could display a map, a few brochures and books to the public along with a real live docent to answer questions.

“Glen had a small two-wheeled trailer near the Hudson House that he began to drive out each morning to a small clearing (still there!) just to the west of the existing Info Station. The docent on duty would lift the flat lid and move up the board below to make a triangle that would stand on its own, upon which was an enlarged map of the Reserve, a few fliers and a few educational books for the public.

“In the evening, Glen would pull the trailer back to a safe storage area. It was not within our guidelines to

put up anything permanent, but this was mobile (on wheels) and therefore not prohibited. This was the first Info Station!



The way we were: The Info Station trailer.

“In 1993, a group was formed to come up with a new design for the Info Station. Two years later, on July 7, a new redwood station was trailered into place early that morning. The welded framework made by **John Hudson** with four legs was carefully lowered into four holes dug into the rugged sandstone by Rangers Glen McGowan, **Jerry Loomis** and **Chuck Bancroft** as well as **Jeff Chapple** (the builder) and Reid Woodward. It was only 5 feet by 11 feet but it had over 100 innovations in store for the docents and the public.



Second generation Info Station.

Continued on next page

Green Jacket Happenings (cont.)

“This structure, as the trailer before it, had no permanent foundation and could be lifted and moved if the need ever arose. The station went “online” the morning of Aug. 8, 1995 – 24 years ago – and enhanced the beauty of the Reserve in so many ways.

“Now, the third generation of the Information Station will again raise the bar for beauty, innovation and interpretation for all docents and the public that we serve.”

So ... Mark your calendars for a Grand Reopening and Ribbon-cutting Ceremony to take place on Tuesday, Sept. 3, at 8:30 a.m. at Info. All are welcome to attend – Melissa.



The new Info Station has expanded display and storage space.

Please consider sending any Green Jacket Happenings to Melissa.

Melissa.Gobell@parks.ca.gov

September Docent Meeting

Alga in the sea and on the land

Docents of refinement and good taste – perhaps not the editor of this newsletter but most of you – were advised by their parents to refrain from mentioning politics and religion in social settings to avoid unpleasantness.

That advice is doubly important in today’s bitterly divided world when mentioning certain topics can ruin a whole evening. But what is there left to discuss? What will docents talk about at dinner parties?

If you come to the Sept. 7 monthly docent meeting, you will have a fresh and safe subject you can chew over past the soup course and into the entrée: Alga, in particular those examples underwater at the Reserve.

No need to feel out of your depth. Just think how you can break the ice by asking dinner party guests: “Did you know that algae are defined as photosynthetic organisms of aquatic or moist habitats, ranging in size from single-celled diatoms to large seaweeds such as kelp and characterized by a lack of complex organs and tissues?”

Our gift to the cause of intelligent conversation is **Judith Connor**. She is the former director of information and technology at the Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute (MBARI). She earned



her Ph.D. in botany and ecology from the University of California, Berkeley.

While Dr. Connor will focus on kelps and seaweeds, she will also look to the land and discuss trentepohlia, which arguably gives

rise to more questions at the Info Station than any other natural feature in the Reserve. She will examine the various forms, features and functions of algae that you can share with visitors as well as dinner party guests.

Be there or be square and socially awkward.

Tips and Tricks

How to make your public walk more appealing

By Fred Brown

It's time to jazz up your public walk! With many requests from docents, the new website has a variety of main topics to headline your nature walk and make it a bit more intriguing. And if that weren't enough to entrap unsuspecting visitors, you have the option, with as much detail as you choose, to provide any additional interesting information in the description box (see illustration). Put your own spin on it.

Create Public Walk

Walk Theme: *

- ✓ - Select
- General
- Geology
- Cultural History
- Wildflowers
- Poetry
- Tide Pools
- Easy-Access Adventure
- Birds
- Perfect Photo Spots
- Family Centered
- Cypress Grove Treasures
- Artists of Point Lobos

Choose the main title for your walk

Provide interesting details

Docent led nature walk through the cypress forest
No mountain lions for several weeks and
as a natural reserve, the bones are left on the side
of the trail. Please join us!

All this will be exported to the home page of the Point Lobos Foundation's public website. The PLF website will not show your name as the leader of the walk, so if you would like to identify yourself, enter your name in the description area. You may want to include more specific information about the starting point, where to park, and how much time to allow to get from a vehicle to walk location as well.

Traipsing through tide pools, reciting poetry, admiring geological contortions, regaling visitors with the storied history, or just quietly walking through the majestic forest – you now have a new way to reel them in. You are unique; make your walk description unique as well.

Although your walk will inevitably provide more than the main topic suggests, a theme is a good way to start and finish a public walk. And, of course, we still have the “general” if you are marching to that tune.

Geology walk at Bird Island Parking Area

Starts at: Bird Island Parking Area

Walk Theme: Geology

Date and Time of Walk: Wed, 09/11/2019 - 10:00am

Walk Details

We'll explore the geologic past of Pt Lobos within the context of Earth's history. The walk will end at Weston Beach viewing some trace fossils amid some of the newest rock deposits. Recommend a camera and sturdy shoes.

Family Centered walk at Information Station

Starts at: Information Station

Walk Theme: Family Centered

Date and Time of Walk: Sat, 09/07/2019 - 1:00pm

Walk Details

Caminata guiada en español e inglés. Vengan a conocer las maravillas de Point Lobos. Walk led by bilingual docents in Spanish and English.

September Calendar

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| Sept. 3 | <i>New Information Station
Grand Opening Ribbon Cutting
Ceremony</i>
8:30 a.m.
Info Station |
| Sept. 7 | <i>Monthly Docent Meeting</i>
9 a.m. Social time
9:30 a.m. Meeting and program
Community Church of the
Monterey Peninsula |
| Sept. 10 | <i>Otter Count</i>
9 a.m.
Info Station parking lot |
| Oct. 5 | <i>Monthly Docent Meeting</i> |
| Oct. 20 | <i>Annual Docent Potluck Picnic</i>
4 p.m. to 6 p.m.
Bird Island Picnic Area |

Editor's Desk

By Reg Henry, Newsletter Editor

When I lead school walks, I like to ask the kids why the Reserve is called Point Lobos. Most of them don't know so I give them a clue.

"Do you know what the Spanish word *lobos* means?" Many of them still don't know, which is always surprising to me as the majority are Latino and many are multi-lingual. Perhaps this word doesn't come up much today in kids' conversations, which is perhaps a blessing of sorts.

Still, I am left wishing that Little Red Riding Hood or a little Russian boy named Peter would turn up on a school walk to help the rest of their class out.

"Wolf!" I say to answer my own question.

Then I ask: "Are there any wolves around here?"

They are not too sure about that and look a little frightened.

"Don't worry," I say reassuringly, "there are no wolves here. There were never any wolves here."

Then I go on to give the standard explanation for naming Point Lobos: That to the early Spanish explorers the sea lions looked to them like sea wolves and they named the place *Punta de Los Lobos Marinos*.

I have heard another docent on a school walk say that because the Spanish traveled the world, they were well acquainted with wolves on the land and the notion of a marine version was easily suggested.

But it may be that they didn't have to travel the world to know wolves. Wolves might have lived at Point Lobos, and no *marinos* about them.

It seems that my bold assertion – "There were never any wolves here" – is at least suspect. I discovered this recently in reading "The Ohlone Way," subtitled, "Indian Life in the San Francisco-Monterey Bay Area." Malcolm Margolin, the author, leans heavily on historical accounts.

He starts the book by saying that modern residents would hardly recognize the Bay Area in the days of the Ohlones, such was the abundance of animal and

plant life. This was the sentence that startled me: "Packs of wolves hunted the elk, antelope, deer, rabbits and other game."

What was true of the Bay Area was no doubt true of our area. As the California Department of Fish and Wildlife acknowledges, the state was home to gray wolves in times past, with most of the packs in mountains like the Sierras, but some may have lived in the coastal ranges, although their numbers might have been small.

The last gray wolf in California was killed in 1924 but they are coming back. The state has made no effort to re-introduce wolves but they are migrating themselves from other places (as with people, so with wolves apparently). At least one pack lives in Lassen County.

The point is that it is important not to embroider the facts, as I have apparently been guilty of. I am sorry; please don't throw me to the wolves, if you can find any.

All I can say now with certainty is that currently no wolves visit Point Lobos, which may be a loss but also a relief to know when leading a school walk.

regwriter43@gmail.com

Point Lobos Tweet

By Tom Clifton



Photo by Tom Clifton

Heermann's Gulls are back in Whalers Cove, laughing. Why? They'll leave in January, before docent trainees ever see this "required" bird.

Ask the DA

Consider vacancies for docent and PLF positions

By Jim Rurka, Docent Administrator

This month's column is more like "From the DA"—one of our periodic "Help Wanted" ads, with a couple of twists.

In addition to informing you of open docent leadership positions that we hope you'll consider, we take the opportunity to recognize and thank several docents who have recently stepped up for additional responsibilities. And, we include a pitch from our Point Lobos Foundation partners for docents interested in helping to advance the foundation's mission.

The audio-visual team is looking to recruit two more members to support our monthly docent meetings. No experience is needed; just a willingness to learn and to arrive early (8 a.m.) to help set up. See **Roger Dolan**, if interested.

Susanne Nilsson has recently stepped up to fill the tech support role previously held by **Duffy Johnson**. She has been meeting with docents who lead programs to identify current usage and future technology needs.

Peter Nodzinski will be replacing **Pat and Joe Bova** as back-up to **Nancy Bryson** as Whalers Cabin scheduler.

Mark Levine has replaced **Alice Knapp** as the assistant librarian, helping **Mary Gale**, our librarian.

Chris Wagner is taking over the lead for MINT from long-serving **Pat Sinclair**.

The programs committee (continuing education) recently added **Fernando Elizondo** and **Ann Pendleton** to join the veterans on the committee – **Don McDougall**, **Carol Marquart** and chair **Roger Dolan**.

Dan Turner has been the docent in charge of Information Station maintenance and merchandise for the past five years. Dan will continue with maintenance, while **Geoffrey Bromfield** takes on merchandise restocking.

The **Point Lobos Foundation** is in the process of identifying community members, including Point Lobos docents, who may be interested in contributing their experience and expertise in carrying out the foundation's strategic, governance and operational oversight functions.

An ideal candidate will be a strategic thinker who has a passion for the PLF's mission and meets the needs and criteria for service to the foundation. The PLF is also eager to continue developing a more diverse board, considering factors such as age, geographical location, and ethnic and cultural identification.

Initial service as a member of one of PLF's board committees (for example: philanthropy, supporting fund-raising, and governance, concerning organizational capacity and performance), could provide a "get acquainted" opportunity, and possibly lead to service on the board of directors.

If you are interested in learning more about these opportunities, or know someone else who might be, please contact **Karin Stratton**, chair of the board's governance committee, at kstratton@mbayaq.org.

My thanks, as always, for all that you do!

Best, Jim

jimrurka@sbcglobal.net

Plant Patrol

Hold the mustard! It's been hot-dogging for too long

By Katherine Spitz

Mustard might be great on your deli sandwich, but, as most of you know, it's not so great in our landscape. That is why ecologist **Anna Bonnette** and the Native Plant Patrol group returned to Granite Point once again to pull it out.



Native Plant Patrol holding up their mustard trophies.

Ever had a visitor ask why we bother to remove invasive plants? Using mustard as an example, here are a few fun facts you can share with them.

Black mustard was brought to California by the Franciscan missionaries in the mid-1700s, who planted it to line a trail between missions. (We can actually date it by analyzing seeds in the adobe bricks!)

Legend has it that the trail of yellow flowers turned out to be a mixed blessing – the path was clearly visible, but apparently grizzlies also made use of it, hiding behind it in order to launch attacks on the walkers, making for a rather bad day. Sigh. So even though mustard was no longer needed for trail work, it was here to stay.

The plant is a clever survivalist. For one thing, it's allelopathic, which means it releases chemicals that poison the ground beneath it, inhibiting other plants from growing. We could observe this at Granite

Point: There was only bare ground, and a few mustard seedlings, below the thickets of mustard. Had the mustard not been there, the voids would have been filled with colorful natives and poppies.

Crystalline ice plant is another allelopathic plant at Point Lobos – it was also deliberately imported, in this case as a food source. And of course, the mustard seeds are edible. Salad, anyone?

By the way, allelopathy is not all bad. It's a necessary trait helping plants survive. Native flora with this characteristic include manzanita (*Arctostaphylos* species), California bay tree (*Umbellularia californica*), and walnut (*Juglans* species), theoretically even oaks (*Quercus* species) and Sycamores (*Platanus* species).

Meantime, go check out how fantastic Granite Point looks without the mustard.



Anna and Ralph way off trail searching for iceplant.

Sunny-side Up

All the News That's Cheerful Enough to Print

Compiled by Paul M. Reps

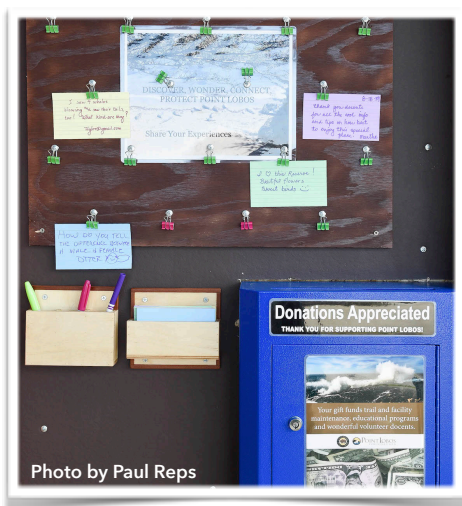
This feature, the brainchild of **Paul Reps**, focuses on the positive experiences that docents have at the Reserve. If something uplifting happens to you, please contact Paul so he can serve it sunny-side up.

This contribution comes from **Grant Swanson**:

“A young couple comes up to me as I am gate greeting and, while the woman stops in the restroom, the man pulls me aside and whispers conspiratorially: “I’ve got a ring. Where should we go?” Because the fiancée-to-be has a sore knee, they get directed to Whalers Cove. Sixty minutes later, they’re back and I get introduced to one very happy lady.”

Not all the good news comes by word of mouth. The new Information Station has become an unexpected source of sunny-side up material. Docents leading public tours have been encouraging visitors to post their impressions on a notice board there. Here are some samples, the good, the great and the exaggerated, to which we have added some editorial comment:

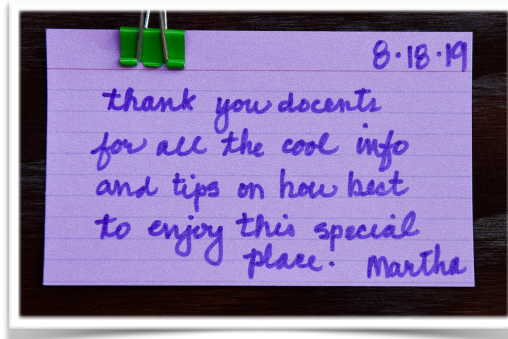
“[name of docent], you were an amazing docent and our daughters will forever remember you” (Whoa! We hope the daughters won’t feel this way because they lead sheltered lives.)



New Share Your Experiences board.

“We are from New York and have never seen coastal views like Point Lobos.” (Yes, but New York has better pastrami sandwiches.)

“The woodwork on this display is wonderful. Excellent job.” (Way to go, Robert Grace.)



“We saw a stop sign in the water.” (Hmm. Somebody drove off the cliff at Bird Island.)

“I will try to save the ocean.” (Cue the sea lions to make appreciative barks.)

If you have other positive stories that put the sunny-side up and lift our morale, send a note to Paul Reps: preps@sbcglobal.net

POINT LOBOS DOCENT NEWS

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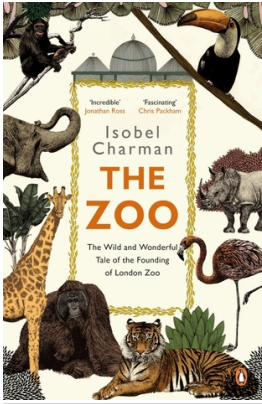
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Contributions Welcome:
Contributions are due on the third Wednesday of the month for the next issue. Contributions may be edited for length and clarity.

Book Nook



The Zoo: The Wild and Wonderful Tale of the Founding of the London Zoo 1826-1951

By Isobel Charman
Pegasus Books

Review by Don McDougall

“This place is just like a zoo.” You may have heard some young visitor say that about Point Lobos, or even thought that yourself. Isobel Charman relates the great story of the tumultuous first 25 years of the London Zoo. Each of the seven engrossing chapters engages you with real characters, from Sir Stamford Raffles, who had the passion for creating a Zoological Society of London, to Charles Darwin, who used it to observe Jenny, the orangutan, which helped him “evolve” his theories of nature.

Other chapters feature John Gould, the ornithologist, and Queen Victoria, who paid a visit. The zoo animals featured in the seven chapters may be even bigger celebrities. Monkeys, giraffes, zebras and Obaysch, a hippo, are delivered to the zoo by diplomats, traders, scientists and amateur naturalists, all for Zoological Society research purposes. These

Otter Count

June - August

Under the direction of **Lynne McCammon**, the docent otter count is held on the second Tuesday of every month unless the weather forces a cancellation. Docents may sign up on the Docent Activity Calendar or simply show up at the Information Station parking lot at 9 a.m. on the day of the count. Here are the latest count numbers with comparisons to the previous month and the previous year:

animals variably live, survive, thrive and perish in spite of or because of their keepers’ tireless efforts.

The Zoological Society of London was to be “a collection of living animals such as never yet existed in ancient or modern times.” Dedicated to scientific research rather than mere public spectacle, it was initially dismissed by the press as the “Noah’s Ark Society.” But from day one in 1828, its collection of animals became immensely popular, drawing 100,000 visitors in its first year to Regent’s Park, and 600,000 by mid-century.

The London Zoo, as such, was only opened to the public in 1847, about the same time Point Lobos was being settled. The zoo and the Reserve maintain similar goals -- to encourage the understanding and protection of nature - but maybe you agree that Point Lobos is not just like a zoo. It’s better than a zoo!



	2019	2018
August	103 adults	55 adults
	9 pups	5 pups
July	91 adults	68 adults
	10 pups	9 pups
June	83 adults	81 adults
	12 pups	22 pups