

TRACKS

A Publication of the Newport Bay Naturalists & Friends

December – February
2003–2004

"It's Time"

Jack Keating Steps Down as NBNF President



Somewhere up in the high Sierras "Ralph" is switching gears. He brings families and gear up the mountain on pack animals during the warmer months. Cold winter months find him plowing snow for Cal Trans. Ralph is retired.

Jack Keating is "retiring" from his role as President of the Newport Bay Naturalists and Friends. But Jack's definition of retirement is much the same as

Ralph's. For Jack, the life-after-retirement of choice was becoming a volunteer naturalist at Upper Newport Bay. The volunteers needed leadership. Jack helped provide it, serving as President of the board for 8 of the last 9 years.

The accomplishments are many, and good.

Revised bylaws have provided a fresh pool of talent at the board level. Associate naturalists with experience, passion, "skills to raise money" and the "contacts" needed to continue the mission started so long ago by the Robinsons and the Friends of Newport Bay are breathing new life into the non-profit organization. The merger with "The Friends" is something Jack is proud of—"carrying on a tradition," with the goal being protection and restoration for the Bay, now preserved from development. It's a natural "evolution," says Keating.

Hiring an Executive Director has "made a lot of things happen," Jack observes. Roger Mallett is "so well organized," and providing much-needed direction and impetus to the 13-year old volunteer group.

Continued restoration has been and remains a priority for Jack. His expectations are that the Management Coalition he has helped to shape—representatives from the County, Fish and Game, the Coastal Commission, Health Care Agency and the

city of Newport Beach—will continue to reach out and tackle issues facing the Bay. Jack is "looking to strengthen that even more" by accessing higher levels; generating grants and identifying "good restoration opportunities" for "big ticket" projects requiring "a lot of money." Kristina Finstad with the Coastal Commission is helping to facilitate "smaller ticket" projects with great success—seed collection and invasive plant removal are just two areas where considerable progress has been made.

Jack is also proud of connections made with local environmental groups and corporations such as Friends of Harbors, Beaches and Parks, and Irvine Ranch Water District. We've "brought in other elements of the community to support what we do," says Jack, noting that a recent Plein Air event encouraged interpretation "through the artists perspective." "Marsh Birds Rising," a new abstract sculpture by Van Sant embraces this approach as well.

The future? As Immediate Past President, Jack will be around to ensure continuity on the board, and to offer advice. He'd like to get better feedback from volunteers, and gain insight on "where things are going on and going right." Recognition of volunteer services needs to occur "both for donors of money and donors of time" in a manner that allows the Newport Bay Naturalists and Friends to better capitalize on volunteer resources.

And research. Anyone closely associated with the Bay knows how valuable "good solid research" is. Research allows all involved to "know our resources better" and promotes better management decisions. Jack hopes the Management Coalition—especially the Health Care Agency—can be helpful here, and that even resources such as U.C.I. can be utilized in the near future.

So don't expect Jack to disappear. He won't. He'll be turning up at board meetings, getting out on a kayak occasionally or sitting in as a representative for NBNF when needed. Given the dedication Jack has provided these last years, that's a very good thing indeed.

Amy Litton, Naturalist

Shark-mobile is available for your school

Shark-mobile is an outreach program that will bring sharks, rays, sea stars and other marine animals to you. Participants will enjoy learning about local marine habitats through hands-on activities. For more information or to reserve the Shark-mobile please call 949-640-9961.

CONTENTS

- Jack Keating's "Retirement"
- Year in Review
- Calendar of Events
- Restoration Report



2003 in Review

About a year ago I posed the question "What will springtime bring at Upper Newport Bay?" As 2003 draws to a close, I would like to recollect some of the important things that have happened over the course of the year, and look forward to what 2004 might bring.

In March, the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) held a graduation ceremony on Shellmaker Island for its first Senior Volunteer Academy in Orange County. The Senior Volunteers provide county-wide wildlife and environmental resource education to urban and suburban communities through a program that emphasizes the importance of understanding the relational aspect of the public coexisting with wildlife and natural resources. Trained to observe and report, they are an extra set of eyes and ears for DFG wardens, biologists and county and city officials, and a partner of the Newport Bay Naturalists and Friends and other volunteer organizations.

Sadly, in April, Frank Robinson passed away at the age of 84. As most of you know, Fran and Frank Robinson began a long, hard battle in 1963 to make certain that Upper Newport Bay would remain a public treasure for future generations to enjoy forever. If not for the success of these two "local heroes," the Back Bay most likely would have become just another marina surrounded by houses.

In July, the old "Naturalist" trailer on Shellmaker Island was removed, replaced by a new "Volunteer" trailer housing the DFG Senior Volunteer Orange County base, the California Coastal Commission (CCC) restoration/education program office, and the NBNF business office. This was a final goodbye to the way we were before the Peter and Mary Muth Interpretive Center and the Marine Studies Center opened in 2000.

In September, the Marine Studies Center on Shellmaker officially became the Back Bay Science Center. The City of Newport Beach (CONB), the Orange County Health Care Agency (HCA), and DFG are moving forward with the design and construction of a new multifunctional facility that will include:

- A state-of-the-art water quality testing laboratory
- Teaching/research laboratories for high-school and college students and staff
- Office space for Ecological Reserve, Science Center and other staff
- Associated outdoor interpretive stations, aquaria, docks, etc.

There will be a total of roughly 13,000 square feet of building replacing the current temporary structures that fulfill the same function on a limited scale. Construction is planned to start in the summer of 2004.

Also in September, the Southern California Plein Air Painters Association (SOCALPAPA) staged an innovative festival of art in collaboration with HBP and NBNF. About 80 artists spent a week painting "The Many Moods of the Back Bay." A juried art exhibition and dinner reception was held at the Peter and Mary Muth Interpretive Center on the Friday evening. On Saturday and Sunday the paintings of the Back Bay were exhibited and sold to the public, with 30% of the receipts donated to NBNF. Thank you SOCALPAPA for your efforts. It is wonderful to know that the Bay is as much an inspiration to you as it is to us.

Let me take a moment to reflect on our role at the Bay. We provide volunteer and financial support to both DFG and HBP. We also function as facilitator for a larger coalition that includes DFG, HBP, CCC, CONB and HCA. We conduct education, outreach and other activities on behalf of the agencies. We provide a bridge between the agencies and the surrounding communities. We interact with numerous public and private organizations in Southern California and beyond. We advocate for the overall good of the Bay.

If you are already a Friend, thank you for your support. We hope that you will continue that support by renewing your individual or family membership for 2004. If you are not yet a Friend, please take this opportunity to join us by completing and returning the form on this page. To find out about the benefits of Friends Membership, or obtain information on our new Corporate Membership program, please call (949) 640-1751 and request a brochure or visit us at www.newportbay.org.

Roger Mallett
Interim Executive Director
NBNF

Yes, I want to be a Friend in 2004 at the membership level noted:

- \$25 Pelican (Individual)
- \$50 Tern (Family)
- \$100 Egret
- \$500 Osprey
- \$1,000 Heron

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

My check payable to the Newport Bay Naturalists & Friends* is enclosed.

Please charge my Visa Mastercard Discover

Exp. Date _____

Card # _____

Signature _____

I wish to make an additional gift of \$ _____

Total Amount given: \$ _____

*A registered 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization. Your donation is deductible to the full extent of the law.

Mail completed form and payment to:

Newport Bay Naturalists & Friends
P.O. Box 10804
Newport Beach, CA 92658-5008



Upper Newport Bay Calendar of Events

December 2003–February 2004

SCHEDULED ACTIVITIES

Steward Days — Every Wednesday, 9:00–11:00 a.m.

Encourage the Bay's unique genetics by collecting seeds & propagating plants. Meet on Shellmaker Island at the Exotic Hut. Reservations required for 5 or more. For information call (949) 640-0286. Location Code: MSC

Canoe the Back Bay — Every Saturday, 8:30 a.m.

Join a trained naturalist for a guided 2-hour canoe tour of the Back Bay. Fee is \$10 per person. For reservations call (949) 923-2269. Location Code: MSC

Kayak Tours — Every Sunday, 10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

Join a trained naturalist for a kayak tour of the Back Bay. Meet at the Newport Dunes Resort. Fee is \$20 per person. NBNF members pay \$10. For reservations call (949) 729-1150 (weekends only) or (800) 585-0747. Location Code: NDR

Walking Tour — Sat., Dec. 6 & 20; Jan. 3 & 17; Feb. 7 & 21, 9:00 a.m.

Join a trained Naturalist for a 2-hour walk along the Bay. Bring binoculars and sun protection. Free. No reservations needed. For information call (949) 923-2269. Location Code: MSC

Paint A Holiday Gift — Sun., Dec. 7, 9:00–11:00 a.m.

Create an original Plein Air oil painting to give to a friend or loved one this holiday season. Best suited for ages 8 to adult. \$15 per child under 18, \$20 per adult. Call (949) 923-2295 to register. Location Code: MIC

Roots Restoration Teamwork — Sat., Dec. 12, Jan. 24, Feb. 28, 9:00 a.m.

Restore the Bay by replacing invasive non-native plants with coastal sage scrub and salt marsh communities. Meet at the MIC parking lot. Reservations required for 5 or more. Call (949) 640-0286 for more information. Location code: MIC

The Lizard Wizard — Sat., Dec. 13; Sun., Feb. 1, 1:00–2:00 p.m.

Come touch the scales of a python, stroke the spines on an iguana's back, tap the shell of a giant tortoise, tickle the feet of a millipede, watch Charlotte the tarantula spin her magical web and more. Best suited for ages 5 and up. \$10 per child. Call (949) 923-2295 to register. Location Code: MIC

Friends of Newport Bay Walking Tour — Sat., Dec. 13; Jan. 10; Feb. 14

Walk along the Back Bay listening to Naturalists and visit Interpretive Stations featuring specialists addressing different natural history topics. Tours leave every 15 minutes between 9:00 and 10:15 a.m. Free. No reservations required. For information call (949) 923-2269. Location code: EB

Electric Boat Tour of the Bay — Sat., Dec. 13; Jan. 10; Feb. 21, 11:30 a.m.

Join a Naturalist on a 2 hour guided tour of the bay on our comfortable electric pontoon boat. Fee is \$10 per person. For reservations call (949) 923-2269. Location Code: MSC

Marine Life Inventory — Sat., Dec. 13; Jan. 10; Feb. 21, 8:30–11:30 a.m.

Marine biology students for all ages are invited to participate in a variety of marine life monitoring programs in Newport Bay. Fee is \$10. For reservations call (949) 642-5031. Location Code: MSC

Toddler Time "Animal Senses" — Wed., Dec. 17, 10:30–11:15 a.m.

Join us for this parent and child playtime to learn how the animals see, hear, taste smell and feel. Age 3-4. \$5 per child. Call (949) 923-2295 to register. Location Code: MIC

Basic Bugs — Mon., Dec. 29, 11:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

"Dr. Sue, The Bug Lady" will share her zoo with you! Learn about bugs and how they do different jobs to help them survive. See and touch different live insects. \$10 per child, ages 5 & up. Call (949) 923-2295 to register. Location Code: MIC

The Adventures of C. Weed & His Friends — Wed., Jan. 7, 10:30–11:30 a.m.

Join us and the Cabrillo Marine Aquarium as we learn about various ocean animals and their strange ways using puppets and an assortment of hands-on specimens including a touch tank. Age 3-5. \$7 per child. Call (949) 923-2295 to register. Location Code: MIC

Beginning Bird Watching/Birding Basics — Sat., Jan. 10, 8:00–11:00 a.m.

A short introduction to the hobby of birding for the beginner. We will concentrate on equipment and resources with a short field trip around the center. \$3 per person, ages 8 and up. Call (949) 923-2295 to register. Location Code: MIC

SCHEDULED ACTIVITIES

Astronomy Night — Sat., Jan. 17 6:30–8:30 p.m.

Join members of the Orange County Astronomers for a tour of the night sky. A presentation and observation with telescopes designed for all ages. Fee: a suggested donation of \$2. Call (949) 923-2295 to register. Space is limited—confirmation number required. Location Code: MIC

Nature Journaling for Families — Jan. 18, Feb. 15

Learn to combine the art of field sketching with the inspiration drawn from nature writing. \$5.00 per person, ages 7 & up. Call 949-923-2295 for times and to register. Location Code: MIC

Low Tide Tour of the Bay — Wed., Jan. 21; Sat., Feb. 7; Wed., Feb. 18

Join a Naturalist on a 2-hour guided tour of the Bay at low tide on our comfortable electric pontoon boat. Migrating birds should be highly visible at these times. Fee is \$10 per person. For times and reservations call (949) 923-2269. Location Code: MSC

Toddler Time "Whooooo's that owl?" — Wed., Jan. 21, 9:00 or 10:30 a.m.

Join a Park Ranger for this parent and child playtime with an owl theme. \$5 per child. Call (949) 923-2295 to register. Location Code: MIC

Train for a Day, Be a Volunteer — Sat., Jan. 24, 9:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

Be a part of this dynamic estuary! Learn about the habitats and wildlife of the bay. Participate in habitat restoration and special events. Assist with water, walking, and school tours. Help us greet and educate visitors at the MIC and MSC. For information and to reserve a space call (949) 923-2295. Location code: MIC

The Animal Guys — Sat., Jan. 24, 1:00–2:00 p.m.

Explore nature's diversity with two enthusiastic biologists! See some very special animals from around the world. Learn about their adaptations, feeding behaviors, and their importance to our ecosystem. \$10 per child, ages 5 & up. Call (949) 923-2295 to register. Location Code: MIC

Night Hike — Sat., Jan. 31; Feb. 28, 7:00–8:30 p.m.

When the sun goes down another world of wildlife becomes active. Join us for a night hike and learn about the wonders nighttime brings. \$5 per person ages 5 & up. This program may be re-scheduled due to weather. Dress warmly for the evening chill. Call (949) 923-2295 to register. Location Code: Call for directions

Family Plein Air Painting — Wed., Feb. 4, 9:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

Experience the joy of painting outdoors. Learn Plein Air techniques, develop your painting skills and take home your completed original oil painting. This family program is best suited for ages 8 and up. \$15 per child under 18, \$20 per adult. Call (949) 923-2295 to register. Location Code: MIC

Beginning Bird Watching/Bird Walk — Sat., Feb. 7, 8:00–11:00 a.m.

Come learn basic bird watching skills with expert Joel Weintraub. Take a bird walk along Back Bay Drive. \$3 per person, ages 8 and up. Call (949) 923-2295 to register. Location Code: Call for directions

Walk on the Wildside — Sat., Feb. 8, 1:00–2:00 p.m.

An arm chair safari with animal ambassadors from all over the world. Find out why the smallest fox in the world has the largest ears and what the 5 lb. Hyrax has in common with a 500 lb. elephant. Join staff of Wild Wonders Inc for this hands-on program. \$10 per child, ages 5 and up. Call (949) 923-2295 to register. Location Code: MIC

Toddler Time "Birds of Prey" — Wed., Feb. 11, 10:30–11:15 a.m.

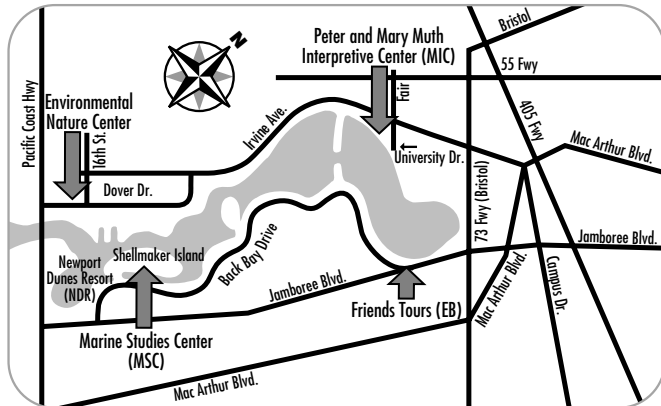
Come join us for story time and hands on fun all about those birds of prey that live here at the estuary. Age 3-4. \$5 per child. Call (949) 923-2295 to register. Location Code: MIC

Toddler Time "Sharks and Rays" — Wed., Feb 18, 9:00 a.m. or 10:30 a.m.

Join a Park Ranger for this parent and child playtime with a shark theme. \$5 per child. Call (949) 923-2295 to register. Location Code: MIC

Marvelous Millipedes and Centipedes — Sat., Feb. 21st, 1:00–2:30 p.m.

Meet marvelous multi-legged millipedes and their centipede relatives! "Dr. Sue, The Bug Lady" shares these residents of her traveling arthropod zoo. Touch a millipede and learn about their bodies, how they live and why they are important. \$10 per child, ages 5 & up. Call (949) 923-2295 to register. Location Code: MIC



LOCATION KEY

Interpretive Center (MIC)
 Peter and Mary Muth Interpretive Center
 2301 University Drive
 Newport Beach, CA 92660

Marine Studies Center (MSC)
 600 Shellmaker
 Newport Beach, CA 92660

WEB SITES

Newport Bay Naturalists & Friends: www.newportbay.org
 Peter & Mary Muth Interpretive Center:
www.ocparks.com/unbic www.newportbay.org
 Department of Fish & Game: www.dfg.ca.gov
 Environmental Nature Center (ENC): www.ENCenter.org
 County of Orange: www.ocparks.com/uppernewportbay/
 California Coastal Commission: www.coastal.ca.gov

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A Report on Survivorship at Restoration Sites at Upper Newport Bay

The California Coastal Commission is working to engage the public in restoration and stewardship by hosting Restoration Opportunities, Outreach, Teamwork and Stewardship (ROOTS) events including invasive plant eradication as well as native plant seed collection, propagation, and out-planting at Upper Newport Bay. ROOTS has removed approximately 31,000 pounds of non-native, invasive plants and installed 388 native plants to provide habitat for wildlife. Over 1,300 volunteers have donated almost 4,000 hours of their time towards the restoration of UNB, not only planting but also blazing trails through thistle thickets and iceplant patches.

Restored sites are monitored for survival and percent cover of natives. Survivorship has varied among the nine sites, ranging from 40% to 100% with an overall average of seventy percent survival.

Children in a summer program restored the dunes on Shellmaker Island. Many plants were installed incorrectly, and they required heavy watering. In general, watering natives is like tiptoeing through the tulips—a balancing act to prevent both desiccation and root-rot. We learned that verbena and beach primrose are subject to herbivory, and in the future they will be caged. None of the yarrow survived, which may indicate that this plant should not be planted in the dunes.

The Bayview Marsh site also experienced poor planting techniques. There was a very low leader-to-volunteer ratio during the time of planting, making it difficult to supervise even adults. Unlike the Big Canyon site, where iceplant-infested soils were replaced with topsoil, plantings at the marsh site endured whatever changes the invasive plant caused. Iceplant has been documented to alter soil pH, making it too acidic for many natives to become reestablished.

If you would like to see the complete Report on Survivorship, or are interested in learning how to get involved with ROOTS, please contact Kristina Finstad at 949-640-0286.

*Kristina Finstad, Restoration Education Project Coordinator
 California Coastal Commission*

