



# OPEN SPACES

Volume 14, Number 3

Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy

Third Quarter, 2002



Conservancy and elected officials (left to right): PVPLC Associate Director Barbara Dye; Rancho Palos Verdes Councilman Larry Clark and Mayor John McTaggart; Rolling Hills Estates Mayor Susan Seamans; Mwituu Ndugu representing Assembly Speaker Herb Wesson, Jr.; and PVPLC President Bill Ailor.

PVPLC President Bill Ailor, left and Executive Director Keith Lenard, right, join Rebecca, Virginia, and Mike Cicoria. The Cicorias donated \$100,000 to the effort to create the Portuguese Bend Regional Open Space Park.

## Portuguese Bend Acquisition Effort Begins With “Open House” Event

The community’s effort to acquire 730 acres and create the Portuguese Bend Regional Open Space Park began with a bang as several hundred South Bay residents attended the *Discover Portuguese Bend!* event on August 25. The “open house” event acquainted participants with an area that many believed was already protected from development, but is not.

Our purpose was to acquaint people with this spectacular area, and we were pleased with the turnout. Some had never walked in the area and expressed delight that such fine open space was so close to home.

Others—hikers or mountain bikers who regularly use the area—shared great enthusiasm for the effort by the Conservancy and City to preserve the area and make it available for public use.

A number expressed surprise, thinking the area already preserved. The

property is actually in private ownership and its future is far from certain. Included in displays were maps showing concepts for golf and residential use under consideration by land owners.

Success in our acquisition efforts will mean that over 1,000 contiguous acres of open space spanning from the tidepools of Abalone Cove to the crest of the peninsula 1,000 ft above will be included in the open space park.

The event included booths by the Pt. Vicente docents; plein air painting demonstrations by artists Rick Humphrey, Daniel Pinkham, Steve Mirich, and Don Crocker; discussion of local birds by Jess Morton and Linda Chilton of the Audubon Society; discussion of native plants by Don Gales, Steve Heyn, and Allen Franz; and special activities and exhibits for children led by Leah Marinkovich, Beth Sohngen, and Holly Gray.

The highlight of the event was the announcement by local resident Mike Cicoria of his donation of \$100,000 toward the acquisition effort. The Conservancy estimates the acquisition effort alone will cost about \$300,000. The goal is to put together funding totaling about \$30 million to complete the purchase.

We are very pleased by the response of our community to the open house event. We are particularly pleased with the generosity of the Cicoria family. Their gift to the Conservancy has come at a critical time in our effort to create this special preserve. We are assuring that the Cicorias and other who contribute to this effort will be remembered for their generosity for generations.

Want to help us preserve Portuguese Bend? Call (310) 541-7613 or e-mail [info@pvplc.org](mailto:info@pvplc.org) for more information.

## Preservation of Open Spaces--

### A Statement of Purpose

*The Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy is a nonprofit, non-political, public-benefit corporation formed to preserve undeveloped land in perpetuity as open space for historical, educational, ecological, recreational and scenic purposes.*

*A diverse group of volunteers from the South Bay makes up the PVPLC's managing Board of Directors and its adjunct advisory board. These private citizens have been drawn together by their belief that open space is crucial to the well-being of our community.*

*Land acquisition by the PVPLC is through purchase and gift. In addition to the good will engendered by gift giving, land-owners and others who donate land or funds to the PVPLC may realize significant tax benefits.*

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## Open Spaces

A Newsletter Published by the  
**Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy**  
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## Opportunity Knocks

About this time of year 28 years ago, Barb and I came to California. I had just finished my Ph.D. at Purdue University and accepted a job at The Aerospace Corporation in El Segundo.

When friends in Indiana heard we were coming to that "wild place" California, they recommended the Palos Verdes Peninsula as a place to live because "it has the only open space in the South Bay."

Loving open space, we drove straight to Palos Verdes and our first night in Los Angeles we spent in the Vagabond Motel at the corner of PCH and PV Drive. The next day, we found an apartment in the complex south of the corner of Hawthorne Blvd and Crest Road, and have been Peninsula residents ever since.

During our early years, we hiked open spaces all over the Peninsula. As time went by, we saw some of our favorite areas disappear to development. But at least, we said, our favorite, the Portuguese Bend area, would be preserved forever because of the landslide moratorium.

While serving on the Rolling Hills Estates Planning Commission, I found that we were wrong—the moratorium doesn't prevent development. The land is zoned for residential development, and the moratorium simply means that the land owners need to prove to the Rancho Palos Verdes City Council that they can build safely.

Over the years, land owners have spent

large amounts of money studying the geology, looking to turn the property into profit by development.

We found that we were not the only ones concerned about the loss of this special South Bay resource. A number of dedicated individuals established the Conservancy to provide a non-development option--land owners could sell the land to the community as open space. They could get a reasonable return on their investment and the community could preserve the land forever.

It took us 14 years to build local and statewide recognition of and appreciation for the resource and to build the coalition required to make a serious acquisition effort. Today, we finally have a chance to purchase this area and assure that it will remain undeveloped forever.

Can we do it? *Yes.* We've done it before. We preserved about 290 acres, using \$12.5 million in funds approved by County and State voters. Now we're after about 700 acres and need about \$30 million.

Can you help? *Yes.* We need donations large and small to assure that we can mount an effective effort to get State funds. We also need a few visionary people who want to leave something special to their community by donating all or a portion of the \$6 million we must raise locally.

Our community has the opportunity to take action which will be remembered forever. Let's take that action and create the Portuguese Bend Regional Open Space Park--now.

Bill Ailor, President, PVPLC

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## 11-Year RPV Resident Is New Office Manager

Mary Ellen Richardson has joined the Conservancy as our new office manager. Mary Ellen is an 11-year resident of Rancho Palos Verdes and has been a regular volunteer in our office for the last year since retiring. She has also volunteered weekly at the Habitat for Humanity South Bay/Long Beach office, helping to manage and update their volunteer database and communications effort.

Mary Ellen brings over 20 years of work experience in promotional and product marketing. Most recently, she worked as an account director within the promotions group for DDB Advertising in



Los Angeles. Background and experience includes marketing communications and developing creative materials including brochures, posters, displays and other elements. She also managed the administrative side of marketing projects, including scheduling, budgeting, billing, and supervision of support personnel. She is a graduate of Michigan State University.

Mary Ellen and her husband live in the Seaview neighborhood and love to hike in the Forrestal Preserve and Portuguese Bend area.

We are happy that Mary Ellen is joining us at this critical time. Her skills and organization ability could not have come at a better time.

## Coastal Commission Approves White Point Project

At its August meeting, the California Coastal Commission voted unanimously to approve the White Point Nature Preserve project. Speaking in favor of the project were Paul Davis, Environmental Specialist for the City of Los Angeles, Project Manager Barbara Dye, and PVPLC Board and Steering Committee member Allen Franz. Commissioners were complimentary about the project, citing its habitat restoration and public access benefits.

Once the conditions placed on the approval have been satisfied, the permit will be issued and work can begin. Community residents can expect the following activities to begin in early October:

- Construction of a temporary, fenced storage yard with a container for equipment
- Removal of the chain link fence
- Installation of a 3'-high wooden fence with pedestrian openings

- Installation of an irrigation system that will water new plantings for at least the first two years

- Planting of coastal sage scrub habitat on the slopes (the flat, grassland areas will be planted in phase 2)

- Demolition of the building at the



corner of the site

- Relocation of one of the sentry buildings to the Fort MacArthur Military Museum

- Clean-out of the canyon that runs through the property

A major effort has been made to prepare the White Point site for this fall's habitat restoration by removing as many as possible of the invasive non-native plants that cover the site. Most invasives have lots of seed, thrive in disturbed ground, and do not support native birds, insects and mammals. The goal has been to remove them before they set seed for this year to give the native plants a chance to establish themselves.

Anyone interested in helping with this exciting project can join the Land Conservancy, the Steering Committee and other interested neighbors and friends on the fourth Saturday of each month to help get the site ready for its conversion to a preserve. Call 541-7613, ext.

202, to be added to the Conservancy's e-mail volunteer notification list, or just show up at White Point from 8 a.m. to noon on September 28 or October 26.

## Las Candalistas and Norris Foundation Grants Support Education Program

Las Candalistas, the local philanthropic organization which runs the yearly "Walk on the Wild Side" event, has donated \$9,000 to the Conservancy to support our Third-Grade education program. The Norris Foundation has awarded a \$5,000 grant to the program.

Las Candalistas provided some of the first funding for this program, which is now given to all elementary school children in the Palos Verdes Unified School District. Two schools in San Pedro, White Point Elementary and South Shores Elementary (performing arts magnet), have recently been added. We hope to add Park Western Elementary and Leland Elementary Schools in San Pedro and Heritage School in Rolling Hills Estates this year.

The program has been offered for

seven years, originating from an in-class pilot presented by Barbara Dye and Aileen Bevan in 1993. The pilot found that less than a third of the children in two fourth grade classes had ever been on a nature walk on the Peninsula or hiked a local trail.

Based on these results and the enthusiastic response to the pilot from both students and teachers, we set about the design of a more complete Third Grade program. Deena Sheridan led this effort, and thanks to her creative efforts, our current program, consisting of four in-class sessions followed by a nature walk near their school, evolved.

A special aspect of the program is parent involvement: volunteer parents serve as docents on the walks, helping the children identify the plants they learned about in class. We estimate that

200 parents assisted with the program last year.

John Nieto is the program's director, and he is assisted by 18 docents, who train all year for the effort. "The docents love the program," says Nieto. "None have left. They get very excited seeing the children and parents having a great educational experience."

We estimate that over 1000 children and 200 parent volunteers participated in this program last year, with more than 8,000 children participating since its inception.

Nieto is always looking for more people interested in becoming in-class teachers for the program. Please give him a call at (310) 541-7613, extension 206 for more information.

We sincerely appreciate the support Las Candalistas and the Norris Foundation have provided to this program.

## Animal Groups and Night Lives

by Joseph K. Slap

An interesting feature of animal groups is the differences in the group names for many different animals. Some examples:

- Herd of cattle
- Sloth of bears
- Drift of hogs
- Knot of toads
- Smack of jellyfish
- Exaltation of larks
- Labor of moles
- Gaggle of geese
- Shrewdness of apes
- Troop of kangaroos
- Parliament of owls
- Pride of lions
- Siege of herons
- Pod of whales
- Crash of rhinoceroses
- Murder of crows
- Mission of monkeys
- Muster of peacocks
- Rag of colts
- Leap of leopards
- Watch of nightingales
- Flock of ravens

As you see, many of those group names each has more than just the group name meaning; like there's a pod of whales but also a pod of peas, and even though there's a parliament of owls, they aren't a law-making group for people in England (as far as we know).

Of all those animals mentioned, plus prehistoric ones, the blue whale (*Balaenoptera musculus*) is the biggest

mammal ever on this planet, and very close to being the biggest animal ever. Its average length is 78 feet with a known maximum of 107 feet; and its known maximum weight is 285,000 pounds. It's also very loud—in fact, it's our planet's loudest animal. In addition, its exhale causes the highest rise of a wet stream by an animal, because it rises 40-50 feet above the water's surface. Occasionally we'll see one or more as they swim past our peninsula.

### Nocturnal Animals

Nocturnal animals spend most of their active time at night. When there were dinosaurs, most early mammals were nocturnal in order to be protected from carnivorous dinosaurs. So those carnivorous dinos ate mostly other non-mammal animals, and the night mammals were able to find food and survive.

Nowadays there are still nocturnal animals plus, of course daytime ones called diurnal. Many nocturnal animals have larger eyes than diurnal ones. Their eyes have components similar to ours, such as the lens to have light go in, and inner rods which are sensitive to that light, but those are more effective at night than the ones of diurnal animals.

Some nocturnal animals use touch or sound or smell as much as or even more than they use sight to locate food, to notice a predator, or to get the correct

path to where they want to go. For example, raccoons often move their hands in shallow water to feel and to capture a fish for eating.

As for sound, a predator may listen for prey, and prey may listen for a predator, etc., and many nocturnal animals have big ears. However, cats hunting at night for prey can often be successful because of their eyes and because their feet have furry padded soles that give them very quiet walking.

Many nocturnal animals have more sensitive noses as well as more sensitive eyes than diurnal ones, so smell is often very helpful for them. Owls not only have big, sensitive eyes, but they also have very good hearing for night hunting. An owl's vision at night is about 10 times better than a person's, and because of its wings' soft edge feathers it flies quietly, helping it swoop quietly onto a prey animal.

An aardvark is successful in getting to eat ants or termites at night because of its good hearing and good smelling plus its long sticky tongue which catches those food creatures. Among the nocturnal animals, of course, are owls, bats, flying squirrels, woodcocks, beavers, some foxes, and foreign animals such as New Zealand's kiwi, Africa's loris, South America's owl monkey, plus numerous others here and around the world.



## Student Volunteers Donate Vacation Hours

Peninsula High students Cynthia Hso, Melody Pongmanopap, and Kevin Ford have spent part of their summer vacations learning a bit more about their Peninsula home. For a couple of hours each week, they have been in our office working on special projects.

Cynthia and Melody are creating a notebook of plants native to the Peninsula and when they flower. The Conservancy has long wanted to have all of the available information about the local native plants gathered together in one place for easy reference, and the girls are helping fill a real

need for the organization.

Kevin is compiling a booklet on Peninsula hiking trails—another popular topic. We receive numerous calls requesting information on trails, and Kevin's work will be a valuable resource.

We thank Cynthia, Melody, and Kevin for the time they have spent working with us and wish them the best for the coming school year.

Others interested in spending some quality time on Conservancy projects should contact Barbara Dye at our office, (310) 541-7613.



Cynthia Hso works on native plant notebook.

## Haiku Corner: The Peninsula from Another Perspective

by Jorg Raue

In the previous issue we looked at the very beginnings of haiku: how this form of poetry evolved from Renga, and how Matsuo Basho (1644-1694), the greatest of all haiku poets, greatly expanded the subject matter of haiku beyond “cherry blossoms” and “beautiful things.”

Again making use of “The Haiku Handbook,” in which William Higginson so eloquently describes the four Great Masters of Japanese haiku, we in this issue will focus on Yosa Buson, who today is considered the second of the four Great Masters.

Buson (1716-1794) was a very versatile as well as sensual artist. Although he is mostly remembered for his haiku and his paintings, he also wrote extensive verse in Chinese. Through Buson’s influential writings, haiku continued its evolution. Buson not only conveyed exceptionally clear images to the reader, but he also introduced the human element into the haiku.

“Even when his painterly love for the visual seems to give way to depict human drama, small and large, Buson never gives up on his senses, as in these two examples:

hashi nakute no bridge and  
hi kuru to suru the sun ready to set  
haru no mizu waters of spring

nusubito no a thief  
yane ni kieyuku vanishes over the  
rooftops  
yosamu kana night chill!

“In the first we feel the dread of someone — the author? — stopped at the edge of what is normally a trickling stream, turned into a rushing torrent by the spring rains. Like the end of the first chapter in a mystery, the sky is about to go dark as we confront the problem. In the second we have a picture worthy of Goya. Shadows surround the puzzled expressions of the people, awakened by the sounds of a thief. They just now begin to feel the chill of the night air as they stand around asking one another questions in their night dress.

“Buson’s most characteristic verses have a sensual and objective quality that we readily accept from a painter. Here another example:

yukaze ya evening breeze...  
mizu aosagi no water laps the legs  
hagi o utsu of the blue heron”

The Peninsula-connected haiku below are selected from haiku recently submitted to this corner:

pink-faced mountain range  
Saint Catalina backdrop  
do iceberg clouds calve?

by Barbara Peirce

smoke in the distance  
summer weeds desiccate now  
powdering to dust

copyright@m.brown2001

one pelican glides  
wing tips touching the swell’s skin  
apt benediction

by Jess Morton

still air — morning dew  
spidernet: thousands of water droplets  
suspended like strung pearls

by Jorg Raue

If you have composed one or more haiku about any nature aspect of our Peninsula, please feel free to submit them for possible publication in this corner. My E-mail address is: raue@cox.net, or mail to Haiku, PO Box 3427, PVP, CA 90274.

## Habitat Restoration Progresses on Peninsula Properties

The move of our nursery to new facilities at the **Defense Fuel Supply Depot** in San Pedro has been completed. The final push was completed with the assistance of six volunteers who donated their time. Thanks to all!

With the completion of the move, we are preparing for the fall planting season (hopefully, we’ll get some rain!). We plan on propagating 80,000 locally seed-sourced native plants for use on our various restoration projects on the Peninsula. Volunteer day at DFSP is the first Sunday of the month, from 9 AM until noon.

At the **Linden H. Chandler Preserve** in Rolling Hills Estates, volunteers have been restoring riparian habitat. Willow trees and mulefat, plants common to this habitat, are being restored in the streambed. This effort is supported by mitigation funds from a project in San Ramon Canyon in Rancho Palos Verdes.

Years of preparation have gone into this effort, which required the removal of a large stand of arundo, a tough, bamboo-like plant which is not native to this area, but quickly dominates other plants if allowed to flourish. Arundo had grown here for years, so removing it was a major effort.

Visitors to the Little League fields behind Dapplegray School will notice the major change this area has undergone since restoration efforts began in 1994. When the willows mature, the area will be even more spectacular.

At the **Forrestal property**, managed by the Conservancy for the City of Rancho Palos Verdes, the steering committee is meeting monthly, primarily working on a trails plan for the 160 acre site. Major restoration work will begin after an inventory of plants currently on the property is completed. Our objective is to have good knowledge of what’s there so we don’t

make a mistake when active restoration begins.

A monthly work day at Forrestal is held from 9 AM to noon on the second Sunday of every month. Volunteers are invited to come out and help us remove some of the exotic nonnative plants which have made a foothold here over the years. Please call the office for information.

No major activities are ongoing at the **Lunada Canyon Preserve**. Borders of the property has been mowed or disked in accordance with fire regulations. Major habitat restoration at the Lunada Canyon Preserve occurs during the rainy season, since irrigation water is not available.

Volunteer days for each of the major projects are noted above, but we’re always open to scheduling special days and times for larger groups. Please call Steve Heyn at the Conservancy for more information, (310) 541-7613, extension 203.



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Enter our photo contest now! Info at [www.pvplc.org](http://www.pvplc.org).

**O**ur mailing label contains useful information about your donation status. On the top line after your name is the date when your last donation was received by the Conservancy. If the top line contains the word "List," according to our records, you have not yet contributed. Please make your 2002 commitment to preserving open space now--we need your help!

### PVPLC Board Member Shirley Borks Selected "Woman of the Year"

Assemblyman Alan Lowenthal selected Shirley Borks as the 2002 Woman of the Year for the 54<sup>th</sup> Assembly District. Shirley has been on the Conservancy's Board of Directors for 11 years and served as our secretary for 10 of those years.

In addition to her work with the Conservancy, Shirley has been an active volunteer in the community for years and has received numerous awards for her dedication and good work. These include the PTA's Honorary Life Award, the Lion's Club of Palos Verdes Community Recognition Award, and the Torrance YWCA Woman of the Year Award in 1988.

Our congratulations to Shirley for this great award. Our organization is one of many which has benefited greatly from her involvement.



Assemblyman Alan Lowenthal and Shirley Borks

#### Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy

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