

# OPEN SPACES

Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy

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## Five Receive Conservancy's Top Award

The President's Award, the Conservancy's highest honor, was presented to **Joe Slap, Nell and Hal Mirels, Angelika Brinkmann-Busi, and Everett Emerson** for their outstanding efforts in support of the Conservancy. The awards were announced at the annual Volunteer Appreciation Picnic held in October.

Joe Slap was a founder and founding Board member of the Conservancy, and served as vice president in 1988 and 1989. Joe was instrumental in the development of the Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation, and was constant help to the Board as we worked to define our role in the community. He is a continuing advocate of beauty in many forms: music, literature, the arts, and especially the beauty of nature. He is a regular contributor to Open Spaces. Joe was presented the President's Award for "his leadership role during the formation of the Conservancy and for his continuing contributions to the Conservancy."

Hal and Nell Mirels have served as treasurer and assistant treasurer of the Conservancy for the last four years. Nell handles the day-to-day treasurer's responsibilities, and Hal keeps the Conservancy's books on his computer. They jointly work out our operating budget and are the conscience of the Conservancy on money matters. They also handle the Conservancy's investments. Hal and Nell were presented the President's Awards "for their tireless efforts in managing the Conservancy's finances for the past four years."

Angelika Brinkmann-Busi, former president of the local chapter of the California Native Plant Society, was awarded the President's Award "for her outstanding work in helping us to understand the plants on the Linden H. Chandler Preserve." Angelika is an acknowledged expert on local flora, and produced an outstanding

report, "Vegetation Survey for the Linden H. Chandler Preserve," which is now available in the Palos Verdes Peninsula Library. She is currently developing a revegetation plan for the Preserve.

Everett Emerson developed the database programs which manage the Conservancy's mailing lists and donation records. The programs are responsible for generating mailing labels, which include information on an individual's donation status. "Everett spent many hours sitting in front of a computer developing these programs, and has been on-call to answer questions and fix bugs," said Bill Ailor. Everett was awarded the President's Award in recognition "of the many hours of work developing these programs and their value to the Conservancy."

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## New Board Members Elected

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Former Rolling Hills Councilwoman **Ginny Leeuwenburgh** and Palos Verdes Estates resident **Bobbi Brown** were elected to the Conservancy's Board of Directors at our October meeting.

Ginny Leeuwenburgh has been an active community volunteer for all of her 38 years on the Peninsula. During this period, she served for 12 years on the Rolling Hills City Council, with two terms as Mayor, and has been PTA president at all three levels. Her volunteer service focus has been on education, human services and government, and she currently serves on the Boards of United Way of Los Angeles, United Way Harbor Southwest, and the LA County West Vector Control District.

Bobbi Brown was born in Manhattan Beach and raised in Van Nuys. She moved to the Peninsula in 1980, coached T-ball and Little League, and served as PTA president at all three levels. She served on the Palos Verdes Education Foundation Board for three years and was active with "The Main Event" during that period. She was on the Norris Theatre Board for three years, co-chairing the Valentine Ball twice. She is a 10-year member, past president, and current walk chair of Las Candalistas.

Other changes included the resignation of Martin Byhower, who moved to the Advisory Board. Byhower will continue with his excellent work as chair of the Conservancy's Land Stewardship committee.

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## Board Elects Officers for 1996

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At its October meeting, the Board of Directors reelected **Bill Ailor** to another term as president, reelected **Mike Kilroy** vice president, **Nell Mirels** as treasurer, and **Shirley Borks** as secretary. In addition, the Board approved the creation of a second vice president position and elected board member **Doug Stern** to this new position.

Ailor, manager of The Aerospace Corporation's computer networking and communications areas, is founder of the Conservancy and has been president since the organization was established in 1988. He served on the Rolling Hills Estates Planning Commission for seven years, with two terms as Chair, and received the Palos

Verdes Peninsula Audubon Society's Conservation Award in 1990 for his work on preserving Peninsula open space and habitat. He also represents Palos Verdes Estates on the Board of the LA County West Vector Control District.

Kilroy, President and CEO of In-Sync Interactive, a wireless communications, interactive video, and data services corporation, chairs the Conservancy's Land Acquisition Committee. Kilroy is also principal at The Kilroy Companies, where he specializes in real estate negotiation, acquisition and development. He was architect of the Chandler acquisition in late 1993, and was awarded the President's Award for his leadership of the Conservancy's land acquisition efforts. Kilroy joined the Board in 1990.

Mirels, who received this year's President's Award for her work as Treasurer, is a teacher and former City Councilwoman and Mayor of Rolling Hills Estates. She joined the Conservancy's board in 1990, and is also active with the League of Women Voters and the Peninsula Friends of the Library. She is assisted in her treasurer's activities by her husband, Hal, who recently retired from his position as Principal Scientist at The Aerospace Corporation.

Borks, in her third term as Secretary, joined the Board in 1993. She is a retired teacher and serves on the boards of the Palos Verdes Peninsula Coordinating Council and the Community Association of the Peninsula (CAP), and the Advisory Board of the Southern California Regional Occupation Center (SCROC) Foundation. She is immediate past president of the local chapter of the League of Women Voters. Borks was the Torrance YWCA Woman of the Year in 1988, CAP's Community Service Award winner in 1988, and CAP's Agnes Moss Award winner in 1995. She was presented the PTA's Honorary Life Award in 1990.

Stern, an attorney and partner at the law firm of Fulbright and Jaworski, received the PVPLC's President's Award in 1994 for his excellent work on the acquisition of the Linden H. Chandler preserve. He has been a Board member since 1992.

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## **P.V. High Students Form Environmental Club**

Palos Verdes Peninsula High School students have formed an Environmental Awareness and Land Conservation Club. According to club Co-President Wayland Hsiao, the group was formed "to make a difference and help make a lasting change." Hsiao also serves as the representative from Palos Verdes Peninsula High on the Conservancy's Board.

Members of the club have assisted with Chandler clean-up activities, cleanups at Malaga Cove and at the PVP High site. They have acted as helpers on Conservancy Nature Walks, and are participating in the Audubon Society's "YES!" program. Jason Zellner is co-president with Hsiao. Ralph Porter serves as faculty advisor to the club.

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## **Walk Leaders Training Program Begins**

The first training session for new Walk Leaders was held on Saturday, November 18, at Chadwick Canyon. The free two-hour session focused on plants, with special emphasis on Peninsula natives.

The training session, attended by ten potential Walk Leaders, was the first of four classes sponsored by the Conservancy. The classes are being offered to increase the number of individuals available to lead our popular monthly Nature Walks.

The second training session, which is yet to be scheduled, will focus on Peninsula geology. The remaining courses in the program will cover habitat communities and local land use and open space issues.

The training program will be repeated periodically. If you'd like to become a Conservancy Nature Walk leader, please call our office to sign up for the training program.

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## Public Information Session Set for January 24 at Library

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The Conservancy will host the first planned annual session on Peninsula land use at 7:30 PM on Wednesday, January 24, in Community Room at the Peninsula Center Library. The session, titled "**Peninsula Open Space: Affecting the Future**," will include an overview of the Conservancy's activities, with brief reports on our Nature Walks, education programs, land acquisition, land stewardship, as well as volunteer efforts and opportunities.

The primary goal of the session will be to review the status of the major undeveloped parcels on the Peninsula. "Many of us feel that the open space the Peninsula offers is critical to our quality of life," notes Conservancy President Bill Ailor. "We want to make people aware of the possible future for some of these areas."

The session is free and open to the public. For information, call the Conservancy's office, (310 )541-7613, or go to the Conservancy's Home Page, <http://www.palosverdes.com/pvplc>.

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## The Ancient Spider: More than Meets the Eye

*by Joseph K. Slap*

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The spider is an ancient form of animal life. Spider silk is estimated to have evolved initially about 400 million years ago in the early Devonian, which is the Period in which bony fish first appeared. Orb spider webs emerged about 180 million years ago during the Jurassic Period, but those webs were not strong enough to capture T. rex! However, as evolution proceeded, orb webs became better adapted for capturing faster and larger insect prey than the early ones were able to do.

Today's garden spider, *Araneus diadematus*, creates a web consisting of two types of thread. On the base of dry radial threads is placed a spiral of sticky threads. The two thread types are similar in thickness, but they respond differently to the stress created by an impacting insect. This is important because the vibration

imparted to the web by the kinetic energy of a large colliding and then struggling insect is damped by the thread combination much more effectively than it would have been by the sticky thread alone. Thus, the insect is less likely to escape.

The strong damping and low flexibility, though, makes the web more subject to breakage by high winds. Wind destruction prevents the orb spider from eating the web and recycling the silk, and also destroys its prey trap. Thus, the spiders have learned to orient the plane of the web to be parallel instead of perpendicular to the site's primary wind direction. So, spiders have become meteorologists of a sort, as well as structural engineers.

Spiders prove to us that there's more to animal life than is obvious to the casual observer. Let's preserve the world's animals; there's much to learn from them!

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## Chandler Restoration and Pizza Day Attracts Volunteers

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Over 50 people pitched in at the Conservancy's recent Chandler restoration day. Boy Scouts, members of the Junior Lions Club, PV High School students, and the Environmental Awareness and Land Conservation Club of PVP High joined other Conservancy volunteers in the two-hour work session. The session was followed by a pizza feast.

"Everyone worked hard and had a great time," said Aileen Bevan, coordinator of the event. "We're getting ready to return native plants to the site, and we were clearing some non-natives which could cause trouble. The planting will begin soon."

Individuals interested in growing native plants for the Preserve, or helping with planting activities, should call the Conservancy's office at (310) 541-7613.

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## Conservancy to Provide Nature Center Naturalist

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The City of Rolling Hills Estates has selected the Conservancy to provide Contract Naturalist services for their George F Canyon Nature Center and Trail. Aileen Bevan, the Conservancy's Land Stewardship Director, will add the half-time naturalist duties to her current half-time activities supporting the Linden H. Chandler Preserve, also in Rolling Hills Estates.

"We think these two positions are complementary," said Conservancy President Bill Ailor. "The George F Canyon Nature Center will be the focal point for activities both at George F Canyon and at the Chandler Preserve. Our involvement will help coordinate activities at both sites. We appreciate the opportunity to continue our strong relationship with Rolling Hills Estates."

The Conservancy currently manages the day-to-day activities at the Linden H. Chandler Preserve, which was dedicated in April of 1994. The 28.5-acre property, formerly known as the Chandler Trust property, was

acquired from the Chandler family by the City and the Conservancy using funds allocated by LA County Proposition A, approved by voters in 1992. The City acquired 7.8 acres using Prop A funds. The Chandler family is donating the remainder of the property to the Conservancy.

The responsibilities of the Nature Center's Contract Naturalist will include developing programs for the Nature Center, developing exhibits, developing an outreach program, assisting with fund-raising, and developing, coordinating, and supervising a docent program. Programs will include walks, classes and activities for all ages with an emphasis on elementary school aged children.

Aileen brings talents and experience well-suited to the task. She was an elementary school teacher in England, with a degree in geology and earth science. She was president of the docents, Los Serenos de Pt. Vicente, for two years, and is currently a docent at Pt. Vicente Interpretive Center. She is a regular Nature Walk leader for the Conservancy, and has served as Land Stewardship Director for the past year. In 1994, Aileen was awarded the PVPLC's President's Award for her Conservancy-related volunteer activities and leadership.

George F Canyon and the Nature Center are located at the southwest corner of the intersection of Palos Verdes Drive North and Palos Verdes Drive East. This otherwise developable 34-acre canyon was donated to the City of Rolling Hills Estates in 1982 by Robert A. Stein, Ronald Stein, Sandra Stein, and Arthur Hale, Sr. The Canyon's Stein/Hale Nature Trail has been named in honor of the donation.

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## Conservancy on the Web!

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The Conservancy now has a home page on the World Wide Web, The home page, provided by Palos Verdes on the Net, presents up-to-date information on the Conservancy and its programs to individuals with access to the Internet. The address is <http://www.palosverdes.com/pvplc/>. Take a look! If you'd like to help us as we evolve our home page, give Doug Stern, our Webmaster, at call at (310) 519-0553.

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