

Amigos de Bolsa Chica

THE

TERN TIDE



Winter 2009
Volume 34, Issue 1

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THE TERN TIDE

is published quarterly by
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2009 Docent Training Program

Become an expert on history, ecology, birds, endangered species and the latest news from the Bolsa Chica wetland!

Class dates: January 14, 21, 28 and February 4, plus 2 weekend field trips to Bolsa Chica

Time: 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm

Location: Bolsa Chica State Beach Visitor Center, at the signal on Pacific Coast Highway 1.5 miles south of Warner Avenue

Requirements: Member of Amigos de Bolsa Chica; payment of \$40 material fee; and a commitment to participate in at least one Amigos tour or other event per month in 2009.

Register now! Call 714 840 1575 or email info@amigosdebolsachica.org

Patty Overley will be the Facilitator, Helen Higgins on history 1/14, Vic Leipzig on Natural History/Ecology 1/21, Barbara Sentovich on Birds and Endangered Species 1/28, and Dave Carlbeg on Restoration and Current Events 2/4. Barbara Stewart and Jennifer Robins will address Teaching Tips and Tours.

Amigos Education Programs at the Bolsa Chica State Beach Visitor Center

by Tom Anderson & Jennifer Robins

One of the components of the mission of the Amigos de Bolsa Chica is to provide education about the importance of wetlands. We accomplish this primarily through our renowned tours and off-site presentations. Amigos now has an exciting new opportunity to build on its solid foundation of wetland tours by utilizing the space at the Bolsa Chica State Beach Visitor Center - for free.

Why does Amigos need to expand our education program to utilize an indoor setting? Because we are at a point in the evolution of our organization where we need to demonstrate to potential funders our resolve and dedication to create a permanent interpretive center. In doing this we will be building a stronger education program that incorporates displays, videos, presentations and lectures. This will expand our horizon to reach out to local, national and international visitors with diverse programs.

The State Beach Visitor Center is located directly across Pacific Coast Highway from the south parking lot at the Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve. How can we best take advantage of the Visitor Center's proximity to the ocean and to the Bolsa Chica? Our first goal would be to educate people about the connection

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Wine Tasting is For the Birds Fundraiser a Success

The Amigo's wine tasting fundraiser was a wonderful event. The tasting was attended by 61 Amigos and their friends. The attendees savored appetizers generously donated by Trader Joe's and tasted wine samples from "The Winery." Everyone had an enjoyable time sampling the numerous wine types and discussing their merits. We give special thanks to Gary King, the owner and winemaker at "The Winery" for hosting this event. The event raised \$1,638.00 for the Amigos. Special thanks for donations received from: Mary Ellen Houseal, Doris Hirosewa and Janis Hirosewa. Another special thanks to Jennifer Robins for designing the postcard mailer and donating the entire cost of the printing and mailing.

Wine Tasting is for the Birds committee (Jennifer Robins, Jamie Pavlat, Ron Davis and Julia Tafel) would also like to thank Margaret Carlberg who helped with hors d'oeuvres and Barbara Sentovich for volunteering to bring food. Other wonderful assistance and donations throughout the planning process and at the fundraiser came from Tom Anderson, Brian Westcott, Dave and Margaret Carlberg, Laura Holdenwhite and Jim Robins. The Amigos hope this becomes an annual event.

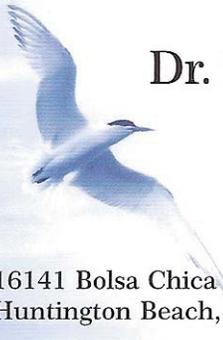
Amigos Receives Grant from the Art Institute of California

Earlier this year Amigos submitted an application to the Art Institute of California, Orange County, for pro bono graphic design services. Our application was accepted and the Public Relations Specialist, Veronica Orozco, coordinated our requests with the Graphic Arts class teacher, Herb Probst and his class. Amigos requested designs for three projects, a membership poster, a poster for Amigos' tours displayed on bulletin boards at wetlands in two places, and a children's brochure. Six students presented us with their unique and imaginative designs. Garrick Clark created the designs that we chose for the posters, and he also designed a colorful brochure for children that has puzzles and quizzes about the Bolsa Chica wetlands. The market value of this work would have been thousands of dollars, and it gave the students experience working with future clients. We extend our thanks to Garrick and to the Orange County Art Institute for this much needed service that helps meet our education needs.

MOU with the Orange County Sheriff's Department

From the City Administrator's Weekly Report dated Dec. 9, 2008:

On November 18, the Orange County Board of Supervisors approved the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) allowing the Huntington Beach Police Department (HBPD) to share general law enforcement responsibilities with the Orange County Sheriff's Department (OCSD) in the Bolsa Chica Wetlands and along the west bank of the Santa Ana River. This agreement mirrors the 2000 agreement between the same two agencies along the Orange County Flood Control channels. This agreement was facilitated in order to provide more efficient law enforcement service to the citizens of Huntington Beach. The HBPD receives a majority of the calls for service in these areas and has a practice of sending patrol officers in order to determine the nature of the incident and the jurisdiction. This agreement empowers the police officers of the Huntington Beach Police Department to take any necessary law enforcement actions in those areas that they encounter. This now includes the enforcement of the Orange County Ordinances.



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2008 Tours - Thanks to Amigos' Docents

The following Amigos docents got out to our beautiful Bolsa Chica Wetlands to share their knowledge with students, Scouts and the general public over the past year. We hosted over 60 tours and eleven off-site programs for over 2,300 people. We already have several new docents eager to get started next year.

1-3 tours or programs (including events such as Earth Day and Coastal Cleanup):

Tom Anderson, Alma Bowman, Shirley Dettloff, Chuck Drescher, Bob Harrison, Bob Hogan, Mary Ellen Houseal, Peter Knapp, Fran Pike, Kevin McCarthy, Elissa Warantz, Brian Westcott, Grace Winchell.

4-7 tours or programs:

Jim Aldridge, Barbara Binaski, Maria Buhbe, Dean Elder, Craig Frampton, Susie Grabel, Terry Hill, Helen Higgins, Nancy Kealer, Karen Kyster, Vic Leipzig, Sue McNulty, Susan Mickelson, Heather Rivera, Beth Taormina, Barbara Sentovich, Phil Smith.

8 -22 tours or programs:

Joyce Beardsley, Dave Carlberg, Margaret Carlberg, Ron Davis, Laura Holdenwhite, Bob Johnson, Jim Marshall, Betty Murphy, Patty Overley, Jamie Pavlat, Jennifer Robins, Jim Robins, Barbara Stewart, Julia Tafel.

And a whopping 33 tours or programs . . . *Al Vari!*

Thanks again for ALL of your volunteer time and efforts! Amigos and the Bolsa Chica Wetlands would not be as great as they are without you.

2008 Docent of the Year Award - Bob Johnson

A surprised Bob Johnson was recognized as 2008 Amigos de Bolsa Chica Docent of the Year during the annual holiday docent party on December 10 at the home of Margaret and Dave Carlberg. For his many hours of dedicated service he received a framed photo of a Forster's Tern feeding its chicks.

Bob is a graduate of the 1998 class of docents, the only one of ten in his class who is still active. This year Bob participated in a total of 13 tours or events. He is a regular participant on Saturday tours, taking any station or assisting others. He is also a frequent docent for weekday tours for any grade. He frequently steps in at the last minute, and is happy to help with the transportation of equipment and setting it up. He is always helpful to new docents, encouraging their independence.

In addition to tours, Bob assisted with cord grass transplanting earlier this year when Fish & Game wanted to move some plants from Upper Newport Bay to some of the newly restored areas at Bolsa Chica. He also assisted with Earth Day events, Coastal Cleanup and the Town Hall that Amigos hosted at the Wetlands and Wildlife Care Center in September of this year. He could always be counted on for assistance when Amigos hosted the annual "Running is for the Birds" 5K/10K Run & Walks.

In his years as a volunteer for Amigos, he has given the occasional off-site presentation at schools and clubs. He also spent a few years on the Board of Directors of Amigos de Bolsa Chica. As a recently retired junior high school teacher, he is always learning and frequently attending docent class sessions for review. Thank you, Bob, for your exemplary service to the mission of the Amigos de Bolsa Chica.



Jennifer Robins and Margaret Carlberg (Education Committee Co-chairs) present Bob Johnson, left, with his Docent of the Year award.



The Bolsa Chica State Beach Visitor Center is located directly across from the Ecological Reserve's south parking lot.



The State is working on interpretive displays that will update and enhance the classroom setting.



Telescopes looking out over the wetlands and the ocean offer a unique educational experience.

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between the ocean and the wetland ecosystems. This includes the relationship to the watershed that drains rain and urban runoff from many miles inland into the wetlands and ocean. This greatly affects the quality of life in the wetlands and in the ocean, and ultimately human life as well.

Other ways we can use the indoor facility: to watch one of Amigos' videos and answer questions before a tour; to have lunch at the beach after a school group tour; to use the telescopes that look out to the ocean and across the highway to the Bolsa Chica; to conduct a program as a rainy day tour option; to present videos, lectures and specialized presentations for children or adults; and to schedule a presentation on water safety offered by the State Beach staff.

The beginning of an education center...

Working closely with State Beach staff, **the First Step** will be taken by selecting volunteer classrooms to bring to the Visitor Center. The students and teachers will provide feedback by enabling us to see how they interact in the Visitor Center space and tell us what they would like to see and learn about while in the center.

The **Second** and **Third Steps need help from YOU.** We are looking for a few committed individuals to help Amigos' Education Committee develop indoor education programs that can stand alone or be incorporated into tours and docent training. We don't need to "reinvent the wheel." Many programs exist that we can utilize to integrate into our educational materials on the relationship between the ocean, the wetlands and the watershed. Once established the programs can be marketed on the website, through the O.C. Education Department and in videos for the public.

This is a new direction for Amigos that is critical in the process of creating a Permanent Interpretive Center. While the economic uncertainty of our times makes the funding of a Permanent Interpretive Center at the Bolsa Chica all the more challenging, we don't need to wait around for the times to change to get started expanding the content of our education programs. But as always, we need volunteers to get the ball rolling. Amigos is the success it is because of the strength of our volunteers.

If you would like to assist the Community Education Committee in establishing indoor programs, call 714 840 1575 or email info@amigosdebolsachica.org and let us know.

2008 Coastal Cleanup Review

by Jennifer Robins

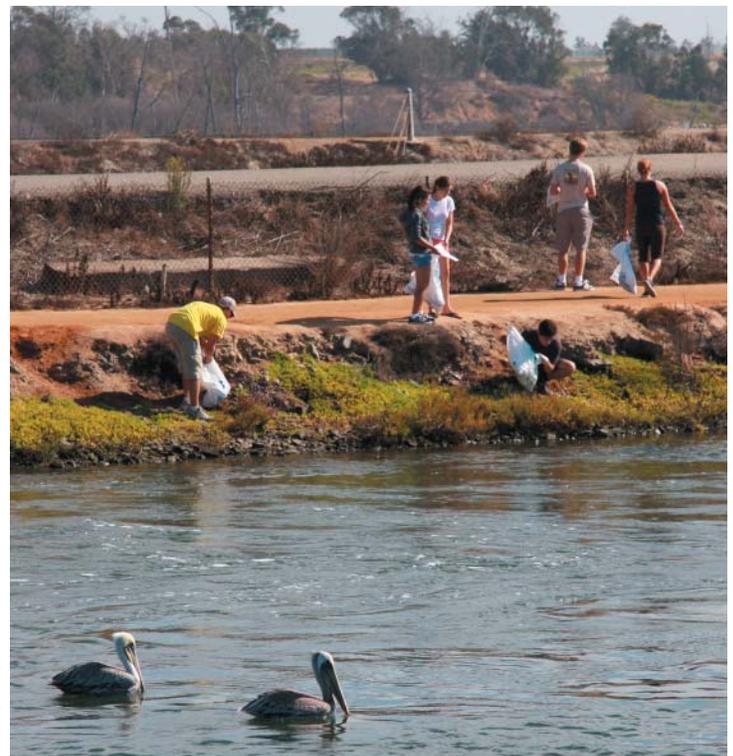
Thanks to all the wonderful volunteers that came to the south parking lot at Bolsa Chica on September 20th this year for the annual California Coastal Cleanup. 125 volunteers from Edison and Marina High Schools' Environmental classes, George Nanoski's Ecology class from Elizabeth Learning Center in Cudahy, Girl and Boy Scouts from local troops, Amigos members and the public in general picked up trash and items for recycling.

Jim Robins led the volunteers on a successful day of cleaning up the trails of the Ecological Reserve, along Pacific Coast Highway and around the parking lot. Over one ton of refuse including such items as plastics, styrofoam and cigarette butts were removed from the southern portion of the Bolsa Chica. Oddities such as a boat ladder and a large canvas tarp were also pulled out of the wetlands and properly discarded.

Thanks to Julia Tafel, Laura Holdenwhite, Tom Anderson, Brian Westcott, Al Vari and Jennifer Robins at the Information and Sign-In tables; Ron Davis as Parking Lot Coordinator, and Margaret Carlberg and Patty Overley as Refreshment Coordinators.

Donations of coffee from Peets Coffee at Bella Terra, fruit from Ingardia Brothers of Santa Ana, water and snacks from Ralph's, Von's and Smart and Final in Huntington Beach provided the volunteers with snacks, coffee and water. Amigos volunteers enjoyed snacks at the Bolsa Chica Conservancy provided by Adams Avenue Donuts, Bagelmania, Dominoes, Round Table Pizza, and Quizno's.

Amigos would also like to thank Experian for a grant that enabled us to buy much needed tools that made this cleanup easier.



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Birds of the Season

By Peter Knapp

The fall season has found some familiar species returning to Bolsa Chica. Two Reddish Egrets arrived early and have been seen for about 2 months. One can only assume they are the same 2 birds seen wintering at Bolsa Chica last year. I saw one of them feeding in the muted tidal area this morning along with a small group of White Pelicans. On the subject of White Pelicans I found an injured juvenile with wing tags earlier this season. I subsequently learned this bird was banded at Minidoka National Wildlife Refuge, Idaho, as a pre-fledged bird in July, 2008.



An unfamiliar species, a Tri-colored Heron, was observed at Bolsa Chica in the muted tidal area for about 2 weeks in November. It has since left. New to the muted tidal area this past week was a Mute Swan. Although not yet completely functional (2 of the 3 tide gates have yet to be opened), the newly-restored muted tidal area has attracted more species of birds than ever before.

This past summer I had the opportunity to attempt to read metal bands on the legs of Black Skimmers. In some cases additional colored bands were also incorporated as a means of identifying individual birds. Many Skimmers were banded by Dr. Charles Collins throughout Southern California and Bolsa Chica. Three of the Skimmers identified were 18-19 years old. They were banded as chicks at Bolsa Chica. Other Skimmers came from Salton Sea, San Diego, Batiquitos Lagoon and Upper Newport Bay.

The Christmas Bird Count will be conducted throughout Southern California, including Bolsa Chica, on December 28. Bolsa Chica is part of the Orange County Coastal Unit which is usually among the top areas of the county in species sighted. For information about volunteering in the CBC, visit www.seaandsageaudubon.org.

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The President's Tern

by Dave Carlberg

Having been living with Bolsa Chica nearly half my life, I've become deeply interested in its enormously colorful history. In addition to its Native American occupation beginning over 8000 years ago, Bolsa Chica has experienced a passing parade of (in chronological order) the romantic days of the Spanish ranchos, Yankee land barons, an exclusive hunting lodge, a military coastal defense post, one of the richest oil fields in California, a battlefield over marinas vs. wetlands, and one of the largest coastal wetland restorations ever attempted in the state. I would hazard to propose no place in the U. S. can boast of such a chronicle.

The Bolsa Chica Gun Club is one of my favorite subjects. It was started by a group of affluent Los Angeles businessmen after they had been kicked out of the San Joaquin Marsh over a dispute with its owner, James Irvine. Swearing never to be evicted from someone else's hunting reserve again, they purchased about 1100 acres

of supposedly worthless wetlands from the estate of Southern California's wealthiest and most famous Yankee ranchero, Abel Stearns. The club built a splendid redwood and cedar lodge on the lower Bolsa Chica mesa that overlooked Bolsa Bay, acres of sand dunes, and the blue Pacific Ocean beyond. While the gun club's membership list revealed a notable roster of Los Angeles' premier rich white males, (Torrance, Slauson, Huntington, etc.), its guest list was even more impressive, bearing the names of popes and kings, presidents and top sports figures.

It was the 1920s when the nearby town of Huntington Beach was experiencing one of the greatest oil booms the state had ever known, but the gun club members refused to allow oil companies to interrupt the peace and quiet of their wetland hunting grounds (except for the sounds of shotguns). It wasn't until the stock market crash of 1929 and the depression that followed that the gun club members realized that collecting oil royalties would be preferred over shooting ducks. They signed an oil lease with the Signal Oil and Gas Company in June of 1940 for 22 wells in the heart of the wetland.

The elegant life at the gun club ended abruptly when the U. S. entered World War II and the Army needed the Bolsa Chica mesa as a site for a coastal defense emplacement. By war's end, many of the club members had lost interest in duck hunting. While the lodge remained a venue for occasional social events, the intense gas and oil production activities that had greatly expanded in the wetland pretty much eliminated Bolsa Chica as a hunting reserve, not to mention nearly destroying its wetland values. The lodge was eventually abandoned and it burned down in the mid 60s. It is said the ashes were bulldozed unceremoniously into the wetland, ending a chapter in Bolsa Chica's unique history.

As I've written so many times on these pages, we could not operate our education programs without our dedicated docents. They skillfully participated in 84 tours and programs presented over the past year, telling the fascinating story of Bolsa Chica to young and old. As a retired educator and a docent, I know the joy of seeing faces light up when relating some hitherto unknown fact whether in a classroom or out at the Bolsa Chica. You, too, can experience that joy by signing up to become an Amigos docent. After a few evening training classes, you can proudly wear an Amigos de Bolsa Chica docent vest and be paid with lighted-up faces. An announcement about docent training sessions can be found elsewhere in this Tern Tide. And congratulations to 10 year veteran docent Bob Johnson who recently received the Amigos de Bolsa Chica 2008 Docent of the Year Award.

As the close of 2008 approaches, Margaret and I and the entire Amigos de Bolsa Chica board of directors wish you a joyous holiday season and a fabulous New Year.



The Bolsa Chica Gun Club in its heyday before WWII



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Jan 14-Feb 4 - Register Now!**

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at Bolsa Chica State Beach**

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AMIGOS DE BOLSA CHICA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

I support the specific and primary purpose of Amigos de Bolsa Chica, which is to advocate the preservation, restoration and maintenance of the Bolsa Chica, to encourage the public acquisition of all the wetlands and sufficient surrounding open space to create a viable ecosystem, and to provide education about the importance of wetlands.

ANNUAL DUES

- \$ 10 Student
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- \$ 30 Family
- \$ 50 Patron
- \$ 75 Sponsor
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- \$ 300 Life Member

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Additional Contribution:

\$ _____ Fund operational expenses \$ _____ Total enclosed

Please check if you are interested in volunteering for:

Office assistance _____ Community Education _____ Grantwriting _____

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