

Amigos de Bolsa Chica

THE

TERN TIDE



Since 1976

Summer 2010 Volume 35 Issue 3

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THE TERN TIDE

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What Have Amigos Been Up To Recently?

(The President's Tern) By Jennifer Robins

What have Amigos members and the Amigos Board of Directors been up to recently? Our committees, sub-committees and docents have been busy working on projects, giving private tours and free monthly public tour, participating at booth events and taking time for a social event. I'm very proud of our docents and members who involve themselves in many aspects of the Amigos experience.

One completed project is the introduction of our new Bolsa Chica Wetlands pin which was pictured in a previous issue. Behind the scenes Ed Zschoche spent time researching the best company for us to use to produce the pin which he and Tom Anderson designed. The product is something we're very proud to present to our members and the general public for sale at \$3.00.

A second project which is in the final design phase and has been worked on diligently by Barbara Sentovich, Ross Griswold, Patti Griswold, Ed Zschoche, Dave Myers, Dave Carlberg, Margaret Carlberg, Brian Westcott and myself is nearing production time. The end result of the project is a two-sided laminated card with a Trail Map on one side and pictures of the most common birds seen at the Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve on the other side. The project has been talked about, researched, had meetings, phone calls and emails about for almost 2 years. The result is something we think teachers, students, Amigos and the general public will be impressed with and be able to use every time they visit the wetlands. It is being produced by a company known for quality work around the world, Franko's Maps, at www.frankosmaps.com on the web. It will be given to teachers for use when they bring their class on a tour of the wetlands and in the classroom for teaching lessons after the tour. They will also be sold at public tours and on our website.

A third project that is in its beginning stages (but a lot has already been accomplished) is the inspiration of Lori Donohue. It is based on a variety of "ranger" programs you find in State and Federal Parks, Nature Centers and other environmental sites. But the concept is being expanded by Lori. Please see Lori's article elsewhere in the Tern Tide for more details on the program being developed. Lori has already met with State Parks who are very enthusiastic about partnering with us and she's held a meeting with interested docents who are cooperating in the development of this project.

Our docents continue, after over 30 years, to give scheduled tours to boy scouts, cub scouts, girl scouts, public school classes, private schools, college classes, families, adult and children's birthday parties, and recently, Indian Princesses, pre-1954 MG car club, the Cadets from Starburst Academy and a hard of hearing group. Amigos docents also continue to give tours to a variety of visitors to Huntington Beach at our free monthly public tour. The next tour is July 3rd starting at 9:00 AM at the South Parking Lot across from the entrance to the State Beach. If it has *President's Tern Continued on Page 7*

Save the Date - August 22 - 4th Annual Celebration Picnic

You are cordially invited! Sunday August 22, 2010, 4:00-7:00 pm. Lake Park (Lake and 12th Street). Amigos de Bolsa Chica is celebrating the 4th anniversary of the opening of the tidal inlet to the Bolsa Chica wetlands. Our annual picnic features great food, a chance to mingle with old and new friends, and brief updates on 'Terns and Tides.' Please call the office if you are interested in helping Margaret with planning this event.

Amigos Fundraising Event at 5 Points Plaza August 28

5 Points Plaza is offering Amigos a unique opportunity by partnering with us to emphasize the importance of the Bolsa Chica Wetlands. We will be able to sell 5 Points gift cards to our members and friends and receive a percentage of the total purchase. You can use the cards at any of the more than 30 stores, restaurants and service establishments in the 5 Points Plaza shopping center and receive full purchasing value. If you are interested in participating please send an email to info@amigosdebolsachica.org for more details. Additionally, 5 Points Plaza employees will volunteer to help with cleanups at the wetlands. And, save the date of August 28th for an event in the 5 Points Plaza parking lot.

Docent Workshop and Get-Together July 26

Are you interested in sharing experiences and learning new ideas about leading tours with Amigos docents? Docents, new and experienced alike, can learn tips and techniques from each other and help. A docent workshop is planned for Monday, July 26, 6:00-9:00 pm. Call Margaret for more information 714-842-5619.

New Program Update: Junior Naturalist Meetings

by Lori Donohue

A subcommittee of Amigos' Education committee has held two meetings to establish a new program that aims to involve families and the Bolsa Chica in a new and fun way. First we met with California State Parks employees who expressed an interest in partnering with us for this new program. The second meeting included Amigos docents and other interested volunteers. It was agreed upon that a partnership with State Parks at the Bolsa Chica State Beach Visitor Center would be beneficial to all involved.

The name of the program is still under discussion. The initial single publication detailing the purpose and intention of the program will be in a magazine-style format. The publication will be comprised of educational articles, maps, photographs, and activities such as word puzzles, mazes, and opportunities for artistic expression. It will cover the entire year including seasonal changes. When it is completed this publication will be available at our tours, information booth events, and Bolsa Chica State Beach Visitor Center.

The most recent meeting was held on June 19. At this meeting, the content of the publication - the activities and subjects - were further edited and authors were assigned. It is shaping up to be an exciting new program. If you are interested in assisting, please e-mail Lori Donohue at ldonohue@socal.rr.com



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Docent's Corner

By Patty Overley

I have been a docent and volunteer with the Amigos since 2006. My term began over an interest to learn more about the birds at the Bolsa Chica Wetlands. Little did I know what that interest would lead to! It has been a wonderful experience to volunteer for the Amigos.

This organization truly knows how to nurture their volunteer docents. Through the organization of Barbara Stewart, Margaret Carlberg and others there are three docent get-togethers each year and an annual party at the holidays to recognize the hours put forth by the docents. Each year one docent is recognized for their outstanding contributions. Additionally, the Amigos provide the docents with the chance to refresh and update their docent skills by offering them the opportunity to attend the annual new docent training class each winter. Whenever there is relevant news about the birds and/or wetlands, the Amigos organization is sure to get the news out to the docents.

Through the year, the docents are called upon to assist with not only the tours of the Bolsa Chica, but also with events such as Earth Day and Coastal Cleanup Day. The board of directors is always sure that the docents are taken care of during any of the volunteer events with drinks and lunches. From my experience, being a volunteer and docent for the Amigos de Bolsa Chica is to be part of the organization. The board of directors treats the docents with respect and gratitude. They encourage learning and involvement. I feel honored to be affiliated with such a wonderful and worthwhile organization.

Oil and Wetlands

By Dave Carlberg

One of the many lessons we can get out of the tragic oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico is that wetlands and oil do not mix. And yet here in Southern California we have wetlands that are at the same time oil fields, such as Los Cerritos, Seal Beach or our own Bolsa Chica. Why is there concern and what is being done to protect the Bolsa Chica wetland from experiencing an oil spill?

Crude oil, in spite of being a natural substance, can be lethal to plants and animals when they come in contact with it. If oil enters a wetland, it can cover the bottom with a thick, airless layer that kills essentially everything in its path that cannot move fast enough to escape, such as oysters, clams, worms and their larvae. The animals succumb either due to the oil's toxicity, or they are simply smothered by it. As oil-contaminated fish and crustaceans are consumed by other

animals, the toxic chemicals are carried up the food chain.

Plants also are affected by oil. A film of oil prevents water and nutrients from getting to the roots, eventually killing the plants. The loss of plants in a marsh is especially serious, not only because it eliminates an important haven and food source of countless animals, the roots are what stabilize the soil. Without the roots, the soil can be washed away by wave and tidal action, ultimately destroying the wetland.

But the most dramatic and heartbreaking impact an oil spill has is on birds. Water birds like grebes, cormorants, mergansers and pelicans, those that depend on diving or swimming to forage for food, are especially prone to oil's lethal effects. These birds instinctively enter the water in search of food without knowing that the water may be covered with a layer of oil. The birds' feathers are soon coated with a sticky film that destroys the birds' waterproofing, causing the birds to lose buoyancy. The oiled birds try to fly to escape the gooey trap, but the weight of the oil makes flight nearly impossible. Exhausted, they soon sink and drown. If an oiled bird makes it to dry land, several things can happen, none of them good. Since its waterproofing is destroyed, water can penetrate to the bird's skin, causing a drastic drop in body temperature and the bird may soon die from hypothermia. Regardless of how little oil a bird may have on its feathers, as it tries to clean the oil out of its feathers by preening with its bill, the bird will invariably ingest some of the oil. If the toxicity of the oil doesn't eventually sicken or kill the bird, its presence in the bird's digestive track will block it, preventing the bird from feeding properly and it dies from starvation.

Fortunately in the event wildlife becomes contaminated with oil, there are specially trained volunteers from the Wetlands and Wildlife Care Center who can be mobilized instantly to rescue and treat oiled birds. The center is located just minutes from Bolsa Chica at PCH and Newland.

In the next issue of the Tern Tide, we will cover what governmental agencies and the oil companies are doing to prevent oil spills and the devastating damage that they can wreak upon wetlands.

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Earth Day 2010 at Bolsa Chica

By Margaret Carlberg

The Amigos de Bolsa Chica, Bolsa Chica Conservancy and the Bolsa Chica Land Trust celebrated Bolsa Chica EARTH DAY 2010 from 10:00 until 3:00 on April 10 at the temporary interpretive center North Lot.

Many, many thanks to the 24 Amigos docents (including 6 new 2010 docents) and board members who helped make this event a huge success for the 815 visitors. There were 24 different exhibitors or booth activities where visitors learned about all aspects of life in our wetlands—the plants, water, insects, bats, snakes, opossums, fish and other marine organisms, birds, Native American history, and many aspects of conservation.

Amigos were involved with five different booths, donating about 125 hours of community service. History and Restoration discussion and display panels were expertly manned by Phil Smith, Dean Elder, Jim Aldridge, Kevin McCarthy and Dave Carlberg, while Jim Robins, Tom Livengood, Dave Vize, Mary Ellen Houseal, Al Vari and Fran Pike shared Amigos information and sold some merchandise, and Carol Rice, Dave and Gail Vize and Jennifer Robins provided a cool stop for younger children with some art activities. The 6th year of our 'Birds and Changing Tides' activity along with a new Bird Feeding activity were very popular at Fisherman's point, with Lori and Jerry Donohue, Mike Concannon, Patty Overley, Sharon Simmons, Ed Zschoche, Jamie Pavlat, and Margaret Carlberg. The 3 groups provided docent-led tours over the new footbridge to the dam, enjoying the maturing native coastal sage scrub plants. Most docents had a chance to visit other booths, and many helped with refreshments, parking and general operations, as well as set up and clean up.

Special thanks go to Patti and Ross Griswold and Patty Overley who photographed many scenes of the events, and Jim Marshall, Tom Anderson, and Dave Vize who supplied extra canopies. Huntington Beach Videographer Matt Lifferring was on hand for interviews and action shots for HB-3TV. Sean and Travis, Boy Scout Order of the Arrow, helped with the equipment organization in the morning.

Amigos arranged for Ingardia Brothers to donate apples and bananas and Pure Water Plus to donate a water dispenser and water, while local markets discounted snacks, juice and paper goods. BCC and BCLT secured donations of pizza, sandwiches, burritos for the 118 volunteers and hot dogs and sodas for participants to purchase.

The 3 organizations collected a wide variety of gifts for an Opportunity Drawing, which raised more than \$400 to help

defray publicity and other costs. The Amigos appreciate donations from Rudy Gardea for a framed Kestrel drawing, Outback Steakhouse for a gift certificate, Dave and Gail Vize for 4 Angels tickets, Dan Nguyen with Merchsource, LLD for Vivitar binoculars, Chris Epting for 2 books to go with our Bolsa Chica History book, and a messenger bag from Jennifer Robins with some environmental CDs and Peter Knapp notecards.

With pleasant weather, neither too hot nor windy and visitors spread out during the 5 hour event. Everyone, visitors and presenters alike, had a chance to interact with the many experts and really appreciate Earth Day and time out in our special wetland environment.



A new activity, 'Birds and Beaks,' allows participants to decide what implement best represents the beak of a particular bird for its eating habitat. Photo courtesy Patty Overley.



The 6th year of our 'Birds and Changing Tides' activity in which participants count the numbers and varieties of birds present as the tide comes in and goes out to get a snapshot of a day in life of Bolsa Chica Wetlands. Photo courtesy Ross Griswold.

Thanks to Volunteers at Amigos' Spring Booth Events

By Jennifer Robins

Thanks to all of the docents and Amigos members who helped at our Booth Events during the first half of 2010. Our first booth event was at the L.A. Environmental Education Fair in March with Sharon Simmons, Margaret and Dave Carlberg and Jim and Jennifer Robins assisting at our booth with information and a children's coloring activity.

This was followed by Lori and Jerry Donohue, Ross Griswold, Laura Holdenwhite and Jim Jauman at the Dana Point Festival of the Whales. This was the inaugural of a new activity, Birds and Beaks, which allows participants to decide what implement best represents the beak of a particular bird for its eating habitat. This activity has become a hit at booth events.

The Huntington Beach Wetlands Conservancy celebrated the opening of the Magnolia Marsh on April 17 with an Earth Day and volunteers Ron Davis, Margaret Carlberg and Jim and Jennifer Robins manned the Amigos booth with background music of a steel drum band and gelato treats from Mangiamo Gelato.

We weren't done yet! The following weekend was the Long Beach Earth Day at the Aquarium of the Pacific with volunteers Lori and Jerry Donohue, Ed and Marie Zschoche and Jim and Jennifer Robins which generated much interest from Long Beach citizens who haven't been to the Bolsa Chica Wetlands. On May 1, the same day as our May Public Tour, Ross and Patti Griswold, Susie Pendleton, Carol Rice and Fran Pike volunteered at the beautiful Shipley Nature Center's 5th Annual Spring Festival. And we still weren't done. On Memorial Day Weekend Don Thomas, Julia Tafel, Ron Davis and Jim and Jennifer Robins joined with the BCLT and Crystal Cove Conservancy to have a table with our information at the REI Summer Kick-Off at Bella Terra shopping center.

That covers the first half of 2010, but we've got more to come. We'll be sponsoring a day at the Friends of Harbors, Beaches and Parks O.C. Fair booth in July or August and later in August will be a new Fundraising Event for which Amigos volunteers will be needed. Thanks again to all the wonderful individuals who make it a pleasure to be a part of Amigos de Bolsa Chica.

Bolsa Chica Nesting Report

The nesting season in Bolsa Chica is in full swing, and early counts indicate that the birds are doing their part in propagating their kind. Four species of terns as well as other species are now breeding in Bolsa Chica. Kelly O'Reilly, California Fish and Game reserve manager reports (as of May 26) that there are 287 active nests of the endangered Least Tern in Bolsa Chica. Along Nest Site 1, at least 57 Least Tern nests are visible to the public through the fence at the end of the south footbridge (photo). By April 12 it was estimated that about 6000 Elegant Terns had arrived on the North Tern Island (visible from the south footbridge), but by the 29th, all but fewer than 100 had disappeared. The same phenomenon was observed in the Elegant Tern colony in L.A. Harbor. Then by May 26 the Bolsa Chica colony had grown back up to about 6000, along with a few Royal Terns and about 300 Black Skimmers. It is not clear if these birds were the same ones that abandoned the site or a new population. A colony of Forster's Terns can be seen in the marsh south of the footbridge. Belding's Savannah Sparrows, Gadwalls and American Avocets also have nested on Site 1 along with 16 Snowy Plovers pairs, bringing the season total for that threatened species to 39 nests.

Unfortunately it is not all good news. A colony of Caspian Terns was destroyed by gulls in mid-May along with several Least Tern nests and some of the Elegant Tern nests on the North Tern Island.

We extend our thanks to the members of the EONS (Eyes On Nest Sites) volunteer group who have been on duty at Bolsa Chica these last several weeks. They help DFG monitor nesting at Site 1 and also educate the public about the need to protect the endangered and threatened species that nest there. Many thanks to Kelly O'Reilly for sharing these counts with us.



Two proud Least Tern parents were photographed feeding three newly hatched chicks. Photo courtesy Ross Griswold.

Bolsa Chica Gun Club 100 Years Ago

Redlands, California resident Britt Wilson was thumbing through an old family scrapbook recently and came across photographs of a large, rustic building with dormer windows and a vine covered sitting porch. Britt's father recognized the building as the Bolsa Chica Gun Club, and the little girl playing in front was his mother, (Britt's grandmother) who was born in 1900, dating the photographs to about 1907 to 1910. Britt is delving deeper into family history to determine if any of his relatives were members of the esteemed gun club, employees, or guests. In the mean time Britt contacted the Amigos to see if we were interested in having the photos. We thank Britt for his generous gift.



As a diversion from duck hunting, club members could fish for black bass in the placid waters of Inner Bolsa Bay. Boat houses and maintenance sheds line the far shore.



Photograph donor Britt Wilson's grandmother, as a toddler, plays in front of the gun club about 1907. The furrows in the ground suggest the lawn is being seeded.



An unidentified man with the gun club in background. He appears to be standing on a wooden boardwalk rather than the concrete walk seen in later photographs.

Amigos de Bolsa Chica Board of Directors

President: Jennifer Robins; Vice President: Thomas Anderson; Secretary: Alma Bowman; Treasurer: Brian Westcott; Immediate Past President: Dave Carlberg; Directors: Margaret Carlberg, Shirley Dettloff, Dean Elder, Craig Frampton Vic Leipzig, Tom Livengood, Mel Nutter, Patty Overley, Jamie Pavlat, Jim Robins, Ed Zschoche.

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Have You Renewed Your Membership?

Amigos' goals remain dedicated to the acquisition, preservation and restoration of the Bolsa Chica Wetlands. Your membership is an integral part of the support needed to continue to achieve these goals. With the catastrophe in the Gulf off America's southern coast and its wetlands, the preservation of wetlands has new significance. Amigos de Bolsa Chica, with your help, has achieved much over its 34 years of existence. The challenges to the maintenance and protection of the wetlands continue. Monitoring wetland management, providing information resources and communication with decision makers is an ongoing necessity. Through its educational programs and tours, Amigos can develop new generations of protectors of the Bolsa Chica.

If you have renewed your Amigos membership, thank you. To renew your membership, you can send a check to: Amigos de Bolsa Chica, P.O. Box 1563, Huntington Beach CA 92647. \$10 Student, \$20 Individual, \$30 Family, \$50 Patron, \$75 Sponsor, \$100 Sustaining, \$300 Life Member. Contributions to Amigos de Bolsa Chica are tax deductible.

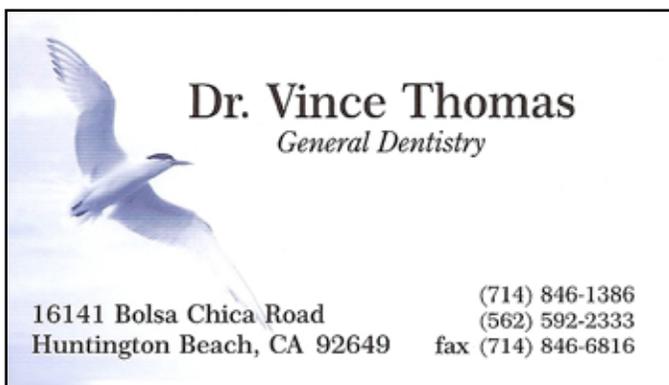
President's Tern

Continued from Page 1 been a few years since you took a tour, now is the time to come out and be reacquainted with the restored wetland, the birds and other wildlife. Also in July we will give a tour to our Sister City's visitors from Anjo, Japan. Dozens of docents have participated in Earth Day and other environmental booth activities. Huge thanks go out to them for giving of their time to represent Amigos de Bolsa Chica and the Bolsa Chica Wetland at these events. Please see the article elsewhere in the Tern Tide which highlights these Amigos docents and members. Amigos docents took time out for a social event arranged by Barbara Stewart to visit the Huntington Beach Wetlands Conservancy's Magnolia Marsh Grand Opening in April. They were given a tour of the Wetlands and Wildlife Care Center Hospital and the Magnolia Marsh. They had lunch at a local eatery after the tour to visit and share Bolsa Chica experiences.

Amigos is also working with the Department of Fish and Game, the Bolsa Chica Land Trust, the Bolsa Chica Conservancy to design and install new interpretive signage throughout the Reserve. This project is still in the design phase, and we will keep you informed of the progress.

The Amigos Board had their Annual Retreat this past January and some of the goals set are underway. We have re-established a Working Group that will meet bi-monthly at the Department of Fish and Game offices. Representatives from the Bolsa Chica Conservancy, Bolsa Chica Land Trust, Amigos de Bolsa Chica and Department of Fish and Game will meet to discuss mutual interests surrounding the status of the Reserve, projects each non-profit is planning at the Reserve, upcoming events and other topics as needed. Shirley Dettloff introduced me as the new President of Amigos to the Mayor and City Council members where we discussed Amigos' goals, education programs and continued dedication to our interests at the BCER. I have met with the Presidents of the BCC and BCLT to discuss mutual interests and we have committed to building continued partnerships. Members of the Board chair the Education, Grant Writing, Media, Legal, Public Relations and Membership Committees. The Board is in the planning stages for a Fundraiser and our Annual Picnic in August. The Board meets monthly and continues to pursue Amigos' commitment to our Mission Statement through all of our work for the Reserve.

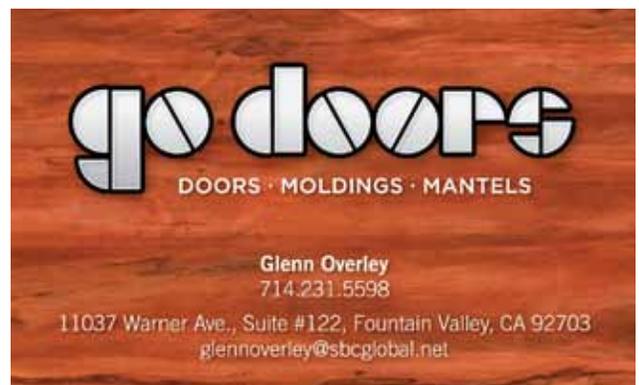
And last but not least I want to recognize the hard work of our Office Coordinator, Laura Holdenwhite. Laura manages the tour schedule for all the private scheduled tours and keeps the Board members up to date on the Amigos' events. Without her dedication we wouldn't be able to have the excellent docent tour program we have maintained for over 30 years.



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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.

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