

# A Different Intern

by Randy Arnold

*Editor's note: The Committee's Internship program draws enthusiastic participants each summer to lead interpretive tours, staff the Information Center front counter, and help staff with a wide variety of projects. Most often interns are college students out for the summer, but occasionally people in different stages of life come on board. Following is one such example from summer of 2003 Intern Randy Arnold.*

**M**y involvement with the Mono Lake Committee started in the early 1980s. I heard about a young couple taking on the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (DWP) in an effort to save Mono Lake and I thought, "I have to find a way to help them!" I volunteered in the visitor center for two one-week stints in the mid-1980s. Over the years I've managed to return to my favorite lake at least once each year and have watched the success of the Mono Lake Committee with amazement and great thanks.

Ever since those weeks of volunteering I dreamed of doing a full summer internship for the Mono Lake Committee. I had always thought I might do it when I got older, but last spring a little voice inside me said, "Do it now." I applied and was accepted as the Birding Intern. The next step was to ask my employers for a sabbatical....

I am the National Sales Manager for the Barefoot Cellars winery and have worked for the winery for 14 years. The owners of the Barefoot Winery—Michael Houlihan and Bonnie Harvey, granted me a sabbatical. Michael called and said, "You are so lucky you're going to be outside every day hiking!" He also said, "You can only go if you give Bonnie and me a tour of the area." Showing off the Mono Basin is my favorite activity so when they came to visit we hiked in Lundy Canyon and to Saddlebag Lake. To celebrate this unusual partnership we had a champagne celebration right on the shore (with Barefoot Bubbly of course) to honor Michael and Bonnie and their commitment to Mono Lake.

Michael and Bonnie love hiking and the outdoors and are avid environmentalists. They donate thousands of cases of wine every year to non-profits for various benefits and support dozens of environmental organizations every year. Michael and Bonnie want to help people through donations to worthy causes in all the communities where Barefoot wines are sold. Barefoot Cellars has donated wine to the Mono Lake Committee for the past 12 years. Michael says, "supporting worthy causes like the Mono Lake Committee with time and products is one way we in the business world can make a difference in preserving the environment. It was a pleasure to grant Randy the time to follow his dream as it is ours as well. 'Cause' marketing is our main form of advertising at Barefoot Cellars, and our customers really appreciate our company's focus on community and the environment. As a native Californian

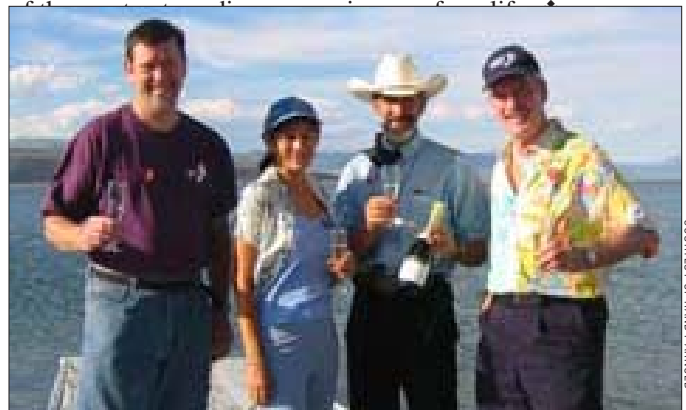
myself, I am happy to help preserve our natural heritage." Bonnie, Michael's partner and co-owner of Barefoot Cellars, is also an avid hiker and naturalist. Bonnie says "as an enthusiastic practitioner of what I call the 'Church of Mother Nature,' I enjoyed our time with Randy in the beautifully unique Eastern Sierra. The canyons, cliffs, forests, and waterfalls are the perfect cathedral to appreciate nature's precious gift of creation."

During my four-month sabbatical I was able to serve Barefoot wines and champagnes at the well-attended 25th Anniversary party during the Mono Basin Bird Chautauqua, a reception for local photographer John Dittli, and the Sierra Nevada Alliance's celebration for the Mono Lake Committee's 25th Anniversary. I also held two benefits for bird research at the Lee Vining Community Center—one was a talent show, highlighting the great and diverse talent in the Mono Basin. The other was a Country Dance that featured the wonderful local band Wild Mountain Thyme with State Park Rangers Janet and Dave Carle as callers. Another great pleasure was assisting Sally Gaines on her half-day tours, which she held as part of the 25th Anniversary celebration.

Doing interpretive work is one of my great pleasures and I was able to take nearly 500 people on Bird Walks, South Tufa Tours, and Canoe Tours during my summer internship. Helping California Gull researchers in the gull colony was one of the most incredible experiences of my life.

I will forever be connected to the Mono Basin and the great work of the Mono Lake Committee. I'm currently working on organizing a benefit Wine Tasting and Silent Auction during the 3rd Annual Mono Basin Bird Chautauqua held on June 19th, 2004 at the Double Eagle Resort at the base of Carson Peak on the June Lake Loop. The Mono Basin Bird Chautauqua is becoming one of the premier bird festivals in the country and I'm very excited about supporting this wonderful event.

So, if you are one of those people thinking about taking a break from your hectic life and spending time at Mono Lake, all I can say is, "apply now!" My sabbatical summer was one



*The Barefoot crew: John Ballew, Bonnie Harvey, Randy Arnold, and Michael Houlihan with Barefoot Bubbly at Mono Lake.*

COURTESY OF RANDY ARNOLD