

# MONO LAKE

N E W S L E T T E R

Fall 2005



The porch at the El Mono Motel & Latte Da Cafe is one of the unexpected special spots in the Mono Basin. Built only in the 1920s, it is difficult to compare it to the thousands of years boasted by the volcanoes on the horizon or the millions of years of quiet persistence of Mono's waters below. Maybe it's because it is so dwarfed by the mountains to the west and humbled by the enormity of the sky above that this cobble-footed landing has secured its niche in this town. Along with being a watering hole for travelers it is a gathering spot for locals—from the beloved gas station attendant to the self-proclaimed rednecks and hippies in between. Sure, they come for the coffee, but they stay for the porch ... the atmosphere, conversation, shared experiences, ideas hatched—often inspired by, or at least enhanced by the view out over Mono Lake.

This morning on the porch the sun is low and the waters glassy. People trickle in and out, and already conversations are turning to current events—Hurricane Katrina and how to help from afar, gas prices (monitored by leaning out to read the signs across the street), the weekend of children's sporting events. The town comes together in the fall—emerging to the quieter streets in excited anticipation of this favorite season. The leaves are just beginning to change and the days are noticeably shorter, but the hiking, wildlife watching, and porch sitting are some of the best of the year. Where are you headed today? Lundy? Tuolumne? Down to the lake?

Sitting here I take great pleasure in knowing that people are out and about enjoying this place. It's one of the many reasons the Mono Lake Committee was founded, and is still here today. I think you can feel it on top of the mountain peaks that offer a view of the lake, on the porch of the El Mono, and, I hope, in the pages of this *Mono Lake Newsletter*.

—Arya Degenhardt, Communications Director



IMAGE COURTESY OF THE IMAGE SCIENCE AND ANALYSIS LABORATORY, NASA JOHNSON SPACE CENTER

A view of Mono Lake and the Mono Basin from the International Space Station.

### Mono Lake Committee Mission

The Mono Lake Committee is a non-profit citizens' group dedicated to protecting and restoring the Mono Basin ecosystem, educating the public about Mono Lake and the impacts on the environment of excessive water use, and promoting cooperative solutions that protect Mono Lake and meet real water needs without transferring environmental problems to other areas.



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## MONO LAKE NEWSLETTER

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# Mono Lake Lessons Learned

*Responsibility and Vigilance for the Long Run*

by Geoffrey McQuilkin

I drove north, a few weeks ago, past Mono Lake, past flocks of phalaropes swooping over the lake's surface, past grebes diving and splashing in the salty water—and suddenly and unexpectedly, past a freshly planted sign that blared “Real Estate Auction . . . 3,700 acres.”

Back at the office, a fax came in: this auction of land just northeast of Mono Lake was highlighted in the *Wall Street Journal* real estate section. The article pointed out that “. . . some brokers suspect this land may be ideal for slicing up into golf courses and small housing communities.”

The *Journal* may well be reporting what the big out-of-town developers think. But I take a contrary view, and I bet you do too. Mono Lake and its surrounding lands are doing great just as they are—they are not ideal for slicing up into anything.

Why do we see slicing up Mono Basin lands as disagreeable? Because we share a vision of this remarkable place. A vision in which the lake is healthy, supporting a unique ecosystem including millions of migratory and nesting birds. A vision in which forests full of wildlife once again follow the flowing waters of Mono's tributary streams to the lake's edge. A vision in which scenic mountain and lake vistas and wide open spaces are the hallmarks of the Mono Basin. A vision that this special corner of California can remain as it is, that our children can visit and learn from it as we have. A vision that includes people, be they in Los Angeles or Lee Vining, and expects that they can look beyond self interest to

**“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”**

— Margaret Mead

One of the great things about summer in the Mono Basin is the chance to meet so many Mono Lake Committee members in the Information Center and Bookstore. I always find it refreshing to talk with such thoughtful, caring, well informed people. Protection efforts, restoration work, education programs, science support—members are interested in it all!

In August, I was talking with one Committee member who was clearly proud to be a part of so many successful Mono Lake endeavors. He began ticking off a list of successes: The rising lake, the restoration of Rush and Lee Vining creeks, stopping the effort to strip state park protection from the lake, ending the poorly planned shoreline widening of the highway, preventing the subdivision of land at the lake's edge, and more.

Committee members and Committee staff achieved each of those successes together, speaking up for Mono Lake to be certain that the right thing happened. As he talked, I couldn't help but be proud right along with him.

Then, I have to admit, I began to worry that this friendly Committee supporter thought that once these fights wrapped up, we'd have Mono Lake's future squarely in hand and our work on the lake's behalf would be done. I began to worry, in short,



act in environmentally sound ways.

But not everyone shares our vision. And thus something more is required of us.

that he hadn't seen that land auction sign by the highway and didn't know there was yet another challenge ahead.

I should have had more faith. Committee members get it, as they always have, and it is rejuvenating to hear. For as he prepared to go, he looked me in the eye, told me he'd be back, and said “keep fighting the good fight.” And whether or not he

*Continued on page 17*

# High Flows Benefit Mill Creek This Year

*Federal Ruling Still Pending*

by Geoffrey McQuilkin

Unusually high water flows benefited Mill Creek for the first time since 1986, the result of a large snowpack which quickly filled and overtopped Lundy Lake reservoir this spring. Meanwhile, the creek's long-term health still awaits action by federal regulators.

## **Reservoir Spills**

Lundy Lake reservoir spilled, as designed, starting in mid-June due to rapid melting of the large backcountry snowpack. All water that spills over the dam flows down the natural stream course to Mono Lake, and the result was a rare high-flow event. High flows are important for Mono Basin streams because they provide the natural forces needed to disperse cottonwood seeds, scour pools for fish, water side channels, move sediment, and otherwise shape the stream corridor.

At the July peak, flows measured 160 cubic feet per second (cfs), the largest in nearly two decades. Investigation on the



*Damp ground marks an area where high springtime creek flows distributed seeds and sediment. Note several young cottonwoods sprouting, showing the potential for recovery of the Mill Creek system if adequate water flows are provided.*

ground showed water spreading through side channels in the bottomlands area, no doubt raising the water table and supporting the re-establishment of willows, cottonwoods, and other streamside vegetation. Such processes have been extremely important to the recovery of lost streamside forest on Rush and Lee Vining creeks, and they show the potential for Mill Creek—if given more water—to rebound from decades of excessive water diversions.

## **Action Required to Assure Creek Health**

Long term recovery, however, hinges on the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), which is in charge of relicensing the Lundy hydropower plant. Mill Creek has long suffered from the excessive diversion of its water: over 70% of the creek's flow is diverted on average, although existing water rights under California law justify diversions of, at the most extreme, 48% of the flow. The primary reason for the excessive diversion is that there is a very limited capacity to transport water that has passed through the hydropower plant back to the creek. As a result, water is often shunted through water diversion systems, including Wilson Creek, in excess of established water diversion rights. The Committee believes that only water diverted under water rights law should leave the creek; the rest should return to Mill Creek and flow in the natural channel to Mono Lake.

FERC has the power to fix this long-standing problem by requiring repair of the "return ditch" as part of a new license for the hydropower plant. Such repair—which would allow

*Continued on page 10*



*In some stretches of Mill Creek vegetation has survived decades of excessive water diversions. The willow-rose-buffaloberry thicket pictured here is similar to the Rush Creek habitat recently colonized by rare Willow Flycatchers. The high streamflow pictured here is due to the upstream reservoir spilling an unusually large amount of water.*

GEOFF MCQUILKIN PHOTOS

# California Water Conservation in the Works

by Frances Spivy-Weber

Recent reports about California's future water supply emphasize water conservation. Urban water agencies that in the mid-1980s said it would be hard to save one million acre feet (maf) of water statewide now acknowledge they are saving over a million acre feet in Southern California alone, largely through changes in fixtures inside the home. The next two to three maf of savings lies in reducing outdoor water use and water used in the commercial, industrial, and institutional sectors.

The state of California has challenging urban and agricultural conservation goals that it will only achieve through a coordinated local, regional, and statewide campaign targeted toward those who shape public opinion, including city and county elected officials, chambers of commerce, commercial builders, outdoor landscape vendors, and the media. This means, among other actions, letting the price of water encourage waste reduction, enacting new state and national water efficiency standards, and providing financial incentives for low-flow and waterless appliances.

Most of the investments in water conservation will be cost effective locally, but there are reasons to look beyond that as well. Reducing new demands for water gives local water agencies time to develop other local supplies, and can enable communities and the state to restore water to the environment.

Future generations will judge today's water leaders on how well their water supply strategy anticipated future risks—earthquakes, climate change, and drought—while meeting the water needs of people, the economy, and the environment. Based on what we know today, those leaders who have a water conservation strategy will undoubtedly get high marks.

Following are reports on California's water future:

The **California Water Plan 2005** ([www.waterplan.water.ca.gov](http://www.waterplan.water.ca.gov)) concludes that the state can meet its projected urban, environmental, and agricultural water needs in 2030 if water users adopt modest conservation measures currently available. See [www.waterplay.water.ca.gov/docs/cwpu2005/highlights/Highlights-web.pdf](http://www.waterplay.water.ca.gov/docs/cwpu2005/highlights/Highlights-web.pdf) for a summary of what water is available statewide.

In **Water for Growth: California's New Frontier**, the Public Policy Institute of California ([www.ppic.org](http://www.ppic.org)) finds that there are plenty of opportunities for balancing the supply and demand of water, but the state will have to play a role in creating the right incentives at the local level. In addition, local and regional agencies will have to make sure they develop those conservation, recycling, and groundwater storage options.

The **Investment Strategy for California Water**, coordinated by the Planning & Conservation League ([www.pcl.org](http://www.pcl.org)) projects an estimated state need of 3–3.4 maf of

additional water to meet future water supply demands, and more than this amount can be supplied from urban and agricultural water conservation, recycled water, groundwater treatment, and brackish water desalination.

In **Waste Not, Want Not: The Potential for Urban Water Conservation in California**, the Pacific Institute ([www.pacinst.org](http://www.pacinst.org)) estimates that one-third of California's current urban water use—more than 2.3 maf—can be saved with existing technology. At least 85% of this can be saved at costs below the price of tapping into new sources of supply.

In **Energy Down The Drain: The Hidden Costs of California's Water Supply**, the Natural Resources Defense Council ([www.nrdc.org](http://www.nrdc.org)) and Pacific Institute underscore the value of urban and agricultural water conservation to reduce energy use and energy bills. The single largest user of energy in California is the State Water Project (SWP), which accounts for 2–3% of all electricity consumed in California. When water conservation in Southern California reduces the need for importing water through the SWP, the state saves money and energy statewide. ❖

*Frances Spivy-Weber is the Committee's Executive Director of Policy. She will be working with Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa and his appointees to make sure the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power maintains its role as water conservation leader in the region.*



*Today Los Angeles is home to almost 4 million people and is expected to add 368,000 people over the next 25 years. Per capita consumption of water has dropped from 180 gallons per day in the 1980s to 155 gallons per day on average since 1996.*

# Fourth Annual Chautauqua Draws Flocks

*Birds and Birders Brave Chilly Spring*

by Bartshé Miller

What is three days long, packed with science, birds, and music, and dodges winter storms? It can only be the Fourth Annual Mono Basin Bird Chautauqua. After all, this is not your ordinary bird festival, is it?

A particularly long winter made for an unsettled spring in the Mono Basin this year, and the last gasp came just before the Chautauqua weekend. Yet another Gulf of Alaska low brought fierce winds and cooler temperatures threatening the field trips and workshops. By some small, bird-like miracle the winds calmed by Friday afternoon, temperatures warmed and pleasant weather prevailed. Tioga Pass remained closed for the weekend, a casualty of a bigger-than-normal winter, but this didn't stop over 220 registrants from enjoying a weekend of fascinating science, birds, good food, music, and friends.

And what about the birds? No doubt many had been rattled by the final blow of winter, but with the nesting season well underway and late migrants finding their way north, there were birds aplenty. One hundred and fifty species were identified in a variety of habitats during the weekend's field trips. One of the highlights included a male Prairie Warbler singing at County Park—only a few records of this bird exist in Mono County. This warbler made an encore appearance during Sunday's concert and picnic, and many concert-goers wandered over to catch a glimpse of the bird and to hear its ascending song. Not to be outdone, Sunday's musical guest Ciúnas dazzled the crowd with traditional and contemporary Celtic music—an elegant ending to a packed weekend of birding, storytelling, and scientific presentations.

And how were the crowds? Chautauqua participants are a dedicated lot, and there were only a couple of cancellations due to the late-season road closure through Yosemite. One of the joys of the Mono Basin Bird Chautauqua is that you often see children and adults of all ages and backgrounds in attendance. Old friends of Mono Lake, scientists, hard-core birders, beginning birders, locals, and an assortment of children from all of the above were in attendance. As much as the Chautauqua is a venue for birding and other naturalist activities, it's also a chance to catch up with friends and meet new ones. For those who could afford to miss some sleep before an early morning of birding, the Bear Flag Republic Band played at the Mono Inn on Saturday night. Rowdy



Lesser Goldfinches spotted by Chautauqua presenter Chris McCreedy.

birders (they do exist in the right habitat) danced and reveled into the late evening.

A dedicated group of leaders and presenters have been with us since the first Chautauqua, and they joined us again in 2005: Jon Dunn, Sacha Heath, Justin Hite, Peter Metropulos, Mike Prather, Kristie Nelson, and Dr. David Winkler. Others leaders returned for a second or third time: Sue Abbott, Don Banta, Susan Colletta, Debbie House, Ann Howald, Cindy Kamler, Jack Laws, Burleigh Lockwood, David Lukas, Jeff Maurer, Chris McCreedy, Paul McFarland, Ane

Carla Rovetta, Rich Stallcup, Chris Tonra, Simone Whitecloud, David Wimpfheimer, and Tim & Leslie Willoughby. Joining the Chautauqua family this year were Steve Howell, Rena McCullough, Dr. Scott Stine, Dr. Steve Rothstein, Ron Silver, and Alison Young. We extend our sympathies to Dave Shuford who had hoped to join us in 2005, but had to abruptly change his plans in order to attend to a family emergency.

The weekend would not have sounded so sweet if it were not for the musical contribution of the Bear Flag Republic Band, and Sunday's special musical guest, Ciúnas. Taste is also part of the Chautauqua, and the Friday night dinner was brimming with it, thanks to local chef Linda Dore.

The Mono Lake Committee hosted its second annual Wine Flight fundraiser with many thanks to Randy Arnold of Barefoot Winery for organizing a great silent auction and inviting and E.J. Gallo, Barefoot Cellars, Henry Wine Group, J.Lohr, and Muir-Hanna Vineyards to pour at the tasting. The Committee also honored the science and senior scientists who helped save Mono Lake: David Winkler, Scott Stine, Peter Vorster, Dave Shuford, and Dave Herbst.

This coming season when the nights are long and you're wondering when the winter rain and snow might end, remind yourself that summer is just around the corner, and that the Fifth Annual Mono Basin Bird Chautauqua will be the perfect way to start it all off. Mark your calendars now for June 16–18, 2006. Registration begins April 15, 2006. Check out [www.birdchautauqua.org](http://www.birdchautauqua.org) for more information. ❖

*Bartshé Miller is the Committee's Education Director. He has been enjoying the fall colors appearing on his 7-mile bike ride to work.*

# Scientific Research in the Mono Basin

News from the Mono Basin Field Station and Beyond

## Ospreys a Success at Mono Lake

Dave Marquart, Mono Lake Tufa State Reserve

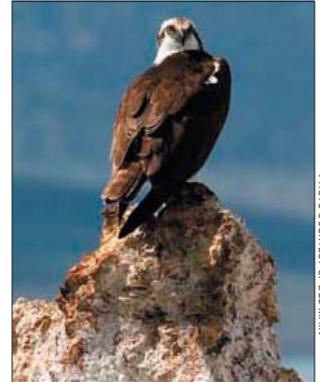
“What is a fish-eating bird doing nesting at a lake that has no fish?” This is a common question asked around the shoreline by visitors. Mono Lake’s off-shore tufa towers offer the isolation that nesting Ospreys desire. Mono’s Ospreys are truly unique because they are probably the only tufa-nesting Ospreys in the world. Mono’s population are commuters, catching fish at nearby freshwater lakes in the June Lake Loop and as far north as Lundy Lake.

Ospreys arrive at Mono Lake by April each year, and when finished nesting, depart for Central and South America in early September. Adults can leave up to a month prior to juveniles for their southerly migration.

Mono’s Ospreys, which nest in various portions of the Mono Lake Tufa State Reserve, are being closely monitored by California State Park biologists. The 2005 nesting season was a

good one for the local Ospreys. A total of 13 chicks were hatched in six different nests around the lake, more than double that of the previous year. Biologists are puzzled over why the success rate is so much higher at Mono Lake than at Lake Tahoe where many nests do not successfully produce chicks even though the food source is literally at their doorstep.

Nesting Ospreys at Mono Lake present unique challenges to State Reserve and Forest Service land managers who try to minimize disturbance to nesting Ospreys by keeping boaters separated from their tufa tower-perched nests. ❖



Osprey atop a tufa tower.

PHOTO COURTESY OF DEB MANN

## Viruses in Mono Lake

Grieg Steward, University of Hawaii

Most of us are familiar with the wide variety of viruses that can infect our own species and the diseases that result from those infections (influenza, polio, herpes, HIV-AIDS, SARS, to name but a few). However, we are not alone in our susceptibility to viral infections. Every form of life on earth, from microscopic bacteria to the mightiest whale, can all be infected by at least one, if not hundreds of different types of viruses. In light of this fact, it is not too surprising that viruses can be found everywhere in our environment from soils to oceans to lakes, and Mono is no exception. But how many viruses are in Mono Lake and what are they doing there? This is the question that our research team has been investigating.

Although we fully expected to find viruses in the lake when we began this project, we were astonished by their incredible abundance. We found that every teaspoon of Mono Lake water contains over 100 million viruses! This is many times higher than is typically found in freshwater lakes or in seawater. This does not mean the lake is polluted or a threat to human health. Rather these viruses are part of the natural lake ecosystem and almost all of them infect other microbes living in the lake. There are almost certainly some viruses infecting the brine shrimp in Mono Lake as well, although they have not yet been discovered.

As we began our research, we hypothesized that many bacteria in the lake would be infected with viruses. Using an electron microscope to examine the bacteria, graduate student Jennifer Brum revealed that many were indeed infected (Fig. 1A), but the percentage was much higher in July than at other times of the year. It is as if the bacteria in the lake have their



Fig. 1. A) This sausage-shaped bacterium is infected with viruses, which are visible by electron microscopy as the dark spots inside the cell. The cell is about 1 micrometer long. For comparison, a human hair is about 50 micrometers in diameter. B) Using the electron microscope for even higher magnification, some details of a virus become visible. This virus has a head, known as the capsid, and a tail, which is common among viruses that infect bacteria. The tail is used to attach to the surface of the bacterium and also serves as the portal through which the viral DNA moves from the capsid into the bacterium.

PHOTOS COURTESY JENNIFER BRUM

own “flu season” in the summer! Our work now is focusing on investigating the diversity and ecology of viruses in the lake. Many of the viruses observed by electron microscopy look similar to those infecting bacteria in other ecosystems (Fig. 1B), but their DNA sequence and growth patterns may reveal clues about what adaptations are required for a virus to thrive in the unusual chemical environment of Mono Lake.

The Mono Lake Virus Research Team is Grieg Steward, University of Hawaii, Jennifer Brum, University of Hawaii; Sunny Jiang, University of California, Irvine; and Robert Jellison, Sierra Nevada Aquatic Research Laboratory. ❖

# Highlights of the 2005 Outdoor Experiences Season

by Stratton Lawrence and Maggie Witt

*Editor's note: Maggie Witt and Stratton Lawrence were the Committee's two Outdoor Experiences (OE) Coordinators for the 2005 season. The OE program brings community groups primarily from Los Angeles to the Mono Basin for a week of hiking, canoeing, and learning about the source of their water. As Stratton puts it, "the OE program stands apart from other environmental education programs by taking the hands-on, experiential approach to learning about nature and complimenting it with personal challenges. Encouraging participants to push their comfort zones lends itself to educational life experiences that will stick with them for the rest of their lives." In Maggie's and Stratton's own words, these are some of the highlights of their time as OE Coordinators.*

## Putting the "Experiences" into the OE Program

Working as an OE coordinator is a tough but exhilarating job, and it's difficult to pinpoint one incident that stands apart in my time here. There is nothing like the

silence of the Jeffrey Pine forest on a dark night to set the tone of the week for a skeptical student. It's surprising that for a child whose idea of night is sirens, gunshots, and constant automotive noise, a walk alone through the woods at night would be scarier than down the street in LA, but nearly every student expresses major apprehension about it. By letting the kids walk alone, both at night and for sections of day hikes, they are far more engulfed in the natural world than they would be if they walked along with friends. The learning experience occurs naturally—we as leaders just fill in details.

With a recent group, the San Pedro High soccer team, we set out to investigate the lakes and mountains just west of Mt. Gaylor. Despite strenuous uphill climbs for nearly three hours, the students made it to the top of our chosen peak only to find the view obstructed by another peak, three hundred feet higher and at least another half-hour climb away. After three days of exploring and discovering the wilderness, their decision was quick and obvious—let's get up there! Arriving at the summit after a far more difficult scramble than expected, our euphoric feeling lasted throughout our well-earned lunch.

During their hike that day the kids saw deer, trout, hawks,

Ospreys, countless flowers, and learned about the glacial cycle and many more "naturalist facts." Some of that they'll remember, and had we taken a leisurely, informative stroll, perhaps they'd remember the same amount of information. But because they wore themselves out on their own two feet, determined to get to the top of a mountain, they'll remember the day for the rest of their lives. It is the "experience" aspect of the Committee's OE program that sets it apart as

a potentially life-changing event for these students.

—Stratton Lawrence



San Pedro High School soccer team with Stratton climbing to new heights near Mt. Gaylor with the Outdoor Experiences program.

## Life's Greatest Challenges

First, I heard the footsteps—fast and heavy, deliberately loud to block out the slight sounds of the Jeffrey Pine Forest at night. Then, I heard the breathing, shallow yet heavy, provoked more by fear than physical exertion. I glanced around the sweet-smelling trunk of the Jeffrey pine at my side to see Wendy's\* tall, thin outline, backlit by the full moon. She was clearly afraid, but if I could have seen her eyes in the darkness

that night, an expression of determination and courage would have permeated the fear. After all, for this forty-something recovering drug addict from Los Angeles, these two characteristics allowed her to face not only the challenges of the Mono Basin, but also the hard knocks of inner-city life.

Like many OE participants, Wendy has lived in Los Angeles her whole life, but she surprised me when she confessed that she had *never* ventured out of the city. In her lifetime, she had given birth to nine children, developed a drug habit, and eventually sought help by becoming a part of Asian American Drug Abuse Program's (AADAP) residential drug rehabilitation program. It was with her housemates at AADAP that Wendy came to the Sierra. Similar to many OE visitors from inner-city LA, she was shy and quiet when she first arrived in the Mono Basin, clearly outside of her "comfort zone." Nevertheless, she was willing to take on the challenges we had planned for her stay—including the infamous solo night walk in the Jeffrey Pine Forest.

After her walk, Wendy joined me beside the pine tree. Her hard breathing steadily became quiet and rhythmic. Her eyes glistened in the moonlight, and she looked at me and shrugged

*Continued on page 9*

# Lee Vining Creek Trail Getting Back In Shape

*Caltrans and the CCC Fix Things Up, One Storm Water Problem Remains to be Solved*

by Greg Reis

Over three years after Caltrans officially closed the books on the Rush Creek Highway Widening Project, one of the last major problems stemming from the construction has been fixed. Four years of erosion and sedimentation of the Lee Vining Creek Trail at the south end of town have finally ended!

Beginning in the fall of 2001, the new larger highway (still under construction at the time) channeled runoff water down the hillside at the entrance to the Creek Trail. This additional runoff repeatedly eroded the trail and hillside, creating gullies several feet deep in places and depositing sediment directly into Lee Vining Creek.

After much discussion, Caltrans initially tried an emergency fix (*Winter 2003 Newsletter*) that would infiltrate water along the slope below the wall. This fix failed, and Caltrans tried various options to adjust the situation, with repeated failures after each rainstorm. Finally this spring, they reconstructed the trail and ran the pipe all the way down the hill so stormwater runoff can no longer erode the trail and hillside. The only erosion from this summer's thunderstorms were some small gullies in one place that can be addressed

with a water bar across the trail. The Committee greatly appreciates Caltrans' diligent work in cooperation with the Forest Service in recent months to solve this problem.

Now the only remaining significant trail erosion is from the storm drain below the Caltrans Maintenance Yard. A temporary solution to this problem worked well last summer when the Lee Vining Public Utilities District diverted the flow from this drain into a holding pond to stop a sewage spill from running down the drain into the creek. Throughout the time the temporary pond existed there was no storm water runoff that reached the trail. The Committee is drafting a letter to the relevant agencies recommending the pond be created again as a permanent solution to this problem.

Without the storm water worries, the main problem remaining on the trail is annual maintenance. Wet weather caused vigorous growth of trailside plants this summer, and by August it was badly overgrown in places. Thanks to a California Conservation Corps crew from San Bernardino, this problem was fixed as well! The trail is now wide and passable, until next year ... when trail maintenance volunteers will be welcome once again! ❖

## *Outdoor Experiences from page 8*

her shoulders—whether it was her way of saying, “that wasn’t so bad,” or “well, I did my best,” I’ll never know, but either way I sensed some pride in her gesture. Her presence by my side that night proved that she had the strength to overcome her fears and emerge more confident.

For me, Wendy embodies exactly what has affected and touched me most during my experience with the OE program. She, like many of our OE participants during the 2005 season, has overcome some incredibly difficult challenges, yet she has continued to find her way out of the darkness. While she could have given up on herself during her drug addiction or even during the night walk in the forest, she refused to throw in the towel without a fight. In addition, even though she had never been outside of LA, she opened herself up to the opportunities provided by the OE program and the Mono Basin, and trusted herself enough to, in the end, come out on top.

While I’ve seen many OE participants of all ages come and go in the past summer months, I still think about Wendy from time to time and hope that she didn’t put her memories of the Mono Basin and her newfound courage behind her when she returned to LA. After all, the Outdoor Experiences program is not only about outdoor education and learning the value of nature. It’s also about spending time alone—solo—and learning to find the inner courage and confidence to face

and overcome life’s greatest challenges. —Maggie Witt ❖  
*\*names have been changed for privacy*



*Maggie and the Asian American Drug Abuse Program group, after having survived the night walk, during their stay in the Mono Basin.*

# Mono County Supports Hoover Wilderness Additions

*Mono County Board of Supervisors Act Unanimously*

by Elin Ljung

*Editor's note: Many members have inquired about the ongoing efforts to designate additional lands near the Mono Basin as wilderness. While the wilderness additions are outside the Mono Lake Committee's primary area of work, we thought this update would be of interest.*

On Tuesday, August 2<sup>nd</sup>, the Mono County Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to support the proposed addition to the Hoover Wilderness, which would increase the existing area by 40,000 acres. This agreement comes on the heels of nearly six months of negotiations between wilderness advocates and recreational snowmobile users, and as a result, contains elements of compromise for both sides.

The 40,000-acre extension goes a long way toward ensuring future protection for a dramatic stretch of the Sierra Nevada near Sonora Pass. The proposed addition is located in the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest, bordered by Yosemite National Park and the Emigrant Wilderness Area, and has a portion of the Pacific Crest Trail

running through it. This area includes Fremont Lake, Rainbow Meadow, Tower Peak, Piute Meadow, and the environmentally sensitive headwaters of the West Walker River.

Wilderness advocates called for an end to recreational snowmobiling in the Leavitt Bowl, which has technically not been open to snowmobiling since 1984, although this provision has never been enforced by the Forest Service. However, the compromise that the Board passed includes letting the 7,660 acres of the Leavitt Bowl be legally open to recreational snowmobiles. In addition, another 3,200-acre parcel that can be accessed from Bridgeport would also be open to snowmobiles, providing an opportunity for winter tourism.

The agreement asks the Forest Service to ensure that recreational use is safe and environmentally sound. The compromise specifies an end date of April 15<sup>th</sup> for snowmobiling in the two recreational parcels. This will allow for responsible ecosystem management. Additionally, after the end date backcountry skiers will have a

chance to visit the area without experiencing snowmobile traffic. The Forest Service can exercise an option to extend that end date in heavy winters, when bigger snowpack would protect natural resources for longer. In order to help the Forest Service effectively monitor and enforce the new snowmobile laws, the compromise includes a request for funding.

## **The Next Step**

Now that the Mono County Board has passed the proposed addition to the Hoover Wilderness, the next step lies with Representative Howard "Buck" McKeon (R-Santa Clarita). He has pledged to introduce federal legislation reflecting the compromise which could make the Hoover Wilderness extension a reality.

For more information contact Sally Miller at the Wilderness Society ([sally\\_miller@twsw.org](mailto:sally_miller@twsw.org)) at (760) 934-4473. ❖

*Elin Ljung is the Committee's Communications Intern. She's been trying on other people's houses and pets as the new local house sitter.*

## *Mill Creek from page 4*

the ditch to carry 40–52 cfs of water in contrast to the current maximum of roughly 15 cfs—is part of a settlement agreed to by Southern California Edison (the power plant operator), land management agencies, the Department of Fish and Game, CalTrout, and the Mono Lake Committee.

FERC does not have to follow a fixed timetable to issue its ruling on the settlement, and earlier hopes for a late summer decision have dimmed. It now seems much more likely that a ruling won't come out until 2006. If FERC adopts the settlement as submitted, refurbishment of the return ditch could be underway within several years, promising healthier, water rights-based flows for Mill Creek and the streamside forest, wildlife, and birds that depend on it.

There has been progress since the settlement was submitted, however, in the FERC procedure. In June, the settlement parties jointly submitted a response to questions and concerns submitted by Mono County and others. (The response will be the subject of a future *Newsletter* article.) In late August FERC issued a request for further documents and information relating to the settlement, indicating that review and analysis is underway in Washington, D.C.

## **Mono County Seeks to Intervene**

Another procedural action happened back in May, when Mono County filed papers seeking recognition by FERC as an official "intervener" in the relicensing process. The County's motivation for seeking such status

appears to be the filing of the settlement agreement. The county cited its role as a public agency and concern for its Conway Ranch water rights as justifications, though it conceded that the settlement doesn't impede delivery of those rights. Southern California Edison opposed the motion, pointing out that "the County is over 22 years late" in its request and noting that the County has passed up previous opportunities to seek intervener status for the same reasons. FERC, which granted the Committee intervener status in 1999, has not yet ruled on Mono County's application. ❖

*Geoff McQuilkin is the Committee's Executive Director of Operations. He has enjoyed hearing Mill Creek flowing all summer long!*

# Stunning Legal Victory in Owens Valley

*Judge Hammers DWP*

*by Mike Prather, Outreach Coordinator, Owens Valley Committee*

*Editor's note: We are excited to share this good news on the restoration front from our friends and aqueduct neighbors the Owens Valley Committee.*

Following a three day evidentiary hearing in April and a strong ruling in June, Inyo County Superior Court Judge Lee Cooper brought out the “big stick” on July 25, 2005 and thumped the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (DWP) for its chronic delays in implementing the re-watering of 62 miles of the Lower Owens River. Legal action brought by the Owens Valley Committee, the Sierra Club, and the California Attorney General’s Office requested that the court impose monetary punishments and reductions in groundwater pumping in order to provide DWP with incentives to complete the Lower Owens River Project (LORP) as soon as possible.

The LORP is mitigation for the destruction of springs and wetlands from groundwater pumping that DWP conducted between 1970 and 1990 to fill its “second” aqueduct. This pumping lowered water tables in the Owens Valley, causing the desiccation of large springs and wetlands. Since the Lower Owens River has been dry since the first Los Angeles aqueduct was finished in 1913, the project’s goals call for the creation of 62 miles of riparian habitat and a warm water fishery, with possible willow-cottonwood stands as well as marshes and meadows. However, flows in the river have not yet occurred, despite DWP’s agreement in 1997 to begin the flows in June of 2003.

In the arid American west, re-watering on this scale is as rare as the occurrence of rain. Equally rare is a judge who will help water find its way back into a dry river. “This case has gone on long enough,” said Judge Cooper. “LADWP has been



PHOTO COURTESY OF MIKE PRATHER

*A glimpse of the future for the Lower Owens River.*

out of compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act since 1973. This mitigation should have been accomplished years ago. This can’t be tolerated. No deadlines have been properly met. It’s time it stops.”

Cooper’s order was a strong and severe one—Los Angeles will be permanently denied the use of its “second” aqueduct unless they meet his list of conditions. Initial flows in the river must begin by January 25, 2007 with full flows underway within six months after that. Groundwater pumping will be reduced from 90,000 acre-feet per year (AF/yr) to just over 57,000 AF/yr until the LORP is completed. In addition, Los Angeles is ordered to spread nearly 17,000 AF/yr of surface water to recharge lowered water tables (water tables are from two feet to twenty feet below the 1985 baseline levels in all well fields in the Owens Valley). Beginning on September 5<sup>th</sup> of this year, Los Angeles has been fined \$5,000 per day until the project is completed, and that money will go to the California Department of Fish and Game and

Inyo County to fund monitoring and restoration expenses.

It now appears that the Lower Owens River has a real chance to begin flowing. Although this water is four years late, thanks to Judge Cooper and his list of conditions there are impressive incentives for DWP to honor its commitments. As California Attorney General Bill Lockyer put it, “Even the mighty DWP has to obey the law.”

The champagne will be chilled and ready for the initial flows, so be prepared to join the folks in the Owens Valley for celebrations! ❖

## For More Information

There are always next steps even after huge accomplishments like the recent court ruling. The Owens Valley Committee encourages you to join them in their work in the Owens Valley: see the new visitor center in Lone Pine at 134 E. Bush St., visit online at [www.ovcweb.org](http://www.ovcweb.org), or email [ovc@lonepinetv.com](mailto:ovc@lonepinetv.com).

# Defender of the Trust Awards 2005

by Frances Spivy-Weber

**E**ach year the Mono Lake Committee Board of Directors gives its highest annual award—the Defender of the Trust Award—to individuals who have made extraordinary efforts to champion Mono Lake.

In 2005, the Board selected two recipients: former mayor of Los Angeles Richard Riordan, and former Mono County Supervisor Andrea Lawrence.

## **Richard Riordan**

Mayor Riordan was elected the 39<sup>th</sup> mayor of Los Angeles in June 1993, arriving in the office at an important time for the Mono Lake Committee. The very next year, he, the City Council, and the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (DWP) Commission had to make a decision whether or not to appeal the State Water Resources Control Board's decision that ordered DWP to re-water Mono Basin streams and wetlands for fish and wildlife and raise the lake level to an ecologically sound level. Fortunately for Mono Lake, the City's decision was to accept the Water Board order.

Today Richard can be found working hard as California's Secretary for Education, advising Governor Schwarzenegger on education policy.

## **Andrea Mead Lawrence**

Andrea Mead Lawrence moved to Mammoth Lakes in 1968, and from the outset she has been dedicated to finding the path between protecting the Eastern Sierra environment and protecting the communities of people who live and work in the region.

Andrea, a three-time Olympic skier,

became the first woman in the world to win two gold medals in one Winter Olympics during the Oslo Games in 1952. Once she settled into her new home town of Mammoth, Andrea founded the Friends of Mammoth, a citizen advocacy

group. Their successful legal action prompted the landmark California Supreme Court ruling which held that the California Environmental Quality Act must apply to all private development within the state. Andrea served 16 years on the Mono County Board of Supervisors, and throughout her service to the people and environment of Mono County she has been a wise friend of Mono Lake and the Mono

Basin. Andrea currently heads a new organization, the Andrea Lawrence Institute for Mountains and Rivers (ALIMAR), and continues to serve on the Mono Lake Committee Board of Directors.

Thank you, Richard Riordan. Thank you, Andrea. Your dedication to Mono Lake is inspiring, and we couldn't have made it this far without you!

Over the years countless numbers of people have contributed to the effort to save and protect Mono Lake. Every person's contribution counts! One great way to show your support for Mono Lake is by becoming a member of the Mono Lake Committee—contact Douglas Dunaway ([douglas@monolake.org](mailto:douglas@monolake.org)) at (760) 647-6595.

For more information on the Mono Lake Committee's Defender of the Trust Awards, visit [www.monolake.org/committee/defender/index.html](http://www.monolake.org/committee/defender/index.html). ❖



*In 1994 Mayor Riordan proudly joined Monophiles both on his bicycle and also at DWP headquarters in Los Angeles, the staging area for the Los Angeles to Mono Lake Bike-A-Thon.*



*Andrea Mead Lawrence, currently on the Mono Lake Committee Board of Directors and head of the Andrea Lawrence Institute for Mountains and Rivers.*

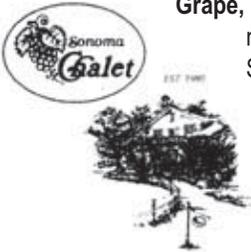
# Free Drawing to Protect Mono Lake

## Send in Your Tickets Today!

The Free Drawing is an annual Mono Lake Committee fundraiser. Send in your tickets today (find them in the center of this *Newsletter*) and get a chance to win one of these amazing prizes donated by generous supporters of the Mono Lake Committee.



**2 Round-Trip Airline Tickets** donated by the Flying Friend of Mono; good for any Southwest Airlines destination in the US!



**Grape, Vine and Wine Sonoma Getaway** two nights for two in a private cottage at the Sonoma Chalet Bed and Breakfast with a personalized tour of the Alexander Valley with Randy Arnold of Barefoot Cellars Winery.

**Deluxe Camping Package** from Wilson's Eastside Sports of Bishop includes items such as trekking poles, a backpack, stove, tent, thermarest, and sleeping bag, from companies like Leki, MSR, Western Mountaineering, Dana Designs, and Cascade Designs!

**Tahoe Area Getaway** at Sorensen's Resort for two nights in Hope Valley.



**Lake Tahoe Vacation:** a two-night mid-week stay for two in a cabin at Zephyr Cove Resort with a Lake Tahoe Cruise.



**Weekend for Two at Rainbow Tarns Bed and Breakfast** at Crowley Lake.

**2-Night Getaway at the Double Eagle Resort & Spa** in June Lake in their new cabin suites.



**Salomon Scream 8 Pilot Hot Skis & S811 Ti Bindings** from Footloose Sports, Mammoth Lakes.



**Yosemite Association Seminar** for two.



**Framed Original Mono Lake Watercolor** by Bridgeport artist Nicola Voorhees.



**Handmade Flute** by Susan Toncray donated by the Walker Lake Interpretive Association.

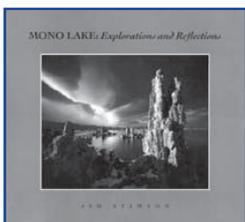


**THE TOGGERY**  
Quality Since 1922

**Patagonia Women's and Men's R2 Jackets.**

**\$50 Gift Certificate** from The Toggery in Bishop.

**Mono Lake Committee Gift Packs:** show your support for Mono Lake!



**Mono Lake: Explorations and Reflections** coffee table book by Jim Stimson.



Intern Allie Jones having fun separating Free Drawing tickets before VERY carefully putting every last ticket back in the box.

ELIN LUNGS

## Streamwatch

### Highest Peak Flows Since 1998

by Greg Reis

This year's spring runoff began in mid-May with a warm storm that rained on the snowpack and triggered rises in all the creeks. Warm weather in late May, mid June, and early July caused several major snowmelt peaks on the creeks. Most reservoirs were spilling by July, and all of the Mono Basin streams experienced their highest flows since at least 1998. The Parker Creek flow was the highest of the last decade with the exception of the January 1997 rain-on-snow flood, and lower Mill Creek received its biggest flow since at least 1986.

The main tool being used to restore the streams damaged by diversions is the release of peak flows that mimic the pattern of natural flows. While Walker and Parker creeks are flow-through and experience flows close to natural magnitude and duration, the

magnitude and duration of Lee Vining and Rush Creek flows are restricted by Southern California Edison reservoirs and capacity limitations in the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (DWP) system.

In wetter years, the Grant Lake Reservoir outlet cannot release flows high enough to comply with the conditions of DWP's water rights licenses, so a temporary solution that DWP is trying is to augment Rush Creek's peak flow with water diverted from Lee Vining Creek following its peak flow. This year was the first time the augmentation was successfully tested and operated, allowing 400 cubic feet per second (cfs) to flow down Rush Creek for eight days without Grant Lake Reservoir spilling.

Creek	2005 Peak Flow (preliminary)		Highest Flow Since
Walker	May 28	52+ cfs	Jan 1, 1997 (54 cfs)
Lee Vining	Jun 15	403 cfs	Jul 9, 1998 (451 cfs)
Rush above Grant	Jun 16	449+ cfs	Jul 22, 1998 (519 cfs)
Rush at Mono Lake	Jun 30	473+ cfs	Jul 23, 1998 (635+ cfs)
Parker	Jul 8	79+ cfs	Jan 2, 1997 (94 cfs)
Mill at Mono Lake	Jul 2-8	160+ cfs	Jun-Jul 1986 (136-200 cfs)

One of the bigger changes made by this year's peak flows was on the A-4 Channel of Lee Vining Creek which was re-watered as part of the interim restoration work in 1994. This year's high flows pushed a gravel plug into the entrance, causing it to dry up at low flows. Luckily, two more entrances were created by the January 1997 flood, and one of these kept flowing longer into the fall. It remains to be seen whether the stream monitoring team will decide to keep this channel open—which it may want to do until the former riparian forest has recovered in this area. ❖

## Lakewatch

### Mono Lake Rises Another Foot!

by Greg Reis

High runoff to Mono Lake occurred in June and July, peaking the first week in July, when the lake was rising one fifth of a foot per week. Between April 1<sup>st</sup> and July 28<sup>th</sup>, Mono Lake rose one foot to a high point of 6382.6 feet above sea level. This is a 2-foot rise since November 2004. Aside from a period between 1997 and 2002, the lake hasn't been this high since 1973.

Everyone seems to be talking about this coming winter: Is it going to be another big one? Right now the long term outlook for this region shows warmer-than-average weather for the next 12 months. The precipitation outlook is average.

If you believe that recent climate patterns are a predictor of the

future, we can speak in probabilities. 15 years since 1940 (23%) were at least as wet as last winter. Seven of those 15 years were followed by a dry year and eight were wet, so by that measure there is about a 50/50 chance of a wet year. But ten of the 15 wettest years were followed by a wet year during the next two years, so there is a 67% chance of a wet year in the next two years.

Wet and dry years do tend to come in cycles, however, and this was the first wet year in seven years. Of the 29 wet years since 1940, only eight of them had a dry year before and after. If you trust that pattern to continue, this means there is a 72% chance of a wet winter.

Of course, wishful thinking plays into which statistics one chooses to look at, and it is also true that the first wet year after a string of at least three dry years is often followed by a dry year. This happened three times at the end of the five dry periods since 1940.

So the bottom line is that anything

could happen!

According to the lake level models that were based on the climate of the 1940-89 period, Mono Lake could reach its target elevation of 6,391' in 18-29 years from the 1994 decision (18 using a rolling average and 29 using identical hydrology). With seven to 18 years more to go from 2005, we should expect to see an average rise of about 0.5 to 1.25 feet per year. Of course, if the lake hasn't reached its target in nine years from now, the State Water Resources Control Board will hold a hearing on the matter. In addition, the impact of global warming on evaporation and precipitation rates has not yet been determined; however increases in evaporation are likely, and could already be affecting Mono Lake's level. ❖

*Greg Reis is the Committee's Information Specialist. This fall he is touring the West's great natural water attractions.*

6417'

6392'

6382'

6372'

Prediversion lake level, 1941

Target lake level

Current lake level

Historic low, 1982

# Mono Basin Journal

A Roundup of Quiet Happenings at Mono Lake

by Geoffrey McQuilkin



GEORGE MCQUILKIN

The first yellow leaf drifted past in August, but we all ignored it—at the office we agreed that it was too soon for autumn. And it was, though the usual excuses about drought stress causing trees to drop their leaves didn't carry much weight in this wet year. Then the first of September took the thermometer to freezing overnight, and suddenly we're into a transition out of summer that can't be denied. Gloriously sunny days still allow shorts and T-shirts—as long as you pack much warmer wear for the evening. Crisp mornings speak of new weather patterns on the way. And the trees keep track of it all; more than a few yellow leaves lie on the road now. I'll ignore them for a week or two more, until the aspen groves light up with red, orange, and yellow colors. Then the time to celebrate fall will truly be at hand.

Not, apparently, that my garden will last that long. Growing vegetables in the Mono Basin is a constant race against frost,

and last night was the finish line. The victories were in the asparagus and peas already eaten; the photo finish was in the attempt to harvest the almost-ripe tomatoes from the vine before the 24° night turned them into solid rocks. So I got to learn some new things about frost damage as I worked out under the stars to clip a few as-yet-unfrozen fruits from their stems. Such as, did you know that tomato plants look vibrant and healthy when frozen solid? It's not until the morning thaw that they turn black and wilted. In addition, the frozen, serrated leaves of a zucchini plant can reasonably be considered weapons, given their ability to slice one's leg. Still, with the stars of Orion rising in the east and coyotes wailing off somewhere near Black Point beneath the first hints of morning light, who can really begrudge the cycle of the seasons? Bring on autumn, the migratory birds, the winter snows; Mono Lake is ready for it all. ❖

## Mono Basin Field Station—Personal Tours Available

The Mono Basin Field Station has been a lively place this summer! You may remember that two summers ago, the Mono Lake Committee bought the Kings Inn, a 16-unit motel. The goal of the Field Station is to support scientific research in the Mono Basin through providing much-needed and difficult-to-find housing for researchers. We have been gradually turning the facility into living quarters and workspace for visiting scientists.

This past spring and summer eleven scientists worked on a wide range of avian and vegetation studies. During the winter the number of researchers doing field work dwindles, but some remain, such as PRBO Conservation Science with various bird-related studies in the Mono Basin and Eastern Sierra, and



the US Geological Survey researchers are working on the Greater Sage Grouse project.

We would love for you to see our “work in progress.” And yes, we are looking for financial support to pay off the \$600,000 mortgage and an estimated \$400,000 of refurbishing expenses. But whether you can contribute a million dollars or nothing, please contact me to set up a half-hour tour of the Field Station if your trip brings you to Lee Vining. You will be inspired by the energy and promise of the people working on and in the Field Station. Once again, the Committee is making big things happen on a shoestring.

Contact Frances Spivy-Weber ([frances@monolake.org](mailto:frances@monolake.org)) at (310) 316-0041 if you're interested!

# The Forgotten Season

## Winter Photography in the Mono Basin



PHOTO COURTESY OF RICHARD KNEPP

January 13-15, 2006

\$195 per person/ \$175 for Mono Lake Committee members

There is a visual quiet that compliments the silence marking this season in a most remarkable place. A lifting morning poconip fog, tufa towers jacketed in snow and reflected in the mirror of the lake's surface, ice sculpting crystalline filigree along creek and lake banks. Come share in the wonder that provides a very different photographic opportunity.

This photography field seminar will be based in Lee Vining and will explore various locations along the lake, photographing the serenity and beauty that is the Mono Basin in winter.

Though primarily a field seminar, there will be discussions covering composition and methods of proper exposure under the diverse variety of lighting conditions encountered during winter in the Eastern Sierra, the Zone System for color and black and white, visualization, filtration, and developing a personal vision. This field seminar is for the enthusiastic color and/or black and white photographer with a working knowledge of his or her camera.

Instructor Rick Knepp is a former Mono Lake Committee staff member and long-time photographer whose autumn workshops

have sold out for years running. Rick has studied with master printers John Sexton and Jim Stimson, teaches photography and darkroom techniques, and directs and assists at workshops around the Pacific Southwest. Rick is a veteran of Mono winters and his experience will allow you to take advantage of the many winter photographic opportunities.

Come prepared for the cold winter weather. This seminar will take place regardless of weather or road conditions. Be prepared for the possibility of driving in snow, or the additional drive time that may be required when Sierra passes are either closed for the winter or closed temporarily due to snow.

Cost is for tuition only. Participants must arrange their own accommodation. There will be no refunds due to weather. Seminar limited to 15 participants.

For registration or more information on the fourth annual winter photography seminar, contact Education Director Bartshé Miller ([bartshe@monolake.org](mailto:bartshe@monolake.org)) at (760) 647-6595.

had seen that land auction sign didn't matter, for he knew the core truth: Mono Lake requires, from us all, unending vigilance.

We've been here before. The Committee won the great water fight with the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (DWP) in 1994. Was it over, time to head home? Was that all the Committee stood for: a lake level on a piece of paper?

Mono Lake supporters knew better. Mono Lake is a place worth saving—for us, for our children. That's a long-term commitment.

In the days since the water fight, Committee members have stayed committed, in huge numbers. And that level of commitment has motivated new folks who share our vision to join the effort. I'm always impressed that fully half of the Committee's members have joined up since the DWP fight came to an end!

Why have we all taken on this collective responsibility and stayed committed? I think, quite simply, it is because we love Mono Lake and the surrounding lands of the Mono Basin. That motivates us to take on responsibility for Mono Lake's future. Responsibility for preserving ecological health, responsibility for bringing back the natural wealth that an earlier generation took from us through excessive water diversions, responsibility for preserving the unique character of the area, responsibility for sharing this special place with the next generation.

I suspect this is what unites the 15,000 Mono Lake Committee members: a common belief in personal responsibility that motivates us to put our time and energy and even money on the line to be certain the right thing happens at Mono Lake.

The results have been remarkable. Here at Mono Lake, with 27 years of grassroots effort, we've shown California and the country that we can do it. We've made a statement: we *will* be responsible—we will do the right thing to protect the millions of birds, unique ecosystem, scenic beauty, and vibrant streams and forests of this extraordinary place. And not only are we doing it, we're doing it with win-win solutions, the biggest example being the ability to meet the real water needs of Los Angeles without destroying Mono Lake.

So, what of that land auction sign? Well, its appearance was

a surprise, but it wasn't unexpected; the Committee has been tracking plans for the auction parcel for several years.

Mono Lake has room for people—but there's no room for unplanned growth, overdevelopment, and profit-driven subdivision. There are viable alternatives, such as land trades and conservation easements, and now is the time to make sure *our* vision charts the future for Mono Lake. You can be sure that Committee staff are already working to create new alternatives, figuring out how to make them a reality in the Mono Basin—how to turn vigilance into results.

---

I walked, in mid-summer, upstream along Mill Creek, past the dry channels of the once-healthy stream, past the downed trunks of hundred-year-old trees, past the signs of wildlife long gone—and suddenly, past a great green cottonwood towering more than fifty feet overhead, leaves rustling in the breeze, birds in its branches.

I was walking through the remains of the great gallery forest of Mill Creek. The cottonwood is a remnant—a surviving fragment—of the rich streamside forest that once stretched six miles from the mountain canyon to the shores of Mono Lake, harboring songbirds, fish, deer, waterfowl, and other wildlife. Somehow that cottonwood survives today on the thin flow left in Mill Creek, providing clues of what this once-rich stream might be like if brought back to health.

Back in the office, stacks of reports, studies, and legal filings speak to the ongoing effort to repair Mill Creek's troubles. With continuing vigilance, water that is grabbed at an upstream diversion point, far in excess of legal rights, will flow again down the creek, and restoration of Mono's third-largest tributary will begin.

That land auction sign is still out there, reminding us of challenges ahead. The remnants of Mill Creek's forest, that tree swaying in the breeze, do much more. They provide hope. Hope that, by being responsible, staying vigilant and doing the right thing—all the things that Committee members do every day—the Mono Lake and Mono Basin of the future will be even healthier and more vibrant than they are today. ❖



GEOFF MCQUILKIN

# The Fall Catalog

from the Mono Lake Committee Bookstore



*Long Live Mono Lake Embroidered*



*Mono Lake Is For Lovers*

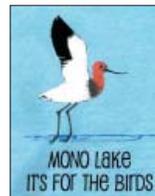
## WOMEN'S MONO LAKE T-SHIRTS

These three great styles modeled by three great staffers Anna, Clare, and Elin, have been redone in exciting new colors. Our "Long Live Mono Lake" shirt has a simple embroidered design on a new bright aqua shirt. The "Mono Lake Is For Lovers" design harks back to the simple single color silk screen designs of the 70s. This version is on a pink shirt with chocolate collar and arm bands with matching chocolate ink. "It's For the Birds" features gorgeous silk screened avocets on front and back from local watercolorist Nancy Overholtz on a sky blue shirt. All shirts are preshrunk 100% cotton.

*Long Live Mono Lake T-shirt, aqua, women's S-XL: \$20.00*

*Mono Lake Is For Lovers T-shirt, pink/chocolate, women's S-XL: \$18.00*

*It's For The Birds T-shirt, sky blue, women's S-XL: \$18.00*



*It's For  
The Birds, front*



*It's For The Birds, back*



*Mono Lake Eastern Sierra California*



## "MONO LAKE – EASTERN SIERRA" EMBROIDERED T-SHIRT

Seen here on smiling staffers Allie, Rebecca, and Greg, this embroidered design depicts Mono Lake's tufa formations with the backdrop of the Sierra Crest from Mono Pass north to Mt. Warren. It is available in two garment washed styles: a 100% cotton long-sleeve unisex t-shirt in smoke grey, and a ¾ sleeve hooded T-shirt in periwinkle blue. The hooded version is cut snug for women with 5% spandex for extra give and stretch.

*Embroidered unisex T-shirt, smoke grey, adult S-XL: \$26.00  
XXL: \$28.00*

*Embroidered hooded T-shirt, periwinkle blue, women's S-XL: \$45.00*

Call (760) 647-6595 to order



MALLARD



RED-TAILED HAWK



GREEN WINGED TEAL



KESTREL



GOLDEN EAGLE



GREAT HORNED OWL



EARRINGS AVAILABLE IN ALL FEATHER TYPES  
*Pins and earrings shown at actual size*



RAVEN



CARDINAL



PEREGRINE FALCON



STELLER'S JAY

### LEATHER FEATHER JEWELRY

Paul Burnett is one of America's leading leather artists and has been producing these wonderful pieces for 20 years. For each piece a master feather is hand carved and tooled in leather and then a plate is made to reproduce exact copies using a hydraulic press. Impressions are cut and worked by hand and then painted to represent the real feather. Some feathers are painted using light interference colors in order to duplicate the changing iridescence found in real feathers. All earrings and pins are finished with quality 14K gold-filled findings. Available in: Mallard (secondary), Green Winged Teal (secondary), Golden Eagle (tail, immature), Red-Tailed Hawk (tail), Kestrel (tail), Great Horned Owl (tail), Raven, Cardinal (wing), Peregrine Falcon, Steller's Jay. Quantities are limited.

*Leather Feather Earrings, please specify bird: \$22.00 pair*

*Leather Feather Pins, please specify bird: \$14.00 each*

Call (760) 647-6595 to order



**HAND-PAINTED CHRISTMAS ORNAMENTS**

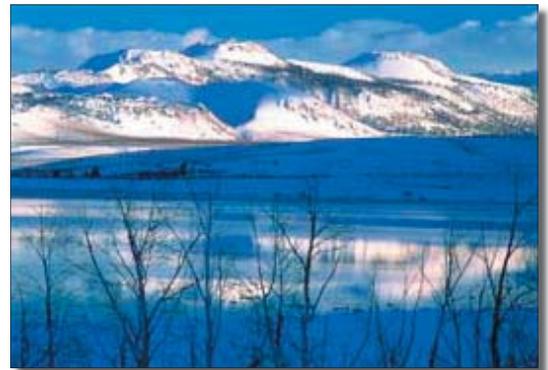
Artist Wendy Rismeyer has created three beautiful Mono Lake scenes, each handpainted in oils on a glass Christmas ornament. Scenes depicted include a Great Horned Owl perched on a tufa, a Steller's Jay on a winter pine bough, and Lee Vining Creek with an early summer lupine bloom. These ornaments will be wonderful keepsakes your family will treasure for many years.

*Hand-Painted Ornament, please specify Great Horned Owl, Steller's Jay, or Lupine: \$14.95 each*

**MONO CRATERS HOLIDAY CARD SET**

Stephen Ingram's lovely photo of the snow-covered Mono Craters reflected in Mono Lake graces the front of this holiday card. Enjoy the holidays and wish for a big snowpack! Message inside reads "Best wishes for a joyous holiday season."

*Mono Craters Holiday Card Set, 8 cards with envelopes: \$11.95*



**TOM KILLION HIGH SIERRA HOLIDAY CARD SET**

Tom Killion's set of beautiful and popular High Sierra woodcut prints includes ten cards, two each of Tuolumne Meadows, Half Dome, East Pinnacles Creek, Horse Creek Trail, and Kearsarge Pinnacles. Message inside reads "Peace on Earth."

*Tom Killion High Sierra Holiday Card Set, 10 cards with envelopes: \$12.95*



**WENDY MORGAN HOLIDAY CARD SET**

Four charming holiday designs from one of our favorite artists! The first has a loon on a bright red background, the second has a group of sanderlings carrying ornaments, the third shows a family of bears with festive holly, and the fourth design depicts a pair of nuthatches. Message inside reads, "May you have a Happy Holiday and a Joyous New Year."

*Wendy Morgan Holiday Card Set, 10 cards with envelopes, please specify Loon, Sanderlings, Bears, or Nuthatches: \$11.95*

Call (760) 647-6595 to order



**COASTER SETS**

These two sets offer the beautiful artwork of Wendy Morgan on four-inch-square heavy paperboard. Each set contains four coasters, one of each design. The everyday set includes Northern Cardinals, Chickadees, Hummingbirds, and Goldfinches. The holiday set includes a Raven, Cardinal, Chickadee, and Common Loon.

*Coaster Set, please specify Everyday Set or Holiday Set: \$6.00 each*



**WOOD CARVINGS**

These unique miniature keepsakes are each hand-crafted by our friend Hunter in Yuma, Arizona. They are hand cut from various hardwoods using a scroll saw and then sanded and oiled. Wood carvings stand approximately 1½" tall. No stains are used, and each one is slightly different.

*Wood Carving, please specify Bear, Hummingbird, Eagle, Coyote, or Quail: \$6.95 each*



**BEE BAR PRODUCTS**

The Bee Bar is a solid bar of lotion made from a unique blend of natural oils and emollients that heals on contact. Apply it to dry skin on hands, feet, and elbows for soothing comfort. Available in standard 2 oz bar or a 0.6 oz travel size in decorative silver tins. Unscented (slight natural beeswax aroma).

*Bee Bar, 2 oz tin: \$10.50 each*

*Travel Bee Bar, 0.6 oz tin: \$6.50 each*

**ART SUPPLIES**

Here are two great ideas for the artist on your gift list—a travel watercolor set and a basic drawing and sketching set!



The travel watercolor set comes in a compact 4½ inch round durable plastic case that contains 10 half pans, a brush, and a mixing palette.

The Studio Watercolor Pad is available in two sizes and contains 12 sheets of 140 lb cold press watercolor paper.

*Travel Watercolor Set: \$22.95*

*Small Studio Watercolor Pad, 7"x 9½": \$5.95*

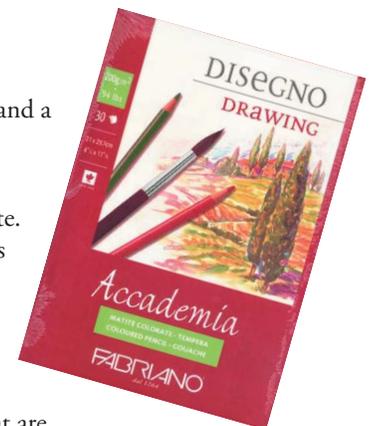
*Large Studio Watercolor Pad, 9½"x 12½": \$8.50*



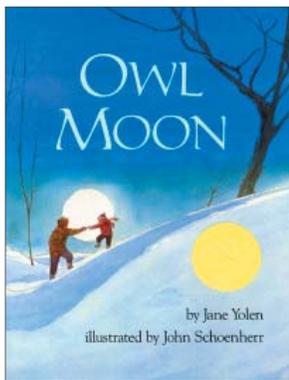
From Cretacolor Austria comes this set of fine art materials that are well suited for sketching and drawing as well as experimental techniques. This set offers artist's pencils (graphite, charcoal, white chalk, sanguine oil, and sepia), sanguine chalk burnt, sketching charcoal, paper wipe, and a kneaded erasure all in a carrying tin. The Academia Drawing Pad contains 30 sheets of heavyweight (94 lb) acid-free white paper with a slightly textured surface.

*Sketching Set: \$17.95*

*Academia Drawing Pad 8¼"x 11¾": \$9.95*



Call (760) 647-6595 to order

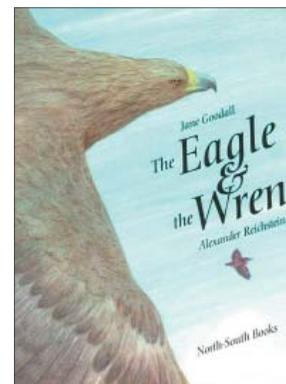


**OWL MOON**

BY JANE YOLEN, ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN SCHOENHERR

In this Caldecott winner, a girl and her father go owling on a moonlit winter night near the farm where they live. They travel through a snowy forest where here and there, hidden in ink-blue shadows, a fox, raccoon, field mouse and deer watch them pass. An air of expectancy builds as Pa imitates the Great Horned Owl's call once without answer, then again. The two walk through the woods with nothing but hope and each other in a journey that will fascinate many a child. Ages 2–6.

*Owl Moon, hardcover, Philomel Books, 32 pages, 11¼" x 8¾": \$16.99*



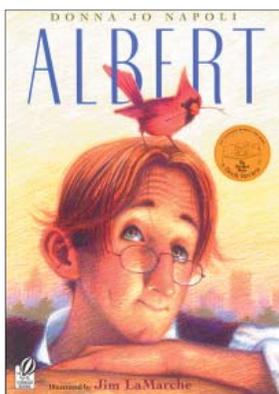
**THE EAGLE AND THE WREN**

BY JANE GOODALL, ILLUSTRATED BY ALEXANDER REICHSTEIN

In this elegant picture book stressing the importance of teamwork, Goodall retells a favorite childhood fable about which of the birds can fly the highest. Tiny wren secretly piggybacks on the eagle, soars up slightly higher for a peek around, then concedes contest victory to the friend that made it possible.

Goodall's rhythms make for a dramatic read-aloud, and the presentation is further embellished by realistic watercolor depictions of owls, ostriches, and vultures, among many other birds. Ages 4–8.

*The Eagle and the Wren, softcover, North-South Books, 32 pages, 11½" x 8¾": \$6.95*



**ALBERT**

BY DONNA JO NAPOLI, ILLUSTRATED BY JIM LAMARCHE

Every day Albert sticks his hand out the window and decides it's too cold, too hot, too wet, or too breezy to go out. Until one day when he works his hand out through the grillwork over his window—plop! A cardinal drops a twig in his palm. Before he knows it, he is stranded, holding a brand new nest in his hand. The days go by, eggs are laid, the papa cardinal starts feeding berries to Albert, and, inevitably, chicks hatch. Meanwhile, Albert is slowly developing a different take on life. His previously protected world opens up as he witnesses the highs and lows of nature's course. Ages 5–8.

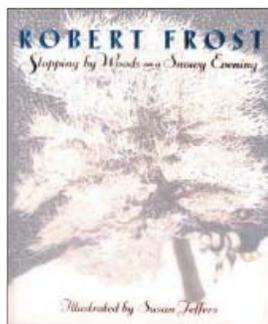
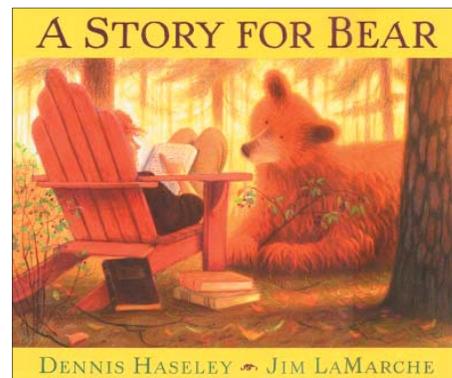
*Albert, softcover, Voyager Books, 32 pages, 12" x 8¼": \$6.00*

**A STORY FOR BEAR**

BY DENNIS HASELEY, ILLUSTRATED BY JIM LAMARCHE

A young bear finds a piece of paper with black marks on it and wonders about its meaning over the years. Then one summer he discovers a cabin and a woman reading in a clearing. He returns day after day until one afternoon, she invites him to sit with her. Thus begins a daily routine of the woman reading aloud to the bear, who cannot understand the words, but is mesmerized by the tones and melodies of her voice. The beautiful pastel artwork conveys the passing seasons and the growing friendship between the woman and the bear. Ages 5–8.

*A Story for Bear, hardcover, Silver Whistle Harcourt Inc., 32 pages, 9¼" x 11": \$16.00*



**STOPPING BY WOODS ON A SNOWY EVENING**

POETRY BY ROBERT FROST, ILLUSTRATED BY SUSAN JEFFERS

Robert Frost's well-known poem takes on new life in its first picture-book adaptation. The kindly older gentleman who narrates the poem stops his sleigh to feed the forest birds and creatures. He stops once more to visit his daughter and grandchildren, and then is off again through a blizzard, with many miles to go before he can sleep. This beautifully illustrated book is a wonderful winter read-aloud and a great way to introduce children to classic poetry. Ages 4–8.

*Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening, hardcover, Dutton Children's Books, 32 pages, 8½" x 7½": \$15.99*

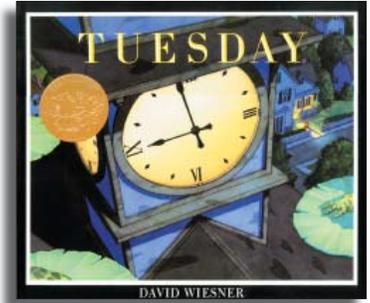
Call (760) 647-6595 to order

TUESDAY

BY DAVID WIESNER

Slowly and quietly on this particular Tuesday, a few fat frogs begin hovering over a swamp, riding lily pads like magic carpets over the countryside and into an unsuspecting town. With rich artwork and hardly any words Wiesner creates a wondrous and surreal romp as silent as the middle of the night. This Caldecott winner is a visual treat for all ages. Ages 4 & up.

*Tuesday, softcover, Clarion Books, 32 pages, 9"x 10½": \$6.95*



DO PRINCESSES WEAR HIKING BOOTS?

BY CARMELA LAVIGNA COYLE, ILLUSTRATED BY MIKE GORDON

In a rhyming text, a little girl asks her mother various questions about princesses. She wants to know if they play in the sand and dirt, wear jeans and a messy old shirt, do chores, follow rules, eat vegetables, snort as they laugh, etc. Each spread has a one-line question facing the mother's one-line response. The whimsical paintings compliment the funny text. Ages 3–8.

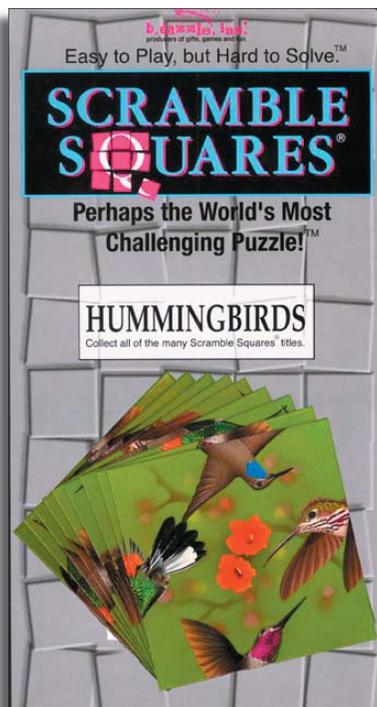
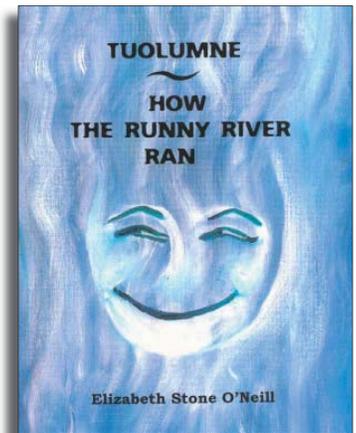
*Do Princesses Wear Hiking Boots?, hardcover, Rising Moon Books, 32 pages, 9½"x 11": \$15.95*

TUOLUMNE: HOW THE RUNNY RIVER RAN

BY ELIZABETH STONE O'NEILL

The Tuolumne River has run for a long time. The river tells its story from the earliest times of volcanoes, earthquakes, and glaciers to the coming of Native Americans, miners, and engineers who would dam her up. Still the river keeps running, bringing recreation and beauty and life-giving water. O'Neill's vibrant oil paintings and poetic language bring the story of this beautiful river to life. Ages 4–8.

*Tuolumne: How the Runny River Ran, softcover, Albicaulis Press, 44 pages, 11"x 8½": \$18.95*



SCRAMBLE SQUARES PUZZLE

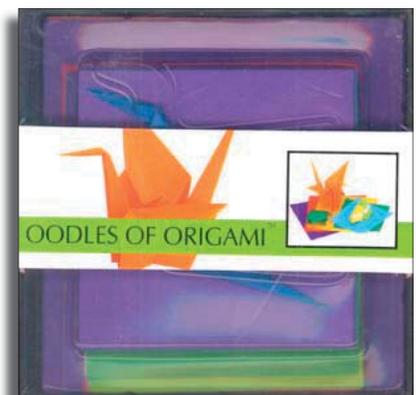
Unscramble the nine square pieces by perfectly matching the pictures on the squares' edges, forming a large square. Easy to play but hard to solve! Please specify picture type. Ages 4–104.

*Scramble Squares Puzzle, please specify Bald Eagles, Bears, Birds of Prey, Butterflies, Forest Animals, Horses, Hummingbirds, or Snakes: \$8.95 each*

OODLES OF ORIGAMI

This compact kit is a wonderful introduction to the art of origami and makes a great travel companion. Housed in a 4¼" square plastic case it contains 48 sheets of origami paper in four different sizes, a 64" page instruction book, and one pre-folded peace crane. Ages 4 & up.

*Oodles of Origami: \$10.95 each*



Call (760) 647-6595 to order

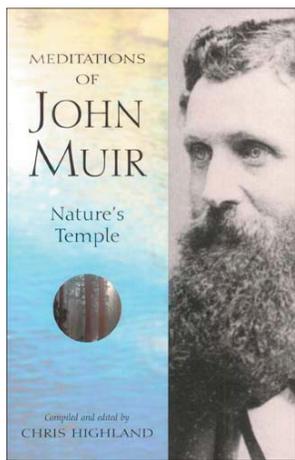
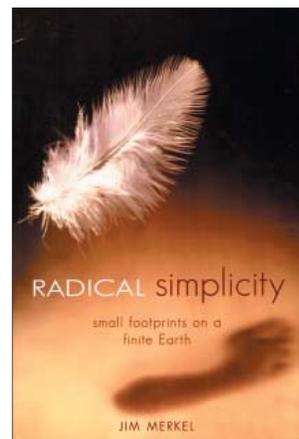
A SELECTION OF MONO LAKE COMMITTEE STAFF-RECOMMENDED BOOKS!

**RADICAL SIMPLICITY: SMALL FOOTPRINTS ON A FINITE EARTH**

BY JIM MERKEL

“This book asks you to reevaluate your life. What are your priorities? What footprint do you wish to leave on the planet? How important is the earth’s ecological health to you? This book will tell you why and how to live more simply and in the process, it will change you.” —Jonna McKone, 2005 Summer Intern

*Radical Simplicity, softcover, New Society Publishers, 288 pages, 9¼" x 6": \$17.95*



**MEDITATIONS OF JOHN MUIR: NATURE’S TEMPLE**

COMPILED AND EDITED BY CHRIS HIGHLAND

“John Muir’s writing is both inspirational and elegant. I carry this book when hiking and stop to read one of the many short passages to awaken my perception of wherever I might be. Highland has chosen the crème de la crème of Muir’s work.” —Beth Harley, 2005 Retail Assistant

*Meditations of John Muir, softcover, Wilderness Press, 145 pages, 7" x 4½": \$11.95*

**THE EARTH IS ENOUGH: GROWING UP IN A WORLD OF FLY-FISHING,**

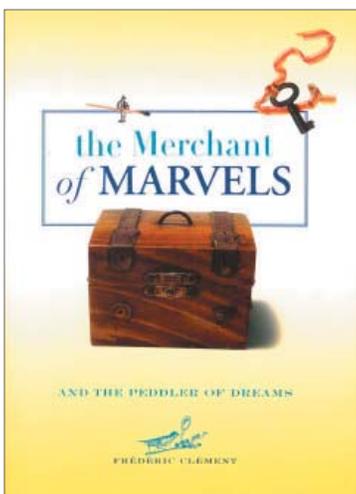
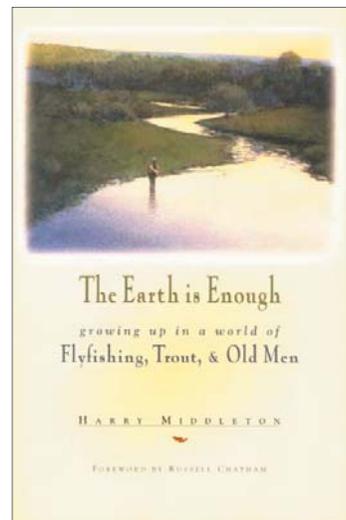
**TROUT AND OLD MEN**

BY HARRY MIDDLETON

“The introduction says it all, ‘This is a book about love for all things that matter.’ It’s also about a boy, a dog, ‘two men as old as the hills they farm,’ and their simple life in the Ozark Mountains. The trio’s religious devotion to fly-fishing provides the backdrop for all of life’s lessons, most importantly, how the pulse of life beats from within the deep constancy of the earth, and from one’s devotion to it.” —Lisa Cutting, Eastern Sierra Policy Director

*The Earth is Enough, softcover, Pruett Publishing Company,*

*206 pages, 9" x 6": \$18.00*



**THE MERCHANT OF MARVELS AND THE PEDDLER OF DREAMS**

BY FREDERIC CLEMENT

“Simply one of the most creative and magical books I have ever read. This beautiful little fairy tale has great flights of imagination that will delight both children and adults. Give it to someone special in your life and read it aloud to them!” —Brett Pyle, Retail Manager

*The Merchant of Marvels and the Peddler of Dreams, hardcover, Chronicle Books, 64 pages, 9½" x 7": \$16.95*

Call (760) 647-6595 to order



# Staff Migrations

by Geoffrey McQuilkin

I sat in staff meeting this morning and quickly became aware that our large circle of chairs is no longer packed with summer's seasonal staff. We're back down to the bare bones, and with the chilly mornings we're starting to wonder when Tioga Pass will close and quiet the town for the winter.

But before we get that far ahead of ourselves we've got some farewells to address. Yet again we were honored to have a highly competent and dedicated seasonal crew, and while we're excited for their next moves we'll be missing them as well.

Our ever-patient, and extremely dedicated Retail Assistant **Anna Scofield** has fixed her truck and headed back to her third year at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo. Anna began her career at the Mono Lake Committee at age seven when she and friend Vireo Gaines would sit on the front steps of the Bookstore in "grown-up clothes" and answer questions. Many years later we're still benefiting from Anna's friendly and helpful nature, and secretly hoping that she'll come back to help out on the front counter for the rest of her life. But in case that doesn't happen, we wish Anna the very best and we know we'll at least see her now and then at Mono Lake, most likely splashing in spring rainstorm puddles.



ARYA DEGENHARDT

The 2005 Mono Lake Committee Intern crew.

After receiving—and accepting—a marriage proposal from her longtime boyfriend while conducting her last canoe tour of the season, Naturalist Intern **Allison Jones** is headed home to Illinois. Naturalist Intern **Jonna McKone** is going back to Maine, and will no doubt be stopping to investigate climbing spots along the way. Birding Intern **Nick Neely** went out with a bang before heading back to Brown University, masterminding an exciting new education exhibit: a hands-on naturalist table for the Information Center.

You just might spot Canoe Coordinator **Mike Mace** in Illinois in his red sports car with its "Kayak Mono Lake" bumper sticker. Outdoor Experiences Coordinator **Maggie**

**Witt** is headed off from a summer of amazing experiences she won't soon forget to the San Francisco offices of the EPA where she's started a two-year internship keeping an eye out for the environment. Thank you, congratulations, and best wishes to all our wonderful seasonal staff.



ARYA DEGENHARDT

The 2005 Mono Lake Volunteer class with Committee and agency staff.

We also send out a big thank you to the **Mono Lake Volunteers** who augmented the work of the Mono Lake Committee, US Forest Service Scenic Area Visitor Center, and the Tufa State Reserve staff this summer. The volunteers staffed visitor centers and led programs around the Mono Basin, and their work has been extremely beneficial! We hope to see them again next year, and welcome new volunteers as well. We also send a grateful thanks to local chef Linda Dore for donating her catering expertise to the farewell dinner.

And last but certainly not least, we must single out two very special volunteers who went far above and beyond their original commitment to the volunteer program and became mainstays here at the Committee. **George and Nancy Appel** not only gave the front gardens and public spaces of the store and offices the love and attention they desperately needed, but they also put in many hours helping do just about everything we could think of around the office. We feel so lucky that you found us, and we hope to see you for years to come. ❖



ELIN LIVING

Volunteers extraordinaire Nancy and George Appel.



# From the Mailbag

*News from Members and Friends*

by Douglas Dunaway

## In Memory

**Christopher and Jane Adams** of Berkeley gave a gift in memory of **Caroline L. Adams**. **Jean Brandt** of Encino made a gift in memory of **David Gaines**. Gifts in memory of **Jean Gillespie Dale**, an early Mono Lake Committee member, were given by **Florence G. Brown** of Scranton, PA, and **Lewis Dale** of Santa Paula gave a generous donation in memory of Mrs. Dale for the purchase of two much needed flat screen monitors. We received many donations in memory of Committee Founder David Gaines' father **Mortimer Gaines**. Donating in his memory were **Richard Gaines** of Windsor, **Kathleen Gaines**, **Ray**, **Patrick and Brendan Welch** of San Rafael, **Miriam and John Frankel** of Los Angeles, **Mrs. Hortense Friedman** of Sherman Oaks, **Leonard and Ethel Hellenthal** from North Hills, and **Harriet Ruderman** of Roseville.

**Mr. Peter Hunt** from Hayward gave a gift in memory of his friend **R.W.S. Bryce Tingle** received a gift in memory from **Mary Elliot James** of San Simeon. A gift was sent by **Mr. Robert Lambert** in memory of **Jean Lambert**. **Mark and Judith** of Moraga gave a gift in memory

of **Jack Green**. A donation in the memory of **Arthur Skotnes** was given by **Dick Meade** of North Liberty, Iowa. **Malcolm Mitchell** of Portola Valley gave a donation in memory of his cousin **Selby Collins**. **Bruce Moore** of Madison, WI, gave a gift in memory of **Thomas N. Callen**. **Mr. and Mrs. Donald Shelburne** of Paradise gave a gift in memory of **Scott P. Shelburne**. **Ms. June Jacobs Storch** of Los Angeles made a contribution in memory of **David Gaines**. A donation in memory of **James Dent Jokerst** was given by **Ken Bern** and **Jan Weydemeyer**. **JoEllen, Lauren and Katie Williamson** of Los Angeles sent a gift in loving memory of **Don Williamson**. A gift in honor of **Carol Rakich** was given by **Carleen and Mike Bedwell** of Escondido.

## Thank You!

**Dean Chacon** of San Jose donated a flat screen monitor to help ease our crowded desks. **Richard Russell** donated time to help with Holiday and Defense Trust Calendar mailings.

## Surprise Visit

One quiet spring day earlier this year, **Tom Lyons III** and his 12-person crew

stopped into the bookstore while on a road trip of California, though they still sported the shorts, sandals, and tans of their native Hawaii. Longtime Committee members will remember his son, Tom Lyons, an ardent Mono Lake advocate and dedicated Mono Lake Bike-A-Thon rider, who passed away in 1992. His family returned to Mono Lake to see the place he held so dear. In the group were **Tom Lyons III and Betsy Wyman; Mike Lyons; Barbie "Lyons" Anderson with children Jarrett and Jami Anderson; Suzie "Lyons" Lee and Aukai Lee with children Malina, Keale, and Kamana Lee; and Shari "Lyons" Grounds and Murray Grounds.**

## Poetry

In a gesture of poetic justice for our Haiku message in our last renewal mailing, **Ms. Kathleen Worley** of Portland, Oregon enclosed her own beautiful Haiku with her renewal:

Renewal takes wing  
Meeting birds on its journey—  
Flight to Mono Lake

*Douglas Dunaway is the Committee's new Membership Coordinator. He has been sharing his poker skills with the novice seasonal staff.*

## A Tribute To My Brother by Richard Gaines

**M**ost of you who have supported the Mono Lake Committee will remember my brother, Mort, as the father of the late David Gaines—Cofounder of the Mono Lake Committee. The world of importance for Mort was his immediate family—wife Edith, his two children David and Karen, his grandchildren Vireo, Sage, and Dylan, and his mother Ruth, sister Grace, his Aunt Esther, and of course, me—Richard, his kid brother. These were the people who were the focus of his life. He kept our family afloat during the Great

Depression by working hard at whatever job was available for him and when he was called to do his part in World War II, he did his duty as a staff Sergeant in the 30th Armored Calvary, going ashore in Normandy at Omaha Beach, later being among the first Americans to enter Belgium and Germany. He survived many of the major battles in France, Belgium and Germany, and came home for his happiest moment when his wife, Edith, was waiting dockside for him. Mort died as he would have wanted, peacefully in

his own home with wife and daughter at his side. On June 19th of this year, Edith, Sally Gaines, Vireo and my daughter, Susan gathered where Lee Vining Creek flows into Mono Lake and paid tribute to both my brother and his late son, David. It was fitting that this tribute once again brought Father and Son together in the spirit of the lake they both loved so very much.

*The complete version of this essay is available online at [www.monolake.org](http://www.monolake.org).*

ROBERT POTTS



The birds and animals,  
trees and grasses,  
rock, water and wind  
are our allies.  
They waken our senses,  
rouse our passions,  
renew our spirits,  
and fill us with vision,  
courage, and joy ...  
We are Mono Lake.

—David Gaines



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