

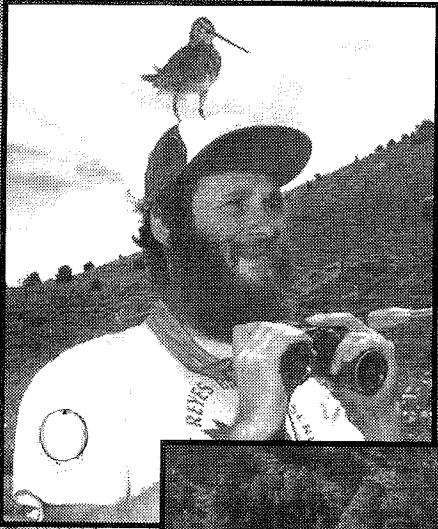
Winter

1998



MONO LAKE

NEWS LETTER



**Mono Lake Committee's
20th Anniversary!**



Mono Lake Newsletter

Winter 1998

Volume 20, Number 3



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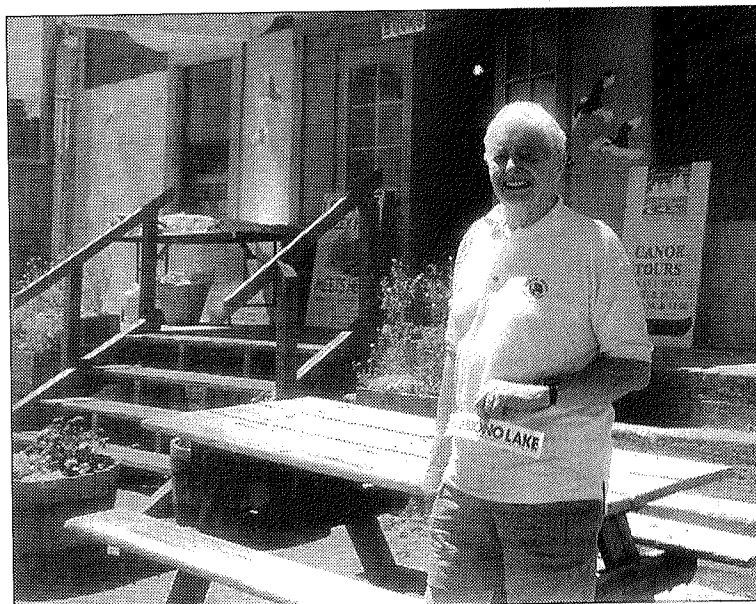
This issue kicks off the Mono Lake Committee's 20th anniversary celebration, making it time to think back to the early days and how far we've come together. Look for anniversary plans and Committee history throughout this and upcoming issues. May the next 20 years be as successful—and as much fun!

Pages 12–14 contain a photo retrospective, while page 5 welcomes the anniversary year and profiles some of the big upcoming events. The 1997 version of some of those events—the Century ride and Restoration Days—are recapped on pages 18–19. And the Outdoor Experiences program completed another successful summer—see pages 6–8.

We planned the 1998 Field Seminars early this year, so pick your classes now on pages 20–23. Be sure to keep the information on hand until May, too. Why? Because the next two issues of the *Mono Lake Newsletter* will be combined into one expanded spring-summer issue, which won't come out until then. In the spare time that results, we'll be developing a new and improved Mono Lake Guidebook.

Snow covers the ground here in the Mono Basin, and winter is setting in. While it's quiet, come on up and join us for a ski along the lakeshore.

—Geoff McQuilkin



Legendary environmental leader David Brower made a visit to Mono Lake last summer and he stopped by the Information Center and Bookstore to pick up a bumpersticker. Thanks for saying hello, Dave!

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 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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Tribute to a tower

by Gary Nelson

Another summer has rushed through the Mono Basin like a runaway circus train, leaving golden aspens, and a dusting of snow in its wake. And memories: the wonder in a first grader's eye as her canoe passed over a plume of brine shrimp; seeing the coast range from the summit of Mt. Dana on an impossibly clear June afternoon; climbing Lumbert Dome by the light of a full moon with my intern friends.

But underlying this collage of remembrance lies a sense of loss. More feeling than image, I can give neither name nor place to whatever was missing this past summer. Slowly my thoughts begin to center on the South Tufa grove. But at the same time I intuitively know that what I seek is no longer there. Surrendering to my intellectual impasse (writer's block), I leave the depths of the editorial office and begin roaming through the darkened bookstore. Perusing our excellent book selection after hours has always helped me return to writing—sometimes by inspiration, mostly by letting my mind wander out of whatever rut it has settled into.

Tonight the process is much more direct. Surrounding me—on the bookshelves, in the poster bin, on the T-shirt display, in the postcard rack—are photographs and images of what has been haunting my summer memories. A certain tufa tower. Rising less than twenty feet above the lake, it was not even close to being the largest. Nor could it be called ornate, quite the opposite in fact.

But this slender, symmetrical, unfettered spire never failed to capture the visitor's eye or the photographers lens. Photographs of this tower were in the first five books I picked out of the Mono Lake section. I turned around. There it was on numerous cards and posters; in Don Jackson's excellent exhibit; on the front cover of the 1996, '97, and '98 MLC

calendars; and on the cover of the fall 1997 *Mono Lake Newsletter*.

What had been a navigational landmark for me during eight previous years of canoe tours had obviously transcended its status as a popular photo subject to become a true icon of Mono Lake. However, I quickly remembered that all of these images and my memories of this tower were in the past tense. For I discovered on my first canoe reconnais-

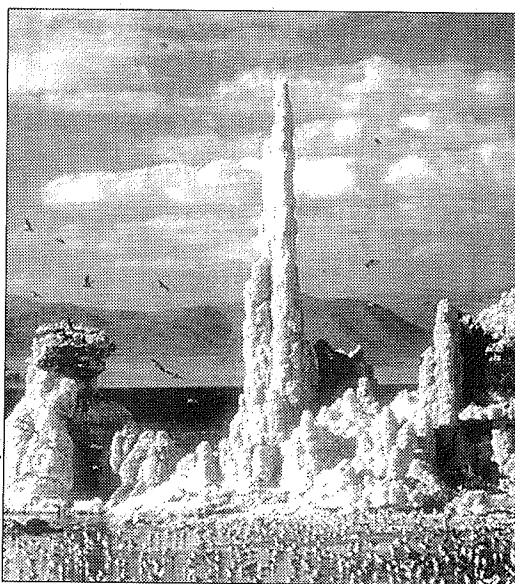


Photo by Tim Snyder

sance of the past spring that this tufa no longer stands against the massive backdrop of the Sierra escarpment. Sometime during the winter, probably during one of the destructive storms that hit the area around the end of the year, the tower was toppled by wave action.

Without wanting to think about it, I steered away from this place during canoe tours, so it wasn't until July that I peered down into the tower's final resting place. Several feet below the surface I saw a three foot section which used to be the top of the tower lying on its side amid a jumble of fragments. After a moment of recognition, I paddled away and did not return for the rest of the summer.

Now, in the silence of the empty store, I am cascaded by conflicting thoughts and feelings. During the previous summer I noticed the tower slowly being undermined by the rising waters. I knew its days were numbered. "But after all," I reasoned, "a rising level is healthier for the lake ecosystem. And this freshwater is being put into the lake by rejuvenated streams and recharged springs. Besides, most other towers have not been toppled.

Some have spring water flowing out of them and are growing once again." Still, I felt as if I'd lost a friend.

The following morning finds me paddling across the wind-rippled surface of the lake. Grebes dive to avoid our bow which is pointed towards the site of the former spire. Being late into the fall, shrimp are scarce and the water is clouded by algae. Floating over the tower, I find that the waves are bending the low-angle sunlight, selectively illuminating, then obscuring features of the submerged pile of shattered tufa. Undulating images of the underwater fragments seamlessly merge between light and dark, recognition and doubt. I begin to wonder why I am here. What am I trying to visually exhume out of the turgid, roiling waters? Why have I navigated my canoe to a landmark that is no longer there?

As I paddle away I begin to feel a sense of closure. I realize that this spire of tufa was more than just a waypoint on my canoe tour route. It was an important landmark in my personal perception of the lake, and now, in my memory. As the lake continues to rise, another tower, perhaps even one that is on dry land today, will capture the imagination of future generations of paddlers and come to symbolize Mono Lake for them.

Gary Nelson is Chief Admiral of the Mono Lake canoe fleet. 🛶

Updates

Mono Basin restoration plans: still waiting

As of December 1997, the State Water Board has not yet announced its decision on Mono Basin restoration plans. As described in the summer *Newsletter*, most of the parties involved in the proceedings, including DWP, signed a Settlement Agreement on the restoration plans, and this Settlement Agreement was put before the Water Board in late summer.

Conway Ranch: in escrow

The Trust for Public Land (TPL) has exercised its option but has not yet closed escrow on this historic north Mono Basin property. If the project proceeds as planned, Mono County will ultimately acquire the property from TPL. The County has raised nearly \$800,000 towards the roughly \$3 million purchase price through grants. The Bureau of Land Management may be brought in as a co-purchaser should the County fail to raise sufficient funds.

FERC proceedings

The Mono Lake Committee recently submitted a motion for late intervention in the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) power plant relicensing proceeding for the Lundy power plant, which operates with water diverted from Mill Creek. A key issue for the Committee is the Mill Creek return ditch, which returns water back to Mill Creek after its passage through the Lundy power plant.

The Committee believes that the Mill Creek return ditch has not been maintained at its originally approved capacity. Unappropriated or unused water that should be returned to Mill Creek instead runs down Wilson Creek because of the ditch's limited capacity.

The FERC relicensing proceedings are an important place to address possible ditch upgrades.

Stream restoration featured at Fall Forum

by Heidi Hopkins

In October, the Committee hosted a day-long forum on Mono Basin stream restoration.

Dr. William Trush, riverine ecologist and one of three scientists who will monitor the progress of restoration on the streams, was the primary speaker. Trush gave a highly entertaining and concise overview of the status of the

creeks today, the goals of restoration, the goals of monitoring and how monitoring results might be used.

Creek flows will be the primary restoration "activity." According to Trush, every element of the flow "regime"—occasional winter floods, annual peak flows at peak snowmelt, the rising and falling flows on either side of the peak, the low flows of late summer—offers benefits to the stream environment, from distributing cottonwood seeds during peak runoff to carving pools during unusually high flood flows to drawing down the roots of streamside vegetation. Monitoring will help us understand which specific element of the flow regime is responsible for accomplishing what restoration. This information will not

only be used to guide future flow regimes, but will add significantly to the body of knowledge in the emerging field of restoration.

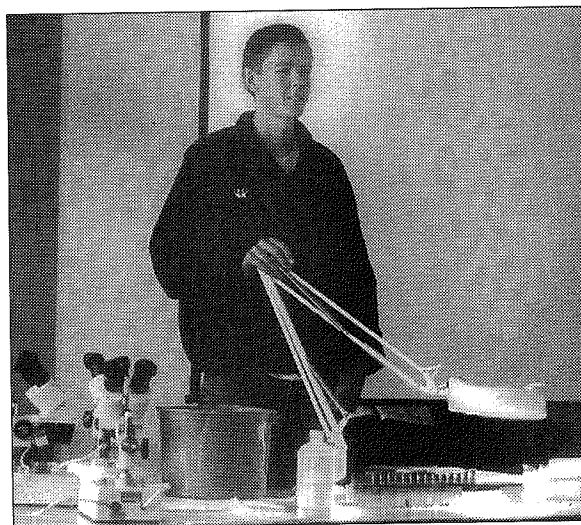
Other panelists at the forum included Peter Kavounas, Mono Basin restoration manager for DWP; Virginia Cahill, an attorney who has represented the Department of Fish & Game; Alan Pickard, senior biologist with Fish & Game; Eric Dinger, assistant to Dr. Dave Herbst; and Eric Ford, high school senior at Lee Vining High School.

The audience turnout was great, though—disappointingly—few Lee Vining residents participated.

Heidi Hopkins, the Committee's Eastern Sierra Policy Director, is a budding Internet surfer.

1998 FALL FORUM **Waterfowl Habitat Restoration**

September 5, 1998
Lee Vining, California



Eric Ford, Lee Vining High School senior, talked bugs at the Committee's 1997 Fall Forum on stream restoration. Eric and others at the high school are working with science teacher Jeff Putman under the direction of longtime Mono Lake researcher Dr. Dave "Bug" Herbst to monitor aquatic life in the Mono Basin's recovering streams. Donning hip-waders, the students periodically net invertebrates from the stream beds, which they later painstakingly identify and count under microscopes in the lab. The work, paid for by a USFS grant, will contribute to the overall picture of Mono Basin health.

20th Anniversary begins!

by Frances Spivy-Weber

The Mono Lake Committee is celebrating its 20th anniversary: 1978-1998!

Each of us can rightly claim some credit for the success of the Mono Lake Committee, and this year we will take time to appreciate these contributions.

The biggest gathering of Monophiles will be during Restoration Days, September 4-7, 1998. We look forward to reuniting many of the founders of the Committee; photographers, artists, filmmakers and authors who have spread the image of Mono Lake far and wide; our Mono County family and neighbors; scientists who are teaching us new wonders each year about the ecosystem of the Mono Basin; Outdoor Experiences

veterans young and old; former employees, interns, and volunteers; lawyers,

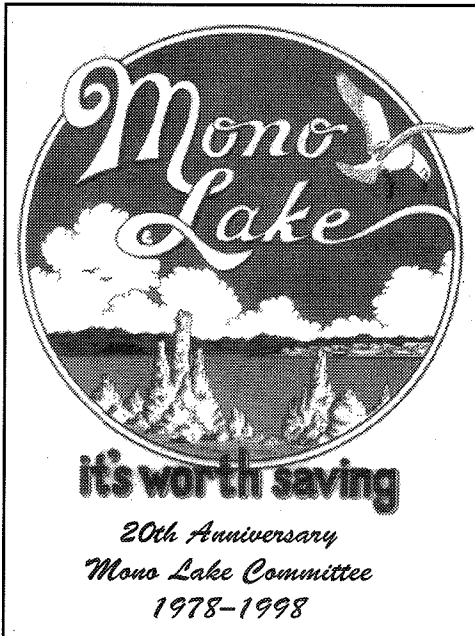
political leaders, and strategists who helped guide us to higher lake levels; partner organizations, Audubon and California Trout; and you, our members. This will be a stellar gathering

Bike-A-Thoners and energetic Mono Lake Committee cyclists can come up for a week and participate in both Restoration Days and the High Sierra Fall Century on Saturday, September 12. We will need volunteers for the Century, too, so anyone who wants to help is more than welcome and will be put to work.

We will also be celebrating our 20 years by gathering your stories about Mono Lake and the Mono Lake Committee on our website (www.monolake.org). Please send us a paragraph or two of your remembrances by mail or by email (stories@monolake.org).

Anniversaries and birthdays are not only about valuing our past, but also about learning from successes and mistakes as we chart our course for the next 20 years. We know water is a finite resource, and water supply will be an issue of even greater importance in the next century. There will be more people who want water both in California and in the West, and there will be wildlife and other environmental needs that must be met. We know there will be more development of the Eastern Sierra, including the Mono Basin, in the next century. We know that people will be making decisions that affect Mono Lake who will never know its magic.

You are the critical ingredient to turning these potential problems into win-win solutions. We will need your wisdom and patience. We will need your financial support for ongoing programs and for an endowment to help ensure Mono Lake is protected forever. We will need your time as volunteers, educators, and citizens to help restore the Mono Basin ecosystem and to educate our state's increasingly diverse population about the Mono Basin



1998 dates to save

March 29

"The Battle for Mono Lake"

September 4-7

Restoration Days

September 5

Reunion & Annual Meeting

September 5

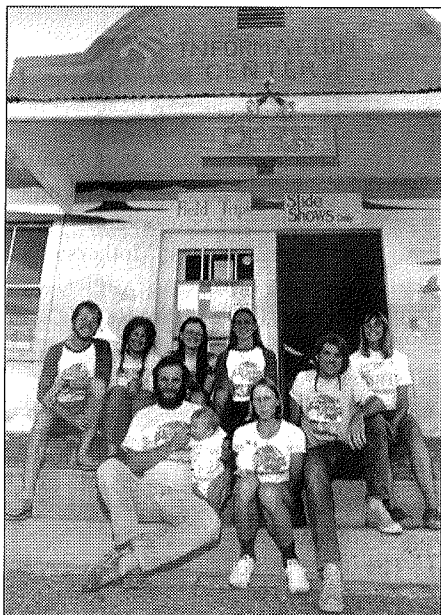
Fall Forum

September 12

High Sierra Fall Century

October 23

Fall Party



Remember the Committee's early days? We're looking for past volunteers, staff, interns, researchers, and any other Mono Lake friends who may have fallen out of touch. If you know who they are, where they are, or what they are doing please let us know so we can have a great reunion in 1998!

and water use in California. If we work together, we should be able to find creative, cooperative solutions that protect Mono Lake and meet California's water needs without transferring environmental problems to other areas.

Are you ready? Let the celebration begin!

Frances Spivy-Weber is the Committee's Executive Director and 20th anniversary booster. ☞

Chasing buckets

by Bartshe Miller

Summer began in May with thunderstorms and tree plantings. The Lee Vining Elementary 5th and 6th graders planted Jeffrey pine and Lodgepole pine seedlings along a small stretch of Rush Creek just above the old Highway 395 bridge. With great energy we set to putting the seedlings into the ground, making sure the tap root pointed straight down, and that the seedling received a good dose of water to get it started.

Rush Creek did not give up its water easily, however. In the process of filling containers with water for trees, a strong current mischievously pulled buckets from young hands. Occasionally, some of us would run wildly downstream trying to cut the current off at a slow bend or within shallow water.

"BUCKET, I LOST MY BUCKET!!!"

And the chase was on.

Four years of Outdoor Experiences

Through the summer, as more cumulus clouds piled above the Sierra Crest, other young people returned to Rush Creek. These young people were not from Lee

Vining, but from Los Angeles. They came to help hydrate developing root systems that could not yet reach their own groundwater.

Two hundred kids and young adults from vastly different neighborhoods in Los Angeles participated in the Mono Lake Committee's Outdoor Experience Program. Seven different Los Angeles area groups traveled north to the Mono Basin this past summer to camp, hike, canoe, explore, experience, help water trees and chase buckets.

Its fourth year now complete, the goal of the Outdoor Experiences Program (OE) remains the same: to educate young people in Los Angeles about the value of Mono Lake, water conservation, and the difference they can make in the health of their water resources. Kids and young adults experience Mono Lake up close and learn a little about its natural and human history while camping, hiking, and

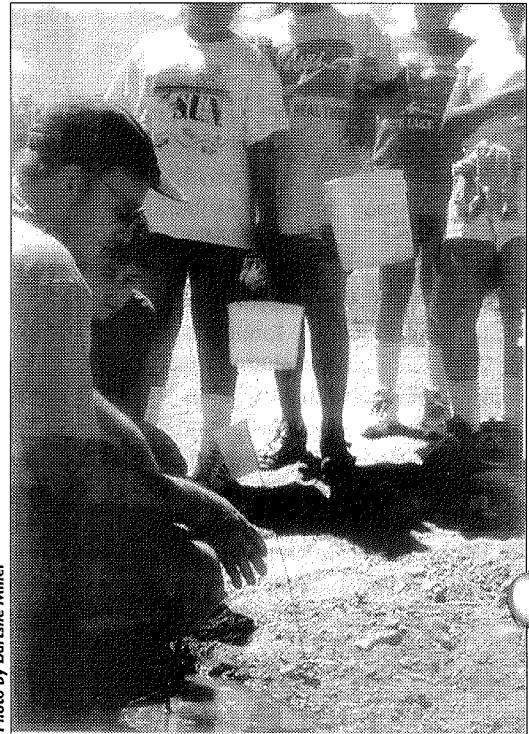


Photo by Bartshe Miller

Iglesia Poder de Dios watering trees

canoeing in the Mono Basin.

Five of the seven groups were from community organizations involved in past or present water conservation programs in Los Angeles: Mothers of East Los Angeles (MELASI), Iglesia Poder de Dios (IPDD) from Reseda, Executive Partners in Environmental Resource Training (ExPERT) from Carson, Korean Youth and Community Center (KYCC) in central Los Angeles, and a Los Angeles Conservation Corps (LACC) "Clean and Green" group from San Fernando/Pacoima.

The OE program also hosted a Youth Task Force (YTF) group from central Los Angeles and Adventure Camp USA (a Korean community organization).

You Are the Connection

This year we initiated a special campaign called "You Are the Connection" with a generous grant from the Los



Photo by Bartshe Miller

Adventure Camp participants explore South Tufa.

Angeles Urban Resources Partnership. Through this grant, matching funds contributed by Mono Lake Committee members, generous grants from Arco and Southern California Gas, several in-kind donations, and our partnerships with a host of community organizations, we

were able to expand our educational efforts, visiting schools and community organizations throughout Los Angeles. We also were able to host a record seven groups at Mono Lake this past summer! The OE program grew considerably last summer as did its challenge and meaning

in the context of the future of Mono Lake and all of California.

An occasional copy of the *Los Angeles Times* would appear in the Cain Ranch house where our groups camped and enjoyed "down time" between the long morning and afternoons of (see page 8)

**"Mike, I'm tired."
"I've got a headache."
"Albert hit me."**

"Do we have to go on another hike?"

This was my first summer as Outdoor Experience Coordinator, and I'll be honest: sometimes the job was really tiring and frustrating. As anyone who works with kids knows, statements like those above can be draining. But in the end, the Outdoor Experiences program accomplished more than one could have hoped for. I'd like to share one of the more memorable events involving Adventure Camp USA, a new Korean community group in LA.

Adventure Camp USA came up for their Mono Lake experience in mid-August. The first few days of their experience in the Mono Basin seemed to go well, and it looked like they would be ready for a good hike to conclude their trip with a little excitement.

With this in mind, we planned an expedition up Lembert Dome in Yosemite National Park. Lembert Dome is a large block of granite rounded and exposed on the south side with gently sloping forest terrain on the north. We gave the kids the option of splitting up, sending one group up the trail on the north side, and allowing the more adventurous to experience the climb up the south. However, being Adventure Camp USA, *all* were adventurous, and they *all* wanted to try the south side.

Despite some reservations, we began traversing around the south face slowly moving up the great rock. As the path steepened, I checked on the crowd—everything was going well. I took a few more steps—checked—everyone fine. I took an

other ten steps forward and then I looked over my shoulder again; this time it was very different. In a matter of seconds order had turned to complete chaos. The poor kids were sprawled all over the rock clinging to the granite in fear. It seemed that all the group, young and old, were wondering why they were willingly doing this; why they weren't in LA happily playing the newest Game Boy or watching TV.

We immediately went to work picking the kids off the rock one by one and convincing them that they would be just fine if they had confidence, stood up on their feet and moved on.

One by one, the kids developed the needed confidence and began to climb up the dome.

One by one, they stopped being scared and homesick and started helping one another.

One by one, step by step, we all reached the top of Lembert Dome alive and well.

The view, as always, was spectacular, with all of Tuolumne Meadows and the Cathedral Range before us. We had accomplished a goal that was never imaginable in the eyes of most.

For me, standing on top of Lembert Dome that day was much more than a great view of the Sierra, it was a realization.

We want these kids to go back to LA and think of this area; to think of Mono Lake and wilderness when they are at home in the city.

That's a difficult goal, but I knew that at least *one* of those kids would remember this. Maybe, just maybe, she'll think of her experience on Lembert

Dome and recognize the importance of Mono Lake, our lake, *her* lake. Maybe for just a moment he'll begin to grasp what it's all about and understand his connection to Mono.

If he does, it will have all been worth it. After all that's how we will save Mono Lake forever. Step by step, one by one.

Mike Klapp was the Committee's Outdoor Experiences Coordinator in 1997, will be again in 1998, and is currently indoors mastering web page graphics.



Photo by Bortz Miller

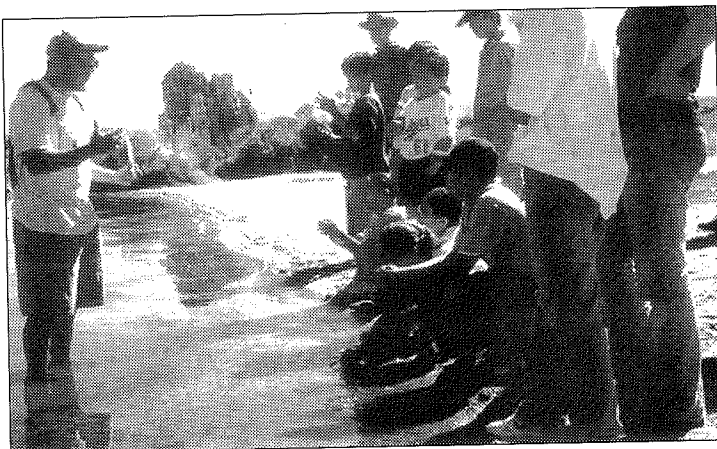


Photo by Bartshe Miller

Outdoor Experiences Coordinator Mike Klapp discusses alkali flies with Korean Youth and Community Center program participants.

(continued from page 7) sun and hiking. A few of the headlines provoked sober thoughts on the meaning of the OE program: Thursday, July 3, "L.A. Loses Battle With Owens Valley"; Tuesday, July 29, "Water Deal Splits San Joaquin Valley"; Monday, August 25, "Population Surge of 18 Million Seen for State by 2025."

For the moment, Mono Lake has a level of protection which today, in retrospect, seemed an impossible dream twenty years ago. What of the next twenty or so years? Can our water resources accommodate 18 million new people in California? Will an outdoor education program that stresses watershed and water conservation make a difference?

If only one of the hundreds, and someday thousands, of individuals that come to Mono Lake through the OE program eventually becomes a hydrologist, or a lawyer, or the Mayor of Los Angeles, or the head of Department of Water and Power, or the Governor of California, or a State Water Resource Control Board Member, or even the future Executive Director of the Mono Lake Committee, then perhaps memories of camping, canoeing, catching brine shrimp, and losing hold of a bucket in Rush Creek will make all the difference.

But for the present, on a more modest level, perhaps the difference is when someone goes home and makes the extra

effort to conserve water because they see that through their faucet they are connected to magnificent waters, mysterious landscapes, and living things.

Watering trees along Rush Creek forever makes you a part of the Mono Basin

landscape, even if you don't like watering trees, even if only one of the hundred or so Jeffrey and Lodgepole pine seedlings survive. Once you see the source, touch it, hear it, smell it, feel it, and have the opportunity to nurture it, water from the faucet no longer has an abstract beginning or end. The connection is concrete—figuratively, as well as literally.

Next year we will probably not plant trees along Rush Creek or any other Mono Basin creeks—no more mad dashes after lake-bound pails. A few years of tree planting is enough for now; it's time to let the water do the work and allow nature to do most of the healing on its own, in its own way. More young people from Los Angeles will return to roam the shores of Mono Lake, swim its

waters, climb its peaks, witness its diversion dams, and exert a little energy on behalf of its restoration. Chasing after lost buckets will not happen, but maybe removing boardwalk away from a rising lake will.

Summer ended in October—October 7 to be exact—as the Lee Vining Elementary 5th and 6th graders made the last watering visit of the year on Rush Creek. Once again clouds gathered over the Sierra Crest, not the summer cumulus type, but the tattered and gray altocumulus that often portend wintry weather. Rush Creek is gentle in October, peak runoff having long since passed. We watered quickly, efficiently, and never lost a bucket.

It's appropriate that the Lee Vining 5th and 6th graders could finish the summer by watering the trees they had put in the ground. It's also appropriate that those trees on this stretch of Rush Creek, owned by the City of Los Angeles, were kept alive through the summer by kids from Los Angeles.

The future of Mono Lake and its creeks is in the hands of people at both ends of the Los Angeles Aqueduct. We all share the same water. Who would have imagined a future like this twenty years ago when the creeks were dry and Mono Lake was on the edge of ecological collapse? Where will we be twenty years from now?

Bartshe Miller is the Committee's Education Director and El Niño skeptic.

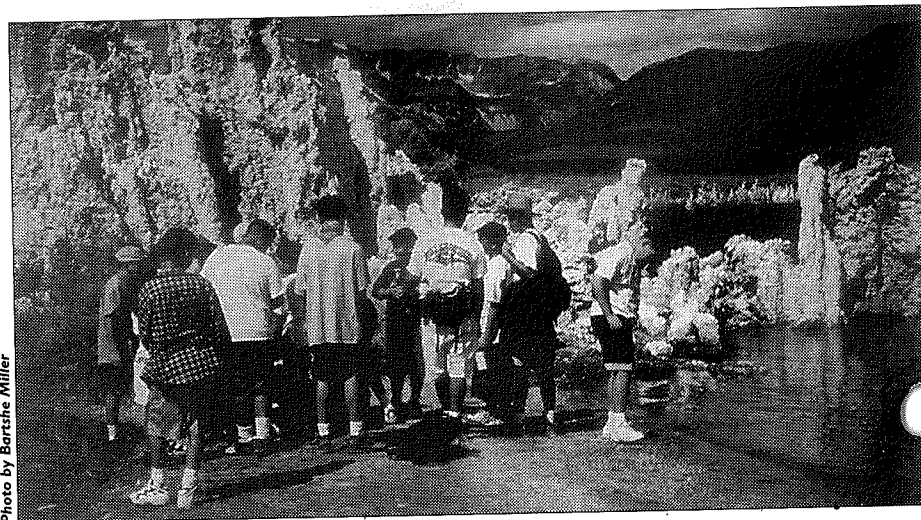


Photo by Bartshe Miller

Naturalist Notes

A Mono Basin Chronicle

Early August: tadpoles in Gardisky lake ... bighorn sheep scat near Tioga Peak ... the local Lee Vining red-tailed hawk circling over town ... northern harrier cruising the lake shore ... two juvenile bald eagles at Saddlebag Lake ... mountain bike attacked by *Artemesia tridentata* (sagebrush) ... five Virginia rails at County Park, joined by two soras, a black phoebe swooping and catching alkali flies, grebes, phalaropes, snipe, yellow warblers, a downy woodpecker, and a coyote exploring the picnic tables and swingset ... great-horned owls at South Tufa ... tentative report of mule deer on Paoha ... 50 mallards along the north shore ... beaver sighting in the Lundy beaver ponds ... an ancient murrelet near Navy Beach.

Late August: subtle signs of approaching autumn ... nighthawks chasing insects over Lee Vining Creek ... silvery hillsides of fruiting mountain mahogany ... six cinnamon teals, two horned grebes, and two spotted sandpipers ... a bobcat bounding across Lee Vining Creek ... 250 northern shovelers east of Navy Beach ... Caspian terns on the south shore ... down by Yost Lake, a white-breasted nuthatch, Clark's nutcrackers, abundant chickadees and juncos ... rabbitbrush blooming everywhere ... aspens showing color ... 50 pintails, 27 least and western sandpipers, two yellow-headed blackbirds, a northern flicker, among others at DeChambeau Ponds ... four great blue herons on the south shore.

Early September: a pied-billed grebe ... soras still at County Park ... many eared grebes ... four black-necked stilts along the south shore, killdeer, northern shovelers, and the osprey ... up near Lee Vining peak, immature golden eagle, sharp-shinned hawk, two kestrels, four red-tailed hawks, a golden-crowned sparrow, two rosy finches, Clark's nutcrackers, and lots of chickadees and juncos ... several hundred red-necked phalaropes at South Tufa, joined by 17 black-necked stilts and a great egret ... 31 Caspian terns squawking overhead ... nine American avocets at South Tufa, ring-billed gulls, a Sabine's gull, and two whimbrels.

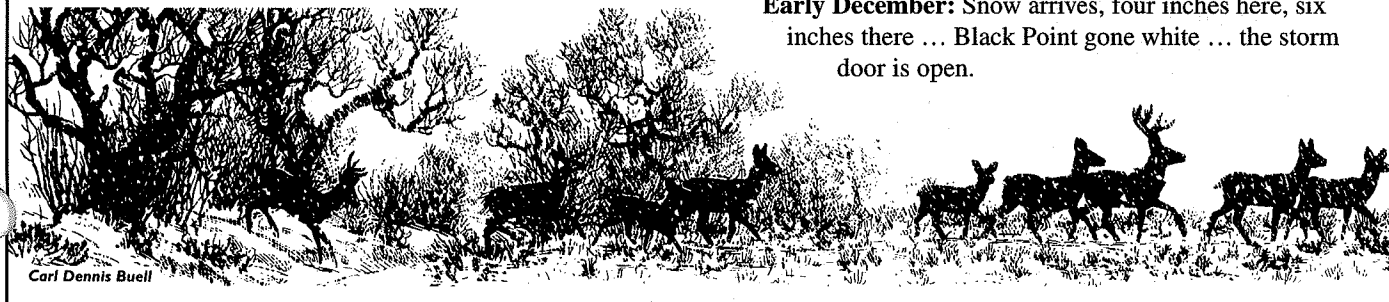
Late September: a Townsend's solitaire and a MacGillivray's warbler in Lundy Canyon ... more Sabine's gulls ... sage sparrows and spotted towhees ... more amber and orange on the trees ... two northern harriers, a green-tailed towhee, and a gray flycatcher near the lake ... the orange leaves on Sagehen Summit visible from Lee Vining ... 600 ducks along the south shore, mostly northern shovelers and northern pintails ... white-crowned sparrow, western kingbird, and sheep at Cain Ranch.

October: one sora still at County Park, red-breasted sapsucker in the willows ... Parker Bench aspens in full form ... aspens waning above 8500 feet ... no wintry weather yet, waiting for El Niño ... ruddy ducks and Forster's terns ... a strong wind, and the colors are gone from the Parker Bench ... canyon wren among the piñons and boulders above Mono ... owl swooping through town at moonrise.

Early November: American coots out on the lake among numerous eared grebes ... snow goose at South Tufa, green-winged teals and horned larks ... a flock of pinyon jays in the Jeffrey pine forest ... more high pressure, still no snow ... lingering fall color, goldenrod gone to seed ... 31 snow geese flying in formation over County Park ... unknown bird of prey hunting successfully among ducks and grebes off the south shore ... Cooper's hawk over the highway ... mule deer on the move ... bald eagle soaring over Silver Lake ... golden eagle rescued from the highway.

Late November: photo documentation of a red-headed yellow-headed blackbird ... vicious winds clocked at 113 mph on the edge of town ... dense poconip ... flock (20? 30?) of spotted towhees north of Highway 167.

Early December: Snow arrives, four inches here, six inches there ... Black Point gone white ... the storm door is open.



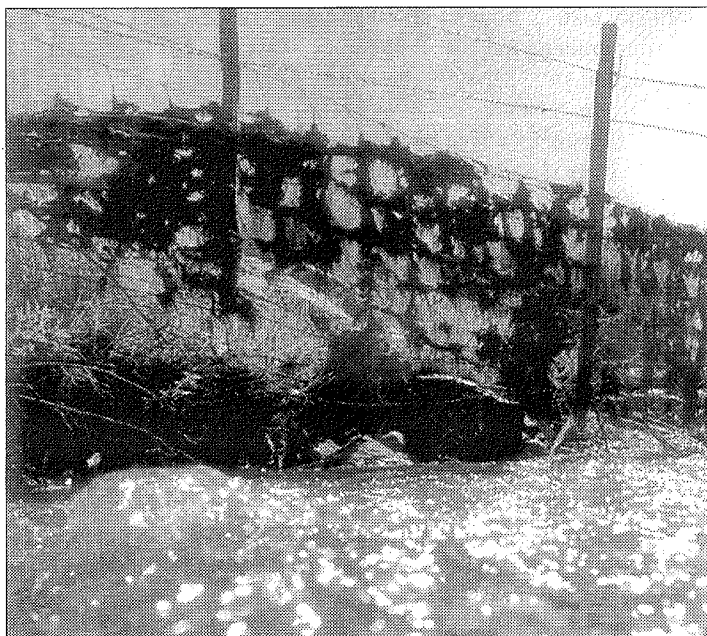
Mono Basin Journal

A roundup of less political events at Mono Lake

by Geoffrey McQuilkin

One day in November the winds crested the Sierra at perhaps a hundred miles per hour and descended steep slopes into the Mono Basin. The lake disappeared in a misty haze of white spray which captured rainbows in the fleeting sunlight. Any lingering leaves were pulled from the trees, as were signs from their posts and fences from their anchors in the ground. The wind roared, doors slammed, and the streets of Lee Vining were blown perfectly clean.

Out in the basin, the deer and coyote have been on the move, searching out spots to spend the winter. Early storms have left tempting patches of snow atop the Mono Craters and up on the



Clues of past floods linger on an old fence line.

Sierra Crest, while not far away the ground shakes with the slipping of the faults which built this mighty range.

Now we sit waiting for El Niño storms to blanket the east side with snow, looking forward to skiing along the lakeshore. Somehow with the rush to winter we always forget how beautiful the lingering days of autumn can be and, indeed, this year was spectacular.

Fall colors shone on the Parker Bench, beckoned from across the basin at Sagehen summit, cascaded down the moraines of Lundy Canyon. The leaves glowed like lamps in the sunlight, then disappeared on the winds of autumn. 🍂

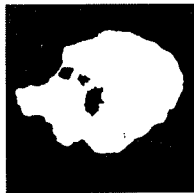
Benchmarks



Summer 1994: Walking to the Rehydration Ceremony at the Old Marina site. Lake level: 6374.9 feet.



Summer 1997: Rehydration at Old Marina, with the lake substantially closer. Lake level 6382.2 feet.



Lakewatch

Mono Lake will never (?) be lower again

by Greg Reis

Mono Lake's fluctuations this year have almost exactly paralleled those of last year. Since early June, the lake has consistently been 2.3 feet higher than last year. It peaked in early August at 6,382.4 feet above sea level, and as of December 10, it stood at 6,381.8. The salinity has also dropped below 85 grams per liter, the maximum allowed under the Outstanding Natural Resource Water designation.

Theoretically, we'll never again see Mono Lake this low. According to projections and conditions in the Water Board order, once the lake has achieved its target level of 6,391 feet, 6,382 feet is the lowest level to which the lake would drop during extreme drought.

However, we haven't achieved the target level yet, and chances are fair that a dry year or two in the near future will drop the lake lower than we see it today. (This is why the lake is expected to take about 20 years to reach the target level, even though it's been rising quickly since 1994.)

DWP's allowed Mono Basin diversions

Based on lake level, DWP can divert the following as the lake rises to the target level:

Under 6377 no diversion
6377-6380 4,500 acre-feet
6380-6391 16,000 acre-feet

After the lake reaches the target level, the following diversions are allowed based on lake level:

Below 6388 no diversion
6388-6391 10,000 acre-feet
Above 6391 all water in excess
of required stream flows

16,000 acre-foot diversions

Annual water diversions from the Mono Basin are set by the Water Board order on a graduated scale (see box) based on lake level. This is the first year since the Water Board decision that the Department of Water and Power (DWP) has been allowed to export 16,000 acre-feet of water. DWP began exporting 20-25 cfs from Grant Lake Reservoir in April, and stopped in early June. On August 16 they resumed exporting as much as 30 cfs, and were expected to reach the halfway point of diversions by the end of October. The full 16,000 acre-feet will have left the basin by the end of March 1998.

Despite the exports, Grant Lake Reservoir began spilling since May 7, and continued for the second-longest time period in history. (The longest period was in 1982.) During a few days in August, the reservoir's spill provided a clue to other things happening with the water in Grant Lake Reservoir. For four days, the inflow and outflow remained constant. Yet the inflow was 10 cfs greater than the outflow. Where was this water going?

Assuming the instruments were accurately recording what was happening, the only place this water could have gone was infiltration to the ground and evaporation to the atmosphere. As it turns out, average evaporation from the reservoir in August is 7 cfs.

As a sidenote for Mono Lake supporters interested in the up-to-the-minute information on streamflows and Mono Lake's level, I post the current lake level at the top of our web page—www.monolake.org—every week. We've also got a table of past lake levels and other recent data, so you may want to visit on your next web surf!

1997-98 winter

The winter is off to a decent start. November and early December storms have brought over a foot on snow to Lee Vining, and the higher mountain areas have seen several feet more than that.

Throughout the winter snowpack measurements are made by automated sensors (verified with springtime snow course surveys in the field) allowing us to track the wetness of the winter, hour by hour. A number of these sensors are available on the Internet and, if you'd like to easily see the latest for the Mono Basin, we've got the local favorites highlighted on our web page as well.

Greg Reis is the Committee's Information Specialist and master of web page tables. ☞

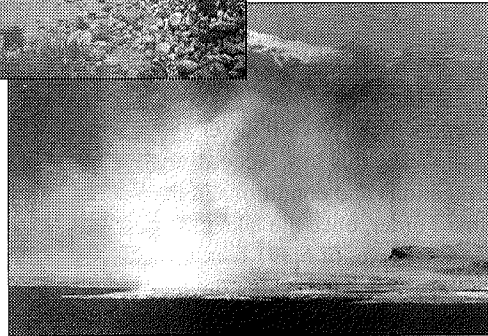
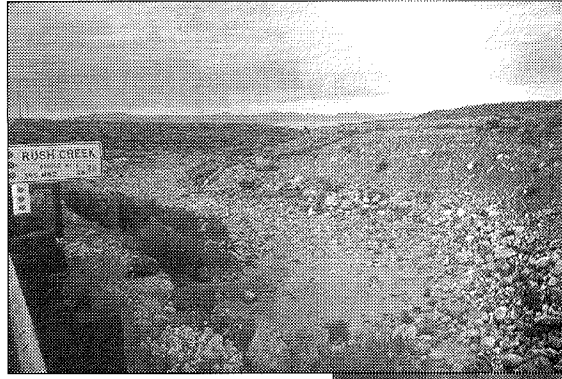
What is a "cfs" anyway?

This column often uses the term "cfs," which stands for "cubic feet per second" and is a common unit for measuring flow in streams. One cfs is a cubic foot of water passing a given point every second. There are about 7.48 gallons in a cubic foot, so one cfs would fill up seven one-gallon milk bottle in just under a second. One cfs flowing for 24 hours adds up to 1.98 acre-feet per day, or enough to flood 1.98 acres one foot deep. Multiply this by 365 days in a year, and one cfs flowing for a year would be enough for over 700 families.

So one cfs is a lot of water for people, but not much for a stream. Rush Creek, for example, carries flood flows well over 500 cfs, and meanders along in the fall at low levels around 50 cfs.

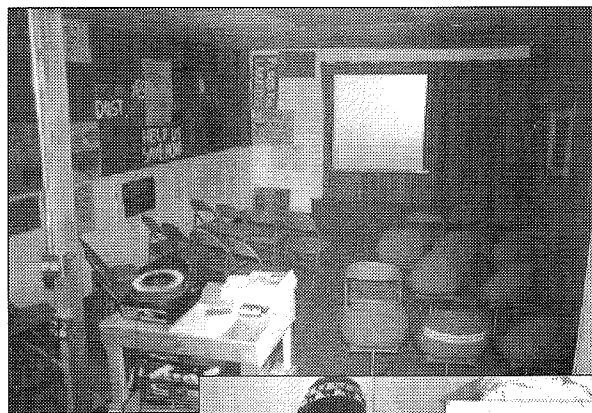
Twenty Years of Advocacy

1978 • Mono Lake Committee • 1998

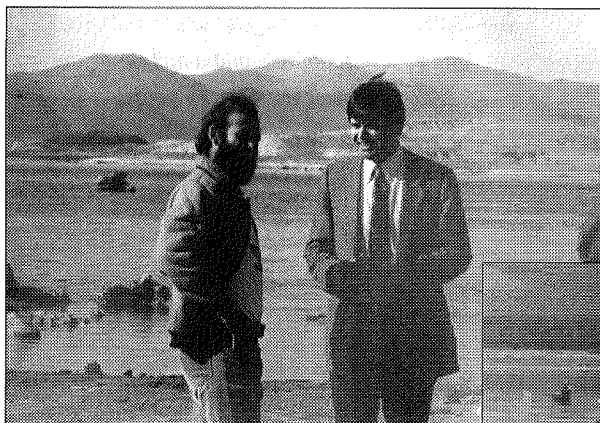


Early in this century, Los Angeles leaders like William Mulholland turned to the Eastern Sierra for water to keep pace with the city's growth. In 1941, they first opened the gates of the aqueduct which takes water from Mono Lake's tributary streams.

The streams dried up and the lake level dropped dramatically, allowing winds to pick up toxic dust off the exposed lakebed and threatening to collapse the Mono Lake ecosystem.



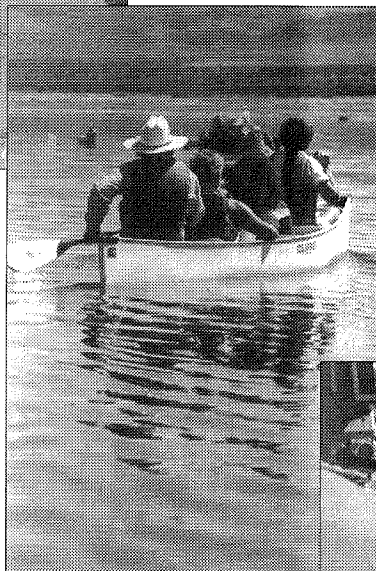
A group of young scientists from Davis studied Mono Lake and became alarmed at what they found. They formed the Mono Lake Committee in 1978. Co-founders Sally and David Gaines realized saving Mono Lake would depend on letting the world know about Mono Lake's wonders and its plight, and turning people into advocates. In the early 80s, grassroots support was growing, enabling the Committee to open a storefront and small office in Lee Vining, not far from Mono Lake. Slideshows, guidebooks, bumper stickers, and other materials helped spread the word. Birders, hikers, and tourists stopped in to learn the latest news.



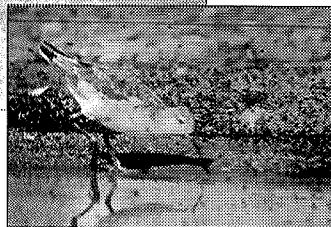
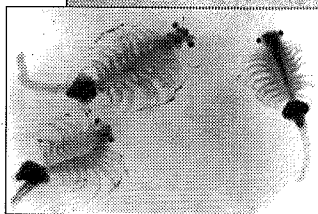
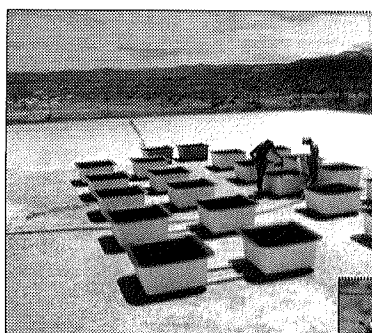
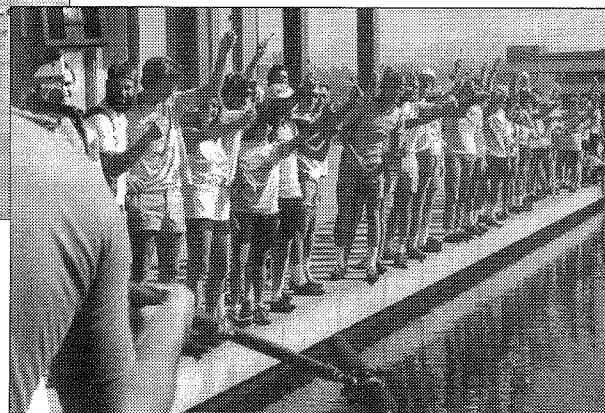
From the early days, the Committee reached out to legislators, state agencies, other environmental groups, and local communities to build coalitions, to ensure that all viewpoints were heard, and to explore every option for solutions to Mono's plight.

Mono enthusiasts staged events to raise awareness and funds, including the annual Bike-A-Thon, which started with a scoop of water from DWP's reflecting pools and ended with the water's return to Mono Lake.

Canoe trips and guided tours exposed nature lovers to Mono's birds and beauty, raising ire about Mono Lake's peril. These excursions are still popular summer programs, helping to increase appreciation for the natural wonders of Mono Lake and the importance of our continuing stewardship.

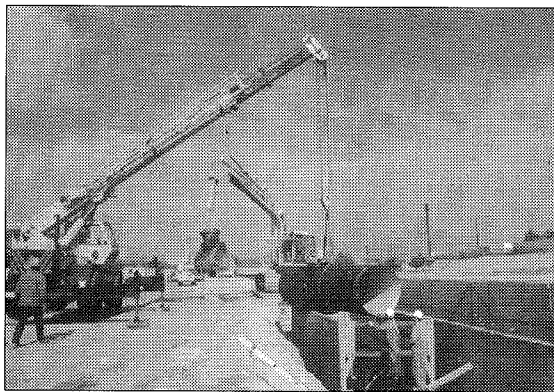


Detailed scientific studies proved necessary for truly understanding the effects of water diversions. For example, experiments helped to show the impact of the dwindling lake's increasing salinity on the health of brine shrimp and alkali flies—and ultimately, the millions of migratory birds that depend on them.



Executive Director Martha Davis worked diligently to assure that protecting Mono Lake wouldn't require diverting water from some other natural area. Her solution was to secure state and federal funding for conservation and waste water recycling programs in Los Angeles that would more than make up the loss of Mono Basin water. And then she persuaded DWP to actually use the money!



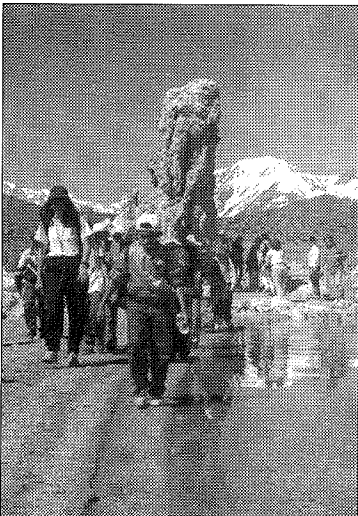


Reclamation facilities are now being constructed in Los Angeles which will conserve 145,000 acre-feet of water per year—about one-and-a-half times the amount DWP typically diverted from Mono Lake over the past 25 years.

Homeowners in Los Angeles are conserving water with low-flow toilets which are distributed by community organizations working with local youth. The Committee played a key role in securing funds for this program as well as funds for water recycling projects, and negotiated with DWP so that the water saved would be credited to Mono Lake.

In 1993, the State Water Resources Control Board held 43 days of public hearings. The Committee and its allies, as well as the Department of Water and Power, presented complex legal arguments and scientific evidence.

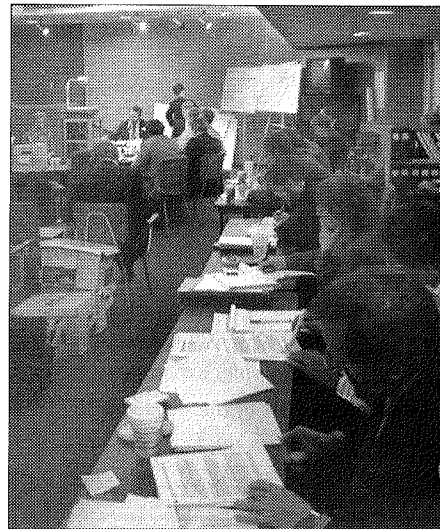
All parties agreed to accept the historic 1994 Water Board decision requiring a higher lake level and restoration of Mono Basin streams and waterfowl habitat while allowing some diversions to LA. The parties were asked to cooperate on developing and implementing restoration plans.



The Committee's work continues in other areas, too. For example, the Outdoor Experiences program brings youth from Los Angeles to Mono Lake, helping them discover the connection between water conservation at home and the preservation of the natural world.

Empowered by 15,000 members throughout California and around the world, today's Mono Lake Committee is vital to the Mono Basin, not only for its protection, restoration, and education

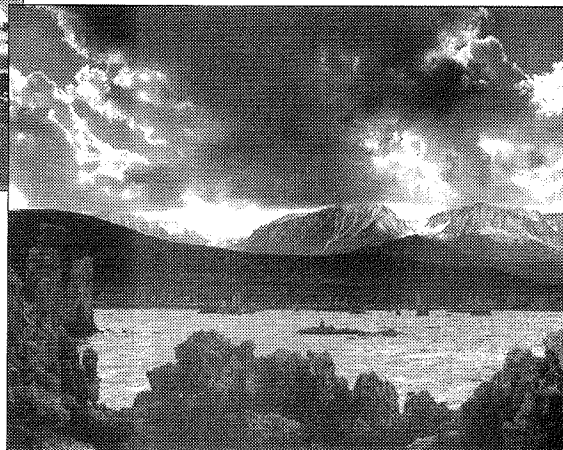
programs. The Committee also serves as the Lee Vining Chamber of Commerce, helps to support a tourism-based economy in environmentally sound ways, and works with all interested parties to explore ways to enjoy the Mono Basin's natural resources without harming or depleting them.



In 1978, young biologist David Gaines envisioned a healthy Mono Lake. Twenty years later, the dream is partially fulfilled.



Yet, the situation is a fragile one. The Public Trust Doctrine, critical to Mono's protection, has been challenged in other arenas, and there are rumblings from DWP that suggest it may ask the Water Board to revisit its 1994 decision. The only way to ensure long-term protection on Mono Lake is to ensure the long-term vitality of the Mono Lake Committee. The next twenty years are just as important as the first twenty years!



Ultra-low flush toilets are no laughing matter

Congressman Joseph Knollenberg (R, MI) introduced a bill (HR 859) in 1997 to repeal water conservation standards for toilets, showerheads, aerators, and urinals.

He maintains that ultra-low flush toilets do not work properly, and that the government should not be in the business of setting such standards. The response from the media—Dave Barry, the New York Times, Time magazine, even NPR—has been to make a joke of the bill, and to reinforce the notion that water conservation in the bathroom is not something to take seriously. Laughter from the press has fueled support for the bill in Congress.

The bill is no laughing matter to water-scarce states and to those who will be

asked to pay for new sewage treatment plants if the standards are repealed. It is also a direct threat to Mono Lake. The Mono Lake Committee helped generate federal and state funds for water conservation to offset the rewatering of the creeks that feed Mono Lake. If the bill becomes law, California and twelve other states' standards will be jeopardized. California's water supply agencies will be crippled in their ability to meet future water needs through conservation savings. The Metropolitan Water District assumes 45% of its conservation savings will come from passive plumbing replacements.

Congressman Henry Waxman (D, CA) has helped to slow down the bill, but hearings will be held in the Com-

merce Committee in 1998. Three members from California support the bill: Congressmen Ken Calvert, Tom Campbell, and Wally Herger. Please send letters stressing your positive experience with low-flow fixtures and your support for federal standards to Congressmen Waxman with copies or separate letters to Speaker Newt Gingrich, Congressman Knollenberg, and the three members who support Knollenberg. They can all be addressed as follows: Honorable(Name), House of Representatives, House Office Building, 20515. Email addresses are (FirstName).(LastName)@mail.house.gov. The Mono Lake Committee will post updates on this bill on our webpage at www.monolake.org.

Berkeley premiere of "The Battle for Mono Lake"

Panelists reiterate that much work is ahead

On Sunday, October 19, 1997, nearly 400 people gathered at UC Berkeley's Wheeler Auditorium for the northern California premiere of "The Battle For Mono Lake," produced by Stephen Fisher Productions in association with KTEH, San Jose.



Following the film premiere, a special reception was held at which Martha Davis received the Committee's 1997 Defender of the Trust award for her years of work for Mono Lake.

The premier was followed by a revealing panel discussion which included geomorphologist Dr. Scott Stine, law professor Harrison Dunning, Water Board environmental specialist Jim Canaday, film producer Stephen Fisher, and Department of Water and Power attorney Tom Birmingham, who conceded that DWP may challenge the Water Board decision in the future.

Event Sponsors made donations of \$500 or more: The American Land Conservancy; Balance Hydrologics, Inc.; East Bay Blueprint & Supply Co.; Forest Glen Winery; Golden Gate Audubon; Levine-Fricke-Recon, Inc.; Mr. George A. Miller; Miller Freeman Inc.; Palmer Madden, Esq.; Peters-de Laet Inc.; San Luis & Delta Mendota Water Authority; US Filter; and Yahoo! Inc.

Event Benefactors made donations of \$150-\$499: Mildred and Ed Bennett; Barbara Blake; Catherine

Collins; Allison Davis; Virginia and Richard Davis; Grace and Rick de Laet; Jerome L. Dodson, Parnassus Investments; Joan Florsheim, Philip Williams and Associates; Nancy Foquet; Helen and Paul Green; Marylee Guinan, Sycamore Associates LLC; Carol James, CR James and Associates, and David Kanner; Michael Kavanaugh, Malcom Pirnie, Inc.; Vrena and Tony Landolt, Infotrieve; Rev. Catherine Linesch; Sylvia McLaughlin; Patrick J Maloney, Esq.; Terre and David Mathiasmeier; William R. Mills; Maryann Muray, Radian International LLC; Antonio Rossman, Esq.; Dilip Trivedi, Moffat & Nichol Engineers; Iris Priestaf, Todd Engineers; The San Francisco Foundation; Joyce Schnobrich; Marv Shaw, Cadiz Land Company, Inc.; Tetra Tech, Inc; and Robert Wagner.

The hidden world of the alkali fly

by Carol Heinz

Editor's note: Because the Water Board has not yet ruled on Mono Basin restoration, proposed monitoring programs are on hold. The alkali fly, a research specialty of Dr. Dave Herbst, is an important indicator of Mono Lake's health, but lack of funding has limited recent data collection and analysis. In 1997, the Committee funded, and contributed staff to, a pilot study to develop standardized techniques for future monitoring.

I hitched up my waders and prepared to enter Mono Lake's alkaline waters. I was struck once again by the lake's magical, undersung beauty. Surrounded by the jagged peaks of the Sierra, Mono is a nestled gem of alkali flies, birds, brine shrimp, and tufa. I felt very fortunate to have the opportunity to study the alkali fly populations at such an incredible place and now realize how quickly Mono Lake taught me about its simple, yet important ecosystem.

I accumulated a great deal of information about this special place from my studies with Dave Herbst of the Sierra Nevada Aquatic Research Laboratory

and our work with the alkali fly. When I first learned I would be assisting with biological research during the summer, I was ecstatic. But I mistakenly envisioned the alkali fly as a house fly, complete with its attractions to humans and rotting meat.

In truth, the alkali fly is a charming creature and could not care less about humans. In fact, it much prefers the company of thousands of other flies. I was able to see this little critter up close as I spent about three weeks counting eggs, larval instars, pupae, and adults. They are brown, black, and white depending on their age and are actually quite beautiful.

The alkali fly goes about its unobtrusive business of eating algae and being a crucial food source for migratory birds. Since so many birds rely on the fly as a protein and caloric source, studying the alkali fly provided an indication of the overall health of Mono Lake's ecosystem.

For example, a little bird called the phalarope (now my favorite bird) flies non-stop from northern Canada to Mono Lake. This avian wonder feeds for a couple of weeks on the plentiful alkali flies until it can hardly lift itself out of the water. Then, it begins another journey and flies non-stop to South America. Mono Lake is the phalarope's only fuel stop!

Our



experiment's purpose was twofold. We tried to evaluate the ecological situation by taking a population census, and we also ran a pilot experiment. Our sampler had six different types of artificial substrates attached to PVC pipes. We wanted to see which type of substrate the fly preferred to pupate on, so that when Dave studies fly populations next year, he will know which substrate was colonized with comparable densities to natural substrates and which artificial substrate was the easiest to remove and process. Our small strips of fiberglass screen won the contest hands down, and Dave will probably use them next year.

I feel fortunate that I was able to see the entire scientific process. I built the samplers, deployed them in the field, collected data, processed the samples, and counted thousands of bugs! Field work is a hard, but rewarding experience. I spent hours drilling cement, sawing PVC, and cutting fiberglass screens. Sometimes we went on very long, hot hikes. Such adventures have benefits, however: I saw the most incredible sunset of my life, and we visited places that only the gulls seem to explore. I had never been to Mono Lake previously. Now the lake's presence has made a permanent mark on who I am, and I am glad that I was introduced to her majesty by the alkali fly.

Carol Heinz worked for the Committee as an intern in 1997. She's currently studying hard at Whitman College. 🐦



Carol working on portable alkali fly habitat in Mono Lake.

It's never too early to think about spring...

Volunteers needed for June breeding bird count

by Emilie Strauss

For ten of the last fifteen years, we have conducted a breeding bird count at Mono Lake and we're looking for participants for 1998. Our area (the "Christmas count circle") is centered in Lee Vining. This includes much of the western shore of Mono Lake, as well as parts of Lundy and Lee Vining Canyons. This project was first initiated by David Gaines in the late 1980s, and Mono Lake birders have celebrated his memory by continuing to conduct this count.

Last year, on June 14 with Mono Lake's level at 6,382 feet, over a dozen intrepid counters braved an unseasonably late snowstorm to participate in the 1997 count. Enduring rain, snow, and hail, we set a new record with 117 total species counted (the old record was 113 in 1989),

confirmed nesting for two new species for the count (blue grouse and vesper sparrow), and observed four new species (peregrine falcon, California quail, indigo bunting, and northern mockingbird). During the past eleven years, we have tallied a grand total of 177 species in the breeding bird count circle.

Summary data on confirmed nesting species has been forwarded to the Point Reyes Bird Observatory, which will be compiling this information into GIS maps to document declining riparian and songbird species in California. These maps can be viewed at their web site (www.prbo.org/prbo).

We hope you can join us on Saturday, June 13, for the 1998 count. Participants need to have a working knowledge of

common California birds. Be sure to bring food, water, binoculars, and a clipboard; a spotting scope and a 4WD vehicle could be useful. Expect Mono's birds to be at the height of song and activity. Abundant Mono Lake species at this time of year include green-tailed towhees, sage thrashers, house wrens, red-breasted sapsuckers, and Brewer's sparrows.

To participate, contact Emilie at emilie@stillwatersci.com or (510) 540-8749 for more information. If you plan to attend, please RSVP by June 1.

Emilie Strauss, locally known as "Emilie with an 'ie'" is a veteran Mono Lake birder. 🐦

Get the latest on the Mono Lake web page

Has it been a while since you visited the Mono Lake web page? Did you just go online at home? Looking for a friendly site on the Internet? Be sure to visit Mono Lake at www.monolake.org!

The Mono Lake web page is continually updated with Mono Lake news, events, lake levels, seasonal reports, and much more!

Recently added features include:

- A membership section where you can contact us, report an address change (or correction), or find links to fellow Monophiles' web pages.
- Instant online Committee memberships—encourage your friends to join online!

- Weekly updates from Lee Vining.
- Seasonal updates and recent bird sightings of note.
- Our favorite weather maps, satellite photos, and snow sensors showing

- what's up in the Mono Basin watershed.
- Updated natural history information.
- Information for visitors including an entirely new Lee Vining Chamber of Commerce section.

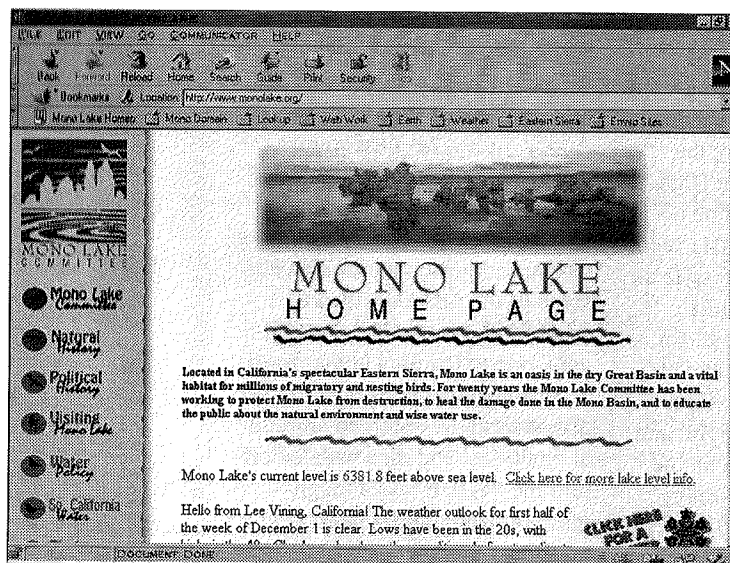
- The Mono Lake Newsletter, online!

- Information on Southern California and California water policy.

- A special button for use with your homepage's Mono Lake link!

- Coming soon: an expanded and improved Internet outlet for the Mono Lake Committee Bookstore. (If technology goes our way, you'll be able to order online too.)

What's that URL again? It's www.monolake.org—we'll see you online!



Fun on the High Sierra Fall Century

by Kay Ogden

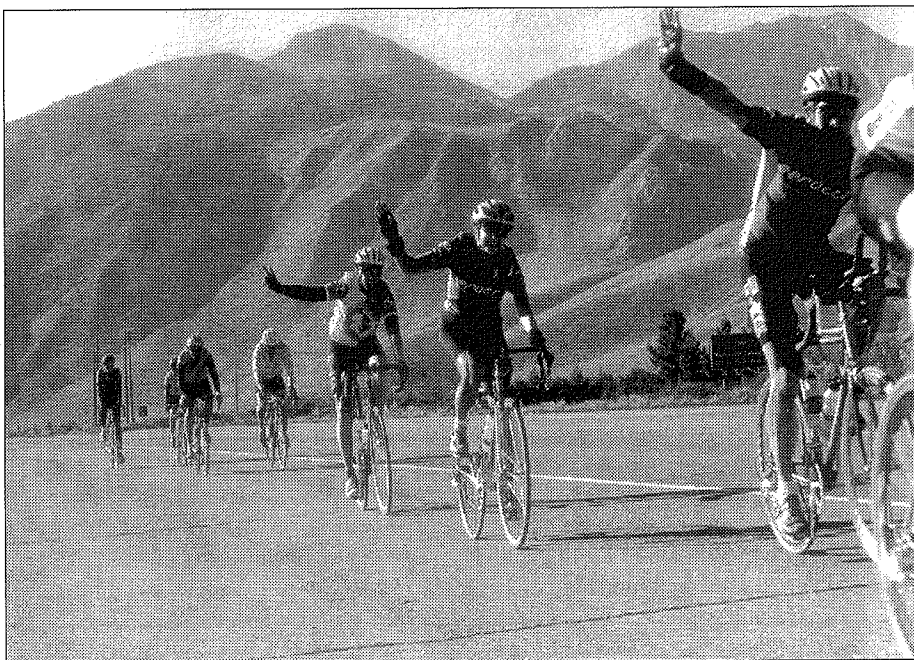


Photo by Sarah Grimke Taylor

including Committee co-founder Sally Gaines—at the finish line.

The ride next year will be on September 12th, and will be another way to celebrate the Mono Lake Committee's 20th Anniversary. There will be surprises at the rest stops, and a party hosted by the Mono Lake Committee at the finish. So start training!

And ... we promise we'll put our request for no wind in earlier!

The 1998 High Sierra Fall Century will be on September 12! If you want to be part of the Century as a sponsor, volunteer, or rider please contact Kay at kay@monolake.org or (760) 647-6595.

Kay Ogden is the Committee's Marketing Director. She cycles, but she doesn't bike. ☺

Wow! What a day! On September 13, almost 300 riders of all ages and fitness levels showed up to ride 100 miles through spectacular Eastern Sierra terrain. Many riders from more densely populated areas were amazed to find no stoplights and just one stop sign on the entire course!

The High Sierra Fall Century began at the Whitmore Ball Fields, just east of Highway 395 on the Benton Crossing Road. For the riders doing the full course (a shorter option was also offered), the morning started by riding north on Highway 395, then up the first long climb of the day to Deadman Summit at 8,041 feet.

From there, riders had a little respite as the road rolled over some small hills before descending into the Mono Basin, offering the first view of Mono Lake for the day. And oh, what a view: the lake ahead, the Mono Craters on the right, and the foothills of the Eastern Sierra on the left lit up with fall colors. After turning east at mile 27 onto Highway 120, riders had just a few more miles until the sec-

ond rest stop of the day, where Committee Executive Director Frances Spivy-Weber and other MLC staff greeted them with smiles, food, water, and tidbits about Mono Lake. Ready to roll again, riders passed the Mono Mills historic site on their way to the top of Sagehen Summit at 8,139 feet.

The riders had a long, fast descent into the meadows of Adobe Valley, but then were smacked with a tough head wind as they traveled to the second lunch stop at mile 66. After eating turkey and roast beef sandwiches, some of the riders decided to relax for the rest of the day and get a ride to the pool at the finish.

Those who kept riding climbed The Wall up to Wildrose Summit at 7,650 feet and then pedaled off into the wind. It was a tough afternoon, but cheers, food, and a poolside party awaited riders—

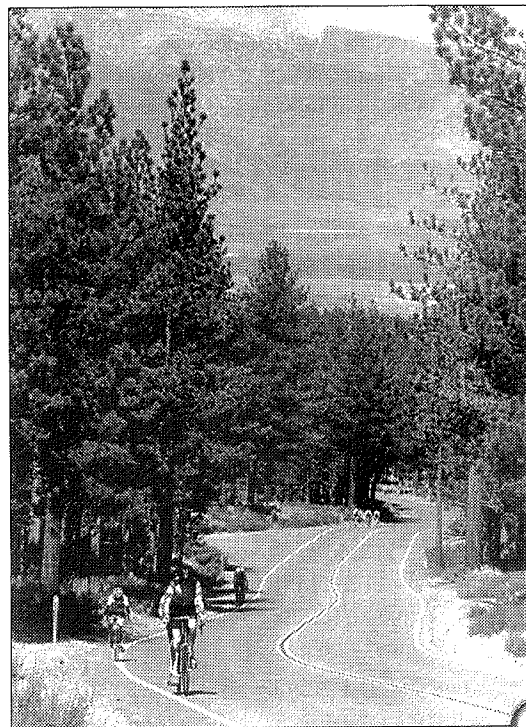


Photo by Sarah Grimke Taylor

Leaving Mono Lake behind, riders climb through the Jeffrey pine forest. The next ride is on Sept. 12, 1998.

Restoration Days packed with activities

by Kay Ogden

Restoration Days have become a Labor Day weekend tradition here in the Mono Basin. 1997's event was marked by four fun-filled days of meeting new and old friends, exploring familiar and unknown locations, and learning more about this glorious place. We plan to have even more fun during the next Restoration Days, September 4-7.

This year, we were fortunate to be able to host the premier of Stephen Fisher's film "The Battle for Mono Lake" on the first night of Restoration Days. Not only was Steve there to talk about his fabulous new film highlighting Mono Lake's political history, but many of the stars of the film—Dave Herbst, Sally Gaines, and Jessie Durant—were in attendance as well.

The real work started early the next morning. A hearty group gathered at the Mono Lake Committee's Information Center and Bookstore at 8:00 a.m. to help plant and water over 100 pine trees. This hands-on effort to repair Mono Basin

creeks for generations to come was so popular that many of the volunteers came back on Sunday and Monday too!

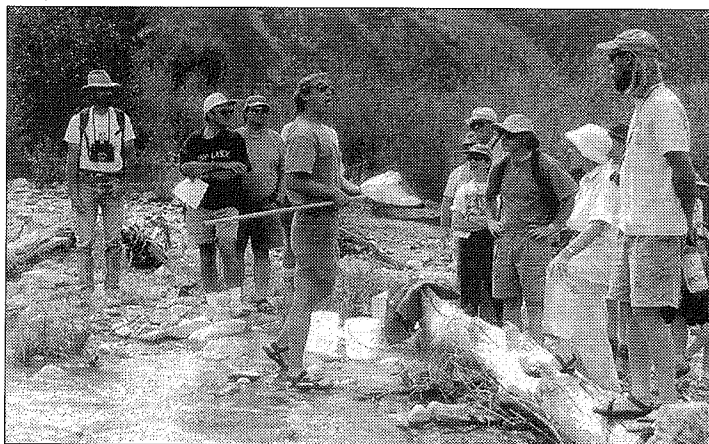
For those who wanted to start their day a bit more slowly, there were bird-watching tours each morning lead by expert Mono Basin

naturalists. Another option was to dip a paddle into clouds of brine shrimp and experience Mono from a unique and unforgettable vantage point—a naturalist guided canoe!

On Saturday, the traditional Rehydration Ceremony was held at Old Marina and given a new twist by Executive Director Frances Spivy-Weber. Standing at the shore, there was talk of Tom Lyons, of first sights of Mono, of Bike-A-Thons past, and of friends who couldn't make it over, such as Paul and Helen Green. Then we dipped our vials into Mono's clear water, and Rich Howe (who had ridden his bike up from Mojave) chose the spot where he thought the shoreline would be next year. We then poured the water from our vials to mark the rising waters of Mono Lake.

After the ceremony, we headed to County Park for the Annual Meeting and Picnic. For 19 years Mono Lake Committee members, families and friends have gathered to discuss the fate of Mono and the role of the Committee.

Later that day, there was a tour of Mill Creek, a guided South Tufa Walk, and a Star Talk, where



Dave Herbst explains how insect populations indicate stream health.

some of the myths and stories of the sky were shared.

Sunday was another full day of activities: planting and watering trees, canoe tours and birdwatching outings. The highlight of the day, though, was an exciting exploration of Lee Vining Creek with entomologist Dave Herbst. Dr. Herbst had over 40 people scrambling to get knee-deep in the chilly creek water to look at invertebrates ... bugs! He excitedly shared the importance of each one to monitoring the restoration of the creeks.

After drying off in the warm sun, there was a walk along the Lee Vining Creek Trail, and an exploration of Panum Crater. And the day wasn't over yet! For those who wanted, there was another guided walk and Star Talk at South Tufa. Back at the MLC, Don Jackson was there to talk about his beautiful photo exhibit.

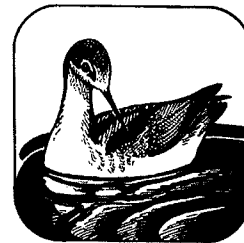
Although Monday was a day for many to start home, others stayed for more tree planting, bird watching, or canoeing. For some, this was the last trip of the year; even for those who would return to see the vibrant colors of fall, or the quiet of snow-covered sage and desert, it was hard to say good-bye. Some of us are lucky enough to live here in the Mono Basin; we'll keep an eye on things until you come back



A watering crew on the job during Restoration Days. In the foreground is John Brennan, who tended the seedlings for several months before the planting.



Advance Notice! 1998 Mono Lake Committee Field Seminars



Some class details are still being finalized at this time; please call for updated information and reservations.

CALIFORNIA GULL NEST COUNT

PRBO researchers; May 22–26

\$120 per person per day; overnight; meals included

Assist the California Gull field study team on Mono Lake's islands! See opposite page for details.

GEOLOGY OF THE MONO BASIN

Tim Tierney; June 20–21

\$90 per person/ \$75 for MLC members

Perhaps nowhere else in California is the geology more varied than in the Mono Basin, where both glaciers and volcanoes have left their mark. Explore mineral towers, volcanoes, and glacial remains. The first day will be spent exploring the area by car and foot. Day two will focus on thoroughly exploring a few special points of interest. Tim is a geologist and author of the Committee's *Geology of the Mono Basin* field guide.

CALIFORNIA GULL CHICK BANDING

PRBO researchers; July 2–5

\$120 per person per day; overnight; meals included

Assist the California Gull field study team on Mono Lake's islands! See opposite page for details.

MONO BASIN WILDFLOWERS

Ann Howald; Date not yet determined

\$90 per person/ \$75 for MLC members

The Mono Basin is an exceptional place to see wildflowers—fuzzy desert lupines, delicate streamside orchids, scarlet gilia, skunk monkeyflower, and many more. Wildflowers are the focus of this seminar, but the insects, birds, and other critters that eat them, pollinate them, and distribute their seeds won't be forgotten. Join Ann, a biology instructor and experienced Mono Basin naturalist, to explore the basin's botanical treasures.

NATIVE AMERICAN BASKETRY

Lucy Parker; July 10–12

\$120 per person/ \$100 for MLC members.

\$50 materials fee

In the tradition of the Kutzadika'a Paiute, learn to make a basket from seasoned willow. This year, the three-day class will camp in the Jeffrey pine forest near Mono's south shore. Lucy Parker is a descendent of the Yosemite Miwok, Mono Lake Kuzedika'a, and Pomo peoples. She learned traditional handiwork from her mother, a master basket weaver, and will pass on some of her knowledge in this two-day seminar. Lucy will see that you have adequate material to take home after the seminar is over.

MONO LAKE PHOTOGRAPHY: SCENIC AND WILDLIFE WONDERS

B. Moose Peterson; July 17–19

\$175 per person/ \$150 for MLC members

Explore the incredible wildlife and scenery of Mono Lake through your camera lens. This seminar will seek out Mono Basin wildlife and includes sunrise at Mono Lake photographing the vast collection of shorebirds, waterfowl, and other avian wonders. The class will also be sure to pay a visit to Lee Vining Canyon and to explore the beauty of Lee Vining Creek. Moose is a professional photographer who has developed particular renown for his environmentally sound wildlife photography.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AT MONO LAKE: A FIELD SEMINAR FOR EDUCATORS

Dave and Janet Carle; July 20–23

\$100 per person (includes one unit of college credit)

A special seminar for teachers, designed to enhance environmental education skills! See opposite page for details.

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PAGE 23 ➡

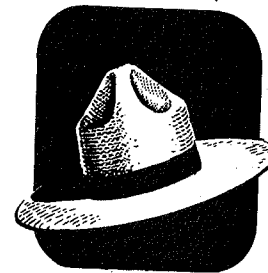
Call the Committee's Seminar Desk to register at 760-647-6595, 9am–5pm daily

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AT MONO LAKE: A FIELD SEMINAR FOR EDUCATORS

Dave and Janet Carle; July 20-23

\$100 per person (includes one unit of college credit, lodge/camping accommodation, and meals)

Science, mathematics, social studies, environmental studies, and the visual arts—Mono Lake can be used as a model for a wide range of curriculum concepts. From fourth grade to high school, learn how you can integrate Mono Lake into your class studies. Designed for teachers to enhance their skills in environmental education, this new seminar stresses study in the field and involves some easy hiking. Dave and Janet Carle are State Park rangers and each holds a master's degree in environmental interpretation. Cerro Coso Community College will give one unit of college credit for the completion of this seminar. This promises to be a unique experience for teachers. Accommodation will be at the rustic Burger's Retreat. Located at an elevation of 8,000 feet, this pristine mountain locale with aspen, fir, and Jeffrey pine provides a welcome setting for your stay in the Mono Basin. Please call for more details on this special field class for teachers.



GULL RESEARCH ON MONO'S ISLANDS

May 22-26, July 2-5

\$120 per person per day; overnight; meals included

Your participation and seminar fee will allow 15 years of research to continue on Mono's islands and will provide you with a field expedition opportunity and a desert island adventure you will not soon forget! Collect data on the Mono Lake gull colony and gain hands-on experience in field survey techniques. You'll enjoy the rare adventure of visiting Mono Lake's spectacular Negit Islets, and at close range you'll observe the second largest California gull breeding colony in North America.

Sign up for one to five days in late May or early July. You'll camp on Krakatoa Islet and you can expect very rugged field conditions, long hours in hot sun or cold wind, hearty meals, and the hue and din of 35,000 nesting gulls. The remote experience and incomparable views of Mono Lake and the Sierra crest make this research seminar a unique experience. You bring your gear, curiosity and energy; we provide training, food, fresh water, and boat transportation.

NEST COUNT *May 22, 23, 24, 25, or 26*

The size of the gull population will be estimated by counting nests over a five-day period on Negit Island and all the Negit Islets. Participants count nests, mark nearby rocks to avoid duplicative counts, and keep an eye out for signs of predators.

CHICK BANDING *July 2, 3, 4, or 5*

The reproductive success of the gull colony will be estimated by counting and banding all gull chicks found in eight study plots. Banding aids in making final survivorship calculations, and data from the study plots is extrapolated to form an overall picture of the gull population's breeding success.

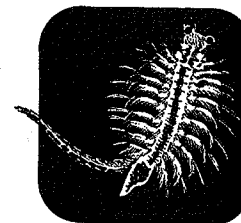
WEEKEND CANOE TOURS

One-hour tours every Saturday and Sunday at 8 A.M., 9:30 A.M., and 11 A.M.

June 21 through September 7

Adults \$15, kids \$6 (Sorry, no kids under 4)

Join expert guides for natural history from a unique perspective: the lake itself. Starting at Navy Beach (near South Tufa), you will canoe among tufa spires along Mono's shoreline and learn about this ancient, life-productive lake. Special group tours can be arranged. All participants must wear the life jackets provided and obey safety rules. Please arrive 30 minutes before departure time. *Reservations are strongly recommended for these popular tours: call (760) 647-6595 (9 A.M. to 5 P.M. daily) and ask for canoe reservations.*



Call the Committee's Seminar Desk to register at 760-647-6595, 9am-5pm daily

1996 ended a while ago, but we finally closed the books in the third quarter of 1997. The final numbers are presented here.

When examining the Committee's supporting services costs, it's always worth noting that about twenty percent of them come from the Information Center and Bookstore sales program—a program which more than pays its way through sales income. The bookstore is doing even better in 1997; expect to see sales revenues continue to add significantly to the Committee's bottom line.

Also note that we spent nearly four times the amount of money on educational outreach as on fundraising.

You may be wondering if it will take another twelve months to report on 1997. We certainly don't expect it to! Audited financial statements should be ready by summer, and a 1997 report should be available here in the *Newsletter* in the fall.

Once again, the bottom line is that the Committee's work is accomplished with funds generously provided by you, our members and supporters. Given the relatively small size of our budget, the impact of your donation, bequest, and membership contributions is large. Thank you! Be sure to visit the lake if you can to see what your support is accomplishing!

Kathi Richards is the Committee's Controller and chief number cruncher. She's the proud owner of new ski boots.

1996 Financial Highlights

by Kathi Richards

Mono Lake Committee

Fiscal Year 1996 Revenue and Expense

Public support and revenue

Public support	Amount
Member contributions	\$ 603,295
Foundation grants	\$ 25,500
Donations and bequests	\$ 42,324
Total public support	\$ 671,119

Revenue

Program service revenue	\$ 28,717
Information Center and Bookstore program	\$ 117,707
Interest and other	\$ 34,135
Total revenue	\$ 180,559

Total public support and revenue **\$ 851,678**

Expenses by program

Program services

Public education and outreach	\$ 440,144
Mono Lake litigation	\$ 26,086
Research and policy development	\$ 150,856
Lobbying	\$ 4,416
Total program services	\$ 621,502

Supporting services

Fundraising	\$ 118,420
Management and general	\$ 119,034
Information Center and Bookstore program	\$ 62,932
Total supporting services	\$ 300,386

Total expenses **\$ 921,888**

Change in net assets \$ (70,210)

Net assets at beginning of year \$1,092,796

Net assets at end of year \$1,022,586

No Newsletter until May

The spring and summer 1998 issues of the *Mono Lake Newsletter* will be combined into one expanded issue. The combined issue will be available in May 1998, so save this issue until then!

1997 Free Drawing winners selected

On November 11, the winning tickets were pulled for the 1997 Free Drawing. Winners have been notified by mail.

Congratulations go to the winners and thanks go to the donors and sponsors who provided a great set of prizes.

We'll be doing the Free Drawing

again in 1998, too! If you'd like to try your luck again, watch for tickets arriving in the spring. If your business would like to donate to the drawing we'd love to hear from you. Please contact Kay at kay@monolake.org or (760)647-6595 for information on the Free Drawing.

1998 Field Seminars (continued)

◀ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 21

MONO BASIN-EASTERN SIERRA WILDLIFE

John Harris; July 25-26

\$90 per person/ \$75 for MLC members

The Mono Basin is home to a diverse array of wildlife, from bighorn sheep on the rocky slopes of Lee Vining Canyon to kangaroo rats in the sagebrush flats. The class will explore the basin's variety of habitats, seeking out a diverse list of animals. John Harris is a professor at Mills College and the author of *Mammals of the Mono Lake-Tioga Pass Region*.

MONO BASIN ARCHAEOLOGY AND NATIVE PEOPLES OF THE PAST

Wally Woolfenden; August 1-2

\$90 per person/ \$75 for MLC members

Join Dr. Woolfenden, Inyo National Forest archaeologist, for an overview of the native inhabitants of the Mono Basin and Eastern Sierra. Two days in the field will focus on piecing together the story of the human past and visiting relevant historical sites!

HIGH COUNTRY WILDFLOWERS

Mark Bagley; dates not yet confirmed

\$90 per person/ \$75 for MLC members

A big winter in the Sierra promises a fantastic, late summer wildflower show! The workshop will journey through subalpine forests, across meadows and fell fields, along cascading creeks, and around jewel-like lakes identifying up to 150 species of flowers, trees and shrubs. Mark, a consulting biologist in the Eastern Sierra, will lead this field seminar's easily paced 2-4 mile hikes at the 10,000-foot elevation.

FALL BIRD MIGRATION

Dave Shuford; August 22-23

\$90 per person/ \$75 for MLC members

The east slope of the Sierra Nevada is a major migration route for birds traveling from northern nesting areas to warm southern habitats. As a result, early autumn is the time of year to see the greatest diversity of landbirds, shorebirds, and waterbirds in the Mono Basin. Dave Shuford is an expert on birds and well acquainted with where to find them in the Eastern Sierra.

STREAM RESTORATION: A HANDS-ON CASE STUDY

Dr. Richard Ridenhour; August 29-30

\$90 per person/ \$75 for MLC members

Explore the hidden world of the Mono Basin's riparian corridors and learn about the evolving art and science of stream restoration in the Mono Basin and around the West. Dr. Ridenhour is a Professor Emeritus at Humboldt State and one of three scientists who developed the Mono Basin stream restoration plans.

PAOHA ISLAND KAYAK

Stuart Wilkinson; September 12

\$60 per person/ \$50 for MLC members

Wind and weather permitting, visit Paoha Island for a picnic lunch and expedition! Stuart is versed in Mono Lake ecology, history, and politics and this natural history kayak tour will cover a wide range of topics relating to Mono Lake. Some kayak experience is recommended. Kayaks and safety equipment are provided.

MONO LAKE IN PASTEL

Maira Donohoe; September 19-20

\$90 per person/ \$75 for MLC members

Explore Mono Lake through art! Working with pastels, the class will spend two days exploring Mono's autumn light and landforms. Maira is an accomplished artist and instructor who lives in Yosemite and works throughout the Sierra Nevada.

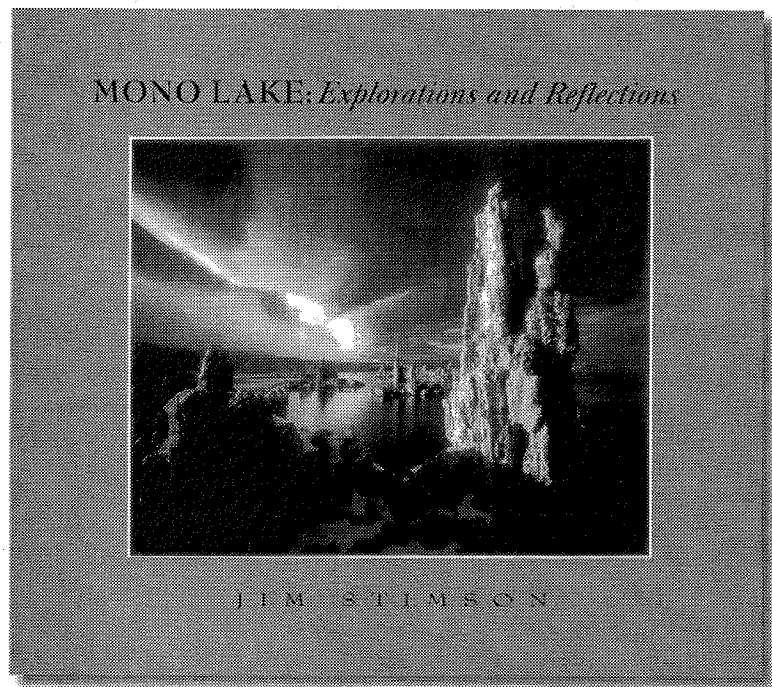
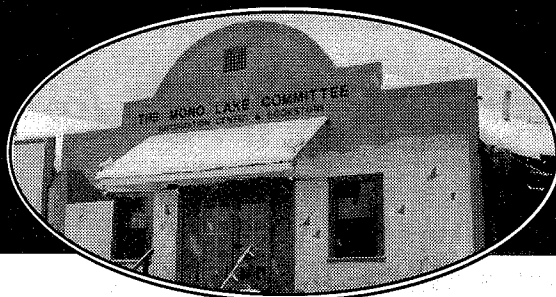
MONO BASIN FALL PHOTOGRAPHY

Richard Knepp; October 9-11

\$125 per person/ \$100 for MLC members

During autumn, spectacular foliage and skies combine with exceptional light in the Mono Basin, presenting ample subject matter for photographers in both color and black and white. Join accomplished photographer Rick Knepp to explore varied shoreline locations at sunrise and sunset and to discover fall color in nearby canyons. Subjects for discussion include composition, exposure techniques, filtration, basic theory of the Zone System, and developing a personal vision. Photographers of all levels are welcome; a fully adjustable camera of any size or format is suggested. This seminar begins on Friday evening.

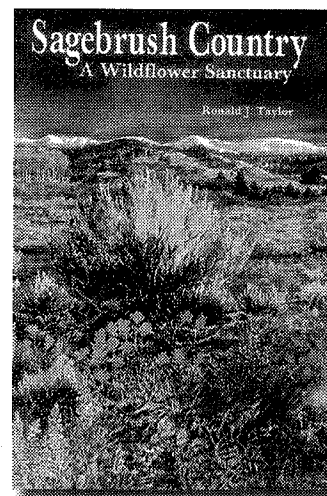
Call the Committee's Seminar Desk to register at 760-647-6595, 9am-5pm daily



JUST RELEASED! MONO LAKE: EXPLORATIONS AND REFLECTIONS

In this captivating portfolio of color images, Jim Stimson explores Mono Lake's austere landscape and presents a hauntingly beautiful and intimate look at a wild place nearly lost to the thirst of a growing city. Stimson's work is deeply rooted with a sense of place and has been frequently seen in the Mono Lake Calendar and on exhibit in the Committee Bookstore and the Mono Inn. A must for Monophiles!

Clothbound, 195 pages: \$55.00 (Item #114)



SAGEBRUSH COUNTRY: A WILDFLOWER SANCTUARY

Through color photographs, *Sagebrush Country* introduces visitors and residents alike to the abundant plant life in the land of bitterbrush and coyotes. This field guide explores the spring and fall flowers and their adaptation to withstand the extremes.

*By Ronald J. Taylor, softbound, 209 pages:
\$14.00 (Item #119)*

**Use our postage-paid envelope
to send in your order!**

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Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Daytime phone _____

SHIPPING RATES

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\$10 - \$25	\$5.00
\$25 - \$50	\$5.50
Over \$50	\$6.00

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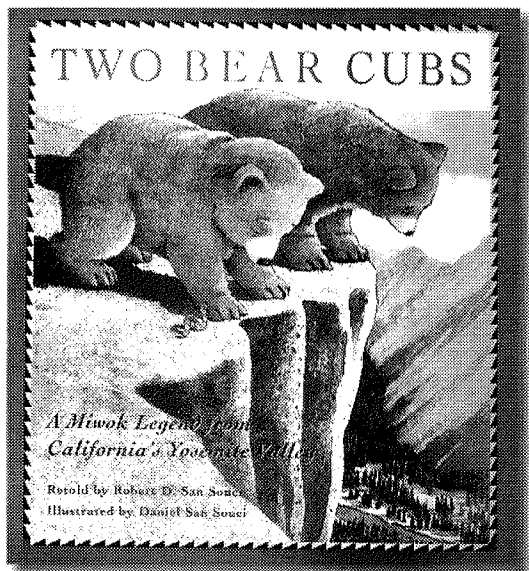
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\$4.00 charge for additional mailing addresses California law requires us to charge sales tax on shipping

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Quantity	Item	Price	Total
	Mono Lake: Explorations and Reflections	\$55.00	
	Sagebrush Country	\$14.00	
	Two Bear Cubs	\$14.95	
	1998 Mono Lake Calendar	\$6.95	
	Mulholland's Dream	\$27.95	
Shipping: use rates at left			
Subtotal			
CA residents—add 7.25% sales tax to subtotal			
Total			

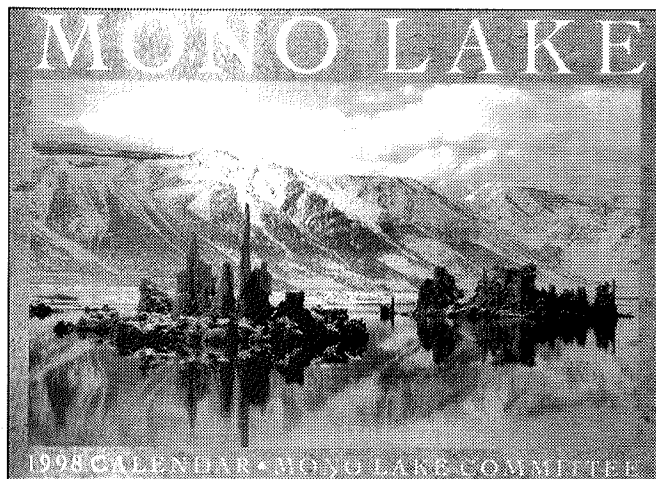
Mono Lake Committee P.O. Box 29, Lee Vining, CA 93541



TWO BEAR CUBS: A MIWOK LEGEND FROM CALIFORNIA'S YOSEMITE VALLEY

In this authentic southern Sierra Miwok legend, young readers will discover how two lost bear cubs are saved while learning the traditional Miwok story of how a rock grew to become one of Yosemite's most famous landmarks

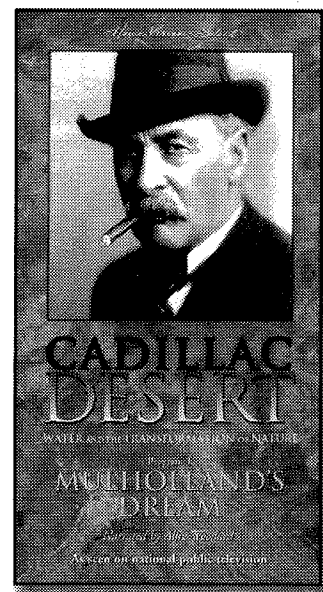
Hardbound, 35 pages: \$14.95 (Item #117)



POST-SEASON PRICE! LIMITED QUANTITY 1998 MONO LAKE CALENDAR

The 1998 Mono Lake Calendar features full-color images from renowned photographers such as William Neill, Jim Stimson, Don Jackson, and Fred Hirschmann. An introductory essay by Committee Board Member Martha Davis looks back on the many years of struggle for Mono's protection.

*Available at a discounted post-season price of \$6.95 (Item #1210)
Quantities limited!*



MULHOLLAND'S DREAM: PROGRAM ONE OF THE CADILLAC DESERT SERIES

This fascinating documentary describes how William Mulholland delivered the Owens River to Los Angeles and how Mono Lake became the place where the water diversions were finally limited. Includes interviews with Lee Vining residents and Mono Lake Committee co-founder Sally Gaines. The complete content of episode one of the PBS Cadillac Desert series!

85 minutes, VHS: \$27.95 (Item #105)

Staff migrations

by Frances Spivy-Weber

Several longtime Mono Lake Committee board members have moved on to new pursuits in the past six months, leaving a tremendous legacy behind. Their extended service has steered the Committee through difficult waters and Mono Lake to higher levels.

Ed Grosswiler, had been a Board member since 1984 when he finished a two-year stint as Executive Director of MLC. Ed would jokingly point out that Mono Lake rose nine feet during those two wet years, a feat Martha Davis, his successor, could never duplicate. Ed served as co-chair of the board for many years, and his political savvy and good financial sense have kept the Committee right on track. We are also grateful to Ed for bringing Martha into the MLC family. We won't let him wander off too far.

Barbara Blake became a Board member after having helped pass federal legislation in 1984 establishing the Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area. She worked on this legislation as a lobbyist for the Sierra Club in Washington, D.C. Barb served as treasurer of the MLC and has been eager to help with fundraising. She is also proud of having introduced Dave Weiman, a brilliant political strategist, to the Mono Lake Committee. We will continue to put her talents to good use.

Also departing this fall was board member **Dian Grueneich**, who joined

the board in 1992 with fresh ideas and an interest in fundraising. We will miss Dian's ability to make insightful judgements after absorbing tremendous amounts of legal and policy information. In the final days of the Water Board hearings Dian helped secure outside political support for a strong Mono Lake decision.

Welcome to 1997's new Board members **Jim Baetge, Martha Davis, Amy Holm, Robert Marks, and Dave Marquart!** We'll profile them in future Newsletter issues.

Congratulations go out to Bookstore Manager **Laura Walker**, married this past summer at Burger's Retreat to Lee Vining resident Randy Walker. Laura also began working full time in the bookstore this fall after doing a remarkable job of keeping the store well-stocked while working part-time. We're glad to have you completely on board, Laura!

Wedding congratulations also go out to board member **Dave Marquart**, who married Connie Henderson this past summer. They're happily living out by DeChambeau Creek and are ready for deep snow and long skis to the house from the highway.

Frances Spivy-Weber is the Committee's Executive Director. She drives her car as little as possible. ☺

Yosemite plan affects Mono Lake

Yosemite National Park recently released the Draft Valley Implementation Plan (VIP), which presents alternatives for, among other things, reducing traffic congestion in Yosemite Valley.

One alternative discussed for achieving this is to create parking areas in gateway communities near the park

entrances. A staging area in Lee Vining could offer new opportunities and have tremendous impacts on the town and Mono Lake. The Committee will be tracking this issue closely.

The VIP is available from the park or on the World Wide Web at www.nps.gov/planning/yosemite/vip.

In Memoriam

Sadly, the final months of 1997 took with them several senior members of the Mono Basin community. Lee Vining matron **Harriet Hess** passed away in the company of her family in November, leaving the town a little less orderly and the "Panum Pantry" food co-op far less organized. Harriet and her husband Augie originally rented, and then sold, us the building which houses the Mono Lake Committee offices and bookstore. We'll always remember Harriet tending her garden and calling to see if the monthly co-op produce list had arrived yet on the fax.

For many years, four generations of the Banta family have kept the town running. **Bill Banta, Sr.**, passed away last fall, and now we'll have to get by with three. His vegetable garden at the start of the Lee Vining Creek trail turned out produce that quickly entered local legend, though we never quite talked him out of all his secrets.

Longtime Kings Inn owner **Jim Harlan** also left us last year. A good friend of the Committee and our local curmudgeon, Jim was always quick with a laugh and cheerful word. We'll miss him in the years ahead.

In the broader world of water politics, **Carla Bard**, former chair of the State Water Resources Control Board under Governor Edmund G. Brown, Jr. and pioneer of the environmental movement in Ventura County, was killed in a car accident in November. Carla helped organize the Water Policy Conference VII, where she spoke out loud and clear for the environment. Carla will be greatly missed.

Mono Lake supporter **Dorothy Babbington** passed away in 1995, and our thoughts have been with her family due to the recent passing of her husband **Robert**. Together, they generously left a bequest for Mono Lake in their estate.

Member Corner: News from the membership desk

by Rebecca Dobert

Accolades

We had several expressions of thanks from unexpected quarters at the end of this season. From our western neighbors, the **employees of the Tuolumne Lodge** in Yosemite National Park, we received a donation of \$150. Their letter detailed the source of this money—they collected "...loose change and contributions to benefit the recovery of Mono Lake" all summer long! Thank you **Martha Miller, Alan Busby, J. Mike Anderson, Renate Binder, Dennis Buchanan, Alice Bromund, Daniel Godeam, Robbye Lanier, Robert High, Michael Seatter, and Joice Simpson!**

An unknown friend from **Barefoot Winery** left us a case of wine in September. We would love to say thank you, but don't know who you are! Please give us a call.

Thank you to volunteer **Alexa Williams of Technical Glass**, who built a wonderful new Defender of the Trust award for us from wood and glass. We now have a distinctive award to present to Defender of the Trust recipients. Martha Davis received the award this year, complete with an attached tube of Mono Lake water.

Thanks also go to all the photographers who submitted images for the 1999 Mono Lake Calendar. The selection was excellent, and the calendar promises to be beautiful.

From the mailbox

We received an inspiring letter from thirteen year old **Dana House of Alpine**. She wrote to tell us: "My goal in life is to be a ranger...and to live and work in Lee Vining...I hope the wonderful store and Committee are around for a long time. I just wanted to express my gratitude that someone is trying to help Mono Lake. I love it! I think it is beautiful."

Keep working for your dream, Dana, and remember that when you're older, the Committee is always looking for passionate interns...

All Committee members should be sure to check out our expanded member services in the Mono Lake Committee section of our web page at **www.monolake.org**. The page details **member services**, and provides an on-line forum for your questions, problems or changes regarding your membership.

To be featured on the web page in early 1998 will be an outline of our **bequest and endowment programs**. These programs seek to aid donors who would like to make large gifts (\$10,000 or more), or who are considering making the Committee a beneficiary of their estate. Until this information is up and running, please contact me at the Lee Vining office for more details.

For our **members overseas**, we'd like to keep in touch with you! Please send us your email addresses and we will keep you posted on Mono Lake happenings in your area (yes, there are a few casual European get-togethers). We can also rectify any mailing problems you may be experiencing, as well as take any special requests from those of you as far away as Malaysia!

Matching gifts & gift memberships

During the winter season of holiday giving, gift memberships and employer-matched gifts are especially popular. **Eleanor Luce** of Berkeley sent a membership to **Mrs. Foresta Gooch**, also of Berkeley, in honor of her 89th birthday. **Heberger & Company, Inc.** sent in a donation to honor the 35th wedding anniversary of two of our newest Lee Vining "locals," **Michael and Jeannie Adams**. We'd also like to send hearty congratulations to members **Jack and Virginia Fair**, who celebrated their 57th anniversary on November third!

A gift from member **Gordon MacDermott** was matched by his employer the **Anchor Brewing Company**. **Paul Rayton** of LA made a donation that was matched by **GC Companies, Inc.** **Patricia Newell** and **Michele Sooy** both had their gifts matched by **Bank of America**, while **Marc Yalom's** gift was matched by **Waste Management, Inc.**

Henry and Mary Hoexter of Berkeley made a contribution in memory of **Gary E. Haas**, on behalf of **Mrs. Haas**.

Calling all Guardians of the Lake!

I am actively seeking to streamline and generally straighten out your gift processing. Please contact me if you are currently experiencing any problems with your account. I may be reached by phone at (760) 647-6595, or by email at **rebecca@monolake.org**. Also, due to several Guardian requests, we are initiating a new service. Instead of printing a renewal date on your newsletter, your label will now reflect your "Guardian" status, since Guardians do not have to renew every year. Thinking of **joining the Guardians program**? I can help you with that too!

Rebecca Dobert is the Committee's Membership Coordinator; she's working on setting a standard of office dress higher than Tevas and T-shirts!

**Migrate south with us to Los Angeles
for a benefit premiere of the PBS documentary
"The Battle for Mono Lake"**

A story of victory—your victory!

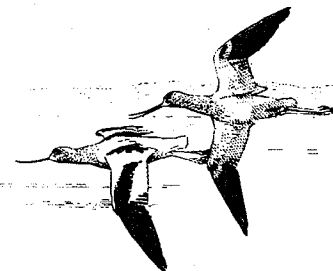
March 29, 3–6 pm



**You are invited to attend a celebration
of the Mono Lake Committee's 20th Anniversary
and the Los Angeles premiere of "The Battle For Mono Lake"
a Stephen Fisher Production in association
with PBS station KTEH in San Jose.**

**The premiere and celebration will take place on
Sunday, March 29, 1998
in Schoenberg Hall on the campus of
the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)
from 3:00–6:00 pm**

**For more information please contact Shelly Backlar
at (818) 716-8488 or shelly@monolake.org
or visit our web page at www.monolake.org/premiere**



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