



# Foundation Flyer

*We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors  
we borrow it from our children.* Native American Proverb

**Santa Rosa Plateau Foundation**

**www.srpf.org**

**WINTER 2008**

## **SPRING GARDEN TOUR**

By Marion Hansen

Remember this date and mark your calendars. The fifth annual Santa Rosa Plateau Foundation Garden Tour will be held on the last Saturday of April. This year it will be April 26, 2008.

Proceeds from this fundraising event will be used to help pay for the third grade educational student trips up to the Santa Rosa Plateau Ecological Reserve. During these trips, which are available to all the neighboring school districts, 3rd graders go hiking on the trails through several different habitats with a docent explaining ecological concepts. Then the students do indoor science and history activities using the Visitor Center displays.

You can support this exceptionally good cause while having a great day enjoying the beautiful gardens on display in the La Cresta and surrounding areas. As usual, there will be 5 to 7 gardens of many different types of plantings to see. There will likely be a shady picnic area in which to eat your lunch. So make plans now to come and bring family and friends.



Preliminary plans are being made now for this event; more details will be available soon. For further information call Lou Schrock at (951) 813-8391.

### **Upcoming Events**

2/2/08 – Docent Meet and Great Pot Luck & Presentation

4/26/08 – Garden Tour

July 2008 – Art Show

7/25-7/26 2008 – Cowboy Jubilee

Oct. '08 – Docent Training

**COMING SOON**

Children's Wildlife Day

### **ENDOWMENT CAMPAIGN UP AND RUNNING WITH KICK-OFF EVENT**

By Ginger Greaves

With the backdrop of Montelone Meadows and a delightful homemade buffet dinner, the Endowment Campaign got off to a great start generating approximately \$16,000 in donations and pledges. Campaign chair, and former founding Board member Cois Byrd, gathered an initial mailing list of invitees resulting in an attendance of approximately 65 individuals and company representatives who are interested in supporting the education endowment. Special thanks to Hennie Montelone for use of her beautiful facility.

Although it may appear a lofty goal of establishing a \$1M endowment, the Endowment Committee feel it is a doable project and as of this writing we only have approximately

\$948,000 left to raise! A \$1M endowment will generate approximately \$45K per year in interest that will meet the Foundation's annual commitment in support of the Children's Third Grade Education Program.

If you would like to help with the campaign, please contact [coisevbyrd@msn.com](mailto:coisevbyrd@msn.com) and/or visit our website at [www.srpf.org](http://www.srpf.org).

### **Thank you for your support! Lifetime Members:**

The Roripaugh Family Foundation, The Coeta & Donald Barker Foundation, Wayne Kiley, and Ginger & Ed Greaves.

A special thanks to our County Supervisors, Bob Buster, Jeff Stone, and Marion Ashley for their support.

### **Board of Directors**

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## **THIRD GRADE REPORT**

By Nancy Backstrand

### **"Limbo Tree"**

Few spots along the trail with kids have elicited such a predictable and universal response than two sagging limbs of large live oaks on the Vista Grande trail: "Limbo, Limbo, Limbo!" Now there is only one. As happens with these big heavy limbs, they sag under their own weight and eventually touch the ground before growing up and out. Unfortunately, two feet over the trail represented a problem. People can't go under, can't crawl across, and if left alone the public would find a long way around. So, Ranger Ed had to perform an amputation. Now there are oak logs along the trail and a new educational opportunity has arisen as we explain how gravity affects the big, old trees and how the decomposers will arrive to do their work turning the logs into fertilizer for other nearby trees. Maybe in another fifty years the logs will be gone. Meanwhile, the other "limbo" branch remains, and we hope it hangs in there a few more years to provide an opportunity for a few more thousand kids to "Limbo, Limbo, Limbo".

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## **Teacher-Network Update**

By Derick Hansen, Educational Liaison

In the last Foundation Flyer we were introduced and you were told of my goal to set up a network via the internet to connect teachers with the Foundation and the Reserve. I'd like to take a moment to tell you about this project and the progress that's been made toward reaching the goal.

The Teacher Network is exactly that – a system by which the Foundation will have direct access via email to the people who most directly benefit from the work of the Foundation. Through an e-newsletter specifically designed for educators, every 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teacher from all seven participating school districts will be able to work together to make the most of their students' experience on the plateau. As an added *bonus*, by having direct access to hundreds of teachers and thousands of students and their families, we hope to increase involvement in and support of the Foundation.

So how is it going so far? For this endeavor to work, it is essential that we obtain permission from the school districts to use their email networks. Currently, we have the full support of both the Murrieta and San Jacinto School Districts. The Temecula School District is also very interested and wants more information. The remaining four districts also want more information before signing on.

The first e-newsletter is currently in the process of being designed. In December, a request for teaching strategies and lesson plans was sent to every teacher in the Murrieta School District and many responses have already been received. These teacher-tips, along with other articles relating to such things as "How to Integrate Lessons on the Plateau Across the Curriculum" and

"Addressing the State Content Standards" will make up the first half of the e-newsletter. We also hope to include articles written by Park Staff, docents and Foundation members in this first half - so if you have an idea that you would like to share, please send them to me at dhansen\_SRP@msn.com.

The second half of the e-newsletter will be a "Kid's Page" (with interesting articles, trivia, and games) that teachers will be encouraged to print and send home with their students.

With any luck, this first e-newsletter will be sent out sometime in March so if you'd like to participate in writing the inaugural edition, send in those ideas ASAP! Also, if you would like to be on the list to receive the e-newsletter, be sure to send me a note.

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## **Welcome New Docents!**

By Rob Hicks

On December 15, 2007 the Reserve congratulated and graduated 15 new volunteer docents as they completed the annual Docent Training Program. With the majority of ten training sessions fulfilled, we welcomed Jackie Clay, Colin Gully, Cathy Hays, Jack and Shirley Jankowski, Stephanie Johnson, Evan and Steve Lusky, Katheryn Miller, Ron New, Diana Nilsen, Sharron Paddie, Karen Pikula, and Chelle Wilson. Both Joshua Nygaard and Nicholas Stokes did not begin attending the training program early enough to officially qualify as a docent, but are continuing "on-the-job" training in order to fulfill their necessary training hours.

All of these new volunteer docents bring diverse backgrounds and experiences that will aid both the public and the Plateau. Whether they are conducting school programs, staffing the Visitor Center or monitoring trails, they will all be helping to conserve the Plateau that they have grown to love while serving the public that visits.

Over the next few weeks, new docents will be paired with seasoned docents in order to learn the details of these many important duties. Any volunteers that are interested in "mentoring" a new docent let us know so that we can schedule you with a bright-eyed and bushy-tailed addition to our Plateau crew.

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## **Get-to-Know and Goodbye Get-Together**

By Rob Hicks

Come and meet our new docents and enjoy a presentation by area archaeologist Paul Price on February 2, 2008. It will be an evening event at 6 p.m. at the Visitor Center and will be a potluck dinner. Please bring a small dinner dish for a few people or an appetizer to be enjoyed before a program on the diversity of American Indian cultures of the area.

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We will also be saying goodbye to Office Assistant Maria Kirkconnell who will be leaving her position on February 27<sup>th</sup>. The upcoming birth of her fourth child will end over five years of important and devoted work with the Reserve's education programs, and we hope that she will always return to volunteer and retain the connection she has created with us over her special time on the Plateau.

If you can bring a baby shower gift for her baby boy to the event, we could thank her for her hard work and devotion by sending her home with enough gifts to require new shocks for her old car!

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**Kudos for Docents, Volunteers & Staff of the Plateau**

In John Hunneman's article in *The Californian* on Sunday January 6, 2008, the docents, volunteers and staff of the Santa Rosa Plateau were given the "You're the Citizen(s) of the Year, Hunny" for all their hard work and efforts each year in raising the necessary money to keep the 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Program running.

Thank you all for your hard work and support, without you the Third Grade Program could not continue.

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**Volunteers Needed!**

Volunteers are always needed and welcomed at the Plateau. Please contact us at (951) 461-7667 if you are interested.

For those who are interested in serving on the 2008-2009 Board of Directors, please contact the Board Secretary at [Virginia@srpf.org](mailto:Virginia@srpf.org).

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Membership is now open to all caring people. Please visit our web site for details & benefits.

**I Eagerly Support the Santa Rosa Plateau Foundation and its Vision. Enclosed is my/our check or money order (made payable to Santa Rosa Plateau Foundation):**

- Student/Senior \$10.00
- Bronze Bear \$25.00
- Silver Oak \$75.00
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(For SRPF use ONLY)

**I would like to receive the Newsletter via Email**

**SEND DONATIONS TO:**

Santa Rosa Plateau Foundation P.O. Box 941  
Murrieta, CA 92564-0941

**Phone:** 951-461-7667

**Newsletter available via email or at SRPF.org**

Save a tree. Educate a child. Respect Nature.

## FAVORITE THINGS

By Virginia Hyde



Marion Hansen sits looking through the bay window overlooking the vineyard she and her husband, Phil, have carefully planted and cared for the past 27 years. Her eyes light up as a hawk swoops past the bird feeder on its

search for a meal and presently a large whirlwind sweeps through the vines sending the grape leaves flying in a golden funnel. She says this is her favorite place. It's the place where she can quietly sit and be entertained, educated and inspired by nature.

She and Phil built their home in La Cresta in 1986 when wildlife constituted the majority of their neighbors, but their five-acre vineyard provides a natural buffer from today's increased housing. As a California native, she grew up in Pasadena and Altadena when the area still supported orange groves and dairies. After graduating from Chapman College, she started her 38-year career as a grade school teacher in Downey and Anaheim retiring in 1992. Her favorite age group was fifth graders. "They have the ability without the attitude", she says with a smile.

Life was busy then, teaching full time and raising three children. But, summers allowed time for the outdoors and were spent camping and hiking with the family in the Sierras or on trips to Minnesota visiting relatives. Her children were hiking without assistance at five years of age. The whole family climbed Mt. Whitney when the youngest was seven and the eldest son continues the annual tradition to this day. "It doesn't take much to inspire a love of nature in children", Marion said. She clearly recalls the moment her family reached the end of a wilderness hike in Sequoia National Park and was rewarded with an awesome view of a jewel-like alpine lake. That "picture was worth a thousand words".

Marion's talent for teaching about her favorite things has been used to the benefit of the Third Grade Program for thirteen years. Long-time docent, Nancy Backstrand, inspired Marion to volunteer before there was a Visitor Center and materials were kept in an on-site metal box. Being a docent for the third graders allows her to continue to teach, but more importantly, to learn about her immediate and local environment. The children are very fortunate to have an inspiring teacher who thoroughly enjoys what she does, who is constantly curious herself, who has a strong bond with her fellow volunteers, and who loves the place where she teaches. She says she is a docent because it is fun! The Santa Rosa Plateau Foundation is also fortunate to have Marion serving on the Board of Directors and acting a Board liaison for the annual garden tour fundraiser held each April. Marion has the contented look of a person able to spend her time doing her favorite things.



### Santa Rosa Plateau Foundation

P.O. Box 941  
Murrieta, CA 92564-0941

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