



# Events & Views

Published for active Environmental Volunteers

April 2008

## Today's Vision, Tomorrow's Reality

by Allan Berkowitz, Executive Director

Last month, Joyce Friedrichs, our Board Chair, wrote about the process we follow to develop our strategic plan. Following up on this, I would like to talk about the plan itself. Specifically, I would like to introduce the core concepts our new 3-year plan will embrace.

The EV is at an exciting crossroads. Six months from now, we will begin construction of the EcoCenter, and 18 months from now, we will move in. The challenges and opportunities are both great, and we are actively planning the process to harness both. Our emerging strategic plan is designed to leverage the emerging new reality.

Our strategic efforts over the next three years will focus on three Vision Elements (as Joyce noted in her column, the vision elements are the broad concepts, the overall goals, the vision we seek to create). The first Vision Element is to *Become a Sustainable Organization at a New Level of Service*. Through this endeavor, we will solidify our long-term sustainability by significantly expanding the resources to operate our organization, deliver services, interact with our constituents, and weather internal and external changes. We will expand revenues, funding sources, staff resources, volunteer and professional development, critical infrastructure, and our operating reserves.

When an organization operates at a certain limited size and with limited resources, the ability to weather challenges and the ability to thrive are hampered. It impacts everything, from attracting and retaining good staff to limiting our capability to promote our good works. The Board and staff are working on answering the following questions. What constitutes greater sustainability for the EV? What increased resources (staffing, educational, funding, and

infrastructure) are needed to ensure greater stability? And how can we best apply these increased resources for greater mission fulfillment? In short, three years from now we envision an EV organization that has greater resources, greater capacity, and greater mission fulfillment.

The second Vision Element is to *Raise the EV Profile*. Dovetailing on the sustainability focus, the EV is one of the better-kept secrets in our community. And yet, as we all know, our work is excellent, and our reach is far and wide. We don't want to be a secret. Over the next three years, we will raise the EV profile so that many of our constituent groups think of us, think of us first, and think of us often. We want to be seen as the 'go to' organization for environmental education; we want to be known as the purveyors of excellent environmental education; and we want to appear on the radars of many more constituents, from parents of our students to prospective volunteers and donors, to science and education reporters in the media. We believe that moving into a high profile facility on the San Francisco Bay is the perfect time to raise our profile and to leverage that profile for greater mission fulfillment.

Our third Vision Element is called *Educate for Depth* and is a direct result of our highly successful Digging Deeper pilot study. Through Digging Deeper, we have proven that multiple educational experiences, which are continuous and repeated, result in a better educated, more environmentally committed student population. And yet our current approach to serving classrooms is almost exclusively focused on one and two touch programs (a classroom program and possibly a field trip, only).

We want to encourage teachers to embrace multiple environmental education experiences within the school year and over multiple consecutive school years. This year, we will begin to give preferential treatment to teachers and schools that commit to

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multiple programs (within the same school year, programs delivered by us and our peer organizations; over multiple years, it might be exclusively our own programs). Here's one way it will work: if a school makes the commitment to provide programs to two consecutive grades for a minimum of two years in a row (so that this year's 3<sup>rd</sup> graders receive a reinforcing program when they get to 4<sup>th</sup> grade, for example), then we will guarantee them those services in advance. Since a guaranteed EV service is worth more than gold to teachers (you know how crazy registration gets), we believe this incentive will result in students receiving more—and better—science education.

What is my vision for the State of the EV in 3 years?

- We are comfortably settled into our new home. Hundreds of nature enthusiasts are walking by our front door, and many of them have become supporters (through their money, time, or both).
- A significant portion of our school services are delivered to classrooms that are receiving multiple science programs from us and in collaboration with our peer organizations. As a result, our volunteers notice that the average student they teach is better educated and more passionate about respecting the environment.
- A much wider swath of constituents recognize our name, can tell you what we do, and want to assist us in meeting our mission.
- Our infrastructure is solid; we have the resources to do much more and to do even better; we have expanded revenues, funding sources, staff resources, volunteer & professional development, critical infrastructure, and operating reserves. As a result, we are always able to look forward knowing that we can weather any storm with minimal interruption to our mission fulfillment.

There you have it: our focus for the coming few years. When you couple this with developing our new building, launching our 9<sup>th</sup> subject, Energy & Natural Resources, and revitalizing every one of our 260 learning kits, you have an incredibly dynamic organization that is not content to rest on its *Laurus nobilis* (that would be a laurel).

Let me know what you think about all of this, and let me know what your vision is for The EV.



## April Area Meetings

### South Bay Meeting

Tuesday, April 1  
Hilde DeMarco's home  
**9:00am**

Treats provided by Sandy Watkins & Chuck Coston

### Peninsula Meeting

Tuesday, April 8  
Bob Dodge's home  
**9:30am\***

Treats provided by Nina Brooks & Sue Irvine

*\*After the meeting, please join us at Jasper Ridge, where Bob will lead the group on his annual spring flower walk!*

## Gourd Crafting Day

**Sunday, April 6, beginning at 9:00am**  
**Marilyn & Neil Hornor's home**

Do you still need to make a birdhouse for the Birds & Blooms event? Please join our resident "gourd experts," Marilyn Hornor and Allan Berkowitz, for a day of gourd crafting on Sunday, April 6. Wear old clothes, and bring your ideas, a lunch, rubber gloves, and acrylic paint (if you have some you would like to use). Marilyn will provide the tools and other supplies. We'll start at 9:00am and go until you are satisfied with a finished gourd or feel confident that you can finish it at home (probably mid-afternoon). We'll be working outside at Marilyn and Neil's home, so dress accordingly. Please RSVP to Marilyn at (650) 941-2783 or [Grizztooth@aol.com](mailto:Grizztooth@aol.com).

## Volunteer Enrichment

**Wednesday, April 30, 10:00am-2:00pm**  
**Coyote Ridge Wildflower & Natural History Hike**

All EVs are welcome! Please join us for a four-hour, docent-led walk at Coyote Ridge (between San Jose & Morgan Hill) for a chance to see the Bay checkerspot butterfly, hundreds of native plants, and gorgeous views. These hikes are only offered for a short time each spring, so take advantage of this wonderful opportunity...and bring a friend!

Please RSVP to Nicole at [nicole@evols.org](mailto:nicole@evols.org) or (650) 961-0545 ext. 336. We hope you'll join us!

## Happy Birthday!



Mary Chessman:	April 3 <sup>rd</sup>
Amy Kelley:	April 8 <sup>th</sup>
Ruth Carleton:	April 11 <sup>th</sup>
Joanne Johnson Felt:	April 17 <sup>th</sup>
Jim Marsh:	April 20 <sup>th</sup>
Bunny Dawson:	April 21 <sup>st</sup>
Bob Phillips:	April 21 <sup>st</sup>
Hilde DeMarco:	April 23 <sup>rd</sup>

### A Big Welcome to Our New EVs!

**Jano Kray** joined the EV after taking the All About Birds and Bay Weekend trainings.

**Serena Aquino**, a student at SFSU, graduated from the Bay Weekend Training on Saturday, March 22. Welcome, Jano and Serena!

## Education Corner

by *Brittany Sabol*

### Build a Better Birdhouse

You have another month to build your birdhouse for the Birds & Blooms event. I have been collecting some great tips and resources for everyone so that your birdhouses will be beautiful, amazing, and fabulous ornithological residences! Actually, if your creation won't be an appropriate residence, put a mesh screen or other cover over the opening so no one can move in. Here are some other hints:

#### **Want to build a birdhouse for an actual bird?**

Get all of the details on measurements and features for different species, as well as information about dealing with predators or nest-box competitors, at the website of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology:  
<http://www.birds.cornell.edu/birdhouse/resources/>

#### **Looking for cheap, fun, or unusual supplies for your house?**

The Resource Area for Teachers (RAFT) in San Jose has great and unusual materials. It is mostly industry surplus and cast-offs. There is a membership fee, but the materials are so inexpensive that it is still a great deal. Visit: [www.raft.net](http://www.raft.net).

### **Looking for tools that aren't in your toolbox?**

The TechShop in Menlo Park is an open access workshop with any tool you can imagine, from screwdrivers to drill presses, to a CNC milling machine. They have a variety of classes to teach you how to use the machines (the upcoming laser etching class could be great for birdhouses!). They work like a gym in that you buy a daily, monthly, or yearly membership. Visit: [www.techshop.ws](http://www.techshop.ws) (Yes, ".ws"). Have fun designing your birdhouse. Don't forget Marilyn Hornor's gourd class, either!

### What's on the Wiki

As more EVs (especially our new graduates) look to the wiki to find the scripts to a kit, we are finding many places where we have more work to do! Some of the recently added or improved scripts include: **MP-05 Nests and Eggs**; **MP-15 Photosynthesis Machine**; and **NN-21 Urban Bird Study Skins**. If you see something that needs some tweaking, you are welcome to fix it yourself. Of course, I am happy to help if you & computers don't always see eye to eye!



## EV Summer Programs

By *Vandy Shrader*

### S.N.A.K.E. Camp 2008

Mark your calendars! Summer is just around the corner, and that means S.N.A.K.E. Camp! This year, S.N.A.K.E. Camp will run for three sessions: June 23-27; June 30-July 3; and July 7-11. There will be plenty of opportunities for EVs to come join us and have some fun.

In our first session, Living in California, we'll explore some of the ecological wonders that make our area unique, including earthquake geology, nocturnal nature and the night sky, local plants and critters, and local ecology. We'll have EV kits, presentations, hikes, and maybe even visits from some live animals.

Our second session, Day Trippers, is something new. Each day we'll take a different field trip to experience some local natural science up close and personal.

During our third session, Energy & Natural Resources, we'll debut kits from our new 9<sup>th</sup> Subject, as well as take some fun field trips to learn more about this interesting topic.

Consider making S.N.A.K.E. Camp a part of your summer. Those of you who've done it before know how much fun it is...and those who haven't partaken should find out for yourself! I'll be passing around sign-up sheets in the upcoming Area Meetings so that you can be part of the S.N.A.K.E. Camp experience.

### **Introducing...EXPLORE!**

If you haven't already heard, this summer we'll be inaugurating EXPLORE!, our new summer program for Middle Schoolers. EXPLORE! will run for two sessions: July 7-11 (overlapping with S.N.A.K.E. Camp) and July 14-18.

In addition to attending some fun field trips, participants in our first session, Energy on the Move, will build renewable-energy-powered vehicles from recycled materials, and then race them on the last day. Come cheer them on at our race day BBQ!

For our second session, Bay, Sea & Slough, we'll meet at the Baylands but then embark on daily field trips to explore watery aspects of the Bay Area. Kayaking Elkhorn Slough, whale-watching, canoeing the Bay...it's all in the plans for this exciting week.

That's it for now. Hope to see you this summer!



## **School Services**

*by Anita Rodriguez*

I like to report numbers to you. Even though they do not measure all that you do in the classroom (and beyond), the numbers give us a picture of what the EV accomplishes month after month in school services. In February alone we did 60 services, including classroom and field trips, and we reached 1,344 students. Since the beginning of this school year, we have provided 273 services and reached 6,293 students! This would not have been possible without your invaluable generosity to give your time and love to these school children. The seeds you plant now will bear fruit tomorrow.

Several teachers work with their students on gracious thank you notes, which show their appreciation for you, the EVs. Here's an example of a letter we received on March 3<sup>rd</sup>:

### **“Thank You” from the 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Team at George Mayne Elementary School**

“Thank you so much for working with us to provide the Nature In Your Neighborhood and Schoolyard Snoop program to 1st graders at George Mayne.

It's amazing how a pile of dirt, some plant parts, a few stuffed birds, and a couple of arthropod models could generate such enthusiasm! It is always a treat to be able to watch our students from a distance while they are learning something from someone else, especially when they are so engaged. And what a wonderful experience it was for our students to be able to look at the school yard they see every day through a different lens. Watching their excitement makes me appreciate anew how eager students can be about learning when they have good teachers—which brings me to your volunteers.

Your volunteers were so patient and knowledgeable. They had great little strategies for managing groups of kids. Some students even asked the volunteers if they could hug them before they left the table! It was clear that students loved them and loved the attention!

We appreciate your programs because they allow our students to learn in small groups from people who have a passion about the topic. The students get to touch and dig and smell and collect (and scream when the beetle gets away), while developing academic background knowledge. We would not be able to duplicate these experiences in our classrooms...”

## **Board Briefs**

At the March Board meeting, Leslie Larson, one of the chairs of the Birds & Blooms Event Committee, presented ideas to the Board for supporting the event. Then, Brittany Sabol, the Education & Training Director, presented her department's impressive progress on the major projects they are undertaking. Lastly, the FY2007 audit was approved unanimously by the Board. The Finance Committee reported that overall expenses should be less than expected but that overall revenue is also expected to be lower. The net, however, is that we are on track to still have a small surplus at the end of FY2008.

## Development News

by Laurie (Lorelei) Rubin

There is endless activity in the development office these days, with the upcoming Birds & Blooms event, the EcoCenter planning, grant writing, and our Spring appeal for the Annual Fund.

Keep an eye out for your invitation to arrive by mail for the Birds & Blooms fundraising event. This not-to-miss event will be tremendous fun and will support the EV's annual programs. Another special feature of the June 1<sup>st</sup> event will be the "official kick-off" of our Capital Campaign for the EcoCenter. As EVs, you've been in the inner circle on this project for quite awhile, but we also want to make a big splash to the public, with an announcement of the campaign.

In the meanwhile, we'll keep EVs informed each step of the way. It was wonderful to have a terrific turnout at our March 5 *EcoCenter Update*. Special thanks to **Jerry Hearn** and **Mary Anne Welton** for their presentations, which were rich in background details and upcoming plans for this massive undertaking. Allan unveiled architectural renderings of the future site, and these images will be on display at the June 1<sup>st</sup> event and at other events throughout the year.



*Architectural rendering of the new EcoCenter*

The EcoCenter Capital Campaign is a special "limited engagement" campaign that requires fundraising above and beyond our usual annual needs. The time frame is limited (but high-intensity!), and we are so grateful to our donors who step up to make extra gifts during this extraordinary time. In addition, we are grateful to donors who remember that we rely on continuous, on-going support for our Annual Fund to cover programs and operating costs, year after year.

## Birds & Blooms

A birdhouse auction & garden party

**EV invitations coming soon.  
Tickets go on sale April 11<sup>th</sup>!**

Mark your calendars for this must-attend fundraising event of the season, **Sunday June 1**. Event tickets go on sale April 11<sup>th</sup> and are \$75 in advance or \$100 at the door. Guests must be over 21. In the meantime, you can support the event in these other ways:

**1) Can you (or someone you know) donate airline mileage for 4 people?**

*Note: Donors will receive an IRS tax donation receipt.*

**2) Do you know a local business that would like to promote itself?** For as little as \$100, a business can advertise in the Birds & Blooms event program. For more information about Birds & Blooms item donation, advertising, and sponsorship: go to the EV website; contact Sue at [suet@EVols.org](mailto:suet@EVols.org) or Joanne at [jjfelt@aol.com](mailto:jjfelt@aol.com); or call the EV office (650) 961-0545.

**3) Do you have a hooked garden stake for hanging planters or birdfeeders?** We would be grateful if you can loan it to the EV for several days for use at Birds & Blooms (to display birdhouses). Please contact Joanne Johnson Felt at [jjfelt@aol.com](mailto:jjfelt@aol.com) or (408) 482-3358. Thank you!

**4) Do you want to volunteer at the event?**

Volunteers are needed for a variety of duties (and time slots) on the day of the event, including setting up, working at the wine/chef tables, helping with the auctions, demonstrating kits at the EV science tables, etc. Volunteers are also needed during the week leading up to the event. Please contact Nicole at [nicole@EVols.org](mailto:nicole@EVols.org) if you'd like to help out!

### **EV Annual Meeting**

Mark your calendars! The EV Annual Meeting will be held on **Thursday, June 12** from 6-9pm at the Palo Alto Baylands Interpretive Center. Please join us for dinner, fellowship, the meeting, and an exciting enrichment. More details to follow!

## Who's News

by Jan Whitmer

After completing the multi-subject training last December, **Alleen (Ally) Christian** has enthusiastically jumped right in, volunteering twice and sometimes three times a week. She feels strongly that observation is a great way to learn an EV program/kit. She loves watching experienced EVs in action because the experience fills her with that wide-eyed sense of wonder and joy of learning that children exhibit. "The EVs' excitement is infectious," she exclaims. "That experience can't be duplicated in a training classroom." In short, Ally thinks EVs are "awesome" and is very impressed with how welcoming and helpful everyone is.



Interestingly, teaching Sunday school introduced Ally to the EV. Every spring the multi-faith 2<sup>nd</sup> grade class she was teaching studied about the web of life, and the EV did several classroom presentations followed by a Baylands field trip. Ally was hooked!

Santa Cruz was home for Ally growing up, but it was while living in Austin, Texas in the '80s that she became involved with a small, local, natural food store called Whole Foods Market. She was the food purveyor and knew the alfalfa sprouts man by name when he pulled up with his produce. Ally worked for Whole Foods for ten years, ending up in Palo Alto when they opened their first California store. Interested in the business end of Whole Foods, she went back to school and then worked in accounting.

In 1996, Ally left Whole Foods and went to work for Imagine Foods, an organic food manufacturer (Rice Dream and Soy Dream.) She left the traditional workplace in 2002, took a two-year landscaping course at Foothill College, and has been doing small residential landscapes and edible gardens with her own company, Design by Nature. She is also working toward a teaching credential in Early Childhood Education, hoping to turn her passion for the environment into a life work.

Ally and her life partner, **Robert Nissenbaum**, thoroughly enjoy gardening. Right now they are into experimenting with blueberries, having put in 15 plants and bought 12 more, looking for the right specimens for this area. Ally says they make nice hedges! Ally, we wholeheartedly welcome your spirit and enthusiasm.



## Help Wanted!

By Nicole Wilson

### Earth Day Outreach

In response to the variety of wonderful events taking place this month, we will be tabling at several Earth Day celebrations during the fourth week of April. Please consider volunteering for a couple of hours (even one hour is helpful!) to table with us at these fun events. Contact me at [nicole@evols.org](mailto:nicole@evols.org) or 650-961-0545 ext. 336 if you'd like to help out.

**\*Bay Area Wilderness Training's Earth Day Event**  
Sat, April 19<sup>th</sup> from 11:00am-4:00pm at BAWT's new South Bay location in Milpitas

**\*Earth Day Celebration at Westwind Barn**  
Sun, April 20<sup>th</sup> from 1:00-4:00pm in Los Altos Hills

**\*SJSU Earth Day Celebration**  
Thurs, April 24<sup>th</sup> from 10:00am-3:00pm at SJSU

**\*Spring in Guadalupe Gardens**  
Saturday, April 26<sup>th</sup> from 10:00am to 3:00pm at the Guadalupe Gardens in San Jose

**\*San Jose Children's Faire**  
Sat, April 26<sup>th</sup> from 11:00am to 4:00pm at Discovery Meadow (in front of the Discovery Museum)

### Other Forms of Outreach

The recruiting "season" is upon us, with tabling events, Farmers' Markets, and other opportunities throughout the spring and summer. If you'd like to help with events, post flyers, set up library displays, or volunteer in other ways, please contact me! Also, if you have other ideas for recruiting EVs or suggestions for improvement, I'd love to hear them!

### Birds & Blooms Event

Volunteers needed! Please see page 5 for more info.

## More Upcoming Events to Enrich & Expand Your Horizons!

### "Natural History of the Bay Area" Hiking Classes

*Instructor: Diane West-Bourke*

Classes begin Tues, April 1 & Wed, April 2

Weekly natural history field trips. Hikes from 10:00am-3:00pm; easy to moderate; 3-5 miles; terrain variable.

<http://natureexplorations.net/classes.htm>

### Author Talk with Phillip Fradkin

*Thursday, April 17 at 6:30pm*

Adobe Building, 157 Moffett Blvd, Mtn View

Philip Fradkin will discuss his book *Wallace Stegner and the American West*. Wallace Stegner was a founder of the Bay Area environmental movement and chronicler of the 20<sup>th</sup> century western American experience.

### Earth Day on the Bay 2008

*Saturday, April 19 from 8:00am to 5:00pm*

Marine Science Institute in Redwood City

Fun for all ages! Featuring live music and trips on the SF Bay aboard the MSI ship. Special presentations by SF Ocean Film Festival and Al Gore's Climate Project!

[www.sfbaymsi.org](http://www.sfbaymsi.org)

### Going Native Garden Tour

*Sunday, April 20 from 10am-4pm*

Free, self-guided tour of over 40 gardens landscaped with California native plants.

[www.GoingNativeGardenTour.org](http://www.GoingNativeGardenTour.org)

### 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Human Race of Silicon Valley

*Saturday, May 10 from 8:30am to 1:00pm*

Charleston Park/Shoreline at Mountain View

Hosted by the Volunteer Center of Silicon Valley.

Activities include 10K/5K Runs, 5K Walk, and 5K Dog

Walk. This unique community event provides all participants the opportunity to raise money for any community-based nonprofit organization or school program of your choice!

[www.vcsv.us/humanrace](http://www.vcsv.us/humanrace)

### Peninsula Open Space Wallace Stegner Lecture Series presents the play "A Sense of Wonder"

*Based on the life and works of Rachel Carson*

Tuesday, May 20 at 8:00pm

Mountain View Performing Arts Center

Tickets on the Main Stage: \$20



artwork by 5<sup>th</sup> grader at Santa Rita Elementary School

Environmental Volunteers  
 Peninsula Office  
 3921 East Bayshore Road  
 Palo Alto, CA 94303  
 Phone (650) 961-0545  
 Fax (650) 961-0548

South Bay Office  
 4020 Moorpark Avenue, Suite 104  
 San Jose, CA 95117  
 Phone (408) 244- 2449  
 info@evols.org; www.evols.org

**Quote of the month:**

“The more clearly we can focus our attention on the wonders and realities of the universe about us, the less taste we shall have for destruction.”

--Rachel Carson

**Hours:** Monday-Friday, 9:00 am - 5:00 pm  
**Staff:** Allan Berkowitz, Executive Director  
 Katie Donovan, Education Assistant  
 Penny Hutchinson, Weekend Programs Coordinator  
 Anita Rodriguez, Program Services Coordinator  
 Lorelei Rubin, Director of Development  
 Brittany Sabol, Education & Training Director  
 Vandy Shrader, Summer Programs Director  
 Sue Trautman, Development Assistant  
 Nicole Wilson, Coordinator of Volunteers

## April 2008

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Sat./Sun.
	1 ♥ 9:00am South Bay Area Mtg. @ Hilde DeMarco's home	2	3	4	5/6 Sunday, 9:00am Gourd crafting @ Marilyn & Neil's
7	8 ♣ 9:30am Peninsula Mtg. @ Bob Dodge's; Hike Jasper Ridge	9	10	11	12/13
14	15 4:45pm Finance; 5:30pm Board	16	17	18	19/20 EV tabling events in Milpitas & Los Altos Hills
21	22 <b>Earth Day!</b>	23	24 SJSU Earth Day Celebration: 10-3	25	26/27 Saturday EV tabling events in San Jose
28	29 4:00pm Teacher signup for 2008-09 EV services	30 10:00am-2:00pm Coyote Ridge Wildflower Hike			