

SBESC Volunteer Connection

SBESC Volunteer Newsletter

Fall 2013



South Bay Environmental Services Center

A Program of the South Bay Cities Council of Governments

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Happy "Green" Holidays

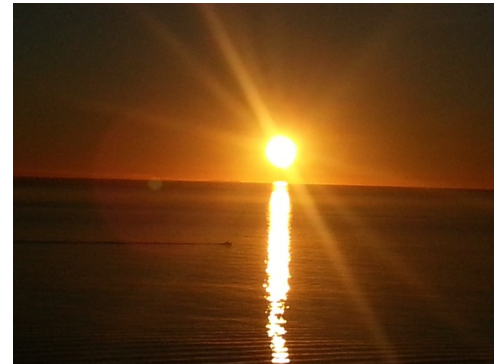
By SBCCOG Executive Director Jacki Bacharach

While I've heard and I've sang many holiday songs that talk about comfort and joy, Christmas often brings some stress and excess -- too much food, too much drink, too much spending, and too much waste.

During the season of celebration we need to show extra care for the environment. Environmentalists advocate for an "eco-friendly" holiday season that will result in a "green Christmas" putting less strain on Mother Earth. At SBESC we have collected tips and ideas from environmental, green, and sustainable organizations with the purpose of helping each of us become a role model, a "green agent" of the holiday celebrations in our neighborhood.

Do you have to buy gifts? Could you buy an "experience" instead? Try cinema tickets, club memberships, gift tokens. Sponsor an animal, buy some rainforest to protect - but think about not giving another unwanted gift which will simply get thrown away.

Although plastic Christmas trees are reusable from year to year, real trees are the more sustainable choice. Plastic trees are made of petroleum products (PVC), and use up resources in both the manufacturing and ship-



Sunset at Terranea Resort Beach
Rancho Palos Verdes
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ping. While artificial trees theoretically last forever, research shows that they are typically discarded when repeated use makes them less attractive. Discarded artificial trees are then sent to landfills where their plastic content makes them last forever. Live trees, on the other hand, are a renewable resource grown on tree farms that are replanted regularly. They contribute to air quality while growing, and almost ninety percent are recycled into mulch. Live trees are usually locally grown and sold, saving both transportation costs and added air pollution. Live trees also smell like Christmas!

Save in energy. Start by defrosting your freezer before Christmas. It will work more efficiently and create more space to store leftover food, so that it doesn't go to waste.

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At the South Coast
Botanic Garden
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GREEN HOLIDAYS FROM PAGE 1

Reduce the size of outdoor and indoor lighting displays, use LED lights. A smaller presentation of lights can still be attractive and more appropriate in the 'season of giving'. And don't forget to turn off the tree lights, house and outdoor decorative lighting at bedtime.

Do you have more tips to offer? Send yours to astrid@sbesc.com so that we can share our lessons learned. And, Happy "Green" Holidays!!

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VOLUNTEER...

The greatest challenge of the day is how to bring about a revolution of the heart, a revolution which has to start with each one of us.

-Dorothy Day

Volunteering at SBESC Meeting Our Volunteers

by Alex Gallipeau

In each edition, we will be highlighting short stories about our volunteers to learn more about this very diverse group of amazing people. This time, we present some of our newsletter team Vibha, Larry, and Alex who collect, write and edit the newsletter stories.

Vibha Shrestha Joshi

Vibha Joshi, as we all know her at SBESC, was born and raised in Nepal and immigrated to the United States 17 years ago. She lives in Gardena with her husband of 14 years, speaks Nepali and Hindi, enjoys painting, photography, gardening, and traveling.



Volunteer Vibha helping at
SBESC office
© Photo Files

She studied Computer Science and Human Development at Cal State Long Beach and is currently working on her MBA prerequisites at El Camino College. During her time at Cal State Long Beach she had an internship at the Superior Court of Los Angeles where she worked with family law facilitators and judges .

Her main reason for volunteering at the SBESC is to learn about the environment. At the SBESC she is learning how to improve the environment while saving

money and water. Before volunteering at the SBESC she worked for Farmers Insurance Group in Lawndale, where she assisted the district manager in recruiting agents.

Larry Sidor

Larry lives in Palos Verdes with his wife Rita. He was born and grew up in France, where his father was a government employee working for the Department of Defense Dependent School System (DODDS) which provides schooling for the children of US servicemen deployed in Europe. Larry's son is a sophomore at CalPoly San Luis Obispo where he is majoring in Biomedical Engineering.

Larry retired in 2012 after working for 40 years in the aerospace industry. During this career, he worked on a large variety of command, control, and communications systems for space projects (Vandenberg and Cape Canaveral ground systems), missiles (Peacekeeper MX), and airplanes (F-18 variants). He would like to see the application of space assets to SBESC areas of interest such as the use of satellite imagery and weather data.

In 2012, he started a company called Entradero Consulting and Services (the name was partly inspired by Entradero Park, home of the Torrance Little League). One of its objectives is to market a compact camper/RV. Another objective is to introduce innovative packaging concepts that are useful during the entire life of the product. Currently, most packaging is discarded after purchase because its purpose is only for shipping and store display.

Another of Larry's interests is promoting children's sports activities: AYSO, Little League, YMCA basketball, plus city parks and recreation. Through these involvements he came to realize that the efforts of parent volunteers had a profound influence on the development of his son and all school-age children.

Alex Gallipeau

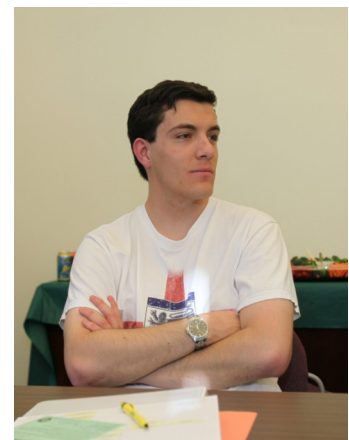
Alex became one of our volunteers because of his interest in environmental causes and in learning about new ways to help protect the environment and minimize his carbon footprint. He is a Los Angeles native, born and raised here in the South Bay. He went to Redondo Union High School and studied history at Loyola University Chicago. He currently lives in Redondo Beach, enjoys the beach, sports, travel, and learning new things.

The SBESC has been a very valuable experience for him. He has so far learned a lot of useful environmental information that he uses personally and also passes on to his family and friends. He values the work that the SBESC does with the South Bay communities and governments and would like to see more local people join the "green" effort.



Larry attending a training
©2013 Astrid Ollerenshaw

SBESC
volunteers are
a very diverse
group of
amazing
people



Alex attending a training
©2013 Kyle

Development Opportunities for Volunteers

By Roberto Concha

New Volunteers Training

We had a small group of new volunteers very interested in becoming ambassadors at our events. To prepare for this position, the SBESC provided a special training session. Participants were given information about the SBCCOG and the SBESC programs and partners had the opportunity to experience a demonstration of a table event set-up. Tips were provided on how to engage and motivate citizens to visit our table at events. If you are interested in polishing your ambassador skills we will be hosting more groups in the near future, so please email us your request at volunteerinfo@sbesc.com



At SBESC Torrance
©2013 File Photos

Our Field Trip to the Ocean-Water Desalination Facility, Redondo Beach

On Friday, October 11, 2013, we had a great opportunity to visit the West Basin Ocean-Water Desalination Facility which is a pilot plant opened in November 12, 2010 designed to evaluate and monitor full scale equipment. Volunteers and SBESC staff met at the facility which is called SEA Lab. We were welcomed by Maritza Franco, our tour guide, who explained in detail where the water we use in Southern California comes from and what quantities of water we spend in our daily activities. Later in the tour we saw how the process of desalination works. In a few words, the pilot plant takes the ocean water and purifies it through the desalting process. We all tasted the newly desalinated water and most of us thought that the desalinated water tasted, smelled, and looked just the same as the fresh water that we use in our homes. After a great lunch, provided by West Basin, we took a second tour called the Touch Tank Tour. In this tour we had the chance to touch some ocean life such as sharks, starfish, and other fish.



At Water Desalination
Demonstration Facility
©2013 File Photos

Some of us felt a little bit scared about this experience! At the end of the trip, we all agreed that we had learned some new things and had a great time!

Learn, share and network with SBESC Staff

On August 22, 2013 a group of volunteers and SBESC Staff met to learn about METRO. Valerie Rader, Senior Account Executive at Metro Commute Services, presented information on the Metro Vanpool Program including its benefits and how easy it is to participate in vanpooling. Melissa Hébert, [SBESC Environmental Services Analyst, Transportation Programs](#), gave us detailed information about the Metro Express Lanes. These presentations were important because they provided us with valuable information we can use to help inform South Bay residents and be more confident talking about these topics to a wide range of people.



At SBESC Torrance
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Plastic Bag Ban in Los Angeles

By Vibha Shrestha Joshi

The City of Los Angeles will become the largest city in the country and the 77th jurisdiction in California to adopt a ban on plastic bags after former mayor Antonio Villaraigosa approved and signed a bill to ban plastic grocery bags. Large grocery stores will have to phase out single-use bags by January 2014 while smaller liquor and convenience stores have until July 2014. Along with the ban, the LA City Council imposed a ten cent tax on paper bags.



www.bozeman-magpie.com Photo Files

As a coastal city, the Manhattan Beach community was the first city in the LA County to take the first step toward reducing single-bag use. The Manhattan Beach City Council passed an ordinance banning the distribution of plastic bags at the point-of-sale for all retail establishments in Manhattan Beach in July 2008. After being on hold for a few years due to a lawsuit brought by the "Save the Plastic Bag Coalition," the City's plastic bag ordinance began implementation on January 14, 2012.

It is the intent of this ban to protect local wildlife and the marine environment. According to a 2008 study in the journal *Environmental Research* by oceanographer and chemist Charles Moore, of the Algalita Marine Research Foundation, 267 marine species are affected by plastic garbage—animals are known to swallow plastic bags, which resemble jellyfish in mid-ocean. In addition, about 44 percent of all seabirds eat plastic by mistake, sometimes with fatal effects.



Above: www.oceanchampions.org Photo

Below: www.oceanchampions.org Photo



While the ban has positive effects on the environment, it poses a threat for plastic bag manufacturers. Mark Daniel, chairman of the American Progressive Bag Alliance, stated that plastic bag companies employ 30,800 people across the country. In addition there may be negative economic effects on the consumers and small business owners with the additional ten cents per bag tax.

In many communities it is believed that the environmental benefits outweigh the economic impacts. Government, consumers, and manufacturers may need to come together to devise a solution as the plastic statistics are worrisome.

- Shoppers worldwide are using approximately 500 billion single-use plastic bags per year translating into about a million bags every minute across the globe or 150 bags a year for every person on earth -- and the number is rising. If all these bags were joined end to end they would circle the globe 4,200 times.
- The number one manmade object that sailors see in our ocean are plastic bags. There are believed to be 46,000 pieces of plastic in every square mile of ocean.
- There are 5 ocean gyres in the world. An ocean gyre is a circular ocean current formed by the Earth's wind patterns and the forces created by the rotation of the planet. In these gyres is where plastic gathers due to current circulation. These gyres contain millions of pieces of plastic and our wildlife feed in these grounds. It can take between 20-1000 years for a plastic bag to break up into smaller pieces. Most of these bags don't break down and those that do disintegrate into polymers and toxic chemicals.

As volunteers at the South Bay Environmental Services Center, I feel we have to be responsible for helping find solutions to these problems or supporting the most effective practices to ease the harm. For example, instead of using plastic bags when going grocery shopping, we can bring our own reusable cloth bags. We can also take back all clean plastic bags. Most stores have a special container dedicated to collect them outside near to the front doors or inside the store. Ask your store where this container is located. Let's all do our part.

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