

TAKING A 'BITE OUT OF LITTER'

Pacifica volunteers hearts and hands for the Earth

MY EARTH DAY STORY

by Lynn Adams
SPECIAL TO THE PACIFICA TRIBUNE

My first Earth Day was about 1970. I was around 10 or 11 when my mother came outside and handed us kids a gunny sack with the instructions to go pick up litter on our country road, both sides, from our house to the high school. I don't remember which of my siblings and I got to go to do this, but for me it was an adventure, something different and I liked it.

The Pacifica Beach Coalition has been working on this year's Earth Day event since shortly after Earth Day 2012. There is a lot of planning that goes into organizing this event and we talk about it all year long. What was good about ED 2012, what could be better? What animal should we honor? Who do we want to perform at the event?

But this, my personal "Take A Bite Out of Litter" story, really begins the Monday before when David McGuire, shark conversationalist and expedition filmmaker, and I as observer, held the first Shark Assembly for one of eight Pacifica schools (Chris Pinetich conducted assemblies to four schools outside of Pacifica). Wow, talk about exciting, seeing 200 to 600 kids' faces light up with excitement at one time because

they were learning amazing things about sharks. That is an image I will have with me forever.

Did you know that some sharks are warm-blooded, some are cold-blooded? Some give birth to live offspring, some lay eggs called mermaid purses and cork screws? One shark species hatch the eggs in their body and the first born or strongest eat the remaining nine to 10 before birth? Have you seen a Cookie Cutter Shark? Or a Goblin Shark? There are more than 500 known species of sharks and they date back 400 million years to an era before the dinosaur. When the Skates and Rays, which are also a class of sharks, are

makes them swifter. While humans have five senses, sharks have seven. The usual see, smell, taste, feel, hear but they also have electromagnetic sensors along the sides of their body that can detect the heart beats of other animals over 2 miles away and special glands on their nose that also act as hyper-acute sensors.

We learned so many things. Sharks are the stewards of the sea, responsible for maintaining the delicate balance of the many species. They are the garbage men, cleaning up the dead of the sea floor; the apex predators responsible for regulating the population census of all of the species by removing the sick, the

reefs. And then he swam on reefs that were devoid of fish and the coral was dead. Further study revealed that the reef sharks had been harvested so the next top fish ate the fish that ate the algae off of the coral. So without these algae eating fish, the algae covered the coral and it died and with it the fish depending on it also died.

As amazing as the Shark Assemblies were, they weren't even the start of what I call the Earth Day "magic." To me, the entire month of April is a season of magic, and I am so happy every day because I get calls from groups and their leaders who want to help. "My team would like to do something for Earth Day, where can we make a difference?" These words are so awesome and they can be heard every day from people who want to help.

After the Shark Assemblies, Earth Day arrived. I woke up and knew that people of all ages were getting ready to meet up and work together; some to pick-up litter, some to remove weeds and yet others to garden somewhere in Pacifica. From the north end at Mussel Rock to the south end Devils Slide area, including every beach and bluff, to the top of Hickey Boulevard back of Valle-Mar, Sanchez Library and Sun Valley Shopping Center people would be arriving to work in teams or as

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included, the species count increases to over 1,200.

Sharks are a fish, not a mammal like a sea lion. Unlike fish that have a skeleton, sharks are made of cartilage, not bone. This is the same soft tissue our ear and nose are made of. This makes them lighter and faster. They can bend almost in half and turn on a dime to chase prey. This

weak, the slow and the dying. Every species is stronger because the shark helps them evolve.

When removed from areas of the sea, the balance of fish becomes askew and the system fails. For instance, McGuire told us that the reefs with sharks that he saw were beautiful and filled with diversity; hundreds of fish species thrived on these



PHOTO BY DAVID MCGUIRE
Surfer Spud from the band Drifting Sand delights attendees with their "surfer pop" sounds including their original tune, "Shark, Shark" to round out the festival's entertainment lineup.



PHOTO BY LOUIS RICH
Terra Nova High School students took on the hard work of removing a shopping cart from San Pedro Creek near the Pedro Point Shopping Center.



PHOTO BY KATHLEEN COURTEY
Councilmember Mike O'Neill greets the Daisy Girl Scout volunteers at the Pacifica Community Center during the VIP tour of the city held during the morning's cleanup efforts.



Lynn Adams

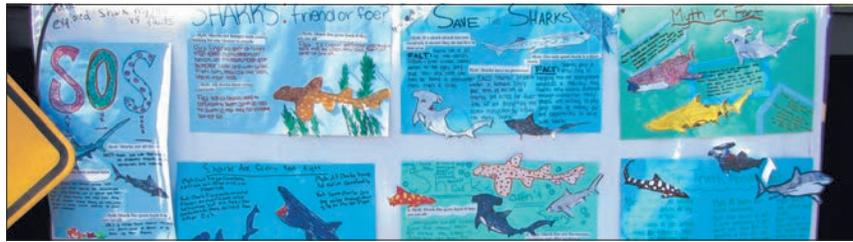
JANE NORTHROP - STAFF PHOTO



PHOTO BY SUZANNE WHEELER
Pacifica Preschool classmates and the Pacifica Mothers Club teamed up to "take a bite out of litter" at Fairmont Park.



PHOTO BY NOEL SANTILLAN
Good Shepherd students removed overgrown mustard on the hills and switchbacks above Rockaway Beach and then proudly showed off their new reusable tote bags that they'll use instead of single use bags now with the plastic bag ban in effect in the city of Pacifica.



This year's theme, "Take a Bite Out of Litter" honored the shark, one of the ocean's most misunderstood sea creatures and inspired Vallemar students to illustrate their Earth Day banner with the myths and the facts about sharks at Family Day.

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families or coming alone and joining in to help the earth. Isn't this a beautiful thing? Isn't this special? It is the "magic of Earth Day" and I can never wait to hear the stories of the day.

I started out with the Pedro Point Headlands team. Thirty adults showed up at the Pedro Point Firehouse early. By 8:45 they were eagerly ready to go. With special permission to go onto the old Devil's Slide Highway, these volunteers jumped out of the cars and dug right into the French Broom Hill while others attacked Pampas Grass near the roadway with chains and trucks. The threat of poison oak didn't deter anyone. Two hours later and one hike out to Devil's Slide, this team returned knowing they had made a difference.

By 10 a.m. I met up with a group of special guests at Linda Mar State Beach. We had a planned tour to see several groups in action. First stop, Linda Mar State Beach with Jim and Ana, site captains here since 1997, and Barbara Redfield and Leslie Guevarra, who organized the record-setting 193 volunteers who checked in here to clean up the entire beach and parking areas from San Pedro Creek to Rockaway bluff. Not a cigarette butt or small plastic bit could be found when they all finished.

On to the Linda Mar Park and Ride where a new team, the Pacifica Tribune staff and friends, worked. What at first looked like a pretty clean spot turned out to have thousands of cigarette butts and other debris. 200 pounds of trash and removed weeds. One person even trimmed the weeds in the parking island. Yep, magic! That is what this is

called/ The Community Center was our next stop and here we found dozens of young daisy, girl and cub scouts working together. The skate park was spotless. Thousands of wrappers, cups, straws and lids had been collected. The parking lot was clean and wonderfully devoid of trash. The kids all had smiles and exuded such pride. Yep, more magic.

From here we couldn't resist driving up and over Roberts Road. The Dig It Landscaping team led by Dave Martinez was already done cleaning the overlook and roadway. They had scoured up and down the hillside and were taking in the view from the top together as a group. They were pretty happy and when we met them they shared their finds with us. Their biggest joy was that they found less debris than any other cleanup and they were done early.

Finally we headed over to Rockaway, between Lovey's Tea Shoppe and Mildred Owen's garden we found Boy Scout Troop 29 and a team from the Chamber of Commerce removing the weeds from the lot. Three truckloads of weeds to be exact. Scout James Burman showed us how to use the weed wrench while dad and others continued pulling weeds.

Around the corner near the parking area to the Quarry, site captains Sandy, Janet, and Larry told us about the cleanup crew at Rockaway Beach. More than 60 people including Cub Scout Pack 9, Good Shepherd Knights of Columbus, and six different Phi Theta Beta chapters from as far away as Nevada teamed up to clean both beaches, the rocks, parking lots and every street in the Rockaway area. Even Niah, Janet's guide dog seemed content and happy. Here

we snapped a couple photos and as a group took the Shark Pledge. More magic? Yes, pure magic.

While we didn't get to see this team in action, we learned that up on the Rockaway switchbacks, a team of 40 high school students from Good Shepherd church pulled out two truck loads full of wild mustard. That is a lot of weeds my friends and they went at it with such gusto that everything was cleaned up and gone before we got there. Funny thing about weeding, if you really didn't know about it beforehand you wouldn't even miss them. You actually might not even know they worked so hard here because it looks so natural when the weeds are gone.

After Rockaway we headed back to the Festival site where all of the booths and stage were set up. It felt like a reunion with so many friends and families, and community groups gathering. The excitement and stories and joy radiated throughout the crowd. Little kids, big kids, petting zoo, face painting, Matt Jaffe and the Distractions, Celia Mulheros, Drifting Sand, Sardine Family Circus, Mitch Reid, Mike Vasey, PBC Earth Heroes, Don Horsley, Kevin Mullin, City Council Members, cake, food, drinks, sun, fun.

Best of all was the joy of knowing that throughout town, from north to south, east to west, we all took time from our day to celebrate Earth Day with action because this is what we do in Pacifica. We take care of the earth together and this year we learned about the shark, last year about the turtle, and every year we learn just a little more about what we can do to help mother Earth every day! Magic? Yes, pure Earth Day magic. Thank you Pacifica.



San Mateo County Supervisor Don Horsley and Lynn Adams present "Shark Girl" Katie Scribner with a PBC Star of the Sea Award for her enthusiasm and passion in protecting sharks.

“ Thanks to Lynn Adams and the Pacifica Beach Coalition we were able to engage and involve more than five thousand Pacifica youth in issues and solutions facing our environment, from plastic pollution to threatened sharks. The enthusiasm of the clean up teams, the educational activities and the schools' symbolic shark posters displayed at the Earth Day celebration inspire us to work harder protecting the planet we love. Pacifica is a community that cares about the earth and the ocean and sets the standard for the rest of us. Thank you.”

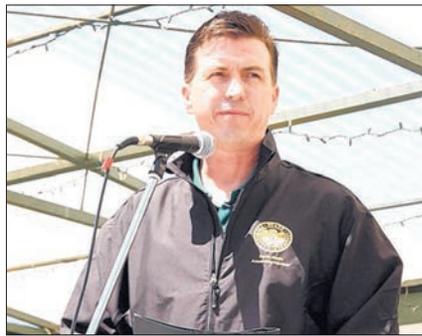
—David McGuire

“ Earth Day to me is about protecting the planet we live on and keeping it clean. It's also about saving different types of wildlife by picking up trash and cigarette butts. It also shows all the people who care about their planet. It can also be about the community coming together as one to clean up. Earth Day is about protecting mother earth.”

—Katie Scribner aka "Shark Girl," 12-year old IBL sixth grader



Lynn Adams, president, acknowledges the volunteers of the Pacifica Beach Coalition who worked tirelessly and with dedication to coordinate a successful Earth Day of Action 2013 in Pacifica. From left to right, Deirdre Finnegan, Julie Brownell Walters, Claudia Reinhart, Ethan Sechler, Helen Nicely, Paula Teixeira, Ana Garcia, Jim Fitzhugh and Beth Monticue. The day concluded with PBC volunteer and festival coordinator Ian Butler leading the crowd in singing "Happy (B)EarthDay" to Mother Earth.



Assemblymember Kevin Mullin addresses the festival crowd estimated at more than 1,000 attendees during the day.

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Children enjoying face painting on Earth Day.



PBC Site Captain Jim Fithian received a Certificate of Recognition from the California State Assembly issued by State Senator Jerry Hill for his long term dedication and contribution to protecting Pacifica's environment.



Sardine Family Circus



More than 5,000 students attended school assemblies, including Ortega School, pictures, the week before Saturday's Earth Day of Action to learn more about the importance of sharks and turtles in the ocean ecosystem led by Shark Expert David McGuire from Sea Stewards and Chris Pinetich from Turtle Island Restoration Network. Many students stated they wanted to grow up to be marine biologists.

“ We've been doing campus clean ups twice a month and it has truly been making a difference as each time we clean we are finding less and less trash. I think students are starting to make the connection between their trash and what we find during the clean ups. ”

— Cole Westbrook (led 30 students) at Ingrid B. Lacy Middle School

“ We saw at least two whales spouting just past the surfers, and many kids who shared their shark assembly experiences with us joined us indicating they were 'already Earth Heroes, so we don't need another button — we got one at school!' Many families came as groups to celebrate Earth Day, and all seemed happy that the bag ban was in place. ”

— Jim Fithian at Linda Mar State Beach

In memory of Cedric Collett, one amazing Earth Hero

The Pacifica Beach Coalition & Pedro Point Headlands honor a fallen hero because on Saturday April 27, Pacifica lost a dear friend, community member, environmentalist, firefighter, father and husband. Cedric Collett passed away while diving for abalone in Sonoma County. Cedric's death came as a shock to everyone who knew and loved him. Those who didn't know him personally have certainly been touched by him in ways they will never know. Those of us who did know him personally will forever remember the ways in which he touched their lives and our community.

As a member of the Pacifica Beach Coalition and Pedro Point Headlands, Cedric was dedicated to the preservation of our coastal habitat through his innumerable daily actions in Pacifica. Cedric was a fixture at my monthly beach cleanups at Sharp Park at 9 a.m. He came sometimes with a bag already filled from his walk from Mori Point and always with a smile on his face and a story to share about things that he found or areas for concern. Cedric was full of so many great ideas about ways in which we could help keep Pacifica beautiful.

He knew everything about California and the environment and the ocean. He was such a wealth of knowledge and a friendly spirit always willing to share his wisdom with those around him. I was also lucky enough to have a friendship with Cedric outside of the PBC. Cedric introduced me and my dad to bay swimming at the Dolphin Club in SF at the Aquatic Park. More often my dad and Cedric would swim, or hike or just have lunch. Cedric showed us the Dip Sea Trail in Marin, which was his backyard and cross country course growing up. One time he took me and my dad to hike a "Double Dip Sea" — out and back — it took us five hours. He showed us the secret spring and the best view to sit and eat our lunch on the hike. We were so blessed to have shared these experiences with Cedric.

Other members whose lives he's touched tell such wonderful stories about Cedric. They say that his trademark was to do the heavy lifting and tough jobs that no one else wanted to do. On the Headlands he would often go for the weeds in the thick of poison oak or the biggest ones that no one else could get. One

time there was a huge tree trunk across the Arroyo trail that Cedric knew about ahead of time. While others worried it would be really hard to clear, Cedric said it was no problem to bring his chainsaw and cleared it in a matter of minutes. When not tending a big job he was more of an observer and a thinker, not a big talker, but when he talked it was something important or insightful. He always had a smile or even an unforgettable devilous smirk.

At one beach habitat restoration event Cedric showed up in work clothes, including boots that had seen better days. One of the site captains teased him about it, saying "Cedric - it's time! Your boots have done their duty. Time for new ones!" He just smiled that sheepish smile and said, "Well, maybe one of these days. They still get the job done." That was so Cedric, he was all about the action. At last year's Coastal Cleanup in September, he showed up with a giant bag bursting with garbage, having walked along a creek bed on his way to Rockaway. He was always very pleased with his haul.

Another friend remembers the time she was walking back to a friend's house

and saw Cedric pulling weeds and invasive ivy from the top of the bank/riparian area at Calera Creek. They chatted for a while, and he pointed out a screech owl that had taken up residence in a palm tree close to his home. He was so willing to share the knowledge he had she fondly recalls their conversation moving from one subject to the next effortlessly. She said that it is not often that you encounter someone as genuine and comfortable as him and feel like she knew him all her life.

After the initial shock of Cedric's passing begins to settle in, I have begun to feel comforted by memories of his hearty deep laugh, his sheepish smile, his sparkling one-of-a-kind eyes and his ever present spirit in Pacifica. Cedric made a significant mark on our Mother Earth through his dedication to our community and environment and his spirit will live on forever in Pacifica. The world lost a precious soul last week, but I am gladdened knowing that he passed doing something he loved so close to the earth and surrounded by all the beauty that he brought to us in life and in death.

—Deirdre Finnegan



“ We collected 1,000 pounds of trash, like discarded wooden pallets, a car seat, small furniture, windshield wiper blades, sewer line galvanized 4-inch pipe, a box of old used books, and a small BBQ. ”

—Jesse Corona, Pacifica Manor Hardware with Cub Scout Pack 256 at Manor District

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NANCY PETTY O.T.R., C.H.T.
CERTIFIED HAND THERAPIST
2945 JUNIPERO SERRA BLVD.
DALY CITY, CA 94014-2549
PHONE: (650) 755-8500
FAX: (650) 755-8565
PERINSULA-HAND-THERAPY.COM



More than 45 local community and environmental groups, including the Pacifica Resource Center (pictured) and the American Cetacean Society, exhibited and greeted attendees during the Earth Day of Action festival.



PBC volunteers, including Julie Lancelotti, assisted with the unloading and hauling of green waste from work efforts conducted by the Vallemar Conservancy at Calera Creek into the dumpster provided by Recology of the Coast, coordinated by PBC Vice President Deirdre Finnegan.



Good Shepherd students removed overgrown mustard on the hills and switchbacks above Rockaway Beach and then proudly showed off their new reusable tote bags that they'll use instead of single use bags now with the plastic bag ban in effect in the city of Pacifica.

“ We planted seven vegetable beds with lettuce, broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, radicchio, leeks, cherry tomatoes, an African Blue Basil plant, and a potato barrel. ”
—Chris Vance at Sanchez Library Garden

“ We led lots of Girl Scouts who were really into participating, and they loved the (Star of the Sea) certificate! ”
—August Murphy at the Community Center



City Councilmember Karen Ervin assists clean up and restoration efforts at Rockaway Beach with Boy Scout Troop 29 member James Burman and Allen Conlon during a stop on the VIP tour visiting and thanking volunteers around the city for their efforts.

Earth Businesses take a bite out of litter

The special thing about Earth Day is how our entire community participates. Families, community groups, churches, schools, and businesses all find a way to support the event and participate together! I'm not sure of any other community with this amount of participation benefiting the environment. The Pacifica Beach Coalition would like to thank our business sponsors, all of the businesses who took action for Earth Day, and those businesses who supported us in the ED Ad in the *Tribune* the week of Earth Day and in this week's special feature! It is an honor to partner with each and every one of you to bring this Earth Day of Action event to our community. It is a pleasure to witness the reduction of litter, growth of gardens, and improvement of habitat in Pacifica and only a united effort on the parts of business and community can make this happen!

“ A lot less garbage was collected at the Earth Day Waste Collection site than in years past. We had a great group of volunteers who were not afraid to get dirty and did lots of hard work but also had a lot of fun. Thanks to Team Dump Site. You guys rocked it this year. ”
—Deirdre Finnegan at the “The Dump Site”

“ Clean business headquarters don't just happen, they are made, and they are a joy to visit and shop in. ”



More than a ton of non-native ice plant was removed from Linda Mar beach by volunteers from Accretive Solutions led by PBC member Michael Ayala.

- Ocean Yoga - led a team (and has every year) who cleaned up Oceana Blvd
- Oceana Market - helping patrons transition to tote bags.
- Pacifica Chamber of Commerce - Joined Boy Scout Troop 29 in removing the weeds in the Rockaway Area.
- Pacifica Tribune adopted and cleaned the Linda Mar Park & Ride - their first hands-on action.
- Pacific Manor Hardware returned this year and teamed up with Cub Scout Pack 256 to remove over 1,000 pounds from their adjoining lot that had been a dumping ground.
- Papa Murphy's -



During the festival, Shark Expert David McGuire of Sea Stewards spoke to the crowd on the continued need to protect the endangered shark species, our environment and the ocean.



Festival attendees of all ages enjoyed the petting zoo (including a potbelly pig) hosted by Friendly Pony Parties and Barnyard Pals.



Tim Swillingor from the San Mateo County Water Pollution Prevention Program teaches attendees about water pollution by demonstrating the watershed model on display at the festival.