Hidden Tsunamis and Small Revolutionaries

“Can we rely on it that a ‘turning around will be accomplished by enough people quickly enough to save the modern world?’ This question is often asked, but whatever answer is given to it will mislead. The answer ‘yes’ would lead to complacency; the answer ‘no’ to despair. It is desirable to leave these perplexities behind us and get down to work.”

- E.F. Schummacher, A Guide for the Perplexed

Last December, the entire world witnessed the ability of a single wave to scour man, beast, and structure from a coastal plain. It was a horrible, awesome, and humbling example of the power of nature to inflict instant, massive change, and vast loss of life. Everyone watching scenes of the tragedy was moved by the tsunami’s ability to destroy on such a scale.

I recall being particularly saddened when I realized that most of those who died, did so because they were near the shore; people who lived near the shore, worked near shore, all those who plied their trade in the water or at its edge. Fishermen, boatmen, beach combers, beachgoers, tourists and all those who worked to support those industries. Children playing at the shores, swimmers, surfers, divers. Those who most loved and needed the ocean were taken by her. Whole communities and several generations of fishermen were wiped out in one instant.

It’s unlikely any Surfrider Foundation member did not have an immediate and extra sympathy for all those affected by that great disaster. Water is usually such a strong metaphor for life. Yet it is also a strong metaphor for rebirth and it is that image to which we must cling.

The South Asian tsunami disaster was particularly compelling because it was such a quick, violent and immediate loss. We could all see it, understand the scope, and the random but concrete loss. And not to sound flippant, but it also lacked something. It lacked a spokesperson, a spin doctor, or a group of attorneys to deny it. The tsunami wasn’t able to hire a PR firm to cast doubt that perhaps it wasn’t the wave at all who killed those people.

So with all due respect, I submit that there are great losses that happen all the time which go unnoticed because they are gradual, incremental and often happen out of sight, and which are denied by lobbyists, attorneys, and public information officers. Pesticides seep into our groundwater; toxic mines and plants leak poisons downstream; urban run-off pollutes the ocean; our cars warm and pollute the earth; coastal armorng erodes shorelines all over the world; and development destroys irreplaceable habitat. Millions die every year, not from one giant event, but from the slow insidious tainting of everything from our shoreline to human breast milk. Horrible tragedies that are often invisible because there is no easy sound bite, no dramatic footage of the destruction, nor any simple solution. Instead, there is a host of corporate scientists, apologists and deniers who leave you wondering if maybe, just maybe, you might have it wrong.

Surfrider Foundation activists know these people well, and go head-to-head with them in city hall meetings all over the country. Our teams of volunteer scientists, attorneys, consultants and activists work tirelessly to cut through all the smokescreens and tell it like it is. Surfing itself is such a powerful metaphor for learning to work with, rather than against good surfers know how small we are, how big and violent a wave can be, and that keeping things simple and going with the flow (literally) is the best way to ride.

The radical economist E.F. Schumacher quoted above knew all these things too. He was a thorn in the side of traditional economic theory for decades, and his book, Small Is Beautiful is as relevant and popular today as it was when it was first published in 1973. His approach is best summed up by that book’s subtitle: Economics as if People Mattered. And he could have been crank. He took the barb as a compliment because “the crank is the part of the machine which creates revolution and it is very small. I am a small revolutionary!” Viva la Revolución.

-Joe Mozdzen

Cover: Sunrise photograph of Folly Beach, South Carolina, by activist Nancy Hussey (www.follywaves.com)
It feels like it was just a couple of weeks ago that we were making plans to kick off our 20th anniversary year. Where did 2004 go? I guess it’s true that time speeds up as you age.

2004 was a busy year for National as well as for our Chapters and the coastal environment as a whole. It was a year filled with many victories, a few set-backs, our 20th anniversary celebrations and some important transitions.

Two very important reports on the health of our oceans were released by separate, yet similar, groups—The U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy’s “An Ocean Blueprint for the 21st Century” and the Pew Ocean Commission’s “America’s Living Oceans: Charting a Course for Sea Change.” The former submitted its final report to President Bush and Congress on September 20. It called for urgent and decisive action and recommended a new National Ocean Policy that balances use with sustainability. Its findings were based on sound science and educational excellence and urged a move toward an ecosystem-based management approach. The Pew Commissions findings and recommendations were nearly identical. While President Bush’s response has been far less than we would have liked, these reports are certainly a step in the right direction and can (and hopefully will!) inform policy decisions on the ocean for this and future presidencies.

What is most important for the Surfrider Foundation is that both of these independent commissions came to the same final conclusion: We must do more to protect what we have left. As Warner Chabot said at our Twentieth Anniversary Coastal Summit, “They have given you a brick. Use it. Throw it.” (I know Warner, I owe you a royalty fee.) As coastal warriors and protectors, we all now have the ammunition for the battle we have been fighting for the last two decades. We must not waste this opportunity.

Although we didn’t see a change in the White House, we now have to work even harder to effect change in ocean and coastal protection. And, we must insist that the Bush Administration acknowledge that a platform of strong moral values has to include the value of environmental protection.

Finally, at the end of the year, we witnessed the incredible power of our Mother Ocean and the devastating destruction and loss of life caused by the tsunami. For those of us who have spent countless hours in the ocean, the unimaginable destruction brought on by a place where we each find so much joy and comfort is all the more incomprehensible. Many have asked what our response will be to the situation. While the entire Surfrider Foundation community expresses its profound sympathy to the victims of the disaster, it is unfortunately well beyond our mission and our capacity to assist the relief effort in any direct way. However, we are grateful to, and very supportive of, all of the international relief agencies that are providing various types of assistance and support to the disaster stricken areas.

This may certainly be the most devastating natural disaster of our lives, and while we mourn the horrific loss of life, we must press on with our core mission and continue the fight for clean water, beach access for all, and for the preservation of the world’s oceans, waves and beaches.

I encourage you to join us in this work whether through activism, membership or financial support. We need your help to throw the brick . . .

For the Oceans, Waves and Beaches,

Michelle C. Kremer, Esq.
Interim Executive Director
By Chad Nelsen

Living up to its name, Sandy Beach is a palm-lined beach in Northwest Puerto Rico that boasts spectacular white sand. The beach is a turtle nesting site, and is home to a left-hand surf break that wraps around a beautiful rocky point and comes screaming into the inshore beach break. The beach is also the scene of the Rincón Chapter’s latest successful battle against poorly planned and illegally permitted development.

The first signs that something was awry occurred last winter, when a plot of land was cleared and bulldozed flat. The fence surrounding the cleared property went below the high tide line and the project had a poster displaying the application permit numbers for the Sandy Beach Apartments. Not only was the lot cleared below the high tide line, it was also cleared right up to a stream (quebrada), which forms the western boundary of the project property. The project not only threatens beach access but also the beach itself because it is being built too close to the sea. These impacts and proposed modifications to the stream threaten to alter the natural coastal process and impact the surf break that is right in front of the development.

The neighbors and local surfers got worried and rumors about what was going to occur began circulating in earnest. Local activists and Surfrider Foundation members went into research mode to get to the bottom of the development proposal. Meanwhile, the pace of construction was rapid. The failure of the public notification and participation process exacerbated the predicament as the community was forced to not only attempt to learn the details of the project but to rapidly identify the appropriate strategy. The community attempted to work within the system and dozens of letters were sent to the relevant planning agencies only to receive an inadequate response. This left legal action as the only means of halting or otherwise modifying the project. The community and the Rincón Chapter went to work fundraising to fund a legal challenge of the project. After successfully raising enough money, they challenged the project in the courts. By the time the courts ruled on it, the project already had three floors framed with concrete and they were working on the fourth (see photo). The fact that the project was already underway increased the difficulty of the legal challenge. Lesson learned. Move fast when organizing to challenge a development project; once they are underway the job is much more difficult! It was also necessary for the Surfrider Foundation to establish standing in the case. For that, we needed members who could demonstrate they were going to be affected by the impacts of this development. This is a great reason to encourage your neighbors to join the Surfrider Foundation.

After the judge deliberated on the project for months, Honorable Pedro Claverol Siaca halted construction of the Sandy Beach Apartments for having a permit that was granted illegally. In the ruling, the court ordered an immediate cessation of all construction and provided the developer with the opportunity to resubmit the project within 45 days for reconsideration of the permit.

The court determined that the project, as proposed, did not comply with the applicable zoning ordinances and that the zoning modifications were made without holding a legally required public hearing.

This represented an important legal victory in Rincón and sent a strong message regarding illegal development along the coast in Rincón.

With the project temporarily stopped, the Rincón Chapter and local activists are working to determine the appropriate next steps. It is extremely unlikely that the structure will be torn down, so now efforts are being focused on minimizing the impacts -- another good reason to start early and get involved before ground is broken.

This project also further highlights the need for improved land use planning in Rincón and all coastal communities so that beach access, water quality, beach health and surfing areas are not impacted. The Rincón Chapter is preparing to work with the Municipality of Rincón and the community on the development of a local land management plan (Plan de Ordenación Territorial) that would create greater transparency and public input and provide the community with the tools necessary to plan for sustainable growth at the local level.

With support from the Ford Foundation, the Chapter is planning a workshop in February 2005 that will bring together urban designers, land use planning experts, municipal fiscal analysis experts and experts on local business growth to work towards a sustainable plan for future development that will allow for growth and prosperity for the local citizens and also ensure that the beach on the coffee mug stays healthy for visitors, locals, surfers and turtles alike.
Activists from our Laguna and Newport Beach chapters celebrated a long awaited victory this past October, when the California Coastal Commission (CCC) unanimously approved a Coastal Development Permit for a restoration plan for the El Morro section of Crystal Cove State Park. This decision marked the end of a multi-year struggle to end an inappropriate land use and allow open access by the general public to one of the last large undeveloped parcels of coastal land in Orange County.

The El Morro property was owned for decades by The Irvine Company, who also owned thousands of acres of land elsewhere in Orange County. During their ownership of the land, The Irvine Company allowed two sections of the property, the “Historic District” and what is now known as the El Morro Trailer Park, to be leased for residential development.

Originally a tent camping area in the 1920s, the El Morro property ultimately evolved into a 300-unit trailer park “village.” In 1979, the State of California purchased 2,791 acres of prime coastal land from the Irvine Company to form Crystal Cove State Park. When this occurred, both the Historic District and the El Morro Trailer Park became land uses that were incompatible (private residential housing within a state park) with the mission of California Department of Parks and Recreation (CDPR). In both cases, existing residents were given 20-year “final” leases while CDPR developed plans for redevelopment and restoration of the areas for the benefit of the general public.

While State Park’s conversion of the Historic District’s three dozen beach cottages to public facilities moved forward, the residents of El Morro Trailer Park put up a determined fight to preserve their hold on what amounted to a de facto private beach on public land.

First the residents lobbied and obtained an additional 5-year lease, extending until the end of 2004. After failing to extend their lease a second time, the residents hired a public relations firm to place expensive ads in local newspapers touting an “alternative plan” that would have removed some trailers and converted others to “affordable housing.” When that effort also failed to generate support, the residents finally hired attorneys to challenge the validity of the environmental studies conducted by CDPR.

The Laguna Beach chapter joined with a large coalition of other local environmental groups to support the CDPR restoration plan. The coalition successfully countered the efforts of the trailer park residents at every turn by writing letters to the local newspapers and city officials, speaking at city council meetings and Coastal Commission meetings, and meeting with key decision makers well before any crucial votes.

Demolition of any remaining trailers and other infrastructure is expected to begin in Spring 2005, followed by restoration work and construction of the new campground and day use facilities. Surfrider Foundation activists will be working to ensure that the major aspects of the CDPR restoration plan are met. This includes removal of nearly 300 trailers, including about 75 of which are directly on the beach and have about 1500 feet of associated stone, reinforced and unreinforced concrete, gunfire, rubble and wood armoring. The plan also calls for the removal of an antiquated septic tank/leach field sewer system and replacing it with a modern sanitary sewer system to service the new park’s restrooms. Restoration efforts will also include native plant restoration throughout the project, including removal of all invasive plants along El Morro Creek.

According to the CDPR, the new El Morro State Park facility will house educational and interpretive facilities, highlighting natural and cultural themes. The park will also feature enhanced coastal access including ADA access to the beach, which is not presently available.

To see a drawing of the State Park Restoration Plan, go to http://www.parks.ca.gov/pages/21299/files/siteplan1.pdf
This past October, beach and coastal activists from all over the country descended on Costa Mesa, California, as the Surfrider Foundation hosted its 20th Anniversary Coastal Summit. Not since 1999 had the collective tribes of the Surfrider Foundation’s grassroots chapters gathered in one place. Not even a powerful early winter storm was enough to dissuade the 250 plus attendees to come together and commemorate twenty years of beach and coastal activism. The sold-out event attracted representatives from over thirty chapters, and even drew attendees from as far away as Japan.

The Coastal Summit was designed to provide chapter activists with the opportunity to gain valuable information, develop new skills and build important relationships with activists and experts from across the country.

The festivities kicked off with a reception honoring the board of directors from the last twenty years. Over two dozen of the Foundation’s past board members were on hand to be presented with a beautifully handcrafted paipo board, adorned with the names of every serving board member over the last two decades. The Foundation then went on to honor outgoing Executive Director Christopher Evans for his tireless work over the last five years. Also honored were Chief Financial Officer, Chris Keys; Webmaster Mark Babski; National Chapter Director, Ed Mazzarella; and Interim Executive Director, Michelle Kremer for each providing over a decade of dedication to the Foundation. The evening was also highlighted by former Surfrider Foundation staff member John Hoskinson, who provided music for the evening.

The first of the weekend’s four speaker sessions began early on Saturday morning. Armed with pens, paper, coffee and baked goods, attendees listened as top experts in the fields of coastal science and environmental activism made their presentations. The seminars and discussion sessions were selected to not only educate Surfrider Foundation activists about current mission-related issues, but also to inform them about pending issues, as well as train them for these campaigns, and allow time for networking.

2003 Surf Industry Manufacturer Association’s Environmentalist of the Year and Wildcoast Executive Director, Serge Dedina joined Robert Garcia from the Center for Law in Public Interest and James Fahn from the International Center for Environmental Journalists for a panel discussion on “Access, Race and Justice/Grassroots Surf Activism and Cultural Diversity.” This session centered on the importance for the Surfrider Foundation to strategically identify culturally diverse community partners to tactically broaden our grassroots support base.

Surfrider Foundation’s former Environmental Director Chad Nelsen, participated on two panels. Nelsen and Randy Olson from Shifting Baselines, presented the concept behind the Shifting Baselines project. The project outlines the importance of documenting change in the coastal and marine environment. This concept was extended to Surfrider Foundation issues such as beach access, water quality, beach erosion, loss of wetlands and coastal armoring.
Nelsen also led a session on the Surfrider Foundation’s National Campaign in Rincón, Puerto Rico. The Salva Tres Palmas campaign was highlighted in this session. This National Campaign has led to the establishment of the first marine reserve on the Puerto Rico mainland and certainly the world’s first marine protected area designed to protect recreational surfing. The presentation included discussion on campaign planning, design and implementation from the Surfrider Foundation perspective.

No Surfrider Foundation Summit would be complete without a presentation on water quality, and the subject of monitoring and compliance was aptly covered by Steve Weisburg of the Southern California Coastal Water Research Project. Weisburg was joined by longtime Surfrider Foundation ally Monica Mazur from the Orange County Health Care Agency and David Beckman from the Natural Resources Defense Center.

In an interesting contrast of East and West coast issues, presentations were made on the California Coastal Act and Coastal Commission, and East Coast Beach Fill issues. The California panel included Peter Douglas, Executive Director of the California Coastal Commission, Mark Massara, from the Sierra Club and Todd Cardiff of Coast Law Group. The East Coast beach fill session was covered by Michelle Duval, PhD, and Ken Lindeman, PhD, of Environmental Defense and Gary Appleson, from the Caribbean Conservation Corporation.

A plenary session devoted to the Pew Oceans Report and U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy recommendations rounded out Saturday afternoon. This information session was moderated by Dr. Michael Orbach; with Warner Chabot, Executive Director, the Ocean Conservancy; Kevin Ranker, Surfrider Foundation; and David Rockefeller, Pew Commissioner as panelists.

Following a full day of outstanding and informative sessions, attendees were welcomed to a cocktail reception in the hotel’s Grand Foyer. Chapter representatives drank and mingled to the sounds of the San Onofre Bamboo Room Band, before entering the Pacific Ballroom for a delicious sit-down dinner.

The keynote speaker for the evening was the one and only “Sturgeon General,” Dr. Sylvia Earle. Dr. Earle spoke of her love of the ocean and showed video clips from several of her dives. Dr. Earle is a pioneering researcher on marine ecosystems and has led more than fifty expeditions totaling more than 6,000 hours underwater.

Sunday morning began with a plenary session for Chapter discussion. The lively hour and a half session was not nearly enough time for all attendees to discuss the pressing issues facing the organization.

“There were lots of things being discussed Sunday morning, including a lot of thought-provoking ways the organization could better service our chapter network,” said Ed Mazzarella. “We took a lot away from the discussion and are looking forward to trying to build upon it.”

Mazzarella was then joined by Surfrider Foundation Board member and President of the Ocean Foundation, Mark Spalding, in presenting a Chapter Workshop on campaign planning and training. This type of planning and training is essential to effective grassroots campaigns. There was also a Chapter Workshop led by Jeff Duclos, of Von Jessen Duclos and Lance Webster of L.W. Communications, both experts in media and communications. The final session was presented by Jack Sterne from Ocean Champions. Ocean Champions is a non-partisan organization dedicated to supporting proven leaders and electing new candidates who will advocate for ocean conservation in the U.S. Congress. As 2004 was an election year, this topic was quite timely.

The weekend concluded with Chapter Recognition Awards presented by National Director of Chapters, Ed Mazzarella and closing remarks made by Board of Directors Chair, Michael Orbach and Interim Executive Director, Michelle Kremer.

In all, it was a wonderful weekend of networking, training and entertainment that inspired all who attended to continue to fulfill the mission of the Surfrider Foundation for the next twenty years.
The Surfrider Foundation is happy to announce that it is in the process of hiring an East Coast Regional Manager and Asbury Park New Jersey Campaign Organizer. These positions provide direct, on-the-ground support to our chapter network and are priority hires for the organization. In approximately three years, Surfrider Foundation has placed nine field staff members throughout the United States. These chapter support positions were identified through the creation of Surfrider Foundation’s strategic plan, and implemented through the Chapter Department Operating Plan.

Pacific Northwest

The Coos Bay Chapter recently celebrated its two-year anniversary of continuous water testing. Mahalo to Grover Hatcher and Rob Klinker, who are conducting water-quality sampling at three sites in Port Orford and two in Bandon. Thanks as well to local activists Donnie Conn, Aldin Wolfe, Carmen Matthews and Mark Pasternak, who have all assisted with collecting samples. George Tinker has also been taking samples for his work with the South Slough Research Center.

Kudos to activists Katie Hildebrandt and Charlie Plybon from the Oregon Coast Aquarium. Because of their efforts, Surfrider Foundation’s Central Coast Chapter is able to conduct weekly water quality tests at six sites in the Newport area. Cheers as well to local activists

East

Congratulations to Jersey Shore Chapter activist, Dr. Bill Rosenblatt, for being named Surfers Environmental Alliance’s “Kahuna of the Year.” Rosenblatt, who also serves as Vice Chair on the Foundation’s National Board of Directors and Mayor of Loch Arbour, New Jersey, was recognized for his extensive work educating and lobbying public officials on the economic and recreational importance of surfing, and the necessity to preserve surf spots and waves. Bill was the lead researcher involved with the Jersey Shore Chapter’s pilot study of the economic impact of surfing in Monmouth County, NJ. Guided by real Kahunas, George Downing and John Kelly from Hawaii, the chapter designed a study to replicate work done in Hawaii in 1975. The concept that surfing has economic value became a useful tool in the chapter’s victory overturning Asbury Park’s 30-year old ban on surfing.

Every other year, Jacksonville Beach, Florida plays host to the Sea and Sky Spectacular; a bi-annual air show which features, among other attractions, the US Navy’s Blue Angels. While the event is a lot of fun, it also draws nearly a half million visitors along the shoreline during its two-day run, which poses a threat to miles of environmentally sensitive coastal dunes. In response, Surfrider Foundation’s First Coast Chapter Vice-Chair Jeb Branham coordinated with the City of Jacksonville Beach to have the dunes secured with sand fencing. Chapter activists Jamie Borders and Jamie Holway of Aloha Signs donated 60 signs encouraging spectators to stay out of local dunes. The chapter also recruited and trained over 60 security volunteers to help control crowds in and around the dunes. As a result, the event created virtually no damage to the dune system. Surfrider Foundation’s First Coast Chapter and Vice-Chair Jeb Branham received a letter of commendation from the City Manager, a hand written letter of thanks from the Blue Angels, and a Bouquet in Folio-weekly

Chapter News

“Kahuna” Bill Rosenblatt drops into another icy Sandy Hook peeler. Photo: Robb Connelly

First Coast Chapter activist Scott Shine tries to keep the crowd in check at this year’s Sea & Sky Airshow. Photo: Hal Padgett
Nathan Camp, Kara Kemmler, Bob Keats & Mark Mekenas with the chapter should be an inspiration of Cannon Beach, whose progressive work stepped up to sponsor the program as donations from the raffle went directly to Surfrider Foundation to fund the Oregon Chapter’s Lincoln City and Pacific City water quality testing programs. The raffle raised approximately $500 (about 35 water tests worth) for the program.

The Oregon Coast Aquarium will also be home to a new Pollution Prevention Display. The display was designed by Roland Hoyle of OzonDigital.com, and constructed by Bryan Bates of Seven Surfboards and Oregon Surf Shop owner Fred Sickler. This board will help educate the Aquarium’s 1.5 million annual visitors on nearshore pollution, and how each of us can help reduce it. Fred has also been nominated to the Ocean Policy Advisory Council, a body that advises the Governor on ocean issues. Congratulations Fred!

Kudos to Oregon activists Mark Piscatelli, Danni Bennett, Sarah Crow, Kristen Green, Brooke Bittner, Rachel Schmidt, and Andrew Corr, who have all volunteered to collect samples as part of the North Coast Water Quality Monitoring Program. Special thanks to Cannon Beach Surf Shop owner Mark Mekenas, and the lovely Rachel Morris, who have not only helped organize the effort, but stepped up to sponsor the program as well. The samples are tested by the City of Cannon Beach, whose progressive work with the chapter should be an inspiration to communities across the country.

Congratulations to raffle winner Bruce Rosebrock of Longview who won a custom shaped Lanny Shuler surfboard. All donations from the raffle went directly to Surfrider Foundation to fund the Oregon Chapter’s Lincoln City and Pacific City water quality testing programs. The raffle raised approximately $500 (about 35 water tests worth) for the program.

Patagonia Portland held a fundraiser/raffle for Surfrider Foundation’s Portland Chapter. Patagonia generously donated a $250 fleece-lined parka. The chapter wishes to thank all the folks at Patagonia Portland, especially Greg Hyde, John Thompson and Katie Goers for hosting the Surfrider booth.

The Central Oregon Chapter of the Surfrider Foundation and Alder Creek Kayak hosted a Deschutes riverbank cleanup on October 30. Thanks to Alder Creek Kayaks, Matt Baker and Brad Johnson for planning the event.

West

Surfrider Foundation would like to congratulate and welcome newly elected Santa Barbara Chapter Chair Kara Kemmler and Treasurer Nathan Campo. Congratulations are also in order for re-elected Vice-Chair Bob Keats and Secretary, Dr. Mark Morey for their continued efforts. We would like to sincerely thank outgoing Chapter Chair, Ken Palley for his outstanding leadership, and outgoing executive committee member Laura Ericson for her long-time activism. We are happy to report that both members plan to stay active within the chapter. Ms. Kemmler brings a great deal of experience to the chapter. As a former staff member of the California Coastal Commission, and current staff member of the California Coastal Conservancy, she has a depth of knowledge about coastal environmental issues.

When Karilily Kent first decided to put together Humboldt County’s Surf for Peace contest, both support and skepticism greeted her. After all, the surfers on Northern California’s isolated coastline tend to prefer their privacy. They wanted to know, “Who is this girl?” Fortunately for the Humboldt Chapter of the Surfrider Foundation, “this girl” turned out to be one seriously motivated woman, who eventually raised over $1,400 for the Humboldt Chapter and Arcata’s Redwood Peace and Justice Center. Local surf shops Salty’s Surf’n’Tackle and Greenhouse Boardshop both donated prizes and offered encouragement as well. The all-fronts success of Surf for Peace not only benefited the nonprofits, but inspired people to look toward the future, Karilily reported. “A lot of people were impressed,” she said, “and want to help out next year.”

Surfrider Foundation’s South Bay Chapter hosted a successful luau fundraiser this past November at Sangria in Hermosa Beach. On hand were dozens of South Bay activists, including Andy Dellenbach, Alisa Guttman, Karen Perry, Stephanie Rosenberg, Joe Geever and Johnna Emke. In addition to a variety of surfboards, skateboards and other beach gear, the chapter amassed a pretty nifty collection of art to auction off. The event was a huge success.

Surfrider Foundation members Kim Tokarz and Rachel Wilson are in the process of organizing a Chicago Chapter of the Surfrider Foundation. They have already done outreach to other members in and around the Windy City, and have gained support from our friends at the Great Lakes Surfing Association. The pair are currently identifying and refining the Chapter’s scope of work. If you’re interested in participating please contact them at chicago@surfrider.org.
For me, the crux of the issue was already taking form as I stepped into the 20th Anniversary Summit session on California's Coastal Commission and Coastal Act: Lasting environmental victory cannot be achieved without winning a change of hearts and a change of ways by the great number of citizens not yet engaged in the war against our planet.

This theme, and the suggestion that the Surfrider Foundation should focus the strength of its grassroots activist network on educating and engaging the public, became a consistent refrain by the experts assembled for this inspiring and soulful weekend event. Prominent among them, Warner Chabot of the Ocean Conservancy, and keynote speaker Dr. Sylvia Earle.

Yet it would go to Peter Douglas of the California Coastal Commission, to give this thesis the scope and perspective that every activist present needed to hear and to heed.

“The greatest threat to coasts and oceans is public ignorance and apathy,” Douglas said in a truncated presentation of his prepared remarks as the session neared an end. Also added to the list were: unrestrained consumerism and what drives it; the failure of campaign finance reform; and the strategic dominance of forces intent on destroying the environment, and that faction’s cultivated ability to capture media and control the message.

Added Douglas: “An insidious obstacle to effective environmental protection is the theft of language ... The careless use of language contributes to a mind-set that paves the way for continued environmental destruction.”

As a public relations professional who has spent more than a dozen years teaching these skill sets to others, I am increasingly concerned about the theft and corruption of language. The power brokers advancing anti-environmental interests have become adept at framing their arguments by the use of evocative language that preempts debate, while also soothing and further numbing the public mind. When “global warming” is framed as “climate change,” questionable decisions regarding this issue are made to appear more acceptable.

Stop and think for a moment: How much time do we spend trying to find the right words to transcend environmental shorthand or jargon? How much effort is made to find words that will ring as quotable language to a reporter, that convey a message with imagery that everyone can understand? The great journalist, Walter Lippman, once said: “People are moved to action by the pictures in their mind.” Moving people to action is the overarching call of the environmental movement, yet ability with words does not make the list of necessary skills for activists.

A recent report by the Center for Media puts the current state of affairs in perspective: “[The right wing] has simply done a better job than anyone else of organizing from the grassroots up. This isn’t because their ideas are more popular or palatable—they aren’t—but because the right has been serious and strategic in its commitment to winning and wielding power.”

Maybe it’s time to step back from the fight of the moment and focus more clearly on how we might do what so many important people are asking us to do—use our influence to get more people to reexamine their priorities and beliefs. As Douglas said in his closing remarks, quoting Senegalese author Baba Dioum:

“In the end, we will conserve only what we love. We will love only what we understand. We will understand only what we have been taught.”

(The complete text of Douglas’ remarks, AGAINST THE TIDE: ACTIVISM IN OUR TIME, is available upon request at the national office. Also, those interested in further study of the use of language in this ongoing debate might want to check out the book, Don’t Think of an Elephant: Know Your Values and Frame the Debate, by George Lakoff, Chelsea Green Publishing - Ed)
Mailbag

The Surfrider Foundation office received quite a bit of mail regarding our October issue of Making Waves:

“For you guys not to have the balls to come out and support Kerry is absolutely absurd...I thought Surfrider was an advocacy group....Looks like you guys are going to turn over and play dead this election.”

Andy Hartnett
Medford, NJ

“We must be the only environmental organization in the country that does not recognize the seriousness of this election and be able to differentiate between smokestack politics and preservation.”

Chris Tellis
Sausalito, CA

“I find it totally astounding and upsetting that the Surfrider Foundation completely failed to take a position on George Bush’s environmental record. Rather, this job was spinelessly pawned off on two partisan congressmen who of course are going to report along party lines.”

David Weil

“I just wanted to say how disappointed I am in you guys for not backing Kerry like the Sierra Club did...The last issue of Making Waves with Kerry/Bush on the cover did nothing but be bipartisan—lame!!!”

Russ Risdon
San Clemente, CA

Managing Editor Matt McClain responds:

Many of our members have written in to ask why the Surfrider Foundation did not endorse a specific candidate during the recent election. The answer is simple: Like all 501(c)(3) non-profits, the Surfrider Foundation is prohibited by law from endorsing candidates or engaging in partisan politics (By contrast, the Sierra Club is a501(c)4, which means that while donations to the organization are not tax deductible, they are allowed to engage in lobbying).

While many of us, staff and activists alike, maintained strong feelings during the recent election, it is crucial to remember that unless a discernable environmental ethic is embraced on both sides of the aisle, we as a country will never succeed in overcoming the multitude of threats facing our planet. The environment must cease to be a partisan issue, but rather a human issue. We must move beyond identifying ourselves as a nation of red or blue, and instead adopt a national value of “green.”

CORRECTION

In the August, 2004, issue of Making Waves, this photo of Jack Johnson was erroneously attributed to Duran. The photograph was taken by Tonya Stumphauzer. We apologize for the error. - Ed
The Surfrider Foundation Orange County 2000 Club held its final party of 2004 on November 11. The event was held at the corporate offices of Quiksilver in Huntington Beach, with Quiksilver generously picking up the tab for the evening. Over 60 guests were treated to musical entertainment by former Surfrider Foundation staff member John Hoskinson as well as plenty of great food and drinks. The evening kicked off with outgoing Orange County 2000 Club Chair Harold Hofer “officially” handing off the baton to longtime Surfrider Foundation member Steve Friedmann, who will be responsible for the planning of the Club’s events for 2005. Renowned surfer and head of Quiksilver’s entertainment division, Danny Kwock, spoke briefly about his personal support of Surfrider Foundation’s efforts—in particular the “Teach and Test” program—as well as Quik’s interest in the Foundation’s programs to protect and preserve the world’s oceans, waves and beaches. Guests then watched the outstanding surf film, Second Thoughts, with narration and personal recollections from the movie’s creator, writer, director and star, Huntington Beach local, Timmy Turner. If you haven’t seen this movie, go buy it or rent it; you won’t be disappointed! After the forty minute movie, Timmy answered questions from the audience before a drawing where two lucky guests won new Quiksilver wetsuits and one stoked kid went home with a new Brewer stinger surfboard that was generously donated by Surfrider Foundation Board Member Lance Anderson. As guests headed for home, Quiksilver had one final surprise in store and handed out gift bags loaded with cool music CDs, stickers and products.

We would like to thank Danny Kwock, Roger Russell, Mark Daly, Bob McKnight and the entire Quiksilver crew for sponsoring and hosting the event. In addition, the night would not have happened without much hard work and planning by Harold Hofer, Lance Anderson and Steve Friedmann.

Lastly, special thanks to Harold Hofer for his nearly three years of leadership of the Surfrider Foundation’s Orange County 2000 Club. Harold was the genesis of this Club and worked tirelessly to build its membership and put on quarterly events focused on fun, entertainment and the mission of the Surfrider Foundation. Mahalo Harold!

2005 will be a year of expansion for the 2000 Club as we hope to develop it in other regions including New Jersey, Central California and San Diego. For more information on the 2000 Club visit www.surfrider.org/club2000.htm or call Surfrider Foundation’s Director of Development, Steve Blank, at 800-743-SURF.
Surfrider Foundation
MEMORIALS, DONATIONS, AND RETAIL PROGRAM

On behalf of the world’s oceans, waves and beaches, the Surfrider Foundation wishes to thank the following individuals, foundations, and corporations for their generous support received between Oct. 1, 2004 - Dec. 31, 2004.

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