

Return of the Native Oyster

by Anne Murphy, Executive Director

The west coast's only native oyster—the Olympia oyster (*Ostreola conchaphilia*), has suffered some hard times, but with the help of non-profit organizations and citizen groups, the diminutive bi-valve is poised for recovery in some of its historic locations. One such effort is happening in Discovery Bay, spearheaded by the Jefferson County Marine Resources Committee in partnership with Puget Sound Restoration Fund and Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife.

In the spring of 1792, Captain George Vancouver sailed into the Strait of Juan de Fuca to explore and survey Washington's coastline. Accompanying Vancouver was Scottish botanist and naturalist, Archibald Menzies. On May 2, while exploring Discovery Bay aboard the longboat, Pinnacle, Menzies made the following entry in his journal, *In the afternoon I accompanied Capt Vancouver to the head of the Harbour which we found to terminate in a muddy bank of shallow water on which the Pinnacle grounded – this led to the discovery of a species of small oyster with which the bottom was plentifully strewd but being now out of season they were poor & ill flavored & consequently not worth collecting.*

It is estimated that around the time of European contact, native oyster populations in Puget Sound and Willapa Bay numbered in the billions. Throughout its range from Southeast Alaska to Baja California, Olympia oysters were part of the subsistence diet of Native American peoples as evidenced by prehistoric shell middens. With the arrival of settlers the demand for the tasty oyster intensified leading to extensive harvest. Willapa Bay oysters, which fed the San Francisco market in the 1850s and 1860s, were harvested at a more rapid rate than Puget Sound oysters but their fate was the same. Heavy harvest coupled with pollution from early pulp and paper mills almost decimated Washington's native oyster. Faced with declining stocks, oystermen who had been successfully cultivating "Olympias" started importing the larger and

He was a bold man that first ate an oyster.
—Jonathan Swift

faster growing Pacific oysters (*Crassostrea gigas*) in the early 1900s. The average size of an Olympia oyster is 2" while Pacifics often exceed 10". The Pacific oyster, native to Japan, adapted well and is now the principle oyster harvested commercially and recreationally in the Pacific Northwest.



PHOTO: BIOLOGIST KAREN LULL SAMPLING OYSTER AGES

Over the past several decades, improved water quality conditions have fostered increases in some Olympia oyster populations. Currently in Hood Canal and South and Central Puget Sound, Olympia oyster populations occur in many of the same places they occurred pre-European contact; however, their abundance is a mere shadow of the historic numbers. The predominant threats to Olympias are pollution, habitat loss, and non-native species such as the Japanese oyster drill snail and a parasitic flatworm, both of which were inadvertently introduced with the Japanese oyster. Competition for space with the introduced Pacific oyster is not considered to be a threat to Olympias since they tend to inhabit slightly different niches.

Scientists in the conservation and restoration field recognize that Olympia oyster beds play an important ecological role by providing habitat and hiding places for small marine fish and invertebrates that are known to be important

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FALL HOURS
begin after Labor Day

BOTH EXHIBITS OPEN
Friday, Saturday & Sunday noon-4pm

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A Glimpse Into Roger Risley's Real World *by Christina Pivarnik*

If you've had the chance to go on one of our cruises to Protection Island over the past 14 years, you've most likely enjoyed learning about the wildlife and geology of the island from Roger Risley, our naturalist extraordinaire. Roger's been with us since the inception of our Protection Island cruises and over the years has virtually become synonymous with the trips.

He loves working with the Marine Science Center because he shares the same goals we have—environmental education and conservation. It's a good fit for him because he's such a big believer in educating the public about our wildlife, geology, weather patterns and the natural environment. And for those of us affiliated with the PTMSC, he's as much a treasure as the island itself.

"The cruises really open people's eyes to what's happening on the island," Roger commented. "They build awareness about the environment. I never have to preach because people can see it all for themselves. I really think the saying 'Build it and they will come' has been applicable to the wildlife on the island. Since it became a National Wildlife Refuge, more and more animals are appearing. There are elephant seals now—in fact the same one returns every year, larger than he was the year prior. I recognize him because of the scar on his shoulder. One year I counted over 1300 harbor seals!



"We have more deer now. People ask me how they got there and seem surprised when I tell them they swim from the mainland. No one seems to think that deer can swim! Everyone is in awe of the number of bald eagles that soar above the island. I've seen as many as three dozen on one trip."

Roger gets a kick out of some of the questions he's been asked by guests over the years. Many of them have never been to the area. Once, a gentleman from the Midwest asked him whether Puget Sound was saltwater or fresh water. The question was genuine from someone that has spent his life only around fresh water lakes. Another request that gave Roger a chuckle was when someone asked him if he could imitate a Heerman's Gull. His quipped response was, "I'm not allowed to sing in my contract." People are very surprised to see five different types of sea gulls. Everyone seems to think there's only one species of gull.

As for bird watching, puffins remain the favorite. They love to pose for photos and aren't camera-shy. "A lot of folks think puffins are endangered and when I tell them there are over 2.5 million, they're pleasantly surprised," Roger said.

Because one of Roger's great loves is geology, he's been fascinated by the geologic changes he's seen on the island over the years.

He commented that Protection Island is the most geologically active spot on the West Coast, other than Mount St. Helens. It has severe erosion on the north side of the island where it dries out. He's seen the sand running like a river down the cliffs. The sand is then removed by high tides and winds. At the rate it's going it will be sundered in 800–1,200 years.

When asked what he likes best about being a naturalist on our cruises he summed it up by saying, "Protection Island is a sample of the real world. Every animal seen is a member of a population. It isn't a trip to the zoo. It's a window into a world we never get to see any other way. More than 70% of the planet is covered with saltwater and 75% of North America is uninhabited by people. So when people see this representation of the real world, it deeply affects them, and I feel honored to be a part of that realization for them."

Roger Risley received his BA in Environmental Policy from Western Washington University and has spent most of his career working in the field with wildlife and plants. He worked for the Department of Fish & Wildlife for five years and for the U.S. Forest Service for five years. He's a tutor for the Port Townsend School District and has a passion for coaching middle school basketball and track. He's lived in Jefferson County for 37 years.

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Octopress is a publication of the Port Townsend Marine Science Center, A 501(C) (3) nonprofit educational organization. Your comments, contributions, and support are greatly welcomed and appreciated. PTMSC is located at Fort Worden State Park in Port Townsend, Washington on the Olympic Peninsula.

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The Main Office is located on the 2nd floor of the Fort Worden State Park Office. The Marine Exhibit & Natural History Exhibit are located on the Pier and on the Beach at Fort Worden State Park.

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PORT TOWNSEND MARINE SCIENCE CENTER SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

FALL HOURS

MARINE EXHIBIT (ME) & NATURAL HISTORY EXHIBIT (NHE) HOURS:
After Labor Day, Friday, Saturday & Sunday, noon to 4pm

SEPT	7	F	Fall hours begin after Labor Day
	11	TU	Geology Study Group 5:15pm NHE
	25	TU	Geology Study Group 5:15pm NHE
OCT	6	SA	Lecture—Tim McNulty <i>Island of Rivers: The Natural History & Future Health of an Island Ecosystem</i> 4 pm Wheeler Theatre (see Insert)
	8	M	Cooking Class at the Green Eyeshade 7–9pm (see pg. 5)
	9	TU	Geology Study Group 5:15pm NHE
	13	SA	Protection Island Fall Migration Cruise 1–4pm
	14	SU	Benefit Wine Tasting Cruise (see pg. 2)
	15	M	Cooking Class at the Green Eyeshade 7–9pm
	20	SA	Protection Island Fall Migration Cruise 1–4pm People for Puget Sound's Kid's Day <i>Life in the Food Chain</i> 2:30pm ME
	22	M	Cooking Class at the Green Eyeshade 7–9pm
	23	TU	Geology Study Group 5:15pm NHE
	27	SA	Protection Island Fall Migration Cruise 1–4pm
29	M	Cooking Class at the Green Eyeshade 7–9pm	
NOV	2	TH	Winter hours begin at both exhibits: Natural History Exhibit: Friday through Sunday: 12–4pm Marine Exhibit: Open by appointment only for 12 or more guests
	3	SA	Protection Island Fall Migration Cruise 1–4pm
	4	SU	Lecture—William Dietrich <i>Our Wheezing Heart: Puget Sound</i> 1 pm The Rose Theatre (see Insert)
	13	TU	Geology Study Group 5:15pm NHE
	27	TU	Geology Study Group 5:15pm NHE
	23 & 24	F-S	Annual Gift Shop Holiday Sale & Fish Printing 12–4pm Both Exhibits open 12–4pm
	24	SA	Protection Island Thanksgiving Cruise 1–4pm
29	TH	Lecture—George Divoky <i>Watching the World Melt Away: What Arctic Seabirds Tell Us About Global Warming</i> 7pm Fort Worden State Park, Bldg 204 (see Insert)	
DEC	11	TU	Geology Study Group 5:15pm NHE
	31	M	New Year's Eve Protection Island Cruise 1–4pm

**FOR INFORMATION ON ANY OF THESE PROGRAMS CALL THE PTMSC
at (360) 385-5582 or e-mail—info@ptmsc.org**

PORT TOWNSEND MARINE SCIENCE CENTER PROGRAMS ARE OFFERED IN COOPERATION
WITH THE WASHINGTON STATE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

Harnessing the Tides—A Presentation by Snohomish PUD

Want to know more about the tidal energy proposal for Admiralty Inlet? On Tuesday November 6, the Jefferson County Marine Resources Committee (MRC), the Port Townsend Marine Science Center (PTMSC), the Jefferson County Department of Community Development and the City of Port Townsend will co-host a presentation by Snohomish Public Utility District (PUD). The presentation

will begin at 6PM at the PTMSC's Natural History Exhibit. The MRC's regular business meeting will follow.

Craig Collar, Senior Manager, Energy Resource Development at Snohomish PUD, and project lead for tidal energy, will provide an overview of tidal energy technology and application as well as an overview of the chal-

lenges and opportunities faced by the PUD in the face of rapid service area load growth and the implementation of Renewable Portfolio Standards. The free presentation will address the potential of tidal energy in Puget Sound from a technological, economic, and environmental standpoint, and will discuss the current status of the PUD's efforts to responsibly study the tidal energy resource in the Sound.

PTMSC Bids Farewell to Cinamon Moffett and Welcomes Chrissy McLean



After 11 years with the PTMSC, veteran staffer, Cinamon Moffett, is heading toward graduate school and Chrissy McLean has taken over.

“Cin” has been instrumental in much of the growth PTMSC has experienced over the past decade. She expanded the summer camp program and spearheaded the creation of our Foss Maritime Discovery Lab. We will miss her

profound enthusiasm for the programs, animals, volunteers and the many students that have taken classes with her.

McLean earned her Bachelor of Science degree from Huxley College in Environmental Education and her Masters in Teaching from City University. She has a K-8 Teaching Certificate in Washington State, having done her student teaching at Chimacum and was the lead teacher at Discovery School for two years. She was a naturalist on the Menzies Project for one season and a shellfish technician for the Department of Fish and Wildlife this summer.

Chrissy says, “I’ve lived and worked in the Puget Sound area my whole life and have a strong sense of place. I’ve learned about the marine environment by rolling up my sleeves and getting salty and I can’t wait to offer this kind of hands-on experience to the groups that come to the PTMSC!”

25th Anniversary Fund Challenge Donors

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Jim Mason (Memorial gifts in honor of Patrick Felker; celebrating the marriage of Jane Flinn and Blair Jones)

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Donations received after September 5th will be listed in our next issue.



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Discounts are available for children and groups



PHOTO: CAROLINE LITTLEFIELD

Celebrate Autumn with Cooking Classes at The Green Eyeshade to Benefit the PTMSC



As part of a fall membership drive and fundraiser, the Port Townsend Marine Science Center will be hosting its fifth series of four cooking classes at The Green Eyeshade. "Celebrate Autumn" is the theme for the classes with the first one beginning Monday, October 8th, from 7–9pm. Additional classes will also be on Mondays: October 15, 22, and 29th, also from 7–9pm. Save the dates!

Learn culinary tips from Port Townsend's hottest chefs while benefiting the PTMSC. Every year these classes are a sell-out and for those who have attended, they attest to the classes being a fall highlight! If you love to cook, and you want to support the PTMSC, you won't want to miss a single class.

Our first featured chef is Tim Tocatlian, from T's Restaurant, on October 8th. He'll be showcasing his favorite appetizers and promises to share a few of his secret recipes with us. Aaron Stark will join us on October 15th—back by popular demand from last year. He and his partner Micaela Colley run Cultivated Palette Catering with their focus on sustainable foods, especially using local farm fresh ingredients. Frank D'Amore, from Pane D'Amore, will give us tips on baking incredible breads on October 22nd and to top it all off, we're featuring Jay Payne, from the Wild Coho, on October 29th to learn about creating fabulous desserts.

If you attended any of the previous PTMSC cooking classes, you'll know you don't want to miss a single class. Sign up early, as space is limited to only 20 per class. Cost is \$35 per person per class or \$25 for PTMSC members and if you sign up for all four classes. PTMSC members who don't reserve all four classes are \$30. All proceeds go toward funding PTMSC programs. Please call 385-5582 or e-mail info@ptmsc.org for reservations.



The PTMSC Endowment

Augusta Comstock, "Goose" to her friends, had always wanted to be a marine biologist. She hoped to follow in the footsteps of her aunt, Augusta Arnold, the author of *Sea Beach at Ebb Tide*, a 1901 volume still in print today. Although Goose never achieved her professional goal, she did make an important contribution to marine education and conservation. When her son Henry Yeaton, daughter-in-law Libby Palmer and friends Frank and Judy D'Amore started PTMSC, she felt inspired to help. In 1998, she made a significant donation which allowed us to start an endowment fund to help secure the organization's future.



Other supporters added to Goose's gift and now, in 2007, the endowment has more than doubled. Through the years, the fund has been carefully managed under strict rules formulated by the PTMSC Board, with advice from professional financial planners. The endowment pays out up to 5% each year to help the PTMSC achieve our mission of marine and coastal education and conservation.

We invite you to consider sharing Goose's legacy by contributing to PTMSC. One of the easiest ways to do so is to include the organization in your will, by specifying either an amount or a percentage of your estate. You

can choose to designate it for the endowment, for youth education programs—or your gift can be unrestricted. If you make an unrestricted gift, the PTMSC will use it strategically to support our educational and conservation priorities.

One Time Tax IRA Rollover Opportunity

If you are over 70½, you are eligible to

make a charitable gift from otherwise taxable Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs). During 2007, the Charitable IRA Rollover permits taxpayers age 70½ and older to make tax-free charitable gifts totaling up to \$100,000 from IRA and Roth IRA accounts. By giving directly to the PTMSC, you don't have to pay any taxes on the amount you donate (which can be any amount). Most importantly, the full amount of what you donate is available for fulfilling the organization's mission. For more information, contact your accountant or financial planner and then get in touch with us.

If you need a copy of the PTMSC official designation as a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization, bequest language for your will, or would like more information about giving opportunities, please visit our Web site ptmsc.org and click on *Donate* or contact JoAnne Heron at (360) 385-5582, ext. 101.

W H A T ' S N E W A T T H E B U R K E

Family Day: *Bug Blast!* Sun., Sept. 9 10am–4pm

This year highlights special guest Ciscoe Morris, who will share his energetic affection for bugs in the garden. Feed your fascination when thousands of specimens, dead and alive, are transported from the deep vaults of the Burke Museum and brought in from private collections, then put on display for the Burke's annual family event *Bug Blast!* Create beetle art, enjoy bug glasses, bug quizzes, and other fun stuff for the entire family in a day filled with displays and hands-on activities!

Opening Day: *In Search of Giant Squid*

Sat., Sept. 22 10am–4pm

Join the Burke Museum for a fun-filled opening day of *In Search of Giant Squid*: take a tour with the Burke curator of mollusks, get your hands dirty by dissecting a squid, and sing-a-long with live performances of sea shanties.



The Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture burkemuseum.org



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components of juvenile salmon diets. Since the retreat of the last glacier, the Olympia oyster has co-evolved with other plants and animals in intertidal and subtidal areas, making it a key animal for habitat recovery projects. In recognition of this, Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW) is working closely with Puget Sound Restoration Fund (PSRF) to support Olympia oyster recovery efforts.

Knowing that Discovery Bay historically supported Olympia oysters, the Jefferson County Marine Resources Committee (MRC) started setting out Olympia seed (baby oysters) in selected habitats in the summer of 2002, under the guidance of PSRF. In 2003 WDFW staff found a healthy remnant population of Olympias in Discovery Bay which served to redirect the MRCs work. Seeding stopped as the MRC decided to closely study the remnant population to learn how to support its continued viability. At first, the MRC considered building a reef (of Pacific oyster shells) to expand habitat for the Olympias since they require hard substrate for their annual supply of larvae to settle on. The MRC decided to look more closely at the population to see if a reef was really necessary. In 2004, the MRC contracted with LaRoche & Associates and the Port Townsend Marine Science Center (PTMSC) to provide biologists to carry out the study under the guidance of PSRF and a team of shellfish specialists recruited by the MRC. The team developed a research plan which is being carried out by biologists Karen Lull and Sharon Schlentner of the PTMSC. Components of the study include population density, size and annual growth, reproductive cycles, larval recruitment, habitat characterization and water quality.

The Discovery Bay Olympia Oyster Project is sponsored by the Jefferson County MRC, funded by the Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative, and supported by WDFW & PSRF. We are not publicly disclosing the location of this project out of respect for the private land owner whose property has to be crossed to access the study site. The MRC would like to work with its partners to one day turn this project into a public demonstra-

3rd Annual Fort Worden Wildlife and Nature Art Expo



Fort Worden State Park Conference Center is hosting its Third Annual Wildlife and Nature Art Expo on Saturday, October 6th, from 10am to 5pm and Sunday, October 7th, from 12 noon to 5pm in building 204. Admission is \$5 per family or \$2.50 per adult for both days; Friends of Fort Worden are free.

Join Fort Worden for a weekend of wildlife and nature art featuring international and regional artists. They will be exhibiting award winning wildlife and nature artists from Washington, Oregon, California, Utah, Wyoming, Idaho as well as Canada who will be showcasing their original paintings, carvings, and sculptures during this two day event.

This year they will be highlighting the sea otter as part of an awareness of endangered and threatened species. Both days will include activities such as nature walks, art demonstrations, and presentations on the sea otter.

Tim McNulty, a noted nature writer, poet, and conservationist, will give a talk on Saturday at 4pm at the Wheeler Theatre, presented by PTMSC.

A wildlife and nature acrylics painting class, taught by award winning artist David Kitler, is being held October 8th through the 10th.

Saturday, October 6th from 6-7pm, is a wine reception for the artists and as part of the Art Port Townsend Gallery Walk.

For more information, visit www.wildartexpo.org/

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Don't miss the **Annual Thanksgiving Weekend Gift Shop Sale, November 23rd & 24th**, at the Natural History Exhibit. Get your holiday shopping out of the way early. There will be Fish Printing noon to 4pm each day!

tion site. Until that time we ask the public to allow this fragile population of native oysters to thrive undisturbed in its current location.

For more information about this project, contact Gabrielle LaRoche, Project Manager for the Jefferson MRC, (360) 531-2458. To learn more about Puget Sound Restoration Fund visit their website: www.restorationfund.org. There is currently no harvest of Olympia oysters allowed. However, they are being farmed on privately owned tidelands and marketed commercially.

Many Thanks are due ...

- ✦ **Dick Pierce** for various administrative tasks
- ✦ **Dan & Soozie Darrow** for donating new tank covers to the Marine Exhibit
- ✦ **Al Bergstein** our computer guru

Seth Bender Memorial Scholarship Fund

PTMSC's hands-on Marine Science and Natural History camps provide educational opportunities for boys and girls ages 8-18. This scholarship fund, established in memory of Seth Bender, provides tuition assistance for low-income families. We sincerely thank Alan Rammer for his recent contribution.

Contributions to the scholarship fund are always accepted and can be sent to:

Seth Bender Memorial Scholarship Fund
Port Townsend Marine Science Center
532 Battery Way, Port Townsend, WA 98368

syn·the·sis

CYNTHESIS

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NEW & RENEWING MEMBERS

Thanks! To our New & Continuing Members! The following folks have either joined or renewed their PTMSC membership since the Summer '07 *Octopress*!

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Cinamon Moffett, Judy D'Amore

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Under the guidance of captain MB Armstrong

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Paul Ganalon, facilitator for clock hour and credit options

Funders

The Harrington Schiff Foundation, Hugh and Jane Ferguson Foundation and US Bancorp Foundation

2007 Participating Teachers

Heidi Austin, Carol Baker, Court Bell, Gary Bletsch, Tammy Fawcett, Marna Friend, Connie Gradoville, Michael Hagmann, Debbie Klabo, Nancy Matlack, Thomas Matlack, Jeanne Metzger, Dori Nagy, Kate Paping, Margie Rehn, Kirsten Rooks, Shannon Shoemaker, Ted Stoeckley, Sarah Templin, Sandy Winchester

Volunteers and Staff

Everyone at PTMSC who helped out during the week

One of the biggest rewards to PTMSC staff in offering this program is the response of teachers. One 2007 teacher's comments were shared by many others: "It was a lifetime experience, and I would recommend it for all teachers."



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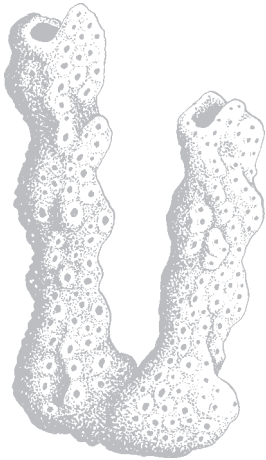
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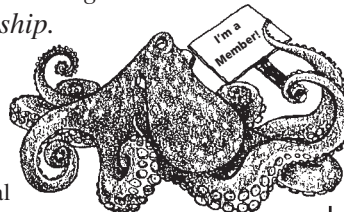
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