

An End in Sight to Creosote?

Judy D'Amore, Naturalist/Curator NHE

As you head down to the beach this summer to enjoy a day in the sun, you're probably not thinking about creosote, but chances are this subtle contaminant of our shorelines is closer than you think. Fortunately efforts are underway this year to reduce our exposure to creosote.

Marine pilings and telephone poles are treated with creosote, but then, we also clean our chimneys to get rid of creosote build-up. If you're from the Southwest, you know there's also a creosote bush. So what on earth is creosote?

Creosote is the name used for tar-like products of wood or coal formed at high temperatures in the absence of oxygen. Wood-creosote, a tarry residue from heated wood—or from the resin of the creosote bush—was once used for a variety of household products but is no longer used in these ways today. Wood-creosote also forms in chimneys where wood is burned with the damper closed. Pilings and telephone poles, on the other hand, are treated with creosote derived from coal-tar, a by-product of the refining process for coal. Coal-tar creosote is a complex mixture of over 300 different chemicals that are extremely effective at protecting wood from decay.

Among the active components of both wood and coal-tar creosote are members of a chemical family called polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), also found in wood smoke and car exhaust. While not all PAHs are toxic, many are highly toxic and some are potent carcinogens. Their toxicity surely contributes to their effectiveness as a wood preservative, but for living organisms coming in contact with them, these chemicals spell trouble. Humans can absorb creosote directly through the skin, or they might ingest creosote through residues in food or water or by breathing smoke or sawdust laced with creosote.

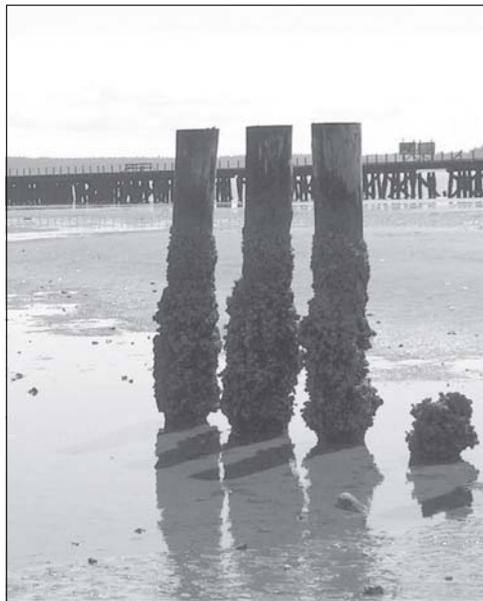


PHOTO: JUDY D'AMORE

In humans the effects of short-term contact can range from skin or respiratory irritation to blistering and convulsions, while long-term exposure has resulted in skin cancer and possibly birth abnormalities. In the marine environment, creosote does not prevent organisms from settling and growing on treated pilings, but it probably affects their health. Field monitoring of contaminated sites reveals that aquatic invertebrates and fish bio-accumulate creosote in their tissues, and laboratory studies show that fish and invertebrates exposed to creosote as larvae suffer high mortality and lowered resistance to disease.

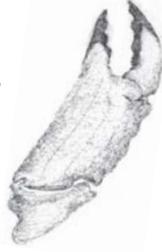
Creosote is still used commercially as a wood preservative although its use is regulated by the Environmental Protection Agency as a hazardous substance. Fortunately, many municipalities and agencies are choosing alternatives to creosoted wood for marine installations, but there is still plenty of it around us. Former wood-treatment facilities such as the Eagle Harbor Superfund site on Bainbridge Island are particular hot spots. Spills and leakage by the former Wyckoff wood treatment facility at that site began in the 1900s and continued until its closure in 1989, leaving surrounding sediments saturated with creosote and other contaminants. Yet all

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Summer Opening Day
June 15

Both Exhibits open
Wednesday through Monday 11am–5pm

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Creosote ... cont. from page 1

around us are sources less dramatic but closer to home: old pilings still standing along the waterfront and creosoted beach logs wedged among other wood at the drift line where our children might clamber or we might stop to rest our legs on a warm day. Although these logs may have been treated years ago, much of their creosote is still with us because it takes such a long time for creosote to disseminate and degrade. Pilings standing in the water for 40 years still retain up to 75% of their original creosote, and logs in the water or on the beach will continue to discharge creosote into the environment for many decades.

This year a major effort is being initiated to remove sources of creosote along waterfronts in Puget Sound. The Washington Legislature has included \$2 million dollars in funding as part of the Governor's Puget Sound Initiative to be used in creosote removal projects. Washington Department of Natural Resources will be coordinating the program, and Lisa Kaufman, who heads up the program, has already been working closely with Washington State Parks, Northwest Straits Commission, several Marine Resource Committees, Beach Watchers and other groups who are conducting inventories and helping prioritize removal sites. Sites slated for removal this first year include clustered pilings, especially those prioritized by local communities, and pilings close to known forage fish spawning sites. At this time, sites that might be contaminated with other toxic substances in addition to creosote are not eligible for piling removal.

Here in Port Townsend Bay, discussion centers on the remains of the old Adams Street ferry dock, the railroad trestle adjacent to Boat Haven, and pier structures at Old Fort Townsend and Fort Flagler State Parks as possible removal sites. Since some of these old pilings currently serve as roosting structures for marine birds, Kaufman and the community are considering what to replace them with at the time of their removal that would have the same value to wildlife. Local partners, including WSU Water/Beach Watchers, North Olympic Salmon Coalition, PTMSC and the Coast Guard, are assisting Kaufman in looking at these issues.

As this exciting project gets underway, there will be many opportunities for public participation. If you would like to be in-



Volunteers with WSU Water/Beach Watchers, surveying beach near Point Wilson.

PHOTO: JOHN LONGCORE

volved, you can reach Lisa Kaufman at lisa.kaufman@wadnr.gov. Meanwhile, one of the most important things we can all do is to avoid use of creosote-treated wood ourselves and encourage others do this as well. Fortunately, alternatives to treated wood are now available. Consider using fence posts made from recycled plastics around your property and avoid the use of railroad ties in landscaping. Concrete and steel can replace treated wood used in pilings and telephone poles. It is time to finally rid our environment of this subtle contaminant.

Big Eddy Goes International: Thinking Ecosystems Without Borders

A Presentation by Carol Bernthal, Superintendent of the Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary
Thursday, June 15 7pm in the NHE



The Juan de Fuca Eddy straddles the northern portion of the Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary in Washington State and the southern coastal waters of Vancouver Island. Driven by a seasonal, nutrient-rich coastal upwelling that feeds one of the most productive ecosystems on the continental margin, the Big Eddy is North America's second most important fishing ground, home to rich First Nations' cultures, and a popular recreation and tourism destination.

Admission is \$5 for nonmembers (\$3 for youth), \$3 for members (\$2 for youth).

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Octopress is a quarterly 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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2006 Eleanor Stopps Environmental Leadership Award Presented to PTMSC Executive Director

Anne Murphy is dedicated to helping people appreciate, understand and protect the environment. Although she is best known in the community for her strong leadership role at the Port Townsend Marine Science Center, she has contributed in countless other ways too, from volunteering with schools to conducting interviews with Jefferson County elders as part of the Historical Society's Oral History Program.



Anne has been passionately involved with education in resource conservation for many years. Before moving to this area, she was an instructor for Oregon's Public Outdoor School Program. In Jefferson County, she helped Chimacum School District establish its outdoor education program and she was instrumental in establishing the education and outreach program for Wild Olympic Salmon including training displaced timber workers in watershed ecology and training teachers to use salmon and watershed curriculum.

When Anne joined the staff of the PTMSC in 1989, she was first and foremost a creative and inspirational teacher who forged some of the Center's most popular and enduring environmental education programs—programs that have had a lasting impact on young people in this community and beyond. Anne's leadership skills positioned her to become the organization's first Executive Director in 2000. Under her direction, the PTMSC has become an important community resource and regional leader in marine and coastal environmental education and interpretation, as well as in the area of citizen science. Anne has expanded the Center's facilities to support additional education programs, including professional training for teachers. She has initiated a natural history and bird migration cruise program and has generated numerous research opportunities for volunteers in partnerships with local and regional organizations.

In 1999 Anne became an active player in a regional initiative that has since grown to become a model for community involvement in marine resource stewardship. In that year, Jefferson County and six other northwest counties established voluntary Marine Resource Committees (MRCs) as part of the Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative, a Congressionally-authorized program to restore and protect the valuable marine resources and habitats in northern Puget Sound and the Strait of Juan de Fuca. In April 2005, Anne was appointed Chair for the Northwest Straits Commission—a thirteen-member body made up of seven representatives of Marine Resources Committees from the Northwest Straits counties (Clallam, Island, Jefferson, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish and Whatcom), five members appointed by the Governor and one member appointed by the Secretary of the Interior.

While involved in these exciting programs to protect and restore our marine environment, Anne still finds time to snorkel in one of her favorite places—the kelp beds. She is often seen swimming anywhere from North Beach to downtown Port Townsend.

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.

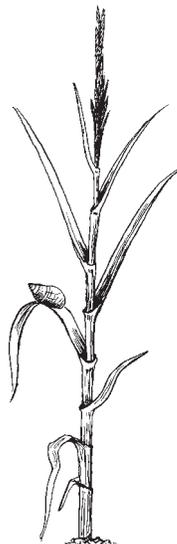
Contributions to the scholarship fund are always accepted and can be sent to:

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

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**Please Join Us for Our Summer Puffin Cruises
or Sail on the Adventuress to Protection Island**



Enjoy Port Townsend's gorgeous summer evenings aboard the comfortable 65-foot motor vessel *Glacier Spirit*, operated by Puget Sound Express, and look for puffins on Protection Island. It's hard to know which is more beautiful—Admiralty Inlet with the sun sinking into the

west or the incredible wildlife on Protection Island! Beginning **Saturday,**

July 8, the *Glacier Spirit* will depart from Point Hudson Marina in downtown Port Townsend at **6pm** and return at **9pm**. Additional cruises will be on **July 15, 22, 29,** and **August 5**.

This is our third year offering puffin cruises and they are usually a quick sell-out because of their popularity. Everyone loves puffins with their colorful markings and endearing expressions. The evening cruises offer a chance to see them in their natural habitat—with a fish in their bill, swimming, flying or diving. No matter what they're doing, they're fun to watch!



**PROTECTION ISLAND SAIL
ABOARD THE ADVENTURESS
SATURDAY, JULY 1, 10 AM TO 4 PM**

You are also invited to take a more leisurely trip to Protection Island aboard the classic 101-foot sailing schooner *Adventuress*. Enjoy this historic sailing vessel while learning more about the wildlife refuge and its natural inhabitants. This is also a "bestseller" since we

only offer the Protection Island Sail once a year. Call soon to make reservations!

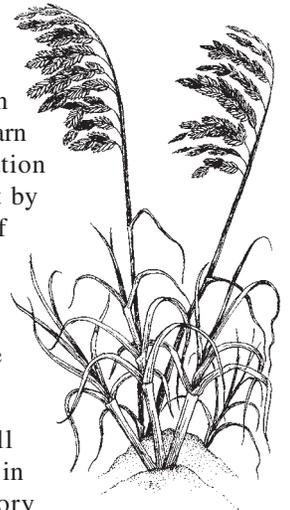
Tickets for the evening Puffin Cruises on the *Glacier Spirit* are \$50 per person (\$45 for PTMSC, Burke Museum, Audubon or Washington Ornithological Society members). Tickets for the sail on the *Adventuress* on **July 1,** are \$75 per person (\$70 for PTMSC, Burke Museum, Audubon or Washington Ornithological Society members). Proceeds will benefit the PTMSC's educational programs. Reservations are required and may be made by phone at: (360) 385-5582 or (800) 566-3932, or e-mail: cruises@ptmsc.org.

**COASTAL PLANTS OF
POINT WILSON:
An Exploration of
a Rare and Beautiful
Plant Community.**



On **Thursday, July 27,** local botanist Charles Espey will share his remarkable photographs of rare and beautiful plants that often go unnoticed. His slide presentation will follow the flowering cycles through

the year, starting with the moss and lichen carpets in January and the first ephemeral flowerings of *Collinsia* (Blue-eyed Mary) in March. Then the group will walk out to the point to see the plants in their habitat and learn about the restoration project carried out by the volunteers of the Washington Native Plant Society and the Port Townsend Marine Science Center.



The program will take place at **7pm** in the Natural History Exhibit. Lecture admission is \$5 for adults and \$3 for youth (\$3 adult members, \$2 youth members).



**PROTECTION ISLAND
SUMMER PUFFIN CRUISES**

SATURDAYS, 6 PM TO 9 PM
JULY 8, 15, 22, 29 AUGUST 5

Tickets: \$50 per person
(\$45 for PTMSC, Burke Museum, Audubon or WOS members)

Reservations and information:
(360) 385-5582, (800) 566-3932 or cruises@ptmsc.org
Discounts are available for children and groups

MSC PEN

Newsletter of Marine Science Center Volunteers

Seth Raymond

Port Townsend Marine Science Center
Fort Worden State Park ♦ 532 Battery Way ♦ Port Townsend, WA 98368
(360) 385-5582 ext. 112 ♦ volunteer@ptmsc.org

June/July 2006
Volume XIII, No. 3

FEATURED VOLUNTEER: — PAM GRAY —



Pam Gray and Libby Palmer preparing food for the Tides of March Benefit Auction

Pam Gray, self-described “Manic Auction Volunteer,” put over 550 hours into this year’s auction! She not only organized and led the acquisition effort for donations of auction items, she was responsible for all the fantastic food at the auction, which involved recruiting cooks and helpers, purchasing or arranging donations of food, coming up with recipes, and putting in an incredible number of hours chopping, baking, sautéing, etc.

“Why did I volunteer so many hours for the auctions? I had no answer to that question for a long time and my friends were getting pretty irritated by the whole thing, especially when I got involved the second year. I had to do some soul searching to find the answer.

“In general, my motivation for supporting the Marine Science Center is The News. Every day I hear about another depressing action that threatens our environment. Many of the environmental protections developed over the last three or four decades, which are the underpinnings of a truly sustainable healthy economy, are being stripped away one by one, in spite of warnings from scientists with the best understanding of natural processes. They foresee the consequences of these actions, while it would be easy for the rest of us to believe from popular culture that technology is what supports us, not nature.

“PTMSC is one of the few surviving local environmental education organizations that tries to reconnect people with our habitat. Citizens with an understanding of basic environmental processes can vote and treat the earth more responsibly.

“Another motive for volunteering was that, like most people out here, I moved here to get away from The City, with its stress, anonymity, and crowding. Port Townsend seemed like a genuine community where people create what they want, instead of working at some tiresome job to earn money to buy it. Life here is simpler, yet more challenging, more individualistic, more socially connected, and closer to wildness. I wanted to join this community and help develop something. We PTMSC auction volunteers created something grand, twice, and drew our community together to help support environmental education. Raising roughly \$40,000 each year in such a little community is a pretty big deal. We done good!”

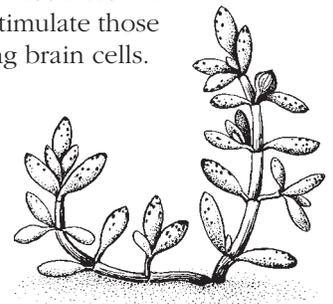
Resources for NHE Volunteers

Prospective and new docents in the Natural History Exhibit often get a case of the fantods about whether they know enough to be a docent. “I barely know any geology myself—Yikes! What if I don’t know the answer to some obvious question?”

While visitors might range from a vacationing botanist to the pre-school child who is happy banging covers on the sand samples, visitors are not expecting a personal college level class when they come into the exhibit. Many are on vacation with their families and want to relax, most will want to learn something new and see interesting things, but few will want to be stuffed with facts or expect you to know all the answers.

If you pursue those topics that you are most curious about in the exhibit, you will both enrich yourself and become a more interesting docent. You don’t have to be an expert on everything! And there will always be a staff person around who can try to find the answer to difficult and not so difficult questions.

Another way to get more comfortable being a guide in the NHE is to take the active approach and make use of the many resources available to stimulate those remaining brain cells.



Continued on page 6 ...

Resources

Natural History Exhibit Guide—This guide is especially geared to the NHE exhibit so it's the best place to start.

NHE Public Program Manual—Read through this resource for additional depth on topics that might come up in the exhibit. You might get so comfortable that you volunteer to lead a public program!

GeoPuzzle Guide—Help visitors go away with more than a memory of knobs and sliding Plexiglas. Ask about Docent Vicki Young's draft guide on the geo puzzle.

Several exhibits have guides close by, tucked under the counter or on the windowsill, including Ancient Salmon, River of Ice, and Glaciers.

PTMSC Library—As volunteers, you can borrow most books, tapes and videos from the library for two weeks. Ask and you shall receive.



Special Thanks to:

Richard Inman and **Otto Smith** who are putting in lots of time developing an inter-active bird call display.

Faithful 2006 Home Crew Members **Marcia Hartshorn**, **Suzanne Hainsworth**, **Katherine Jensen**, **Pam Gray**, **Betty Petrie**, **Chris MacLachlan**, **Kathy Combs**, **Jamie Parker**, **Kathleen Kelly**, **Bob Tyer**, **Joan Goff**, **Barbara Cochran** and **Barbara Baird**, **Barb Stone**, **Dan** and **Soozie Darrow**, and filler-inner **Sharon Schlentner**.

AJ Proutt and **Trish Walat** for managing the Gift Shop.

Seiners who helped fill our Marine Exhibit with Creatures.

Mike Morrissey for a multitude of tasks.

Sally Robbins and **Moh O'Hanlon** for helping to upgrade sound equipment.

All the Great Docents who helped through the winter and spring when things are a lot less lively.

Spring Cleaners who helped us sparkle.

Roger Wilson for building a sample box.

Sue Skubinna for donating funds for the NHE Kids' Corner furniture.

Maite for creating marine mammal stranding network display.

Sally Loken and **MaryAnn Schaffer** for on-going landscaping and weeding help.

Gray Wolf Helpers, **Patrick**, **Richie**, and **Eric** for help with home crew, beach seining, and spring cleaning.

All the other **Wonderful Volunteers** who helped in so many different ways to make this a great center!

Exhibit Volunteers—If you are interested in helping visitors explore the Marine and Natural History Exhibits, please contact Jean. Both returning and new volunteers are welcome as docents. Lots of fun, training provided.

Factoid—In 2005 more than 140 individuals contributed at least one volunteer hour to the Marine Science Center, with total logged hours exceeding 7,000. That's a lot, and doesn't even count all the hours that people forgot to log!



Looking for Fun Things to Do with Your Grandkids this Summer?



It's that time of year again, when you're planning fun things for your kids or grandkids to do this summer. What to do? Enroll them in one of the hands-on science camps at the PTMSC.

Those kids will love plunging their hands into goopy sediment to examine it under a microscope or coming face-to-face with sea creatures from the deep. Day camps at the Port Townsend Marine Science Center give kids experiential learning while they explore cool things about marine life and our natural environment.

Bones, Bugs & Bluffs Day Camp

July 31–August 4 Ages 8–12

Campers will use the Park's varied natural environments from beach and glacial bluff to forest, pond and meadow. They'll assemble skeletons of marine mammals, catch and learn about bugs, find out about earthquakes detected on a seismograph, investigate the life in a pond and make connections between fossil animals and their descendants alive today. With hikes, crafts, games and quiet times in a beautiful setting, this camp offers fun and learning. Cost is \$180.

Marine Biology Day Camp

August 7–11 Ages 9–13

Campers engage in exciting classes, labs and field programs. A few of the many captivating activities include: sieving through goopy sediments looking for brittle stars, pulling a seine net through eelgrass beds to learn where young fish hide and using microscopes to observe the "stuff" that supports all life in the sea. These activities give campers an opportunity to learn about individual groups of marine plants and animals, while taking an ecosystem approach to marine study. Cost is \$180.

Since the day camps are from 9am–5pm, it keeps them busy while you're working or, if you're a grandparent, it also gives you a few free hours to catch your breath and relax before they come back for dinner! An overnight five-day camp, July 9–15, for ages 9–13 is also available, with housing in the barracks at Fort Worden State Park.

Inspire your young scientist and create fun memories to last a lifetime!



NEW & RENEWING MEMBERS

Thanks! To our New & Continuing Members! The following folks have either joined or renewed their PTMSC membership since the Winter '06 *Octopress* was sent!

INDIVIDUAL

Mary Lou Boegehold
Ardith Cole
Dorothy Curren
Carolyn Dankers
Patricia Derouchey
Kathryn Foster
Ingegerd Hill
Nancy Israel
Katherine Jensen
Nel Jones
Barbara Lloyd
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Marilyn Muller
Ruth Neill Johnson
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Rosalyn Roberts
Sandra Robison
Nancy Shipley
Janet Thingvold
Floie Vane
D.D. Wigley
Roger Wilson

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Kippi Barbouletos
Nicole Beck
John Bodger & Seldon McKee
Karen Boegehold & Gerald Braude
Daniel Bugel-Shunra
Dennis & Carol Burk
David Christensen
Robert & Helen Cleveland
Larry & Donna Coffey
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Ginny & Bob Treche
Peter Uglesich
Maren Wetmore
George & Beth Wheeler
Keith & Catherine White
MaryAnn & Don Wilson
Hugh & Ruth Winn
Richard Wojt & Carolyn Latteier
Vicki Young
Dick Zinn

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Kathryn Edens
Mary Griep
Jim Johannessen
Heidi Sewall
Patty Siemion & Jim Beebe
Joan Thomas
Martha & Robert Van Etten

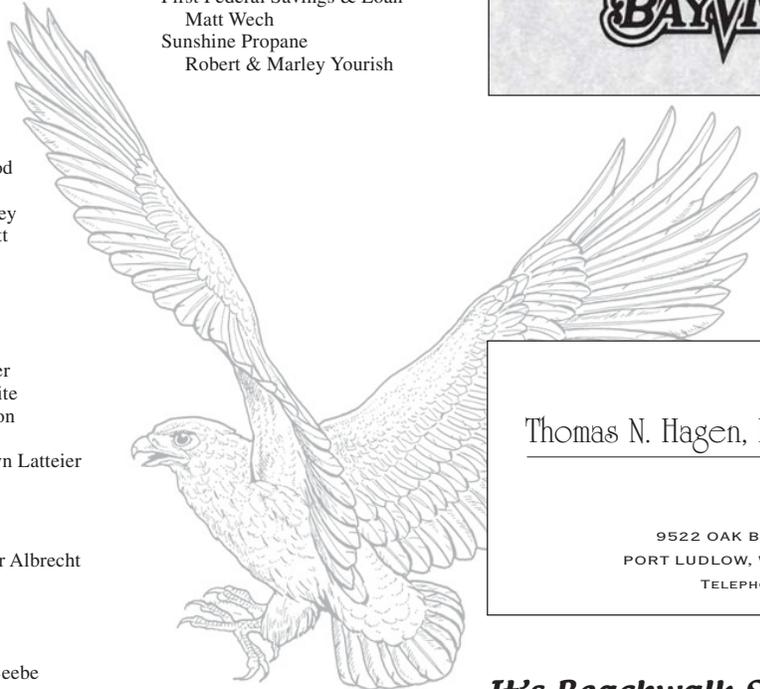
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It's Beachwalk Season!

That means summer and all sorts of interesting stuff happening between sand and surf. On the Friday beachwalks this year we can turn over rocks (and put them carefully back), peek under seaweed and wonder about the forces that make our beaches. And the best part will be sharing all this with our visitors—and a chance to do a little educating, teaching about this wonderful but fragile environment and how to take care of it. This year's beachwalks will begin around **1pm** every **Friday** from **June 16th to September 1st**. Meet at the portico of the Natural History Exhibit.

David T Chuljian, DDS, PS

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1303 Washington Street
Port Townsend, WA 98368 www.chuljiandds.com

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



EXHIBIT OPENING DAY

Wildlife Photographer of the Year—Award Winners

June 24–Sept 4, 2006

The Burke Museum celebrates summer with a new exhibit from London: *Wildlife Photographer of the Year—Award Winners*. Explore the world of wildlife photography with a full-day of hands-on activities, discussions, and demonstrations for all ages. Meet professional wildlife photographers to learn more about their art. Enjoy hands-on activities using video cameras and other equipment, make your own pinhole camera, and find inspiration while touring the new exhibit: *Wildlife Photographer of the Year*, on view June 24–Sept. 4, 2006. Call (206) 543-5590 or go to www.burkemuseum.org for more information.

**PORT TOWNSEND MARINE SCIENCE SOCIETY
 FORT WORDEN STATE PARK
 532 BATTERY WAY
 PORT TOWNSEND, WA 98368**

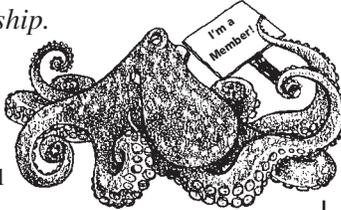
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Please mail this form to: PTMSC, 532 Battery Way, Port Townsend, WA 98368



Student & Individual

- ◆ Unlimited free admission to the Marine Science Exhibit and Natural History Exhibit
- ◆ Quarterly mailings of the PTMSC newsletter, *Octopress*
- ◆ 10% discount on all regular priced merchandise at our Gift Shop
- ◆ Discount admission to all PTMSC events: Protection Island Cruises, Speaker Series, etc.
- ◆ Reciprocal member privileges at the Burke Museum
- ◆ PTMSC bookmark
- ◆ Monthly e-mail notification of upcoming events
- ◆ Recognition in the *Octopress* newsletter
- ◆ Unlimited use of the PTMSC library
- ◆ Advance notice of programs & events

Family

- ◆ All of the above plus unlimited free admission to the Marine Science Exhibit and Natural History Exhibit for your family
- ◆ Tuition discounts for the PTMSC Hands-On Summer Science Camps

Friend

- ◆ All of the above plus 6 free admission tickets for your friends and/or associates

Sustaining

- ◆ All of the above plus 10 free admission tickets for your friends and/or associates

Business/Professional

- ◆ All of the above plus a link from our Web site to yours

Octopress Sponsor

- ◆ All of the above plus a business card ad in 4 issues of the *Octopress* newsletter

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- ◆ All of the above and recognition in the Annual Report



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