

HIGH DESERT VOICES

February 2016

News and Information published by and for Volunteers

Farmers, Warriors, Builders: The Hidden Life of Ants

by Siobhan Sullivan, Newsletter Editor



Opening day of the new exhibit about ants coincided with Free Family Day. There were many visitors at the Museum learning about these fascinating creatures. This is a traveling exhibit organized by the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History of the Smithsonian Institution. It is curated by ecologist and photographer Dr. Mark Moffett. The displays include large color photographs of different kinds of ants involved in typical behaviors. There is also a three-dimensional model of an ant and two models that show what underground nests look like. Outside of the exhibit hall, representatives of one of our local ants, the Western thatching ant, *Formicus obscuripes*, can be observed through a glass-lined enclosure.

This exhibit focuses on how ants work together to meet the basic needs of food, shelter, mating, and defense. Ants communicate with each other through chemical signals (pheromones), touch, and sometimes through vibrating their bodies. Some ants find shelter in complex underground cities while others use tree leaves, or even their own bodies, to create nests. Ants actively defend their territory using a variety



of methods. These include stingers that inject poison, powerful jaws, mass raids, ritualized combat, and patrol guards. Dr. Matt Orr of OSU-Cascades gave an engaging talk about his experiences with ants in South America. He also talked about ants found in the high desert.

Ants work together in many ways to gather food for the colony. They may be involved in group hunting, producing crops, and raising other animals for food sources. Individuals sometimes have specialized skills that are used to procure food. Their size and physical characteristics determine the role they play in the colony. In smaller colonies, worker ants may assume several roles while in larger colonies they have a specific job.

The displays include more detailed information on several species. Slavemaker ants capture and trick other ants into working for their colony. Some species such as the Argentine ant, *Linepithema humile*, are rapidly expanding their range and threaten native species. The herdsmen ant, *Dolichaderus cuspidatus*, maintains a "herd" of aphids that they harvest honeydew from. Several types of ants grow fungus gardens. Army ants stockpile food along the routes of their raids on other colonies. There are beautiful close-up pictures of each of the featured species.

The Western thatching ant observation area proved to be especially popular on opening day. Visitors wanted to get a good look at what goes on underground in a nest. The thatch of twigs, grasses, plant parts, and soil that worker ants build on top of this species' nest helps to regulate the temperature underground. Colonies of this species can number from 10,000 to 40,000 individuals. A supercolony was located in the Blue Mountains of Oregon. The 10-acre area contained 210 active nests with an estimated population of over 56 million ants!



Introducing Volunteer Jean Bennett

by Lynne Schaefer, Newsletter Writer



New volunteers may be the only ones who don't know Jean Bennett. Look in the High Desert Museum *25 Years of Memories* coffee table album in the Museum office reception area to read how Jean Bennett excelled in every Museum department since her 1993 volunteer debut.

In 1999, she earned Volunteer of the Year. In 2009, she was one of only seven volunteers since 1995 to have received the Barbara Sharp Award for Outstanding Services.

Collections presented her two awards in September 1999 in appreciation of her efforts. A large chunk of obsidian mounted on a plaque was a complete surprise because she had helped hand pick the obsidian pieces on a field trip to Little Glass Butte believing them to be for an exhibit. A miniature mannequin mounted on the other plaque is in recognition for completing a required life-size mannequin for museum costume exhibits. Painted on the base of the mannequin award is *Veni, vidi, vici*, Latin for "I came, I saw, I conquered."

However, all you'll find out about Jean Bennett in the September 2015 Volunteer Recognition program is that she donated 253 hours during the 2014-2015 fiscal year. During her 23 years of service, her hours total more than 8,000.

As a former primary public school teacher, Jean began in the Museum education department presenting programs at the Museum and visiting local schools with a bird of prey or snake. She portrayed a school teacher during history programs about the Oregon Trail.

As a wildlife interpreter, she talked about reptiles and amphibians, otters, and porcupines when they were outside in the rock enclosure.

In Living History, she guided Spirit of the West (SOW) tours; at the 1880's cabin, she portrayed neighbor Mrs. McCurdy; and during Fur Trade Encampment/Frontier Days, she interprets a Metis trapper's wife, Marie.

Jean remembers when Collections was housed in the basement and later in a leaky trailer before the new wing was built.

Vivian Adams, a Yakama Indian, joined the Museum in 1994 as Curator of Native Heritage working with Bob Boyd, Curator of Western History, to research and select artifacts for a new exhibit, *By Hand Through Memory* (BHTM). To learn more about the exhibit, Jean attended classes taught by Vivian for three years, including how to make moccasins. White Owl taught beading.

Jean attended all of Bob Boyd's field trips. Her articles about BHTM field trips to Warm Springs annual Pow Wows and Klamath Falls to learn about the Klamath and Modoc cultures appeared in previous newsletters.

She looks forward to the annual spring cleaning weeks for BHTM and SOW because they reveal additional information helpful for interpreters/guides. As a result, Jean said, "I've been able to answer all visitors' questions."

Teachers never stop learning. "You have this craving to learn more," Jean said.

She described her attempt to weave a pine needle basket. "It's an Indian tradition to give away your first basket. A young neighbor boy was thrilled to receive my pathetic little lopsided basket. He is now an adult living in Washington and still treasures it," Jean laughed.

During her earlier years at the Museum, Jean was a member of the bee trap crew, volunteers who placed and emptied bee traps in season around the Museum grounds.

She has been a frequent member of the Volunteer Advisory Council (VAC).

Jean attended and wrote about six different Pacific Northwest Docent and Volunteer Association (PNDVA) annual meetings in Canada, Washington, and Oregon. Fifteen member museums, zoos, and aquariums exchange ideas, explore subjects of mutual interest, and learn different approaches to visitor interactions. The Museum hosted the 2006 conference.

In 1993 when Jean first signed on to volunteer in several Museum programs, she said, "I was advised to focus on just one." Her eyes sparkle, and she laughs, "I did it all anyway." *Veni, vidi, vici*.

"The High Desert Museum is a special, magical place to meet people with similar interests. Everyone can find a niche here," Jean said. Her grandson, Dylan Petrescu, is a teen volunteer in special events and children's activities.

Everyone knows Jean Bennett. As we talked in the Museum reception area, those passing through stopped to ask how she was doing. A sling held her right arm motionless, the result of a dislocated shoulder from a fall just before Christmas. "I'm not in any pain; it's just inconvenient and frustrating because I'm right-handed. Poor Bob (her husband) is cook, chauffeur and dishwasher. It's harder on him. Patience is now what is required for both of us." Jean laughed, "It could be worse."

They spent a week in California with their grown daughters and family who prepared all holiday festivities for them.

Jean and her husband, Bob, were both born in 1941, nine months apart, at Alta Bates Hospital in Berkeley, California; both were baptized at Northbrae Community Church in Berkeley; they lived five blocks apart growing up in the Orinda area, but first met each other in a Spanish class at the University of California (UC)-Berkeley.

Prior to college, Jean felt special to be in the first class to enter and complete four years at the new Miramonte High School in Moraga. "Everything was so clean and new," she said. She was active in the Spanish Club and edited the high school yearbook.

Jean fondly remembers choir practice during a year she spent at Stanford. "We sang up in the choir loft. When the teacher motioned for us to stop, we listened to our echo in the chapel. It was fabulous!"

At UC Berkeley, Jean contributed to the student humor magazine, *The Pelican*.

An anthropology class peaked her interest, but she did not want to extend her studies an extra year. She recommended the subject to her sister Carol, three years younger, and sibling rivalry surfaced. Carol took her advice and earned a Ph.D. to become an anthropology professor.

Jean earned her degree in Spanish. She and Bob married after their graduation in 1963 and Bob received his draft notice for Vietnam. While he was stationed in Georgia, she sought work in Augusta. A shortage of teachers landed Jean in her first classroom of 35 farm youngsters in public school grades six-seven-eight. "I said I did not have my teaching credential, but they were thrilled to have me because I had a college degree. Spanish was not important."

When Jean returned to California, she earned her teaching credential at St. Mary's College in Moraga and taught primary grades for fifteen years in Orinda. Bob resumed work in investment real estate. After many family camping vacations in the Bend area with daughters Jennifer and Katrina, Bob moved his business to Bend and Jean began her Museum career.

She quilted baby blankets in the 1970's for neighbor children and their children's children—too many to count—and gave them all away. The king-size quilt for daughter Katrina's wedding was a task. Jean says, "Never again!"

Katrina, husband Rob Petrescu, son Dylan, 13, and daughter Emma, 10, live in Bend. Both grandchildren attended HDM summer camps and have volunteered at the Humane Society for two years. Jennifer lives in San Francisco.

When we depart, Jean delivered her baby blanket story for the tower sculpture exhibit "Art for a Nation" at the Museum this spring.

Kudos Korner

by Siobhan Sullivan, Newsletter Editor

Several staff and volunteers were thanked for their work in January. Several people mentioned how impressed they were by the work **Heather Vihstadt** put into making the *Gala at the Riverhouse* event such a success. She had put a lot of time into organizing things ahead of time so that when the event was being set up, things went well. Thanks to other staff that helped at the event. **Linda Meurer**, **Elizabeth Sirhall**, and several other volunteers were also thanked for their help. **Faith Powell** was thanked for her work on the *Tough by Nature* exhibit. It was beautifully done and people really appreciated it. Thanks to **Jonathan Brower** and **Ralph Berry** for helping collect the thatching ants from Sunriver for the ant exhibit and for keeping the ants alive until the exhibit opened. **Curt Belshaw** was thanked for handling a skid steer "like no one's business" to remove snow at the Museum. **Patrick Johnson** was also thanked for his work removing snow. Kudos to all of you!

Collections - Area Overview

by Muriel Carbiener, Team Lead



What do volunteers do behind that locked door? I think I should start with some past history. Several of us have been involved for quite a while. Before the vault and collections work area were built, there were three trailers in the staff and volunteer parking lot located near the fence above the Facilities area. The Exhibits staff worked in one, the Collections staff and volunteers worked in another, and some artifacts were stored without heat in another. The *Doris Swayze Bounds Collection of Native American Artifacts* was stored in another unheated area in the basement below *Spirit of the West*. If we were working on any of those items, they had to be carried across the parking lot, which was a challenge in the winter snow. In 1988 the Collections Vault and work area were completed. Now all of our artifacts are stored in an area that is temperature and humidity controlled, and our work area is so much better with good lighting and storage.

In order for a new artifact to be accessioned, it must first be accepted by the Board of Trustees Collections Committee, and then by the full Board of Trustees. It must be considered on the basis of

our Mission Statement. Then it is given an accession number by staff before coming to us to be processed. We examine the artifact and fill out a Catalog Form in great detail. This includes what it is made of, what its measurements are, what it looks like, where it came from, where it will be stored, and how it will be stored using archival materials, etc. A second form, a Condition Report, details any imperfections such as a tear or maybe a stain. The dimensions and exactly where any imperfections are is also noted on the Condition Report. When we handle an artifact, we wear special gloves to keep the oils on our hands from coming in contact with the artifact. We also



attach an I.D. number by sewing a tape on textiles or using a special archival glue on a hard surface. This information then goes to the volunteers who specialize in entering the information into the Museum data base, Past Perfect. Every time an artifact has work done on it, or goes on exhibit, or comes back from an exhibit, a Condition Report is done again. This also is done for any traveling exhibit that we bring into the Museum. We are an American Alliance of Museums (AAM) accredited institution which means that we adhere to the highest standards of collection care.

Then there is cleaning. If you did not clean your house for a year, it would be a bit dusty. The same goes for *Spirit of the West* and *By Hand Through Memory*. Once a year, each exhibit is shut down for a week. We use archival vacuums and archival towels for cleaning. All wool items go into our very large freezer as a preventive measure in case any little creatures have decided to nest. All these items are vacuumed before being returned to the exhibit. We do ask for help from all volunteers for this cleaning process.

In the past, a black and white photo was taken of every artifact. Today it is a digital, colored photo that is then entered into Past Perfect. We currently do not have a volunteer to do this and there are many more photos that need to be taken. If anyone is interested in this position or would like to learn more about our other volunteer positions, please contact Faith Brower, Curator of Exhibitions and Collections.



Introducing Tyson Baird, Event and Facilities Manager

by Dave Gilbert, Newsletter Writer



Tyson Baird visited Bend for the first time a year ago and took his snowboard to Mount Bachelor. He lucked out. In an otherwise meagre snow year, he found eight inches of powder and, he says, he “caught the Bend Bug.”

Back at home in California, he found that he was “always thinking about Bend,” so last June he “took a leap of faith” and moved here. Now Tyson is the Events and Facilities Manager at the High Desert Museum.

Tyson was born in Van Nuys, California, in 1978. His parents didn’t like the idea of raising a family in an urban environment, so when Tyson was six months old, they moved to Big Bear, a picturesque ski resort in the San Bernardino Mountains. His father, Tom, was a building contractor; his mother, Betsy, “made it work,” Tyson says. She owned a clothing store for a time, was a waitress, and worked at the ski resort, partly so the family could get discounted lift tickets.

Within about six years, Tyson was joined by a sister, Carly, and brother, Zack.

Tyson took up skiing and raced for his high school. He also played baseball and soccer. “Go Bears!” he says, giving a small fist pump. He also developed a love of the outdoors.

He’s a big guy, six-feet-four, and looks solid. His black hair is buzz-cut, and stubble crosses his chin and upper lip. He speaks loudly and fast.

After high school, Tyson went to California Lutheran University in Thousand Oaks, between Santa Barbara and Los Angeles. He studied Communication, with emphasis on public relations and events planning.

After graduation in 2001, he went to work nearby for Michael Epstein Sports Production, where he “caught the event bug.” The company planned and put on sometimes unusual athletic events, including something called an “adventure race,” kind of like Bend’s Pole-Pedal-Paddle.

Tyson explains that contestants combined trail running with mountain biking and kayaking.

A call from his mother informed him there was a job opening on his “home mountain,” at Snow Summit Resort at Big Bear. He couldn’t resist. He got the job and spent the next two years as the resort’s communication manager.

But then, Tyson says, he entered his “rebellious stage” and quit work for a couple of years to snowboard.

“But you can only do that so long,” he says, and he went back to work. This time, it was for AXO, a manufacturer of motorcycle clothing, boots, and gear. That didn’t last long. He found motorcycles to be “the most fun and the most dangerous.”

Next Tyson worked for four years as an admission advisor at National University in La Jolla, Calif., before he went “back home” to California Lutheran for “a few years,” in the school’s events department.

It was then that Tyson took his snowboarding vacation to Bend.

Once he relocated to the high desert in June, Tyson found two part time jobs at the Riverhouse Convention Center and at the High Desert Museum. An unattached bachelor, he says he was “lucky” to find a place to live on Bend’s west side.

“I want to make a home here,” he says, “a life...in Bend. This is where I want to be.”

He hopes his work at the Museum will become full time when spring activities begin to pick up. Tyson hopes to use events to help build the Museum, but he knows that “it is first and foremost a Museum. It is an educational facility, and finally it is an events venue.”

“What a great place to work,” he says with gusto. “I love the people here.”

The Museum volunteers, he says, “are a huge part of making this place work. I learned that in my first few days.”

Also, he’s noticed something else: the High Desert Museum has a great local reputation. “People get excited when they know I work here,” he says.

Ladies' Night Out: An Evening of Cowgirl Poetry and Music

by Siobhan Sullivan, Newsletter Editor



Every seat in the place was filled by visitors eagerly awaiting a night filled with music and cowgirl poetry. Most of the people in the audience were women. Some wore the cowboy hats and boots that are part of their day-to-day attire.

A buffet was set out and it included kabobs, fresh vegetables, local cheese, and a variety of tasty cupcakes. Local wines and beers were also served.

The *Tough by Nature: Portraits of Cowgirls and Ranch Women of the American West* exhibit was open for visitors to enjoy. Some of the visitors to this evening's event live the life portrayed in the artwork of the exhibit. They appreciated that their way of life was so accurately and touchingly captured in the art.

The local band, *Bend'N Strings*, set the tone for the evening. They played a hard-driving mix of bluegrass, country, and traditional music. This six-member acoustic band includes Museum volunteers Ralph and Elaine Berry, and staff member Amanda Berry. They strummed up a storm on banjo, mandolin, guitar, rhythm guitar, and upright bass. Soaring vocals drew the audience in and lots of foot tapping and head bobbing to the beat was observed.

Curator of Western History, Laura Ferguson, and Executive Director, Dana Whitelaw, welcomed visitors. Laura reminded everyone about the upcoming *Art for a Nation: Inspiration from the Great Depression* exhibit. She called for donations of blankets that will be included in a display by artist Marie Watt. Stories from donors about each blanket will be attached to them in the display. Dana reminded visitors that it was the last week of the *Tough by Nature* exhibit at the Museum. She noted that it portrayed the "resilience, character, and strength" of the women of the West. Dana concluded by saying that she hoped that this evening's *Ladies Night Out* event was the "first of what she hopes will be many."

Three award-winning poets read some of their cowgirl-related works to the crowd. Ellen Waterston read several poems including one about being the wife of a buckaroo in which she repeated the refrain "Ain't a heifer no more." She also read some of the work of Linda Hussa and noted that two of her books were available in the Museum's gift shop. Linda's poems included lines referring to the desert where there is "Nothing to stop your mind - it splatters out" and "Sage does its best with the perfume." The next poet was Jessica Hedges and she had a very animated delivery. She referred to cowgirls as being "Grounded and true to their roots." She encouraged people to take photos of the event and share them on social media to get more people interested in this kind of poetry. She recited poems about coming in late from cattle drives and a funny one about what happened to someone in town who broke the unwritten rule about getting too close to a pickup with a dog in the bed. She said, "Walking too close to a cowboy's bed will put you in a bind." The last poet of the evening was Carolyn Duferrena. She read a poem about trying to get a good horse but noted that "Nobody I know with a good horse takes MasterCard." She reminisced about a life in the saddle saying, "Think about the best days of our lives - most of them have been on horseback."

During Jessica Hedges' presentation, she told the story of Johanna Monahan who lived in Idaho and Oregon in the late 1800's. Johanna was a New York debutante but after an unplanned pregnancy, fled to a new life out West. She lived much of her life in the guise of a man named "Joe" and worked the mines, shepherded, and tamed wild horses. She starred in the first Western movie ever made. Upon her death in 1904, the undertaker discovered that, in reality, she was a woman. The community was shocked by this revelation. Joe had lead a successful life as a rancher and was admired by many for her determination in doing so.

After the poet's readings, they sat at a table in the lobby to sign copies of their books. There were long lines of people waiting to get books signed in support of this type of literature.

This evening strengthened everyone's admiration for the women of the West and for their role in making it what it is today.



High Desert Museum Area Updates from January 2016

by Siobhan Sullivan, Newsletter Editor

By Hand Through Memory – They are concerned about not doing an area cleaning this spring. The cleaning has been postponed. Work in the computer room of the exhibit and the installation of an entrance sign has also been delayed. An additional full-time position in Collections would help spread the workload. The group is having a meeting on February 18th at Sigrid's home.

Naturalists – Since the Nature Walks begin under the sagebrush sculpture at the front entrance, they would like there to be a plaque about it nearby. Moving the sculpture and lighting it more effectively was discussed. They recently had a team meeting. They have lost a couple of volunteers recently and are on the lookout for new ones. The team has a brand new table for their displays and will be getting a museum-quality display board. New photos will be a part of the display.

Collections – The *Hidden Life of Ants* exhibit is currently being put together and it opens on January 22. It will include some live ants. They are in need of a 1930's era couch and chair for the upcoming WPA exhibit. The tall sculpture of blankets will be a part of this exhibit. They are still in need of blankets and the time to accept donations has been extended to February 21.

Birds of Prey - They have been busy training new people. Wildlife has a waiting list of potential volunteers. Several people on the list of new volunteers have not been trained yet.

High Desert Voices Newsletter - There was a reminder to go to the blog at <http://bendbranches.com/> to view the posts on the Edward S. Curtis program that was recently in the Bend area. A post about the High Desert Museum was also mentioned.

Silver Sage Trading Center – The store has one book about ants in the store and hopes to get more. There is an audio book narrated by Grace Vandervert about the history related to their ranch. Young readers will enjoy a book about the Oregon Trail or a board book about owls. The laminated brochures about fish, birds, trees, and flowers of the Pacific Northwest have been very popular. A couple of ornaments in the shape of a rustic teapot and stewpot are available. A small High Desert Museum hoodie would be a great gift for a child. They might also like an adorable knit ladybug hat or owl-shaped purse. A cute feathered hair clip is also available.

Admissions/Greeters – The weather has been bad lately but attendance has been up. They are still receiving questions about viewing the *Tough by Nature* exhibit even though it has closed.



**Free Day
was a great
success!**

Photos by Siobhan Sullivan

High Desert Voices

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The
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2016



2016

Kitchen Patrol: Mammal/Wolf Teams

February	March - Save the Date!
3 Museum & Me. 4:00 - 7:00 pm. Free. RSVP.	3,4 Teacher Training: <i>Into the Field: Exploring Environmental Issues Through Inquiry.</i> 9:00 am - 4:00 pm. Free, \$10 refundable deposit required to reserve a spot. Pre-register at Highdesertmuseum.org/teacher-training .
6 Off-Site Field Trip: <i>Winter Mule Deer and Raptors.</i> 8:00 am - 2:00 pm. Members \$10, Non-members \$20. Registration & pre-payment required.	5 Thorn Hollow String Band. 11:00 am - 2:00 pm.
6 Thorn Hollow String Band. 11:00 am - 2:00 pm.	8 Natural History Pub: <i>Scavengers of the Sky: Cooperation in Carrion-eating Birds.</i> McMenamins. Doors open at 5:30 pm. Program starts at 7:00 pm. RSVP.
9 Natural History Pub: <i>Navajo, New Dealers, and the Metaphysics of Nature.</i> McMenamins. Doors open at 5:30 pm. Program starts at 7:00 pm. RSVP.	12 Weekend Workshop: <i>Incredible Insects.</i> 10:30 am - 12:00 pm. Paired pricing one adult & one child. Members \$10, Non-members \$15. Each additional participant \$5. Registration & pre-payment required.
9,14 High Desert Museum Staff and Volunteer Pie Social. 10:00 am - 3:00 pm. Bring a pie or taste someone else's special recipe. Drinks provided. Classroom A. Contact Amanda Berry at the Silver Sage Trading store aberry@highdesertmuseum.org .	19-26 Sky Hunters. 11:00 am and 1:30 pm. Members \$3, Non-members \$5 plus admission.
13 Weekend Workshop: <i>Snow School.</i> 10:30 am—12:00 pm. Paired pricing for one adult & one child. Members \$10, Non-members \$15. Each additional \$5. Registration & pre-payment required.	23 Kids Day: <i>Art for a Nation.</i> Free with admission.
13 Central Oregon Symphony: <i>Winter 2016 Concert.</i> 7:30 pm. Bend High School Auditorium. 230 NE 6th St., Bend. Go to www.cosymphony.com/tickets.htm for tickets.	
14 Central Oregon Symphony: <i>Winter 2016 Concert.</i> 2:00 pm. See above for location & tickets.	
15 Central Oregon Symphony: <i>Winter 2016 Concert.</i> 7:30 pm. See above for location & tickets.	
17 Lunch & Lecture: <i>The Plow that Broke the Plains.</i> 12:00 pm. Free with Museum admission.	
20 Free Day. 10:00 am - 4:00 pm.	
24 Lecture: <i>Grouse of the Lewis and Clark Expedition.</i> 6:00 pm, doors open at 5:30 pm. No-host bar. Members \$3, Non-members \$7. RSVP. To RSVP: www.highdesertmuseum.org/rsvp or 541-382-4754 ext. 241 To pre-register: www.highdesertmuseum.org/program	