

NEWSLETTER OF THE PUGET SOUND CHAPTER
OF THE AMERICAN CETACEAN SOCIETY

VOLUME 9, ISSUE 2

SPRING 2008

Next Meeting: Wed. May 21st

Please join us in welcoming our May 21st Speaker: **Jessie Huggins—“CSI: Cetacean Stranding Investigation”** Stranded cetaceans provide a unique opportunity to gain insight into cetacean physiology and health. See www.acspugetsound.org and page four for more details. See you there!

Event Information

All speaker series events meet on the 3rd Wednesday of the month at the Phinney Neighborhood Center, Room 6, 6532 Phinney Ave. N., Seattle, (just north of the Woodland Park Zoo).

Doors open at 7pm and the program starts at 7:30pm. Plenty of free parking is available in the upper and lower parking lots. Admission is free—donations to offset the room rental costs are gratefully appreciated of course as we operate on a shoestring like almost all nonprofits.

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Earth Month Education: TEK on Vashon

by Ann Stateler, VHP Coordinator

Thanks to the Vashon Artists in Schools program, fellow ACS/PS board member Odin Lonning and I were invited to several classrooms during Earth Month (April) to share Native perspective on whale conservation with Island students and informally spread the ACS message, “They’re Not Saved Yet.”

The first week of April, Odin collaborated with the Vashon High School Wood Art teacher to guide students in creating carvings in Coast Salish style. In his introduction to Northwest Coast Native art, Odin explained the importance of whales and other marine life to Coastal First Nations. He articulated the intimate connections between Native art, culture, and the natural world. Odin described his philosophy as a sustainable carver, committed to minimizing his ecological footprint while producing his artwork. Though Odin is Tlingit from Southeast Alaska, he opted to instruct students in

(Continued on page 2)



female salmon carved by Odin Lonning in Coast Salish style © 2008



Earth Month Education: TEK on Vashon (continued)

(Continued from page 1)

Coast Salish design out of respect to the First Peoples of Vashon Island, the S'homamish. A sampling of student carvings -- salmon, sea otter, wolf, and bear -- along with two pieces by Odin are on display this month at the Heron's Nest gallery on Vashon.

The accompanying photo shows a three-foot panel of a female salmon Odin carved in Coast Salish style. It served as a teaching tool for his students in the Wood Art class before going to a permanent collection in Sequim, WA with 13 other salmon he carved in multi-tribal styles.

Time-honored Native values call for inspiring the next generations to cherish nature and our animal relatives.

At the end of April, I spoke to enthusiastic fourth graders who are composing a story spanning 200 years for their Pacific Northwest History curriculum. My contribution as a Native whale conservationist was to detail two centuries of dramatic changes affecting Southern Resident killer whales and their home, the Salish Sea. My audience of emerging environmentalists and young historians was highly inquisitive and engaged. They had an inexhaustible supply of questions about orcas, other whales, salmon, and early contact between Northwest Coast Natives and immigrants from distant lands. They bolstered my hope for future stewardship of our blue planet. I eagerly anticipate a copy of the students' finished story.

Odin and I savor these opportunities to teach in our preferred modality, a multi-disciplinary approach based on traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) that integrates Native culture, art, natural history, and, yes, science!

Since 2000, we have staged our original presentation "Keet Shu-ka: An Indigenous Tribute to Killer Whales" several times at events sponsored by ACS/PS, including the 2002 ACS International Conference in Seattle -- see <http://www.acsonline.org/conference/culture2002/KeetShu-ka.html>.

We are also semi-regulars at OrcaSing, the annual summer solstice concert for the Southern Residents, where we offer a First Nations convocation to our beloved J, K, and L Pods.

Whulj
"the saltwater we know"

The Newsletter of
the Puget Sound Chapter
of the American Cetacean Society



P.O. Box 17136
Seattle, WA 98127-0836
206-734-4737

acspinfo@acspugetsound.org

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uko.susan@verizon.net
Vice President - Ann Stateler,
reletats@aol.com
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Secretary - Candice Emmons,
cemmons@u.washington.edu

BOARD MEMBERS:

Chapter Delegate: Uko Gorter,
uko.susan@verizon.net
Conservation: Ann Stateler,
reletats@aol.com

Education: Peggy Foreman,
pforeman20@yahoo.com

Fundraising Events, co-chair: Hella Cascorbi,
hcascorbi@pra.com

Fundraising Events, co-chair: Odin Lonning,
odinshark@aol.com

Grants: Stephanie Norman,
whaledoc@verizon.net

Media Jill Swanson,
mjills@gmail.com

Membership: Uko Gorter,
uko.susan@verizon.net

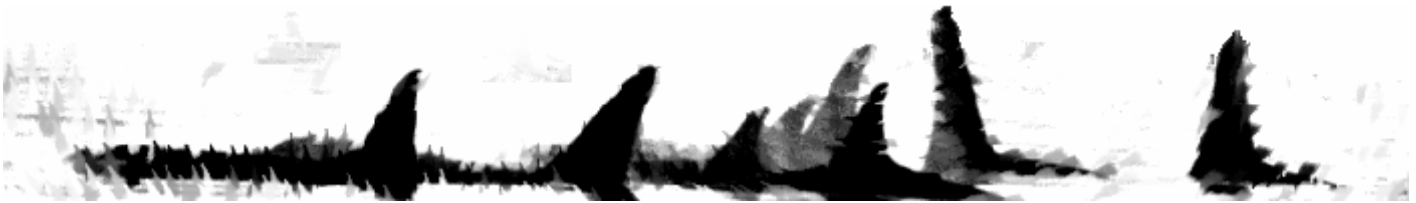
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bonnie@solv.org

Past President: Joe Olson,
joe.olson@acspugetsound.org

ACS/PS Scientific Advisors

Dr. David Bain, Dr. Robin Baird, John Calambokidis,
Dr. Marilyn Dahlheim, Dr. John Ford,
Dr. Richard Osborne, Dr. Adam Pack,
and Dr. Peter Ross

Whulj publication schedule: February, May, August, November
Editor - Diane Allen, diane@artemisComputing.com - 360-437-1303
46 Village Way, suite 171, Port Ludlow WA 98365
submissions, comments, suggestions, and questions welcomed



2008 Research Grant Awarded!

by Stephanie Norman, ACS/PS Grants Chair

Our research grant committee met last week and reviewed five proposals received in response to our call for research proposals. This year we offered one (1) \$1,000 grant to be restricted to research of Southern Resident Killer Whales within the waters of Oregon, Washington or British Columbia, Canada.

This grant was available to undergraduate students currently enrolled in a college or university and graduate students currently enrolled in, or accepted to, a masters or doctorate program who met the evaluation criteria. The research must be conducted within the waters of Oregon, Washington State or British Columbia (Salish Sea). Researchers of any nationality were eligible to apply.

There is no deadline for the completion of work; however, a brief report describing the progress/status of the research will be presented to ACS/PS no later than one (1) year after receipt of funds. This report will be featured in a future issue of our chapter newsletter, *Whulj*. In addition, the Salish Sea grant recipient will be invited to present a talk at one of our chapter meetings.

This year's recipient was Teresa Mongillo, a master's student at the University of Washington, School of Aquatic and Fisheries Sciences, who submitted a proposal titled "Accumulation and potential long-term exposure effects of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs) in the Southern Resident killer whale." She will use an individual-based modeling approach to estimate the accumulation of PCBs and PBDEs in each individual killer whale in the Southern Resident population. The current accumulated levels will be projected into the future and run under various assumptions and scenarios to predict the potential long-term effects of contaminant exposure on the population. The results of this study will provide useful information for the recovery of this endangered species.

Thank you to all the researchers who submitted proposals and to our research grant review committee. And congratulations again to Theresa on her selection as recipient of this year's award!

White House officials delay whale protection

An effort to protect the endangered North Atlantic right whale from being killed by commercial ships has languished for more than a year in part because Vice President Cheney's office and White House economists questioned the conclusions of marine scientists, according to internal documents.

The documents were released on April 28 by Rep. Henry A. Waxman (D., Calif.), who questioned why White House officials raised what he called "baseless objections" to findings by government scientists who for years had studied the dangers posed to the whale by commercial shipping.

Waxman wrote the White House Office of Management and Budget, demanding to know why the final regulation to increase protection for the whale from commercial vessels was being held up.

Only 300 to 350 of the whales remain in Atlantic waters off the eastern seaboard. At least 19 have been confirmed killed since 1986.

OMB spokeswoman Jane Lee said she couldn't comment on an "ongoing rulemaking process" but voiced confidence the process would "provide an approach that will achieve our shared goals." *Source: AP (May 1, 2008)*



Interesting Things to Do—May and June 2008

Penn Cove Water Festival 2008

The lovely, annual Penn Cove Water Festival features tribal canoe races, Native arts and crafts, demonstrations, storytelling, dance performances, artist demonstrations, authentic Native foods, children's activities, and environmental exhibits and displays.

This event will be held on **Saturday May 17**, from 11am until 6pm, in the lovely town of Coupeville, Whidbey Island.. For more information, check online (www.penncovewaterfestival.com).

ACS/Puget Sound Chapter will participate again this year with a table. Look for Uko and Susan at the ACS/PS booth. You can find us in the Coupeville Wharf underneath “Rosie”, the gray whale skeleton.

CSI: Cetacean Stranding Investigation

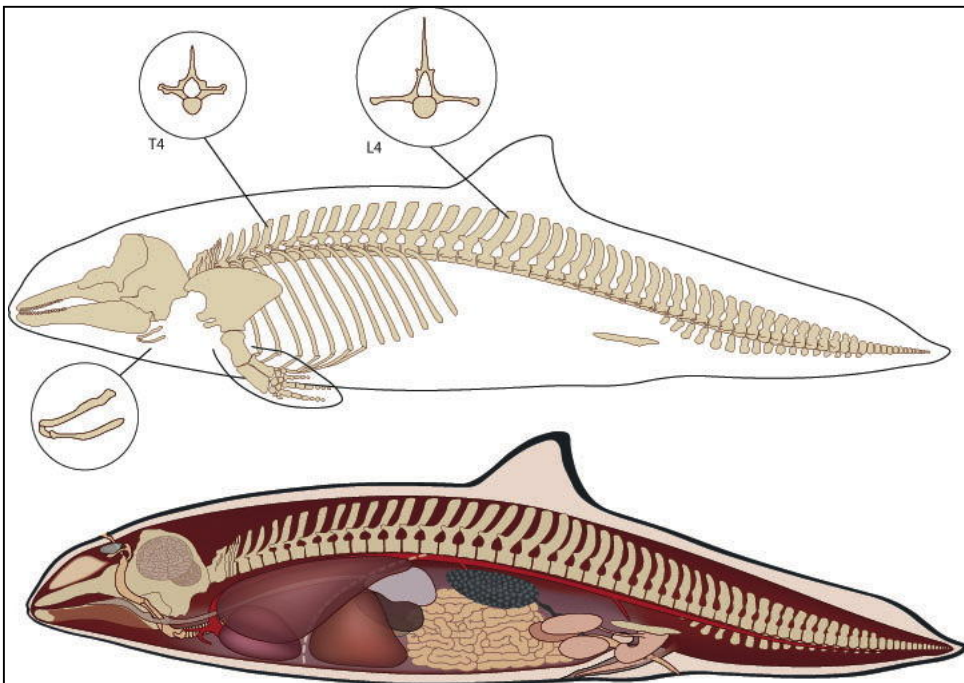
Please join ACS/PS on **Wednesday May 21st** at Phinney Center, for CSI: Cetacean Stranding Investigation with Jessie Huggins.

Stranded cetaceans provide a unique opportunity to gain insight into cetacean physiology and health.

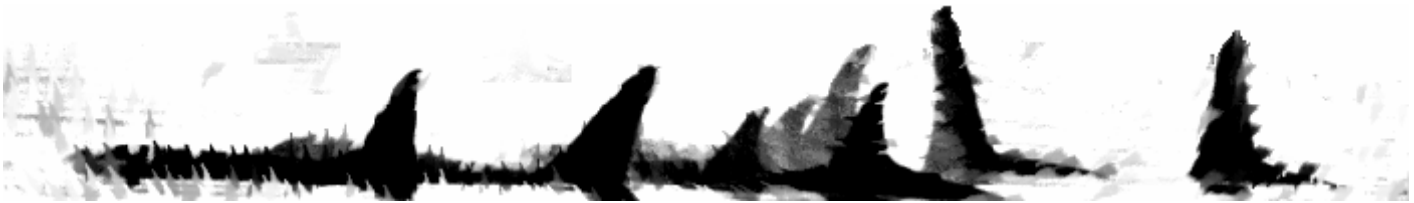
Through thorough assessment of stranded animals, we can monitor several areas of concern, including disease prevalence, contaminant levels, and frequency of human interactions.

We will discuss tools and techniques of stranding response and examination, and using the recent 2006-2007 Northwest Harbor Porpoise Unusual Mortality Event (UME) as an example, look at the collaborative efforts required for a large-scale stranding investigation.

Jessie has worked as a Research Assistant at Cascadia Research since 2004 and has been heading up Cascadia's stranding response program for over three years. She received a BS in Zoology from the University of Washington in 2001 and is currently serving as the On-Site Coordinator for the 2006-2007 Northwest Harbor Porpoise Unusual Mortality Event.



Harbor Porpoise by Uko Gorter, © 2007



Interesting Things to Do—May and June 2008

World Ocean Celebration at the Seattle Aquarium is all about Whales!

Come on down to the Seattle Aquarium on **Saturday and Sunday, June 7-8**. This weekend celebration is all about whales. Special talks and activities are planned to help you understand why whales are important to our Oceans, and how even things we do on land affect these magnificent mammals. There will be a specific emphasis on our local killer whale pods.

Our ACS/Puget Sound Chapter will be on hand with a table. Chapter president, Uko Gorter will present a slide show on Antarctic killer whales. Past chapter president, Joe Olson will give everyone an opportunity to listen to whale calls, as well as noisy human activity heard underwater.

This event is included with a regular Aquarium admission. For more information, check the Seattle Aquarium's website (www.seattleaquarium.org), and click on Event Calendar.

ACS/PS June Speaker

Join us on **Wednesday June 18th** at Phinney Center. Lynne Barre, of NOAA Fisheries, will talk about implementation of the Orca Recovery Plan. For more details, check <http://www.acspugetsound.org/speakers/index.html> in a couple weeks.

Orca Sing 2008

No doubt many of you are looking forward to the annual Orca Sing event this year. Even when our finned guests of honor have not appeared, this event remains a special one to anyone who has ever attended.

This year's Orca Sing will be held on **Saturday, June 21** (Summer Solstice). As usual, the City Cantabile Choir directed by former ACS/PS board member, Fred West, will perform for our resident killer whale pods and anyone interested.

As in previous years, the event will be held at the Lime Kiln Point State Park, near the lighthouse from 6:30pm until 8pm.

Orca Sing is sponsored by, People of Puget Sound, City Cantabile Choir, Friends of the San Juans, and our ACS/Puget Sound Chapter. Support for this event is given by the San Juan County Parks Department.

Please, carpool to the park if you can, as parking is limited. We hope to see you there.

Save the Date!

2008 ACS Conference

ACS's 11th International Conference: *Whales in a Changing World*, will be held the weekend of **November 15-16** in Monterey, California.

Final negotiations are currently being conducted with the venue. Check <http://www.acsonline.org/> for developments as they are finalized, including special hotel rates.



Peggy Foreman stepping down from the ACS/PS board

by Uko Gorter, ACS/PS President

It is not easy to say goodbye to someone who has meant so much to our ACS Puget Sound Chapter. In Peggy's case, it is even harder. Her tenure as our education chair has been an exceptional one. Peggy's enthusiasm, dedication and love for the marine environment are unmatched. Peggy, who joined the ACS/PS board as our education chair in 2003, is one of those rare gifted people with an ability to inspire others.

Unfortunately, Peggy Foreman's departure from the board is necessitated by an increasing workload and commitments. All of us understand her decision to step down in order to redirect her focus. However, it is with some sadness to see her go. Our only consolation is that Peggy will remain in the Seattle area, and –more importantly– committed to the whales and the marine environment, and we look forward to seeing her at our speaker series meetings.

Peggy, we wish you all the best with all your many endeavors. Lucky are those who work with you now.

Traditional Food Guide for Alaska Native Cancer Survivors

by Barbara Bennett, ACS National Board Member-at-Large

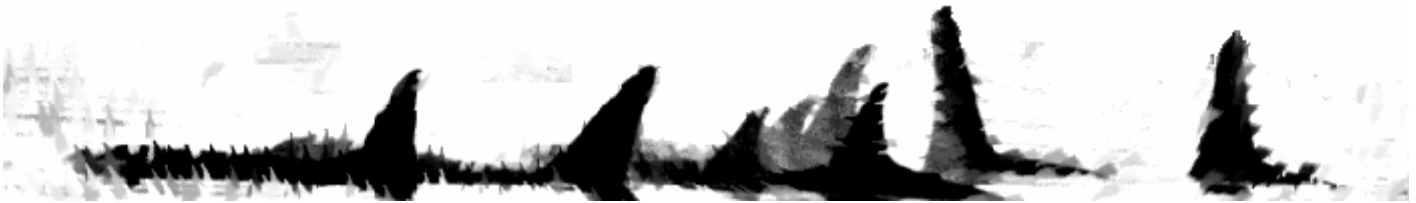
There is a new publication available, "Traditional Food Guide for Alaska Native Cancer Survivors," that gives a nutritional breakdown of Alaska Native subsistence foods. It includes everything from muktuk (whale blubber) to mouse nuts. There is additional information about the Native names for both plants and animals, things like what one serving of muktuk would be, and food preparation. An interesting tip on bird eggs that you might like to try; To test if an egg is good to eat, Alaska Natives put it in water. If it sinks, it is good to eat. If it floats, it is about to hatch and is not good to eat. One seagull egg is equal to one chicken egg and can be used in cake mixes. The guide is distributed free to Alaska Native cancer patients; sold for \$24.95 to others. For more information about the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium's cancer projects and other health research, go to <http://anthc.org/cs/chs/oahhr/Index.cfm>.



Bowhead photos courtesy Kristin L. Laidre, © 2001



The reason that this book might be of interest to non-native ACS members is in regard to the Alaska Native subsistence bowhead hunt. Some believe that Alaska Natives can easily switch from a subsistence diet to a more conventional diet. Aside from the extremely high cost of getting things like hamburger, milk, or veggies into bush villages where there is no running water, the cost of gas is \$10 a gallon, and the average income is well below the poverty level. Alaska Natives have a cancer rate that is much higher than in the white population. With 400 new cases diagnosed each year, it is the leading cause of death among Natives in Alaska. Research indicates that a shift of diet, from subsistence foods toward processed, convenient ones, may play a role. And not just in higher rates of cancer, but diabetes, obesity and other health issues that are hitting the Native community hard.



New ACS Executive Director to start in June

by Uko Gorter, ACS/PS President

We are happy to announce that we have found an Executive Director for ACS National. As some of you may know, the national board has invested a great deal of time looking for just the right person. Our new director, Sandra (Sandie) M. Phipps, hails from the New England area, and brings with her an enormous amount of experience managing non-profits and raising funds.

Sandie, who has a Master of Sciences in Environmental Studies, describes herself as being passionate about cetaceans. This is evident in the number of vacation field experiences with whales and dolphins in the Dominican Republic, Mingan Island, and the Bahamas, among other places.

Her credentials are impressive. Prior to coming on board with ACS, Sandie was the Executive Director for Giving Monday in New Hampshire. The press release they issued when announcing her resignation was glowing with praise for her efforts.

Sandie will start with ACS on June 2nd, giving her some time to relocate and settle into her new job.

We (ACS/PS) are very excited by this development, and look forward to working with Sandie.



Illustration
of
Beluga Whale
by
Uko Gorter
© 2003

Cook Inlet Belugas

by Barbara Bennett, ACS National Board Member-at-Large

A grant has been obtained that will allow Barbara Carlson (from the Cook Inlet Keeper, see www.inletkeeper.org/) to put together a group of observers stationed at various points along the Cook Inlet in order to start counting whales for the census this summer.

Photo ID isn't possible with belugas because they lack a dorsal fin and they shed annually.

Business interests and government officials, including Gov. Sarah Palin oppose the endangered listing because they fear it will hurt industry.

One of the potential factors being looked into is great white shark predation! Great white sharks aren't supposed to be this far north but last summer I heard a report from one of the ship pilots of a great white shark on the other end of his halibut line. Then last summer another great white shark was photographed in the Cook Inlet.

The belugas usually start showing up in May but the Eulachon are running so I've heard of a few sightings this month. The official census will start mid-May and continue through next September. The census last summer indicated that the population is still declining.

AMERICAN CETACEAN SOCIETY



Puget Sound Chapter
P.O. Box 17136
Seattle, WA 98127-0836

www.acspugetsound.org
info@acspugetsound.org
206-734-4737

address label

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SAVE THE DATE—Wednesday May 21st

Please join us at 7pm at the Phinney Neighborhood Center, Room 6 (just north of Woodland Park Zoo)

Jessie Huggins with Cascadia Research —"CSI: Cetacean Stranding Investigation": Stranded Cetaceans provide a unique opportunity to gain insight into cetacean physiology and health.



Photo courtesy Mark Sears © 2002 All Rights Reserved

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