

Getting the whole Mono Lake Committee staff all together in one spot at the same time is more difficult than one might think. It takes a pretty special event, and some advance planning to make it happen—and it did, this year, for the first time I can remember in a long while.

It happened down at Mono Lake itself, County Park to be specific. It was a beautiful warm day, and after coaxing some staffers away from their work, we, all together, walked down the boardwalk, through the tufa, to the viewing platform overlooking the lake (see photo page 26). There's nothing like a walk down to the lake to shed worries about deadlines, issues, and to-do lists, and by the time we got to the end everyone was smiling, relaxed, and happy. As we stood there, looking out at the rapidly-rising shoreline and listening to the birds and the quiet Geoff asked us to share our memories of our very first visit to this spot. Smiles turned to grins as people reached back in their memories—some back 16 years, some just last year—and we went around the circle telling our stories. Some folks remembered walking clear around the big tufa mound 150 yards out in the lake, some remembered pulling up the old boardwalk, and some remembered exactly where the lake level was at this time last year—all were excited to share their piece of history with this place.

This connection with Mono Lake is the thread that ties the Mono Lake Committee staff together, and to the 15,000 members we serve. This connection is why people come back year after year, making their own personal pilgrimages. It's why we keep the Information Center & Bookstore open year-round. It's why we produce the *Mono Lake Newsletter*. It's why we lead countless education programs. It's why we put in long hours, attend numerous meetings, and go the extra mile to make things right. It's why we dream about Mono Lake's challenges at night and wake up with new ideas in the morning. In short, it's why we're here.

Summer is a great time for connecting with Mono Lake—if it's your first time here, or your 100th. Come, see the glassy water, listen to the gulls as they circle overhead, smell the sagebrush, walk, paddle, float, sit, enjoy, experience, connect. There are memories to revisit and new memories waiting to be made here. May this *Newsletter* serve to jog those memories and inspire new ones.

—Arya Degenhardt, Communications Director



COVER PHOTO, MONO LAKE TUFA & BOTTLE BRUSH, BY JOEL ST. MARIE

ARYA DEGENHARDT

County Park and the Mono Lake Tufa State Reserve boardwalk are great places to visit.

Mono Lake Committee Mission

The Mono Lake Committee is a non-profit citizens' group dedicated to protecting and restoring the Mono Basin ecosystem, educating the public about Mono Lake and the impacts on the environment of excessive water use, and promoting cooperative solutions that protect Mono Lake and meet real water needs without transferring environmental problems to other areas.



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Founded by David Gaines in 1978

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