

The word was out—it's time to ice skate! Watching the skies (and the local "Dweeb Weather Report") for snow was no use—clear and cold. Because it doesn't happen every year, you almost forget, but then suddenly someone walks in the back door with an ice report ... three inches, solid, smooth, clear ice on Lundy ... Trumbull ... Silver Lake.

It's a bit like an unexpected holiday. With Tioga Pass closed, the sun on its winter route, and the possibility that it may snow at any moment, you've got to just get out there when you have the chance. Snow debates turn to shoe-size discussions and everyone scrambles for a pair of ice skates.

I like to skate in the early morning. You start off mostly looking down—it is fascinating to see the lake below the frozen surface. Bubbles get trapped in other-worldly shapes in the ice, cracks are both neat and slightly freaky, and you may catch a glimpse of a fish darting by. And then you look up, and I swear it happens every time—"Wow." Surrounded by steep canyon walls, breathing the crisp clean air, soaking up the quiet—it's too good to be true.

What is it that happens in that moment? We've all had it at some point in our lives, and many of us have had it happen at Mono Lake. It's hard to find adequate words to follow-up on "wow." In this issue of the *Newsletter* we're attempting to do just that. Mono Lake inspires something within us—something strong enough that it motivates us to protect it. See if you can find it in the pages that follow.

And so, this is a symbolic raising of the glass (of water, of course) to Mono Lake Committee members and friends, cohorts in this journey to protect this place that we love. Here's to Mono Lake!

—Arya Degenhardt, Communications Director



COVER PHOTO, SUNRISE, PHIL LINDSAY

ARYA DEGENHARDT

Early December ice on Parker Lake.

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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