



Sierra Nevada AmeriCorps Partnership

“Serving the Sierra”



SNAP Monthly News

May 2007



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Quotes of the Month

“You make a living by what you get, but you make a life by what you give.”

-- Winston Churchill”

“Everyone can be great, because everyone can serve.”

-- Martin Luther King, Jr.

Quick Links

- SNAP Shots (Flickr)
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I. The following is a reprinted letter from Maria Shriver, First Lady of California, thanking AmeriCorps members serving in California for their service to the state and nation during AmeriCorps week.



May 14, 2007

Dear California AmeriCorps members,

As you celebrate the first ever National AmeriCorps Week, I want to extend my deepest gratitude for your commitment to *Getting Things Done* for California. I have always believed that one of California's greatest resources is the diversity of people who call the Golden State home. You are a shining example of what it means to be a Californian.

My father, Sargent Shriver, who was the founding director of the Peace Corps, once said, “Begin to look less at yourself and more at each other.” Thank you for looking beyond yourself and for your service to improving the lives of those around you. You are true architects of change!

As your year-long service commitment comes to a close, I hope you will continue to seek out ways to stay engaged with your community. No matter where you live in California, you can log onto CaliforniaVolunteers.org and get connected with volunteer and service opportunities that match your interests.

I wish you all the best in your future endeavors.

Warmest regards,

Maria Shriver



Left: *The Greatest American Hero* was a short-lived 80's TV show in which an ordinary teacher is visited by aliens, who had decided to endow him with superhuman powers to fight the battle against injustice and crime.

II. With Nary A Superpower

By Do Lee

The first-ever AmeriCorps Week occurred during May 13-20, 2007 and marked a historic milestone – this spring, the 500,000th AmeriCorps member took the pledge to “get things done for America.”

I am not a hero. The elderly Kazakh woman collecting fares on the mini-bus proclaimed loudly “He’s a hero!” Concealed underneath my Russian-style shapka hat and non-descript black winter coat, I should have blended in with the local populace in Kazakhstan. However, the Kazakh woman recognized me as I had organized a free environmental summer camp for 60 city and regional kids, including this particular woman’s daughter, Aigul. Due to economic and opportunity obstacles, many of the kids who came to our camp (7 hours away by bus) had never been in a forest before. Aigul, a bright and conscientious young Kazakh teenager, was the driving force behind a local eco-club for schoolchildren. She did this despite never having been to the woods or mountains. She stood out at camp as an environmental leader and for her infectious excitement at being at camp and in the woods. All of which ultimately led to the scene on the crowded mini-bus as Aigul’s mother outed me as a non-local and making unbelievable claims of heroism.

No, I don’t rescue babies from fiery buildings, I don’t fly (although I dream about it), and I don’t make cool climate change presentations around the world like Al Gore (and Helena Rodriguez!). If you’d like to see some real environmental heroes, take a look at the stories of the Goldman Prize winners – those who have sometimes endured prison, threats, and even life and limb for their communities. Upon reflection of the Kazakh woman’s words, I started to wonder about who I really am, if not a hero.

Before traveling to Kazakhstan, in 1998, my uninspired work consisted of long hours slaving

away under fluorescent days with Petri dishes full of bacteria as my unwilling conversation partner. One night, I got into a long conversation with a woman about to join the Peace Corps. It all sounded beyond the life of an uninspired lab tech. The next day in the *SF Bay Guardian*, there was a little ad for an informational meeting about joining the Peace Corps. Thunder crashed and stars exploded in my head. It all finally made sense. I lay down my pipeter and lab coat, walked down the hall, and joined the Peace Corps.

So yes, the Kazakh woman had it wrong; I am not a hero, but rather a volunteer much like all of you AmeriCorps members. For us, providing service to our communities is the norm – not random acts of heroism. We restore degraded landscapes, monitor critical waterways, and teach others to be better environmental stewards because we are all volunteers at heart and that’s what we expect of ourselves. Because volunteers do great things without expectation of awards or financial windfall, it is perhaps not surprising that there are those who confuse heroism with volunteerism.

We care - this is what unifies all of us in SNAP, our care to go out to our communities and make a difference. We all choose to not be a generation trapped by the office coffeemaker staring blankly at Styrofoam cups of lukewarm coffee, not even caring enough to vote. I was one of them until the day I learned to say freely and proudly that I do care for clean air and waterways, fairness and equity, and a better world. This is why we celebrate AmeriCorps Week – to declare clearly who we are and that we care enough about our communities and our planet to act and to inspire others to “Serve the Sierra.”

Still, I will always remember the moment in that capacity-filled (and more) mini-bus in the middle of the bone-chilling steppes, when Aigul’s mother mistook my volunteerism for heroism. One could easily do the same for all of you SNAP members. But the reality is so much better - people like you, me and others strive to make a difference daily without the aid of super-strength, x-ray vision or fancy climate change powerpoints.

Happy AmeriCorps Week!

Peace,

Do Lee
SNAP Regional Coordinator

III. SNAP News Recap

- **Juniper Elizabeth “Buckethead” Suarez-Brand Born!!!** On June 6, 2007 at 11 AM, Megan gave birth to a 6 lb 4 ounce new SNAPer!
- **SNAP Goals Tracker by April 30:**
 - Restored Habitat Goal: 1700 acres**
To Date: 30 acres
 - Ecological Monitoring Sites: 212 sites**
To Date: 104 sites
 - People Educated: 16,800 persons**
To Date: 6758 persons
 - Volunteers Engaged: 2165 persons**
To Date: 1381 persons
- **SNAP Mid-Service Training in Springville!** A very big thank you to Gary Adest for his hospitality at River Ridge Ranch and for setting an example of a sustainable ranch in the beautiful Tulare foothills. It was great to see everyone and hear all the awesome service stories. And everyone had a great time at Restoration Day with the students of Granite Hills High School where we planted trees and did maintenance for a wilderness corridor!!!



Photo: SNAP and Granite Hills High School on Restoration Day at River Ridge Ranch in Springville, CA.

- **SNAP Logo Finished!!!** Check it out at: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/7409610@N08/522190783/>
- **Happy AmeriCorps Week!** All of the SNAP members celebrated AmeriCorps Week with many fun and interesting events. To read about some of the activities around AmeriCorps week, check out these news articles:
 - South Lake Tahoe SNAPers: <http://www.tahoedaily-tribune.com/article/20070517/NEWS/105170064>
 - Nevada City SNAPers: <http://www.theunion.com/article/20070517/NEWS/105170208>

IV. Upcoming Events

- **Sierra Nevada Alliance Annual Conference!!!** August 3-5, Location: North Tahoe Conference

Center, Kings Beach. For more info and to register (for non-SNAP members), check out: <http://www.sierranevadaalliance.org/conference/>

Sierra Nevada Alliance ASnnConference Summary: *What is Sustainability?* The answer depends on who you ask. WalMart, the federal EPA, Wikipedia, and hundreds of other entities all have different takes. The goal of this year's conference is to explore what Sustainability means for Sierra conservation. More importantly, what must we do to ensure the Sierra qualities we all love are here for future generations. Sustainability often encourages better stewardship of the environment, along with efforts to achieve economic stability and shared social objectives. Sustainability requires that institutions – groups, agencies, businesses and others -- sustain their stewardship efforts because sustainability is an ongoing process. Sustainability also requires some capacity to anticipate and analyze trends that have implications for the future. An awareness of the environmental consequences of social, economic and technological changes is critical for making better-informed strategic decisions about our conservation work in a rapidly changing world.

Come to our Annual conference and explore Sierra sustainability issues around local energy, community planning, forest health, water management, watershed stewardship, and wildlife preservation. Explore what it will take to grow and sustain grassroots efforts throughout the region. And as the tradition, come meet other great leaders, have some fun, get inspired, and leave with new tools to make a difference.

- **SBC's State of the Sierra Regional Conferences coming to your area July 9-19th!!!** The Sierra Business Council and the Sierra Nevada Conservancy announce the upcoming release of the State of the Sierra report. The report and regional conferences will explore key data trends and includes investment opportunities to achieve a sustainable future for the Sierra Nevada.
 - Workshops are occurring in Mammoth Lakes, Lake Isabella, Sonora, Auburn, Lake Tahoe, Reno, Susanville, and Sacramento. Contact SBC for more information. You can register online at <http://www.sbcouncil.org/>
- **Out of the Classroom, Into the Community:** Free workshop by SWEP at the Sagehen Creek Field Station (just outside beautiful Truckee, CA) on June 28-29, 2007.
 - Understand and apply the components of service learning in your classroom
 - Understand how to identify, coordinate and assess service learning projects at school and in the community, including developing successful community partnerships
 - Begin to assess, select and apply the most effective educational resources

SNAP Upcoming Events Cont'd

- Learn techniques to engage youth and develop youth voice and leadership
- Design a service learning action plan for your grade level or after school program, integrating required grade-level standards
- Take your service learning practice to the next level

For more information or to register, contact Christine McMorrow at christine@4swep.org or 530-525-9457.

- **Tahoe Environmental Research Center (TERC) Docent Training!!!** Host: TERC, June 11, Location: TCES, Incline Village. This is the last of their

4-6 session (2 sessions are optional) volunteer docent training. Each session has a different focus and SNAP members are welcome to attend any or all the sessions. Contact: Heather Segale at TERC, 775 881-7562, hmsegale@ucdavis.edu

- **BIRTHDAYS!!!!** Recent and Upcoming SNAP Birthdays:

- Do Lee: May 11
- Helena Rodriguez: May 20
- Megan Suarez-Brand: May 31
- Sol Henson: June 3
- Juniper Elizabeth "Buckethead" Suarez-Brand: June 6
- Katy Sater: June 25

V. Poetry by Noel Kroeplin

A View

Far below
misty falls
flow over valley ridges
layers of clouds
upon ocean
lie
like vast
Antarctic plains
stretching
further
than forever
illuminated neon
by a sun
that's been waiting
for this moment
all day
to set.

How can you look at me like that and only look?

I can feel
Your eyes searing my skin
Everytime
We are together
until I am nothing
but a pile of ashes
that you feel the need
to blow away
repeatedly

Today

Today
the sun burned
two horizons
into the sky
and onto my brain
light and dark
a storm is on the way

Hungry Like A Wolf

Full moon karaoke
on a
Monday night
whiskey
doesn't make you
sound any better
but you keep on trying
anyway
with your painfully
bad
music.

NowHere

(previously published in Rattlesnake Review #15?)

Three
and a truck
going nowhere
in particular
unexpectedly
escaping
to winding
gravel roads
sprawling hilltop fields
dense ocean views
late night
freezing cold
dew
Early morning
fresh brewed coffee
salty air
tender
juicy
strawberries
in seas
of perfectly
whipped cream
and everything else
they can find
that feels like
the freedom
of disappearing.

SNAP

On the wrist
rubberbands
from newspapers
and asparagus
a reminder
of all the things
I should be doing
but I'm not
Because all I can do
is gaze
out the window
at another day

Last Call

(previously published in Cocktails & Confessionals chapbook anthology)

It's 2am
and the night is full
of fresh opportunity

bottles of wine
phone calls
to people
on my list

It's 3am
and the evenings
opportunities
are waning

wine drunk
calls unanswered
telephone
remains
silent

It's 4am

and I am responsible
for keeping my own bed
warm tonight



VI. Hello Heather James!

Site: Central Sierra RC&D

Location: Jackson

Q. Where did I grow up?

I was so fortunate to grow up in the awesome town of Point Pleasant, NJ. I spent most of my childhood days on the beach, it didn't matter what season it was, and I loved the beach in all weather. We lived near an inlet to the Barnegat Bay and I used to lay in bed on stormy nights and listen to the fog horn guiding the fishing boats home. The sound of a fog horn to this day is very comforting.

My father occasionally had to travel for work so I spent some time living in North Aurora IL, Scottsdale AZ, and Phoenix AZ. My father, a native New Yorker, fell in love with AZ and eventually left us to go live there. This is how I wound up out west. When I was 23, my mother had passed away and I was ready for a change so I loaded up my car and headed out to Phoenix, AZ. I was not enjoying desert life and had plans to head back east when I met Dale, my husband now for 11 years. Here I find myself perfectly content to be out west and not very close to the ocean, love is a funny thing.

Q. What is my favorite hobby?

My favorite pastime these days is painting. I had a childhood passion for drawing that was packed away in some mental file for many years. About 7 years ago I decided to take out some paints and I have not stopped since. If you're ever in Pine Grove, Mark's favorite town, stop by the folk art center and you can see some of my works.

Q. What is my favorite SNAP moment?

Well, there are so many rewarding moments for me when I'm working with children it's hard to pick just one.

Q. What is my most challenging SNAP moment?

This may sound redundant but it has to be filling out those darned forms.

Q. What is my favorite Quote?

"May you be in heaven a half hour before the devil knows your dead" Old Irish Saying.

Q. What is my favorite place I've traveled to?

I have traveled to many places, different countries, many states, but I will have to say my very favorite place is Trinidad CA. I absolutely love that town. It has an awesome camp ground called the "Emerald Forest". You feel as though you are in a fairy tale forest with giant ferns and costal red woods, and the biggest bonus is that you are a short trail walk to the most beautiful beaches I have ever seen. They have a light house trail around Trinidad Head, a cove full of fishing boats where you can watch Sea Otters searching for scraps, and wonderful tide pools in which to find many creatures. For all of you visitors to California, the north cost should be on your list of places to see, Trinidad is about 30 miles north of Eureka.

Q. What is my favorite childhood memory?

It has to be Christmas. Do I need to say anymore about that?



Above: "Rooster Cogburn" by Heather James



VII. Getting To Know Sol Henson!

Site: Friends of Deer Creek

Location: Nevada City

Sol Henson was born and raised in Nevada County and has recently returned from his studies in Davis California. He graduated from UC Davis in 2006 with a masters degree in hydrology with a water quality emphasis. Past projects at UC Davis included studies on eutrophication (nutrient pollution) and phytoplankton (free floating algae) quantification on the San Joaquin River in California's Central Valley. As an AmerCorps member with Friends of Deer Creek, Sol is participating in an EPA Brownfields assessment to determine the impacts of abandoned mine sites on the water

quality of Deer Creek and its tributaries. Also, he is coordinating restoration efforts to remove non-native English Ivy and plant native species along the trail between the Stonehouse Restaurant and Pioneer Park on Little Deer Creek. His primary motivations for joining Friends of Deer Creek as an Americorps member are to participate in sound science within a community involved setting and to work in the field experiencing the beautiful surroundings that Nevada County has to offer.

Q. Where is the favorite place that you traveled to?

Escalante National Monument with its outstanding navajo sandstone and sweet canyon names such as Peekaboo, Spooky, and Death Hollow.

Q. Describe a funny experience you had while hiking or camping:

I waded through a lake in southern Utah and had to pick about 50 leaches off of my legs



VIII. Chatting With Katy Sater!

Site: Placer Land Trust

Location: Auburn

Q. Where did you grow up?

I grew up in Livermore, CA which used to be a Podunk little town with one restaurant and not much else.

Q. Where did you go to college?

I graduated from UC Santa Barbara, but I started at University of the Pacific and then went to CC for a year to transfer.

Q. What are your favorite hobbies, sports, or fun activities?

I enjoy many outdoor activities, including but not limited to road biking, swimming, hiking, reading, traveling, gardening, exploring, surfing.

Q. What is your favorite moment in SNAP?

When we do baseline documentations often I am privileged to see properties that the vast majority of the public doesn't know exist. During one of our latest out-

ings I was lucky enough to hike through a blue oak woodland that exhibited few or no invasive species and also included a rare lily. On the same property there is also a breathtaking view of the Sierra that makes hiking through difficult terrain and poison oak worth the effort.

Q. Your most challenging moment in SNAP?

Learning that sometimes results don't immediately show themselves, and often times conducting business and planning for the future is nearly impossible because you are at the mercy of other peoples timelines and what for you may be a priority is not necessarily someone else's priority.

Q. What is your favorite quote?

I have two favorite quotes, and to me they go hand in hand. The first is a Hunter S. Thomson quote "Life should not be a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in a pretty and well preserved body, but rather to skid in broadside, thoroughly used up, totally worn out, and proclaiming... WOW - What a Ride!" The second quote is from Mark Twain and it is "Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn't do than by the ones you did do... Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover."

Q. What is something that no one else in SNAP knew about you (until now)?

I bowled competitively for UCSB my senior year in college.



IX. Meet Katie Hergenrather!

Site: Eastern Sierra Land Trust

Location: Bishop

Q. Where did you grow up?

On the Columbia River, in the self-proclaimed wind-surfing capitol of the world, Hood River, Oregon, where we had an abundance of pears, tourists, and people too cool for school!

Q. Where did you go to college?

Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo.

Q. What are your favorite hobbies, sports, or fun activities?

Dressage. Designing, installing, and preaching sus-

tainable landscapes. Mountain and road biking. Poaching as much free food and warm water as possible. Exploring, getting lost, trespassing, and meeting strange and interesting people (usually in that order! Ha).

Q. Your favorite moment in SNAP:

Watching Do, Genevieve and Joan “boogy-down!”

Q. Your most challenging moment in SNAP:

See answer to previous question.

Q. What is your favorite quote?

Isaiah 55: “Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare... You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and hills will burst into song before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands. Instead of the thornbush will grow the pine tree, and instead of briars the myrtle will grow. This will be for the LORD’s renown, for an everlasting sign, which will not be destroyed.”

Q. Where is the favorite place that you traveled to?

Mal Pais, Costa Rica



X. Hanging Out With Noel Kroepin

Site: South Yuba River Citizens League

Location: Nevada City

Noel Kroepin is a recent Wisconsin–California transplant. She may be exotic (???) but she has no plans to overcome the natives. Noel is an environmentalist with an existential twist. She often disputes the existence of time and uses it as a justification for her extensive tardiness.

Noel isn’t sure how she ended up where she is now but she knows it took seven years as an undergraduate to get here. She tested multiple majors including philosophy, geology, math, psychology and sociology before settling on geomorphology. Rivers sooth her

(and in their frozen state, glaciers) so it seems to be the appropriate field. In the future, Noel plans to save the world environmentally and socially while getting paid to write poetry. For now she’s content to spend her free time naked on the Yuba River. If you’re lucky, you’ll run into Noel in her usual haunt, the middle of nowhere.

Q. What is Noel’s favorite quote?

“Show me a sane man and I will cure him for you.”
--Carl G. Jung

Q. What is something that no SNAP-per knows about Noel?

I don’t think anyone knows this, but I used to cry every day on the school bus when I was in first grade thanks to a kid named Jeremy Turner who was a jerk and put gum in my hair. It would take about an hour for the bus to drop me off and my inability to handle my emotions in relation to the frequent harassment I received on the bus led to semi-frequent stoppage of the route so my parents could pick me up in the middle of nowhere. Explains a lot, eh?



XI. In The Words of Eric Martin

Site: South Yuba River Citizens League

Location: Nevada City

Eric Martin: A multi-faceted character

I grew up in the Bay Area about 25 miles south of San Francisco and first gained a love of natural places when my best friend moved out of town and back into the coastal hills outside of Half Moon Bay with his family. Since then I have loved to immerse myself in the woods and jump in cold rivers and creeks whenever possible.

In 2001, when I was 19 years old, I moved away from my hometown in the Bay Area to live in Northern Humboldt County, CA where I spent the last 5 years of my life. Just recently I completed a Bachelor's Degree in Art at Humboldt State University, with a focus in ceramics. Working with clay is one of my most favorite things in the world.

The day after completing my degree at Humboldt State University I received a service position offer from the South Yuba River Citizen's League (SYRCL) in Nevada City through the SNAP program, and I was stoked to have an occupation working with the natural environment directly out of college.

I love to sleep outside during the warm season, I'll eat just about anything, I love coffee and sleeping in late whenever possible. I subsist almost entirely off of granola, brown rice, seaweed and mildly fermented oat pudding. In a former life I had evolved two sets of gills on either side of my neck and spent my days poking about in the Amazon,

feasting on piranhas and parasitic worms. Back then, I was known as "YuktiTashivana," which roughly translated from the Original Underwater Language, meant "The One who Shakes and Wiggles."

In this lifetime, my Personal Soul-isophical Consultant tells me that my Soul's Character will be most fulfilled by a lifetime dedicated to "spreading healing love energy to all beings from the focal point of a boundless, kaleidoscopic mandala of light and joy," which is somewhere deep in the grey-matter of my brain. And, of course, by living a life balanced masterfully between the poles of reckless hedonism and selfless sainthood.

So I play records and C.D.'s daily, enrich myself by dabbling in a seemingly contradictory mix of socio-cultural conventions and un-conventions, enjoy my share of quality crafted beers (Blue Ribbon and "High Life" not discluded), cultivate a self-fulfilling altruism towards others, waste countless hours contemplating nothing in particular, indulge in eccentricities and attempt to keep my gaze on what I perceive to be the grander scheme of things.

I love my family and relatives to whom I owe everything. I keep to myself often and often surprise people by spontaneously revealing undetected aspects of my personality at moments of least expectance. And this makes me a ninja "of the mind." FYI: you can add "of the mind" to any noun or pro-noun and it will become noticeably cooler.

All in all I strive to function as a moderately even-keeled, down-to-earth kind of guy, so one should not take my sense of the absurd too seriously. Essentially, I am a very sincere jokester, a shape shifter of sorts. And that's me in a nutshell. Oh no, I'm stuck in a nutshell, somebody help me break out of this thing!!

XII. SNAP Shots

Want to share some of your photos? Remember that we have a shared SNAP Flickr site where all SNAP members can share their photos: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/7409610@N08/>

Please refer to the instructions (login, password) about how to upload photos. Contact Do Lee if you need help to upload photos.



Photo: The Tule River in Springville at dusk.



Photo: Sarah Pitzer, SNAP member at UC-Davis Tahoe Environmental Research Center, gives a presentation on *How to ID Sierra Birds*.

Please do share your photos on the Flickr site, as we know that you all have wonderful photos from your service and communities! Thank you!

XIII. Tips & Resources Monthly Tip on How to Live Green & Cheap Eco-Friendly Alternative to AAA

(Information from: <http://www.betterworldclub.com/>)

Looking for a eco-friendly and affordable option to AAA? As you may know, AAA has a long history of opposing eco-friendly transportation options and initiatives.

One option is the Better World Club and their business mission reads as:

"Better World Club, Inc. is dedicated to balancing economic goals with social and environmental responsibility. Better World Club supports a cleaner environment and alternative modes of transportation. We will provide our customers with high quality, good value and environmentally sensitive products and services:

- Emergency Roadside Assistance
- Travel Products and Services
- Insurance Products and Services

Importantly, we act as an advocate on behalf of the consumer and demonstrate our social and environmental commitment by donating an amount equal to 1% of our annual revenues toward environmental clean-up and advocacy and by providing unique eco-friendly travel alternatives."

In addition, they offer emergency roadside assistance for bicyclists. So if you want to switch to an eco-friendly AAA option, check out the Better World Club prices, they're comparable to AAA.

If you would like to share tips, resources, websites, and post-SNAP opportunities, please send them to Do Lee, do@sierranevadaalliance.org by the 20th of every month.

For any questions or contributions, please contact:
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