



Hetch Hetchy Happenings

In Yosemite National Park

Vol 6, No. 4

Winter 2007

RHH in the Sunset District of San Francisco

by Tuan Nguyen, RHH San Francisco Field Director



Tuan Nguyen, Restore Hetch Hetchy's San Francisco Field Director, gives a PowerPoint presentation to the Sunset Neighborhood Coalition.

As Restore Hetch Hetchy continues to gain traction in San Francisco, I have great faith that our grassroots effort is having an impact in the court of public opinion. I have been doing presentations to numerous neighborhood organizations within the City. For example, I recently did a presentation for the Sunset Neighborhood Coalition. They were very interested to learn about Hetch Hetchy Valley and the opportunity available for its restoration. There is a growing sentiment that it is feasible to restore the valley, and I am hopeful these clubs and organizations will endorse our calls for a comprehensive study. In our latest public outreach

opportunity in San Francisco, some volunteers and I tabled the 13th Annual Sunset Community Festival on September 29th. Angela McClure, Micah Allen, Damian Quilling, Mimi Ng, Jed Chan, and Madeline Morten donated their time to promote Restore Hetch



Front row, left to right: Damian Quilling, Mimi Ng, and Tuan Nguyen (RHH's San Francisco Field Director) Backrow, left to right: Micah Allen and Angela McClure

Hetchy. The RHH team continued to draw more people's attention to the issue by talking with residents, and by passing out membership brochures, buttons, and bumper stickers. These volunteers provided great insight and knowledge for possible new members to draw on since they are from the City and know the history behind the inundated valley. They also signed up several dozen people in support of our efforts. We assured people attending the festival that

our goal is to obtain a "win-win" solution for City residents and for Yosemite's Hetch Hetchy Valley.

I was also pleased that the *Sunset Beacon* newspaper's September issue published a front page article about our effort to restore Hetch Hetchy, and it had quotes from me and from RHH Executive Director, Ron Good.

I will continue to push for more outreach opportunities and bring Hetch Hetchy's message to concerned San Franciscans. If you live in San Francisco, or other places in the Bay Area, please contact me if you'd like to volunteer in our grassroots outreach! E-mail me at: tuan@hetchhetchy.org



RHH volunteers (left to right) Damian Quilling (with the megaphone), Mimi Ng, and Madeline Morten (sitting at the table)



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It Could Have Been Different...Part II

Dr. Robert W. Righter

In the early 1900's, there were a number of opportunities to save the Hetch Hetchy Valley. In the Summer newsletter, I wrote how Secretary of the Interior Ethan Hitchcock took a brave position in 1903 by denying San Francisco the right to dam the valley. He reasoned that his job was to protect the resources of Yosemite National Park, and certainly the magnificent Hetch Hetchy Valley was one of them. Other options, he argued, for water were open to the city.

Now I would like to explore the effect of the most important event in San Francisco history: the Earthquake and Fire of 1906. The earthquake struck early on the morning of April 18, 1906. Buildings fell, power lines separated, gas lines broke, and, of course, water mains ruptured. After four days of fire, the heart of San Francisco lay prostrate. No one could be blamed for the earthquake, but many believed that the fire was the result of an inadequate water supply; which leads to the connection with Hetch Hetchy.

As one can imagine, there was great sympathy across the country for the broken and charred city. Relief supplies poured in, and city leaders resurrected the Hetch Hetchy water plan. Powerful people embraced the plan. One was Gifford Pinchot, head of the United States

Forest Service and the confidant of President Theodore Roosevelt. Pinchot was always in sympathy with San Francisco's desire for Hetch Hetchy, and after the disaster he wrote City Engineer Marsden Manson that he would "stand ready to render any assistance which lies in my power."

Another powerful person was James R. Garfield, Roosevelt's new secretary of the interior. Pinchot and Garfield were good friends, and no doubt Pinchot influenced the president in his choice. Now Pinchot advised Manson to reapply for a permit for Hetch Hetchy, stating that "my advice to you is to assume that his [Garfield's] attitude will be favorable . . ." Manson quickly took the hint and in May of 1908 Secretary Garfield authorized the city to proceed with its Hetch Hetchy plans. With the "Garfield Grant" the way was clear for San Francisco to begin construction.

However, by a quirk of fate the Hetch Hetchy issue fell into the halls of Congress. There the Sierra Club, the Appalachian Club, and the Society for the Preservation of National Parks made serious inroads into the "Garfield Grant" assumptions, stressing the beauty of the valley and its national park status through testimony, pamphlets and a letter writing campaign. It paid off. Getting the valley might not be as easy as the city fathers anticipated.

But we must review just a lit-

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tle more politics. When William Howard Taft became president in 1909 his choice for secretary of the interior was Richard Ballinger. Both Taft and Ballinger were sympathetic to the Sierra Club position. In fact, Taft asked that Muir be his guide on a tour of Yosemite Valley, and shortly after that trip the intrepid mountaineer accompanied Ballinger on a horse excursion to the Hetch Hetchy Valley. We can be sure that Muir was at his most persuasive as he argued and pleaded for Hetch Hetchy. Ballinger was won over, and Muir wrote William Colby that "all seems coming our way, and the silly thieves and robbers seem at the end of their scheme."

Muir's optimism was warranted. By the end of February, 1910, Ballinger ordered San Francisco to "show cause" as to why the Hetch Hetchy Valley should not be deleted from the Garfield grant. In essence, Ballinger reversed the Garfield grant, demanding that San Francisco officials prove that the Hetch Hetchy Valley was essential to their water needs. Muir was ecstatic, writing Ballinger that "all the right-minded people throughout the country and particularly out here, are rejoicing over the stand you have taken for the preservation of our National Parks." For the valley defenders the "show cause" order was the high point of their fight, and as historian Holway Jones




Dr. Robert Righter (right) was awarded the Hal Rothman Prize by the Western History Association (WHA) for his book, The Battle Over Hetch Hetchy, America's Most Controversial Dam and the Birth of Modern Environmentalism. Dave Edmunds, WHA President (left) and Kevin Fernlund, WHA Executive Director (middle), present the prize. This new prize was awarded for the best western environmental history book of 2005-2006, and is named in honor of Hal Rothman who died tragically of ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease) last year. Dr. Righter had mentored Hal when Hal was beginning his career as an environmental historian several decades ago and remained Dr. Righter's friend throughout his life. Dr. Righter's book can be ordered using the form on page 7 or online at www.hetchhetchy.org

noted, "it appeared that the fight was won and that nothing... could stem the tide of victory."

Many believed that the city would gracefully withdraw, leaving the valley and the flow-

ing Tuolumne for future generations to enjoy. But wealth, power, and sympathy engendered by the 1906 earthquake were not easily dissuaded.




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RHH Executive Director, Ron Good (left) and RHH Advisory Committee member, Kay Pitts (center) met with Chris Stein, Chief of Interpretation for Yosemite National Park (right), to discuss interpretive opportunities to educate Park visitors about Hetch Hetchy Valley. Thanks to the leadership of Park Superintendent Mike Tollefson and Chris Stein: new seasonal interpretive rangers did programs at Hetch Hetchy last summer and will again next summer; the map on the Yosemite Today newsletter that is handed out to Park visitors at all entrance gates has information about Hetch Hetchy and the Grand Canyon of the Tuolumne River; and, a new Hetch Hetchy brochure that mentions John Muir and Native Americans, and has hiking trail information is being handed out to Park visitors at the Hetch Hetchy entrance gate.



Wildnesswithin.com

was created in 1998 by environmentalist web designer Robert Brower in partnership with his father, conservationist David Brower. The website promotes the principles of conservation, preservation, and restoration of the Earth's natural resources. It is also a tribute to the late David and Robert Brower. Both David Brower and Robert Brower were avid supporters of the Restore Hetch Hetchy movement and were members of the Board of Directors.

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MEET OUR VOLUNTEERS - DENNIS POTTENGER

In a late, undated, journal fragment, John Muir wrote of his transits through wilderness: "I only went out for a walk, and finally concluded to stay out till sundown, for going out, I found, was really going in."

In working to restore the Hetch Hetchy Valley, literary journalist Dennis Pottenger has discovered that Muir was right: the journey into wildness mirrors the interior adventure we undertake to connect with the life of our soul – that wild terrain within that we come to know only through inner practice and the courageous cultivation of our own consciousness.

"As a boy I was deeply nourished by wilderness. Yosemite has always felt like home to me. I look up at the granite and feel somehow comforted by the stark tall rocks. I feel engaged by the animals and touched within by the sky and the cold water that leaps from the shoulders of the cliffs and rushes through canyons carved by glaciers. No longer a boy, I believe I am being asked now to tend the psychic relationships that exist between the creatures and things of our world – to facilitate, in particular, interaction between the psyche of nature and the human psyche.

"What is being asked of us now is to create an alignment between natures, between souls in persons and soul in the world. Because only when there is communication between human beings and the creatures and things of the world will human institutions be responsive to the beauty and splendor that is nature's dream."

Dennis grew up in Sacramento. His father was a music teacher. Every summer his parents would pack up the trailer and travel. Interestingly enough, the family never visited Yosemite. Dennis didn't make his first trip into the park until he was in his mid-thirties, when a magazine hired him to join a group of executives on a hike to Half Dome. "It was late, almost midnight, when we got to the park," Dennis remembers. "We stopped the car and stood there in the



middle of the road in the moonlight looking up at El Capitan. Then we looked off to the east, up into the Yosemite Valley, where Half Dome stood brooding in the shadows. I knew right then that Ansel Adams was right: somehow, a large granite mountain speaks in silence to the core of our being."

Dennis first heard about the effort to restore the Hetch Hetchy Valley in the summer of 2004. Tom Philp, an Associate Editor at *The Sacramento Bee*, would later win the Pulitzer Prize for his series of editorials exploring ways to meet the water and power needs of San Francisco, the Bay Area and the Central Valley of California in ways that *don't* involve flooding Hetch Hetchy. "Up to that time," Dennis says, "I had been disapproving and cynical about how politics in our country goes about doing whatever it takes to keep the engine of capitalism running. But then I read Tom Philp's editorials and I realized what I had been doing: As our industrial culture marches forward, irreparably damaging the environment, I had retreated into apathy and non-action in a bid to avoid confronting the threatening reality that human beings are quickly destroying the planet we live on. Reading those editorials shifted something in me. I realized that I am responsible for what happens to the

Earth, and that if I don't like the way things are being done then it's up to me to do what I can to change them. I went to Restore Hetch Hetchy's website, got the address, and mailed in a check for \$25. When Ron Good emailed back to thank me for my donation I asked him how I could volunteer. Soon after that I was standing behind a table talking to people about restoring Hetch Hetchy."

Indeed, the next summer, Dennis helped staff the Restore Hetch Hetchy outreach table in Yosemite Valley. He has testified at legislative hearings and traveled as far north as Ashland, Oregon in support of the Hetch Hetchy cause. These days, he continues to help staff Restore Hetch Hetchy outreach tables at events throughout Northern California. He has also developed a popular PowerPoint presentation which examines the history and politics that got Hetch Hetchy flooded. He is currently at work on a book, *Rape of the Well-Maiden: Depth Psychology, God, and the Wounding and Healing of the Hetch Hetchy Valley*."

"In restoring the Hetch Hetchy Valley," Dennis says, "what we are up to is contributing to the shift from a fear-based paradigm which values profit and political power more than qualities like soul and love and reverence for nature. In order to build a respectful and sustaining relationship with the natural world, consciousness is going to have to shift. Politicians like Dianne Feinstein need to recover a sensibility that is informed by an awareness that human beings are born out of the rhythms of nature, and to destroy nature's psyche – as we did at Hetch Hetchy – is, ultimately, to end our own. In the end we are not only working to redeem a wounded place. We are helping remake the wholeness of a fractured world."

GIFT IDEAS

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Movie



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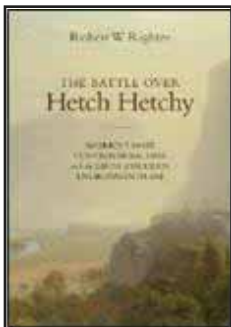
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Book



The Battle Over Hetch Hetchy:
America's Most Controversial Dam and the Birth of Modern Environmentalism
 by Robert W. Righter **\$20.00 Donation**



This high-quality matted poster of the beautiful painting by Brooks Anderson that is featured on our website is our latest tool to help spread the word to **Restore Hetch Hetchy! \$40.00 Donation**

Posters



This is a quality poster of the rare Bierstadt painting of The Hetch Hetchy Valley housed at the Wadsworth Athenium. Size: approximately 30"x 40". **\$20.00 Donation**

Music



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We cannot guarantee delivery by December 25 so order early.

Please Use Our Website Catalog To View the Items Described Below at www.hetchhetchy.org.

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- Please renew my membership in Restore Hetch Hetchy. *The expiration date of your membership is located near your name and address on page 8.***

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Hetch Hetchy Waterfalls
& Wildflowers

The expiration date of your membership is located near your name and address at the bottom of this page. To renew, please use the form on page 7, or go online to our website, www.hetchhetchy.org, and click on "Join or Renew" and use the secure Network for Good system.

SOLICITATIONS FOR SUPPORTING RESTORE HETCH HETCHY

The Board of Directors and staff of Restore Hetch Hetchy wish to thank sincerely our over 2,000 members for their very generous financial support for our movement to restore Yosemite National Park's Hetch Hetchy Valley. As a grassroots, 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, we depend on your tax-deductible contributions to allow us to continue our work for Hetch Hetchy Valley. **We ask for your financial support only three times a year:** membership renewal, spring special appeal, and year-end appeal.

However, we do send out monthly reminder letters to those of you who haven't gotten around to renewing your annual memberships! Renewing your membership on a timely basis would help us tremendously, so that we don't have to go to the expense of sending the reminder renewal letters.

Thanks again for all of your wonderful support for Hetch Hetchy Valley, the place John Muir called "a grand landscape garden, one of Nature's rarest and most precious mountain temples."

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