

NEWSLETTER



Fall 2003

ROOKIE LEGISLATOR BOOSTS OSO BUILDING PROJECT



First year California Assemblymember and OSO Advisory Board Member John Laird has provided a much-needed boost to the renovation of OSO's marine education center at the Santa Cruz Harbor.

OSO is working with the Port District on a \$2.8 million upgrade of the O'Neill Building, which was built by OSO Board Chair Jack O'Neill in 1966 and donated by O'Neill and his business partner Harry Hinds in 2000 along with a \$250,000 gift for building renovation.

The Santa Cruz Port District owns the land on which the building sits, and has granted OSO a 25 year lease for the upstairs portion of the building after renovation. Devcon Construction has been chosen as General Contractor, and Gary Garmann will continue as project architect, and Mark Mesiti-Miller will continue as project engineer. The renovations began October 1st.

Working with the California Coastal Conservancy, Laird has recommended that the critical last piece of funding - \$150,000 for disabled access to the upstairs education center - be secured with Conservancy funding.

In addition, Laird urged the Conservancy to provide \$13,000 for temporary facilities for OSO's education center on the west side of the Harbor, and \$87,000 to make up for rental revenue that will be lost to OSO during renovation.

"John's advocacy for O'Neill Sea Odyssey and the thousands of kids we serve was critical to our survival during these tough economic times," said OSO Executive Director Dan Haifley. "John's involvement, though, should be a surprise to no one. He has devoted his life to California's coastline, to protecting the ocean environment, and to educating California's youth."

Laird, who previously served as Santa Cruz City Councilmember and Mayor and Cabrillo College Trustee, was involved with OSO before his election to the State Assembly in 2002. He hosted and emceed an OSO event in honor of his predecessor, Assemblymember Fred Keeley, who had secured nearly \$500,000 in park bond funds for the education center. John also lobbied Governor Gray Davis on behalf of OSO, and had lobbied to secure a new 25-year lease for OSO's share of the building.
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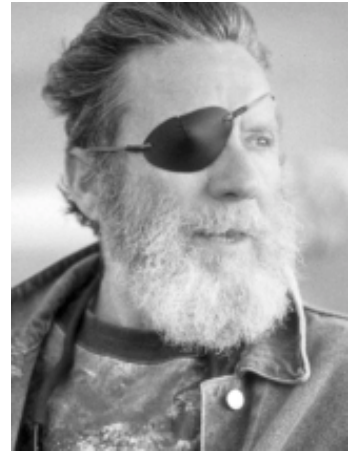
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SECURING THE FUTURE

By Jack O'Neill, Chair of the Board; O'Neill Sea Odyssey

Nearly two years ago, I stood side-by-side on the upstairs deck of the O'Neill Building with then-Assemblymember Fred Keeley, facing television cameras and news reporters who were there to hear Fred announce that Governor Gray Davis had approved \$472,000 in state bond funds for renovation of the O'Neill Sea Odyssey (OSO) education center.



As I spoke to the news reporters, I made a comment that was later quoted in the news reports. What I said was, spending money on kids today, will save money on prisons tomorrow. I meant it then. And I really believe it now.

My family and I have devoted over a million dollars to the O'Neill Sea Odyssey program since 1996. We are very grateful to those very generous donors who have helped us keep the program going. We believe that together, we have made a difference in the lives of the over 23,000 kids we have served. Will our program be able to reach the next 23,000 kids? How will we secure our future?

With the construction of our new education center and the provision of means to provide rental revenues to O'Neill Sea Odyssey for the next 25 years, OSO will focus on securing its future through the development of an endowment.

An endowment is a fund established through generous gifts from individuals. Those gifts are left in the fund, which over time will grow to a point where OSO's program will be able to draw upon its earnings for its operational needs. The principal funds themselves will not be used.

One method of raising funds will be the use of planned gifts. These gifts may involve funds transferred to a fund, with its earnings yielding benefits to the donor until her or his passing. At that point, the fund will benefit the program. There are also variations on this concept that may be utilized.

Future generations will benefit from this effort. Stay tuned for more details.

OSO MOVES TO TEMPORARY QUARTERS

As demolition and reconstruction starts on our building and education center, O'Neill Sea Odyssey (OSO) is moving its program to a temporary trailer on the west side of the Santa Cruz Harbor, adjacent to the Coast Guard auxiliary building.

The trailer will be located near F dock, where the Team O'Neill catamaran is docked, for easy access and operation. This will allow OSO to continue serving kids while the building project is underway.

So, if you are looking for OSO from October 2003 through the end of construction, you can find us by taking Seabright Avenue towards the ocean, turning left on Atlantic Avenue, then turning left on Mariner Park Way. Go down the hill, and follow the boats, until you find our trailer next to the Coast Guard Auxiliary building.

CONTRIBUTORS

Fitzpatrick Foundation / City of Scotts Valley / Cisco Systems Foundation / Starbucks Coffee Company
City of Capitola / Santa Clara Valley Water District / City of San Jose / Scott Kennedy / The Westly Family Foundation
Team O'Neill / The David and Lucile Packard Foundation / Brad. D. Wiles, Attorney at Law / Gunter & Edelgard Heine
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Zarina & Leah Kosinovsky / United Way Silicon Valley / Betty Webster

LEGISLATION WOULD ESTABLISH CALIFORNIA OUTDOOR EDUCATION FUND

What if the State of California established a funding mechanism, using privately raised contributions, to support outdoor education? What if the State tapped the ability of the State Department of Education to select, monitor and evaluate outdoor education programs?

The Sierra Club Youth In Wilderness Program asked these questions, and found someone to convince California's legislators and Governor Gray Davis to provide positive answers.

California Assemblymember and OSO Advisory Board Member Joe Simitian (D-Palo Alto), worked with the Sierra Club to write Assembly Bill 1330. On August 18, the Senate Appropriations Committee voted 7-4 to approve the bill, which sent it to the Senate and Assembly for final votes before it reaches the Governor's desk for approval.

The Sierra Club Youth In Wilderness Program has funded O'Neill Sea Odyssey's collaboration with the City of Oakland and California State Parks, to serve over 600 low to moderate income Oakland youth for an overnight, land to sea ocean and watershed program.

Assemblymember Simitian's bill:

- 1) Establishes the Outdoor Environmental Education Program to foster stewardship of the environment and an appreciation of the importance of wise use of natural resources,
- 2) Requires the State Department of Education to administer the program and to select organizations to implement the program that must:
 - a) Serve at-risk youth and underserved demographic groups.
 - b) Encourage collaboration with other entities in the provision of services.
 - c) Serve a minimum adequate number of participants.
 - d) Commit a minimum adequate amount of resources to the program.
 - e) Promote outdoor educational activities.
 - f) Provide a curriculum that fosters stewardship of the environment and an appreciation of the importance of the wise use of natural resources.
 - g) Include service learning and community outreach components for the purpose of building partnerships between local participants and local communities.
- 3) Requires the State Department of Education to evaluate the program and submit a report to the Legislature on its findings and recommendations no later than February 1, 2005.
- 4) States that this article shall be implemented only if all costs of the program and its evaluation are funded with private donations. *(continued on page 4)*

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(OSO Building Project...continued from front page)

In other building renovation a development, the US Coast Guard has agreed to provide space on property it owns on the west side of the Harbor free of charge for OSO's temporary classroom. OSO staff faced a huge task in moving its operations to the Harbor's opposite side, in redirecting classes and community centers it serves to the temporary facility, and to help relocate building tenants.

(Outdoor Education Fund...continued from Page 3)

OSO Executive Director Dan Haifley spent time in Sacramento this summer with Assemblymember Simitian and Sierra Club Youth In Wilderness lobbyist Martin LeBlanc to promote AB 1330.

California Assemblymembers who have supported AB 1330 include John Laird, Simon Salinas (who is also an OSO Advisory Board Member), Rebecca Cohn, Manny Diaz, Sally Lieber, Abel Maldonado, Wilma Chan, Loni Hancock, Mark Leno, Gene Mullin, Lynn Daucher, and Simitian. California State Senators who supported the bill include John Vasconcellos, Bruce McPherson, Jeff Denham, and Byron Sher.



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