

Watershed Education Flows Anew

by Brooke Wright & Julie Miller



Julie Miller demonstrates the Tiny Town

For the first time since 2019, the fourth and fifth grade classes from Westside Elementary returned to The Ranch for a Watershed Education Field Trip.

Sporting their wellies and rain jackets – it was yet another wet winter day – the children were split into groups and guided through four morning rotations:

- A demonstration of water ecology and possible sources of water pollution using a model city that was donated to The Ranch by Rick Kaye, and affectionately named “Tiny Town.” Tiny Town has a pump to push water from the mountains through the tiny town infrastructure to the ocean to enable a better understanding of how a watershed works.
- An art project where the children crumpled butcher paper to mimic mountain ranges and speculated where water would flow. They marked these areas with blue marker, and then misted their mountains to watch where it did flow.
- An opportunity to write and produce a “televised” Watershed Public Service Announcement, which included weather reports, descriptions of the water cycle, and interviews with a macro invertebrate!

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Begin Again

Aaron Wright, Executive Director



Spring has sprung at The Ranch. Thanks to record rain, the hills are the greenest I've seen in my six years at The Ranch. The vineyards are experiencing bud break. The ancient apple trees in Gina's

Orchard are full of blossoms. Wild turkeys, ducks, geese, and birds of all feathers are mating and establishing nests. A Great Blue Heron has been a frequent visitor to the front pasture. Everything is so alive and vibrant.

During this season of newness, I've resumed the practice of enjoying the sunrise for a few minutes to start my day. As I pause to take in the beauty, I remember these meaningful words a dear friend and neighbor has painted in her living room: Sunrise: a time to begin again.

Sunrise at The Ranch is one of the most beautiful sights to see. Many of you agree because you often share your photos with us! I'm finding the symbolism of beginning again – and again – to be exceptionally relevant this spring. Each sunrise breaks through the darkness with that promise – that we get to begin again.

I recently had the great honor of attending a memorial service for the Reverend Joe Pummill held here at The Ranch. Joe and his wife Phoebe were appointed the first managers of The Bishop's Ranch in 1983 after the Franciscan brothers left. They served The Ranch until Phoebe became ill in 1987. I knew this piece of Joe's life and had spent a little time with Joe and his wife Doris when they visited The Ranch over the last few years. But what struck me most about the stories shared by family, friends, and people who worked with Joe at The Ranch were the threads of love and hospitality and how he began again and again – in new

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On The Trail “Oh, Look!”

A Regular Column by Greta Mesics



A student examines wild Ranch mushrooms

“Oh, look!”

So often, when I am roaming and exploring on The Bishop’s Ranch trails, I want to tell somebody about what I am seeing. Sometimes that urge to say, “Oh, look!” is directed at a particular person. Maybe a naturalist friend, perhaps one of my children, or maybe my Dad — who is long gone from this Good Green Earth but to whom I still turn to report extraordinary joy and good news.

And, often, maybe most often, I want to say, “Oh, look!” to my students.

I am an elementary school librarian when I’m not out on the trails. My students are young, grades TK - 2. There are more than 200 of these delightful, curious children. I always see something on the trail that I wish they could see. I want to take them all wandering with me. Not only because The Bishop’s Ranch is a marvel and would be a wholly novel experience for many of my students, but also for myself because my students see so much more than I see.

Hearing my students say, “Oh, look!” and seeing what they see that I may have missed would be like what I experience daily when I read aloud and wait to hear what the children see, hear, and ask that never occurred to me.

“Oh, look!” Rocks, flowers, grasses, hills, birds, otters, paw prints, clouds, rain... mushrooms! I saw mushrooms all over the trails this winter and wonderfully wet and green spring. So many. So often. So beautiful.

“Oh, look!” I found myself looking at them everywhere, week after week, as they morphed and grew. I looked at them from above, from below, on my knees, and through my camera lens.

And then one Sunday afternoon, as I wished again and again that I could say “Oh, look!” to my students, I had an idea. Fungi are portable. What if instead of that impossible 200-kid field trip to The Bishop’s Ranch, we had a very possible “reverse field trip?” And, so, I began to collect fungi right off the trails that afternoon.

On Monday morning, the mushrooms — packed in jars and boxes — went to school with me. The following week our library lessons, recess time, art observations, and conversations were focused on the visiting mushrooms plucked from the trails at The Bishop’s Ranch. The children were fascinated and insisted on using magnifying glasses and pencils to examine and prod the fungi more closely. They asked questions about the smells, the shapes, and the definition of mushrooms. They wanted to know about names, edibility, and whether fairies and gnomes lived in and under the broad, umbrella-like examples.

And then an amazing thing happened.

“Oh, look!” Children began to find mushrooms on our school campus. They found lichens, tiny brown mushrooms, Turkey Tails, Milky Caps, and more. Every day, they made me look, and look, and look. They found mushrooms where I walked daily and had never looked before. They found mushrooms at home. They saw mushrooms in all the places we adults never bother to explore. Just when I thought I was taking The Ranch to my students, they took the lessons learned on the trails of The Bishop’s Ranch further than I ever thought to go.

“Oh, look!” What a miracle!



Fantastic fungi found at The Ranch

Resurrection Font

by *The Rev. Liz Tichenor*



Baptismal Font at Church of The Resurrection

Many years ago, a member of our parish, Church of the Resurrection, Pleasant Hill, built a baptismal font covered in tile mosaic. It was lovely, but had run its course, and we began dreaming about what might come next.

I had a vision for something more natural and started searching hillsides and the internet alike for chunks of interesting wood. While on a vestry retreat, some of us noticed a downed tree trunk in the heart of The Ranch. Beautifully burlled and aged, we all had the same thought, "this could be our font!"

The Bishop's Ranch graciously agreed to give us this wood, and Facilities & Land Manager Matt Kissmann shared his expert chainsaw and tractor skills to help us harvest a perfect section of wood and load it up on a truck.

Once back in Pleasant Hill, our parishioner and master woodworker Myron Backhaus began the work of figuring out how to turn the tree trunk into a font. This was no small feat with such an irregular, twisting, tilting piece of wood! He was able to level it, build feet for stability, and add pegs to hold a bowl.

We had our first baptisms with the new font at this year's Easter Vigil, and are so grateful to be connected to the wider Ranch Community in that celebration of the Body of Christ.



Rev. Liz Tichenor and Myron Blackhaus

Begin Again (continued)



places, with new ministries, and new people many times over throughout his 96 years.

The Ranch was the beneficiary of Joe's love and ministry of hospitality not only in the four years he served as manager, but far beyond. Joe advocated for The Ranch not to be sold during his time as manager. He and Doris had their first date here; they visited over and over again, and are proud supporters and Acorn Society members. Two of our beautiful chapel windows also pay tribute to the Pummills. We all can say thanks to Joe for The Ranch we know today. He left a legacy of love and hospitality.

We can also take a cue from Joe's life and commit ourselves to start each day over and over again with love and hospitality. In this issue of *Coming Home* you will read several stories of *Beginning Again* – a fallen tree given fresh life, the return of our watershed education program after a three-year dry spell, and how one man's tenacity gave The Ranch new life several times throughout his long tenure as a Ranch advocate.

I hope you'll join me in a commitment to *Begin Again* and again and again. We're embracing this practice at The Ranch – with each guest, group, program, and camp – beginning again with love and hospitality.

And, I also hope you'll come to experience a Ranch sunrise very soon.

Acorn

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Coming Home

A newsletter about life at
The Bishop's Ranch

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Contact us to update
your contact info and
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advancement@bishopsranch.org

A Lifetime of Advocacy

by Joan Griffin

My father, Dr. Marty Griffin, a long-time supporter and board member, has a notable history with The Bishop's Ranch. During the early years of Marty's medical practice in Marin, he was asked to look in on Bishop Karl Block, the Episcopal Bishop of California, who was recuperating from a heart condition. They became friends, and Bishop Block told Marty about the sixty-four hilltop acres on Westside Road in Healdsburg that the church had obtained as a retreat facility. The property was part of the former 8,000-acre White-O Ranch, made up of hills, forests, and creeks abundant with Steelhead and Coho Salmon. Marty fell in love with the area. He purchased the adjacent ranch in 1961, restored the hops-drying barn, registered it as a California Historic Landmark, and established the Hop Kiln Winery.

Meanwhile, during a time of rampant developer-driven growth, The Ranch retreat center for the diocese had floundered after Bishop Block died, and there was talk of selling. In 1985, it was proposed that the lands of The Bishop's Ranch be sold to create a county garbage dump. Designated "high priority" by the County, Public Works officials were to use their power to condemn the Griffin Ranch, the Russell Ranch, and The Bishop's Ranch and bulldoze the rolling hills and bury Griffin Creek in a long trench for a "sanitary landfill." The County only dropped the proposal after a long-fought battle with neighbors, and the city of Healdsburg showed how the landfill could cause irreparable watershed damage and pollute the drinking water wells at Wohler Bridge on the Russian River.

For years Marty had been working diligently to help protect all Northern California rivers and waterways, including the Russian River, against gravel mining and the resulting degradation of aquifers. In 1990, he donated forty-four acres along the Middle Reach of the Russian River to the Sonoma Land Trust, establishing the Griffin Riparian Preserve. Griffin Creek flows into this riparian preserve from the Lower Lake on The Bishop's Ranch. This watershed serves more than 600,000 people in Marin and Sonoma counties with fresh drinking water.

It was 1991 when the Rt. Rev. William Swing set out to revitalize The Bishop's Ranch by purchasing one hundred and eighty acres bordering Griffin Creek. Marty, with the support of Bishop Swing and help from land stewards Sean and Caroline Swift, began to restore both Griffin and Keepo Creeks. In 1995 with direction from the Resource Conservation District, Sonoma County Water Agency, and California



Marty and Joyce Griffin at Sean Swift's Retirement

State Fish and Game, Americorps began working to make the streams on The Ranch more habitable and help establish vital tributaries for steelhead and salmon spawning.

In an excerpt from Marty's book, *Saving the Marin-Sonoma Coast*, he says, "Bishop Swing wrote an inspiring letter about the 'coming home' of the wondrous steelhead and helped bring the concept of watershed stewardship to the attention of the thousands of Bay Area members of the church."

With Marty's gift of the 23 acres of Gina's Orchard to The Ranch in 2008, he hoped to preserve the riparian habitat of Griffin Creek for generations to come. Named for his granddaughter, Gina, who died at age fifteen of leukemia, Marty wanted children to experience the wonder of nature by the creekside, where they can learn about ecosystems, watershed hydrology, and land use practices.

In 2001, The Ranch honored our family by naming their environmental field studies for school children the Gina's Orchard Watershed Education Program.

At age 102, Marty continues to advocate that "preserving the natural world is the true foundation for health." He believes that the future of The Ranch depends on making long-range plans to deal with climate instability while protecting the land and the watershed. Nicknamed "the doctor with mud on his shoes," Marty prescribed nature walks for his patients, as he himself was out in the field making assessments of the ecological factors that may put people at risk of disease. He continues to believe the presence — or lack thereof — of wildlife is a reliable indicator of the condition of our environment, that a loss of biodiversity and habitat results in the declining health of our families and communities and, therefore, the quality of our lives.

Marty was recently honored at the NorCal Public Media Food and Wine Awards held at Luther Burbank Center for the Arts for his lifetime of protecting watersheds and wildlife and his distinguished statewide career in Public Health.

To learn more about L. Martin Griffin, M.D., author of Saving the Marin-Sonoma Coast - The Battles for Audubon Canyon Ranch, Point Reyes, & California's Russian River, go to his website at martingriffin.org.



Elementary students use the Marty's Crossing bridge over Griffin Creek

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Summer Camp Registration is Open

bishopsranch.org/camps

Camp Staff Training: June 18-23

BREAD Camp

is a place to discover community, spirituality and more about yourself. Campers spend mornings exploring spirituality through activities, music, conversation, and small group discussions. Afternoons are filled with fun: swimming, arts and crafts, hiking and other elective activities. Evenings are filled with games, campfires, compline and a few surprises!

BREAD Explorers

June 25-30 For campers entering grade 10 through graduated grade 12

BREAD Adventurers*

July 16-21 or July 23-28 For campers entering grades 7 – 9

BREAD Discoverers*

July 16-21 or July 23-28 For campers entering grades 4 – 6

**New in 2023! BREAD Adventurers and Discoverers are happening at the same time for the 2 weeks they are offered.*

TOAST

July 14-16 For campers who identify as young adults (21+) and BREAD Alumni

Intergenerational Camp

July 2-7 A new (yet familiar) camp for families of all shapes and sizes

READ Camp

July 10-14 For day campers entering grades 4-6
READ Camp is a day camp for local elementary school students incorporating reading skills and fun camp activities including swimming, games, crafts and more.

Save the Date for Fall Programs

bishopsranch.org/programs

Fall Hike: Autumn at The Ranch

October 14, 9:30 am - 3:00 pm

Spend a Saturday walking the little-known trails of The Bishop's Ranch and exploring its many habitats. An expert guide will lead this rambling walk with a special eye towards discovering viewpoints from which to enjoy autumn sights. Lunch is provided.

Yoga with Marie Hirsch: A Day Retreat

November 11, 9:00 am - 5:00 pm

Use breath and meditation to deepen your understanding and appreciation of yoga. You will be guided and encouraged to move past your resistance into a state of peace, clarity, and joy. A morning of active, uplifting asana practice, focused on raising the energy and creating a sense of strength and lightness, is followed by an afternoon of Restorative/Yin Yoga, moving into increased levels of awareness and stillness.



Fall is a beautiful time to hike at The Ranch

Watershed (continued)

- An examination of Foss Creek water to search for macro invertebrates.

After lunch in the Refectory, the children hiked to Gina's Orchard to see The Ranch's watershed in action and explore Griffin Creek.

The Gina's Orchard Watershed Education Program at The Ranch is supported by donations and is named after Gina Marin Monaco, granddaughter of Dr. L. Martin Griffin who you can read more about in "A Lifetime of Advocacy" on pages 4 & 5 of this newsletter.



A Watershed Education Newscast



Westside teacher Stephanie Freele and students in Gina's Orchard

Share Your Ranch Photos

Sharing your treasured photos from your Ranch experiences is easy!

Just send them to
photos@bishopsranch.org.

Who knows, they could end up in our newsletter, on social media or even on our website.

Volunteer at The Ranch: Prayer Resident

Daily prayer is an integral part of Ranch life. The Prayer Resident leads morning and evening prayers five days a week in The Chapel of St. George. Under the leadership of the Ranch Chaplain, the Prayer Resident assists in maintaining the Chapel as a warm, welcoming, sacred space for all guests and community members, leads weekday Liturgies, and assists the Chaplain in tending the Chapel space, preparing for Sunday worship, etc.

The Prayer Resident also works with all Ranch staff, occasionally helps in accommodating the needs of various groups using the Chapel as part of their program at the Ranch, and assists with other tasks pertaining to the operations of The Ranch.

This is a month-at-a-time volunteer position offered in exchange for room and board. The position is open to lay as well as ordained persons. Familiarity with Episcopal worship, commitment to daily prayer and silence are important qualifications. Experience leading worship is helpful. People of all faith traditions are welcome to apply.

For more information or to apply please visit bishopsranch.org/chapel-of-st-george/

Make a Gift to the Annual Fund today!

Your support of The Bishop's Ranch Annual Fund will provide hospitality that nourishes spirit, body, and mind for more than 5,000 guests in 2023. Your gifts directly support the Ranch's operating budget, sustaining this rare place of beauty where visitors create life-changing experiences and treasured memories. By investing in The Ranch, you support our staff, facilities and land, and enrich the entire Ranch Community for future generations.

Donate online at bishopsranch.org/donate or scan the QR code.



Annual Fund

Mail in a donation or make a pledge using the enclosed remit envelope.

Transfer stock or other securities; see instructions at bishopsranch.org/stocksandsecurities



The Bishop's Ranch

of the Episcopal Diocese of California


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Coming Home Spring 2023

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Recipes from the Ranch

The Not-So-Humble Ranch Tomato

Ranch tomatoes are a staple of our summer menus and we eagerly await their arrival every year. Freshly sliced, roasted, transformed into chutney, gazpacho and jam, tossed on all-manner of salads, we truly believe they are the most delicious tomatoes around. Why are they so good? Because they are grown and prepared with love at The Ranch, from seedlings to soup.



Tomato plants grown from seed by Facilities & Land Manager, Matt Kissman; planted and nourished with Ranch coompost in The Ranch Gardens by Mayko Gutierrez; served in many of our favorite summer dishes; and returned to the compost pile at season's end.