



Friends of Ballona Wetlands

<http://www.ballonafriends.org>

Contact:

Richard Beban, Co-Executive Director
Friends of Ballona Wetlands
richardb@ballonafriends.org
310.306.5994

Friends of Ballona Wetlands Gifted with Board Member's \$5,000 in "Sweat Equity"

Board Member Bob Shanman Completes Catalina Marathon at 65 Years Old, Raises more than \$10,000 for Two Enviro Groups

Playa del Rey, CA (April 2, 2010) – Long-time Friends of Ballona Wetlands board member Bob Shanman, 65, owner of Torrance's Wild Birds Unlimited store, literally sweated out a \$5,000 donation to the Friends, and another \$5,000 for the group South Bay Wildlife Rehab, by redeeming the pledges he received from supporters when he completed the 26-mile, March 13 Catalina Marathon.

"Non-profits like the Friends depend upon giving board members as well as giving members, but Bob went well beyond the extra mile in this case. Twenty-six of them, to be exact," said Richard Beban, Co-Executive Director of the Friends.

Bob and his wife, Roberta, have been associated with the Friends since the organization's founding in 1978. An avid birder, he worked as a civil engineer until he came to a career crossroads in 1994, when his company downsized. During a day of birding at the Ballona Wetlands, he decided he'd rather live his passion, and opened Wild Birds Unlimited in Torrance in 1995.

"I had to find a job that involved birds, kids, nature, education and photography," he said. His store has won numerous awards, such as one of the 101 Best Stores (Los Angeles Magazine), recycling awards from the state, and lifetime achievement from the WBU Franchise. He serves on the boards of the Friends of Ballona Wetlands, Friends of Madrona Marsh, and Palos

Verdes/South Bay Audubon. The store sponsors bird feeders at the Los Angeles Zoo, the L.A. County Museum of Natural History, and the California Science Center.

Running had always been another of Bob's passions, but this was his first marathon. "I chose Catalina because my hiking friends do it every year, and I felt it would be a great challenge at 65," he said. "South Bay Wildlife Rehab has always been our primary charitable group, but I thought the Friends were equally valuable recipients."

Shanman said monies for the Friends will be used to support their education programs, which bring as many as 5,500 people to the wetlands each year, more than half of those children from inner-city schools. Monies for SBWR will go "towards the care and feeding of their education birds, and the rehab of the many spring fledglings they care for at this time of year."

Ballona's 600 acres are a remnant of an estuarine wetlands system that once covered more than 2,000 acres. Friends of Ballona Wetlands was formed in 1978 to protect and defend the wetlands, which are part of the Pacific Flyway, and which provide crucial habitat for hundreds of species of birds and other wildlife.

The Friends of Ballona Wetlands works in partnership with the California Coastal Conservancy, the California Department of Fish & Game, and the Mountains Recreation & Conservation Authority, which have authority over the State-owned Ecological Reserve. FBW programs have served the greater Los Angeles area by providing hands-on restoration opportunities to more than 65,000 volunteers since 1994.

The mission of the thirty-two year-old non-profit is to champion the restoration and protection of the wetlands, and to involve and educate the public as advocates and stewards.

For more information, visit <http://www.ballonafriends.org>.