

Wendy Gingerich

Becomers Mystery Person of the week - January 13, 2008

Born in Kansas City Missouri - late! Mom finally took a long ride on a bumpy road in a model T Ford.

Descended from the family of Sir Francis Drake on my mom's side (I guess that makes me a pirate)

Moved to California when I was 3. Stood watch with my mom on top of the Biltmore Hotel in Hermosa Beach until 10 at night when I was only 6 years old. She was part of the Civilian Ground Observer Core and we were looking for enemy fighter planes during the Korean War.

Took and taught dance for 12 years for therapy after cutting my Achilles' tendon- Ballet, tap, jazz and hula!

Sang in choirs for many years, (took piano but had no talent)

Active in Youth for Christ - leadership training camps and weekly Saturday night Rallies in the old hotel in Los Angeles with Roy Rogers and Dale Evans, Camp counselor for pre-teens at Idyllwild Pines Christian Camp. Wanted to be in Christian service or teach.

First kiss - Senior Ditch Day to Catalina

First boyfriend - had a gecko

Second boyfriend - had a trampoline and sold saltwater taffy on the pier in Redondo Beach

Married my High School Jr. class prom date - he had a motor cycle (he was also the one with the gecko)! Borrowed my best friend's wedding dress, had a wonderful wedding at 18 and went to Yucca Valley for a honeymoon. Greg was off to the Navy Hospital in Guam as a medic but then things changed and he was re-routed to Vietnam. Life held its breath for 11 months during the TET Offensive and then it stopped. Governor Ronald Reagan gave me a flag and planted a tree to honor Greg.

The world walked on the moon and I turned to Science. I got my Bachelor of Science degree from UC Irvine in Biological Sciences and Chemistry.

Calculus put an end to any aspirations I had for a future in Chemistry or Physics. The first brain surgery that I did (on a rat) was the end of my pre-med career goals the patient died on the table? All this finally redirected me back to my high school goal of being a teacher.

I got a Master of Arts from CSU Long Beach and a job at Marina High for the past 36 years teaching Biology, Environmental Science, Physiology and Chemistry. I have taught about 9000 students by now about 6500 days!

I also took a summer job as a National Park Ranger Naturalist in Rocky Mountain National Park one summer (fell off a rock embankment and cut that career short). I have plenty of park stories to tell.

I studied during the summer at UCI with other teachers and was a National Science Foundation Mentor getting to take an atmospheric chemistry class from Dr. Sherwood Rowland, who got the Nobel Prize for discovering the hole in the *ozone layer*.

I have taken 7 trips to Alaska. On one of those I actually steered the ship, turning the 20,000 ton Island Princess around - made quite a hole in the ocean.

I got lost one time in the back country near Mendenhall Glacier and had to wade out down a Salmon spawning stream to catch the bus so I would not be left behind by the ship.