

# Members Making Memories

Valaree and Michael Ho have been on many memorable trips that have allowed them to experience cetaceans up close. Michael is a wonderful photographer who has shared two of his photos and their experiences with us:



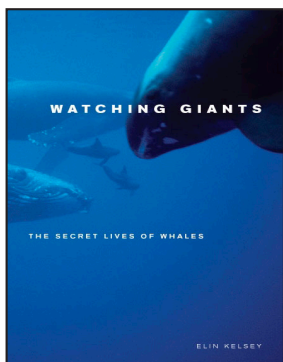
"Valaree and I were in Monterey, California, last September. The weather was beautiful and sunny. We headed out into Monterey Bay and over the deep sea canyon. A few humpback whales were spotted putting on a great show. Suddenly, a pod of orcas appeared but paid no attention to the humpbacks. I noticed there was a calf traveling with its mother, and the two were inseparable."



"We were on a Princess cruise ship in Banderas Bay in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico in January. We took a whale watching excursion on a high speed zodiac, which made it easy to follow the whales. The humpbacks were very active, and the action was fast and furious. The younger whales were spotted first breaching and spyhopping. Then we went to a different spot, and the full-grown humpbacks put on a fantastic display for about two hours. I was exhausted after all that action photography!"

Photos ©Michael Ho, <http://MichaelDanielHo.com>

## Book Review



**Watching Giants: The Secret Lives of Whales** by Elin Kelsey  
California Press, 2009. Photographs by Doc White and Francois Gohier

**Review by Steve Katona, past president of ACS:** Readers of this deeply humane and ecological book will gain surprising insights into the cultural lives of various whale species, the motivations, hopes and fears of those who study them, and the ecosystems that support all of us. *Watching Giants* focuses on the Gulf of California, one of the ocean's most beautiful and productive ecosystems, but contains information about other regions and will be of interest to readers anywhere. The book's very special character comes from themes of family and culture, as author Elin Kelsey interweaves vignettes of her personal life as a woman and mother of two young children to illustrate the important similarities and differences between human and whale society, providing uniquely refreshing perspectives on both. Scientifically accurate and broadly informative, *Watching Giants'* chapters touch on nearly all aspects of the life cycle of whales, including the vigorous communities of external parasites they host, and specialized animals that colonize and decompose whale carcasses in the deep sea. Remarkable facts abound, but beyond its scientific interest, *Watching Giants* is creative, deeply thoughtful, caring and inviting. It whets our curiosity about lives so different from our own, but also discusses them in ways that engage our relationship, for example in a very humorous chapter on whale sex and another entitled "What's the Use of Granny?" on the evolution of postmenopausal females and matrilineal societies. Above all, *Watching Giants* welcomes us to understand and celebrate our kinship and connectedness with all life and to reflect on what we could do to reverse the harm we have caused in the ocean and elsewhere.