



**IRVINE RANCH
CONSERVANCY**

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IRC Docent Thea Gavin Selected for Grand Canyon National Park's Artist-in-Residence Program

Gavin is the only Orange County artist chosen for prestigious opportunity

(Irvine, CA)— The Irvine Ranch Conservancy today announced that docent Thea Gavin has been selected to participate in the Grand Canyon National Park's Artist-in-Residence program. This once-in-a-lifetime opportunity offers professional artists the chance to spend three weeks on either the North or South Rim of the Grand Canyon in housing provided by the National Park Service.

The program seeks artists whose work addresses issues that are relevant to the Park Interpretative Themes, while also challenging the visitor to become an active participant in preservation and environmental and cultural advocacy. During the three weeks, artists will immerse themselves in uninterrupted time, pursuing their art while creating works that generate understanding and dialogue about the need to preserve the Grand Canyon. In exchange, the Artists-in-Residence will provide three public outreach programs, presentations or performances of their choosing. In addition to these free programs, each artist will also donate to the park one work that was inspired by his or her residency.

Gavin was among just six chosen for the South Rim AiR program and among 12 for the North Rim AiR program. Artists from across the nation submitted applications; Gavin was the only Orange County artist to make the cut.

"The Grand Canyon is such a significant place, for so many reasons," she said. "I am excited to have an opportunity to spend an extended amount of time there, both hiking and just sitting and soaking it all in. And then, writing to see what poems come out of the experience. I'll have my trusty little digital camera along, for taking images for the slide show I plan to put together to accompany my final residence-related requirement

— a presentation after it's all over to share the National Park's artist-in-residence program here in Orange County.”

Gavin began helping out with IRC hikes in spring 2004 and has been an active docent ever since. Two years ago she started leading creative writing hikes in the Irvine Ranch Natural Landmarks. In addition to her creative writing programs, she has participated in a few IRC stewardship projects as well as escorting Plein-Air artists around the Natural Landmarks as they created their works of art. Gavin's favorite activity was spending hours just sitting in remote spots of the Irvine Ranch Natural Landmarks, with nothing to do but enjoy the day and write about it.

Being a volunteer for IRC seems to have paved the way for this Grand Canyon adventure and appears to be the next step in Gavin's outdoor adventures.

“Volunteering for an organization like IRC, which emphasizes issues similar to the Grand Canyon's interpretive themes, made this opportunity seem like a perfect fit,” she explained. “I view it as another great opportunity to do what I love to do as an IRC docent: introduce people to beautiful places that deserve attention and protection.”

To volunteer on the Irvine Ranch Natural Landmarks, go to <http://www.irlandmarks.org/Volunteer/> and to learn more about the Grand Canyon Artist-in-Residence visit <http://www.nps.gov/grca/supportyourpark/air.htm>.

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