

torreyana

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Sunny Rankin, Editor

NEXT DOCENT MEETING - Saturday morning, September 17, 9:00 A.M.

PROGRAM - Cacti and Succulents of T.P. Reserve and San Diego County.
Presented by the San Diego Cacti and Succulent Society.



NOTES/NEWS

Board Meeting Scheduled - Saturday, September 17, following the general monthly meeting and program, a meeting of the board of directors will be held to discuss sales performance, problems, etc. All members of the board are requested to be present.

The Board meets at irregular intervals, approximately every two to three months. These meetings are open to any member. If you would like to attend meetings, please advise us and you will be informed when a meeting is planned.

NEW ASSOCIATES

Welcome to our new associate members: Sylvia Owings and Wanda McCaddon.

MEMBER TRANSFERS

Congratulations to the following former associates who are now voting members: Peter Elias, Jean Hawthorne, Rowdy James, Anne Lutz, Melissa Mayfield and Glenda Richter.

THE VELVET HAMMER

Associates, most of your check lists have expired. We have requested that the rangers honor your expired lists for admission to the Reserve in September. However, unless we receive your completed list on a written extension request this month, we will assume that you are no longer interested and your name will be removed from our rolls. We don't want to do that.

DOCENT DISCOUNTS DO DOUBLE DUTY

Some of you read the docent discount books while sitting at the sale's desk. Some buy them for home use or for gifts. Either way, we benefit. Reading is a significant part of our continuing education. One of our recent additions is In Wildness is the Preservation of the World, a beautiful book with text from the writings of Henry David Thoreau.



OUR PERFORMANCE

Our Dependability Percentage for August was approximately 80%. That represents many hours of service; it was a good performance.

Our schedule now becomes much easier as we will only schedule ourselves for weekends. I hope this easier schedule leaves you with enough time to attend our monthly meetings; we would really like to see you more often.

A Docent Uniform?

At our June meeting, the majority present indicated a desire for some optional uniform items. We need some volunteers to investigate and recommend.

MAT

Mat, our artist friend, will have a show "The Ancient Bristlecone Pine" at the Library of Grossmont College from September 6 through October 7. Admission is free.

HIKING ANYONE?

Are you interested in forming a hiking group such as one in Arizona which has 200 members? Hikes are local and for one day or less. San Diego County is loaded with beautiful nature trails and places to hike. Increase your knowledge of nature and make friends. Call Marcie Thorner, 756-2019. Allow at least ten rings. Noon or evening best times.

PLANT HAPPENINGS AT SAN DIEGO'S WILD ANIMAL PARK

San Diego's Wild Animal Park is also part botanic garden--so much so that there's now a Green Thumb Show one weekend every month with talks and demonstrations repeated throughout both days. There are even a few small plants and seeds for sale.

September 10 and 11 are devoted to California natives; October 1 and 2 are the annual Autumn Plant and Flower Show.

The park is open daily after Labor Day from 9 to 6. It's located just off State Highway 78, 6 miles east of Escondido. Admission is \$4.95 for adults and \$2.50 for youngsters 6 to 15 years old. For more information, you can call (714) 747-8702.

BOOK REVIEW - FORMER DOCENT, PEGGY HASKELL

I was so glad that I could attend a Docent meeting while I was in California, and I enjoyed seeing so many old friends. I'm now working for a wholesale book jobber, and every now and then a book comes across my desk that I think might be of special interest to the Docents, either directly related to their work at Torrey Pines or of a more general conservation or natural science nature. One new book in the latter category is Inside the Alaskan Pipeline by Ed McGrath, published by Celestial Arts. The author has been a native Alaskan for several years, has worked off and on as a laborer on the pipeline, and makes

many astute observations on the effects it's having on the Alaskan quality of life, the horrendous waste in construction, and the still unanswered questions about its impact on the environment. I recommend it highly.

Another book that I have just come across, Land of Clear Light, by Michael Jenkinson (Dutton, 1977) describes in detail the "wild regions of the American Southwest and Northwestern Mexico--how to reach them and what you will find there." I have the book home with me this weekend, and have flipped through it enough to know I want to get a copy for myself. The book is divided into areas such as canyon country (Southern Utah and Northern Arizona), the high lonesome (southwestern Colorado), rim of the Sea of Cortez, etc., and describes many little trails into the back country of each area (complete with pictures and maps), many of which the author has experienced first hand, availability of campsites, bits and pieces of history and local folklore, etc. I would think this would be a most interesting and useful book for anyone planning to camp or hike or just drive through any of these areas.

Also, as you may know, Edward Abbey's new book, The Journey Home, has been out for a few months. I was a little disappointed in it at first as it seemed merely a re-hash of other things he'd written, but I warmed up once I really got into it.

Lastly, there was an interesting article in the May issue of Harper's called Hired Scapegoats--In Support of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers written by Samuel C. Florman. The author certainly doesn't try to gloss over or erase past mistakes made by the Corps, but he does stress the fact that the Corps has generally reflected the mood of the nation as a whole. And--has understood the importance of natural balances only as well as the available scientific knowledge at any given point in time. I recommend the article highly, as a means of more clearly understanding its history and perceiving a ray of light in its future.

FROM SUNSET MAGAZINE--MORE BOOKS FOR DOCENTS

Walks and trails. Garden and park strolls, marked forest trails, and interpretive walks are the focus of Walking: a Guide to Beautiful Walks and Trails in America. The 340-page book also lists wilderness trails and walks over rough terrain. It details outtings in all states and should be used in conjunction with good maps. The book is available in bookstores for \$3.95, or order by mail for \$4.70 from William Morrow & Co., 105 Madison Avenue, New York 10016.

Birds of the West, by Herbert Clarke and Arnold Small (A.S. Barnes and Co., Box 421, Cranbury, N.J. 08512, 1976; \$30 plus 52 cents for postage), covers the most territory. Color photographs illustrate 201 of the more than 500 species commonly found in the West. The emphasis is on bird ecology, with birds grouped in 10 major habitats, from "Cities, Suburbs, and Gardens" to "Boreal Forests and Mountains." Some field guides provide better color and more complete identification data, but this hardback is a good book to study before and after going birding.

(Another mail-order source is the Los Angeles Audubon Society, 7377 Santa Monica Blvd., Los Angeles, 90046; \$30 plus 85 cents for handling.)

SOME PROVOCATIVE CACTI TRIVIA

Botanists consider cactus one of the youngest of the world's plant families, although its origin is imperfectly known. Probably it was once related to violets and begonias.

Native only to the new world, cacti have thrived when transplanted abroad, enough to have become serious pests in Australia. In the Americas, the natural range is from Patagonia nearly to the Arctic Circle. Catus thrive in low, hot deserts and in cold high deserts, in windy prairies and tropical jungles, and at foggy sea shores. At least one species grows native and wild in each state of the U.S. except Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Alaska and Hawaii.

Cacti bloom have an unexpected glory. Every possible red, pink, orange, and yellow is represented, even greens and browns. Petals are luminous and saturated in hue, as though endowed with structural color like tropical fishes instead of the pigment of ordinary flowers.

Thorns vary widely; hair, hooks, bristles, short spines, straight spines, curved spines, long spines.

Father Johann Jakob Baegert, one of the early-day desert Jesuits, wrote: "Thorns are surprisingly numerous, and there are many of frightening aspect. It seems as if the curse of the Lord, laid upon the earth after the fall of Adam, fell especially hard on (Baja) California and had its effect . . . it is easy to see that, according to my calculation, a single one of these shrubs carries more than a million thorns.... One of them will serve as a toothpick for many years without repointing or resharpening."

Why thorns? In species such as barrel cactus or pincushion, they shade one-quarter of the plant at a time, acting as a built-in lathouse and prevent overheating. They also reduce the drying effect of wind by breaking the force of the air's rush. The most bizarre theory of all--thorns directly affect the water regimen of cacti by the plants tendency to build an electrical charge greater than that of surrounding earth to air--the charge coming from free ions in the water, absorbed by the roots and carried to the branches and leaves. With cacti, thorns act something like reverse lightning rods, discharging the built-up electricity from their tips. This helps raise water within the plant in a sort of pumping action. The concept, if true, may help to explain the lifting of water by giant cacti, such as saguaros and cardons, which are so tall that capillarity alone scarcely seems adequate.

Cactus are so neat--one could go on and on--sorry no more space. Read Life on a Tall Cactus by Ruth Kirk, Audubon, July 1973--a fantastic article, read about the longnose bat as a nocturnal pollinator of saguaro flowers! Come to our September meeting for more about this fascinating plant family.

CALENDAR - MARCIE THORNER

NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

Oct 4 to 25 - Course on Gardening with Native Plants - Helen Chamlee. \$16. Includes field trip to Rancho Santa Anna. Tuesday mornings 10 to 12; evenings 6:30 to 8:30

- Oct. 8 - Star Party. Astronomy lecture Grossmont College. \$5
- October 15 - Another Know Your Parks Walk with Helen Chamlee. Heise County Park. Morning and afternoon session. \$2. Must make reservatoins. Other walks monthly except November and December.

AUDUBON SOCIETY

- Sept. 24 - San Elijo Lagoon 7:30 a.m. Bring lunch. Park on Manchester Avenue. Call for more details. Marcie Thorner 756-2019. Other walks on October 15, October 20, and November 5.

SIERRA CLUB

- Sept. 14 - General meeting. Public such as Docents invited. Slides on South America. Fine library of nature books to see. Multimedia Center, San Pasqual H.S., 3300 Bear Valley Parkway, Escondido. From I-15 take Via Rancho Pkwy east to Bear Valley.

WILD ANIMAL PARK

- Sept. 10&11 Green Thumb Show California Native Plants, Saturday 9-6; Sunday 9-5.
- Oct 1 & 2 - Third Annual Autumn Plant and Flower Festival. Nairobi Village. Cactus, succulents, shurbs, trees and plants.

SAN DIEGUITO ADULT SCHOOL

- Sept. 12 - Beginning of Fall Nature Walks. Monday A.M. 9:30. First meeting at Sea Cliff Park between Encinitas and Leucadia. \$4; free for Senior Citizens.