

TORREYANA

Published for Members of the Torrey Pines Docent Society, Nr.51, May, 1980

NEXT DOCENT MEETING...SATURDAY MORNING, MAY 17, 9:00 A.M. LODGE

Conn Quest by Martha Conn

Our Training Sessions have been quite successful. We have been blessed with at least twenty prospective docents who come because they love Torrey Pines too. Our first session was led by Dr. Phillips, who gave us a brief but thorough introduction into the geology of this area. It was such a clear day that we could see Mt. Gorgonio and San Jacinto to the east and the islands to the west. Do all of you know how those baubles on the Beach Trail were made?

On the second session we were enlightened about the grunion species. And the third session was terrific. Birds, and my, how they did cooperate for our walk, more than I've ever seen! At the time of this writing we have yet to do Botany and Vertebrate Biology. The precedent has been set and they will be very informative sessions. Thanks to all who have participated in this on-going docent training, and welcome to all newcomers!

By now all have received their green duty cards, and are using them to keep in touch with the most beautiful part of the coast. Suggestions and questions are always welcome. Pack a lunch and join the Board meeting from 12-1 on May 17.



In the next issue: A summary of the Area Workshop held in Old Town on April 19th.

Secretary's Notes by Mary Christenson

A short business meeting was held in conjunction with our second program in the spring training session, April 19, 1980.

Our treasurer reported a balance of \$976 and suggested a need to put this money to use. Gene Barber suggested that we budget money for 1) library, 2) audio-visual, 3) office supplies, 4) museum improvement on a yearly basis. Ruth Hand, Rowdy James, and Jeff Price will meet to discuss these matters.

Ruth Hand requested help on policy matters for the library. Terry White and Jule Hunter will help her. A copy of "Eocene Depositional Systems of San Diego" is a gift from Dr. Phillips.

Milli reminded us to write in the Trail Topic book. It is found on the top shelf of our bookcase and is only useful when kept up to date.

Martha introduced the new duty system submitted by Bob Hopper.

In his friendly and original style, Gene Barber shared door prizes with three lucky winners.

Did you know there are two species of grunion? Coast and Gulf. Our speaker for the day was Dr. Moffet who gave an engaging study of the development of the grunion.



THE LIVING DESERT - by Mary Christenson

The desert blooms are nearing their peak and are a sight to see. In pursuit of color and sunshine our family spent an overnight, April 26, near Bow Willow in the western part of Anza-Borrego Park. From the red ocotillo to the blue indigo to the orange desert mallow to the chartreuse of the cholla to the white and yellow belly flowers we were rewarded at every step and turn. Dozens and dozens of century plants were giving themselves up to bloom. The flowers we knew would be there but to our delight and surprise so were the birds, more than I could identify. To name a few of our singing friends, we saw: the Phainopepla, the Loggerhead Shrike, the Wilson's Warbler, the White-winged Dove, Gambel's Quail, Costa's Hummingbird, the Black-tailed Gnatcatcher and many "little brown birds". Oh, if only I had taken that class on identification! Last but not least, minding his own business, a large adult rattlesnake appeared. We were close enough to identify five rattles and left. Evidence of life is everywhere. See the desert soon.

Torrey Pines Docent Society was sorry to learn of the death of Jou-jou Sumner on April 27. Jou-jou was a dependable, two duties per month docent until illness forced her to resign. Our condolences are extended to her family and friends.

FLORIDA CANYON by Marc Cimolino

I had never been to Florida Canyon, yet one could hardly be a docent and not have heard about the tours that leave from the Morley Field parking lot each Sunday at 2 p.m. I had imagined long trails winding through a canyon that was much larger than the reserve extension canyon. Actually, it consists of the two slopes east and west of Florida drive. Seven eager people were gathered on the west edge of the lawn to be guided by three Florida Canyoneers, who were very knowledgeable about the specific flora and fauna to be seen.

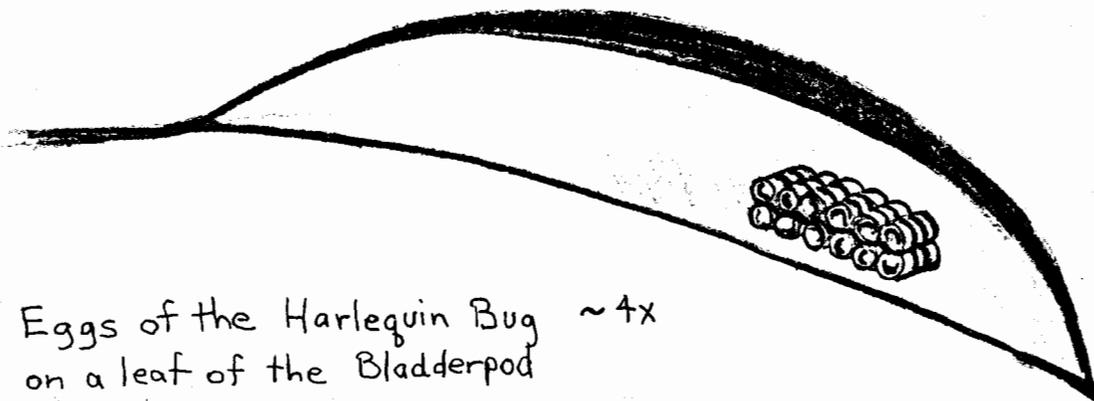
Trail #1 is a bit different from the ones at T.P., being narrow, steep and very windy with many low hanging branches. The lead guide brought a bucket containing a gopher snake and a garter snake to be released during the walk, which lasted about 2 hrs. on a trail about half the length of the Parry Grove loop. I saw and photographed a male Anna's hummingbird at close range, saw a wood rat scurry across the trail, captured then released after closer examination a pair of good sized alligator lizards. Blooming were pearly everlastings, wild onion, redberry, red monkey flowers and a few others.

I spotted the eggs of the harlequin bug on a large bladder pod, and realized that what I thought was the harlequin bug at T.P. is actually sometimes the mimic beetle which is more rounded.

A Marcoscopic View

by Marc Cimolino

3/80



Eggs of the Harlequin Bug ~4x
on a leaf of the Bladderpod

Each off-white egg, with two dark bands around the middle and a crescent shaped dark splotch on each end, is about the same size as a postage stamp perforation. Perhaps someone will spot the larvae form soon at Torrey Pines Reserve.

In all it was a delightful excursion and I plan to return to see trails #2 and #3. A self guiding pamphlet is available from the Natural History Museum.

A Sensible Walk by Judy Schulman 5-80

Needless to say, Torrey Pines State Reserve offers an individual countless numbers of beautiful views to behold, and most tourists tend just to concentrate their enjoyment on seeing what's around them. Towards the beginning of my walks I like to emphasize that Torrey Pines Reserve is a perfect place to experience all of our five senses. Although people tend to view the scenery as a whole, I like to point out certain "surprises" that they may not be aware of. For example, the fact that both cactus, a desert plant, and pine trees, a forest plant, grow in the same vicinity. Or changes in the color and texture of the sand, best seen on the Guy Fleming Trail, due to the meeting and blending of different geological layers of sand. Most people walk by the "Witches - Broom" alongside the main road near the entrance to the Parry Grove Trail without being aware of its unique relationship to the tree. Although chaparral is known as a plant community that grows so densely that you can't climb over it or go through it, the Mission Manzanita has nothing growing underneath its branches. The plant has nothing growing underneath it because it eliminates competition for soil nutrients by emitting a toxin that is poisonous to other plants.

One of the visual effects that I get the most tourist interest out of is windcropping. Starting at the foot of the Parry Grove Trail, I ask people to note how tall and straight the trees are and then to compare them with the bent "arthritic" look of the trees on the bluff by the ocean. Children (of all ages) especially enjoy someone pointing out dolphins playing in the surf or a lizard using its protective coloration to hide on a branch.

Taste is the most difficult one to get people to experience. First of all, this is a Reserve and no eating is allowed.... especially of plants! I do let people taste the sour, sticky covering on a lemonadeberry and I try to explain the test of a cactus apple. An important thing to note when doing this is to emphasize that no one should eat anything growing in the wild unless some knowledgeable person (teacher, parent, guide) assures one of its edibility.

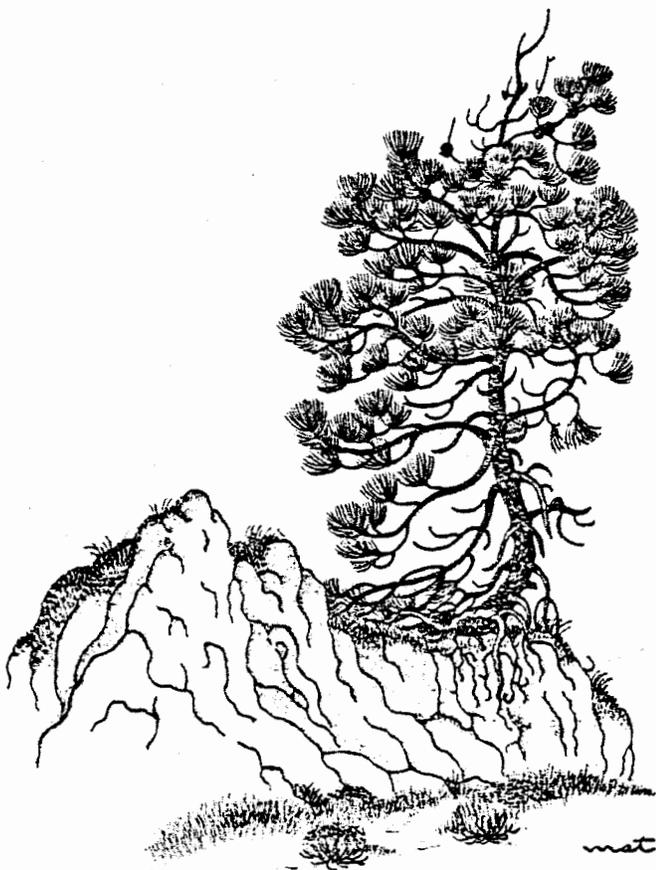
There are many things to hear at the Reserve, so I like to incorporate a "hearing game". I ask visitors to stop and listen for 2 minutes and then compare with each other what they have heard. The Park can really be quite "noisy" if you listen long and hard enough. Sounds most commonly heard include the roar of the ocean, birds singing, unseen lizard moving in the brush, other people, an insect buzzing, and one's own heart beat.

Interesting smells also abound. Just walking around the Reserve, one can smell the fishy-salty odor of the ocean or the sweet smell of spring flowers lingering in the air. I usually ask people to rub a sage leaf and then smell the mint scent on their fingers. Continuing on the walk, I later ask them to do the same (but with different fingers) to a spice bush to get the citrus smell. And don't forget the odor of the bladder pod!

Next to sight, my favorite sense is that of touch. You can do practically an entire walk just based on texture alone. I usually tie the different textures of plants to their natural adaptations to our semi-arid environment. The Torrey Pine needle is a good place to start. I ask people to run their fingers

up and down a needle. I point out that it is three sided and that the side facing upward has little ridges on it that act as reservoirs to increase the amount of water moisture collected by the plant. Most visitors tell me that they would call the yerba santa plant a velvet bush. And indeed the hundreds of hairs on each leaf do give the feel and look of velvet. The hairs serve as a protective coat to prevent moisture loss. Sand verbena can be used to get children involved in the walk. Ask them to get a pinch of sand and put it on a verbena leaf. Then tell them to turn the leaf upside down, shake it, and observe what happens to the sand. Because the leaf is slightly sticky, the sand stays on the leaf. Just like the hairs on the yerba santa, the sand prevents water loss.

Why all this emphasis on getting people to actively use their senses? Well, too many walk through a natural area only passively experiencing nature. If a bird comes directly into view, they'll see it. But they won't seek the sound. Actively using your senses to experience nature results in a personal communication with and appreciation of the natural world around you.



"Gratitude" - on the Guy Fleming Trail, pencil by Mat.

5-90

BLUE-EYED GRASS.

Sisyrinchium angustifolium. Iris Family.

Four to twelve inches high. *Leaves.*—Narrow and grass-like. *Flowers.*—Blue or purple, with a yellow centre. *Perianth.*—Six-parted; the divisions bristle-pointed. *Sizmens.*—Three, united. *Pistil.*—One, with three thread-like stigmas.

“For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat,
But it withereth the grass,
And the flower thereof falleth,
And the grace of the fashion of it perisheth.”

So reads the passage in the Epistle of James, which seems so graphically to describe the brief life of this little flower that we might almost believe the Apostle had had it in mind, were it to be found in the East.

The blue-eyed grass belongs to the same family as the showy fleur-de-lis and blossoms during the summer, being especially plentiful in moist meadows. It is sometimes called “eye-bright,” which name belongs by rights to *Euphrasia officinalis*.



Ed. Note:

My mother, a botany teacher, prized this well worn volume, “How to Know the Wild Flowers” by Mrs. W'm. Starr Dana, published in 1893! She added her own margin notations. Although written of the area east of the Mississippi, the book contains descriptions of many flowers found in Torrey Pines Reserve.

M.H

BLUE-EYED GRASS.—*Sisyrinchium angustifolium*.

Along Our Bloomin' Trails by Hank Nicol

You can scrub the oak, the yucca, ceanothus, bushrue, red-berry, johnny-jump-up, tread lightly, pigmy weed, dichondra, shooting star, mountain mahogany, and both manzanitas.

Here are a few flowers which have come into bloom since April 1: chamise, another everlasting (the big one that smells like maple syrup), yerba santa, snapdragon, windmill pink, Mexican pink, filaree, owl's clover, canchalagua, barrel cactus, honeysuckle, golden yarrow, purple mariposa lily, beach evening primrose, and the weed, scarlet pimpernel.

Then there is the locoweed, which I somehow missed writing down last time. And then there are a few I just plain don't know. I won't emulate the old botanist who told the young botanist, “Always walk well ahead of your students. Then you can step on anything you don't recognize.”

A few weeks ago I met a man who introduced himself as Bill Critchfield. I'm kind of slow on names, but bells kept ringing. I sneaked back into the office to look through things. I reached for a valued reference book on the geographic distribution of pines. Right on the cover, in large letters was the author's name.... William B. Critchfield, PHD. I resolved to do some brain picking.

Dr. Critchfield was here with a team from the U.S. Forest Service. It was collecting Torrey Pine seeds for genetic testing. I stuck as close to him as my duties would allow while he was setting a world record for opening Torrey Pine cones with a screwdriver. Dr. Critchfield is a quiet, dignified man. He wasn't at all voluble as Dr. Klaus had been, but I stayed after him and got a lot of information.

You probably have noticed the huge clump of pine needles in the tree just west of the road near High Point. Most people think it's the nest of a large bird- an owl or eagle. I like to tell the school kids that it's a gorilla's nest. They never believe me. I don't know why. I stole the line from a college professor. It is really called a "witches-broom". There are several more, big and small, along the Guy Fleming Trail and an even bigger one in the bottom of Big Basin. Nearly all the books say that it is caused by a fungus which gets into a wound at the growing tip. A few others blame it on a virus. Dr. Critchfield told me another version. He believes that witches-broom is caused, either partly or completely, by heredity. For evidence he said that, if you can find a pine cone on a witches-broom and plant the seeds, about half the seedlings will grow into witches-brooms instead of normal trees. As far as I know, neither fungus or virus is transmitted through seeds.

Now I don't think Dr. Critchfield is the kind of guy who would tell me a botanical version of the story about picking up a guinea pig by the tail and having its eyes fall out, but I'm looking for a cone. I haven't found one yet, but I'll keep on. This is something I just have to try. A dwarf Torrey Pine could be verrry interesting.

Hank

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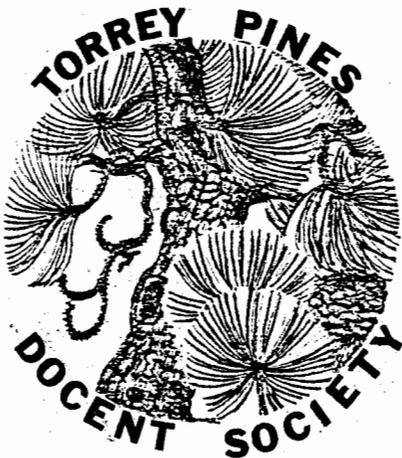
QUIZ - Where is this sign?
(Hint: Ranger Jeff Price knows!)

CORRECTION !

From Larry Banks, Florida canyoneer and new Torrey Pines Docent trainee- "There is no truth to the rumor that the Canyoneers are disbanding, as was stated in the last Torreyana. One outstanding feature of the Canyoneers is their Outreach Program, exploring ten open areas within the city with school groups," Larry explained. These include San Clemente Canyon, the top of Mt. Soledad, the back of Presidio Park, Shepherd's canyon, Kate Sessions, Sand Rock Canyon and Cowles Mt.

Torreyana regrets the error. For more information, call Julie Parks, Chairman, at 459-1969.

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