



TORREYANA

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December 1989

Next Docent Society Meeting

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 16, 10:00 A.M. AT THE VISITOR CENTER

The traditional holiday party for the Torrey Pines Docent Society will begin at 10:00 A.M. (one hour later than regular meetings) Saturday, December 16. Everyone is asked to bring the dishes they signed up for at the November meeting, or, for those who missed that meeting, dishes of their choice. Call Denise Holcomb, 225-1618, if you have questions. Docent Judy Carlstrom will provide seasonal background music on the dulcimer during the refreshment period and will later lead carol singing accompanied by her guitar.



LODGE AND TREE TRIMMERS NEEDED

Saturday, December 9, is decorating day at the Lodge. Docents who can give a hand, plus some boughs, berries, cones, or other appropriate natural products, are requested to come at 9:00 A.M. that day to help turn the exhibit room into a winter wonderland (Southern California style). Assistance is also needed to trim the evergreen tree, provided this year by supporting members Jack and Jo Ann Cannon. So set your alarm on the ninth and join in the festive preparations with the 1989 docent class in charge of the project.



SPECIAL TRAINING SCHEDULE

Chief Ranger Bob Wohl will lead a training walk on interpretive trail patrol for docents at 12 noon Saturday, December 2, starting at the Lodge. If not enough docents can make the walk that day or if too many sign up for it, a second trail patrol training walk will be led by Ranger Greg Hackett at 1:00 P.M. Sunday, December 3. Walks will last one to one and a half hours. It is suggested that docents call the Reserve office (755-2063) to make an appointment for either walk. (For information about walks for children and other special groups, see p. 2.)



HAVE A HAPPY HOLIDAY!



Docent Doings



WALKS FOR CHILDREN AND SPECIAL GROUPS

At 11:00 A.M. Wednesday, December 13, at the Lodge, Ranger Greg Hackett will teach docents how to give walks for children, with some additional information about other special groups. This information is not included in the regular docent training sessions, although there is considerable demand for such walks. As many docents as possible should attend this meeting.

NEW FULL MEMBERS

At the November meeting of the Docent Society, President Michael Fox announced that the following 1989 trainees had completed the requirements for full membership : Colleen Lemke, Barbara Greene, Sharon Liu, and Joan Nimick. So far 16 out of a class of 27 have completed their requirements and others are nearing completion. *(Editor's note: All new full members are requested to turn in a paragraph or two of relevant biographical information for the "Getting To Know You" column of the Torreyana. Please don't wait to be asked. Send to address on the back page of the newsletter.)*

CANCELLING OUT CARPOBROTUS



The docent class of '89 may go down in TPSR history as the class that eliminated carpobrotus in the park--or at least made significant inroads on it. On October 28 they attacked this peregrinating plant once more, gathering 58 bagfuls in two hours, thus preparing areas at the entrance to the Guy Fleming Trail for the return of some natives. The class plans to continue its devastation on non-meeting Saturdays. Shown in the picture after their October harvest are, left to right: Norma Boutelle, Jan Taylor (not an '89er, but all docents are welcome), Carol Lewis, Kathy Estey, and Diana Snodgrass.

A LIGHTER AND BRIGHTER LODGE

Visitors no longer have to peer into the shadows to read the labels on the Lodge exhibits: 150 watt spotlights have replaced half of the original smaller bulbs, which had finally burned out. The brighter lights improve working conditions for Lodge duty, too.

*Come forth into the light of things,
Let Nature be your teacher.*

.....
*One impulse from a vernal wood
May teach you more of man
Of moral evil and of good,
Than all the sages can.*

--William Wordsworth



LIFE IN THE CHAPARRAL (PART III) by Hank Nicol

(This is the concluding section of a three-part series on the chaparral.)

Plants as well as animals need protection from the heat. The fuzzy leaves of one yerba santa act as would fins on a radiator. Another is protected by a sticky coating over the leaves. The leaves of many plants have waxy coatings and/or a reduced number of pores that transpire water. This includes lemonadeberry, scrub oak, and California buckwheat, which actually contains more oil and burns hotter than greasewood/chamise. The genus *cactus* has such tiny leaves and loses them so early that most people don't realize that cacti do have leaves. The cacti store water in their fleshy stems. So do succulents such as the live-forever. The top leaves of the laurel sumac, those out in the sun, fold almost double to reduce their exposure to the sun. Leaves down in the shade stay flat. Sagebrush and the sages lose their leaves in the heat of summer. Manroot cucumber has a root which can be the size, and shape, of a man. It disappears underground when the weather turns hot. So do plants with combs, tubers, and bulbs, such as brodiaea, milkmaids, and mariposa lily.



Fire is a major fact of life in the chaparral, but no matter how hot the fire, very few animals are killed. A woodrat nest made of dry sticks is reduced to white ash. The rat outruns the flames. Only two to four inches underground burrowing animals experience no more than 80°F. Half the rodents may leave a burned area, but within a year there will be as many as before. Bobcats, foxes, and coyotes move in after the mice. Deer are animals of edges. They do not like open country or heavy brush, and after a fire they have lots of nice sprouts to nibble on. Their population is greatest from two to five years after a burn.

I realize that the word "Indian" should describe someone from India, but "Aboriginal American" is awkward, and "Native American" describes anyone born here--including me. Please forgive me when I use the inaccurate word. The California Indians, like the rest of us, occasionally became injured or sick. They had no drugstores, so their doctors made do with what was available. Chaparral was very available. *Yerba santa* is Spanish for "holy herb." The Indians taught the Spaniards its many medicinal uses. These were passed on to the *Californios* and to the Americans. As late as 1910 yerba santa was used to cover the unpleasant taste of quinine. Even today it can be found in herb shops. In the form of tea it was used to treat flu, pneumonia, headaches, and tummy aches. The fuzzy variety that grows around San Diego has untasty leaves, but it makes a good substitute for a Band-Aid. It was also pounded into a poultice. One green, smooth-leaved yerba santa has been called "Indian chewing gum." A wadded leaf is nice and chewy. It doesn't taste half bad, either. Our aboriginal predecessors used this yerba santa to relieve thirst when no water was available along a hot, dry trail.

You might think that something as common as chamise would be ignored, but chamise tea by the gallon was the treatment for syphilis. Chamise was also used on two diseases we regard as incurable: tetanus and rabies. Paralysis was treated by bathing with chamise tea. Oil from the leaves was used on infections of the skin.

It seems that every plant had its uses. Buckwheat blossoms were made into an effective eyewash. I know. I've tried it. Jojoba was, and is, used as hair oil. The leaf of white sage was used as a deodorant or, rather, a re-odorant. A hunter would sleep with it



(continued on p.4)

LIFE IN THE CHAPARRAL (PART III) (continued from p.3)

under his armpits so his prey would have a hard time smelling him. Lemonadeberry made--what else?--lemonade. The flavor is really more like mineral water with a twist. Sagebrush tea was a flea repellent, and the smoky fire of green sagebrush was supposed to alleviate the effects of a run-in with a skunk. Black sage seeds and, indeed, most seeds were eaten. Acorns from the scrub oak were considered inferior and were eaten only during hard times; but the juice of the large red galls, often called "oak apples," was used for gargling and as a cure for pinkeye. Oak gall tea was taken for heart trouble. Yucca root was used as soap. The list goes on and on. Unfortunately, it doesn't go on far enough. Settlers, whether Spanish, Mexican, or American, treated the Indians as something less than human. How much of their knowledge has been lost we will never know.

Most humans have conflicting attitudes toward chaparral. One evening I watched a TV reporter tell, with great concern, how the Normal Heights area was all set to burn again only three years after the fire which destroyed many homes. He was standing between laurel sumac and lemonadeberry bushes. I am not a betting man, but I would be willing to wager a small amount that he would not be able to set fire to either on the hottest day in August. The leaves will be killed, but neither bush will burn during the hottest of fires. Sensationalists moan about the "tragic loss of the chaparral." Chaparral is not lost as result of fire. It is rejuvenated. It needs fire. Even worse is the ignorance that says, "It's just a lot of brush." This is the attitude that destroyed San Clemente Canyon and is fast doing the same thing to Peñasquitos Canyon "Nature Preserve." We have not been very good at preserving nature. We "made the desert bloom." Then we paved over the orange groves we created. The best thing about Southern California was the climate. The daily sunshine that attracted the motion picture industry has given way to smog. Hollywood was named for the red berried toyon which once grew there. Today toyon is hard to find even in gardens, and "Hollywood" juniper came to us from China. Chaparral is seen in smaller and smaller patches. Populations are being divided into island communities.



Animals on islands become stunted as are the foxes of the Santa Barbara Channel Islands. Species are left to inbreed or not to breed at all. Plants, too, suffer. The rare mesa mint has received a lot of publicity. Our Lord's Candle has not. This yucca is disappearing because it can be pollinated by only one species of yucca moth. Individual plants are separated so much that the moths can't find them. One dwarf live-forever, *Dudleya brevifolia*, still exists only because it is in a nature preserve which has been jealously protected. We have dedicated other "nature preserves" and then carved roads through them. Exotic weeds such as tamarisk, pampas grass, and garden stock invade what is left. Life in the chaparral is tough, but it is not impossible. Life will become impossible when the chaparral no longer exists.

WORK ON WETLANDS BEGINS

"What are all those machines doing down on the beach?" may be one of the questions posed to docents beginning the end of November. The answer is that the machines are deepening the channel into the lagoon in order to improve the wetlands, where industrial effluents had led to a fish kill earlier.

The channel to the ocean, which had been opened November 15 by the County Department of Health Services, was closed the next day by tidal action. Los Peñasquitos Lagoon Foundation and the California Department of Parks and Recreation are cooperating in an extensive cleanup operation. Beach material which will be removed from the channels will be deposited back on the beach. The length of the operation will depend on the winter storms.

IN MEMORIAM: ELBERTA FLEMING

Memorial services were held Saturday, November 25, at the Johnson-Taylor Ranch in Canyonside Park for Docent Elberta Fleming, who died of a heart attack Friday, November 17, at the age of 77. Docent Chris Dittmar, who graduated in the same docent class as Elberta, represented Torrey Pines Docent Society at the service and was one of the speakers.

"Bert" had been involved with the Torrey Pines group for many years, becoming a full member in 1988. This was one of her many environmental activities. She was also on the Board of Directors of Friends of Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve, where she was in charge of education and trail walks and was an active member of the Museum of Natural History as well as the Sierra Club. She appeared frequently at San Diego City Council in support of the preservation of Los Peñasquitos Canyon and was honored with a citation by the Council as well as an early adjournment of their Monday meeting following her death. Throughout her life she had received many other awards for her work with nature and children.

"Bert" was born in New York but lived for many years in Ohio, where she was founder-director of the Lake Erie Nature and Science Center. She also wrote and illustrated children's books. She received her Ph.D. in humanities from Wooster College, Ohio.

The Flemings moved to this area in 1977. "Bert" is survived by her husband, William, and two adult sons and their families.

LISTENING POINT

*While we are born with curiosity and wonder
and our early years full of the adventure they bring,
I know such inherent joys are often lost.
I also know that, being deep within us,
their latent glow can be fanned to flame again
by awareness and an open mind.*

--Sigurd Olson

TPA TopicsTPA OPPOSES NEW "CENTRE"

A letter to the San Diego Planning Commission objecting to the existing plans for the La Jolla Pines Technology Centre was approved by the Torrey Pines Association counselors at their agenda-packed meeting November 11 at the Lodge. The letter was followed by a formal appeal November 17.

The new Centre would turn 54.4 acres of land between Genesee and North Torrey Pines Road, south of General Atomics, into eight building sites, involving massive cut and fill as well as destruction of Torrey pines. It would adversely affect a freshwater spring used by deer and create an estimated 20,000 additional daily automobile trips in the area.

Other organizations which have filed appeals opposing this development are the La Jolla Town Council, the Sierra Club, and Los Peñasquitos Lagoon Foundation. Objections are being made to the anticipated air pollution, adverse effect on the plant and animal population, as well as pollution of the lagoon caused by watering, fertilization and insecticide treatment of extensive lawns and landscaping.

Bird of the Month

TIGER WITH WINGS: THE GREAT HORNED OWL by Marion Dixon

If you thought, as I did, that all birds mated and nested in the spring, you're wrong. The great horned owls are hooting around our woodlots and maybe your neighborhood now, looking for mates (though some say they mate for life). Listen carefully in the early evening and you may hear them. You can attract them if you're a good hooter yourself or if you play a recording of their sounds in a likely vicinity.

Another way of finding the "hoot owl," as it is sometimes called, is by tracking it down through its pellets, those regurgitated bits of feathers, fur, bones, and other indigestible items that it spits out after consuming the edible portions of its meal, possibly a rodent, skunk, raccoon, or another bird. Look above the pellets for a nest site. If that method doesn't work, check out noisy swarms of small songbirds. They like to mob a roosting owl, which instinct tells them is an enemy.

In fact, peregrine falcon aficionados are unhappy about the increasing number of great horned owls. Dan Brimm, a local director of the World Peregrine Fund, says these owls now dominate our woodlots and will attack and kill nesting adult peregrines as well as the young. When the peregrines, an endangered species, are released after being raised in captivity, the handler tries to make sure there are no nests of great horned owls within many miles.

This species of owl also has a bad reputation elsewhere. In some parts of the U.S. it is illegal to kill any kind of owl except the great horned. It's open season on them because they occasionally catch chickens and other domestic animals. However, arguers on the other side point out that this second largest owl (weighing up to four pounds--only the snowy weighs a few ounces more) is a benefit to farmers because of its large consumption of destructive rodents. The U.S. Department of Agriculture arrived at this conclusion after studies of thousands of those tell-tale pellets. Some hunting club members who tried to eliminate the big owls in their preserve shamefacedly agreed with the USDA when they found that the fewer the owls, the greater the number of skunks and rodents which ate the eggs of their game birds.

People with a less scientific approach think on a higher plane about owls. The Greeks revered them as creatures of great wisdom and pictured Minerva, the goddess in that realm, with an owl perched on her shoulder or hand. Folklore describes the birds as "wise old owls." "Old" may be applicable: one captive owl lived to be 68. But "wise" is subject to skepticism. The great horned owl proved so difficult to train for falconry, for example, that it wasn't worth the effort. The association of the owl with intelligence and the occult is probably based on its solemn, staring look, its ominous hooting, and its ability to see in the dark. "We know not alway who are kings by day/
But the king of night is the bold brown owl," wrote a poet named Proctor.



There's something eerie, too, about the silent flight of the great horned owl. Listen if you happen to see one flying nearby. You won't hear any flapping. The sound is completely muffled by a downy edge on the flight feathers, one reason this owl is such a successful hunter.

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Another reason its victims don't have much of a chance is the owl's large ear openings(not those tufts that look like horns: they're just feathers). By turning its head, which can swivel almost 180°, and adjusting its ear flaps, the bird can home directly in on its prey.

But forget those survival abilities and take a look at the magnificent appearance of the great horned owl. The west coast variety is buff with dark brown horizontal bars, a conspicuous white throat, and large bright yellow eyes. These features, plus its fierceness, have given rise to the description, "tiger with wings"—and to a great number of admirers. This species, perhaps more than others, is reproduced in metal, cloth, wood, paper, and ceramic and purchased by collectors, who even have a newsletter, "The Owl's Nest."

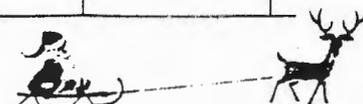


Great Horned Owl

Among its other qualities, the great horned owl may be just a little lazy: it likes to move into a nest some other bird took the trouble to build. In San Diego County its preference is for old nests of red-tailed hawks, though it will also use a crevice in a cliff, as one did two years ago in our Canyon of the Swifts. Check out this cliff and others in the Reserve in the next month or so as this "night's herald" (Shakespeare's phrase) begins its nesting. You'll have a good bit of time for your sleuthing since the young are often dependent on their parents for several months before they disperse.

DUTY CALENDAR - DECEMBER 1989

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
DUTY HOURS WEEKDAYS: LODGE 11:00 - 2:00 WEEKENDS: LODGE 10:30 - 1:30 1:30 - 4:30 WALK 11:00 - 2:00 1:00 - 4:00		PLEASE CALL IF YOU HAVE NOT SIGNED UP OR HAVE TO MAKE A CHANGE. JEANNE HELLER 587-6713			1 AMMAN, B&M	2 L - TAYLOR W - BROWN L - CHENEY W - TAYLOR
3 L - LEWIS W - ROBERTS L - GREENE, B W - DIXON	4 TALBERT, J&B JAMES	5 BUECHLER RICHARD (Trainee)	6 MARGULIES ANTRIM	7 BUECHLER BOUTELLE	8 GITTELSON	9 L - KOOYMAN W - MORRISON L - LEWIS W - PARKER, PV
10 L - LIU W - SANDERSON L - HUMPHREYS W - LIU	11 GREEN, D JAMES	12 MARTIN	13 ESTEY	14 GITTELSON BOUTELLE	15 NICOLOFF RICHARD (Trainee)	16 L - LUCIC W - FOX L - HELLER W -
17 L - HOLCOMBE W - SCHULMAN L - MORROW, J W - MORROW, C	18 TALBERT, J&B JAMES	19 ESTEY	20 SACHS	21 BARDWICK, P&M	22 DIXON	23 L - MORROW, C W - MORROW, J L - ROBERTS W - BROWN
24 L - W - L - W -	25 CAMPORINI SNODGRASS Christmas Day	26 MORRISON	27 MARGULIES	28 MORRISON	29 NICOLOFF	30 L - SWANSON W - SWANSON L - CHENEY W - DIXON
31 L - W - Holcombe						



Torrey Pines Docent Society

President: Michael Fox

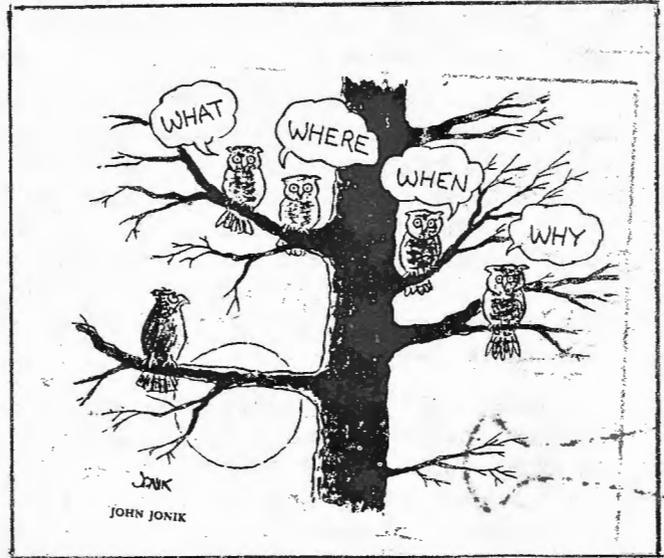
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Certain environmental resources deserve to be counted as global resources. That is, they are part of a common heritage in which the whole of humankind has a stake. An obvious example is the great whales: they appeal to people in lands around the world and their decline impoverishes everybody.

--Norman Myers



FLASH!! This Torreyana is printed on recycled paper.

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