



TORREYANA

A NEWSLETTER FOR
TORREY PINES
STATE RESERVE

Volume 2, Issue 5

September 2001

Del Roberts

August 8, 1927 -- July 29, 2001
(Docent class of '88)

On August 2nd, more than one hundred friends and relatives gathered at Torrey Pines State Reserve to celebrate the life of special friend and docent Del Roberts. Many of the docents, San Diego Opera friends, family members and acquaintances shared their memories of Del. The following are excerpts from Barbara Wallach's presentation that day.

"We are here in this beautiful reserve today to share our thoughts and memories of a very special person, Del Roberts. As we remember Del, it seems only right to gather in a place that meant so much to her.

"Many of you knew Del longer than I had that privilege; but I'm sure you would agree that to know Del was to love her. She was a charming, kind, thoughtful, considerate, intelligent, interesting woman. A very classy lady! Her warm and caring manner would envelop everyone who came in contact with her. She was our colleague and also our friend.

"I became a docent in 1993 and shortly thereafter Del found time in her schedule to do some of the children's school walks. This is when I began to know Del. She enjoyed working with the children and sharing her knowledge and love of the Reserve with them. Because of her many talents, the docents began calling on Del to assume very important board positions within our organization. There was not enough time in her week to continue hiking with the children anymore.

However, she never lost interest in the program and always spoke of coming back to it. During her tenure as *Torreyana* editor, she frequently solicited articles about the children's program and loved printing "thank you" letters we received from them.

"Del became a docent in 1988 and over a span of 12 years, she served our organization as *Torreyana* editor, program chairperson and led interpretive walks on the weekends. Her walks were always very popular with park visitors. Del was an entertainer; and visitors were delighted by her sense of humor and enthusiasm.

"Even though she worked with a computer that gave her fits, she produced and edited *Torreyana* after *Torreyana* that we all looked forward to reading. They were always expertly done and very well written. After all, Del was a professional and set very high standards for herself. Nothing short of the best was good enough for her. Those of you who worked with her on the committee planning the 100th anniversary celebration of the reserve, know what I am talking about. 'If anything is worth doing, it is worth doing well.' That was Del's motto! She wouldn't settle for less than the best from herself or from others. That put a lot of pressure on the rest of us. I'm sure we all still have the wonderful anniversary edition of the *Torreyana* that Del put together. It is a masterpiece...

Del also knew that recognizing docents for their hard work, time and effort was important. The special recognition pins that many of us wear are due to Del's thoughtfulness and insistence on having some way of honoring docents for their contributions to the organization. **(Continued on Page 3)**

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President's Message

On August 2nd, a beautiful warm sunny afternoon, we gathered at the Circle of Trees to say goodbye to our friend and dedicated docent, Del Roberts. More than one hundred friends, relatives and fellow docents came to Torrey Pines to celebrate the life of this lovely and talented woman with the beautiful smile and caring ways.

Our second Docent Beach Picnic was as successful as the first. Many of you came to eat, drink and socialize with other docents, their family members, and TPSR staff. We were having so much fun, we forgot to play the games Joan Nimick brought. Maybe next time?

We'll have another opportunity to celebrate life among the Torrey pines on October 11th at the Docent/Volunteer Appreciation Dinner, an evening of good food, fun and camaraderie. Ranger Dick Miller, who is coordinating the event, promises entertainment, as well. If you can help, please contact Ranger Miller at (619) 606-0138. He's retiring this month, so here's our chance to show him how much we appreciate his service with the TPSR.

I know you join me in extending condolences to dear friend and colleague Mary Knox Weir. Stanley Weir, her husband of 54 years, died August 6th after a long illness.

Georgette Camporini

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Ystagua -- The place of trees

by Maryruth Cox

It was the 15th of July, 1769, when Don Gaspar de Portola led 63 men down a steep ravine from Miramar Mesa to Carroll Canyon (where now the railroad tracks wind). When the explorers saw the broad expanse of Sorrento Valley, Father Juan Crespi noted that it looked "to us to be nothing less than a cultivated cornfield or farm, on account of its mass of verdure".

When they came closer they saw "calabashes and wild roses." It is believed that Indians purposely had burned the perennial shrubs on the valley floor to facilitate their hunting, and that annuals such as gourds and roses sprung up afterwards.

Portola saw six brush huts on a small rise near the junction of Carroll and Penasquitos canyons. It was the Indian village of Ystagua, the place of trees, and its excited inhabitants swarmed around the travelers, smiling and laughing.

The party stopped briefly to exchange gifts and information. One of the Indians offered to guide them to San Dieguito Valley, their next camp. As the Spaniards left Ystagua, Crespi saw two clay pots near one of the huts.

This scanty information represents the earliest first-hand observations about Ystagua, an Indian settlement for hundreds of years before the Spaniards came to California.

Ystagua was in a favorable location near the present merge of Interstate highways 805 and 5, south of the railroad tracks. From it could be seen the lagoon that emptied into the sea, the pine-covered hills, and the adjacent slopes with thickets of chaparral.

Here was fresh water from the drainage of two major canyons; fuel from manzanita and toyon; and food from the beach, the estuary, and the hills and valleys. The collecting, hunting, and fishing grounds of the village encompassed Torrey Pines State Reserve. These natural resources supported 30-50 people, depending on the season.

How did people live in Ystagua? What did they eat in this self-sustaining community? In recent years archeologists have found many answers to these questions. Future articles will be based on this new information.

References: "Portola's 1769 Expedition and Coastal Native Villages of San Diego County," by R. L Carrico, JCA, Summer 1977, Vol. 4, No. 1

"Excavation of a Portion of Ystagua: a Coastal Valley Ipai Settlement," by R.L Carrico, 1983, Docent Library

Del Roberts (continued from Page 1)
"In 1999, Del was recognized as docent of the year, an honor which she could have received many times over for her contributions and efforts on behalf of the docents.

"For many of us, the last time we saw Del was at the beach picnic July 6th. It is a day that will live with me forever. When I saw Del and Bob coming down the steps onto the beach, a huge lump formed in my throat and tears came to my eyes. I believe I hollered out, 'Del is here!'

"I hope she could feel the love that reached out to her that evening from all of her friends. We all knew how she had been suffering...but this brave, courageous woman graced us with her friendship, smile and warmth one more time that evening. Her presence made the evening perfect and brought joy to our hearts. We have this very special moment to remember always.

"To Bob Margulies and his family, the docents extend their condolences and prayers. We cannot feel the extent of your loss but we will always have wonderful memories of Del, our friend and fellow docent.



Class of 2001 -- Docents completing requirements and *badged* at the July 21st general membership meeting: (from left to right) Iris Geist, David Rightmer, Jim Sanserverino, Betty Smith, Training Officer Jim Cassell, Virginia Sabella, Nan Criqui, and Peter Torrey. Not shown, Stan Bliss. (Photo by Ranger Allyn Kaye)

Docent Chronicles

General Membership Meeting - September 15

Our guest speaker today represents the **Nature Conservancy**.

In 2000, this organization launched the largest private fund-raising campaign in conservation history when they committed to raise \$1 billion to fulfill their blueprint for conservation --a map of places and landscapes important to the long-term health of biodiversity and ecological systems, and the range of strategies necessary to conserve these systems.

Please bring a snack to share and a re-usable cup for liquid refreshments. Ranger Kaye reminds us to park on the west side of the Lodge Road, **south** of the restrooms, and carpool, carpool, carpool!

August membership meeting:

Charlie Kerns, a member of our own Natural Resources staff, addressed the general membership meeting August 18th. Kerns brought us up to date on the staff's continuing effort to remove exotics from TPSR and control the bark beetle infestation. He answered many of our questions concerning pesticide use and other resource management decisions. Kerns, who grew up in San Diego County, remembers clamoring over the old trail to the beach and squeezing through narrower and narrower sandstone outcroppings, obstacles that earned the trail its unofficial name, "Fat Man's Misery." It was closed to the public more than twenty years ago. As increasing visitor numbers threaten to overwhelm it, Kerns credits the TPDS with protecting what's left of the Reserve.

Barbara Wallach announced that the Children's Program would resume September 19th. She and co-coordinator **Margaret Fillius** still need docents to help with these walks. Wallach also reported that docents would be participating in **Del Mar's Native American Cultural Arts Day** the morning of September 22nd. Docents will present a native American-Kumeyaay school program and lead children on a hike.

Supervising Ranger Allyn Kaye urges us to attend the

Docent/Volunteer Appreciation

Dinner rescheduled for October 11.

"Bring your family, too." **Ranger Dick Miller**, who is retiring September 3rd, will coordinate the event. Please contact him if you can help. Also, Kaye says it is very important that you let us know you are coming and how many will be in your party. Please call the Lodge at (858) 755-2063 or sign-up on the clipboard at the docent desk.

Nancy Woodworth was named "**Docent of the Month**" for all the good work she's doing with our bookstore inventory and for re-organizing our Lodge desk resources. Woodworth established a Blue Notebook that lives at the docent desk. This Blue Book will tell you everything you need to know about volunteering in the TPSR. Thanks, Nancy Woodworth, for helping us get our act together!

And, another artistic docent surfaces --

Muriel Beyer's water-color was exhibited at the Del Mar County Fair and awarded Third Place.

Congratulations to all our multi-talented docents!

Another docent beach picnic was well attended, August 21st. Dozens of docents and their families came to the Torrey Pines State Beach for great food (potluck, of course) and good times. We're learning that docents really do like to party. Perhaps we should consider hosting these events year-round?

If you have to miss the Volunteer Appreciation dinner in October, you'll have one more chance to say your "good-byes" to Ranger Miller. **Old Town's recognition dinner for Dick Miller is Friday, September 21st at Casa de Guadalajara Restaurant.** Reservations are to be sent no later than September 14th to Joe Vasquez, San Diego Coast District, 9609 Waples St., Suite 200, S.D. CA 92121. Call (858) 642-4200 for more information.

Stanley Weir, late husband of **Mary Knox Weir**, TPDS board member and program chair, will be remembered at Esmeralda's Bookstore and Garden, September 9 at 1 PM. The long-time labor activist, educator and publisher died August 6. Esmeralda's is in the Del Mar Plaza.

The November Torreyana will be the last issue of 2001. Don your creative hat and write a poem, draw a picture, take a photo or write a memoir of your time in the Torrey pines. Deadline for submission is October 22nd!

"More" Diary of a Docent-in-Training

by Cynthia Dukich

April 7, 2001: Birds
Barbara Moore

It rained the morning of bird class, sideways, blow-your-roof-off rain in which sensible birds take shelter. Not to be outdone by our feathered friends, we demonstrated our sensibility by taking the bus instead of bikes.

Weather prevented the class from going out in the field with Barbara, but she still did a great job of introducing the birding novice (me), to the JIZZ—the general shape and size—of birding. She began with what I find most appealing about birds, their ability to fly from place to place. Migrating birds live the life to which I aspire. When natural conditions aren't right, instead of modifying their surroundings, they change place altogether, travelling somewhere else to find the season, latitude, or landscape they're looking for.

Due to individual adaptations, this right-place/right-time equation varies from species to species. The unique characteristics that prevent all birds from eating the same thing, or migrating to a single breeding ground on the same day (the Friday-afternoon gridlock syndrome) also are great clues to identity. Barbara advised the new birder to first observe the general shape and size of an unfamiliar bird's body, as well as the wing, tail, bill, etc., along with other distinguishable characteristics that make up what's known as the JIZZ of birds, such as field markings, songs, and behavior. Then she suggested asking questions about these traits. How are long legs advantageous? A curved beak? Webbed feet? The questions should probe how the bird interacts with the environment, and how these adaptations separate this species. Seven-powered binoculars make it easier to discern field markings. (Plus they look snazzy hanging around the

neck, especially when wearing a khaki vest with lots of pockets.) A good field guide, either a book, such as Kaufman's *Birds of North America*, or your own personal ornithologist is important as well. Barbara also recommended writing down each bird you see, every time you see it. If you go birding with others, you even get to write down the birds they spot (unless they see a greater bird of paradise, which I believe must be personally corroborated in San Diego County).

Barbara writes in her handout, "You have to work at learning birds." Work?! Oh, no. I see chain gangs, in-boxes and cubicles, until I remember the good works: working on a philosophy, a tan, a book, or a hot fudge sundae. Then I get into the spirit of what she means. Learning to bird seems a lot like the bulk of other worthwhile things, all about the willingness to look, and the desire to see.

April 28th: Insects—Ron Lyons

My big revelation today was that most critters I've always called bugs aren't really bugs. Beetles, dragonflies, wasps, ants and bees are not bugs. They're insects, categorized within different orders of the class *Insecta*. "Bug" applies only to a certain type of insect, one of the order *Hemiptera*. I suppose everyone else already knew that. Such grade-schoolish discoveries (more common than I should fess up to, especially in certain scientific realms) make me wonder what else I'm missing. Yikes! At least it gives me empathy for the blind spots in others that sometimes appear so obvious to me. Anyway, even the ladybug isn't a bug. She (or he) is really the ladybird beetle. The wing alignment gives away her beetle-ness, T-shaped and rather tidy. Real bugs cross their wings over each other in back, like an X.

May 5: Extension Hike

Wow! I had no idea the Extension was so . . . extensive. If the hike hadn't been added to the docent class schedule, it might have been years before I got over there. What a wonderful refuge, and

reminder. On days I'm dejected by mini-malls and roads without bike lanes, convinced society is stupid, wasteful, and stinky (except for the rare, correct-thinking folks like me), I'll try to keep the Extension in mind, and the fact that it exists because there are individuals everywhere, even if sometimes they're hard to see through the traffic, who are willing to spend their time fighting for trees and the preservation of open public spaces.

May 12: Interpretive Methods

Today's theme was themes, how to present information effectively, within a context, so that visitors leave TPSR, not with a list of facts they forget as they pull out of the parking lot, but with greater understanding and appreciation of the Reserve, as well as the natural world at large.

August 23: The Rest of the Requirements

Now that David and I are nearly rested up from an ambitious vacation schedule, we have few excuses for not finishing up our docent requirements by the end of September (other than the duties that come with houseguests, having a job, avoiding a job, looking for a job, and the numerous responsibilities that go along with sheer laziness). What are we waiting for? What are any of us -- who haven't yet finished our docent training -- waiting for? A medal? A paycheck? A personal summons from the governor? It seems the worst that could happen -- whether leading a group of kids on a hike, coming up with a theme, straightening the stuffed bobcat, or interacting with visitors while doing lodge duty -- is never quite getting around to any of it!

This concludes our "Diary of a Docent-in-Training" series. If you've enjoyed these entries as much as I have, give Cynthia a call. Let's encourage her to finish her requirements. Let's keep her involved and writing for the Torreyana. If you keep a diary or notebook chronicling your activities in the TPSR, why not share them in these pages? October 22 is the deadline for submitting articles for the November Torreyana. Editor



A Ranger's Life

by Linda Martin

Two years ago, when Docent Cheryl DeWitt and I first met Dick Miller at the intersection of Mar Scenic and the D.A.R. trails, we knew the friendly, talkative ranger would quickly find his niche in TPSR and would become an invaluable docent resource. An ardent birder and native plant specialist, Miller was tracking a quail family through the Extension chaparral. As predicted, Miller soon gained a reputation for being the staff person to see when stumped by a particular plant or animal species. If he didn't know the answer, he'd sure find out.

Miller grew up in Northern Michigan knowing he wanted to be a ranger, even though he'd never met one and couldn't explain to anyone exactly what that was. "I always knew what I wanted to do but it didn't have a name," he says. A Boy Scout through senior high school, Miller returned from a camp counseling job his graduating year to go straight into the Army. After the usual progression of small town jobs, delivering papers, bagging groceries and Boy Scout camp counselor, Miller suddenly found himself on the way to more adventure than any 18-year-old could possibly imagine. The Army Map Service would take him half-way around the globe and train him to be a land surveyor...in Ethiopia.

During his years in Africa, Miller's official surveying and mapping duties were carried out at night when it was cooler, so he spent his days exploring the desert. On one of these informal forays into the wilderness, he found himself face-to-face with two hyenas. "Hyenas are not a small animal, maybe 40 inches at the shoulder," says Miller, "and are just as aggressive pursuing live prey as dead." It was a chance encounter: Miller and the predators escaped unscathed.

Miller had many such unexpected thrills during his Army tour in Ethiopia, but there's one that still makes his heart race - it was the giant python that slithered out of the cane, across his trail and into the river. Miller says, "I couldn't move, I was just stuck in that spot, thankful that the huge snake had already eaten and was probably just looking for a quiet place to digest its meal." Miller insists the snake was plenty big enough to devour a full-sized man for dinner.

Miller's African adventures gave him a taste for "life on the edge." After college, he signed on with G.S.I., parent company of Texas Instruments, and spent a year in the Alaskan bush where he and a lone partner were once rescued by dogsled. When Miller settled in California nearly 30 years ago, he found a home in the state park service where he could continue his Indiana Jones lifestyle.

In fact, Miller's fondest career-related memories are associated with his role as the district's only mounted ranger. From 1984 until 1996, Miller interpreted for visitors to Old Town and the Tijuana River from atop his steed "Ranger." "It's a very special stage from which to interpret," says Miller. "Once you learn how to do it, you become a unit. It's not a ranger sitting on his horse, it's a ranger who is eight and a half feet tall." (When Miller left that assignment, Ranger went to live on Palomar Mountain: today he provides rides for children.) Miller smiles, a little sadly I think, and says, "Those were the best of times, when I was riding. Did you know I rode in the Rose Parade?" he asks suddenly. "It was the only time a uniformed park ranger rode in the parade."

In those early years, the park service was everything he'd hoped for -- a multi-generational family of park employees, naturalists, and educators. These days, the docents are sole survivors of the "family that was," says Miller. "The docent organizations, here and at Old Town, provide continuity that links the generations," Miller explained. "In the old days, the employees themselves would have provided the connections, but today, things happen so fast, partly due to staff shortages, that ties don't have time to develop between new and senior ranger staff."

Miller's appetite for travel and adventure will surely take him to more exotic locales after his retirement next month, but he insists there *are* things he will miss -- like the total and complete silence of the Torrey pines shrouded in a solid blanket of fog, especially when there are no people around. And the aroma of warm pine on a hot day -- unusual for a beach venue, he says.

Miller will *not* miss pedestrians on the Lodge Road. There's not a lot we can do about the problem of the "multi-use" road, he concedes. "It's locked into the system." But mention the "rights of pedestrians" and watch his hot button engage. Miller has problems with a few other DPR regulations (or, the interpretation of same) and is still amazed at a suggestion he cite a woman on the beach for having her pet goose "off-leash."

When I suggest we continue our interview without the tape recorder, he chuckles. The tanned ranger with military bearing says, "I never go off record. What you see is what I am."

Ranger Miller and his wife Lois are long-time residents of Normal Heights. September 3rd will be Miller's last day on the job, but he promises to come back to visit us often. You'll see him at the Volunteer Appreciation Dinner October 11 or at his own retirement dinner in Old Town, September 21. Details in the Docent Chronicles, this issue, page 4.
LM

Barn Owl, *Tito alba*

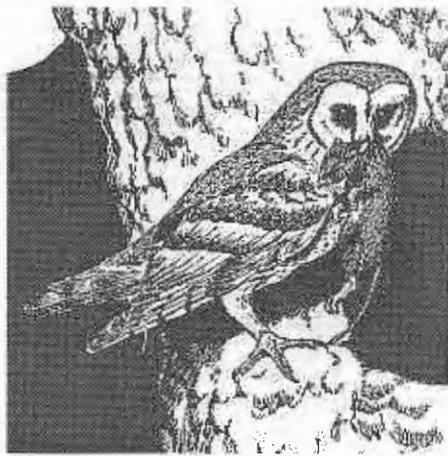
by Don Grine

The Barn Owl is listed as "irregular" in our Torrey Pines bird list. That's rarer than "rare." It is not seen at all in some years. However, we saw two on the August count: they were in a hole in the Torrey sandstone cliff overlooking the lagoon trail. This owl is more nocturnal than most, it seldom hunts at dusk. Since we don't count our birds at night, we generally miss the Barn Owl. We should get an owl expert in for a few special night counts.

The Barn Owl makes a realistic ghost. The mounted specimen in the Lodge shows how pale it is. It has fuzzy feathers (the forward edge of the first primary feather on each wing has small *barbules* sticking out) so air flow separates from the wing and stays smooth. As for all owls, the lack of vortex flow gives a very quiet flight. Its most common flight call is a hissing scream. The pale color, silent flight, and scary call produce the "haunt" in many abandoned buildings where it likes to nest.

The silent flight and a remarkable sense of hearing make this owl an efficient killer of the small rodents that comprise its diet. Experiments in totally dark rooms show that it can sink its talons into a running mouse without using its very good night vision. The facial ruff is not just decoration, it concentrates sound at the Barn Owl's ears just as holding your cupped hands back of your ears will do for you. The owl's ears are not symmetric, the left is higher than the right. The ruff is also asymmetric, enhancing the effect of the ear placement. The asymmetric placement allows the owl to locate sound sources vertically as well as left and right.

The species uses differences in loudness and time of arrival at its ears to make a two-dimensional map of auditory space. Its neurons multiply the signals from sound level and arrival time to respond to a pair of signals, each too low to locate that mouse. Fourteen owls with little headphones contributed to the study reported in "Science", on April 13, 2001.



The Barn Owl lays 5 to 7 eggs in a clutch but in most years, competition for food among the siblings is deadly. The eggs are laid so that they do not hatch all at once and the older owlets kill the younger unless food is very plentiful. The owls thus produce as many mature owls as the food supply permits.

The Barn Owl family, *Tytonidae* contains two genera and seventeen species, spread worldwide. They are pretty successful birds.

The Birds Of Torrey Pines State Reserve: August 4, 2001

Western Grebe 1
Brown Pelican 18
Double-Crested Cormorant 11
Great Blue Heron 8
Great Egret 8
Snowy Egret 25
*Little Blue Heron 1
Black-Crowned Night Heron 3
Mallard 2
Godwall 1
White-Tailed Kite 5
Red-Shouldered Hawk 2
Red-Tailed Hawk 6
American Kestrel 1
California Quail 1
Black-Bellied Plover 1
*Snowy Plover 1
Semipalmated Plover 2
Killdeer 9
Greater Yellowlegs 3
Willet 20
Whimbrel 50
Long-Billed Curlew 1

Marbled Godwit 3
Western Sandpiper 6
Heermann's Gull 54
Ring-Billed Gull 1
Western Gull 29
Caspian Tern 2
Royal Tern 2
Forster's Tern 5
Least Tern 8
Rock Dove 12
Mourning Dove 17
*Common Barn-Owl 2
Anna's Hummingbird 15
Nuttall's Woodpecker 1
Black Phoebe 17
Ash-Throated Flycatcher 1
Cassin's Kingbird 11
*Western Kingbird 1
N. Rough-Winged Swallow 4
Cliff Swallow 20
Scrub Jay 7
American Crow 1
Common Raven 34
Bushtit 34
Bewick's Wren 3
House Wren 1
California Gnatcatcher 2
Wrentit 12
Northern Mockingbird 2
California Thrasher 7
European Starling 4
Common Yellowthroat 4
Wilson's Warbler 1
California Towhee 31
Savannah Sparrow 23
Song Sparrow 39
Brewer's Blackbird 15
House Finch 120
American Goldfinch 1
House Sparrow 1

Total species 63

*Rare to uncommon in the Reserve
Observers: Shirley Grain, Don Grine, Kathy Estey, Dorothy Green, Barbara Anderson, David Blue, Gary Grantham, Twinx Hauer, Hank And Jane Baele --
Weather: clear, temp.70, medium tide, mouth open, wind 5-10mph

