



# Torrey Pinecone

A news bulletin for the  
Torrey Pines Docent Society

**October 2006**

## September Docent Meeting

*Excerpted from notes from the TPDS General Meeting, September 16, 2006 taken by Victoria Schaffer. Complete notes in docent library.*

### Docent of the Month: Bob Lawhead

for major efforts on our Web site and computer network.

### Treasurer Report: (Rick Vogel)

Major expense of \$1,400 for TPSR signs.

**Children's Program:** (Cecily Goode) Program will start September 28, with slots all filled for September through November. Docents can sign up in video room. For training, seven docents joined a children's tour by Cecily and Edigna Hansen on 9/15.

**Training:** Jeff Spivak reported there is already a list of 16 docents waiting for next year's training.

**Duty:** (Lillian Lachicotte) There will only be two Lodge duty shifts after the time change the last Sunday in October.

**Communications:** (Roger Isaacson) Online duty hour logging is heavily used: 3800 entries this year. The computer will be in the video room during library remodeling. Find out your year-to-date hours from the Tracker program or by emailing Roger. The monthly duty calendar and a Google calendar are both on the Web site. The October Pinecone will be distributed later than usual, to allow for reports of end-of-September events.

### October General Meeting will be Saturday October 21

**At 9:00 a.m.**

**At National University  
11255 North Torrey Pines  
Road**

**Further information on  
program and agenda by  
email.**

**Bookstore:** (Nancy Woodworth) 900 postcards with TPSR flower information, donated by Margaret Fillius, are available for sale. Tide Calendar, Almanac and Engagement Calendar are also available. **Barbara Wallach** will conduct a Gourd Art Workshop on Saturday, 10/28, starting at 9 a.m., to decorate gourds for the holidays. Look for email reminder. The Bookstore Committee is developing a Children's Program table.

**Library:** (Steve Rose) Library has new geology books. During remodeling return books to box outside Library door. Sharon Rose reminded docents of the Quail Botanical Gardens tour on 9/26, a reciprocal arrangement with their docents.

**Trail Patrol:** (Paul Whitby) Thanks to docents who worked the busy Labor Day weekend. Updated Trail Patrol Manual just emailed to the patrollers, with recommendation to take it on patrol. Twenty-seven docents did 127 Patrol hours in August.

**Library Remodel Update:** (Steve Usher) Remodeling begins next week. The video room will be closed during the remodeling. We will celebrate the Grand Opening of the remodeled Library on Saturday, 10/28. Per Sharon Rose, books will be packed and not available until reopening.

### TPDS Meeting Break:

**Cecily Goode, Barbara McCardle and Walter Desmond** will head a committee to arrange for the break refreshments during our General Meetings. Volunteers should contact one of them.

**Rangers' Report:** (Jody Kummer) Arrangements for the Volunteer Appreciation Dinner on 9/24 are under way. The California Coastal Commission is reviewing the Beach Trail repair proposal. Docents should ask certain callers to contact the staff by email, especially for requests for staff talks or other special events. Minimize taking phone messages and/or requests for phone replies. Email address information is given in the TPSR Web site under Education/Teacher's Corner/Special Hikes and is also printed on a card taped onto the Lodge desk. The address is

[TorreypinesFieldTrips@yahoo.com](mailto:TorreypinesFieldTrips@yahoo.com).

Resource Ecologist Darren Smith and Jody Kummer are planning for T-shirts for the exotic plant removal group.

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### **Meeting Program:**

A pleasant surprise was a program by our own in-house speakers, who recounted some of their experiences and gave tips on their various areas of expertise.

**Nelson Brav**, Interpretive Walk guide, informed us that he was always prepared to give talks to any group that would have him, and shared some interpretive tips advising docents to include sense-stimulating experiences in their walks, such as the touch, rub and smell of scented leaves. He also suggested that docents share their own, vivid experiences to educate visitors, and gave as example for snake-phobic visitors that in 20 years of tour-giving he has run into only 3 rattlesnakes. He said not to worry too much about scientific names, since "You cannot always have Margaret Fillius come along with you."

**Herb Knufken**, Class of 2006 and expert photographer, specializes in birds in flight. He first learned how to photograph moving, fluttering subjects by taking pictures of helicopters, whose flight he finds rather predictable. He then moved on to birds in flight. He said that it helped to find out where Bill Sutter was, because that would be the site of an excellent photo opportunity for peregrines or any falcon. For Herb's gallery of photos, go to [www.pbase.com/herb1rm](http://www.pbase.com/herb1rm) or Google his name for links.

**Kathy Estey**, expert birder and monthly Bird Survey observer, reminded us that the monthly TPDS Bird Survey can be found in the video room and the *Torreya/Pinecone* on the TPSR Web site. August count included 60 species. The count and species vary from month to month, depending on the season and migration patterns. A good way to start learning about birds: Take the San Elijo brochure of the bird surveys of the 30-40 shore birds most frequently seen in our area. Take it along for a beach walk and I.D. the 4 or 5 most common birds for the given month. Do that monthly. Right now, the most common

shore birds for September just flew in from Alaska. In October, ducks will be back from Alaska and Canada. Learn about adult gull species, and do not worry too much about plumage for different sex and age unless you have a lot of time available. Look for trends, such as increase or decrease in numbers, and return of migratory species. Belted Kingfishers are back this month. Global warming is changing the usual patterns. Learn about birds by small groups and not 50 at a time!

**Don Grine**, one of our Geology experts, gave tips on important features to point out in the cliffs when walking up on the beach. "You walk up in time as you walk up the cliff." He recommended the *Geology of San Diego Metropolitan Area* as a good, new reference book in the Library. "One interesting thing about geology is that it's all over the place."

## **A visit to Quail Botanical Gardens**

*Text by Victoria Schaffer*

*Photos by Herb Knufken*

Our group of 30 Torrey Pines docents toured Quail Botanical Gardens, under a reciprocity arrangement between our docent societies, organized by docents Sharon and Steve Rose. The gardens were originally a farm, which became the private residence of plant collector and naturalist Ruth Larabee. Ruth donated the land to San Diego County in 1957 as a park and wildlife sanctuary. Quail Gardens opened to the public in 1971, and later changed its name to Quail Botanical Gardens. A non-profit foundation has operated it since 1993.

The 32 acres are divided into 24 sections, most corresponding to distinct phytogeographical collections. Led by docent Kay Worley we toured the **African Garden**, through cycads, lion's tail and African tulip trees. Cycads are

an ancient group of dioecious species that lived in the Permian era, over 200 million years ago; once abundant, they are now rare and coveted by collectors.



Looking at Madagascar, "spiny desert" plants

We next visited the **Tropical Rain Forest**, which surrounds a waterfall, pools and spring, under a tall canopy of Torrey pines! Tree ferns and epiphytes, including orchids and bromeliads, are at home in this lush section. A Strangler Fig epiphyte slowly strangles a magnolia tree. By the lower pond at the end of the waterfall, the evergreen sausage tree (*Kigelia pinnata*) produces large, sausage-shaped fruit. Bats pollinate it in its native Africa, and elephants and rhinoceros eat its fruit; at Quail Gardens pollination is by hand. Docent Kay advised us not to stand under the Australia native Bunya-Bunya tree, (*Araucaria bidwillii*) that unexpectedly drops 10-15-pound cones.

**The New World Desert Garden** highlights succulents in the genus Agave, native to the Western Hemisphere, with 130 species. Agaves were used as food in Mesoamerica for 9000 years. Sap from some species is drunk fresh, or fermented to produce pulque, mescal or tequila. All plants from this section thrive in San Diego.

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In front of the Old World Desert Garden

The **Old World Desert Garden** includes colorful aloes, euphorbias, and dragon trees, from Asia and Africa. Many of the 350 species in the genus *Aloe* were traditionally used for food or medicine, and are currently used in the cosmetics industry. The dragon tree (*Dracaena draco*), Quail Botanical Gardens' signature plant, was named for its sap's red color which ancients compared to dragon's blood, and was used to stain Stradivarius violins.

The **Subtropical Fruit Garden** displays unusual plants from

Heading to the Bamboo Garden



assists in maintaining the collection. Bamboo is used worldwide as food, fodder, timber and household material. Plants spread through rhizomes, and range in height from a few inches to 100 feet. As we walked under the green, creaking, waving canopy, among attractive culms (stems), docent Kay explained the difference between runners and clumpers. The most common runners in the U.S. are in the genus *Phyllostachys*; they are highly invasive and not the plant for your backyard. Clumping bamboos grow in dense clumps that spread slowly around the edges. A common genus is *Bambusa*. With 20 more sections to go, we will return soon to this "place of year-round blooms and beauty."

For more information, call 760.436.3036 or go to [www.qbgardens.org](http://www.qbgardens.org).

## Special Events

There will be an ebb tide beach walk by Wes Farmer on October 7<sup>th</sup>, starting promptly at 2 p.m. from the Kiosk. The mile long hike will last about 2 hours. We will find fossil oyster beds, a buried carbonized "tree" where the Crocodile bone is located. See the Bay Point Formation "cave" from the beach. Discover sea life the sea might have deposited on the beach. Hike includes the earthquake zone past Flat Rock. The tide will be a high of 7 ft at 9:30 a.m. and -0.6 ft at 4:07 p.m.

The **California Native Plant Society, San Diego Chapter** is holding their Fall 2006 Native Plant sale, Saturday, October 14, 2006, at the Casa del Prado courtyard (across from west entrance of Natural History Museum) Balboa Park, San Diego. Sale begins at 9:15 a.m. for members and 10:00 a.m. for nonmembers. Join CNPS at the plant sale and get in at 9:15 a.m! Visit the Web site at [www.cnpssd.org/plantsale.html](http://www.cnpssd.org/plantsale.html) for more information.

## TPSR Staff Dramatize their Appreciation

By Walt Desmond

Photos by Herb Knufken

The mystery thriller "Who Killed Max Devlin" made its long-awaited, all-too-brief, appearance on the San Diego stage Sunday evening, September 24, at our own TP State Beach near Tower One. The entire TPSR staff put on their annual Volunteer Appreciation—in both thespian and gastronomic form.



Ably emceed by the irrepressible Ed Vodrazka, who equally irrepressibly heads the lifeguard staff, the production featured the hitherto hidden talents of ranger and aide alike. This ensemble kept the audience of 130 on the edge of their seats (no, they were NOT trying to sneak away!) as they unveiled the horror of a murder in their midst, and a riveting series of discoveries implicating virtually every player as the possible perpetrator of this vile deed.

Guests were presented with evidence sufficient to identify said perp unambiguously—though the facts were continually and cleverly obfuscated by stepped-on, fumbled and dropped lines. (These seemed to take a noticeable uptick as the sun set, and the carefully disguised cheat



sheets became illegible.) The appearance of torches, both flaming and electrical, permitted the delivery of the denouement, as the mystery reached its dramatic peak (Supervising Ranger Jody Kummer's stage whispered suggestion that, "We have to wrap this up!", and perhaps a glazed expression or two among the rapt remaining attendees). In spite of the precise and careful laying out of evidence throughout the evening, an audience vote on the doer of the dastardly deed was quite equivocal—probably influenced more by the provocative dress of some of the suspects, Gary Olson and Moira Reagan, to mention a couple. There could be no better evidence for their dedication to those duties first

and foremost. Perhaps overshadowed by the onstage triumph was an excellent picnic buffet of sandwiches, appetizers, sand, carrot cake and drinks. An alternative way to a docent's heart!

From ridiculous to sublime for a moment—the appreciation of the Reserve staff was obvious in planning, publicizing and organizing this event, in their interactions throughout the evening with the audience; and just in the effort to set up chairs, tents, tables, etc. for 130 guests (docents, docent family, TPA members, other volunteers). All this at the end of a busy September weekend...And we didn't even see the work they continued after we left! Surely this is mutual appreciation! □



## 32 DUTY OPENINGS!!

Please check the October duty calendar on the back of this issue: there are 32 slots, at press time, needing YOUR name! Help us fulfill our PRINCIPAL RESPONSIBILITY!

## Santa Rosa Island affected by defense bill

By Walt Desmond

As docents have become aware, Santa Rosa Island, entirely within Channel Islands National Park, and the other home of our precious Torrey pine has become a legislative issue. The federal defense appropriations bill, critical for continued military operation over the next year, included a requirement that non-native animals be permitted to stay on Santa Rosa permanently. This reverses a court order that deer and elk being maintained for trophy hunting be removed by 2011, as part of a National Park Service effort to restore the island ecosystems. As congressional representatives returned to their districts for November elections, the

House-Senate conference committee released the final version of this bill, which was then approved by both houses (the Senate unanimously) and now awaits the President's signature. Park supervision and environmental groups are examining the ramifications of this legislation, and possible remedies.

*Editor's note 1: Readers who wonder what thwarting of National Park habitat restoration has to do with our nation's defense, should know that this bill contains around 2000 'earmarks,' worth upwards of \$7,000,000,000, many of which have no obvious relation to defense. (Could they have to do with those trips back home seeking reelection?)*

*Editor's note 2: As docents who made the recent Santa Rosa Island trip can attest, 90% of this publicly-owned island is off limits to the public (for safety reasons) during the 4-month hunting season. The Torrey pines are in the 10% that remains open. Signs of the exotic animals are also evident in this open area.*

## Some recent Torrey Pines Beach activity

by Herb Knufken



"Willets fighting"



Semipalmated Plover playing "tug-o-war"

Images are copyrighted. Please contact the photographer before using an image for any reason:  
[herb1rm@hotmail.com](mailto:herb1rm@hotmail.com)

[Ed. Note: See in color at Herb's site: [www.pbase.com/herb1rm](http://www.pbase.com/herb1rm)]

## Torrey Pines Docent Society Bird Survey: Sept 3, 2006

Total of 69 species (unusual sightings shown with an asterisk and in italics) Weather: clear Lagoon mouth: open

Gadwall 4	Semipalmated Plover 3	Mourning Dove 12	Common Yellowthroat 10
Mallard 68	Killdeer 8	White-throated Swift 2	Spotted Towhee 9
Ruddy Duck 1	Black-necked Stilt 2	Anna's Hummingbird 41	California Towhee 25
California Quail 8	Greater Yellowlegs 1	Belted Kingfisher 2	Savannah Sparrow 10
Pied-billed Grebe 13	Willet 18	Nuttall's Woodpecker 4	Belding's Savannah Sparrow 3
Brown Pelican 14	Whimbrel 3	Black Phoebe 17	Song Sparrow 16
Double-crested Cormorant 2	Long-billed Curlew 1	Cassin's Kingbird 3	Black-headed Grosbeak 1
Great Blue Heron 2	Marbled Godwit 7	Western Scrub-Jay 21	Red-winged Blackbird 6
Great Egret 9	<i>Ruddy Turnstone*</i> 1	American Crow 38	Brewer's Blackbird 8
Snowy Egret 8	Sanderling 60	Common Raven 2	House Finch 52
Green Heron 2	Western Sandpiper 7	Northern Rough-winged Swallow 2	Lesser Goldfinch 13
Black-crowned Night-Heron 2	Least Sandpiper 2	Cliff Swallow 6	
	<i>Red-necked Phalarope*</i> 6	Bushtit 28	
Osprey 1	Heermann's Gull 65	House Wren 10	
White-tailed Kite 3	California Gull 1	California Gnatcatcher 18	
Red-tailed Hawk 3	Western Gull 21	Wrentit 34	
American Kestrel 6	Royal Tern 3	Northern Mockingbird 1	
<i>Clapper Rail*</i> 1	Elegant Tern 12	California Thrasher 6	
Black-bellied Plover 7	Forster's Tern 11	Orange-crowned Warbler 1	
Snowy Plover 16	Least Tern 1		

Observers: David Blue, Will Cox, Blair Francis, Kathy Estey, Jack Friery, Gary Grantham, and Herbert Knufken