



Torrey Pinecone

A news bulletin for the
Torrey Pines Docent Society

June 2012

What is the San Diego Science Fair?

by Joan R. Simon

Two Science Fair presentations highlighted the May monthly meeting. Ari Colton and Matan Kaminski, both juniors at the San Diego Jewish Academy, presented their study, “Development of Algae as a Biofilter for Phosphate Reclamation” and Boris Stepanyuk, a junior at High Tech High, talked about his project, “Small Insect, Large Dilemma.” Summaries of their projects can be found in the May *Torreyana*, pgs. 7-8:

torreypine.org/Torreyana/1205.pdf

Nilay Shah, an eighth grader from Wangenheim Middle School, will present his project, “What is the Decomposition Rate of Polylactic Acid in Ocean Water?” at the June meeting. A summary of his work appears on pgs. 6-7 of this issue.

Before the students made their presentations, Walt Desmond gave a brief overview of the Greater San Diego Science and Engineering Fair and the Docent Society’s involvement. Most projects, he said, are year-long with one or two students participating. There are 10,000 students from San Diego and Imperial Counties who vie for a spot at the Fair. The first stop is usually a local school fair, then students go on to a regional fair. Finally the top 800 – 1000 students from middle and high schools are selected to participate in

Docent General Meeting Saturday, June 9th 9 am

Location: St Peter’s Episcopal
Rec Hall, Del Mar

Speaker: *Layla Aerne Hains*, Research Project Manager, Botany Department, San Diego Natural History Museum. For seven years, Layla has headed The San Diego County Plant Atlas, a project designed to improve scientific knowledge and documentation of regional plants.

Program: *The Flora of San Diego County and the Plant Atlas Project*. With more than 2,500 native and naturalized plants, San Diego County is an internationally recognized hotspot of biological diversity. The plant atlas has helped to document this floristic diversity.

Additional Program: After the break, we will be honored with an excellent student presentation by *Nilay Shah*, Science Fair Student Winner: *What is the Decomposition Rate of Polyactic Acid in Ocean Water?* A summary of his project can be found on pgs. 6-7.

the Science Fair in Balboa Park, which usually takes place in late March or early April. This is the 58th year of the Science Fair.

Two divisions, junior (7th and 8th grades) and senior (9th-12th), are judged separately, with 12 different science and engineering categories, one of which is environmental. First through 4th place awards are given in each category. The top 100 winners go on to the California State Science

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Fair and from there the highest ranked students are invited to the Intel (formerly Westinghouse) International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF),

More than 80 professional organizations, including many engineering societies and universities, participate in the judging at the San Diego Science Fair. Local natural history groups include the Audubon Society, the San Diego Water Authority, the San Diego Botanical Gardens, the San Diego Zoo, and the Geology Society.

TPDS has been involved with the San Diego Science Fair since 2001 when Walt brought the idea to the Society from his own experiences at high school science fairs. At the time, he said, “I was concerned that not many

students were doing projects on natural history topics.” A program was organized by **Theo Tanalski** to give awards from the Docent Society to Science Fair projects that were relevant to TPSNR. The original judges were **Theo, Don Grine** and **Georgette Camporini**. Over the years the awards have expanded in number and value with more docent judges and more complex projects to evaluate.

Today, up to four winners are selected and invited to present their projects at a docent meeting and to submit a summary of their work to the newsletter. A docent mentor is provided to the students to help in this process. Each winner receives a certificate, a yearly parking pass to the Reserve and \$250 (\$125 when two students collaborate). In recent years the program has been coordinated by **Sally Whitlock** and **Frank Burham**. The current judging team consists of **Sally, Frank, Joan Adamo, Walt Desmond, Wes Farmer, Frank Burham, Mike Yang, Sheldon Krueger, Bill Key, Paula Shaw, Jeff Harrison, Lou Adamo** and **Denise Sunseri**.

Walt stressed the benefits students gain from participating in a science fair and how important it is for TPDS to support them. The experience offers “learning beyond the text books,” he said, which is inquiry-based and interdisciplinary. Students gain practice in using the scientific method and are mentored by academic scientists. More importantly, 60 – 70% percent of participants go on to work in the science and engineering fields. And, he noted, “Colleges and scholarship programs love it!”

FLASH From Laura Lowenstein: Don't forget to donate your ZooNooz magazines to the Museum Shop.

How You Can Be Involved in the Science Fair Program:

- Join the TPDS judging team (contact Sally Whitlock or Frank Burham)
- Volunteer to be Coordinator of the program
- Generate ideas for projects that directly relate to TPSNR. Please submit your ideas to Joan Adamo.

May 2012 Docent Meeting Minutes

Excerpted from notes of TPDS May 12th General Meeting, by Secretary Bill Eckles. Complete minutes in docent library.

Ken King, President, called the meeting to order at 10:25 am following two presentations by winners from the Science and Engineering Fair and a summary by **Walt Desmond** of the history of our involvement with the Fair.

Janie Killermann informed trainees that “live scan” representatives were present at the day’s meeting.

President's Announcements:

Docents of the Month for their collective contributions to Art in the Pines are **Judith Zyskind** and **Doug Smith** [see pg. 3].

Parry Grove Trail is progressing with boulders being moved. No ETA as yet, but progress is noticeable.

Docent Society Funds are substantial and Ken requested suggestions to spend some of them. Obvious possibilities are improved taxidermy and repairs to the Lodge infrastructure. Please send other suggestions to Ken.

"After Hours," a painting by Don Fremuth, has been donated to the Society and now hangs in the Lodge on the wall next to the entrance to the video room.

Treasurer's Report: **Carolyn Butterfield** reported that financials for the month of April were very

strong, especially income from the Museum Shop. The cash flow was negative because of expenses, but the financials did not include proceeds from Art in the Pines.

Art in the Pines: Cindy Wollaeger announced a successful event and thanked all those who helped her. The booth artists were happy and sold over \$35,000 in art. The two-day format worked well. Net proceeds for the Children's Program were around \$10,000, a big increase from last year. Special thanks to the Park Aides for their assistance in controlling traffic and helping all around. Their uniforms encouraged compliance with the rules.

Lillian Lachicotte thanked the volunteers, some 175 in number for their help and support during the two days.

Joan Simon reported docent net sales at nearly \$1,000 for almost 100 items. **Nancy Woodworth** reported that Museum Shop sales exceeded a normal weekend by approximately \$1,300. Water sales were 388 bottles!

Children's Program: Sue Randerson expressed thanks to all helpers in the program. [see pg. 3 for more]

Lodge Hosting: Irene Larrimore reported a fairly full calendar with only a few slots remaining. Hours spent on AIP can create a down turn in docent volunteering immediately following the event, so please check the schedule for openings.

Book Club: The book club will meet on June 12 at 2:30 pm at **Allison Howard's** home.

Membership: Carol Smith announced that membership directories have been distributed and to send her any corrections you have.

Chuck Anders announced a "Biblical Plants Walk" scheduled for June 2 at 12:30 pm starting from the Lodge.

Ken adjourned the meeting at 10:55 am.

Children's Program

by Sue Randerson, Children's Program Director and Laura Lowenstein, Children's Program Coordinator

A big thank you to all the Children's Program docents for the outstanding job you have done presenting and leading the children every Thursday and Friday this past year. Because of you an average of 120 children a week have had a chance to experience nature first-hand and be inspired by your enthusiasm and all the fascinating things you have shared with them.

Thanks also to **Janet Ugalde** and **Lynne Truong** and her daughter who represented TPSNR at the Military Families Nature Event at Camp Pendleton on April 28 with a booth offering geology activities for the children there. And thanks to **Diane Greening** and the docents and trainees who manned the children's art activity table at Art in the Pines. The kids had a great time at both events.

You can tell teachers who inquire that online teacher signups for the coming year will open on August 15. Everything is done via our website at torreypine.org by looking under Education/Teacher's Corner/Field Trips for request forms. Teachers that can't get a date may want to consider coming for a naturalist talk followed by a self-guided hike. Field trip dates for both programs will start again after Labor Day. During the summer when we get lots of visitors for the beach and trails, docents take a well-deserved break.

We often are asked, why don't we offer the docent-led program on more than two days a week? The docent-led Children's Program is so popular that many teachers are turned away each year. We would like to provide more field trip dates but in order to add another day to our two days a week we will need to have more docents who will commit to helping

on a regular basis. We are delighted that several trainees are planning to join us. And we welcome docents who would like to join us to make a third day a possibility. Thanks to the hard work of the docent planning committee and other docent volunteers, funds were raised at Art in the Pines that can be used once we secure more volunteers to help with leading students on-trail. This would be a wonderful goal!

Our year-end wrap up/evaluation session will be on Friday, June 8. All Children's Program docents as well as trainees and others interested in the Children's Program are invited and encouraged to attend. We will meet at the back of the Lodge at 9:30 am and discuss what has worked well, share highlights, ideas for improvement, and suggestions for next year. The meeting will be followed by a simple but delicious potluck lunch at 11:30 am.

Please bring your ideas and also your calendars so we can set up dates for a couple of training sessions during the summer. One will probably be a field trip...and we welcome suggestions!

Jim Cassell's Bird Houses

Docents love birds and bird houses so bring cash or your checkbook to the June docent meeting so that you can purchase one of Jim Cassell's unique bird houses. Jim has been enjoying painting during his recovery from back surgery and has created some delightful and whimsical bird houses.

The houses are one of a kind and reflect Jim's wonderful artistic talent—talent that has benefited the Reserve for many years in so many ways. We will have a live auction during our refreshment break and try to outbid each other to claim one of the little treasures as our own. Monies



Docents of the Month: Doug Smith, Judith Zyskind

Photos by Herb Knufken

Becoming docents in 2010 was exciting for us because we loved hiking in the Reserve through the years and now would be able to give back in tangible ways. Previously we worked together professionally and thought perhaps there would be docent activities that would allow us to continue to focus on similar tasks, such as working for Art in the Pines.



This year under the able direction of **Cindy Wollaeger** both of us worked on Artist Relations with Doug building a database and Judith communicating with the artists.

We felt that the purpose of extending awareness of Torrey Pines State Natural Reserve to more people in the community through a popular event like Art in the Pines was worth the effort. Plus we raised \$10,000!



raised will be donated to the Docent Society in Jim's name.

Jim hopes to see many of his friends at the meeting and will welcome all gentle hugs. Be prepared to join in the fun!

Barbara Wallach

Art IN THE Pines

Art in the Pines was a huge success thanks to

you. Our goals were met. We opened Torrey Pines to many, many people who were not aware we offered such a lovely hiking spot, with a gift shop as well. We allowed over 100 artists to show their works in their natural setting (the Plein Air competition had 50 competitive paintings each painted in TPSNR) and we provided a beautiful way to spend a Saturday and Sunday afternoon enjoying tacos and organic popsicles, listening to a variety of excellent musicians. The docent booth was a huge success – what a talented group. Thank you for showing us your passions.

Our THANK YOU's go out to all the docents who pitched in in their own way. This event could not happen without all of you. Whacky Weeders continued to keep the Reserve free of exotics and worked extra hard around the Lodge as May grew closer. Christine's road crew was hard at work on Thursday. The Seabees provided much of the new safety items – white A-frame signage, large brown barricades to keep pedestrians off the shuttle route and bicycles off the main road. Did you see the tall purple towers with green and yellow flags? Thanks again to the Seabees. Those of you who like to lead hikes, run the POS, stock the Museum Shop, train new docents and sell opportunity drawing tickets – thank you.

Our committee members each had a specific area of responsibility and each person did his or her job magnificently. Together we have created an improved Art in the Pines with the Children's Nature Programs as the beneficiary.

*Cindy Wollaeger and
Judith Zyskind*

phoTORREYgraphs

by Judy Schulman

A little over a year has passed from the date on last month's (1970) photo to this month's photo (1971). Parking has now gone up from \$.75 to \$1.00. Is that because of the economy or was that because the State Park system was allowing dogs at Torrey Pines? Would they have charged more if the dog was not on a leash?



New Superintendent for North Sector, San Diego Coast District

I am pleased to announce that Robin Greene has been selected as the new Superintendent for the North Sector of San Diego Coast District.

Robin has worked for over 23 years with California State Parks, serving at Parks in both the San Diego Coast District and Colorado Desert District. Most of Robin's time has been spent at the spectacular Picacho State Recreation Area.

Even though she has spent much of her career working in that southeast outpost of the state park system, Robin is no stranger to many of you. She has provided invaluable statewide support and leadership in firearms training and many other training programs for most of her career. Robin also played a major leadership role following the devastating Cedar Creek Fire.

Robin's passion for State Parks, professionalism, and management skills will serve her well in her new

position as leader of, arguably, one of the most complex sectors in the department. I am thrilled to have her join our District.

Clay Phillips

*District Superintendent
San Diego Coast District
California State Parks*

Art in the Pines: My Impressions

by Bill Eckles

Art in the Pines. I know art. I studied art history in school. I've seen the Uffizi. Masters. The Hermitage. I've seen a lot but I had never seen the mass of art produced by the multitude of artists of Art in the Pines, all amassed into one beautiful location. I had not witnessed their similarities and their differences.

The theme for all was the same "Art in the Pines" and not necessarily the Torreys.

It was a collection of more than a hundred artists showing their art reflecting Nature, with or without that capital "N." Water colors, oil, acrylics, canvas, gourds, ceramics, paper, digits of photographs and film reflecting plants, animals and dirt alike. Could there actually be more diversity surrounding this single subject? I cannot comprehend, nor describe the multitude of expressions that were portrayed. Even more elusive are those expressions that linger in the hearts, minds and hands, yet are still not expressed by the artists.

I had seen art, works of art, but I had yet to understand the real concept of art. Art as the expressions of a multitude of human beings, each with a multitude of exposures, experiences, environments and desires to come to the surface. You do the math. Art in the Pines was a festival, a bath in exposures to and experiences of emotion. A wondrous collection of feelings. This finally is

my undercover understanding that had been lacking before when I had thought of “Art.”

So, thank you ladies and gentlemen, large and small, with your many colors and shapes from countless places influenced by infinite experiences. Thank you all for sharing, giving to me, with my limited abilities to absorb, your intentions. You overwhelm my senses and bring me elation in the realization that I will never consume the abundant supply of beauty available. Thank you for this Art.

Opening the Los Peñasquitos Lagoon

by Joan R. Simon

For months the winter storms strip the beaches on either side of the Los Peñasquitos Lagoon, revealing a sea of rocks and pebbles, squeezing the strip of sand to a bare minimum and leaving the inlet to the lagoon open and unfettered. Then one day, usually in late March or April, as the gentler spring/summer ocean builds the beach back up, the inlet gradually (or sometimes suddenly) closes up tight and the two beaches are united, cutting off the tidal flow to the lagoon.

On April 2nd, right on schedule, the lagoon closed, but this year was a little different. A few days later a heavy storm filled the lagoon to the brink and the water pressure, reported to be over 400 cubic ft. per second, broke through the sandbar and opened up the lagoon.



Before dredging

This was a welcome reprieve, but a temporary one. It was only a matter of time before the lagoon would close up again, and this time undoubtedly for good. So as happens every year,

the lagoon needed to be dredged and the inlet opened up. This is an annual expense that averages \$100,000, according to Mike Hastings, Executive Director of the Los Peñasquitos Lagoon Foundation which is charged with finding the money and overseeing the project every year.

It was not always this way. During the lagoon’s 10,000 year history, the pushing and pulling of tidal waters and the force of winter storms carved out changing openings to the sea. The inlet meandered up and down the shoreline, following the proverbial path of least resistance. That started to change in the late 1800s, when the first recorded closing coincided with the building of the initial railroad berm. Things went from bad to worse when a larger railway berm was built in 1925. The *coup de grace* was in 1932 when the expansion of Highway 101 along the coast left only one opening for the lagoon under a cramped bridge with 74 pilings.



During dredging

This narrow and fettered gateway restricted the tidal flow to such an extent that the reduced volume and velocity of water could no longer suspend most of the sand and cobbles it carried. Sediment built up quickly at the lagoon’s entrance and the inlet started closing up with frequency. From that time on, Mr. Hastings said, the closures became chronic, sometimes lasting up to a year.

Lee Legrange, one of the pioneers of inlet openings at Los Peñasquitos Lagoon, started recording mouth closures and openings (by shovel at that time) from 1956 to the mid-1980’s. Mechanized openings began around 1985 and have been

conducted at least once a year ever since.

In 2005 the City of San Diego completed a new bridge over the inlet, designed with 4 support columns (instead of the older bridge’s 74), allowing freer access to tidal flows. As a result inlet closures have become less frequent, but annual maintenance is still required to connect the lagoon’s main channels to the ocean.

This year \$50,000 was secured from the County of San Diego through their Department of Environmental Health. The dredging was done during the week of May 14th.

Why is it so important to keep the lagoon open? The answer is pretty simple. Without the influx of ocean water, the lagoon begins to die, according to Doug Gibson, naturalist at the San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy, who spoke at the Docent Society’s March meeting about both Los Peñasquitos and San Elijo lagoons. See: tinyurl.com/pinecone1204

Without tidal flushing, the salt marsh accumulates too much fresh water from rain and run-off in the winter; in the summer, the water becomes too warm and oxygen-deprived. Under either condition, the lagoon is no longer a viable habitat for the myriad birds, fish, reptiles, invertebrates, and plants which thrive there under normal conditions.



After dredging

A regular inflow of ocean water is necessary to maintain the range of salinity, temperature, nutrient and oxygen levels that these salt marsh inhabitants have adapted to. When the lagoon is compromised, the species that can leave will do so (some never to return, even if the

lagoon regains its health); the others simply die off.

Mr. Gibson calculates that the lagoon when closed can stay viable for “no more than 15 – 20 days” in the winter, but “it will crash in 24 hours” in the summer.

Los Peñasquitos Marsh Natural Preserve, like Torrey Pines, is part of the State Parks system. As a Preserve, usage is more restricted than in a Reserve or Park. The Los Peñasquitos Lagoon Foundation was established in 1983 to help State Parks manage and restore the marsh.

CALPA Conference Comes to Town

by Rick Vogel

As you have been hearing for months now, the 2012 CALPA Conference took place last week, May 16-20. By all accounts the Conference was a resounding success, with participants gathering much desired information about a number of important issues, including:

- Ways and means of non-profits and other community organizations that are keeping Parks on the closure list open.

As many as 30 of the 70 Parks on the list have received a reprieve, with 15 organizations that are working toward that goal represented at the Conference. Parks saved so far include Jack London SHP, Palomar Mountain SP, multiple parks in the Sonoma District, and several in Mendocino.

- Using social media and other newer technologies to reach new constituencies for our Parks. Be sure to “like” CALPA on our new Facebook page.
- Non-profit board development, fundraising and enhancing communication among the California Department of Parks and Recreation, volunteers, boards and staff of the Park organizations.
- Park organizations’ growing partnership role in the future of the Parks systems.
- New interpretive ideas using our Park stores.

The Conference also provided networking opportunities for Conference participants to learn informally from our fellow organizations outside the confines of meeting rooms.

The venues included Crystal Cove SHP, Torrey Pines SNR and Old Town SHP. The participants who were at Torrey Pines were enthusiastic in their praise for the docents who led them through the Reserve and enjoyed the relaxing reception afterwards on the patio behind the Lodge.

The speakers included Ruth Coleman, Director of the DPR, Clay Phillips our District Superintendent, Elizabeth Goldstein and Traci Verardo Torres of the California State Parks Foundation, plus many speakers from both the government and State Park community who presented 21 different programs for the participants. The Conference was topped off by a banquet at the Cosmopolitan Hotel, with a speech by Richard Louv, author of “Last Child in the Woods” and “The Nature Principle.” Mr. Louv presented a hopeful and inspiring message about getting back to nature and why we *really* need to save all our Parks. It was an exceptional experience all around which I am proud to have been a part of. Next year’s conference will be held in Sacramento.

Plastic Biodegradation in a Marine Environment

by Nilay Shah

Nilay Shah is an enthusiastic eighth grader from Wangenheim Middle School, who conducted his experiment under the tutelage of Ms. Karen Madsen and Mrs. Jorga Austin. He received the Young Scientist of the Year award for his science fair project from the San Diego Oceans Foundation. The following is excerpted from a more extensive article submitted by Nilay Shah.

A wandering albatross (*Diomedea exulans*) soars over the calm ocean waves, oblivious to the danger lurking beneath. After many miles, she spots a squid, dives down, snaps it up, and begins the long journey back to her nest—little knowing that the “food” she carries back will lead to the death of her chick. This scene is one of many that take place due to the twenty billion pounds of plastic deposited in our oceans annually, resulting in the death of over



1,000,000 seabirds and 100,000 marine animals every year.

Looking back, I realize how limited my knowledge was of this problem. I was only aware of a Great Pacific Garbage

Patch, but not its true immensity. I discovered that plastics are widespread throughout the oceans, mostly existing as microscopic fragments that can be ingested by organisms as small as zooplankton. (A UN document finds 46,000 pieces of plastic per square mile of the world's oceans.) The plastics can leach chemicals like Bisphenol A and phthalates into the bodies of the animals that eat them, affecting growth, reproduction, and viability. Moreover, petroleum-based plastics concentrate other hydrophobic chemicals, such as PCBs and DDT, resulting in levels up to one million times higher than the surrounding ocean water. These chemicals then travel up the food chain, affecting humans at the top.



Baby albatross stomach contents—in carcass from Midway Island. Shown with plastic it has ingested, the cause of its untimely demise.

An alternative to petroleum-based plastics could be biodegradable plastics, such as polylactic acid (PLA)—compostable, and thus not producing the toxic byproducts of petroleum-based materials. PLA decomposes in a land environment, but would it biodegrade in the ocean? That's what I set to find out in this experiment.

I hypothesized that PLA exposed to ocean water, teeming with microorganisms, would decompose, thus losing mass. I could compare PLA to polypropylene (PP), known to take hundreds to thousands of years to decompose.

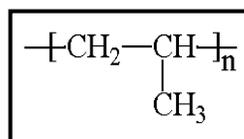
I tested my hypothesis by submerging PLA samples in seawater and looking for loss of mass over eight weeks, comparing these to similar PP samples. (See Experimental Procedure for details).

I conducted the experiment inside my garage to prevent UV photo-degradation. After eight weeks, I removed the samples, washed and dried them and determined their mass.

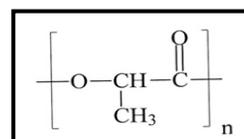
I found that 30% of the PLA samples decreased in mass compared to 5% of the PP samples. The average PLA sample lost 0.81% of its mass, from which I estimated full biodegradation would take 19 years in a similar marine environment, significantly faster than petroleum-based plastics. Under natural conditions, degradation is likely to be faster, since ultraviolet light, heat, and mechanical

stress exerted by the ocean on the samples would accelerate the process.

This experiment is just a “drop in the ocean” of possibilities that have opened up because of my research. Further experiments could determine degradation differences among PLA stereoisomers; test other biodegradable products; or determine the effect of sea water from different sources (with possible differences in degrading microorganism concentrations). Plastic pollution in our oceans is a serious threat to the environment and organisms at all levels of the food chain. Therefore, an alternative to the ubiquitous plastic needs to be found, and the PLA results I report are a crucial step in preservation of marine ecosystems.



Structural Formula of Polypropylene



Structural Formula of Poly (lactic) Acid

Experimental Procedure:



Four tubs each contained fifteen gallons of ocean water. Fifty PL samples were placed in each of two tubs (top and bottom left), while 50 PP samples were in each of two other tubs (top and bottom right). Each sample was trimmed to a 0.52g initial mass. An air pump connected by plastic tubing to an airstone in each tub provided oxygen for aerobic microorganisms in the ocean water.

Timeliness of Nilay's Research

A very recent publication suggests the timeliness of Nilay's work: a team led by Miriam Goldstein, a graduate student at Scripps Institution of Oceanography, has just reported finding a 100-fold increase in the concentration of plastic particles in the North Pacific Subtropical Gyre (“Garbage Patch”), and its impact on a key organism in the marine food chain. (In the course of doing his experiment, Nilay Shah met and discussed his project with Ms Goldstein.)

Reference: Plastic Trash Altering Ocean Habitats, Scripps Study Shows

“Sharp increase of small plastic debris in the 'Garbage Patch' could have ecosystem-wide consequences.”
tinyurl.com/d7ck3kb

SPRING TRAINING AT TPSNR: Docent Class of 2012 Moves Toward June Graduation

by Janie Killermann



Trainees form a column behind bird expert Jack Friery in search of ravens, falcons, towhees, bushtits, pelicans and other feathered inhabitants of TP



Drawing on activities from the Children's Program, docent Barbara Justice brings Kumeyaay culture alive for trainees Debbie Sherman and Doug Hansen



Historian Judy Schulman surprises trainees David Woo and Annette Ring with gifts of a highly prized pine needle basket and ornate gourd created by Schulman herself using Kumeyaay techniques



Environmental Scientist Darren Smith caps off his presentation on the plants of TP with a guided walk searching out some of the rarest and most fragile plants in the Reserve



One sure sign that Barbara Wallach's adventuresome presentation "Signs Along the Trail" has been a huge success: the happy smiles of trainees Isabeth Yarrington and Joy Inton



Hospitality providers Ann Walker, Bridget MacConnel and Andre Batarseh and trainers Jeannie Smith and Janie Killermann delight in interacting with the terrific Class of 2012

Romantic Interlude at Yucca Point

by Walt Desmond

While stopping with my trail walk group on May 19th to admire the view from Yucca Point, we were treated to a rare (my first ever at TP!) event: a marriage proposal. We had found three young men sitting on the bench behind us, two

quietly strumming guitars. Suddenly the third announced that he was about to propose to his young lady, just arriving unsuspecting. As we all prepared to leave them to some privacy, he said, "Oh, no, it's fine if you want to stay. Just turn around, though, and pretend nothing is happening." Of course, we turned back to the rail, scanning the surf line for dolphins. We heard "Here she comes;" and as the guitars started playing, we turned back to see a traditional proposal, with ring, on bended knee, and then an original (evidently!) song. The entire Point burst into applause (I guess she said "Yes"), and we proceeded on with the hike, but not before reminding them that they could even come back for the wedding (with the proper paperwork). I think there might have been a few tears among the hikers as we left!

Gateway Gatherers: Another Road Clean-up Ahead of Art in the Pines

by Kristine Schindler

We had another successful Torrey Pines Grade/Hwy 101 road clean-up on Thursday, May 3rd. There were 10 of us this time and many hands (and backs) did make for quicker work. Plus, we are seeing a cumulative benefit of having one clean-up each quarter. Hopefully my fellow cyclists and others are seeing less litter on the roadside and it is affecting their behavior in a positive way. Thank you to the docents (including three 2012 trainees) that came out to help!

Warning: With the warmer weather these days, we should all be on the lookout for snakes in the Reserve. Pictured here is a beautiful red diamondback

rattlesnake that was almost mistaken for a big suede workmen's glove.

Thankfully, I took a closer look before reaching out further to pick it up. The snake was tucked up nicely under a Lemonadeberry bush, having a mid-morning snooze. Whacky Weeders and others please be careful in the months ahead.



Photo by Wes Farmer, east side of Hwy 101, May 3, 2012

Crotalus ruber: For more info go to:

sdnhm.org/science/herpetology/resources/rattlesnakes/

and click on Red Diamondback.

[Note from the Whacky Weeders: Thanks for the tip. We've encountered a number of rattlesnakes on our last few outings – a couple of close calls! See photo below!]



Photo by Margaret Pluth, edge of Guy Fleming trail, May 14, 2012

Raven's Nest Visible in Canyon of the Swifts



Photo by Wes Farmer:

Wes Farmer found this raven's nest in a wind-cave. It is at the end of "fat man's misery" and the start of Canyon of Swifts. Contact Wes as to where to stand to look back up the canyon to see the nest.

Torrey Pines Docent Society Bird Survey: May 5, 2012

Total of 81 species

Gadwall 16	White-faced Ibis 10	Eurasian Collared-Dove 2	Northern Rough-winged Swallow 30	Wilson's Warbler 7
American Wigeon 7	Turkey Vulture 1	Mourning Dove 33	Tree Swallow 1	Yellow-breasted Chat 6
Mallard 28	Osprey 1	White-throated Swift 3	Bushtit 35	Spotted Towhee 17
Cinnamon Teal 2	White-tailed Kite 1	Anna's Hummingbird 28	Bewick's Wren 10	California Towhee 38
Northern Pintail 1	Red-shouldered Hawk 2	Allen's Hummingbird 1	House Wren 4	Savannah Sparrow 7
Ruddy Duck 2	Red-tailed Hawk 4	Rufous/Allen's Hummingbird 1	Marsh Wren 5	Song Sparrow 19
California Quail 28	American Kestrel 2	Nuttall's Woodpecker 6	California Gnatcatcher 3	Black-headed Grosbeak 2
Red-throated Loon 4	Peregrine Falcon 2	Downy Woodpecker 3	Wrentit 32	Red-winged Blackbird 40
Pied-billed Grebe 1	Clapper Rail 1	Black Phoebe 6	Northern Mockingbird 4	Brown-headed Cowbird 4
Western Grebe 2	Common Gallinule 1	Ash-throated Flycatcher 3	California Thrasher 3	Hooded Oriole 2
shearwater sp. 4	American Coot 4	Cassin's Kingbird 8	European Starling 1	Bullock's Oriole 2
Brandt's Cormorant 1	Whimbrel 1	Warbling Vireo 1	Cedar Waxwing 24	House Finch 47
Double-crested Cormorant 17	Ring-billed Gull 28	Western Scrub-Jay 8	Orange-crowned Warbler 3	Lesser Goldfinch 38
Brown Pelican 14	Western Gull 5	American Crow 10	Common Yellowthroat 10	House Sparrow 2
Great Blue Heron 1	California Gull 1	Common Raven 10	Yellow Warbler 1	
Great Egret 9	Caspian Tern 6			
Snowy Egret 15	Royal Tern 7			
Black-crowned Night-Heron 8	jaeger sp. 1			
	Common Murre 2			

Observers: Frank Wong, Blair Francis, Eva Armi, Jack Friery, Kathy Dickey, Gary Grantham, Herb Knufken, and Anonymous

For many beautiful photos of birds and other subjects go to Herb Knufken's photo site: pbase.com/herb1rm



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The Torrey Pinecone, a calendar of events, notes from business meetings, and other items of specific interest to the docent membership, is published bi-monthly (even months). For odd months we publish the *Torreyana*. Please submit items by the 20th of the month to the Editor Editors@torreypine.org. This newsletter is edited by Docent **Joan Simon**. Items for publication may also be left in the *Torreyana* mailbox in the docent library.

June 2012 TPDS Lodge Docent Hosting Calendar- Updated 5/27/12						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Lodge hosting hours: L- 9-12 L- 12-3 L- 3-6		Walks: W Sat/Sun/Hol 9:30 (Start 10:00) W Sat/Sun/Hol 1:30 (Start 2:00)			L-Burke L-Woods L-S&S Rose	L-McGee W- L-Hacklander W- L-
L-Lombardi W-Rowbottom L-Simon W-Brav L-	L- L-F Doolittle L-Donnelly	L-Colwell L-Phillips L-Dickey	L- L-Humphrey L-McCardle	L-M Lewis L-Isaacson L-Ivany	L-Sheehan L-Donnelly L-Martineau	Meeting L- W-Sanseverino L- W-Sheehan L-
L-A Davis/Kebow W- L- W- L-	L-M Lewis L-Humphrey L-Dewhurst	<i>Maids</i> L-Blantz L-Phillips L-Donnelly	L-Fiorentino L-Barnard L-	L-Griffiths/Malm L-Donnelly L-Ivany	L-Burke L-Justice/Johnson L-	L- W-Geist L-Hartung W-Kamen/Yehu L-Hartung
L-Rowbottom W-Schindler L- W- L-	L-M Lewis L-F Doolittle L-Donnelly	L-Tarkington L-Phillips L-B&F Eckles	L-Fiorentino L-Barnard L-	L-Justice/Johnson L-A Howard L-A Howard	L-Sheehan/ MacConnel L- L-Justice/Johnson	L- W-Farness L- W- L-
L-Schulman W- L- Schulman W- L-	L-M Lewis L-Dewhurst L-	<i>Maids</i> L- L-Phillips L-B&F Eckles	L-Blantz L-Barnard L-McCardle	L-Colwell L-Tarkington L-A Howard	L-Schindler/ MacConnel L-Donnelly L-Justice/Johnson	L-McGee W-Geist L- W-Sheehan L-

To sign up for an opening, call the hosting docent (858-755-8219) to confirm the time and write your name in the Logbook. If you cannot do your session, please try to find your own substitute by switching with another docent or using the short-notice list. Then call the hosting docent to make the change in the Logbook. Coordinators: Irene Larrimore & Jan Lombardi