



TORREYANA

THE DOCENT NEWSLETTER FOR
TORREY PINES
STATE NATURAL RESERVE

Issue 407

April 2019

What's Under Our Feet?

by Joan R. Simon

Kesler A. Randall has been the Collections Manager in the Department of Paleontology at the San Diego Natural History Museum for 20 years. At the Docent Society meeting on March 9, he gave a sweeping history of fossil finds in San Diego County, whose coastal area is rich in fossils going back 75 million years. The museum has a collection of 1 million specimens from Southern California and Baja.

Fossils, both terrestrial and marine, are found only in sedimentary rock, not in igneous or metamorphic rocks. Today sedimentary rocks can be found in coastal San Diego County and in the desert areas to the east. The Natural History Museum has over 5000 fossil localities in our region. Among the most productive sources of fossil material have been construction sites. State law requires that paleontological monitors be on site to excavate each area before construction begins.

Here are some of the prime fossil eras in our region:

Cretaceous Period (80-65 MYA)

Mr. Randall started with the Cretaceous Period, from 80-65 million years ago (MYA).



Ammonite

Local findings from this era come from Pt. Loma, La Jolla and Carlsbad and contain marine organisms from off-shelf areas. Ammonites, which are related to squid and nautilus, are one of the signature fossils of the Cretaceous era. Other invertebrates, such as mesogastropods (snails and other mollusks) are also common. Rarer are vertebrate species, such as the Mosasaur (a large aquatic, carnivorous lizard). Another

Docent General Meeting

Date: Saturday, April 13, 9:00 am

Location: St. Peter's Episcopal Rec Hall, Del Mar

Speaker: Dr. Elsa Cleland, Professor of Ecology, Behavior & Evolution, UCSD

Topic: The role of seasonal phenology (timing) for predicting invasion by exotic plant species, and their impact on coastal sage scrub ecosystems.

Refreshments: Docents with last names beginning with J-K-L will be responsible for providing snacks for this meeting.

find is *Aletopelta coombsii*, an Ankylosaur fossil from the Point Loma Formation, whose carcass floated out to sea. "This is not the best area for dinosaurs," Mr. Randall admitted, "and the few we have in this area are almost exclusively specimens from marine deposits."



Mosasaur

Eocene (51-36 MYA)

Fifteen million years of the middle of the Eocene period are beautifully preserved by both marine and terrestrial fossils in our region.

(cont on pg. 3)



The Torrey Pines Docent Society publishes the *Torreyana* monthly, edited by Joan Simon and Dan Hammer on alternate months, and is formatted and produced by Roger Isaacson. Submissions are due on or about the 20th day of the preceding month and may be emailed to

Editors@torreypine.org.

Please send postal/
email address changes to:

Torrey Pines Docent Society
P.O. Box 2414, Del Mar, CA 92014
Attn: Membership or email to

Membership@torreypine.org

Web sites:

TP Docent Society: torreypine.org

TP Association: torreypines.org

Visitor Center phone: **858.755.2063**

TPDS Executive Board Members:

President: Janet Ugalde

Vice-president: Roger Isaacson

Treasurer: Gerry Lawrence

Secretary: Steve Neal

Directors-at-large:

Pao Chau

Mark Embree

Annette Ring

Stu Rosenwasser

Lynne Truong

TPSNR Staff:

Supervising Ranger: Dylan Hardenbrook

Rangers: Kyle Knox, Dave Richards, Jesus "Chuy" Salinas Rodriguez

Sr. Park Aides: Louis Sands, Jake Mumma

Park Aides: Tyler Best, Cheryl Biernacki, Krista DeBusschere, Joy Inton, Shawn Jacobs, Johnson Jou (Interpreter), Ingo Renner

© **Torrey Pines Docent Society**
Since 1975
All rights reserved

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

President's Message

OMG. If you don't speak text, you may not be familiar with this now common expression. **OH MY GOD.** This was exactly my thought as I walked around our **GORGEOUS** Reserve this past month. We are super blooming, and positively alive -- plants, insects, animals, and more. On a recent Children's Program hike, we saw magnificent peregrine falcons soaring and swooping. We saw dozens of painted lady butterflies and sphinx moths fluttering about. We saw hundreds of brilliant orange California Poppies and yellow Sea Dahlias. We saw cottontails and squirrels foraging for food. We saw an amazing bushtit nest. And, we saw my favorite Shooting Stars.

Many words have been written about the restorative power of nature. Don't miss this opportunity to feel the power. Now is the time to enjoy our magnificent Reserve.

See you on the trail.

Janet Ugalde
President, TPDS

Inside

What's Underfoot (cont)	3-4
President's Message	2
Earth Day	2
Meeting Minutes	4
Children's Program	5
Docent of the Month	5
Nature Discovery Series	6
New Park Aide-Ingo Renner	6
Nature Moments	7
TP Book Club	8
Bird of the Month	9
Bird Survey	9

Earth Day – Saturday, April 20
9 am to 1 pm

Bring family and friends to the Reserve enjoy all the fun. We will have interpretive nature booths, live animals, and kids' crafts.

Any docent interested in helping out, email Ingo Renner asap.

See you at Earth Day!

Nature Discovery Series

Torrey Circle Pavilion Public Events

Sat. April 6, 9:30 – *Kumeyaay People: Their History and Cultural Traditions*, by Kathy Dickey and followed by a hike.

Sat. May 18, 9:30 – *Birds of Torrey Pines State Reserve*, by Marty Hales and followed by a hike.

Sat. June 15, 9:30 – *Signs Along the Trails – Become a Nature Detective* Barbara Wallach and followed by a hike.

(cont. from pg. 1)

Some come from Torrey Sandstone and the Del Mar Formation. The preservation of an ancient estuary can be seen in the Del Mar Formation, while a giant submarine canyon south of Flat Rock can be seen in the Torrey Sandstone.

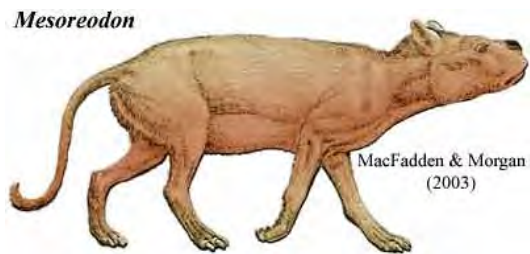
Most of the plant fossils from this area are land species that were washed into the sea. Examples are Sabalites, related to Palmettos, and predecessors of the soapberry and magnolia. Oysters and clams are plentiful as well. Numerous vertebrates have been found, including sharks, grunts, giant tortoises, soft-shell (fresh water) turtles (Trionyx), Glyptosaurus (armored lizards), and a non-venomous snake related to boa constrictors (Boiidae).

A large diversity of mammal fossils are present in San Diego Eocene formations: Pseudotomus (large rodent); Micropsyops (related to primates); Hyaenodon (in a sister group to carnivores); Tapocyon (another extinct mammal that is considered to be a primitive carnivore); Oreodonts (related to pigs and camels, who were very social); Protylepus (camel-like animals); *Protoreodon walshi* (a common oreodont of the time); *Hesperoletes borineyi* (a small tapir); Brontotheres (with bizarre horn-like skull appendages, which were actually nose extensions; they are closely related to rhinos).



Oligocene (33.9 - 23 MYA)

The fossils from this era are known primarily from Chula Vista and the Otay Formation. Among the findings are large tortoises, quail, and bird tracks. The mammals include the Mesoreodon, an herbivore and part of the oreodont group, with generalized teeth similar to sheep's, which let them eat a variety of vegetation. Others were *Sesipia californica*, from Carlsbad, a dwarfed oreodont, which was the size of a house cat; and the Nimravids, a group of short-legged catlike animals called "false sabertooth cats." As the landscape changed to open-spaced grasslands, mammals started to develop features that enabled them to run faster.

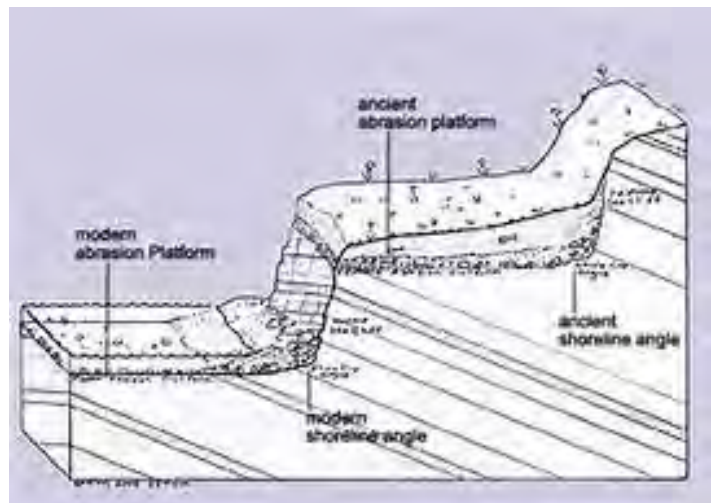


Pliocene (5 – 2.6 MYA)

Sites from this time span have been found in central coastal San Diego and Chula Vista. The shoreline was 7 miles inland, with a bay of shallow warm water similar to San Ignacio in Baja California, where gray whales migrate every winter to mate and give birth. There is a plethora of fossil invertebrates preserved including clams and sand dollars, and the vertebrates include fish, birds, and mammals. Teeth of *Carcharodon carcharias*, a great white shark, are the most common shark fossils. There was a flightless auk (*Mancalla*), probably a powerful swimmer like today's penguins, and a giant albatross (*Diomedea howardae*) with an 11' wingspan. Whales were present as well, with fossils from 6 different kinds displayed at the museum, including the ancestor to the gray whale. In addition there were river dolphins, a 30' manatee (*Hydrodamalis cuestae*) and an extinct walrus (*Valenictus chulavistensis*).

Pleistocene 2.6 MYA – (10,000 YA)

Terraces have been preserved during this period owing to the uplift of the land, and many sites from this era have been found, with both marine and terrestrial fossils. From the Reserve, the Linda Vista dates to 1 million YA and the Bay Point Formation from 500,000 – 100,000 YA.



From the Bay Point Formation there are fossils of frogs, pond turtles, king snakes, American coots and the teeth of moles, pack rats and voles. Not so familiar to us is the giant ground sloth *Megalonyx jeffersoni*. Photo on pg. 4.



Additionally, there were relatives of bison (short horns and longhorns), camels and horses (both of which evolved in North America before migrating to Eurasia), pronghorn, and deer. Two kinds of elephant-like animals were present, mastodons (*Mammut americanum*) and mammoths (*Mammuthus columbi*), “the poster-children” of the Pleistocene. There is one theory (among several) that they were hunted to extinction when humans migrated over the Bering land bridge to the New World.

The journey through time Mr. Randall led us through is just the beginning. We encourage you to visit the San Diego Museum of Natural History to learn more about “what’s under your feet.”

General Meeting Minutes -- March 9, 2019

Meeting called to order at 9:08 am by President **Janet Ugalde**

Speaker: Kesler A. Randall from the Paleontology Department of the San Diego Natural History Museum presented a very interesting lecture titled *What’s Under our Feet?* He showed several of the more than 1 million fossil specimens collected by the museum (see the article on the front page).

President’s Report: **Janet Ugalde** congratulated **Ingo Renner** on his hiring as a park aide. As of now, Ingo is a park aide two days a week and plans to continue docent activities on other days. However, the TPDS Bylaws state “No Department of Public Recreation employee may serve as a Board member.” The Board approved **Roger Isaacson** to replace Ingo as Vice President and **Annette Ring** to fill the remaining Director-at-Large position. (See article on pg. 6.)

Because the Reserve is getting an increasing number of visitors each year, Janet stated that all docents who are physically able should park in the volunteer parking area on the park road, leaving the open spaces in the upper lots for visitors. The Board approved the official name for the new pavilion as *Torrey Circle Pavilion* and the monthly program open to the public as the *Nature Discovery Series*. **Kathy Dickey** has done a nice job promoting the program to the

public. Supervising Ranger **Dylan Hardenbrook** reported he is having four benches made from the Torrey pine trunks of the recently fallen trees, to be placed in front of the Lodge as seen in old postcards.

Class of 2018, Earth Day, Roving Interpreters, Nature Discovery Series: **Ingo Renner** updated docents on the strong interpretive volunteering of the 19 new members of the Class of 2018; almost half of the class is participating in the Children’s Program, eight have logged hours for Public Walks, ten have staffed the Lodge Hosting desk, and all have staffed the TIK! Annual Roving Interpreter training, coordinated by **Annette Ring**, is scheduled for Saturday, May 4 (time to be announced). Ingo announced that Earth Day on April 20 is all set, *but docent help will be needed to staff the various booths, and for setup and takedown/cleanup*. Ingo is looking for docents to present at the *Nature Discovery Series* for September and October (the other months of 2019 have been filled – see pg. 2 for a list of upcoming events). He urged docents to pair up for a presentation on a subject they feel passionate about.

Better Impact: Volgistics is no longer available. Most scheduling and logging of hours needs to be done through *Better Impact*. If an Opportunity is scheduled in BI, the hours will be logged automatically. The main Children’s Program signup is still under Docent Logins under Volunteering at torreypine.org. In addition to Special Walks, the Children’s Program is not available for advanced signup in BI. This is because of frequent rain rescheduling. All Children’s Program docents need to manually log their three hours in BI. Contact **Roger Isaacson** with BI questions or concerns (portal@torreypine.org).

La Jolla Half Marathon: **Ann Smith Mercandetti** announced the La Jolla Half Marathon on Sunday, April 28; she had a signup sheet for docents to volunteer. This event is sponsored by the Kiwanis Club of La Jolla, and the \$100,000+ earned by this event goes to various local children’s programs. Contact Ann if you can volunteer.

New TPA Tote Bags: **Donna Close** had the new bags for sale at the meeting and announced they will also be available in the Museum Shop. The discounted price for docents is \$13.

Whacky Weeders Needed: **Lynne Small** made a plea for additional docents to volunteer at weeding for the next couple of months. The invasive species are competing with our wildflowers for space and spreading unwanted seeds. (Weeders meet at 8:30 am on Mondays and 9:30 am on Thursdays.) Contact Lynne to be placed on her email list for the location each week.

Docent of the Month: **Roger Isaacson** for all his efforts getting the TPDS transitioned to the State-mandated *Better Impact* program for scheduling and logging volunteer hours. Roger has logged almost 200 hours since January 1, mostly for BI; but he also has a hand in every technical aspect of

the Society from *Torreyana* formatting to the Museum Shop POS updating (including the new chip reader). Roger is an avid Whacky Weeder. He has also agreed to replace **Ingo Renner** as Vice President, after Ingo was hired as a park aide. With this award, the TPDS acknowledges just how valuable Roger's skills are to our Society.

Refreshments: At April's General Meeting, docents with last names starting with letters **J-K-L** are responsible for snacks.

Meeting ended at 10:52 am.

Children's Program

by Louis Sands, Children's Program Coordinator

Well, the "April showers bring May flowers" rhyme never *really* applied to southern California, but this year the January/February showers certainly delivered the March flowers! Children and chaperones alike were wowed by the Reserve's colorful displays, particularly along the ever-popular Guy Fleming trail. With rain showers still continuing in March, who knows what April has in store for us? Whatever the scenario, we've got the resources to assist Children's Program docents. Log in to review our program links: torreypine.org/volunteering/childrens-program-login/. If you have not joined us this school year, now is the time! There are only two full months remaining. Check the offerings online, and sign up if your schedule permits: torreypine.org/volunteering/.

This month, I'd like to use this forum to disclose our protocol for reporting accidents that happen during field trips. While our program has never been censured by a school or parent, it is always best to document our recollections of these outlier events as preparation for potential subsequent inquiries.

Case in point: During the Children's Program on March 14, a young student sustained injuries when her classmate shoved her into a cactus. Ouch! Fortunately, this does not happen often, but when it does, it is crucial that the docent "walk leader" summarize the events in writing and forward a report to my attention as soon as possible:

tpsnr.childrensprogram@yahoo.com In your description please include the following: date, school, time of incident, location of incident, incident description including names of involved parties, and any corrective actions taken by you or chaperones/teachers. The administration of first aid by docents is NEVER authorized; however, it is wise to carry Band-Aids and antiseptic wipes so that a chaperone or teacher could use them to administer care when appropriate.

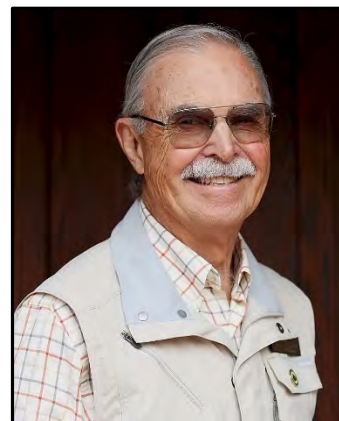
Let's all do our part and keep student safety a priority. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me. I'll see you 'round the Reserve!

Docent of the Month:

Roger Isaacson

Photo by Herb Knüfken

I was born in Winslow, Arizona and enjoyed a classic small-town childhood. We moved to San Bernardino when I was 12, to Barstow at 15, and then to Pomona College. It dawned on me, only a few years ago, that all those places are on Route 66, after I heard the Eagles singing "Take it Easy" enough times (67?). BTW- I heard recently that the "girl in the flatbed Ford" scene actually took place in Flagstaff, 60 miles to the west, but



"Winslow" sounded better to the lyricist. I escaped Route 66 in 1961 to attend graduate school at UCSD. I got an MS in physics and stayed on as a Research Specialist, an academic job requiring no teaching or grant writing but managing an experimental lab.

In 2004 I became a docent at the suggestion of my wife, Jane, who said "you should go volunteer at Torrey Pines Park like **John Pfleeger**" [Class of 1998]. (I knew John from Boy Scouts, camping with our sons.) My wife also knew **Barbara Wallach** [Class of 1993] from tennis connections, and I heard about many of her activities at Torrey Pines.

Even though I intended to mainly do trail work, I ended up managing Team *Torreyana* (now 12 years), with the amazing help of **Joan Simon** and **Dan Hammer**. In 2006, I took over the website from **Jeannie Smith**, who spent countless hours creating the first site in the late 90s. There was a lot of joy when I made the *Torreyana* available online. I was a founding member of **Barbara Wallach's Whacky Weeders** around 2005-6. Elsewhere in this issue [pg. 7], I relate some unforgettable moments with that group.

It has been such a pleasure working with so many incredibly dedicated and talented docents for all these years. I am continually amazed at the different things they do, both personally and for the Reserve.

Nature Discovery Series

Trails A'Bloomin'!

by Kathy Dickey Photo by Marty Hales

About 35 souls braved a cold, cloudy (first day of daylight savings) morning to hear the second of the "Nature Discovery Series" talks on March 10 at the new Torrey Circle Pavilion. The topic was flowering plants at the Reserve, but **Margaret Fillius** taught us much more than just identifying the flowers. Her first question, "Why do we have so many flowers at this time of year?" — led to a discussion of the local Mediterranean climate and our two plant communities (evergreen Southern Maritime Chaparral and deciduous Coastal Sage Scrub). Her next question, "Why do plants flower?" — led to fascinating facts about pollination. Flowers have unique traits to encourage pollination, including color, nectar guides, odor, nectar, flower shape and pollen type. Margaret showed us how some flowers look under UV light, revealing their nectar guides very clearly. Our local pollinators (bats, bees, beetles, birds, butterflies, flies, moths and wind) all have different approaches as well. Insects, bees and butterflies can see in the UV part of the spectrum, drawing them in to the nectar and pollen. Flowers that smell strongly in the evening attract bats and moths. Did you know that flowers have a negative electrical charge? Bees build up a positive charge by fluttering their wings, helping the pollen attach easily to their bodies. We learned that there are 1,600 species of native bees in California. In the case of the Purple Nightshade, bumble bees "sonicate" the flowers to encourage the pollen to release and attach to themselves. Pollen is usually yellow, but can be other colors, like the pink on our local Flat-top Buckwheat.

Following the talk, we broke up into two groups, led by Margaret and **Peter Domaille**, to hike the trails and view this year's plethora of blooming plants following the ample, multiple rainfalls this winter. Visitors from New England remarked on the diversity and beauty of the colorful views. Peter's group went to the Razor Point area, passing many familiar (to most docents) and some rarely seen flowers. The photo above by **Marty Hales** says it all, in just one small patch: California Poppy, California Sun Cup, Popcorn Flower, Common Groundsel, and (best of all) the San Diego Jewelflower. At the end of Razor Point, we also saw a surprising patch of Johnny Jump-Up, along with some Pigmy Stonecrop and Padre's Shooting Star.



Stay tuned for the next Nature Discovery Series on Saturday, April 6 at 9:30 am: "The Kumeyaay People: Their History and Cultural Traditions."

New Park Aide: Ingo Renner

Unless you've been living under a rock for the past few years, you will need no introduction to the newest park aide at TPSNR: **Ingo Renner**. Ingo (Class of 2013) has just completed a three-year term as President of the Docent Society. A professional furniture maker, Ingo designed and built all of the new cabinets and display cases along the walls in the Lodge, including the west wall unit with accessible drawers and the Lodge hosting desk designed specifically for docent use. He also assisted



in the planning, design and installation of the new Torrey Circle Pavilion and built the benches at the Stu Smith Memorial in Whitaker Garden. He was Docent of the Month in June 2014 and Docent of the Year in 2015. He has always been an enthusiastic tour leader and has taken docents on multiple field trips to local areas. He has also organized many public nature events in the Reserve and has spearheaded the Earth Day festivities for the past few years. He has worked with nearly every group at the Reserve: Whacky Weeders, Seabees, Children's Program, Budding Botanists, Public and Special Walks, TIK, and Roving Interpreter. He's even written articles for the *Torreyana*!

As a state employee, Ingo has been required to resign his current position on the board as Vice President. Replacing him is **Roger Isaacson**, who had been serving as a Member-At-Large. **Annette Ring**, formerly the Society's Secretary for three years, has rejoined the board as a Member-at-Large.

We welcome Ingo as Torrey Pines' newest aide, and look forward to seeing him twice as often at the Reserve!

Nature Moments while Whacky Weeding

by Roger Isaacson

I am a regular at the 8:30 am Monday Whacky Weeding activity. Very often we have 15 or more weeders scattered all over, way off trail, hunting down various invasive plants. It is not very common for any of us to encounter a rattlesnake. Since I have weeded most Mondays for the past 13 years, time is on my side, so I will tell you something about some snake encounters.

I was going up the switchbacks from Yucca Point when bounding down the center of the trail came a striped racer in pursuit of his breakfast, a small mouse. I froze, holding a bag of invasive *Erharta* grass in each hand. At that moment the mouse veered off the path to the left, but the racer wrapped himself around my right white tennis shoe. Immediately, his head rose up six inches off the ground, cobra style, and he whipped his head around as if to say, "Where's my mouse?" It happened so fast, even if I had a cell camera handy I would not have gotten a photo.

One January, while pulling *Erharta* grass near the top of the northerly hill in the Guy Fleming Trail loop, I thought to myself, "I wonder what temperature rattlesnakes become active. Is it about 55 degrees, as it is now?" Then within about 10 min. I was crawling under the low branches of a Torrey and wearing surgical gloves to pull the small sprigs of grass. I felt something that didn't feel like the dense pine needles and realized my hand was against the coils of a small rattler. With my previous thought in mind, I pulled out my camera and took this photo, dated Jan 2010.



I then pointed out to **Diane Russell**, a fellow weeder, that she was in the presence of a "silent observer." She did not appreciate that.

We were pulling out *Erharta* next to the trail to Yucca Pt. A small rattlesnake was about two feet off the trail, behind the cable, on a prickly pear cactus pad. As visitors passed I would ask them if they would like to see a rattlesnake just

off the side of the trail. After about 20 visitors had passed, I took a mental note of how many said "Yes" and how many said "No." It turned out that about 80% of the males said no and about 80% of the females said yes. Does that tell us anything?



Small Southern Pacific rattlesnake on prickly pear pad, April 2009

Carmel Mountain Preserve Hike

Barbara Wallach, along with **Peter Domaille** and **Eva Armi**, led the docents around the Carmel Mountain Preserve loop on March 18. We saw lots of flowers, lichens, liverworts, plus all the flowering shrubs putting on a show.

One of the highlights was seeing Vernal pools with many tadpoles and some rare plants. Barbara scooped up water samples showing us the fairy shrimp. Magnifiers helped those of us with older eyes.

This area has the highest density of concretions in the county. If you decide to go, you need to be very careful on slippery slopes of the trails.



Barbara introducing many of us to the Carmel Mtn. Preserve (some for the first time) Photo by Roger Isaacson



Help for the Whacky Weeders

Photo by Joe Meyer

Two groups gave the Whacky Weeders much-needed help in February. The first were several Janssen Pharmaceutical employees, with their teenage children, who worked with the weeders near the north edge of the Extension. Volunteers from Jansen have been coming to Torrey Pines several times a year for the past three years.

Another repeat group, the Solana Beach Presbyterian Church (SBPC), brought 27 parishioners (including 6 children ages 3 – 17) from their church, Seacoast Community Church in Encinitas, and La Jolla Community Church (see photo above). They pruned back the overgrown islands at the North Beach parking lot. Volunteers from SBPC have been coming to Torrey Pines on their annual Community Serve Day for 11 years.

Torrey Pines Book Club

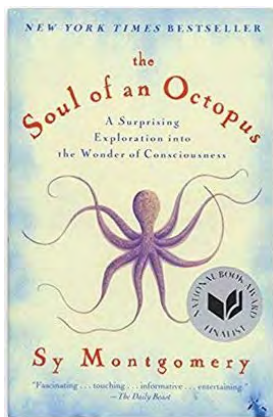
When: Tuesday, April 9, 1 pm

Where: Carol Hunt's home in Del Mar Heights

What: *The Soul of an Octopus: A Surprising Exploration into the Wonder of Consciousness* by Sy Montgomery
Amazon says:

Another *New York Times* bestseller from the author of *The Good Good Pig*, this “fascinating...touching...informative...entertaining” (*Daily Beast*) book explores the emotional and physical world of the octopus -- a surprisingly complex, intelligent, and spirited creature --and the remarkable connections it makes with humans.

In pursuit of the wild, solitary, predatory octopus, popular naturalist Sy Montgomery has practiced true immersion journalism. From New England aquarium tanks to the reefs of French Polynesia and the Gulf of



Mexico, she has befriended octopuses with strikingly different personalities -- gentle Athena, assertive Octavia, curious Kali, and joyful Karma. Each creature shows her cleverness in myriad ways: escaping enclosures like an orangutan; jetting water to bounce balls; and endlessly tricking companions with multiple “sleights of hand” to get food.

Scientists have only recently accepted the intelligence of dogs, birds, and chimpanzees but now are watching octopuses solve problems and are trying to decipher the meaning of the animal's color-changing techniques. With her “joyful passion for these intelligent and fascinating creatures” (*Library Journal* Editors' Spring Pick), Montgomery chronicles the growing appreciation of this mollusk as she tells a unique love story. By turns funny, entertaining, touching, and profound, *The Soul of an Octopus* reveals what octopuses can teach us about the meeting of two very different minds.

May 14: *The Fire Outside My Window: A Survivor Tells The True Story of California's Epic Cedar Fire* by Sandra Millers Younger

Bird of the Month: Ruby-crowned Kinglet

by Jack Friery; photo courtesy of Andy Rathbone

Our featured bird this month is the **Ruby-crowned Kinglet**, *Regulus calendula*. This tiny bird is a wintertime visitor to Torrey Pines Reserve. It summers (and breeds) in the northwestern United States and across Canada. It is about four inches in length, and weighs only .2 to .3 ounces (5-10 grams). (For comparison, an American nickel weighs about five grams.)

The bird is a dull grey-green, with a white wingbar above a black wingbar, and a white eyering. Despite the name “ruby-crown,” the small patch of red feathers on its crown is normally visible only when the bird is disturbed or angry, taking a bath, or sitting on its nesting territory. Watch for the bird flitting ceaselessly low in trees, flicking its wings nervously while it collects tiny insects. Its call can sound like an IBM Selectric typewriter (and I’m old enough to know what that sounds like).

Some interesting facts: the female lays a very large clutch of eggs -- there can be up to 12 in a single nest; an entire clutch can weigh as much as the female herself. Despite their hyperactivity, metabolic studies suggest that these tiny birds use only about 10 calories per day. And the bird’s genus name *regulus* means “little king” in Latin, and its species name *calendula* means “glowing”—a tribute to its ruby crown.



Sources: allaboutbirds.org/guide/Ruby-crowned_Kinglet/overview,
rbo.org/conservation-science/research/bird-banding/recoveries/ruby-crowned-kinglet-from-toronto/,
audubon.org/field-guide/bird/ruby-crowned-kinglet,
ca.audubon.org/news/%E2%80%9Ckinglet%E2%80%9D-social-winter-birds.

Torrey Pines Docent Society Bird Survey: March 2019

Number of species: 81

Cinnamon Teal 6	Long-billed Curlew 1
Blue-winged/Cinnamon Teal 5	Willet 1
Northern Shoveler 11	Heermann's Gull 2
Gadwall 20	Ring-billed Gull 16
American Wigeon 57	Western Gull 10
Mallard 9	California Gull 40
Northern Pintail 1	Royal Tern 7
Green-winged Teal 4	Red-throated Loon 18
Canvasback 5	Pacific Loon 1
Lesser Scaup 25	Common Loon 1
Bufflehead 5	Brandt's Cormorant 2
Red-breasted Merganser 3	Double-crested Cormorant 8
Pied-billed Grebe 1	Brown Pelican 29
Western Grebe 15	Great Blue Heron 2
Eurasian Collared-Dove 1	Great Egret 5
Mourning Dove 10	Snowy Egret 4
White-throated Swift 1	Black-crowned Night-Heron 2
Anna's Hummingbird 25	White-faced Ibis 44
Allen's Hummingbird 5	Osprey 1
Rufous/Allen's Hummingbird 4	Cooper's Hawk 2
American Coot 27	Red-tailed Hawk 5
	Nuttall's Woodpecker 6
	Northern Flicker 2
	American Kestrel 5

Peregrine Falcon 2
Black Phoebe 5
Say's Phoebe 1
Cassin's Kingbird 8
California Scrub-Jay 4
American Crow 34
Common Raven 15
Northern Rough-winged Swallow 8
Tree Swallow 6
Violet-green Swallow 2
Bushtit 28
Rock Wren 1
House Wren 2
Marsh Wren 1
Bewick's Wren 7
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher 1
California Gnatcatcher 9
Ruby-crowned Kinglet 3
Wrentit 25
Western Bluebird 1
California Thrasher 5
Northern Mockingbird 2
House Finch 19

Lesser Goldfinch 2
Fox Sparrow 1
Dark-eyed Junco 1
White-crowned Sparrow 3
Golden-crowned Sparrow 1
Song Sparrow 15
California Towhee 12
Spotted Towhee 13
Red-winged Blackbird 30
Orange-crowned Warbler 5
Common Yellowthroat 10
Yellow-rumped Warbler 31
House Sparrow 3

Observers:

Frank Wong, Eva Armi, Gary Grantham, Marty Hales, Andy Rathbone, Phyllis Kuszner, Mark Embree, Steve Neal, Kathy Dickey, Jack Friery, Herb Knüfken, Bob Glaser, David Walker, and Anonymous

Herb Knüfken's amazing photo gallery, including many birds, may be found here: pbase.com/herb1rm



Torrey Pines Docent Society
PO Box 2414
Del Mar, CA 92014
(858) 755-2063
torreypine.org