



TORREYANA

THE DOCENT NEWSLETTER FOR
TORREY PINES
STATE NATURAL RESERVE

Issue 414

January 2020

Holiday Potluck

New Venue -- Same Good Time!

by Joan R. Simon; photos by Joe Meyer

There were changes to this year's docent Holiday Potluck Party on December 14. The surf pounded (it was a high-surf day), there was a refreshing breeze from the ocean, and quite a few interested sea gulls were close at hand (sometimes too close). Yes, we were in a new location. We walked up the short path from the northwest corner of the North Parking Lot and under the bridge to find festively decorated tables and chairs overlooking the North Torrey Pines Beach, and an enticing and bountiful spread of food.

Sixteen graduates of the 2019 fall docent training class were welcomed: **Meg Banta, Emily Cline-Gibson, Gretchen Embree, Linda Guest, Lore Heath, Lisa Kakone, Jean Kelleher, Carol Kerridge, Huathin Khaw, Richard (Koa) Lavery, Mark Leppard, Rosemary Smith, Crescencio (Cres) Torres, Vinayak Rayannavar, Howie Wilcox, and Matthew Xavier** (photo on pg. 4).

Twelve docents from the Class of 2010 were awarded their lifetime pins for serving 10 years: **Janice Barnard, Kathy Glasebrook, Linda Griffiths, Alison Howard, Greg Howard, Craig Humphrey, Anna-Lena Malm, Arline Paa, Joan Simon, Ann Walker, Linda Zlotnik, and Judith Zyskind** (photo on pg. 4).

President **Janet Ugalde** thanked outgoing board members **Steve Neal** (Secretary) and **Pao Chau** (Member-at-Large) and welcomed new incoming board members **Gabriele Wienhausen** (Secretary) and **David Walker** (Member-at-Large). The holiday decorators, under the guidance of **Deborah Walker**, were also thanked for transforming the Lodge, both inside and out.

Steve Neal was named Docent of the Year for his work on many fronts: Board Secretary; public walks; Children's Program; Lodge hosting (and training); weeding; and even the bird survey -- for over 600 hours this year. As Janet remarked, "He does everything!" (See photo on pg. 3.)

Docent General Meeting

Date: Saturday, January 11, 9 am

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

Speaker: Judy Schulman

Topic: Entrepreneurs Who Ran the Restaurant at the Lodge

Judy Schulman is the longest-serving active docent at Torrey Pines (42 years and counting!) and has served as the Docent Society's resident historian for many decades. She has held nearly every position in the Society, including president (1982-84, growing the fledgling docent society to 100 members) and editor of the *Torreyana*. If it has to do with the history of Torrey Pines, just ask Judy!

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

For the approximately 135 attendees, the new location brought no change to the two things that make this gathering so special -- the delicious and plentiful food and the warm fellowship and friendships that are always a hallmark of our holiday party.



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

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Annette Ring

Stu Rosenwasser

Lynne Truong

David Walker

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Sr. Park Aides: Louis Sands, Jake Mumma

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

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

President's Message

Recently, we were given a very clear reminder that life can change in an instant. A reminder that we shouldn't take anything for granted. A reminder to be grateful for everything that is beautiful in our lives — like treasured friendships with generous and compassionate people.

There aren't too many things that we can be sure about, but here is one—we will die. And when our lives end, what will we leave behind? I hope to leave a legacy of kindness, respect and boundless energy for my family and for the causes in which I believe — like the preservation of Torrey Pines State Natural Reserve.

Hooray! Doctors tell us our beloved **Annette Ring** will fully recover from her horrendous car accident. As I continue to pray for her speedy recovery, I will strive to adopt her wisdom and generosity.

Together, let's resolve to be more kind and respectful to everyone this year!

See you on the trail.

Janet Ugalde

President, TPDS



Children's Program

by Louis Sands, Children's Program Coordinator

Thirty years and counting! That's right, 2020 marks the thirtieth year that our beloved Children's Program has been in operation. Thirty years of committed docents and curious kids within San Diego's best outdoor classroom. Why not experience the magic for yourself? Come join the fun!

Congratulations and welcome to our most recent docent training graduates!

Janet Ugalde and I are so excited to experience your unique interpretive gifts, and so are the kids. Your next steps are simple: Come to the Lodge by 9:15 am on any Tuesday, Thursday, or first Friday of the month, and we will pair you with a seasoned docent to shadow on the trails. When you are ready to lead a walk on your own, just let us know, and one of us will follow your lead. We are here to support your success.

Just imagine how special it is to expose an eight-year-old native San Diegan to the Pacific Ocean for the first time. It happens more often than you'd think! This program offers a feel-good experience for docents, and its thirty-year tenure proves that. Hope to see you soon!

Nature Discovery Series – Jan. 25, 2020

The January Nature Discovery Series topic is "The Amazing Gray Whale Migration," with a lecture by Jane Barger followed by a walk to an overlook. Meet at the Pavilion on Saturday, January 25 at 10:30. Bring binoculars and spotting scopes if you have them.

Docent of the Year:

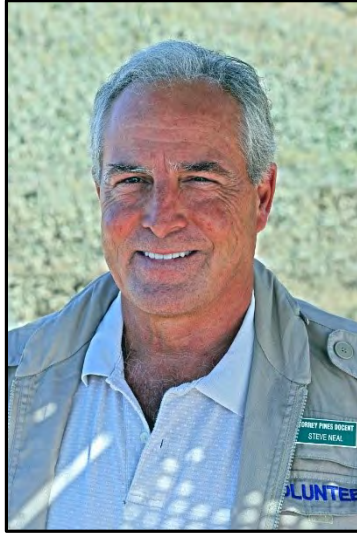
Steve Neal

Photo by Herb Knüfken

A lot of you know that 35-plus years ago, I was that "jerk" pilot flying my F-14 Tomcat out of Miramar (when it was a Navy base). I drifted too far north of the golf course and promptly lit full afterburner to climb after clearing the shoreline. I was very ignorant of TPSNR. There are no more F-14s flying. At the Reserve today we are privileged to see (and hear) the current fighters of the US Marine Corps which are the F-18 Super Hornet and the newer F-35 Lightning. Although I agree the noise is not ideal for our wildlife, please remember that "the roar of jets is the sound of our freedom." I have been a member of the Men's Club at the Torrey Pines Golf Course for years and volunteered at the annual Farmer's PGA tournament for over 10 years. Even then, I still did not understand that TPSNR is really special.

So when I retired from Delta Airlines five years ago and was looking for an opportunity to "give back" (my wife had informed me that I was not going to be hanging around the house), my buddy **Harry Proctor** told me he was signed up for docent training. (We are now both proud members of the Class of 2015.)

I believe we have a special group in the newly graduated Class of 2019, as I did a lot of training with them on Lodge hosting. I challenge the members of the Class of 2019 to jump right in and help interpret our beautiful Reserve for our many visitors!



Dues are (Past) Due

by Lynne Truong

Your 2020 docent dues (\$25) are due! Please make checks payable to TPDS and leave them in the Membership or Treasurer mailbox or mail to P.O. Box 2414, Del Mar, CA 92014. Or bring them to the January 11 docent meeting and give them to either Gerry Lawrence (Treasurer) or Lynne Truong (Membership Chair).

If you did not complete your 84 hours in 2019 but would like to remain with the Docent Society for another chance to fulfill your hours in 2020, please fill out the Associate Membership Request Form* and submit it to membership@torreypine.org. With the Board's approval and paying your Associate Membership dues (\$25), a 2020 parking pass will be granted.

If you are not interested in volunteering but would like to support the Docent Society, the Friends Membership dues of \$25 will let you participate in special events and general meetings.

**Click here for the link* to the Associate Membership Request Form

More Holiday Party Photos:



Another view of the crowd.



TPDS President Janet Ugalde and Docent of the Year Steve Neal holding the DOY plaque.



Docent Class of 2019

Back row: Cres Torres, Howie Wilcox, Linda Guest, Rosemary Smith, Vinayak Rayannavar, Gretchen Embree, Carol Kerridge, Meg Banta, Matthew Xavier **Front row:** Lore Heath, Jean Kelleher, Lisa Kakone, Mark Leppard, Huathin Khaw, Emily Cline-Gibson **Not shown:** Richard (Koa) Lavery



Lifetime Docents

Judith Zyskind, Kathy Glasebrook, Joan Simon, Alison Howard, Greg Howard, Arline Paa, Anna-Lena Malm

Not shown: Janice Barnard, Linda Griffiths, Craig Humphrey, Ann Walker, Linda Zlotnik

Restroom Update

With the restroom at the North Beach parking lot closed for renovation (and due to reopen in July 2020), the question has once again come up about the west parking lot restroom in the Reserve. According to Supervising Ranger **Dylan Hardenbrook**, the target date for its completion is March 2022. Here is Dylan's recap of this project's progress.

The restroom in the west parking lot has been closed since June 2015. The leach field that had been serving the restroom since the late 1950's was completely overwhelmed by the volume of visitors. We are in the midst of replacing the restroom and installing a modern sewer line to connect to the San Diego City sewer system. The design and permitting phase is nearing completion, but we are still a couple of years out from construction. Digging a nearly mile-long trench through a State Natural Reserve is a daunting proposition. It will impact historical, cultural and natural resources. Finding a solution with the least impact, which still provides the necessary infrastructure capabilities, has been an arduous process, but is now wrapping up.

Because the project is in California Gnatcatcher breeding habitat, construction can be carried out only between September and March. The current construction schedule calls for a new sewer and other below-ground infrastructure improvements, including replacement of the 80+ year-old water main, to take place during the September 2020 to March 2021 window. The replacement restroom is scheduled to be built during the following year, September 2021 to March 2022.

Thank you for your patience as we try to juggle the need for visitor comfort with habitat protection and environmental permitting requirements.

Join a First Day Hike on January 1st
On January 1st, all 50 states across the country are offering First Day Hikes in state parks as a way to promote healthy lifestyles. Join the TPSNR First Hikes at 10 am and 2 pm. Participants will receive a special commemorative button.



Torrey Pines Book Club

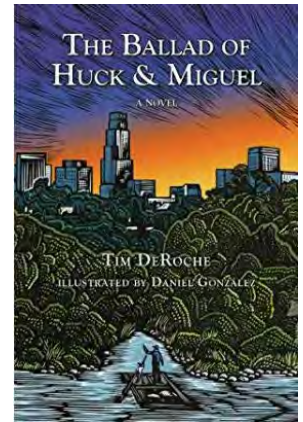
When: Tuesday, January 14

Where: Mona and Ron Kuczenski's home in University City

What: *The Ballad of Huck and Miguel* by Tim DeRoche; illustrated by Daniel Gonzales

Amazon says:

In this retelling of Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Tim DeRoche dares to imagine that Huck Finn is alive today. Chased by his vengeful and psychotic father, Pap, Huck escapes down the concrete gash that is the Los Angeles River with his friend Miguel, an illegal immigrant who has been falsely accused of murder. Riding the dangerous waters of a rainstorm, the two fugitives meet a strange cast of Angelenos both animal and human who live down by the river. And they learn the true value of love and loyalty. *The Ballad of Huck and Miguel* is not only a thrilling urban adventure, but also an inspired tribute to one of the most beloved novels ever written.



All TPDS docents are welcome. Meetings usually last a couple of hours. RSVP to the Kuczenskis if you plan to attend. (Check Member List for email or phone number.)

February 11: *A Primate's Memoir: A Neuroscientist's Unconventional Life Among the Baboons* by Robert M. Sapolsky

A Matter of Balance

by Kristine Schindler

Mark your calendars! In early spring, I will be offering a FREE fall-prevention program called Matter of Balance (MOB) to our docent group. More details will be coming closer to the date, as well as a chance to sign up for this opportunity. The group size will be a minimum of 4 and a maximum of 14. You must commit to joining in for six of the eight two-hours sessions. They will be held eight weeks in a row at the same time and day each week. As suggested by the Docent Society Board, the program will be held outdoors at the Pavilion. I will be leading it along with another volunteer MOB coach. I am eager to support my fellow TP docents in a new and different way to help sustain us as we age, so that we can continue to be active volunteers and give to TPSNR and beyond. Thank you TPDS board for saying "Yes"!

For more details about the MOB program itself, go to mainehealth.org/healthy-communities/healthy-aging/matter-of-balance

Where Did All the Birds Go?

An Analysis of 14 Years of Data at TPSNR

by Kathy Dickey

"The number of birds in the United States and Canada has declined by 3 billion, or 29 percent, over the past half-century, scientists find." (*New York Times*, 9/19/19) By now, we have all heard the bad news. After ten years of participating in the Torrey Pines monthly bird count, I had a feeling that we were seeing far fewer birds today than we did when I started, but I wanted to prove my hypothesis. Sorely missed were the formerly common "Chi-ca-go" calls of our California Quail (now essentially absent in the Extension for over a year). I wanted to check on the status of some of our birds at TPSNR and the Peñasquitos Lagoon, especially those considered endangered, threatened or "of special concern." Also included in the study were a few of our other common birds as controls.*

The data came from the bird counts published on our webpage from 2006 through 2019. **Kathy Estey** reminded me that the bird counts actually started in 1996, but I wanted to limit the database to a reasonable group of figures. Many thanks to Kathy and **Jack Friery** for compiling all the data over these many years. I added up all the monthly data for each year and for each species studied to account for seasonal and migration variation.

The results were mixed. Here's the good news first. Our total number of bird species counted has varied very little over the 14 years (ranging from 839 to 964 species per year, or an average of 70 to 80 species per month). This is remarkable because in 2006 we sometimes had only six observers for the entire area, and in 2019 we had up to 17! By the way, here's an atta-boy/girl to all those who trek out to count in the cold or heat at 7:30 am, month after month, year after year!

The trend line was narrow or flat for species such as the Wrentit, House Finch and (formerly endangered) Brown Pelican. The data looks good for our Peregrine Falcon (also once considered endangered), with annual counts trending up from 6 to 29 over the 14 years. The curve is also up for the California Gnatcatcher, with recent annual counts trending up to three times those seen in the earlier years (this year the total was 183, or an average of 15 per month). That's still a low number, but the Gnatcatchers seem to be surviving.

I can report that in 14 years we have seen a total of six California Least Terns, with none seen since 2009. California Ridgeway's Rail (formerly called Clapper Rail) were seen or heard a total of 44 times in all those years. No Bank Swallows or Least Bell's Vireos have ever been spotted.



California Quail – now essentially absent in the Extension the past year Photo by Kathy Dickey

Now for the bad news. The Western Snowy Plover annual counts have plummeted from 179 in 2006 to fewer than four (even zero, in three of the last five years). Some other beach or bay reserves and estuaries in San Diego have resorted to building fenced sand islands for the Plovers and Least Terns to safely nest. We haven't yet adopted those safeguards at TPSNR. The annual numbers for Savannah Sparrows, also an estuary-loving bird (including the Belding's subspecies), have dropped from 148 in 2006 to nine in 2018, with none seen in 2015. The count for 2019 was 23.

How about my beloved California Quail? Well, the numbers don't lie. In the entire Reserve we counted 235, or about 20 each month, in 2011. In 2019, the count for the entire year was 12.

So what happened to decrease the numbers of these bird species? Was it predation, too many visitors, drought, disease, climate change, or some other cause? While the data don't necessarily indicate a looming catastrophe, there is still cause for concern—and a need to increase our vigilance at TPSNR about saving habitat and protecting our environment.

*Email Kathy Dickey if you would like see her Excel spreadsheets or paper entries.

[Author's Note: I added up all the species seen to date on ebird.com for the TPSNR Extension, Upper Trails, Flintkote Trail, Carmel Valley Road and Beach areas. This includes our docent monthly bird counts as well as those observations by other local and visiting birders. We have now surpassed a total of 200 species observed --201, to be exact!]



Peregrine Falcon *Photo by Herb Knüfken*

Torrey Pines Docent Society Bird Survey: December 2019

*Number of species:*80
(+3 other taxa)

Canada Goose 1
Gadwall 29
American Wigeon 9
Mallard 17
Northern Pintail 13
Green-winged Teal 11
Lesser Scaup 2
Surf Scoter 14
Bufflehead 27
Red-breasted Merganser 13
California Quail 3
Pied-billed Grebe 6
Western Grebe 266
Mourning Dove 11
Anna's Hummingbird 53
Allen's Hummingbird 8
hummingbird sp. 4
American Coot 58
Killdeer 2
Whimbrel 2
Long-billed Curlew 1

peep sp. 10
Willet 4
Heermann's Gull 37
Ring-billed Gull 5
Western Gull 19
California Gull 21
Caspian Tern 2
Pacific Loon 6
Common Loon 1
Black-vented Shearwater 506
Brandt's Cormorant 112
Double-crested Cormorant 4
Brown Pelican 48
Great Blue Heron 2
Great Egret 4
Snowy Egret 8
Osprey 2
White-tailed Kite 2
Northern Harrier 1
Cooper's Hawk 4
Red-shouldered Hawk 3
Red-tailed Hawk 6
Downy Woodpecker 1
Nuttall's Woodpecker 11
Northern Flicker 1

American Kestrel 8
Merlin 1
Peregrine Falcon 2
Black Phoebe 23
Say's Phoebe 7
Cassin's Kingbird 15
Hutton's Vireo 5
California Scrub-Jay 3
American Crow 19
Common Raven 46
Bushtit 146
Wrentit 56
Ruby-crowned Kinglet 7
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher 1
California Gnatcatcher 19
House Wren 6
Bewick's Wren 11
wren sp. 2
European Starling 10
California Thrasher 21
Northern Mockingbird 5
Western Bluebird 2
Hermit Thrush 17
Cedar Waxwing 15
House Finch 29

Lesser Goldfinch 20
Dark-eyed Junco 10
White-crowned Sparrow 84
Golden-crowned Sparrow 1
Song Sparrow 25
California Towhee 50
Spotted Towhee 18
Bullock's Oriole 1
Red-winged Blackbird 6
Orange-crowned Warbler 5
Common Yellowthroat 6
Yellow-rumped Warbler 150

Observers: Andy Rathbone, Marty Hales, Steve Neal, Herb Knüfken, Jack Friery, Kathy Dickey, Gary Grantham, Karen Turner, Manolo Turner, Frank Wong, Tsaiwei Olee, Bob Glaser, Robert Turner, Nancy Richardson, and Anonymous

View this checklist online at ebird.org/checklist/S62274207

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



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