



TORREYANA

THE DOCENT NEWSLETTER FOR
TORREY PINES
STATE NATURAL RESERVE

Issue 429

April 2021

Mountain Lions 101

by Dan Hammer

Mountain lions do *not* stalk pregnant women. They do *not* develop a taste for human blood. Their population is *not* exploding. And the CIA does *not* loan out its helicopters to wildlife agencies for night drops of mountain lions in remote areas.

These and other widespread myths about mountain lions were dispelled by our March TPDS guest speaker, Robin Parks. A retired 25-year veteran of the Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS), he has served for the past 15 years as a San Diego field volunteer and representative for the Sacramento-based Mountain Lion Foundation (MLF).

Robin brings his NCIS experience to his volunteer work, educating and advising law enforcement agencies and civilians throughout Southern California on various mountain lion issues. His Zoom presentation reflected



this: entitled “Mountain Lions and Law Enforcement First-Responders (a.k.a. ‘Mountain Lions 101’),” it aims to show public safety officials, ranchers, and residents of suburban/rural interface areas that mountain lions (a.k.a. *cougars*, *pumas*, or *panthers*) are not as aggressive or threatening as they are reputed to be.

Robin is, by his own admission, “very much pro-cat.” He despises the NRA and those hunters with a “deep-seated need to want to kill mountain lions.” He teaches public safety officers how to safely respond to mountain lion events, and he tells residents “Just because you find a mountain lion in your back yard doesn’t mean you have to kill it.”

Docent General Meeting

Date: Saturday, April 10, 9:00 am

Location: Online via Zoom (link to the meeting will be emailed to all docents)

Speaker: Ed Parnell, PhD, Associate Researcher, Scripps Institution of Oceanography

Topic: Kelp Forests of Southern California

Ed is a research oceanographer specializing in ecological studies of the southern California coastal shelf. As an undergraduate at UCSD, he worked in the labs of Mia Tegner and Paul Dayton at Scripps studying the kelp forests off San Diego. After earning an MS and PhD at the University of Hawaii and doing postdoctoral research at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute, Ed returned to his San Diego roots to study kelp forests, submarine canyons, and communities spanning the entire depth range in between. His work encompasses an applied aspect, including the design and effectiveness of marine protected areas, the effects of human resource exploitation, and the effects of pollution on marine environments. For more on Dr. Parnell and his work, visit eparnell.scrippsprofiles.ucsd.edu



Thanks largely to the MLF’s advocacy work, California has led the nation in protecting mountain lions. Then-Governor Ronald Reagan supported cougar protection, which is why Robin tells hunting groups “You cannot be a good Republican and shoot mountain lions.” In 1990, California

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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voters approved Proposition 117, a citizen initiative that provided comprehensive protections. These were further strengthened in 2014 by Senate Bill 132 (which Robin calls "EPIC!"), and the California Department of Fish & Wildlife (CDFW) has "really rogered up" to enforce the new law. SB 132 includes a "three-step policy" that requires ranchers and others to fully document their efforts to deter predators before CDFW will issue a depredation permit for a mountain lion kill.

The State is currently revising the California Endangered Species Act to provide further safeguards, including safe passage requirements for highways; these are desperately needed to conserve mountain genetic diversity, which is rapidly declining as habitat is divided by roads and housing developments. As Robin says, "When wild lands are lost, mountain lions are the first to go."

Some of the basics on these big cats: They are born with spots and blue eyes; at about six months, their eyes turn green and the spots disappear. A fully grown adult weighs about 110-120 pounds (with males slightly larger than females) and is 7-8 feet long, including its long tail; this tail, its huge paws, and its far greater size distinguish mountain lions from bobcats. Adults can jump 22 feet high from a standing position and spring 45 feet ahead; they can run 50 mph in short sprints and walk for many miles at 10 mph. They like long ranges and don't like to share territory with other cougars. Deer are "the main thing on their menu; otherwise they'll eat anything that doesn't eat them first." Like most cats, they sleep most of the day.

As civilization encroaches on mountain lion habitat, cat/human encounters are increasing – at far greater risk to the cats than to humans. In fact, since 1895, mountain lions have killed just 27 people in all of North America – compared with 54 killed by bee stings in the year 2000, 23 by dogs in 2008, 75 hunters killed every year (mostly by each other), and 28 children and adults murdered at Sandy Hook Elementary in a single day.

In response to encroachment, mountain lions have become stealthier. They avoid any human who is facing them and almost any group of more than one person. When they do attack (always from behind), they flee if the victim or a companion fights back. Robin told how an 80-year-old woman got a mountain lion to release her husband from its mouth by attacking it with her BIC, proving once again that the pen is mightier than the sword.

When in mountain lion country, you can avoid trouble by avoiding dawn and dusk hikes, walking in a group, making lots of noise (even carrying an air horn), and avoiding animal carcasses, especially deer. If you encounter a mountain lion, the cat will always try to find a way out, either by climbing a tree or sitting tight. If you have a dog, hold on tight – cougars avoid barking dogs but can easily defend themselves if attacked.

If you missed Robin's presentation, you can (and should) watch it by clicking here: vimeo.com/523272796.

For more information on the Mountain Lion Foundation, visit mountainlion.org/

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General Meeting Minutes

March 13, 2021

The General Meeting was called to order at 9:05 am by President **Lynne Truong**.

The meeting was conducted via Zoom attended by more than 100 docents.

Invited Speaker

Robin Parks from the Mountain Lion Foundation gave a presentation titled "Mountain Lions 101."

TPDS Business

Lynne shared the following business items:

- *Docent of the Month*

Mark Lippard, class of 2020, was honored for providing significant Roving Interpreter services (over 160 hours) throughout 2020, a time during which the COVID-19 Pandemic severely limited docents' opportunities for services and work in the Reserve.

- *Reserve Maintenance Updates*

A new South Beach sign has been installed.

Permanent trail maps with *you-are-here* markers have been installed throughout the Reserve.

Yucca and Razor Point will be closed starting March 15 for urgently needed repair work. Building material will be flown in by helicopter. This has been financed by the Torrey Pines Conservancy. The work needs to be finalized by the end of March, the beginning of the gnatcatcher breeding season.

The stairs connecting the Beach Trail with the beach are still out for repair, which Supervising Ranger Dylan Hardenbrook hopes will be completed in about two weeks.

- *COVID-19 Pandemic Update*

San Diego will move most likely from Purple Tier to Red Tier by the end of March. This would mean fewer restrictions and the opportunity to resume many TP docents volunteer opportunities.

Docents who wish to resume working in the Reserve must fill out and sign a COVID-19-specific form, which can be found on the protected Docent Login web pages. The form can also be obtained from the Reserve's park aides.

- *Name Tag and Docent Shirt Orders*

Docents who wish to order a name tag, a docent polo shirt (short- or long-sleeved) or a docent T-shirt should contact **Myrna Trust**.

- *Continuing Education*

Moving into the Red Tier also means that the TPDS Continuing Education program can soon resume again. Board member **Cres Torres** has taken the lead on planning activities.

- *Taxidermy Cleaning Project*

TPDS funded the purchase of a freezer and a vacuum cleaner, equipment necessary for cleaning the museum's taxidermy animals. To kill the beetles and moths known to destroy the animals, the taxidermy animals will be placed in the freezer and then carefully cleaned with the special vacuum. This procedure replaces the costly and disruptive annual tenting of the shop area. Park aides will be trained soon in performing this new cleaning protocol.

Happy Hour -- March 18, 2021

Kristine Schindler reminded docents about the Happy Hour on March 18 at 4 pm. She assured the docents that the playlist for the event will be a lot of fun. The event includes contests for the fanciest mask, the best pet or pandemic buddy, and for the greenest outfit (to celebrate both the day after St. Patrick's Day and upcoming Earth Day).

Matter of Balance

Kristine shared that the Matter-of-Balance workshop is in full swing. Because of COVID-19 the course is being taught online. The course has an enrollment of sixteen docents.

Two New Docent Society Projects

- *Torreyana Feature TP Docents 80+*

The Docents' 80 + Project's mission is to honor and celebrate the contributions of our elders. Docents 80 years and older are invited to be interviewed by **Janet Ugalde**. Janet then summarizes the conversation in an interview article for the *Torreyana*. Docents who wish to participate should contact Janet.

- *Why-I-Became-A-Docent*

Kristine Schindler described the new *Why-I-Became-A-Docent Project*. The goal of the project is to invite docents to share why they became volunteers. Docents are invited to write a brief essay and submit their stories to Kristine. Alternatively, docents can ask members of the Care Team for help writing up their story.

The meeting ended at 10:35 am.

Many docents remained on Zoom for an additional 30-plus minutes of informal socializing.

80+: A Conversation with Frank Burham

Interviewed by Janet Ugalde

This is the second in a series of articles honoring docents who have celebrated their 80th birthday. If you would like to recommend an 80+ docent to be featured in a future article, or volunteer yourself, please contact Janet Ugalde.

Frank Burham became a docent in 2005 and served as the Docent Society's president in 2015. He was named Docent of the Year in 2009. (See Frank's photo on pg. 5.)

Hi Frank. Thanks for allowing us to honor you with this 80+ interview.

Please tell us about your childhood.

I was born in Nebraska; then we moved to Kansas. We were there in the middle of the Dust Bowl and the deep depression, so it was some pretty dark times. We ended up in Iowa alongside the Mississippi River, so I grew up as a kind of Tom Sawyer. Then the army drafted me and sent me to Korea, where I worked as a tank mechanic.

Where did you go to college?

After I was discharged from the army I went to Iowa State, and graduated with a bachelor of science in electrical engineering. The computer industry was just starting and the field was wide open. John Kennedy was elected and said we were going to the moon. I had the opportunity to work with NASA and ended up designing a component that was used in the backpack for the moonwalk.

How long have you lived in the area?

I moved to Sorrento Valley in 1976. During that time I would come up and hike in Torrey Pines all the time. I fell in love with it. There were very few people up there then, not like today. After I retired, I spent several years in my motor home, going all over the United States. I spent all my time in the parks, having loved being in the Reserve. When I got tired of that I came back and settled in Del Mar.

Why did you become a docent?

I went to an Earth Day meeting and met **Barbara Wallach**. She handed me a rake and put me to work. She also convinced me that I should become a docent, so I did.

As a docent, what accomplishment are you most proud of?

Most of what I enjoyed doing up there involved creating something new. I started the TIK because so many people never went to the Lodge. I also liked working with Boy Scouts on their service projects. That was really enjoyable – working with those young folks. I think the thing I really love most of all is the camaraderie with all the fabulous people.

Is there a philosophy, or some advice, you'd like to share?

The motto is constant improvement. It doesn't have to be

broken. You can still improve it. And don't give up. I got heavily involved in docent training and did a lot of mentoring. I always encouraged docents if they had concepts and ideas for improvement. Don't give up when you run into resistance, because it is going to be there. If your idea is good, you are going to succeed.

Thank you, Frank. To view Frank's interview [click here](#).

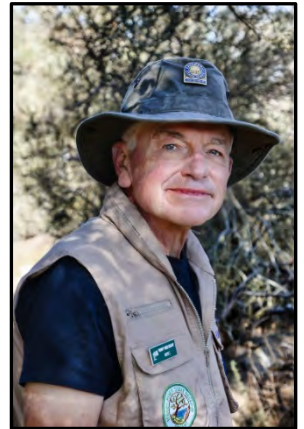
Docent of the Month:

Mark Lippard

Photo by Herb Knüfken

Of the fifteen months that I have been a docent, the Reserve was closed for six months and the School Program was offered for only two months. Nonetheless I have developed a deep appreciation for the Reserve, the staff, and the docents I have met. While I am somewhat "name challenged," finding it difficult to remember the name that goes with a face, there are a few names that stand out.

Bruce Montgomery was my mentor. We have a similar sense of humor, which made us somewhat dangerous when we were together. **Louis Sands** is a force of nature. **Barbara Wallach** never ceases to amaze me every time we are together – sometimes causing my jaw to drop.



I have been volunteering for the past 30 years. Much of that work was devoted to children's educational programs. After moving to San Diego eight years ago, I became involved with Title I Children's Program, which was one of the aspects of the Docent Society at the Reserve I found attractive.

During training I learned to appreciate and value the many natural features of the Reserve. As I walked the trails, I was able to see something new every time. I have always preferred being outside and moving rather than sitting, so when the Reserve reopened, I applied to the Roving Interpreter program. Wow, does it get any better! Walking the trails, experiencing never-ending beauty, and helping visitors better understand the magic of the Reserve is a wonderful experience.

I look forward to meeting all the docents I do not know, to the resumption of the Children's Program, and to earning a ten-year pin.

Green Clothing, Masks, and Beer

by Kathy Dickey

"Never iron a four-leaf clover because you don't want to press your luck." – Irish Saying.

On March 18, the TPDS group, led by **Kristine Schindler**, had a virtual Zoom happy hour celebrating St. Patrick's Day and Earth Day. About 26 attendees enjoyed a mix of "getting to know you" questions and special contributions by some talented individuals. **Roger Isaacson** looked particularly dashing in his green top hat with shamrocks. By the end of the hour there were many messages of thanks for the opportunity to socialize after a year of (mostly) social isolation.

Debi Buffington started us off by sharing some of her fabulous art work. She has been a busy lady in the last few months! There was a large painting of an underwater scene with whales, some smaller paintings, jewelry, and some copper bowls. She sells her art at a local gallery, Off Track, in Encinitas. It was nice to hear the stories behind each piece.

Frank Burham spun a fine yarn of a story about the origin of the term "wallflower." He also won the "green" prize of the night for his green beret and shirt. With his white hair and beard, he looked very Irish (if he was shorter he could have been our very own leprechaun).

Next **Ron and Mona Kuczenski** did a demonstration of Scottish Country Dance. Although it is not Irish (for St. Patrick's Day), Ireland and Scotland are only separated by 12 miles across the sea at their closest point. Many Scottish people have Irish ancestry, and vice versa. Scottish Country Dance is enjoyed throughout the world, including very active chapters in Paris and Tokyo (where the Kuczenskis have participated in classes!). This dance was called "Joie de Vivre."



During the "getting to know you" questions we found out that **Marty Hales'** super power is making a mean martini; that **Marty Jacobson** makes new objects from discarded wood and furniture; that **Marie Johnson** (right) lives the furthest distance away (Morro Bay); and that besides cats and dogs,, many of us have other "pandemic buddies" for pets. It turned out that most of us are "early birds," but there were plenty of "night owls" in our group. We also learned that Roger Isaacson owns a bar and plays in a ukulele group. It was nice seeing some old friends we have not seen for a long while, like **Nancy Woodworth**.

Marty Hales wailed on her harmonica for us, with a bluesy song called the "Covid Loop." It had most of us dancing in our seats.

Karen Fraser shared her fabulous needlework, along with a new hobby she has learned, glass art. The glass was made into lace and strings to form beautiful patterns that she incorporated into serving plates. Amazing!

Marian Edelbrock won the prize for the best mask, a fancy green jeweled one with feathers.

Ann Gaarder's corgi Mandy won the prize for best pet or pandemic buddy, although **Molly McConnell's** cute green frog Buddy came in a close second.

It was a relaxing, fun way to spend a late afternoon. Nice to see docents laughing and smiling.

"May your troubles be less, your blessings be more, and nothing but happiness come through your door." – Irish Saying.

To view the happy hour video [click here](#).

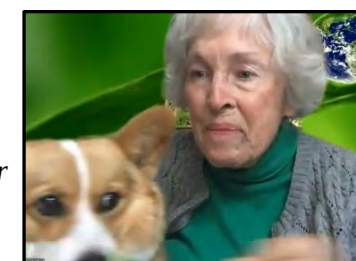
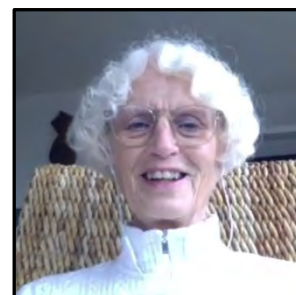


Photo News Briefs - February 23, 2021

from Guy Lawrie, our graffiti removal leader

Before the beach stairs were removed for recoating, a large amount of graffiti was taken off the sandstone, from the South lot to the Reserve's southern boundary. Pictured here are **Thomas Stehlik**, **Don McGuire** and **Guy Lawrie** hard at work fighting vandalism and keeping our cliffs clean.



Torrey Pines Book Club

We will continue to meet via Zoom at our regularly scheduled time. Please notify **Ken King** if you plan to participate and if you need any extra help getting connected.

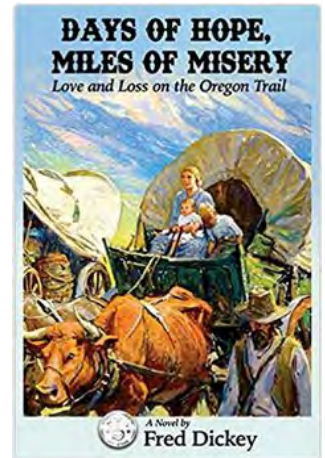
When: Tuesday, April 13, 1:00 pm

What: *Days of Hope, Miles of Misery: Love and Loss on the Oregon Trail* by Fred Dickey

Amazon says:

They knew the trip would be difficult, but they didn't bargain on hell. The shout "giddap" starts the oxen down a path to the end of the world. For five months, and two thousand miles, the wagon train lumbers toward California on the Oregon Trail and into big trouble. The emigrants endure disease, dirt, and attacks from outlaws and invaded Indians. Bitter strife erupts between ill-matched pioneers forced together by necessity.... Beyond all they must endure, the pioneers keep fighting, and keep coming. Those who make it are survivors, survivors with a great story to tell.

May 11: We decided to be a little creative. We want to read a **Jack London book**, but which one? Each person will choose a book to read, then we'll compare and contrast the various stories!



Bird of the Month: Red-Tailed Hawk

by Jack Friery; photo by Andy Rathbone

Our featured bird this month is the **Red-tailed Hawk**, *Buteo jamaicensis*, the most common hawk seen in the western United States. Look for a very large hawk “making lazy circles in the sky.” (Yes, the bird is also found in Oklahoma.) The Red-tail has a wingspread of about 50 inches. Despite this size, the heaviest female (females are generally about 25% heavier than males) weighs only about three pounds – much lighter than your average dog or cat.

Red-tails subsist on a diet of small mammals, such as ground squirrels and rabbits, although I’ve seen a Red-tail carrying a rattlesnake into a Torrey pine tree as a meal. The bird has a call that’s a single-note rasping scream. Oddly, filmmakers have frequently used the Red-tail’s call as the call of a Bald Eagle in their films.

Don’t be surprised if you see a Red-tailed Hawk that doesn’t have a red tail. First, the bird doesn’t earn its red tail until it’s about two years old. Next, in mature birds, the tail is red only on the upper side – the underside is pale in color (though the sun shining through the bird’s tail often exposes the brick-colored top side). Look for a soaring bird that is rich brown above and pale below, often with a broken band of dark feathers across its belly.



Sources: allaboutbirds.org/guide/Red-tailed_Hawk/overview; en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red-tailed_hawk; audubon.org/field-guide/bird/red-tailed-hawk; animals.sandiegozoo.org/animals/red-tailed-hawk.

Torrey Pines Docent Society Bird Survey: March 2021

Number of species: 92
(+2 other taxa)

Blue-winged Teal 4
Cinnamon Teal 5
Northern Shoveler 1
Gadwall 15
American Wigeon 38
Mallard 9
Northern Pintail 3
Green-winged Teal 2
Canvasback 1
Ring-necked Duck 2
Lesser Scaup 32
Surf Scoter 6
Bufflehead 19
Red-breasted Merganser 3
Ruddy Duck 28
California Quail 3
Pied-billed Grebe 5
Western Grebe 316
Eurasian Collared-Dove 4
Mourning Dove 16
Anna's Hummingbird 50
Allen's Hummingbird 12
Rufous/Allen's Hummingbird 18

hummingbird sp. 4
Ridgway's Rail 1
Virginia Rail 1
American Coot 20
Killdeer 2
Whimbrel 6
Long-billed Curlew 4
Willet 20
Heermann's Gull 30
Ring-billed Gull 71
Western Gull 67
Royal Tern 3
Red-throated Loon 4
Common Loon 2
Brandt's Cormorant 8
Double-crested Cormorant 8
Brown Pelican 15
Great Blue Heron 2
Great Egret 2
Snowy Egret 8
White-faced Ibis 1
Osprey 2
White-tailed Kite 1
Northern Harrier 1
Sharp-shinned Hawk 1
Cooper's Hawk 2
Red-shouldered Hawk 2
Red-tailed Hawk 12

Nuttall's Woodpecker 8
Northern Flicker 10
American Kestrel 6
Peregrine Falcon 4
Black Phoebe 17
Say's Phoebe 3
Cassin's Kingbird 10
Hutton's Vireo 4
California Scrub-Jay 7
American Crow 56
Common Raven 39
Northern Rough-winged Swallow 13
Tree Swallow 5
Barn Swallow 1
Bushtit 60
Wrentit 71
Ruby-crowned Kinglet 3
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher 1
California Gnatcatcher 11
Rock Wren 1
House Wren 5
Marsh Wren 1
Bewick's Wren 18
California Thrasher 11
Northern Mockingbird 8
Western Bluebird 3
Hermit Thrush 5

Scaly-breasted Munia 14
House Sparrow 2
House Finch 96
Lesser Goldfinch 38
Dark-eyed Junco 3
White-crowned Sparrow 35
Golden-crowned Sparrow 9
Savannah Sparrow 6
Song Sparrow 40
Lincoln's Sparrow 2
California Towhee 64
Spotted Towhee 25
Red-winged Blackbird 31
Orange-crowned Warbler 16
Common Yellowthroat 12
Yellow-rumped Warbler 78

Observers: Marty Hales, Nancy Richardson, Andy Rathbone, Tsaiwei Olee, David Walker, Deborah Walker, and Anonymous

View this checklist online at ebird.org/checklist/S83405201

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



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