

TPA

# Journal

Journal of the Torrey Pines Association

Spring 2008

*If the trees could speak*

Karin H. Wilson

Vol. 4, No. 2

## *A salute to those with a vested interest!*

Join us as we spend a little time with the heroes of the park—our team of Docents. Here's the inside story on all they accomplish

By Karen Woods

Passing through a doorway in the 16-inch adobe walls of a 1923-era building, your eyes slowly adjust to the light and you quickly realize this is not your typical visitors' center. Greeted by one of the Docents who staff the museum, you are encouraged to warm up by the fire on this chilly day and make yourself at home.

You recall seeing a bird of prey on your walk up the hill, and ask the Docent whether you saw a red-shouldered hawk or perhaps a peregrine falcon? To help distinguish

its characteristics, you are guided to one of the numerous books in the bookstore featuring local birds. For

added confirmation, you consult the Docent bird survey for the most recent sightings.

Other Docent-created items are on hand to enhance the visitor experience—books and brochures to help identify native plants, custom-made jewelry detailing the long needles of the Torrey pine in sterling, and hand-crafted baskets made of actual needles (collected from outside of the Reserve).

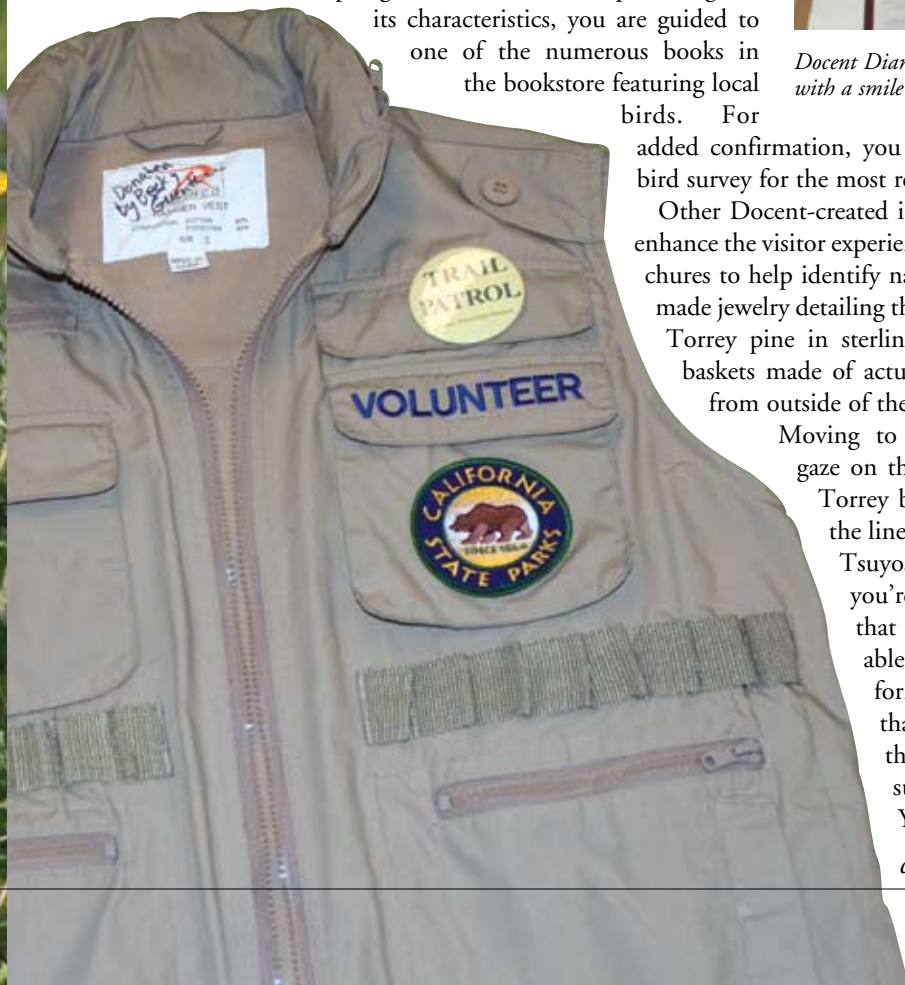
Moving to the east wall, you gaze on the rhythmic grace of Torrey branches captured in the line-drawing triptych by Tsuyoshi Matsumoto, and you're pleased to discover that his artwork is available for purchase in the form of greeting cards that he bequeathed to the Docent Society to support its mission. You select a tee shirt,

*continued on page 4*



*Docent Diana Corum greets visitors with a smile of welcome*

Herb Knufken



*past*

*present*

*future*

Karin H. Wilson





Karin H. Wilson

*TPA Journal*

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Editor: Peter Jensen, TPA

Art Director: Karin H. Wilson, TPA

Contributors: Sherry Doolittle, Margaret Fillius, Mike Gonzalez, Jr., Cecily Goode, Peter Jensen, Herb Knufken, Pat Masters, Steve and Sharon Rose, Will Sooter, Jeff Spivak, Steve Usher, Barbara Wallach, Karin H. Wilson, Karen Woods

**Torrey Pines Association**

P.O. Box 345  
La Jolla, California 92038  
www.torreypines.org

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TPA Board meetings: last Thursday of every month at 6:30 p.m. at the Lodge.



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# President's Message

## In the eye of a cormorant

Everyone has seen a cormorant—the dark rather ungainly bird with longish neck and short tail and wings. I’ve always thought its ability to “fly” underwater was its distinctive feature. Who could have guessed that the dull cormorant possesses the most limpid azure eye – an orb of stunning beauty. Thanks to Will Sooter’s photographic skill, now we all know!

Revelations from nature such as this remarkable eye have the power to transfix us. Such experiences, unpredictable and uncontrolled, grab our attention and rock us out of our assumed perceptions. They refresh and enliven us, inspiring us to share these joyful insights with others.

The cormorant’s eye also reminds us of the treasures of the natural world – a world we can experience any day here at the Reserve. We hope you come often and open your senses to its many beauties of light and shadow, silence and bird song, pine scent and salt breeze. This precious natural island in an urban sea restores us and merits our protection. As our founder, Guy Fleming, noted over sixty years ago, “...the sanctity of this refuge can only be preserved insofar as the people, whose heritage it is, zealously guard and maintain it in its primitive beauty.”

Almost 60 years later, *to support, protect, and increase public appreciation for the Reserve* remains TPA’s core mission.

We are fortunate to have the Torrey Pines Docent Society as our partners in this mission. With over 200 members, the docents put in thousands of hours last year with their “boots on the ground” volunteerism. After completing nine rigorous training sessions, each docent commits to volunteering 96 hours every year. They greet visitors to the Lodge, lead nature walks, patrol trails, repair benches, maintain the recycling program, weed invasive plants, and raise funds through bookstore sales and special walks. The dedication of our docents to interpreting the wonders of the Reserve is best expressed with the Children’s Program. Led by 24 docents, the program brought approximately 3400 children from 54 schools to the Reserve last year for hikes and learning activities. Among these children may be the future stewards of this special place.

Through their interpretive programs, the docents are always looking for that moment when they can reveal a “cormorant’s eye” to someone new at the Reserve. We dedicate this issue of the Journal to them with many thanks. 🍀

—Patricia Masters



Will Sooter



# Meeting at the ocean's edge

Green was the theme of the TPA Annual Meeting in February. A standing-room-only audience heard State Parks Environmental Scientist Darren Smith describe the challenge of managing and preserving our 326 native plant species. Architect Drew Hubbell enthralled us with his artful design and use of sustainable materials even in restorations and expansions of historic buildings. Joining us were more than 20 Urban Studies and Planning students from UCSD who came to hear Drew's presentation.



It was "standing room only" at our annual meeting—a great chance to meet friends, pick up information on the park, and review the year's achievements and challenges. Below: TPA President Patricia Masters welcomes members, docents, and guests to the 58th annual meeting. Highlights of 2007 included \$64,468 in grants from TPA to fund programs and projects at the Reserve and creation of an endowment that will ensure support into the future



Photos Karrn H. Wilson



Drew Hubbell extols the virtues of "green" steel, strawbale, recycled cellulose insulation, recycled lumber, solar power and heating, natural lighting and ventilation, rainwater harvesting and drought-tolerant landscaping



Darren Smith updates us on the natural resources priorities for 2008 — veldt grass control, sage scrub restoration, bark beetle monitoring, permits for lagoon mouth maintenance, and fire hazard policy — and warmly thanks TPA members for funding support



## What a difference an "S" makes!

For more information on the Torrey Pines Docent Society and their programs — please visit [www.torreypine.org](http://www.torreypine.org) (not PINES).

## *A salute to those with a vested interest!*

*continued from page 1*

gratified to hear that all of the proceeds will directly benefit the Reserve.

Around the corner, the portrait of Ellen Browning Scripps gazes over her creation. Beneath her calm visage, a father reads out loud about migrating gray whales, while his daughter colors in a whale fluke at the children's activity table that is just her size. Perhaps on her next visit the hands-on display will teach her about the Kumeyaay, the

hope future renovations will preserve the unique charm and character of this place, and avoid the high-tech template that seems to be the current fashion.

In the adjacent room, the Docent starts up the film *A Legacy of Stewardship* (beautifully produced by the TPA) just for you, and leaves you to relax to the melody of wooden flute and crashing waves.

As your visit draws to a close, you're encouraged not to miss the views from the back patio. Three-hundred feet below are the winding channels of Peñasquitos Lagoon Preserve (the most protected designation within the State Parks system). The Docent points out the golden layer of Torrey Sandstone standing to the northeast, capped by the rust-colored Linda Vista formation. Straight ahead above the lagoon, you consider the brown outcropping of a housing development that began to spread in the 1960s, bordered by the undeveloped green expanse of the Extension, which serves as a graphic reminder that the work to defend this precious land is never done.

As the Docent gives you some last minute pointers for your hike, you find yourself eager to feel the soft trails beneath your shoes, and tell yourself that you really must come here more often. On your way out, you watch the little girl skipping down the steps with her father, her drawing of the whale clutched tightly in hand. They seem to have made the Lodge their own. You hope that this direct contact will leave her with a heartfelt connection. Indeed, the future of the Reserve is quite possibly in her hands.

Join us elsewhere on these pages as we describe other Docent activities and volunteer efforts...it's a rewarding and vital side of the Reserve story that continues to unfold. ✂



Patricia Masters

*Docent bookstore was the topic of conversation among Supervising Ranger Jody Kummer and Docents Nan Danninger and Nancy Woodworth, manager*

early residents of this area, and the pine nuts they roasted. Meanwhile, a young boy asks the Docent questions non-stop about everything in sight, and marvels at the surprising softness of the skunk he was allowed to pet carefully.

The full-sized table nearby is set as it was during the lodge's original function as a restaurant. You learn that food is no longer served on this land, for the focus now is its preservation and protection. You reflect on your leisurely, self-directed opportunity to explore. Yes, some of the displays are a bit worn and in need of update, but you

## *Discover the docent in you*

By Jeff Spivak, Coordinator of Training

Our training program strives to give our new members a solid educational foundation so that they can interpret Torrey Pines Natural Preserve for our visitors. This nine-week course includes instruction in plants and wildflowers, geology, history, birds, Native Americans, and insects. Most important, however, is the way we tie these various strands together to weave a story of the land: how it was used in the past and its significance today. The trainees receive a 200-page manual, are required to complete take-home quizzes, and, as a culminating activity, complete group work on a trail describing what flora and fauna are found there and how the Kumeyaay used these resources. Over 60 members of the class of 2008 began training at the end of February. They will continue the legacy begun by Guy Fleming and Ellen Browning Scripps to preserve and protect this most precious resource. ✂



Herb Knufken

*Docents Alan Bennett and Mike Lewis volunteer for bench maintenance projects*

## A special walk on the wild side

By Margaret L. Fillius, Special Walk Coordinator

The Special Walk program was initiated by docent Don Grine several years ago. This fee-for-service program tailors docent-led walks according to the needs and interests of the group, which can vary considerably, e.g. board of directors, top sales personnel, conference attendees, YMCA elders, boy/girl scouts, family groups, school groups that don't qualify for the Children's Program. Group size can be from one to sixty but sub-group size is kept to ten or less, with a docent leading each sub-group. The program is a significant source of income for the Docent Society. ❧



Herb Knufken

## The Docent Library

By Steve and Sharon Rose (librarians from 2004 to 2007)

Thanks to the generous contributions of the Josephine Stedem Scripps Foundation and TPA the docent library was remodeled in 2006. This room, a part of the original living quarters of the proprietors of the lodge restaurant in the 1920s and early 30s, now has glass enclosed book cases to keep the mice from nesting among the books, a beautiful oak table for meetings, mail slots for the docent board and program leaders, and two computers for entering docent hours and for internet searches. The library provides a place for quiet research as well as a wonderful place for small meetings. Over 600 items (books, historical articles, CDs and DVDs) in areas with particular relevance to the reserve are housed in the library. The book catalog can now be accessed on line through a link on the docent web page. A number of videos of historical interest are available on DVD as are videos of many of the presentations given as part of the docent training classes. For more information on the library contact Mike Yang or Bonnie Hornbeck, the current librarians. ❧



Karin H. Wilson

## Those Whacky Weeders (Veni, Weedi, Vici)

By Barbara Wallach



Herb Knufken

Docent Vernie McGowan tackles invasive weeds.

In the summer of 2005 the "Whacky Weeders" became a formidable force in the Reserve. Docents and volunteers, concerned about the appearance of the trails and the lack of regular maintenance, felt they might lend a hand by performing some of the more mundane chores on a regular basis. Working with the guidance of Reserve staff, the Weeders have contributed thousands of hours of volunteer time.

During the last three years the weeders have ...

... established a native plant nursery and planted seedlings; made the Whitaker Garden a showplace for the use of native plants; reset downed posts and cable; made the garden in front of the Lodge more open and welcoming; pruned and opened vistas around the perimeter of the North Beach parking lot; pruned along all the trails in the Reserve; removed invasives by hand, rake, and shovel; bagged and carried hundreds of pounds of debris and cuttings; swept, washed, and cleaned around parking lots, the Lodge, water fountains, and signs; pruned shrubs and pulled invasives along the road throughout the Reserve; picked up litter along Torrey Pines grade and Carmel Valley Road; collected seeds in the Flintkote and other areas; and participated in the mapping of invasives. Many of these projects, although completed, require constant monitoring.

This dedicated group meets on Monday mornings at 8:30 for two hours. Newcomers are always welcome and one need not appear every week in order to join in the fun. To be on the email list for this group, let us know via the Docent website [www.torreypine.org](http://www.torreypine.org). ❧





Herb Knufken

Docent Stu Smith restraining a rustic bench near the Lodge

Docent Frank Burham leads a weekend Nature Walk. Join the fun weekends and holidays, 10 am and 2 pm at the Visitor Center



Herb Knufken

Children's Program stalwarts Diane Greening, Barbara Wallach, and Jeannie Smith



Herb Knufken

## How it all began

Our legacy of Docent volunteerism stretches back to 1975...with roots even deeper

By Steve Usher, President, TPDS

The many docent activities described on these pages are an integral part of the Torrey Pines experience today.

It was not always this way. After the land that constitutes the Reserve today was transferred to the State of California in 1959, the Lodge was actually closed. During the 1960s, a group of residents from the Del Mar Terrace area joined together to promote the restoration and preservation of Los Peñasquitos Lagoon and the protection of the native Torrey pines grove in the Terrace from development. Under the name of the *Torrey Pines Wildlife Association* (TPWA), this group later joined with the Torrey Pines Association (TPA) in the great effort to preserve the Extension and add it to the Reserve.

In addition, this group worked with the Reserve staff to restore public access to the Lodge. In April, 1968, a group of two dozen volunteers succeeded in opening the Lodge to the public from noon to 4 on weekends and 10 to 4 on holidays. While they referred to themselves as the *Lodge Volunteers*, they came to be known as the *Lodge Sitters*. This group set up display cases, added lights and worked to create a museum atmosphere in the Lodge. On occasion they organized nature walks led by knowledgeable people from around the county, including representatives from the Natural History Museum. Sometimes a TPWA member would even lead a walk.

With the assistance of the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) staff, the *Torrey Pines Docent Society* was formally established in March, 1975. Under the guidance of Ranger Linda Engel, volunteers were recruited mainly by advertisements

in local newspapers. A nine-week training program was established and in addition to training, organization bylaws were written and officers elected. The training outline was heavily influenced by the program used by the Natural History Museum in preparing its *Canyoneers*, a volunteer group that had been established just two years previously. In fact, many Museum staffers served as lecturers during the Docent training. Service to the public officially began in June of that year. Ironically, only a few members of the *Lodge Sitters* joined the Docent Society. This group of independent souls preferred to simply enjoy the peaceful beauty of the Reserve and to casually share their love of the place with visitors. They were less interested in the formal structure and the training. Nonetheless, in December, 1975, the two groups focused on their common purposes and agreed to merge.

Originally the Docent's activities focused on the Lodge and leading walks through the Reserve. In 1990 the Society added the *Children's Program* (see below). Then in 1997 a program dedicated to *Special Group Walks* was added (see page 5). While work at eradicating non-native plant species had always been part of the Docent brief, in 2005 a special team, the *Whacky Weeders*, was organized (see page 5). Given our large number of volunteers, we are also able to serve as the eyes and ears for the Ranger staff throughout the Reserve. In 2005 this service, popularly known as *Interpretive Trail Patrol* (see page 7), became formalized with required training and the careful logging of hours, notes for needed maintenance as well as anecdotes from the trails.

In 2007, in cooperation with our sister organization, the TPA, we added a recycling service to the Reserve. Recently, the Society has become more active in fund raising. Following a grant from the

## Teach the children well...

By Cecily Goode, Director

The beauty of the Reserve and ocean creates a lasting memory for children, parents, and teachers. The first school program offered at Torrey Pines State Reserve in the late 1980s focused on the Kumeyaay people—their history, culture and customs. In 1994, the program expanded with more topics available to teachers. This led to our present Docent-led Children's Program from September through May. Teachers are able to sign up on line for five different topics: Native Americans—the Kumeyaay; Geology; Ecosystems and food chains; Reserve—plants and habitats; Oceans—whales and dolphins. Over 3,000 children a year presently come to TPSR for the presentation and hike. ☘



Herb Knufken

Josephine Stedem Scripps Foundation in 2006, the Library and Docent Room was fully remodeled in period style. Another grant, this time from the Ellen Browning Scripps Foundation, was used as the core funding to restore and reopen the critical Beach Trail which provides access from the top of the bluffs to the beach. Both TPA and the Docents participated in the funding of that project. Finally, also in cooperation with TPA, we embarked on one of our most ambitious ventures and established the Torrey Pines Reserve Endowment Fund. While the Fund only began taking donations in 2007, it rapidly grew to \$370,000 to support necessary work in the Reserve.

The Society has been regularly expanding its membership as well as its services. Due to incoming trainee classes of over 30 new Docents a year since 2004 we now have an active membership of just over 200 members. We have recently increased the requisite number of volunteer hours from 72 hours/year to 96 hours/year. We have also added Lifetime Membership status for those Docents with at least 10 years of active service. There are 51 Lifetime members in the Society representing a total of 863 years of service to the Reserve.

One of the most important developments over the past few years has been the restoration of the strong bond between the Torrey Pines Docent Society and the Torrey Pines Association. We have a long history of common interests and it is a pleasure to be working closely with TPA once again. One of our predecessor organizations, the TPWA, joined with the TPA in the 1960s in the fight to preserve the Extension. It is no accident that our two organizations have again come together to meet the increasing challenges that face our beloved Reserve. The Docents remain a vibrant, committed, and expanding Society and together with the Torrey Pines Association, we look forward to a wonderful future for the Reserve.

## On "trail patrol" with the eyes and ears of the rangers

By Sherry Doolittle  
Interpretive Trail Patrol Coordinator

"Will I see rattlesnakes here? Will this trail take us to the beach? Why would you allow that big bird to kill the poor little squirrel?" These are a few of the questions one might hear on Trail Patrol.

Trail Patrol started when then-Supervising Ranger Bob Wohl created the first handwritten Trail Patrol Handbook from his training-class notes. Currently 86 specially trained docents make up the Trail Patrol team at Torrey Pines State Natural Reserve.

Trail Patrol members interaction with the public goes a long way in helping both the Reserve and the people who frequent it...

How do you tell a family with hungry toddlers that they can't have a picnic on the edge of the cliff by Yucca Point, or a young lady walking her little Yorkie down Beach Trail that dogs are not allowed? You help them understand that the Reserve is a special habitat filled with natural wonders like no other. You entice them into helping protect it by following the rules, ensuring that Torrey Pines will remain wild and unspoiled for future generations to enjoy as well. You remind them that our treasure is just that—a treasure



Karin H. Willson

### What does the Reserve mean to you?

Send us a short essay on how you use the Reserve, how it enriches your life, and other themes that spring from your visits. We'd like to publish some of these writings (which continue a great tradition of writing about the Reserve, including the essays of naturalist Hank Nichol).



### Torrey Pines team makes our voice heard in Sacramento

By Mike Gonzalez, Jr.

**Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's** proposed FY '08-'09 budget calls for the closure of 48



Docents Steve Usher and Rick Vogel flank Mary Ann Maslowski and Mimi Feiler with Counselor Mike Gonzalez, Jr. on right

state parks facilities, and the loss of half of our lifeguards on local state beaches.

To help bring a message of concern to state legislators, Torrey Pines Docent President Steve Usher, Docent Rick Vogel, and TPA Counselor Mike Gonzalez traveled to Parks Advocacy Day in Sacramento. They, along with over 250 others, engaged state Senate and Assembly members with an appeal to find ways to keep all of California's parks open and ensure public safety on our shores.

Learn more about the issues and what you can do to help at the California State Park Foundation's website [www.savestateparks.org](http://www.savestateparks.org). Make your voice heard.

### "I'm a member!" New membership tags debut this spring

Say goodbye to that worn and faded piece of paper in your glove box that proclaims your TPA membership. Our smart-looking new car tags are both functional and beautiful. As before, they are non-transferable and are for your car's entry to the South Lot...and only your car when driven by you, the TPA member.



# What the cuts may mean to us

## Proposed state park budget cuts may compromise beach safety

**S**.O.S. (Save Our State Parks Campaign) is a statewide, grassroots campaign that aims to keep California's magnificent state parks open. In January, 2008, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger proposed to close 48 state parks and reduce lifeguard staffing on 16 state beaches as a way to shore up a portion of the state's deficit.

Although the popularity of Torrey Pines State Reserve (and its lucrative state revenue from entry fees) assures that we are in no danger of closing, our State Beach does face significant cuts in lifeguard service.

Not surprising to anyone who has been at the beach during a busy weekend, T.P. State Beach is the second-most "rescued" beach in the state system (Huntington tops the list). To lend your support to the campaign to preserve state park funding for Torrey Pines and all state parks, learn more about the Save Our State Parks Campaign at [advocacy@calparks.org](mailto:advocacy@calparks.org).

*If ever a beach needed even more lifeguards...! A typical busy summer day at Torrey Pines State Beach packs 'em in*



Edward A. Vocirazka

## Who we are... [www.torrey.pines.org](http://www.torrey.pines.org)

The Torrey Pines Association was founded in 1950 to encourage public interest in, and support for, the preservation of the rare Torrey pine trees and their scenic refuge. Since then it has played an active role in:

- achieving State Reserve/Preserve status
  - assisting in the acquisition of additional acres of native trees
  - funding educational exhibits
  - publishing informational and educational materials
  - managing memorial funds
  - renovating the Fleming house for use as an on-site ranger's residence
  - monitoring the overall welfare of the site
- We invite you to join with us in our ongoing

ing efforts to preserve and protect the rare Torrey pines and their scenic refuge by becoming a member of the Torrey Pines Association.

Please visit our website or contact us by mail for more information on membership levels. We also encourage contributions to the new Torrey Pines Reserve Endowment Fund. Donations will help protect and preserve the Reserve — a lasting legacy! Contact [TPApresident@san.rr.com](mailto:TPApresident@san.rr.com).



Karin H. Wilson



Karin H. Wilson

TPA *Journal*

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La Jolla, California 92038

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