

# TPA *Journal*

Journal of the Torrey Pines Association

Summer 2005

*If the trees could speak*

©Bill Everts

Vol. 1, No. 1

## *Custodians of one of the rarest remnants...*

### Fleming Award debuts this spring, honors first recipients John and Mary Ann Shelton

By Diana Bergen, TPA Counselor

The Torrey Pines Association first convened in February, 1950. Fifty-five years later, it seemed fitting for your Board of Counselors to create the first "Guy Fleming Award" in honor of our founding president, Guy L. Fleming.

Who, we wondered, should be the first recipient of what we hope will be a long string of awards honoring service to our Reserve? Who will stimulate inspiration and define the spirit of this award from here on forward?

The answer came to us immediately. But before we tip our hat to our first honorees, some background:

In 1921 Guy Fleming became the custodian of then-named Torrey Pines Reserve. Later, in gratitude for his watchful presence there, Ms. Ellen Browning Scripps gave the Flemings the opportunity to build a house within the newly established Torrey Pines Reserve. The Guy L. Fleming residence opened its front door in 1927: Guy and his wife, Margaret Eddy Fleming, moved in as official caretakers of Torrey Pines.

Guy Fleming was much more than a caretaker. He was a widely recognized writer, naturalist, conservationist and reserve administrator who influenced the protection of natural lands throughout California.

When the city's attention to protecting the Reserve waned through the 1940s, Guy Fleming, along with others, became interested in sparking and continuing the legacy of protection. They established the Torrey Pines Association in 1950, with Guy Fleming as the first president.

Another founding member of the board of counselors was Henry W. Shelton.

Henry W. Shelton and family moved from Philadelphia to La Jolla in 1925, and were soon joined by Henry's first cousin, Margaret Eddy. Henry introduced Margaret to Guy



*(Top) John and Mary Ann's love of the outdoors often took to the skies as well. (Above) Their collection of photos of the Reserve includes this rarity; an early configuration of the road and river mouth*

Fleming, and in 1927, she became Mrs. "Peggy" Fleming. The Sheltons and their three children, one of them named John, enjoyed the Fleming home and its "backyard," Torrey Pines Reserve.

What sparks personal and civic dedication to protect Torrey Pines State Reserve? What stimulates someone like a young John Shelton to be

*continued on 3*

*past*

*present*

*future*

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## President's Message

### Welcome to our first TPA Journal

**M**y two favorite places on the planet are the Rae Lakes Basin in the Sierra Nevada and Torrey Pines State Reserve, a short run from my house.

Rae Lakes is an easy pick. Even Muir called this high basin on what is now his eponymous trail a favorite; a trout-laden string of turquoise lakes lorded over by a canine spire of granite. Rae Lakes is an archetypal, Lord of the Rings landscape accessible only a few months each year. You love it partly because you *earn* it via the breathless act of getting there.

Torrey Pines, on the other hand, has always made me pause. I pick it—no question. (You probably do too.) But why? Because it's five minutes from home? Because I love the beach? Because the zigged and zagged branches of its trees please my eye and my camera lens again and again?

How can a small reserve of approximately 1,750 acres, set aside to protect the perilously tiny habitat of a relict pine tree, all of it noosed or stitched by freeways, houses, railroad tracks, golf course, hotels, and cars-cars-cars, sustain me as much as a granite-ringed basin far from the nearest road?

Easy.

Beauty. Fragility. Improbability. Fortitude.

Torrey Pines State Reserve resonates with us on every level in a shrinking natural world through the sheer miracle of its existence. Now your fellow members of Torrey Pines Association hope to examine this wondrous conundrum at least four times a year through this newsletter. We call it a Journal because it reminds us of the journey these trees and their parklands have made, and must still make, to assured survival—a journey that can only be made safely through your help.

Look for the wonderful little tag line, dreamt up by one of our Counselors, hiding up top in the photo on the cover page:

"If the trees could speak."

Let them speak: Of two groves left on the planet, one here on the San Diego coast, the

other out on Santa Rosa Island.

Let them speak: Of hanging on in a reserve besieged by growth and all that it brings—polluted waters, noise, noxious air, and the nibblings of development at every edge.

Let them speak: Of being all but cut-off from other habitats and wildlife.

Of course there are no Treebeards here (not that we know of!), so we must speak for them. Will we rail against the rails? Of course we will. Will we also muse about the reserve's beauty and glorious history? Of course we will. Will we alert you to the dangers that lurk ahead, and

occasionally take positions that may not agree with those of many others? We will—because the trees would speak if they could.

In the past we have been honored to communicate through a single letter in each issue of *Torreyana*: the newsletter of the Torrey

Pines Docents Society. This new *TPA Journal* will be sent to you, our TPA members, in place of the *Torreyana*. To all the docents: thank you for hosting us these many years. To all our members: the *Torreyana* will always be available on line at [www.torreypine.org/Torreyana/Archives.htm](http://www.torreypine.org/Torreyana/Archives.htm). We also urge you to become a docent: there is no greater service to the reserve.

Who are we? Our membership is as diverse as the Reserve's habitat. People join us because they love to hike, study biology, jog the beach, sit on the sand, defeat insensitivity and ignorance toward nature, listen to the trees sing in a gale off the sea, or see the million-drop chandelier of a Torrey draped in morning dew combed from the night air. Your dues go toward many good works...and a few good battles.

Welcome...to these pages, to these trails. Help us protect this Reserve, and come share our mutual love of all the pieces that make this one of the most beautiful and sacred puzzles on the planet. —Peter Jensen  
[858-755-2331 or pjensen@san.rr.com](mailto:pjensen@san.rr.com)

#### *TPA Journal*

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Your comments and articles are welcome.

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A special thanks to professional photographer Bill Everts for the use of his photographs in this first issue from his book "Torrey Pines: Landscape and Legacy." Bill Everts can be contacted at: 760.746.5710.

#### **Torrey Pines Association**

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#### **BOARD OF COUNSELORS**

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

## *Custodians of one of the rarest remnants...*

*continued from p. 1*

interested in Torrey Pines? Is it childhood memories about the places and people we grow up with? Or is it curiosity to find out how nature works? Is it a deep sense of social obligation?

Let John tell you himself. His Afterword in Bill Everts' book "Landscape and Legacy" says:

"We come away realizing that, by force of circumstances, we are custodians of one of the rarest remnants of natural open space in the world."

John S. Shelton attended Pomona College. After WWII he received his doctorate in Physical Geology from Yale. He worked for the U.S. Geological Survey and Encyclopedia Britannica. He wrote his world-renowned book, "Geology Illustrated," in 1966. John Shelton is also well known for his pioneering aerial photography.

John and Mary Ann Shelton have carried the diverse responsibilities of the Torrey Pines Association for decades. They even have a room in their home they call the Torrey Pines Association Room.

As treasurer, historians, and membership care-

takers of the TPA, their influence in carrying on the legacy of the TPA enabled our non-profit organization to be what it is today. The articles of incorporation set forth through the establishment of the Torrey Pines Association in 1950 have been realized time and time again through their involvement.

Like Guy Fleming, who took on every task in the reserve, so have John and Mary Ann Shelton nurtured the legacies set forth by Ellen Browning Scripps and the many supporters of Torrey Pines State Reserve. Their knowledge and actions have sparked public interest in the protection, preservation and beautification of Torrey Pines Reserve as a public land to be enjoyed by all.

From all of us in the Torrey Pines Association, and all who have ever walked our Reserve's trails, we thank you John and Mary Ann Shelton, recipients of our first Torrey Pines Association Guy Fleming Award. ❀



*Peggy and Guy Fleming (top) hosted friends, including a young John Shelton in this photo, at the reserve aerie overlooking the lagoon.*

## *"View From the Sand"*

### Thoughts and Perspectives from a Torrey Pines Lifeguard

By Ed Vodrazka, Humble Lifeguard

**W**ho is That Guy?" I wondered the first time I saw him, and so have many of you. If you have spent even just a day or two on the beach at Torrey Pines, most likely you have seen Tom Coppage. You probably didn't notice him, but chances are he walked right past you. He may have stopped to pick up a cigarette butt or a candy wrapper before walking on.

The reason you probably have seen Tom is that he is on the beach at Torrey about 320 days a year. Whether it be the sunny days of August, the windy evenings of February, or the gloomiest mornings of "June Gloom"...Tom is here. He walks the 4 mile length of the Torrey Pines beach almost every day picking up the pieces of trash that people leave behind, then hauls the bags back to the main parking lot where he deposits them into the dumpster. His average haul in a day of work is a diverse collection of every conceivable type of trash that fills roughly five "full sized" trash bags.

As you can imagine, this is strenuous work, and it takes hours to complete even one day's haul. Tom's physique has actually been honed by the years of time he has spent on the beach. His body is lean and taut, and his skin bears the marks of age from working in the elements for so many years. To perform that kind of service to the parks for a day would be appreciated....*to do it for a year would be incredible...*but get this...**Tom Coppage has performed his "routine" for some 25 years!** Frankly, that level of selfless service to the parks is beyond comprehension.

In his "LBT" (Life Before Trash), Tom was an auditor, so he has a natural facility with numbers. Part of the motivation that keeps him

going is his ongoing tally of the number of bags he collects. In a month he fills 150 bags. Talled over a year's time, he usually nets around 1800 bags. Now if you extrapolate the bags of trash he has hauled off Torrey Pines State Beach in his trash hauling "career" you end up with an astonishing 45,000 bags of debris!

Just for fun, I figured I would do a bit of calculating myself to put things into perspective. If you were to take one of his bags, tear it open, then distribute the trash back on the ground (incidentally, this would be Tom's worst nightmare), it would cover approximately 5 feet by 5 feet. If you then multiplied that surface area by his estimated lifetime total (45,000 bags), you end up with an astonishing 800,000 square feet of trash! That "haul" would completely cover 26 football fields and weigh in the neighborhood of 500,000 pounds!

I'm pleased to say that Tom has recently been selected to receive the "Director's Award." This is the highest award for voluntary service presented by the State Parks (and one rarely given out).

Since Tom is a rather shy man, I know that he will be reluctant to step into the limelight, but I'm hoping that we can convince him to attend. The years Tom has worked on behalf of Torrey Pines (and for all of us) far exceeds any measure of service we could have ever hoped for. The beauty of Torrey Pines remains pristine today...a fact largely attributed to the selfless service of one man. ❀



*Lifeguard Ed Vodrazka*



The existing single track makes a beeline across the lagoon atop a wide berm

JOHN DURANT

EDITORIAL

# Will the Lagoon Get a Second Track?

## Why Caltrans' plans pose a major threat to the reserve

The railroad tracks that cut across Los Peñasquitos Lagoon Marsh Natural Preserve in Torrey Pines State Reserve have had a profound effect on the flow of water in these beautiful wetlands. None other than Carl Hubbs, Thomas Whitaker and Freda Reid write in the Green Book: "The new roadbed running through the center ... divided the lagoon ... significantly altering the tidal current pattern." Now comes word of increasing the size of the tracks: putting another set of tracks ("double tracking") on a new roadbed. *TPA Journal's* Doug Lappi spoke with Don Billings, who has been leading the discussions for complete removal of the tracks and alternative routes. Don is Vice Chair of the Torrey Pines Community Planning Board and has an impressive background in economics.

### ***Please describe the "double tracking" proposal.***

Caltrans plans to spend up to \$7 billion of taxpayer funds to widen and "Double Track" the heavy diesel railroad that runs along our coast from Los Angeles to San Diego. This plan is supported by SANDAG (the county planning agency), as well as NCTD (owner of the Coaster train), Burlington Northern, and some local city council members. double tracking would involve a number of massive construction projects that would severely impact Torrey Pines.

### ***What will be the effect of double tracking on Los Peñasquitos Lagoon?***

The project would require construction of a multi-mile, elevated, concrete causeway, resembling a freeway, with double tracks to carry significantly more polluting diesel trains, through the length of the Lagoon. The project includes digging double tunnels under Del Mar, with the construction staging site likely in the Lagoon in the vicinity of the north parking lot. There would be years of massive impact during construction (excavating 3.4 linear miles of tunnels, pile driving in the Lagoon, construction of the elevated causeway, etc.) followed by elevated levels of pollutants and Lagoon and wildlife stressors, including heavy metals, train horns, visual blight, etc.

### ***Where does the financing for this project come from?***

Some of the money is already in place; the rest is "in the wings." TransNet II (a.k.a. Prop. A), which squeaked by on the November 2004 ballot (by barely 1,000 votes County-wide), includes a \$400 million line item that can be used for rail projects; this would be supplemented by an additional \$800 million, per the standard SANDAG

formula (which matches every dollar of TransNet tax money with two dollars of State and Federal tax dollars).

In addition, there is likely to be a "California high speed rail" bond for around \$10 billion on the ballot next November; this bond includes nearly \$1 billion to pay NOT for high speed rail, but for double tracking projects for the (non high speed) railroad on our coast, including construction of the Los Peñasquitos Lagoon Elevated Railroad.

### ***What are the alternatives?***

As a matter of form, Caltrans must consider (and then reject!) a "no build" (leave it as it is) option. They are offering only one, straw-man alternative route (i.e., move the railroad to the I-5 corridor, starting in the north at Cannon Road and rejoining the existing route near the Sorrento Valley station). This would involve tunneling under the I-5 at the Del Mar hill (from approximately Via de la Valle on the north to Carmel Valley Road on the south) instead of the proposed tunnels under the City of Del Mar.

There has been recent community activity urging SANDAG to consider investing instead in cutting-edge transportation technology, by studying the concept of a maglev train up the I-5, which likely would be cheaper to construct, much cheaper to operate, produce virtually no at-point pollution, and run essentially silently and without any vibration.

Unfortunately, Caltrans has to date refused to consider taking a serious look at any alternatives, and continues to use the EIR process to advocate only the Lagoon route.

### ***What can a TPA member do to remove the tracks from the Lagoon?***

Just as several decades ago the community rose up and defeated Caltrans' plan to "widen" Camino del Mar into an Interstate freeway, and then run it along the Torrey Pines bluff front, today there is growing community opposition to coastal double tracking. After years of supporting this route, the Del Mar city council recently declared itself agnostic; while this clearly is not a victory, it is a sign that community opposition is having some limited impact. San Diego city councilman Scott Peters has gone on record to publicly oppose the Lagoon routing. The TPA Board and the Torrey Pines Community Planning Board have both declared their opposition. However, this is not nearly enough to derail this project. Caltrans has given no sign of budging from its plan. ☞

### **How Can You be Heard?**

Call or write: the mayors and city councilmembers of San Diego, Del Mar, Solana Beach, and Encinitas; Gary Gallegos, executive director of SANDAG; county supervisor Pam Slater-Price; Mr. Pat Merrill of Caltrans; and State Senator Christine Kehoe and State Assemblymember Mark Wyland. Send letters to the editor of the *Del Mar Times*, the *Union Tribune*, the *Coast News*, the *North County Times*, and Voice of San Diego.org. Go to local city council meetings and read a short statement asking for their clear support of protecting our community from this massive project. Monitor the EIR process. And watch these pages!

We can win this one, but only if every single one of us gets mad enough to make change happen.

– Don Billings

# "Hippos" in the Reserve?

Yes! Watch out for this wandering acronym

By Judith Vacquier, TPA Counselor

Many conservationists say we are at a crossroads in the history of life on Planet Earth. While more and more species are being discovered and identified in far reaches of the oceans, Antarctica, and deep inside the Earth, we humans are in the process of causing another mass extinction like the one that occurred when the dinosaurs disappeared 65 million years ago. Why is this mass extinction happening, and what does this have to do with Torrey Pines State Reserve?

The millions of species of plants and animals on the planet represent our biodiversity. These species have arisen through millions of years of evolution. There is a natural equilibrium, with new species arising and species going extinct for various reasons. However, mankind is speeding up the extinction process, as much as 1,000 to 10,000 times the natural rate. The main causes can be summed up in the acronym "HIPPO," as described by E.O. Wilson in his fascinating book "The Future of Life." What does HIPPO stand for? **H**abitat destruction, **I**nvasive species, **P**ollution, **P**opulation, and **O**verharvesting.

If we don't slow this down (and there's no reason why we can't), some predictions are that a significant fraction of our biodiversity will be gone in the next 50 to 100 years. With the destruction of rain forest habitats and coral reefs, which have some of the highest densities of plant and animal species, untold numbers of species may go extinct before we even learn of their existence. This is detrimental for many reasons, not only because some species may benefit mankind by providing new sources of pharmaceuticals, such as anti-cancer agents and antibiotics, and new species of food crops, but we lose the aesthetic pleasure of seeing our fellow creatures in their natural environment, and must question whether this is ethical.

So what can we do, as lovers of Torrey Pines, to help stop this destruction and live in harmony with nature? The answer is: a lot!

**"H"** First and foremost, preserving and protecting the Reserve, the purpose of the TPA, preserves habitat – the "H" in HIPPO. We can continue to acquire land for the Reserve and support efforts to protect the Reserve from further encroachment into the wetlands of Peñasquitos Lagoon, e.g. by supporting efforts to get the rail-

road rerouted out of the lagoon. We can stay on trails to prevent erosion and plant damage, and, of course, not pick the wildflowers.

**"I"** How about invasive species? We have many volunteers who help our reserve staff remove destructive invasive species such as iceplant, veldt grass, mustard and Russian thistle. We can avoid disasters such as the appearance of "killer algae," *Caulerpa taxifolia*, as happened at nearby Aguas Hediondas lagoon, by not disposing of aquarium water, plants or fish in the lagoon.

**"P"** Pollution is an easy one. We can avoid littering in the reserve (and elsewhere). We can recycle, and we can pick up trash, especially plastic and styrofoam, as we stroll on the beach. Did you know that plastic in the environment doesn't biodegrade, it just breaks into smaller and smaller pieces, until it looks like food for fish, sharks, sea turtles and sea birds? And those balloons we release at special occasions end up in the ocean looking like a nice jellyfish meal for some unsuspecting sea animal.

**"P"** The next "P" is for Population. As Southern California increases in population, and the reserve has more visitors, there is more pressure on the habitat and its inhabitants.

**"O"** Finally, the "O" of HIPPO stands for overharvesting and overfishing. This is something you can't see as you gaze out over the ocean from the Guy Fleming Trail, but when you leave the reserve for your trip to the grocery store, you can make wise, educated choices about which seafood to buy to support sustainable fishing and avoid overfishing.

So next time you visit the reserve, think about HIPPO's, but don't expect to see one! 🐼

## To learn more:

See the Torrey Pines State Reserve Lodge exhibits about our local biodiversity.

"The Future of Life" by E.O. Wilson, 2002, Alfred A. Knopf

"The Diversity of Life" by E.O. Wilson, 1992, W.W. Norton & Co.

*Natural erosion, sometimes hastened by man, creates many tableaux of twisted roots crawling across sandstone. Exposed roots can grow a protective covering of bark.*



*Invasive non-native "pampas grass" escapes local gardens via wind borne seeds. Its tough, sharp-leaved clumps are very difficult to remove.*

## PROTECT THE PINES—BECOME A MEMBER

Membership benefits include free parking at the Reserve (except at North Beach) and a subscription to "TPA Journal." (No free parking with the "Friend" Annual membership.) Make check payable to Torrey Pines Association and send to P.O. Box 345, La Jolla, CA 92038.

Friend annual, \$25  
Individual Annual, \$45  
Family Annual, \$75  
Contributing Annual, \$250  
Individual Life, \$500  
Patron Life, \$1,000

For more information, e-mail membership chair Mike Gonzalez, Jr. at [gonzojr@san.rr.com](mailto:gonzojr@san.rr.com)



# News from the Reserve

## Trails still show effects of winter rains

By Mike Gonzalez Jr., TPA Counselor

Due to the severe rains which Southern California experienced this past spring, Torrey Pines State Reserve officials were forced to close certain trails within the Reserve as unusable and unsafe for visitors. Presently the Beach Trail is closed at the Yucca Point Trail as is the Broken Hill Trail which begins on Park Road and leads down to the Beach Trail. This has taken the one route from the Visitor's Center west parking lot to the beach out of service.

Many have wondered what is being done to repair and rebuild these popular trails. The Reserve's chief technical services supervisor, Brian Gaudet, has applied to FEMA, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, which would provide for funds to bring the trails back to their status prior to the damaging rains. He explains that "any funding or work applied towards the Beach Trail would jeopardize that claim." However, the \$10,000 granted by the TPA may be applied to other issues relating to present trails projects which would not conflict with the FEMA processing. Denny Stoufer, North Sector Supt. for the State Park Coast District adds, "We ask everyone to understand that trails are 'facilities' and as such must be reasonably closed on occasion for

repair and rehabilitation. In our recent efforts we are choosing to do a more comprehensive job." I am convinced that all steps are being taken and, that with hard work and a bit of luck, we will see most of the trails reopened by late summer or early fall. ✂



TPA Counselor and seasonal park aide Mike Gonzalez, Jr.

### Your membership dollars at work! In May-June, TPA allocated...

- \$6146 for trail repair equipment
- \$1030 for office equipment
- \$6380 for official state park trailhead signs
- \$5,000 for continuing pheromone trap maintenance (beetle control)
- \$3,000 for exotic plant removal and restoration
- \$7,500 for new natural history/human history interpretive panels
- \$10,000 to repair trails after recent storm damage
- \$1,030 for Visitor Center office equipment.

## Who we are...

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 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.



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