

A quiet and beautiful life

As the Guy Fleming House enters its ninth decade, thoughts turn to its historically significant past...and its immediate need of major renovation

By Peter Jensen
Photography by John Durant

Step close to the north-facing picture window that frames the silhouettes of nearby trees and the silver glint of a distant lagoon. Watch the rugged, dark Torrey trunks ripple and dance when seen through the wavy 80-year-old rivulets of slumping glass.

Only you can see this. A camera's lens and film can't capture it.

This old plate glass, and the Pueblo Revival-style walls of the Guy Fleming House that surround it, seem still alive with the memory of all who have admired a beauty that has been viewed—for the most part—only by the family and friends of those who live here.

For this is a private residence—one that only a park's "custodian" can appreciate year in, year out. Built by Guy Fleming and his father in 1927, and occupied by the Fleming family until 1958 (and by a few individual rangers and lifeguards and their families after that), the house is all but unknown to the majority of park visitors. It cannot be seen from the main park road. It hides in a grove on an east-facing hillside, approximately one football field's length north of the main Lodge.

It is exactly where Guy Fleming believed a ranger's residence should be: tucked in a place so hidden it doesn't interfere with a visitor experiencing the Reserve's wild groves and spectacular views from the clifftops. Today, as then, the house hunkers down in its

grove, protected from the ever-present sea breeze and occasional big blows of a winter storm. The feeling is of sheltered quietude. Retreat. Sanctuary.

Designed and hand-built by Fleming and his father, the house is a no-nonsense homage to the tail-end of the Craftsman Era. It was a time when cutting a heavy ceiling beam's corbel was still considered a chance to express oneself with a ziggurat detail...when choosing wood was a thoughtful exercise in thrift and conservation (some of the house is reportedly salvaged from the first home of the San Diego Natural History Museum, which was consumed by fire)... when the visits of jays and snakes and skunks and the

continued on page 4



Guy Fleming stands beside the bridge leading to his second-story office—which became the original headquarters for Southern California's state park system. No interior stairs link this office to the residence below: Fleming preferred to truly "go home" and this helped keep work separate from family life. For a modern-day view of this elevation, see page 5

past

present

future



John Durant

President's Message

Resilient ... or relict? A metaphor for our times

TPA Journal

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



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What do we call a survivor like the Torrey pine? Although widely cultivated, its natural groves are highly restricted, found only here on the San Diego coast and on a few acres of Santa Rosa Island near Santa Barbara. The pines' gnarled, twisted limbs hold tenaciously to our wind-swept cliffs—the relict offspring of once-vast Ice Age forests.

Things change ... and the climatic conditions that supported these forests have turned into our present dry Mediterranean conditions, which may change to even drier conditions as global climate responds to increasing concentrations of greenhouse gases.

Things change ... for visitors to Torrey Pines State Reserve as well. Responding to the uncertain funding climate in Sacramento, State Parks is adding parking fee collection machines and concessions to boost revenues. And have you noticed the new name? Torrey Pines State Natural Reserve will become more prominently displayed in time.

There is also a new proposal to secure a dedicated funding stream for State Parks before the Legislature this summer.

The California State Park Access Pass program was announced in late May by Assemblymember John Laird (D-Santa Cruz). The plan would bring over \$280 million per year in new funding to support California's state parks by adding a \$10 surcharge to vehi-

cle registration fees. In return, all California-license-plate vehicles and their occupants would have free day-use access to all state parks.

To take effect, this proposal must be approved by two thirds of the Legislature, signed by the Governor, and implemented by the Department of Motor Vehicles. Free access debuts once the DMV begins to impose the new fee on annual vehicle registrations—perhaps by January 2009.

Your Torrey Pines Association Board endorses the State Park Access Pass because it throws all California State Parks a lifeline after years of dwindling General Fund support. Deferred maintenance is backlogged to \$1.2 billion, and inadequate staffing leaves parks like TPSR without full-time staff to provide visitor services, education, and resource protection.

As this issue of the *TPA Journal* goes to press, the fate of the Access Pass program is unknown. Please visit our web site for updates www.torreypines.org. While the proposal is being debated, day-use fees are still being collected in state parks and your TPA parking passes are still valid. Should the proposal become effective, the TPA will have plans in place to provide member benefits beyond the parking passes.

What won't change is TPA's—and hopefully most of its members'—commitment to preserve and protect the Torrey pines on these glowing cliffs. This sublime, rare place merits our attention and care and support from donors like you. We take these resilient pines as our inspiration and thank you for sharing our mission.

—Patricia Masters

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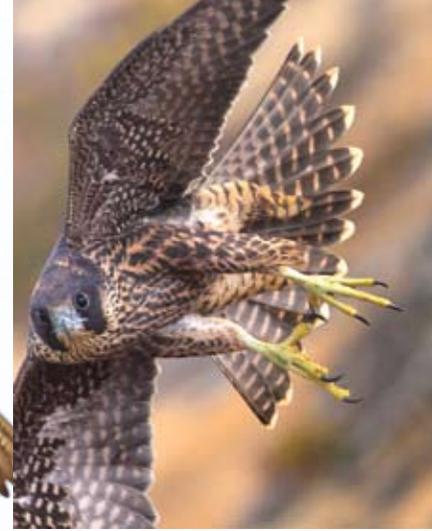




Young falcons lose their down and grow flight feathers in mid May



Father falcon (above) delivers a kill to the mother bird



Fledgling develops flight skills

Falcons x 4

To beach walkers at Torrey Pines this spring, something was definitely in the air. The Reserve has become home territory to a pair of Peregrine falcons who established an eyrie (falcons nest) and fledged two female chicks in June. Although peregrines have been sighted at TPSR over the years, this eyrie is thought to be the first successful fledging here in decades. The pair's courtship, mating, hunting, and food exchanges have amazed and delighted observers. The two youngsters will have dispersed to find their own ways in the world by the time you read this article, but visitors may catch glimpses of the parent birds hunting and perching along the cliffs throughout the year. The falcon's stoop (hunting dive onto prey) is a spectacular 200 mile/hour feat. These extreme athletes of the bird realm are making a recovery from near extinction during the DDT era. Their reproductive success here in the Reserve is a small step in the right direction for California's Peregrines.

To learn more about these amazing birds and recovery efforts on their behalf, see Will Sooter's article in the Docent's July newsletter at www.torrey-pine.org/torrey-ana.html . ✂



No mystery where this young falcon is perching

Photographs by Robert Horstmann

Parrots at Torrey Pines?

The fastest bird in the world is ... a parrot? According to a new DNA study (June 27 issue of *Science Magazine*), peregrine falcons are more closely related to parrots than to hawks. So the next time you hear the speedy peregrines screaming over the sea cliff, think of their jungle cousins and the remarkable evolutionary history that allows us to marvel at this carnivorous "parrot."

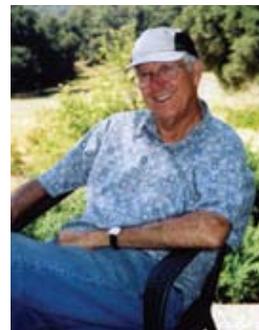


Mother falcon departs eyrie after a feeding

We remember Bob

When La Jolla civic leader and bookseller, Bob Warwick, died in January, 2008, the TPA lost a former Counselor and long-time friend. His clear-thinking, problem-solving skills, and ability to build consensus made him a valued member of many La Jolla civic groups as well as the TPA. Bob shepherded our iconic publication, "Torrey Pines: Landscape and Legacy," from idea through to publication and in doing so helped revitalize the organization.

Following the creation of the Torrey Pines Reserve Endowment Fund in 2007, the TPA Board has committed \$10,000 from our operating funds this year to building the endowment. We dedicate this donation to Bob for his many contributions to the mission of the TPA. ✂



Marion Warwick

You can make a memorial donation in honor of a family member or friend. Please contact TPA President Patricia Masters via email at TPApresident@san.rr.com.

A quiet and beautiful life

continued from page 1

IS Architecture



flashing wings of butterflies were welcomed as yet another enchantment of nature and not a reason to keep the doors closed.

Today, thanks in good part to the love affair between the house and its current residents—state lifeguard Ed Vodrazka, his wife Jenny, and their young daughter, Jade—the Fleming house is heading solidly into its ninth decade.

Like most any octogenarian, it has health issues: leaks, bugs, blockages, and breaks. Frustrated by maintenance always deferred in these days of budget crunches, Ed and Jenny put hundreds of hours of their own time over about four years—not to mention the couple’s own funds—into patching, painting, and protecting the house.

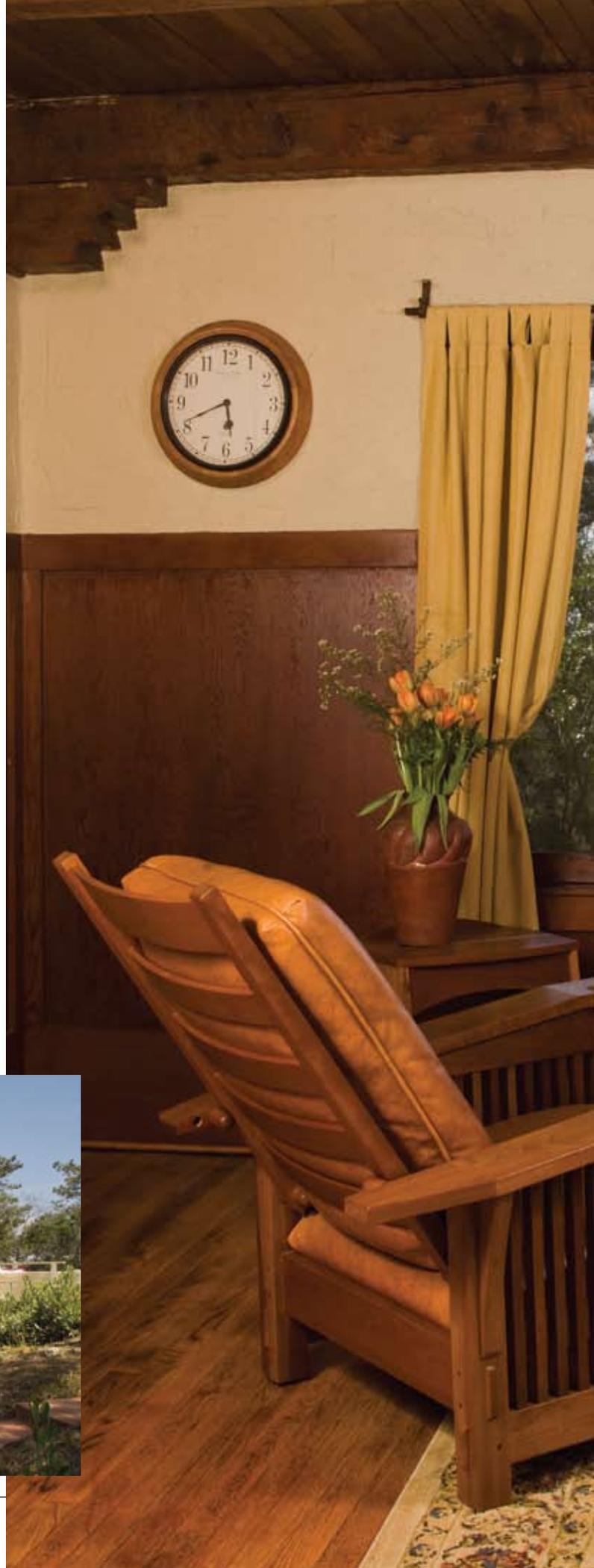
Their work, which has followed historic structures maintenance guidelines, has drawn the praise of architect Ione Stiegler and the team that produced the house’s recently published Historic Structures Report. “In 2006, due largely to Mr. Vodrazka’s own personal initiative, the historic Guy L. and Margaret E. Fleming House is currently in good condition and retains a high degree of historic integrity.”

What this really means is that the stage is set for the next act in the Fleming House’s quiet and beautiful life: a complete stabilization and restoration. Torrey Pines Association, propelled by a grant from the Ellen Browning Scripps Foundation and working in concert with State Parks and the Torrey Pines Docent Society, hopes to begin this exciting new phase immediately. The costs could ultimately range into the low- to mid- six figures.

But the house that Fleming built, and the historic significance with which it underpins the Reserve and the entire state park system of California, is worthy. You may not see it on your visits to the park, but it is there, and the park is there because of the people who built this abode and called it home. ✂



IS Architecture





Clockwise from top left: Coat hook carved from a Torrey pine twig; Main living room window (the glass is wavy with age) faces north, framing a view through trees to Peñasquitos Lagoon and the State Beach; West elevation clearly shows the second-story Fleming and State Parks office, reached via a short bridge (the front door is down the hill to the left); Guy and Peggy (below) outside the south-side kitchen door, enjoying the site's protected location out of prevailing sea breezes; West and north elevation (far left image) shows front door reached by orange concrete path; Exterior light echoes the house's rustic, handmade nature



Childhood visits to my grandparents' house...

Memories of growing up a “park brat”

by Cynthia Fleming Goodson



Interior hall leading to three bedrooms, a bathroom, and a laundry room on the western side of the house. Arched niche was for a telephone. Floor is original Douglas Fir.

My first recollection of Christmas is one I celebrated at Torrey Pines with my family. I was three years old and can still see the Christmas tree decorated with popcorn and cranberry garland and my grandmother’s antique glass ornaments. I don’t remember what gifts I received that year, but I do remember walking with Grandpa down his favorite trail (now known as the Guy Fleming Trail) and following a rabbit’s tracks to a burrow in an old hollow log. We waited quietly until the little rabbit peeked out.

Grandma was awed by the variety of colors and textures, landscapes and creatures found in nature. She taught us to appreciate every creature, because every one had a purpose in life.

She was often bothered by field mice in her kitchen. One day she watched a garter snake slither in the backdoor and go under her stove, where she knew mice were in residence. The snake ate the bothersome mice and so earned a place in the household. She would open the kitchen door in the morning and let the snake lie in the sunshine. He spent the nights in the house, on mouse patrol. That snake lived with my grandparents for many years—not-the-average pet for not-the-average grandparents!

I recall spending countless hours outside the house in the protected yard. Many people have wondered why Guy chose to build his house where he did. Why not high on the bluff with an ocean view? It was explained to me that it was better for the ranger’s house to be out of sight of the visitor, so not to take away from the wild outdoor feeling of the park or reserve. He also understood that here the house was protected from the storm winds off the ocean and would always be snug and warm.

Another question is often asked about the house’s design: why no interior staircase between the living area and the upstairs office? Grandpa wanted to be able to “go home” from work and *be home*. When meetings took place in the office, they didn’t spill over into the house.

I was blessed with an idyllic childhood growing up in the state parks (my father was also a ranger). Now I enjoy being able to go back to all my childhood homes. Trees I planted as a child—and carried buckets of water to—now stand tall. I have always been proud of the fact that my grandfather “had his own park” and “his own pine tree!” I used to wonder if everyone’s grandparents lived in a park and protected special trees. I didn’t see my childhood as anything special back then, but now I realize how wonderful it truly was to grow up a “Park Brat.”

Scripps Foundation grant announced!

As this issue neared press time, the good news arrived that the Ellen Browning Scripps Foundation decided to fully fund a 2008 Torrey Pines proposal for \$10,000 to help begin renovating the Guy Fleming House.

“The Ellen Browning Scripps Foundation continues the philanthropic legacy of Miss Ellen Browning Scripps and her original passion for Torrey Pines. Miss Ellen purchased the land to preserve the pines and invested funds to provide an access road, build the Lodge, employ a caretaker, and finance this permanent caretaker’s home.” said Doug Dawson, Executive Director of the Ellen Browning Scripps Foundation.

The Reserve and the TPA are indeed fortunate to have this generous support from the EBS Foundation, a continuing tradition dating back to Ellen Browning Scripps herself.



IS Architecture

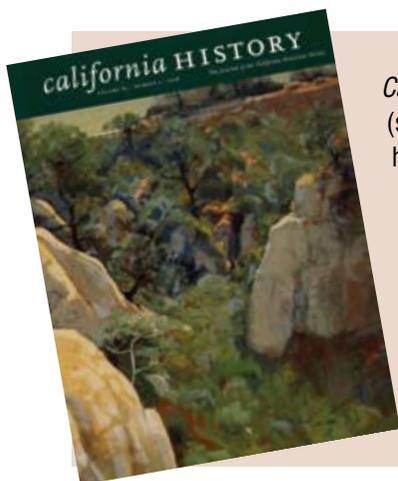
Badly deteriorated “horno” (outdoor fireplace) stands unused in a corner of the yard. One can imagine the family and friends gathered ‘round at sunset as the air cooled and the fog rolled in

Did you know?

- Guy Fleming worked as a landscape foreman and guide for the 1915-1916 Panama-California Exposition in Balboa Park?
- Ellen B. Scripps hired Fleming, along with Ralph Sumner, for a 1916 survey of Torrey Pines on behalf of the San Diego Natural History Museum and San Diego Floral Association?
- Fleming became the groves' first "custodian" in 1921 and initially lived in a tent-cabin?
- Guy Fleming's father, John A. James Fleming, a carpenter by trade, was the builder of all the tables and chairs in the Lodge, and helped Guy build the Fleming House in 1927?
- The house is a "vernacular interpretation of the Pueblo Revival architectural style which was popular throughout the Southwest during the early decades of the twentieth century"? ("Guy L. and Margaret E. Fleming House Historic Structures Report," IS Architecture et al.)
- Guy Fleming helped found and develop the California State Park system, and much of the planning for the park system took place in the upstairs office of his house in the park?
- "Peggy" Fleming was a well-respected artist who once studied art with Norman Rockwell in New York City?
- The Guy Fleming House was the first headquarters (1933-1948) for all California State Parks from Mexico to Monterey, with Guy as Superintendent?
- The Flemings lived in the house from 1927 until 1958?
- The house has always been occupied by a ranger or life-guard, helping to ensure that the park is watched over day and night?
- A coat hook in one of the closets is fashioned out of a twig?
- The house was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1998?



Photos this page: Ed Gohllich



California History magazine (spring issue, 2008) features historian Victor Walsh's account, "Preserving 'Nature's Artistry'—Torrey Pines during its Formative Years as a City and State Park." This elegant history is available for sale at the Visitor Center.

Top right: East elevation shows the house dwarfed by a massive Torrey—one of the straightest trunks in the park, thanks to its location out of the wind.

Middle: Front door and entry. Light fixture is original, as are all ceiling beams. Beams are rumored to have been salvaged from the first Natural History Museum in Balboa Park, built for the 1915-1916 Panama-California Exposition, that suffered fire damage.

Bottom: Another view of the living room, showing heavy ceiling beams with ziggurat-pattern corbels—a comfortable and commodious room, now occupied by a State Lifeguard and his family

Torrey Pines Legacy Society created to honor donors

The TPA Board of Counselors is pleased to announce the initiation of the Torrey Pines Legacy Society. It is your Association's way of acknowledging and honoring the very significant generosity and vision of those who have chosen to provide for the preservation and future of the Torrey Pines State Reserve. "Legacy" gifts may include:

- Bequests through a will or living trust
- Outright gifts of \$10,000 or more to our endowment fund
- Beneficiary designations of retirement plan assets, and life insurance or annuity policies
- Life estates
- Remainder interests in charitable trusts, gift annuities, and pooled income funds

Legacy Society donors receive special recognition in our publications and acknowledgment at activities. (We will also respect requests for donor anonymity.)

Enrollment is easy. To become a Legacy Society member, simply contact us and we will provide a confirmation form for your gift. Legacy gifts should be designated to the Torrey Pines Association or the Torrey Pines Reserve Endowment. Please contact us at TPApresident@san.rr.com for the appropriate language to include in your gift plans.

The TPA Board encourages you to consider a Legacy gift. It will ensure that Torrey Pines State Reserve will be enjoyed as a sanctuary of beauty for generations to come. ✂

Coming in September

TPA Symposium –

Saturday • 27 September 2008 • 8:30-12:30

Sumner Auditorium

Scripps Institution of Oceanography

"Ants, Plants, and Fire"

Everything you always wanted to know about the natural history of Torrey Pines State Reserve

Admission free • For program and details, please visit www.torreypines.org

Coming in November

Plein Air Art Festival —

Nationally recognized artists set up their canvases on-site to capture the light and beauty of the Reserve

Sponsored by The Lodge at Torrey Pines in conjunction with the 2008 "Celebrate the Craft"

Details and special events will be posted on our web site www.torreypines.org

Who we are... www.torreypines.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

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.

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