Algae: The Overlooked Heroes of the Sea

by Joan R. Simon

At the November meeting, Dr. Peter Vroom, a marine biologist for the City of San Diego, gave us a new appreciation of the humble algae, calling them the “overlooked heroes of the sea.” A Marine Biologist for the City ofSan Diego, Dr. Vroom has worked as an Algal Biologist for the past decade at NOAA. He pointed out that, without algae, there would be no earth as we know it today. Algae are not only the precursors and ancestors of all land plants, but they are also responsible for 70 – 80% of the oxygen in the earth’s atmosphere. This makes them the #1 consumer of CO₂ and a very important player in the battle against climate change.

Dr. Vroom introduced us to the wonderful world of algae that goes far beyond the “slimy green stuff” and the “rotting kelp on the beach” which he explained are hardly representative of the tens of thousands of species that exist. He showed us photographs of lacy, elegant-looking alga, dazzling purple and red ones, even calcified species, as well as the luminescent, sparkling algae familiar to anyone who has viewed the Pacific Ocean off Torrey Pines at night in recent months.

Dr. Vroom explained how algae are the indispensible base of the food chain, cement together much of the marine environment, play a role in keeping storms from destroying the coastal shoreline, and even make up the white sands of tropical beaches. They are also ubiquitous in the grocery store, not just as the seaweed wrap on ready-made sushi, but primarily as emulsifiers in most milk products and virtually every bath and beauty aid, from soap to toothpaste. And perhaps, Dr. Vroom hinted, our future energy problems will be solved by bio-fuels made from the lowly alga.

After taking us on a quick tour of the two empires and three kingdoms which comprise the multitude of algae, Dr. Vroom turned his attention to what we might find at Torrey Pines. Other than the recent prevalence of our local luminescent species -- the dinoflagellate Lingulodinium polyedrum – Torrey Pines docents walking along the beach are most likely to encounter a variety of kelp. He described an impressive array, including giant kelp, elk kelp, feather boa kelp, forked kelp, walking kelp, fringed sieve kelp and oarweed. Other algal species we might encounter are coralline algae, red blade-like algae such as red sea ferns, and some green blade-like varieties including sea lettuce. Dr. Vroom observed all of these species at Torrey Pines, many of them during the 2010 BioBlitz.

Dr. Vroom is currently spearheading a volunteer project at the San Diego Natural History Museum, cataloging and photographing all the specimens in their alga collection, which has not been updated in more than 50 years. He hopes to complete the project next year with a website showing samples of some of the 360 species that exist in San Diego County. In the meantime, he recommends two algal sites which offer photographs of west coast species: seanet.stanford.edu and seaweedsofalaska.com.
November 2011 Docent Meeting Notes

Excerpted from notes of TPDS November 12th General Meeting, by Secretary Bill Eckles. Complete minutes in docent library.

Ken King, President, called the meeting to order at 10:30 am.

Bill Sheehan spoke to the group about the Belding's Savannah Sparrow and its presence here in Southern California.

Roger Isaacsom was thanked for the extra effort he put in getting out last month’s Torreyana while on vacation in Hawaii. Ken presented him with a sun hat, beach mat and floral Hawaiian shirt.

Parking is now being managed by LAZ using Automatic Parking Monitors and an employee staffing the South Beach Kiosk. [Please see article by Ken King on pg. 4.]

Holiday decorations for the Lodge will be put up on December 3rd and the holiday potluck is scheduled for December 10. Please help out if you can. [See notice on pg. 3.]

Treasurer’s Report (Mike Yang): October was a good financial month for the Society, with revenues increasing about 40% from September with the seasonal, post summer gain coming earlier than last year. Additionally, special walks activity was much higher than normal.

Ken announced for Steve Usher, the TPA President, that the TPA symposium on the sewage spill caused by this summer’s substantial power outage was a success, though lightly attended.

Ken also announced two new books were in the Museum Shop: The Rise and Fall of San Diego (newly revised) and A Pocket Guide for Chaparral.

The Lodge Hosting training manual, revised edition, is through its first draft and ready for amendments. Once finalized, it will be digitized so that it can be searched electronically from the Lodge desk computer for on-the-spot assistance.

Jeff Spivak is resigning as director of the Trail Patrol due to personal reasons. Mike Pisor has agreed to fill in temporarily, but a permanent replacement is needed. If you are interested, please contact Mike or Jeff as soon as you can.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:05 am.

Jim Larrimore -- Docent of the Month, November 2011

Photo by Herb Knufken

Torrey Pines State Park was a favorite place for the Larrimores to walk, swim and take visitors from the time we moved to Del Mar in 1970. After living in Vienna for 14 years, we returned to Del Mar in 1999 and took up where we left off. By 2004, Irene and I recognized the opportunity offered by becoming Docents at TPSNR.

The excellent training humbled and challenged us: how much there was to learn about the natural wonders at TPSNR! Coming from an engineering/physics background, never having taken a course in...
Come One, Come All to the TP Docent Holiday Party
by Diane Stocklin

Come one, come all to feast and be merry! The Docent Class of 2011 invites you and your families to the Docent Holiday Potluck Party on Saturday, December 10th at 11:00 am. Bring a dish (main dish, salad, appetizer or dessert) to share and in the interest of "greening" our docent activities, please bring your own plate, cup and utensils. Our goal as docents is to have a fun gathering, while making an effort to cut waste. For your kind compliance with this request, our class has scheduled a musical treat in your honor. (No, we are not singing carols.)

If you wish to start the holiday celebrations early, you are welcome to come on Saturday, December 3rd at 9:00 am to help decorate the Lodge under the creative guidance of Kelly Proudfoot. Again, it will be a "green" project with donated clippings from personal trees and shrubbery.

The class of 2011 looks forward to offering you warm hospitality and cheer in the surroundings of our treasured TPSNR.

Several have already signed up to lead walks all the way through May. We want to express our deepest appreciation to the following:

Walk leaders: Joan Adamo, Diane Davis, Kathy Dickey, Bob Doolittle, Wes Farmer, Margaret Fillius, Kathy Glasebrook, Diane Greening, Kay Harry, Paul Howard, Marie Johnson, Barbara Justice, Norman Lewis, Laura Lowenstein, Molly McConnell, Cynthia Parnell, Kelly Proudfoot Sue Randerson, Mary Stovell, Lynne Truong, Ann Walker, Sally Whitlock, Ann Williamson, Cindy Wollaeger and Linda Zlotnik.

Walk leaders who have also given presentations: Joellen Barnett, Frank Burham, Kathy Dickey, Margaret Fillius, Frank Burham, Barbara Lowenstein, Janet Ugalde and Barbara Wallach and deserve a special thanks for setting the stage for the trail portion of the visit. This fall, Frank Burham created a handy geology box and white board display and gave several excellent geology presentations.

In addition, several docents have tagged along and we look forward to their joining us as walk leaders soon.

You would think with all these wonderful people that there were plenty of Children’s Program docents, but we still are always looking for more people to join us. Every Thursday and Friday up to 6 or 7 docents are needed to lead the walks, plus a presenter or two. There are still lots of empty spaces to fill, and in the winter and spring, there are often cancellations because of illness or conflicts such as travel. So if you have been meaning to join in, you are encouraged to make a New Year’s resolution to start in January 2012. Try it once…the enthusiasm and smiles of the children as they immerse themselves in nature will keep you coming back.

See a related article [on pg. 5] about the November 11 field trip to San Elijo Lagoon Nature Center attended by 20 Children’s Program docents. Many thanks to Barbara Wallach and Kathy Dickey who led the group on the visit. Thanks also to Karen Fraser for the lovely photos.

Sue Randerson,
Children’s Program Director

Laura Lowenstein,
Children’s Program Coordinator
DQOM (Docent Question of the Month)
December 2011: Elevation Changes at TPSNR
by Jim Larrimore

Q. “You suggest we do the Guy Fleming Trail. How far down the road and then back up must we go; is that more than going down to Razor Point?”

A. The question arose with the Road Scholars special walk on Thursday, November 10, when we were forming groups of those wonderful older visitors. A docent suggested, “The first group will do the Guy Fleming Trail, which is the most scenic one. It’s not far down the road; it’s only about 300 feet down to the beach.” Some combined the two facts prompting some confusion, so I tried to change that image, saying it was only 50 feet down to the entrance to Guy Fleming, not knowing the right number. But the 300 was heard and 5 out of 32 agreed to go down that far! Another group went to Razor Point, which I knew was further down than Guy Fleming -- but how much further? This DQOM gives docents the information to answer those questions, which are most likely to come from an older visitor.

Knowing Michael Yang had gone all over the Reserve with his GPS some time ago, I asked him to collaborate with me on this DQOM. Michael had indeed logged the coordinates of the main endpoints and intersections at TPSNR, but had not noted the elevations. Therefore, to prepare this DQOM, Michael went out with his GPS again on November 17. Here are his elevation change results:

- Lodge to Guy Fleming Trail entrance: about 100 feet (30 meters)
- Lodge to Yucca Point or Razor Point overlook: about 190 feet (58 meters)
- Lodge to the beach: about 330 feet (100 meters)

Michael would be happy to discuss those and other elevation measurements he made with any interested docent.

In discussing this with Special Walks Coordinator Ann Williamson, she pointed out that the roughness and the absence of handrails on the Razor Point Trail might be more important to older visitors than the elevation change. That should certainly be mentioned, but now docents can tell visitors the elevation changes involved as well.

phoTORREYgraphs
by Judy Schulman

Not exactly a photo from our park, but it does have to do with the Torrey Pines Docent Society. Does anybody recognize this location? This is from a postcard with a 1956 postmark.

New Docent Training Begins February 2012
The Torrey Pines Docent Training Program for 2012 will begin in mid-February.

Training sessions will be held at the Visitor Center-Lodge on Saturday mornings from 9:00 am until noon and will culminate with graduation of the Docent Class of 2012 in mid-June 2012.

Please encourage anyone you know, who is interested in the upcoming training program, to contact Training Coordinators Janie Killermann or Linda Zlotnik. Their names and contact information will be added to the interest list and they will begin receiving details shortly before the New Year with specifics about the training sessions.

What’s New with Concessionaire Parking?
by Ken King (updated 11/30/11)

Now that the "Automated Payment Machines" (APMs) are installed in the north and south lots, we're learning what works and what doesn't. When the LAZ (the parking concessionaire) attendant is in the parking kiosk, all's well. But on those rare occasions when the booth is unoccupied, we frequently have a problem up at the lodge. In spite of the many signs around and on the kiosk directing visitors to pay at the APM, folks still drive up the hill and come into the Lodge looking to pay. Fortunately, as of 11/30, there is a box for pay envelopes on the Lodge Host's desk (in the right hand corner next to the front door) so that visitors with cash can pay for their parking when they come into the Lodge (if they need to use a credit card, they will still have to go back down to the South parking lot).

Another issue that needs to be addressed is the CA State Park Annual Day Use Pass. This hangtag pass is good in all of California state parks. $300,000 worth of these $125 passes are sold at Torrey Pines each year! Typically, a visitor will wait until after the pass expires and then purchases a new one at the kiosk. LAZ will not be selling these, and the Park Aides won't be in the kiosk to sell them. Visitors can buy them online or at some of other parks, but, being creatures of habit, they will be hoping to buy one on the day of their visit. Park Aides, who will continue to work in the Park for the foreseeable future, are able to sell the passes. We are now working on a...
way for docents hosting at the Lodge to contact a Park Aide to make the sale.

And what about the TPA annual and lifetime passes? These passes will continue to be honored and are sold through the TPA. As always, lodge hosts should give any visitor who inquires a copy of the TPA brochure with information on how to obtain a pass. Information is also available on the TPA website (www.torreypines.org) under Membership.

Stay tuned for more updates on the APM system.

Two New Holiday Offerings at Museum Shop Plus Many Old Favorites

Welcome the holiday season with a stop at the Museum Shop and don’t overlook our two new offerings this year:

- **Torrey Treats**, a collection of home-tested recipes from Torrey Pines docents, with a history and charming photos of the Lodge when it was a restaurant in the 20s and 30s.

- **Hand-crafted Coiled Baskets**, made with loving care (and lots of hard work!) by more than 20 docents, which are adorning the Christmas tree along with a variety of perennial favorite brushkins.

encourage the natural curiosity of the children in your life, to photographic and Mat greeting cards, sterling silver jewelry and art prints by local artists for the adults.

Our large selection of nature books includes new titles of the Pocket Naturalist Guides and Golden Guide Books, as well as the TPA’s “Landscape and Legacy.” There are T-shirts, nature pins and medallions for your hiking sticks (we have the hiking sticks as well!) to remind your friends and family how important Torrey Pines is to you.

Come and see all of the possibilities to complete your holiday shopping and don’t forget to ask for your 20% docent discount.

**Children’s Program Docents Visit San Elijo Lagoon Nature Center**

*Photos by Karen Fraser*

On November 11, Veteran’s Day, there were no school visits at the Reserve, so 20 Children’s Program docents were treated to a wonderful tour of the San Elijo Lagoon Nature Center by Barbara Wallach and Kathy Dickey, who are docents at both San Elijo and Torrey Pines. They first brought the group to the visitor’s center/museum (an award-winning LEED building) and some of the docents donned stuffed animal headgear to demonstrate how kindergarteners at San Elijo learn about animals in an ecosystem.

Kathy and Barbara then led a guided walk along the north side of the lagoon. **Ann Williamson** reported that the group saw “a pied-billed grebe, a very fat fence lizard and a jumping mullet. We watched termites fly out of a hole in the ground. We learned about willow galls and how to distinguish a willow leaf from a mulefat leaf. We got to interact with a watershed model and see how the Coast Highway changes the rainwater flow as it heads toward the ocean.”

“I loved the visit,” commented **Cindy Tozer**. “My impression was that the docents at San Elijo have put together a very special program for developing children’s awareness of nature in general and the need to preserve this precious resource.” Laura Lowenstein, coordinator of the TP Children’s Program, said the docents came away with some new ideas and dreams of creating a program on the lagoon or adding to the unit on whales, dolphins and sea life.

The San Elijo children’s program can be viewed at www.sanelijo.org under Education/Teachers’ Place. □
Encampment Cleared in Remote Indian Canyon Site

by Dylan Hardenbrook

Photos by Karin Wilson and Diane Greening

The Indian Canyon cleanup day above Black’s Beach at Torrey Pines State Natural Reserve was a complete success and an example of cooperation that I was proud to be a part of. The final result: 15 participants loaded up and removed over 2,200 pounds of garbage from the canyon in 5 helicopter loads. CA State Parks was helped by personnel from Visitor Services, Tech Services, Aquatics, Natural Resources and Cultural Resources as well as by Blackhawk Helicopters Inc., the Torrey Pines Association, San Diego City Lifeguards, Torrey Pines Golf Course and the Torrey Pines Gliderport to pull off this cleanup.

The project started when rangers on a law enforcement patrol in a closed area of the Reserve discovered an unoccupied encampment in a remote and highly inaccessible area.

The encampment appeared to have been developed over several years, but was no longer in active use.

There was no trail leading to the encampment; it was located because the rangers were determined to follow a water course all the way up Indian Canyon and verify there were no persons there. Because of the volume of trash and inaccessibility, the normal method of simply bagging up the trash and hauling it out was not feasible. To remove the trash, we had to devise a method that would avoid damaging the resource or making a false trail and would minimize the possibility of injuries to the workers.

Ken Krauss of Blackhawk Helicopters Inc. offered his services free of charge (for the second time -- he previously removed a car from the lagoon) if we could gather the trash. The Torrey Pines Association donated $500 to purchase used military surplus cargo nets.

Twelve state employees representing Visitor Services, Tech Services, Natural Resources and Cultural Resources as well as a volunteer from the TPA and 2 lifeguards from the City of San Diego all came together to bundle up the trash into bags and then secure them in the cargo nets. Torrey Pines Golf Course shuttled us across their property in golf carts and allowed us to access the canyon from the edge of their property. The Gliderport concessionnaire was notified when the helicopter was scheduled in order to avoid any mishaps in the air above the canyon and San Diego lifeguards helped us set up and protect a landing zone on the beach.

Once the trash was on the beach, we took four pickup truck loads to the beach lots and filled up three dumpsters. The final step of the process will be to return to the site and cut up the remaining boards and pallets so they cannot be used for constructing a shelter again. Under the direction of the CA State Parks’ Natural Resources staff, the wood will be used in the water course to slow the rain runoff and help to restore the canyon. We will continue to monitor the area for inhabitants and have reached out to the Golf Course and Gliderport for notification if they suspect anyone is trying to reuse the area.

My heartfelt thanks to everyone who helped in the preparation and participated in the cleanup. Below are the names of the 15 of us who hiked down into the canyon and bagged up all the trash.

Musings During the November Monthly Bird Count
Or: What Would Guy Fleming Think of His Trail Today?
by Kathy Dickey

It’s chilly and wet..hope the birds come out.
Don’t like birding on weekends..too crowded and loud.
Please get out of the street. Somebody’s gonna get hurt one of these days.
Wish we had a dollar for each of these bikers and joggers and walkers.

Cool..listen..is that a thrush? Wow, look – a Hermit thrush!
Here come the sparrows..the rufous crowned are back.
Yikes, a pack of cross country runners are gonna run over me!
Listen to all those cute quail and bushtits.

There’s my friend the thrasher.
People on the trail are like the house finches..always talking, talking.
Where is that roadrunner today? Nowhere near the Lodge today.

Gorgeous view. Can see forever.
Hey, is that a hawk? Naw..it’s a raven.
What is that little plump bird? Oh, another sparrow, just a cold guy.
Will that kid stop screaming so I can hear the birds?

4 more bushtits. 2 more house finches. Finally can hear the gnatcatchers.
The scrub jay came out into the sun. Bright blue back.
Pretty little goldfinches with their sad, whiney song.
Not a bad day after all. But where is that roadrunner?

Two-Day Art in the Pines
May 5 – 6, 2012
The third annual Art in the Pines will be a 2-day event on May 5 – 6, 2012, with an art show and sale featuring nature-based art of all mediums. NEW this year will be a photo competition to complement the plein air competition. We will continue to have the Open Air Gallery and the Docent Tent. Think about friends who may be interested in participating, or prepare your own work to be shown. This is for everyone!

For up-to-date information and art parameters, go to www.torreypine.org.
For more information, contact Cindy Wollaeger.

Total of 92 species (plus 1 other taxon)

Torrey Pinecone December 2011 7
The Torrey Pinecone, a calendar of events, notes from business meetings, and other items of specific interest to the docent membership, is published bi-monthly (even months). For odd months we publish the Torreyana. Please submit items by the 20th of the month to the Editor Editors@torreypine.org. This newsletter is edited by Docent Joan Simon. Items for publication may also be left in the Torreyana mailbox in the docent library.

### December 2011 TPDS Lodge Hosting Calendar - Updated 11/28/11

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<td>Walks: W Sat/Sun/Hol 9:30 (Start 10:00)</td>
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To sign up for an opening, call the hosting docent (858-755-8219) to confirm the time and write your name in the Logbook. If you cannot do your session, please try to find your own substitute by switching with another docent or using the short-notice list. Then call the hosting docent to make the change in the Logbook. Coordinators: Irene Larrimore & Jan Lombardi