Moving a Stranded Fin Whale Out to Sea

by Joan R. Simon

How do you move a 67-foot stranded Fin Whale? With great difficulty, according to the April meeting speaker, Eddie Kisfaludy, a former marine biology curator at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography and deep sea explorer extraordinaire. But no task seemed too daunting for Mr. Kisfaludy, who enthralled the docents with his tale of orchestrating a multi-agency effort last Thanksgiving to move a giant leviathan who had been stranded on local shores to a suitable resting place at sea.

The first step was to tow the whale, with the assistance of local lifeguards, from its beached location on Point Loma to the calmer waters of Fiesta Island in Mission Bay. There researchers from Sea World and NOAA determined it was a pregnant female who had been struck and killed by a ship, a somewhat common cause of death among whales.

The next task was to tow her out to sea and sink her – certainly not the usual modus operandi for the occasional stranded grey whale that washes up on the San Diego shore.

These far smaller creatures are usually taken by dump trucks to local landfills.

Sinking a whale, however, is “the most ecologically responsible” way to dispose of it, Mr. Kisfaludy said, and in this instance would provide a unique research laboratory for biologists at Scripps to follow the natural decomposition of the whale, using a remotely operated vehicle (ROV). Both financial support from NOAA and a 125-foot ultra-catamaran from Virgin Oceanic made the venture possible.

(cont. on p. 3)
The Torrey Pines Docent Society publishes the Torreyana bi-monthly, edited by Anna-Lena Malm. On alternate months, the Society publishes the Torrey Pinecone, edited by Joan Simon. Both publications include the monthly duty calendar, announcements and information concerning membership meetings. Submissions for either publication are due on or about the 20th day of the preceding month and may be submitted to Editors@torreypine.org.

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Dirs. of Lodge Hosting, Irene Larrimore & Jan Lombardi
Extra newsletters are available in the Docent Library.

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Rangers: Kyle Knox, Mike Winterton, Lisa Urbach
Sr. Park Aides: Diane Greening (Interpreter), Laura Lowenstein (Volunteer Coordinator)
Sr. Park Aide Ambassador: Louis Sands
Park Aide Ambassadors: Jake Mumma, Joy Inton

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Many thanks to Editor Anna-Lena Malm and the docents contributing to this newsletter and to faithful Team Torreyana. And thanks to Marian Casazza for mailing and distribution.

Roger Isaacson
Publication Coordinator

Message from the President

I recently had the opportunity to attend a training conference organized by California's Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR). Included among the 34 attendees were 19 State Park Rangers/Supervisors, 9 Cooperating Association Board Members and 6 Executive Directors/Business Managers (paid staff for the Co-ops). Dylan Hardenbrook, our Supervising Ranger, also attended, making the training especially valuable for me.

The four 8-hour days of classes focused on creating agreements between DPR and Cooperating Associations such as the Docent Society, creating a "Mission Statement," governance of non-profits, and fundraising.

For me, the major messages were: a) relative to most other Co-ops, we're in very good shape, both financially and in our relationship with park staff; b) we should consider hiring an Executive Director/Business Manager; and c) we should focus on developing a list of projects to fund over the next 3-5 years. The last two points will be a challenge for our board. If you are interested in serving, either on the board or in some other capacity, let me know!

Speaking of funding, our major fund-raising event, Art in the Pines, is May 5 and 6. Many talented and dedicated docents have spent hundreds of hours bringing it to this point, so it's guaranteed to be a success. Thanks to all who pitched in! Proceeds will fund our Children's Program, one of our most important activities.

May 5 and 6 promise to be very busy days in the Reserve, and we’ve had plenty of those already. Torrey Pines Reserve was filled to capacity early on those sunny weekends in April. Our District Supervisor decided to raise the vehicle day fees to $15 over Easter weekend, and the results were positive. Remember that 80% of the increased parking revenue goes to DPR, helping to keep all our parks viable.

On May 1, California’s park system raised prices on vehicle annual day-use passes from $125 to $195. Roy Stearns, DPR spokesman, stated that the additional revenues will not go to saving parks on the closure list but will support services like park programs and keep restrooms open.

With the inevitable increase in demand for our precious Reserve, we docents will be especially busy this summer. I urge you all to consider choosing activities that interact with our visitors: Lodge Hosting, Interpretive Walks, and “Trailhead/Map Board Duty.” The last activity enjoys more visitor interaction than any other job we do, but we don’t have a good name for it yet. It’s Frank Burham’s dedication, energy, and building skills that got us this far, but we could use help in naming it, so let’s have a contest! But we really need you to hang out at the trailhead helping visitors. Check out the pictures on page 4 & 5 to see the location and Frank in action.

See you around the Reserve,

Ken King
President,
Torrey Pines Docent Society
But the actual sinking did not come easily. The whale was not only immense, but post-mortem gases in its cavity created an extreme buoyancy that made the task even more challenging. In the end, it took 14,000 pounds of shackles, chains and ship moorings before the whale finally sunk to its ultimate destination 2700 feet beneath the waters off the La Jolla coast.

Mr. Kisfaludy also presented a history of grey and humpback whale migration, documenting a century of severe whale killing in the eastern Pacific, some of it from the Alaskan waters to Baja California. Whales as they make their way down today for viewing the migrating grey whales, one of the best vantage points on land to watch the whales in Mexico. Thanks to both of these gentlemen for a very interesting presentation and photo exhibit.

Mr. Kisfaludy noted that Torrey Pines is one of the best vantage points on land today for viewing the migrating grey whales as they make their way down from the Alaskan waters to Baja California.

The San Ignacio Lagoon is divided into three sections. The inner two areas are used for research and provide the birthing and mating grounds for the whales. The third section, which is closest to the open ocean, is accessible to tourists who are well-rewarded for their visit by being able to touch whales that come right up to their boats. (See Arline Paa’s article on whale watching in Baja in the April Pinecone, pg. 8: torreypine.org/Pinecone/pinecone1204.pdf and Herb Knufken’s whale photos: pbase.com/herb1rm/whale_trip.) For more information on the fin whale saga, go to: tinyurl.com/whale-sinking and tinyurl.com/almost-didnt-sink

TPDS General Meeting Notes April 14, 2012

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

Ken King, President, called the meeting to order at 10:40 am following a presentation by Eddie Kisfaludy, detailing the behaviors of whales in the California coastal waters, especially the Gray Whale [ed.: see article on page 1]. Following this presentation, Herb Knufken showed several photos he had taken on a couple of trips to watch the whales in Mexico. Thanks to both of these gentlemen for a very interesting presentation and photo exhibit.

Ranger Report (Lisa Urbach for Dylan Hardenbrook):

- The lagoon is clogged and the ranger staff is working to get funds to re-open it. Oops, on her way back to the Lodge, Lisa called to say the lagoon had cleared its opening through water pressure and now flows freely! Quick action, Lisa!

- There is no new news concerning the Parry Grove Trail, but its repair remains a high priority.

- The replacement for Brian Ketterer is expected soon and the pool of possible candidates is of high quality.

- Fees to park at the Reserve are currently set at $15/day on a weekend. However, the fee is to be managed as a "crowd control" mechanism. The rate will fluctuate with the demand, and if there’s no noticeable decrease in demand, the rate is likely to remain high on holidays and weekends.

- Ken King and Dylan attended a four-day training session in Asilomar concerning cooperating associations. Both Palomar Mtn. and San Pasqual are on the list to be closed, but will remain open through cooperating associations. Expect more relationships like this in the future.

- A walk through the Extension is scheduled for May 12 at 2:00 pm, according to Kathy Dickey and Lou Adamo, both of whom have volunteered to conduct these walks.

- Dylan has created a list of docent skills, and he would like all volunteers to indicate their areas of expertise on his list. He hopes this list will provide a shortcut when specific skills are desired of the docent membership.

Treasurer’s Report (Carolyn Butterfield): Cecil Hornbeck will help with dispensing money back and forth between the bank and TPDS (deposits and "change"). The fiscal state of the Docent Society is healthy with strong Museum Shop sales, Special Walks and revenues in general. No major obstacles are anticipated.

President’s Comments (Ken King):

- TPDS’s money reserve will be spent responsibly over time on actions appropriate to the organization. There is no desire to spend it at once, but it should not get too large, either. Ideas from the membership are welcome.

- The CALPA conference is slated for May 17-20. Rick Vogel still requests docent help with walks in the reserve for visiting participants.

Museum Shop (Nancy Woodworth): Nancy listed the criteria for item selection for the Museum Shop:

1. Interpretive value
2. Is it a good seller?
3. Consider shop’s space restraints
4. Children’s products
Torrey Pines Association (Rick Vogel):

- The Historical Structures Report continues evolving, eagerly awaited by those wanting to do repairs to the Lodge.
- Steve Usher has resigned as president due to family illness. Pat Masters will fill the position in his absence.

Children's Program (Sue Randerson):

- Lots of trainees are attending walks to observe. The program is progressing nicely.
- We still have openings on all our dates in May, so please check the schedule and sign up to make a presentation or lead a walk.

Lodge Hosting (Jan Lombardi): Lots of slots are still open, especially for Art in the Pines walks. Also, thanks for the Lodge Hodge Podge!!

Finally, Ken issued a general “Thank You” to Frank Burham for his leadership and ideas adding the Trail Patrol Station at the "Map Board." It is working well and is a great asset.

Ken adjourned the meeting at 11:35 am.

Children's Program
by Sue Randerson, Children's Program Director and Laura Lowenstein, Children's Program Coordinator

April was a busy and fun month. Our groups of well-prepared and eager students enjoyed some interesting nature sightings on the trail, such as a raven flying with a mouse in its beak. On April 5th, Interpreter Diane Greening led an excellent training session with docents presenting two skits she had prepared. The first demonstrated how not to discuss the food chain with students and produced much laughter. The second skit built upon students’ prior knowledge and encouraged interaction. She then led us on the trail with several of her favorite stops, where she showed how different plants and animals can be used to interpret for all of our five program topics.

We are grateful to Susan LaVorgna Elementary School, a Title 1 school from Temecula. They brought donations from the students to the Children’s Program totaling $90!

Many thanks to the dedicated Children’s Program docents who have come so faithfully and filled all the spaces in April, even filling in at the last minute when someone had to cancel. However, we still have many vacancies for leaders and presenters in May, when many are traveling or have other commitments. We encourage everyone who possibly can, to go to the Children’s Program online signup and look for the dates in red which need leaders or presenters and sign up to lead or present in May.

Laura Lowenstein and Diane Greening have been attending meetings (open to all docents) of the San Diego Children and Nature (SDCaN) Collaborative, which focuses on networking with other nature centers and organizations to provide educational opportunities for children and families in nature. Richard Louv’s book, Last Child in the Woods, has been an inspiration to create a strong networking effort to reach children and their families. Our Docent Society received a request from SDCaN to have a table with an activity for children at the Camp Pendleton Military Families’ Nature Event on April 28. The event was sponsored by the Marine Corps Community Services.

Children’s Program Docent Janet Ugalde, along with Lynne Truong and Lynnes daughter graciously volunteered to represent Torrey Pines with a fun table of geology activities, which included our favorite trail activity of finding magnetite in sand simply with an index card and and magnets.

Save the date of June 8 at 9:30am for our year-end wrap up session. We’ll talk about our year, discuss possible training workshops or field trips for the summer and suggestions for next year, and enjoy a simple but yummy potluck.

Docent Doings
May 5-6 Art in the Pines
May 12, 2 pm- Public walk in Extension

Go to the docent date list on Docent Login on torreypine.org for latest event details.
Mondays, 8:30-10 am- Weeders
Tuesdays, 8:30-noon- Seabees

Send future event info to editors@torreypine.org.

Map Board Hosting
Photos by Ken King

Frank Burham engaging visitors at trailhead

Items of interest to visitors (below)
Frank Burham made a model for a proposed Trailhead Interpretive Center Kiosk (TICK). Sharon Belknap then did this simulation of it to show a possible location by the map board/trailhead.

**Water in the Early Days**

*by Maryruth Cox*

If you walk along Red Ridge Road in Torrey Pines Extension, you follow a road that has been in use since at least 1889, according to the Del Mar Quadrangle map made by the USC&GS (U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey) in that year. The map is difficult to read, but may show a house and the name White. If there was a house and a Mr. White, he lived in splendid isolation from the hurly-burly of Del Mar, but had a magnificent view.

In the 1970’s we could still see remnants of a house: old foundation stones and some tall eucalyptus trees. Now the foundation is obscured by plants and the trees have been cut down. Still a large stump or two is visible.

At the south end of the road is a large cleared space with a lone Torrey pine at the west side. Under the pine, the soil is different from the Red Rock that is common in the area, and you can see the outline of a filled area. Our son Joel used to see a big hole there in the 70s before it was filled in by the State park. The hole was 10-12 feet in diameter and 6-8 feet deep.

Why was the hole there? It looked as if the cleared area had been shaped to let rainwater flow into it. Was it a cistern to store rainwater for household use? For stock? Had it been filled by a truck bringing water from town?

Cole Owen, who has lived on the Terrace since 1985, had also noticed this cistern. And he knew about another cistern, located in the white sandstone in a neighbor’s yard on Via Latina. It, too, had been filled in. Cole speculated that the two cisterns might be part of a water system, perhaps supplied by the spring on Carmel Valley Rd. We knew that Miles Standish, who dry-farmed 14 acres of the Extension and lived in an adjoining house on the Terrace, had run a pipe from this spring to his house. Maybe he or someone else had dug these cisterns?

A plentiful source of good water was pumped by a windmill from an underground aquifer, which used to stand near the present Park & Ride at Carmel Valley Rd and Sorrento Valley Rd. Welty, a farmer who lived on the hill where Pointe del Mar is, is said to have turned down an offer of city water, claiming that the windmill water supply was ample for him.

We may never know the complete story of water in the early days. We can say with surety, however, that the first settlers in Soledad Valley found many ways to secure water. They dug cisterns, ran pipes from far-away springs, and built a windmill to pump water from an underground aquifer.

Lois Harris painted this picture of the windmill that stood near the intersection of Sorrento Valley Rd. and Carmel Valley Rd. in the 1960s.

**photORREYgraphs**

*by Judy Schulman*

Given the announcement at the last meeting that parking fees would go up, I thought this sign showing a 75 cent entry fee would be appropriate. The date is September 1970. According to an inflation converter I found online, what cost $0.75 in 1970 would cost $4.34 in 2011 (based on the Consumer Price Index).

Note: Original 1970 photo cropped for better visibility
Docent Visit to the California Wolf Center
by Barbara McCardle
Photos by Mike Yang

On March 27th, nearly thirty docents gathered at 8 am to carpool to Julian for a morning tour of the California Wolf Center. Mike Yang took some excellent photos of Alaskan Grey Wolves and Mexican Grey Wolves, which we were able to observe at very close range. Most of the group had lunch at the Julian Grill before heading home, and some stopped in Ramona to visit Roger Isaacson's family's popular bar, Molly Malone’s. It was a great day for everybody to share!

The Center’s interesting website is californiawolfcenter.org/

Docents observing the Alaskan species at one of several very large enclosures.

Mexican Grey Wolf

Alaskan Grey Wolves

Torrey Pines Docents Enjoying a Beautiful Day
The 58th Annual Greater San Diego Science and Engineering Fair
by Sally Whitlock, Co-Team Coordinator

Once again, our TPDS Judging Team enjoyed a wonderful day at the Science Fair, and with a great amount of consideration, selected four worthy award winners from the 800+ projects.

Small Insect, Large Dilemma
by Boris Stepanyuk
Photo by Mike Yang

Abstract:

Argentine ants (Linepithema humile) started to invade the United States about a hundred years ago. Since then, they have spread and taken over the habitats of many native ants. This study was created to see how the abundance of Argentine ants affects the native ant species. The hypothesis was that the Argentine ants decrease the amount of native ants in a habitat. Three places in San Diego were surveyed: Lake Murray, Mission Trails and a small canyon (Lisbon St.). Those places were surveyed for ant biodiversity. The ants were lured and captured using pitfall traps. It was found that once the Argentine ant takes over an area, the chances of other ants existing there are very low. In Lake Murray only Argentine ants were found and in the other two areas no ants were found at all. Some ants were then barcoded to ensure they were Argentine ants. The DNA sequences were uploaded to BOLD (Barcode of Life Database) for positive species identification. This led to the conclusion that once Argentine ants are introduced to a habitat, the native ants disappear from that area. For the two areas with no ants it was difficult to arrive at a conclusion because no ants were present. They might have been underground due to the season. The significance of this study is not only to understand the effects of the Argentine ant species, but also to raise awareness among the public about the importance of protecting local ecosystems.

Check for $250.00 from TPDS and a one-year Reserve parking pass from the TPA.

The fourth award was given to Adam Recht and Gabriela Rothman: Ants of Southern California. Adam and Gabriela will not be able to present as they will be on their Senior trip to Israel. They will be graduating from the San Diego Jewish Academy in June. They each received a Certificate of Achievement and a check for $125.00. In addition to the TPDS award, they also received an award from the San Diego Children and Nature Collaborative. We wish them the best in their future academic endeavors.

A great big THANK YOU to our Judging Team for a job well done.
DEVELOPMENT OF ALGAE AS A BIOFILTER FOR PHOSPHATE RECLAMATION
by Ari Colton and Matan Kaminski
Photo by Mike Yang

A little known fact is that at the world's current consumption of phosphorus, it is estimated that in the next thirty years the world's rock phosphorus deposits will be dangerously depleted. Phosphorus is a required nutrient for life and the world's food production is dependent on a continuous and increasing supply of phosphorus in the form of phosphate. A significant proportion of the phosphate is lost to our freshwater and ultimately marine environments. Reclaiming and recycling the phosphate lost to freshwater would help towards alleviating this problem.

The purpose of this project was to determine if algae could be developed as a biofilter to reclaim phosphate lost to freshwater. The testing was carried out with filamentous green algae named Cladophora aegagropila. These algae were selected for their ease of use. The algae tend to grow in large spheres about the size of a tennis ball. This makes them very practical for use in a system in a river because you can easily put on a glove and pick them up, which cannot be done with many other types of algae. The algae were cultured with Alga-gro media. Dissolved phosphate (PO4) concentrations were measured at different time points and the biomass of the algae was measured at the termination of the experiments.

Rates were calculated for the phosphate depletion by C. aegagropila at different starting concentrations of dissolved phosphate. It was calculated that it would take 90 kg of algae thirty days to remove 1% of the PO4 in Lake Murray CA; assuming a starting concentration of 1 mg/L. Note that this data is evaluated considering a non-flow system.

A biomass evaluation demonstrated an increase of 53% over a two-week period at an initial phosphate concentration of 1.0 mg/L. During this experiment, media was replenished every 48 hours to more closely model a continuous flow freshwater situation.

These results support the hypothesis that if algae (specifically C. aegagropila) were to be incubated with phosphate under controlled conditions, the phosphate levels would gradually decline and the biomass of the algae would increase as the algae utilize the phosphate to grow.

In summary, C. aegagropila is an excellent candidate for a biofilter as it removes phosphate at a rate comparable to other algae. Preliminary modeling of phosphate removal in a freshwater lake revealed an achievable target with this algae species. Additionally, due to its ability to grow as spheres it could easily be incorporated into a biofilter device. A device is now under development.

### Torrey Pines #3 on “Trip Advisor” List!

Thanks to Park Ambassador Louis Sands, who was alerted to this information by a recent visitor, we now know why there are SO many people coming to Torrey Pines of late. We are #3 (out of 190 attractions!) on Trip Advisor’s “Things To Do” in San Diego (the top two are the Midway and Balboa Park). These rankings are based on reviews submitted by visitors to the various locations. (See: [http://www.tripadvisor.com/Attractions-g60750-Activities-San_Diego_California.html](http://www.tripadvisor.com/Attractions-g60750-Activities-San_Diego_California.html))

Please look at the Hosting Calendar on page 10 and see where you can help out, especially as an extra host on weekends. For May 5 & 6 contact AITP coordinator, Lillian Lachicotte.
TPDS Google Group

by Roger Isaacson

The primary internet tool we use for docent-related discussions and announcements is the TPDS Google Group (GG). This is a “private group,” formed in 2009. Currently, about 60% of active docents are members and receive periodic emails from group members. The activity tends to be in “spurts,” depending on subject matter. If you are hesitant to subscribe because of too many emails, consider that in February you would have received about 10 posts and, in March, only three in three weeks and 13 the first three weeks of April. Past discussions have included dogs in the Reserve, wildlife sightings, lost & found items and how to order T-shirts or a new badge. When you join you have four choices to read group emails:

1. No email: remember to logon to see what’s new
2. Abridged email: summary email of activity; (most popular)
3. Digest email: full content of new emails in a single email
4. Email: receive each message as it is sent

Only with (4) could you receive more than one email a day, and only if there is a flurry of activity. This choice is easily changed at any time. To join the GG, you do not need to have a Google Account or Gmail, but you do need to create a password to gain access (and it is a little less convenient). Access to the GG is convenient from the Docent Login page on torreypine.org (at two places on the page). Otherwise, go to: groups.google.com/group/tpds.

In the near future, we plan to “invite” all remaining docents/trainees to join the GG. Just reply with REMOVE and you will no longer be bothered about joining. Remember, however, that it is easy to choose (1) above and you will receive no emails when there is activity, but you will still be able to look at the group postings.

Torrey Pines Docent Society Bird Survey: April 7, 2012

Number of species: 87

Gadwall 11
American Wigeon 21
Mallard 11
Cinnamon Teal 5
Northern Shoveler 4
Green-winged Teal 1
Lesser Scaup 1
Bufflehead 11
Red-breasted Merganser 1
Ruddy Duck 6
California Quail 24
Pied-billed Grebe 4
Western Grebe 2
Double-crested Cormorant 6
Brown Pelican 12
Great Blue Heron 1
Great Egret 2
Snowy Egret 11
Black-crowned Night-Heron 2
White-faced Ibis 84
Osprey 1
White-tailed Kite 1
Northern Harrier 1
Red-shouldered Hawk 1
Red-tailed Hawk 2
American Kestrel 4
Peregrine Falcon 2
American Coot 8
Snowy Plover 3
Semipalmated Plover 5
American Avocet 3
Willet 15
Greater/Lesser Yellowlegs 1
Whimbrel 15
peep sp. 6
Wilson's Snipe 1
Hermann's Gull 1
Ring-billed Gull 17
Western Gull 38
California Gull 7
Caspian Tern 5
Royal Tern 12
Elegant Tern 40
Eurasian Collared-Dove 8
Mourning Dove 15
Greater Roadrunner 1
White-throated Swift 18
Anna's Hummingbird 27
Rufous/Allen's Hummingbird 6
Nuttall's Woodpecker 3
Black Phoebe 7
Say's Phoebe 1
Cassin's Kingbird 4
Western Kingbird 3
Western Scrub-Jay 3
American Crow 22
Common Raven 6
Northern Rough-winged Swallow 39
Cliff Swallow 3
Bushtit 42
Bewick's Wren 9
House Wren 4
Marsh Wren 8
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher 3
California Gnatcatcher 2
Wrentit 28
Northern Mockingbird 5
California Thrasher 4
European Starling 2
Orange-crowned Warbler 4
Common Yellowthroat 17
Yellow-rumped Warbler 6
Spotted Towhee 17
California Towhee 24
Lark Sparrow 2
Savannah Sparrow 4
Song Sparrow 19
Lincoln's Sparrow 1
White-crowned Sparrow 19
Red-winged Blackbird 19
Brewer's Blackbird 1
Brown-headed Cowbird 5
Hooded Oriole 4
House Finch 57
Lesser Goldfinch 35
American Goldfinch 4
House Sparrow 1

Observers: Eva Armi, Herb Knufken, Gary Grantham, Blair Francis, Kathy Dickey, and Anonymous

Previous Bird Surveys may be found at torreypine.org/activities/bird-sightings.html

Herb Knufken’s amazing photo gallery may be found here: pbase.com/herb1rm
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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