No “Schmeazley Life” For Ed Vodrazka

by Pat Finn

Great Horned Owls congregate around his house at night, holding conversations with each other that keep him awake.

He once rescued a very toothy (and quite angry) moray eel caught in “the bathtub” at Torrey Pines State Beach, without losing a finger.

In 2010 he rappelled into a ravine off the Torrey Pines bluffs (way off), where, with absolutely no room to maneuver, he extracted a woman who had been wedged there for hours in her upside-down car.

Ed Vodrazka, the head lifeguard of Torrey Pines State Beach, told the TPDS in September that he hadn’t wanted what he called a “schmeazley life” (spelling approximate) and so he became a lifeguard, first in San Clemente, then in Huntington Beach, and now here.

The house he lives in, the one visited by owls at night, is the Guy Fleming House, which Vodrazka allows is a blend of better and worse. And at first, he said, it was mostly worse, even with its matchless location. But things got better, and life went on, although sometimes ordinary events became extraordinary in the Reserve.

Two years ago, just before New Year’s, Ed decided to take the family Christmas tree to be recycled. As he headed down the hill with the tree roped to the top of his car, he began to notice people pointing and staring with shocked looks on their faces. At last it occurred to him that carrying a pine tree on the roof of one’s car was perhaps not the best thing to do in the Reserve.

Ed’s favorite stories seemed to be about participating in lifeguard competitions and particularly competing with and even beating Mark Cunningham, whom he called “the world’s greatest body surfer.” He told the affectionately unsympathetic docents that he decided to compete for the first time when he reached the advanced age of 55.

Whatever the definition of “schmeazley” is, it is decidedly not the life Ed lives, nor, one guesses, will it ever be.
Message from the President

I've been laid up since the end of July with this broken ankle, which is now healing much more quickly. My lack of mobility has kept me from seeing much of what has been going on during August and September. I have been talking with several people, however, especially during my trips to the Lodge, orchestrated by Nurse Flo. Let me share the little I know.

There has been no decision, as yet, to make the Pack it in/Pack it out experiment official, but the general opinion is that 1) the docents would surely have appreciated a longer "heads up" before removing the trash cans and 2) we should probably provide trash containers at least in the rest rooms. Jeff Harrison and I have prepared a press release about it for the local papers that is in the "approval" process and should appear very soon.

The Museum Refresh project hit a stumble when all but one of the vendors invited to bid failed to show and the one that did, pretty much missed the target with his pitch. Nonetheless, we plan to keep the project rolling and will convene a special committee meeting in very early October to solidify the thinking and considerations of the group.

Lots of work is going on with the trails. We now have three plywood boxes of stone to use as foundation for Broken Hill Trail restoration. It will still take a while to get it finished, but there is little to get in the way of the project, and we hope to see the ruts and gullies repaired this fall.

So I think you get the idea. As my term winds down, I’m reestablishing my knowledge that our Docent Society is a self-energizing machine. Committees continue, projects get accomplished, intelligent direction shifts occur seamlessly. This is an absolutely great group of people we have assembled here, and you all make me look pretty good, even as I hobble around the "ADA" trails on my crutches. Yes, this, too shall pass!

Bill Eckles
President,
Torrey Pines Docent Society

FLASH From Joy Inton: Don’t forget to donate your ZooNooz magazines to the Museum Shop.
Torrey Pines Docent Society General Meeting Minutes for September 13, 2014

Meeting called to order at 9:00 am by President Bill Eckles.

Speaker: Ed Vodrazka, who is currently Head Lifeguard at Torrey Pines and lives in the Guy Fleming House.

Spotlight on #1: Science project winner and 11th grader, Nilay Shah, reported on his experience in the UCSD COSMOS program learning about regenerative tissue engineering.

Spotlight on #2: Wes Farmer’s slide show of fossils in Anza Borrego, deposited some three million years ago included footprints by elephants, llama, early horses, cats, and dogs. He plans to organize a TPDS trip to see them sometime in October.

Docent of the Month: Marsha Arones was named Docent of the Month for September.

Ranger’s report: (Bill Eckles for Supervising Ranger Dylan Hardenbrook)
The erosion on Broken Hill trail is being repaired. The Marines are helping by getting the materials out to the affected areas. CCC is repairing the damaged areas. There are large plywood boxes along the Broken Hill trail to hold the materials, such as decomposed granite and rocks, needed to make these repairs (see photo on pg. 7).

The new Pack it in, Pack it out policy seems to be causing minimal problems overall. Dylan asks that we work together to make this work. There are plans to put up signs to let the public know about this policy.

Kathy Dickey asked again via email what the status is regarding soap in the bathrooms.

Parry Grove Trail is scheduled to open in October or November.

Children’s Program: (Marie Johnson) The Children’s Program will have a Get Back in the Zone session at the Lodge at 9:30 -11:30 on September 18th at the benches.

Museum Shop: (Margaret Pluth) The last session to make baskets for the Christmas tree to be sold in the Lodge over the holidays is October 18th. Refreshments will be provided. Contact Margaret or Nancy Woodworth for more info.

Museum Refresh: (Ken King) The Museum Refresh project has had a setback. None of the vendors that were given the request for bid was BOTH qualified AND interested. The Museum Refresh Committee will meet soon to decide where to go from here.

Financial Update: (Gerry Lawrence) The TPDS is doing well financially, with larger income than projected so far.

Board Restructuring and changes to the By-laws: (Bill Eckles) Any change to the structure and/or function of the Board requires a change to the bylaws. Changes to the bylaws require a vote by the general membership of the TPDS. It passes if it receives a two-thirds vote in favor, or more, by the docents present at the November General Meeting. (See pg. 8 details on the changes.)

Seabees: Sheldon Krueger announced that the Seabee’s need more people. There are some big projects going on right now, so join if you can.

General Announcements:

Ann Smith Mercandetti asked for volunteers to be in the Reserve during the Susan G. Komen three-day walk. The walk will be in TPSNR on November 21st. They expect 2000+ walkers and we need 25 docents.

Bill Eckles asked for volunteers to help out in the library.

Bill reminded everyone that docents need a minimum of 72 hours a year to remain active, and in order to become a lifetime member after 10 years, you need a minimum of 72 hours for each of your 10 years as a docent.

Bill mentioned that some companies (including Qualcomm and Bank of America) match contributions, including hours, to non-profits. Docents are encouraged to find out whether they work for companies that do the same.

Meeting ended at 11:29 am.

Docent of the Month: Marsha Arones

Photo by Herb Knüfken

Thank you so much for naming me Docent of the Month. I am honored, and glad to be part of the docent family of dedicated, passionate people.

I grew up in Syracuse, New York, and spent my teenage summers at camp in the Adirondack Mountains. Surrounded by magnificent pine trees, mountains and lakes, it’s where my deep love of nature began. After graduating from Boston University, I moved to New York City where I had a career as an advertising and marketing executive for several years. Living in Manhattan was exciting, but I missed nature, so I moved to Los Angeles in 1989; then San Diego in 2006.
When I first saw TPSNR, I thought it was one of the most beautiful places I had ever seen! I spent most of my free time hiking the trails and walking the beach. I was passionate about protecting its beauty even before I became a docent in 2014. That included a citizen’s arrest in 2008 of a man who refused to stop carving his initials two feet high in the cliffs! I’m hoping that the new beach graffiti signs will stop people from damaging our 40 million year old cliffs.

Becoming a docent has been a fantastic experience! I am so grateful for the excellent training program that educated me on so many topics. It created a new way of seeing everything in the park. Thanks to all who work so hard to make this happen. I look forward to sharing what I’ve learned and contributing to the preservation of our park.

At the initial meeting of Children’s Program docents in September, Barbara Wallach (right), shares ideas on how to encourage children to think critically and become more involved during Reserve tours.  

**Children’s Program**

*by Marie Johnson and Barbara Justice, Children’s Program Directors and Louis Sands, Children’s Program Coordinator*

The Children’s Program was up and running starting September 25, 2014. It will go until May 29, 2015. Teachers from “old” and “new” schools have already reserved almost every date.

Please check your calendars and sign up to be a presenter and/or lead the hikes. Or, if you are new to the Children’s Program, please just show up and tag along. It is such a joy hiking with all the kids and of course making new docent friends. Please call or email us if you need more information.

We had two Native American Kumeyaay Indian presentations and hikes in September. Presenters were Louis Sands and Janet Ugalde.

At the Thursday September 18th “Getting Ready for the Kids” meeting at the benches, 35 docents participated with great enthusiasm, including several docents new to the program (see photo above).

**Barbara Wallach** introduced her “Asking Questions to Encourage Critical Thinking” and gave several examples and great ideas how to get the children more involved during the hikes.

Louis Sands spoke about the process of signing up and where to find all information online. He also showed examples of props to use during the hikes and will update them all before our first hike.

We finished with a wonderful hike and shared information and experiences

**A (CHALLENGE MS) WALK IN THE PARK**

*by Ann Smith Mercandetti*

On Saturday morning, September 6th, nine docents -- Lillian Lachicotte, Joe Meyer, Jeannie Smith, Shelley Hammer, Bridget MacConnel, Karen Lay, Helen Grundler, Cindy Wollaeger, and Ann Smith Mercandetti -- arrived at the gates of Torrey Pines State Natural Reserve before 7 am.

They were there to welcome 200 walkers coming through the Reserve on a 50-mile, three day route to raise $1 million for multiple sclerosis. One event participant walked
with the help of her walker. Another was pushed in a wheel
chair. All made it up the big hill. The event theme was
“Hook the Cure,” so a few participants appeared to be
pirates! This was a much smaller event than both the
Komen Walk and the La Jolla Half Marathon.
In addition to wrangling the MS walkers, docents also
answered many questions from those in the Reserve at the
time. Many, many thanks to the docents who got up so early
to help make another event through TP a very positive
experience for all the people in the Reserve.

For docents who are interested, the 3-Day Komen Walk for
Breast Cancer is scheduled to come through the Reserve on
Friday morning, November 21st. Hopefully at least 20
docents will sign up for that event, as there are generally
about 2,300 walkers in that group. The sign-up sheet for the
Komen event will be available at the docent meeting on
Saturday, November 8th. Or, contact Ann Smith
Mercandetti, and she will put you on the Komen Walk
event docent list.

REFRESHING THE LODGE
by Ken King

At one time there was general consensus that the museum in
the Lodge is cluttered, appears to be somewhat dusty and in
poor condition and that the islands and desk do not fit with
the historical period of the building.

So late last year a questionnaire was sent to all docents
asking them to evaluate our various exhibits to see what
works and what doesn’t. One of the key findings was that
our two most important themes were the Torrey pine and
the Lodge. Many other conclusions came from this survey
as well. After obtaining Board approval in March, the
committee asked several museum professionals to assist us
in making some changes to the museum. Unfortunately,
none of them were both interested and qualified to do what
we needed, so the committee is now refining its plans and
ideas for the museum. We met on September 2nd and
discussed a rough layout that reduces the hodgepodge,
cluttered look. Rather than tell ALL of our stories at once,
we decided that we should focus on a few stories, and bring
in temporary “seasonal” exhibits like other museums do.
Not all members are in agreement, but we are working to
build a consensus that everyone can accept.

The composition of the committee changes frequently,
partly because we have continuously welcomed any docent
to the committee. Currently, there are approximately a
dozen interested docents, including three on the Docent
Board and three from the Torrey Pines Association Board.
A lot of ideas, some more controversial than others, are
being discussed. We believe that any modifications should
complement the historical nature of the building.

Ideas include opening up the windows and doors in the
building (particularly those in what is now the video room);
constructing more cabinets in the style of the building;
creating a timeline showing significant milestones in the
cultural history of the Reserve, and focusing on our two
main themes: the Torrey Pine Tree and the cultural history
of the area.

All of these previous conclusions have once again been
reopened to more discussion, and President Bill Eckles has
called for a committee meeting on October 9th to evaluate
where we go from here.

TIK Kumeyaay Interpretive Event
by Frank Burham

On Labor Day, September 1, Sherry and Bob Doolittle set
up a table at the TIK to display Kumeyaay articles Sherry
had acquired during her teaching career.

Bob and Sherry Doolittle explain Kumeyaay artifacts to a few of
the hundreds of visitors to the Reserve on Labor Day.

Bob estimated that from 9 am to noon, approximately 600
visitors stopped at the TIK. Half spent time at the
Kumeyaay display. Sherry and Bob talked about the articles
used by the Native Americans, while Joy Inton instructed
children in the use of the mano and metate for processing
acorns.

Their presentation was an excellent example of the special
interpretive activities that can be available at the TIK. There
were a great many items on display that day, and they
focused on a specific topic. We almost always have a few
articles on the table such as Torrey pine cones, seeds and
needles; the rocks of the Linda Vista, Torrey Sandstone,
and Del Mar Formations, along with sea shells, reference
literature, and pictures.

We encourage all docents who have not yet experienced
time at the TIK to do so, especially if you would like to
improve your interpretive skills. Working at the TIK gives
you a chance to interact with a wide variety of visitors.

We try to fill the time slots from 9 to noon and noon to 3
pm on weekends and holidays. You also have the option of
working at the TIK on any weekday. Anytime a docent is
present, there will always be visitors with questions.
The sign up is easy, using your Volastic (Vicnet) login. Under Profile check off **TIK, near the top of the list, and then you can go to My Schedule and put yourself on the schedule. If you would like training assistance or any other info, contact Karen Lisi or Sally Whitlock.

TORREY PINES BOOKIES
by Ken King

The Bookies thank Sherry and Bob Doolittle for hosting the book lovers in September and for leading the discussion of Barbara Kingsolver's latest book, Flight Behavior.

Our selection for October is Gloryland, a novel of the Buffalo Soldiers after the Civil War and the first book by Shelton Johnson. Mr. Johnson's bio includes a stint with the National Park Service as a Ranger and member of Yosemite's Horse Patrol.

The Amazon description notes that Gloryland unveils a little-known chapter of America’s past, through the voice of Elijah Yancy, born on Emancipation Day, 1863, to a sharecropping family of African and Indian blood. Yancy never lived as a slave, but his self-image as a free person is at war with his surroundings: Spartanburg, South Carolina, in the Reconstructed South. Exiled for his own survival as a teenager, Elijah walks west to the Nebraska plains and, like other rootless young African-American men of that era, joins the U.S. Cavalry.

Elijah’s army career parallels the nation’s imperial adventures in the late nineteenth century: subduing Native Americans in the West and quelling rebellion in the Philippines. Haunted by the terrors endured by Black Americans and by his part in persecuting other people of color, Elijah is sustained only by visions, memories, prayers, and his questing spirit—which ultimately finds a home when his troop is posted to guard the newly created Yosemite National Park in 1903.

See box below for meeting info.

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Signs for Graffiti
by Marsha Arones

To address the significant problem of beach graffiti on the cliffs, we have developed and installed signs in the two areas where the graffiti is focused: midpoint on the beach between the south parking lot and flat rock; the alcove at the top of the beach stairs.

They communicate that carving on the cliffs is illegal and that there is a $500 fine. Docents can help with enforcement. If you see someone carving on the cliffs:

- Call Surcom (951-443-2969)
- Provide description of people, location, your cell phone #
- Surcom will call a ranger, who will go to location if available
- Do not take photos with your phone to avoid confrontation

Thanks to all who helped on this project, including the Green Team, Rangers Dylan and Mike, and the Board for funding!

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**Mini-Basket Workshop**

Learn how to make a basket using the coiling technique.

The baskets will be sold as tree ornaments in the Museum Shop during the holiday season.

Saturday, October 18th
10:00-12:00
Visitor Center

Please email Margaret Pluth if you would like to come.
What is wrong here? Can you guess five things that shouldn’t be going on here? See p. 8 for an answer.  *Photo by Donna Close*
(Location: cliff on Broken Hill, just above the stairs to the beach)

“Seabees in a Box”  *Photo by Wes Farmer*
Three boxes like this have been built by the Seabees and taken to distant points off of Broken Hill. The boxes are to store DG (decomposed granite) and rocks for future trail repairs (by non-Seabees!).  L-R Isabet Yarrington, Jake Mumma, Art Guerro, Sheldon Krueger, Thomas Stehlik, and Stu Smith

Channel Island tour of September 13-15 to visit Santa Rosa Island. Here we see the Maritime basket makers:  Front row: Mary Tabar, Linda Zlotnik, and Janet Ugalde  Back row: Megan Pluth, Margaret Pluth, and Linda Lawley  *Photo by Lillian Lachicotte*

Pacific oysters, *Crassostrea gigas*  *Photo by Wes Farmer*
Last year an article appeared on the California Sea Grant website, describing the invasive, but delectable oyster, *Crassostrea gigas*, and how it has taken up residence in San Diego’s bays and lagoons.  Read this interesting article:  caseagrantnews.org/2013/07/02/a-new-oyster-invades/

Docent beach party, September 11, 2014  We had the best weather ever and food to match.  *Photo by Wes Farmer*
TPDS BOARD PROPOSES BYLAWS AMENDMENTS

At the November Annual General Meeting, TPDS members will be asked to vote on amending the Society bylaws. Amendments will be proposed as two motions:

(1) Changing the composition of the Board, to replace the current five directors of specific functions with five at-large members. Direction and oversight of all functions would continue to be the responsibility of the entire Board.

(2) Eleven minor technical or typographical corrections proposed to enhance the accuracy and clarity of the bylaws. The Board considers these to have no impact on Society operation, structure or function.

The proposed changes are reproduced below; rationale for the Board structure amendment was published in the September Torreyana; reasons for the eleven minor changes are included below.

Full copies of the bylaws, both current and proposed (after amendments) will be available at the October general meeting; and are available online at the TPDS website: torreypine.org/Private/password.html (in “Miscellaneous” at the bottom of the Docent Login page).

AMENDMENT 1: In Article IV (Administration):

(Deletions are indicated by strikethrough; insertions are bolded)

Section 4. Officers shall be elected at each annual meeting. A majority vote of the voting membership quorum at the annual meeting shall constitute election, with the exception of cases when there are more than five at-large candidates. These candidates shall be voted on by ballot, each voter having the right to one vote for each of five candidates. The five candidates with the highest number of votes shall be elected. Nominees from the floor must have notified the Executive Board or nominating committee appointed by the Executive Board or nomination from the floor (with seven days prior notice) at the annual meeting. (Both methods of nomination permitted, not either one or other; seven-day notice required in amended section 4)

8. In Article IV, Section 3: “...nomination shall be by a nominating committee appointed by the Executive Board or and/or by nomination from the floor (with seven days prior notice) at the annual meeting. (Both methods of nomination permitted, not either one or other; seven-day notice required in amended section 4)

9. In Article IV Section 4: “…The Executive Board shall consist of the following persons: officers:” (More specific, consistent, “officers” used throughout)

10. In Article IV Section 5: “No DPR employee may serve as an officer or a Board member.” (redundant--all officers are Board members)

11. In Article V, Section 1. The rules contained in the current, 10th edition of Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised shall govern the Society in all cases to which they are applicable…” (Robert’s recommends not specifying the edition number.)

Photo (p. 7), answer for What is wrong here?:

1- off trail
2- food
3- glass
4- alcohol
5- feeding wildlife
Did you know?*

Buckwheat
by Tom Polakiewicz

A few years ago I was in the building at the Del Mar County Fair that displayed all the agricultural products of San Diego County. On one board was a picture of golden wheat waving in the wind with the caption, “Buckwheat.” I wondered how the commercially grown buckwheat related to *Eriogonum fasciculatum*, the California buckwheat that grows at Torrey Pines?

The answer is that California buckwheat and commercial buckwheat, *Fagopyrum esculentum*, are both members of the same family (Polygonaceae), but they aren’t grasses like wheat, and don’t look like the picture at the Fair. The buckwheat used to make pancakes has been cultivated for about 8,000 years and is a bush, just like California buckwheat. It’s one of at least a thousand different species in the Polygonaceae family. It’s a big family that includes sorrel, knotweed and rhubarb.

California buckwheat is one of 113 different species in the *Eriogonum* genus, the largest plant genus in California. The Jepson Manual tells us that the various forms of buckwheat are the third most valuable native bee plant in California, after only white sage and black sage.

Native Californians made various kinds of medicines from the leaves and flowers of California buckwheat. They didn’t make buckwheat pancakes, but they did find the tiny seeds and shoots to be edible.

So why do the names of different kinds of buckwheat make them sound like they are a type of wheat? The seeds of *Fagopyrum esculentum* are the same shape as beech tree seeds, just smaller. “Buckwheat” comes either from the German word *buchwizen*, or the Middle Dutch word *boecweite*, both of which mean beech wheat. California’s wild buckwheat inherited the name from its European cousin.

*This “Did You Know?” tidbit is one of a series of occasional submissions from Tom Polakiewicz.*

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Torrey Pines Docent Society Bird Survey: September 6, 2014

**Number of species:** 63

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</table>

Previous Bird Surveys may be found at [torreypine.org/activities/bird-sightings.html](http://torreypine.org/activities/bird-sightings.html)

Herb Knüfken’s amazing photo gallery, including many birds, may be found here: [pbase.com/herb1rm](http://pbase.com/herb1rm)