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Mission Trails Regional Park News

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Lose Your Mind - Come to Your Senses From Tracking Tidbits by Luanne Barrett

Lose your mind and come to your senses. What in the world does that mean and why would I want to do it? Because, being a part of the natural world sometimes means not thinking as you normally would. Logically, we know there are animals hidden all over when we are hiking in Mission Trails, but where are they and how do they know we are coming? Sure we are noisy, but it is so much more than that. This is where coming to your senses comes in, where you put your mind on "off" and just be. Let's explore four of our senses, one at a time, to see what we can do about "being".

VISION: Picture an owl sitting high up in a tree, looking straight ahead without moving,



seeing all for 180+ degrees. This patient expectant gaze, called wide-angle, is the way the owl sees tiny rodents and a way for us to scan the sky for falling stars, find your child

lost in a store, or a deer far off on a hillside. Stretch your peripheral vision to "wide scan" the horizon. If you hold your hands out to your sides and straight above you, you should be able to wiggle your fingers and see them. Don't focus on any one thing; instead, be aware of light and dark, colors, patterns, shapes and lines. You will start to notice things that are out of place and small movements. That's

when you change your focus to key into the object to define it. Try cupping your hands around your eyes like binoculars to help see distant

Senses, continued on p. 2

Featured Park Fauna

Tantalizing Tarantulas

Movies like "Arachnophobia" and "Eight-Legged Freaks" have given tarantulas a negative reputation that is not deserved. They portray tarantulas as big, hairy, vicious, evil, deadly creatures. In reality they are actually very docile and relatively harmless (their bite is much like a bee sting). In fact, they even make good pets! The Tarantula family includes the largest known spiders. They have a hairy body and legs, and come in a wide variety of colors, from soft tan to black. There are over 800 species of tarantulas worldwide, ranging in size from less than ¼ inch in diameter, all the way up to 12 inches! (That would be the *Goliath tarantula* found in South America.) Females are usually a bit larger, lighter-colored, and longer-lived than are males, and can live up to 30 years.

Tarantulas live in a large variety of habitats, from desert to rainforest, and prey predominantly upon insects. Some of the larger species will even prey upon small rodents and birds, earning them the nickname, "bird-eating spiders." Unlike other spiders that spin a web to capture prey, tarantulas stalk and kill their prey by injecting them with venom from their large fangs. When they are not out hunting for prey in the evening, or searching for a mate (males, during the Fall), they either hang out in their silk-lined burrow or hide somewhere under rocks, logs, or tree bark. Tarantulas in other parts of the world use their *spinnerettes* (located at the end of the ab-

Tarantulas, continued on p. 3

Mission Trails Regional Park Benches

How nice it is to be exploring in the park...to hike, jog or bike. But, if you are tired or just want to daydream, isn't it nice to sit, rest and contemplate a soaring hawk or a fluttering butterfly.

The benches located in various areas of the park have been donated by park patrons and include plaques that honor or memorialize someone close to them. Picnic tables are also available for

sponsorship in honor or memory of a close friend or relative. Bench sites are available along the Oak Grove Trail, at the Cowles Mountain staging area, and at some of the park trailheads. Table sites are available at the Visitor Center, Old Mission Dam, Kumeyaay Lake Campground and the East Fortuna Equestrian staging area.

For more information, please call (619) 668-3280



A Message From Councilmember Jim Madaffer

I hope that you had a very Happy New Year and that 2006 holds great promise. As we begin the first quarter, I want to take this time to let you know how fortunate we are to have such outstanding people be part of the Mission Trails Regional Park supporters. We could not operate this vast park without so many reliable, dedicated volunteers. Thank you. That brings to mind the volunteer leadership who serve on the MTRP Citizens' Advisory Committee. They look into issues affecting the park and make recommendations to the policy making group that comprises the MTRP Task Force. Also, the volunteers who serve on the Foundation deserve recogni-

tion for the efforts to raise funds to operate and improve the park. Of course, the outstanding staff – and I do mean outstanding – are experts in what they do and it is reflected in how the park operates and serves the public. We are so fortunate to have this vast resource which provides educational and recreational opportunities and is also a visual reminder of what historical San Diego used to look like. I hope you and your family enjoy Mission Trails Regional Park and, again, thank you for your support.

As always, I welcome hearing your comments regarding Mission Trails Regional Park or any other issue. Call me at (619) 236-6677 or send an email to jmadaffer@sandiego.gov. I invite you to visit my Web site at JimMadaffer.com where you may sign up to receive my electronic newsletter.

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Senses, continued from p. 1

things. Wide-angle vision also works best at night with limited light. Normally, about 95% of human vision tends to be focal or short range and 5% of the time we use wide-angle. Animals use the reverse (5% focal and 95% wide angle) as the way to find food or keep from becoming food!

HEARING: Pay attention to what you hear in front, above, behind and to the sides. Note if it is constant or variable. Humans have good peripheral, but poor focused hearing and since we can't move our ears like most animals, we lack directional hearing. Increase your directional and focused hearing by cupping your hands, thumbs up, behind your ears with your elbows out, creating a kind of parabolic reflector to gather sounds. Keeping your mouth slightly open allows you to hear low sounds more clearly. Listen for birds and squirrels to give away positions of sounds – they are nature's alarms. Listen to the wind, which tends to blow things in one rhythm. Anything you hear moving contrary to that rhythm, check it out with wide-angle, then

focal vision.

SMELL: Try to identify smells when you are out on the trail, especially in the morning or evening or after rains since damp air carries odors. Breathe long slow breaths through your nose. Suck a tiny bit of air slowly through just parted lips. Can you detect any new smells? Moistening your nostrils on a dry day will increase your ability to use this sense.

FEELING/TOUCH: Take a big, deep slow breath, hold for a few seconds and then let it out slowly through your mouth. Feel your body begin to relax. Be aware of your body's connection to the ground, where the sun is by which side of your head is warm, which way the breeze is moving on your skin. Become aware of everything that touches you.

Temporarily suspending your logical mind and, instead, honing your ability to sense what is happening in your immediate environment, is a wonderful way to get in touch with Mother Nature and also increases your enjoyment of wild places.



Recycle your glass, plastic and aluminum at Kumeyaay Lake Campground. Containers are located in the day-use parking lot. Proceeds go to MTRP Foundation.

Visitor Center

Open 7 days a week 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. except major holidays

Gift Shop

We are pleased to offer merchandise geared to those who love to explore the out-of-doors. Whether a guide book or a walking stick, our merchandise will help you to enjoy your excursions into nature.

In addition to our own "San Diego's Mission Trails Regional Park: Official Guide Book", you will find various books dealing with the geology, history and ecology of the San Diego region.

The gift shop also continues to carry crafts made by the local

Native American people. Numerous pots and baskets are available for your purchase and enjoyment.



Theater

When visiting the Center ask one of our friendly volunteers to show one or all of our exclusive presentations.

Our newest video "Trails of the Kumeyaay" is a 15 minute pro-

gram featuring Stan Rodriguez, from the Santa Isabel band of the Kumeyaay. He discusses the Kumeyaay people today and their link with the past, their culture and the land.

Our three other offerings include two videos "Mission Trails Regional Park, Link with the Past, Experienced Today", a fifteen minute informative film on MTRP, "Stewardship Through the Ages", a twenty-four minute presentation depicting the ownership and usage of the land we now call MTRP, and a ten minute inspirational slide show "MTRP - A Natural Beauty".

Tarantulas, continued from p. 1

domen) to build silken retreats on trees, cliffs, buildings, or in crop plants such as bananas.

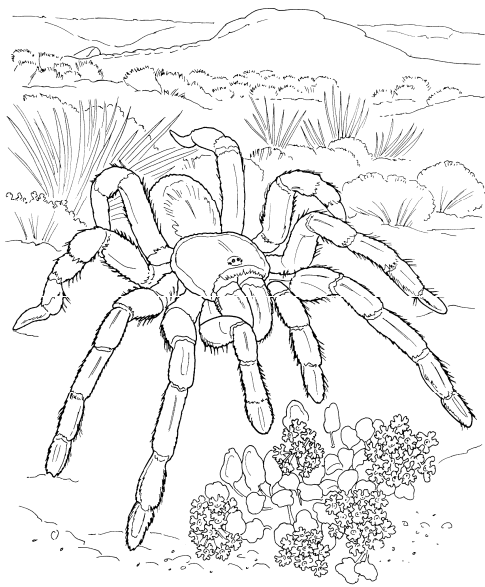
The two small appendages located in front of the fangs are called *pedipalps*, and are used for grasping

prey. A sexually mature male tarantula develops a pair of bulbs on the end of its pedipalps (that resemble a pair of boxing gloves) where sperm is stored. During mating, the male uses a pair of special mating hooks on its front two legs to hold back the female's fangs, while it uses its pedipalps to deposit its sperm in the fe-

male's *seminal receptacle* (structure located on her underside between the *cephalothorax*--the top body part, which consists of both the head and chest--and the abdomen). After this tricky mission

is accomplished, the male must boogie out of there as fast as he can, or he may end up becoming the female's dinner!

Our local *California "brown" tarantula* that is found here within the park is actually more of a charcoal gray color (the females) or black (the males). They have an average body length of up to 2 inches, with a leg span of 3 to 4



inches, and prefer areas where there is dry, well-drained soil (the grasslands is a good place to see one). The arch-enemy of the tarantula, the Pepsis Wasp (A.K.A. *tarantula hawk*), can also be seen flying around the park. The females of this large blue-black wasp with translucent orange wings will sting and paralyze the tarantula, drag its body back to her burrow, and

deposit her eggs on the tarantula's abdomen. When the eggs hatch, the developing wasp larvae have both a shelter and food supply (they literally eat the tarantula alive!) Other enemies of the taran-

tula include coyotes, foxes, birds, raccoons and opossums. To ward off such enemies, the tarantula has a unique defensive tactic: using its hind legs, it will quickly flick off the *urticating* hairs from its abdomen into the eyes of the predator, producing a stinging or itching sensation, buying time for a hasty escape!

And finally, how did tarantulas get their name in the first place? Well, legend has it that over 600 years ago, in a small town in Southern Italy called *Taranto*, a large European wolf spider could be found. This spider was named after the town and was called a *tarantola*. The people thought that the bite from this spider caused a disease, referred to as *tarantismo*, whereby victims would suffer a deep depression and then die. It was believed that the only cure to this "disease" was to participate in a frenzied, out-of-control dance, called the *tarantella*. When explorers and settlers from southern Spain and Italy came to our country, they thought that the spiders we now know as "tarantulas" were the same kind of spiders (the European wolf spider) found in their homeland, and the name just stuck!

Ranger Heidi Gutknecht

Thank you to our many Mission Trails contributors in the year 2005

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 San Carlos Garden Club



Notable Donations

October - December 2005

Sponsor - \$10,000 to \$25,000
 City of San Diego Special Promotional Programs

Patron - \$2,500 - \$5000
 Olive Garden Italian Restaurant

Founder - \$1,000 - \$2,500
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 Kathryn Harnish-Scott - *In memory of Sylvia Harnish*

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MTRP Events and Activities

For activities at the campground, park at the day use parking lot.

For outdoor activities, bring water and wear sturdy shoes.

Outdoor activities canceled if raining.

This is only a partial list of events and activities in the park. For current, additional and updated information, visit mtrp.org or call the Visitor Center at 619-668-3275

Star Gazing

Star Party
with **George Varga**
Saturdays at the
Kumeyaay Lake Campground.

February 18, 6:00-9:00 p.m.

May see Mercury in the West before it sets. Saturn in the East. Orion and the magnificent Orion Nebula well placed near our meridian. Sirius, the Dog Star, in the Southeast with Open Cluster M41 near by.

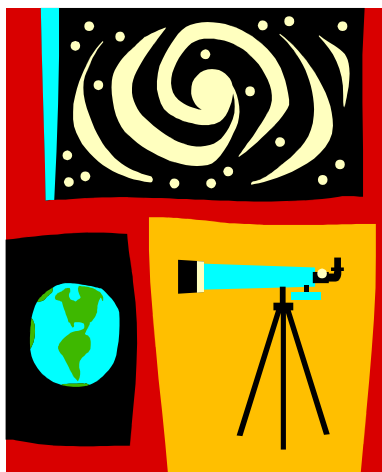
March 11, 6:00-9:00 p.m.

The Moon will be quite gibbous as it is but three days from being full. Saturn will be overhead and close to the Beehive Cluster (M44).

April 8, 7:00-9:30 p.m.

Gibbous moon with Saturn and Mars well positioned for viewing. Constellations Leo, the Lion, and Ursa Major, the Big Bear, high in the South and North respectively.

Both star gazing events canceled if overcast conditions obscure the night sky.



Stars at Mission Trails

Join members of the San Diego Astronomy Association (weather permitting) on the 2nd Friday of each month, from sunset to 10 p.m., at the Kumeyaay Lake Campground's Day Use Parking Lot. Telescopes will be available for you to view the stars and planets!

Art Exhibit

January 21 through March 3

Richard Johnson
And
Shandel Gamer

March 4 through April 14

Dorothy Dundore
Barbara Alexander
Carol Finney

The Visitor Center has on-going exhibitions of local area artists. Paintings may be purchased with a percentage of the proceeds going to MTRP.



Volunteer Work Crews

Habitat Restoration

Second Saturday of each month
8:00-11:00 a.m.

Trail Crew

Third Saturday of each month
8:00 a.m. - 12 p.m.

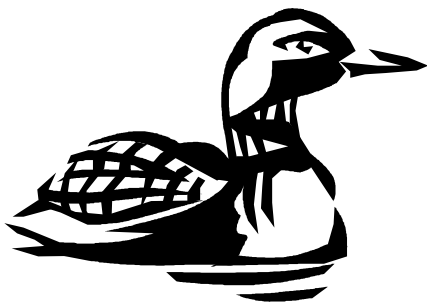
Park Beautification Crew

Fourth Saturday of each month.
8:00 a.m. - 12 p.m.

All teams meet at the Visitor Center by the flag poles. Please bring water and gloves, and wear long pants, hat, sunglasses, sunscreen and sturdy, closed-toed shoes.

Bird Walks

With **David Kisner, Kerry Kenwood and Jay Rourke**. All walks are the **third Saturday of the month, 8:00-10:30 a.m.**



February - Oak Grove Loop

March - Lake Murray

April - Old Mission Dam

May - Kumeyaay Lake

To be placed on the email Bird List write to Jay at ekruor@mindspring.com

Support Mission Trails Regional Park

Volunteer Opportunities

There are numerous volunteer opportunities available. No prior experience needed. We provide any training necessary.

At the Visitor Center
Front Desk
Gift Shop

Within the park
Trail Guide
Park Patrol
Work Crews



The easiest way yet to support Mission Trails*

Simply go to www.escrip.com access the "sign up" link near the top of the page and follow the simple instructions. All it takes is five minutes.

Ways you can donate to Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation

The Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation Board of Directors extends sincere thanks to our many donors. It is because of your continuing support that we are able to fulfill our Mission - *In partnership with the City of San Diego, to preserve and protect the natural environment of Mission Trails Regional Park and to provide and promote educational and recreational opportunities.*

In addition to traditional cash donations, there are other ways you can provide short and long-term financial support for park programs and projects.

Memorial or In Honor Of gifts
Honor a friend or family member with a donation.

Matching Funds
Identify Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation for a matching funds contribution if your employer

has a policy of matching charitable gifts.

Wills

Remember Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation in your will.

Gifts of Securities

In order to allow donors to realize full tax deductions for appreciated stock, Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation accepts gifts of stock. Please call (619) 668-3280 for further details.

Charitable Remainder Trusts

With a CRT, highly appreciated assets are placed in an irrevocable trust. Those asset proceeds provide income to the donor and/or to his/her beneficiaries for life. Contact your financial advisor for information.

The Foundation's Special Funds include education and library funds, trail and tree/habitat maintenance funds, education and library endowment funds. Call (619) 668-3280 for further information. - MTRP Foundation Federal Tax ID number 33-0285093.

Mission Trails Regional Park Donor Opportunities

Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation provides opportunities for individuals, businesses, community organizations and foundations to support a variety of programs and projects within Mission Trails Regional Park. Thank you to our many friends who make annual contributions to Friends of Mission Trails Regional Park. A variety of donor opportunities are available as indicated below. All contributions are tax deductible. Persons donating \$100 or more will be given a certificate of contribution. Names of contributors of \$1,000 or more will be engraved on a plaque permanently displayed at the park Visitor and Interpretive Center. Donations of \$100 and above will accumulate from year-to-year for contributor recognition purposes.

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____
Home Phone _____ E-mail _____

Donor Levels

\$25 Individual _____	\$1,000 Founder _____	\$25,000 Benefactor _____
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\$100 Path Finder _____	\$5,000 Steward _____	\$100,000 Director _____
\$500 Trailblazer _____	\$10,000 Sponsor _____	Other _____

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Please check fund(s) for which you wish your donation to be used.

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Education Program Endowment	_____
Tree & Habitat Maintenance	_____
Trail Maintenance	_____
Lake Murray	_____

Make check payable to MTRP Foundation and send to:
Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation, Attention Secretary/Treasurer
One Father Junipero Serra Trail, San Diego, CA 92119-1008

Charge my donation to VISA _____ MC _____
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**Mission Trails
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Volume 17 Number 1 Winter/Spring 2006
Mission Trails Regional Park News

Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation, Inc., established in January 1988, is a non-profit public benefit corporation organized for the purpose of preserving, improving and maintaining Mission Trails Regional Park.

Mission Trails Regional Park News is a publication of Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation, Inc., published four times a year.

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 Distribution: Marjorie Ferrante*

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Mark Your Calendar

Fourteenth Annual Amateur Photography Contest

The 2006 Amateur Photo Contest has been moved up to coincide with this year's Explore Mission Trails Day. All entries will be on display during this yearly event, which celebrates everything Mission Trails has to offer.



The deadline for submitting photos is 5:00 p. m., Friday, May 5, 2006. The entries will be on display in the gallery during the months of May and June. You are welcome to attend the Photo Contest Reception and Awards Ceremony on June 25, 2006 at 2:00 p. m.

Fourth Annual Explore Mission Trails Day

Join park staff and volunteers on Saturday, May 20, 2006 for an all day celebration highlighting everything Mission Trails has to offer. This popular event will feature free interpretive walks, talks and programs throughout the park, including live animals and activities for children. An exhibition of this year's Annual Photo Contest will be on display at the Visitor and Interpretive Center and there will be free pony rides and children's crafts at the Equestrian Staging Area.

Explore Mission Trails Day is presented by Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation, City of San Diego Park and Recreation Department and San Diego City Councilmember Jim Madaffer.

Funding is being provided by the following sponsors:
Title Sponsors – Supervisor Pam Slater-Price and County of San Diego, City of San Diego Special Promotional Programs, Vons Foundation and Adventure 16. **Community Sponsors** – Olive Garden Restaurants and Silicon Space. **Neighborhood Sponsors** – Pure Flo, Mimi's Cafe and Mission Federal Credit Union Community Foundation. Sponsorship opportunities are still available. For information on how to become an Explore Mission Trails Day sponsor, contact Leslie Walsh at 619-668-3280 or e-mail at missiontrails@san.rr.com.

