

VOLUNTEER PROFILE

by Nicole Dunkley

During the months of October through the beginning of January, I volunteered at the Mitchell Canyon Visitor Center at Mount Diablo State Park.

I am a freshman at Clayton Valley High School. There, I am a part of the Public Service Academy. For the first semester, I had to earn 15 hours of community service. I chose to volunteer at the visitor center.

I enjoyed volunteering at the visitor center. It was so much fun. I love being outdoors. It was great to meet all the wonderful people that worked. Everyone was so nice. It is such a great atmosphere.

There is a main reason why I chose to volunteer at Mitchell Canyon: Mount Diablo is right in my backyard. I am a resident of the little town of Clayton. I am really familiar with Mount Diablo. My family and I used to hike there a lot. We would go to Rock City and drive up to the summit. My mom currently hikes Mount Diablo frequently. I felt that if I volunteered there, I would truly be helping my community.

My experience there has been a brilliant one. I will remember it forever. For all the young people out there, you should get involved in your community. If you are a resident of Clayton, I would highly suggest volunteering at Mount Diablo. It is truly great. I hope to continue volunteering there from time to time.



Nicole Dunkley

Printed by



925-866-1514 • www.prestigeprinting.com

Like most organizations, MDIA does some communication via email—it is not only timely but cost-effective. Nancy Topp maintains the MDIA email directory. If you would like to add or update your email in this directory, please provide it to Nancy at <mnvtopp@pacbell.net>. Please be assured that your email will not be shared with any other organization or company without your permission.

There are 14 Spring '09 events /hikes about Mount Diablo that are described in the MDIA website <<http://www.mdia.org/events.htm>>. We encourage you to look at this site, and join in on these activities. Thanks!

MDIA BOARD MEETINGS DATES FOR 2009

Meet from 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM at Sports Basement, 1881 Ygnacio Valley Road (across from Heather Farms Park), Walnut Creek, 925/941-6100. Sports Basement generously allows MDIA to use one of their private meeting rooms. MDIA members and their guests are most welcome to attend Board meetings.

March 26 (Thursday)

April 23 (Thursday)

May 28 (Thursday)

June 25 (Thursday)

July 23 (Thursday)

August 27 (Thursday)

September 24 (Thursday)

October 22 (Thursday)

October 31 (Saturday)--Annual Membership Meeting at Mitchell Canyon

December 3 (Thursday)

MOUNTAIN NEWS

Spring /Summer 2009

MOUNT DIABLO INTERPRETIVE ASSOCIATION

The Bi-Annual Membership Newsletter

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE.....

It is my distinct privilege and pleasure to be your President for 2009. This will then be my fifth year as MDIA President, and ninth year on the MDIA Board. This will be my last year as President and on the Board, as MDIA has a nine-year term limit. It has been my honor to serve you the membership, the Park, and the Park's visiting public.

It is easy for me to serve because MDIA has so many dedicated members; those who serve on the MDIA Board, those who are docents, those on the various MDIA committees, those who help MDIA and the Park in a myriad of other ways, and those who renew their membership year after year. It is the MDIA members who provide the impetus that leads to a vibrant organization. Thanks to you, the MDIA members!

The 2008 MDIA Annual Membership Meeting was conducted on Saturday, November 1st, from 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM. The meeting was to be held under the oaks in Mitchell Canyon, but due to the very heavy rains that day, the meeting took place nearby at the Dana Farms Homeowners Association Clubhouse. Thanks to Harvey Brosler for making the last minute arrangements at this indoor facility. And, instead of the noon Ken Lavin walk up Mitchell Canyon, Ken gave a very interesting indoor talk on tarantulas. Ken even had a live tarantula for us to view.

About 50 MDIA members and guests attended the Annual Meeting. Food and drinks were arranged by Liede-Marie Haitisma, Sue Donecker, and Nancy Topp. Since many of the 325 MDIA members could not be at the Annual Meeting, herewith is an abbreviated "State-of-MDIA" talk that I presented:

"Financially, MDIA is in great shape. Of course, most of the monies taken in by MDIA is returned to the Park in the form of goods and services that are intended to directly enhance the visiting public's experience in the Park. As of today, MDIA's net worth is almost \$178,000. So, I'm happy to be able to report that MDIA is on solid financial footing. The Board has several initiatives underway to wisely spend that money for the benefit of the Park and the visiting public.



Rich McDrew, President

Continued on page 2

SUPPORT MDIA THROUGH WORKPLACE CAMPAIGNS

MDIA members who are, or were, employees of the County, State, or Federal Government, are no doubt familiar with workplace giving/donation campaigns. These annual employee campaigns provide current employees and retirees with the opportunity to designate pre-tax monetary support to eligible non-profit organizations. Application for inclusion into these campaigns is rigorous, and non-profit organizations must comply with qualitative and quantitative guidelines before they are to be considered. MDIA is pleased to announce that it will again be included in this year's campaigns. If you are participating this year, consider donating to MDIA to help support MDIA activities, publications, and specific events geared to enhancing and enriching one's experience in Mount Diablo State Park. These workplace giving/donation programs usually run September through December. If you have any questions, please feel free to call Rich McDrew at 925-932-7511, or email him at <mcdrewwich@astound.net>.

Thank you for your considerations!

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Rich McDrew (President)
Jim Mitchell (Vice President)
Stephen Elliott (Treasurer)
Tom Nootbaar (Secretary)

&

Burt Bogardus, Dave Caniglia, Leslie Contreras, Helene Crowley,
Leslie Dawson, Sue Donecker, Ken Lavin, Roi Peers,
Maria Tice, Nancy Topp, Dan Weiss, Ralph Wright

If you wish to submit articles or photographs for the *MOUNTAIN NEWS*, contact Rich McDrew at 925-932-7511 or via e-mail at <mcdrewwich@astound.net>. Submission deadline for the Spring/Summer edition is February 1, and for the Fall/Winter edition is August 1.

MDIA, P.O. Box 346, Walnut Creek, CA 94597-0346 MOUNTAIN NEWS © 2009 by MDIA
Voice Mail: 925.927.7222 Fax: 877.349.5016 Website: www.mdia.org

Continued from page 1

MDIA had five major goals and objectives for 2008:

(1) Complete the 'Trail Through Time'. As most of you know, this trail traces the 190 million year old geologic history of Mount Diablo utilizing a 6.25 mile trail with 20 strategically placed interpretive panels extending from the bottom of Sycamore Canyon to just below the Summit. After 13 years of work, I'm proud to be able to report that it is done. This has been a crowning achievement of the Park and MDIA.

The dedication ceremony took place on October 18, 2008. Countless people from the Park and MDIA have been involved with this project over the years, but the three geologists who have been involved from the beginning, and put in most of the work, were Craig Lyon, Roi Peers, and Phil Reed. Congratulations!

(2) Make strategic Park interpretive and educational investments. In other words, spend money wisely for the Park. 'Trees and Shrubs of Mount Diablo' booklet was completed. 'Common Birds of Mount Diablo' booklet was completed. 'Trail Map of Mount Diablo State Park' (6th Edition) is in process. Funding a Park Aide at the Summit Museum for two days is ongoing. Purchased new docent vests and badges. Purchasing Park benches is in process. Purchased a new bike rack for Mitchell Canyon. Purchased six display racks for the 'Mount Diablo Review'. Webcam at the Summit is in process. Several interpretive panels are in process. Native plant interpretive garden in Mitchell Canyon is ongoing.

(3) Enhance the communication with the MDIA membership. Continuing to do the Annual Report in color. Continuing to improve the 'Mount Diablo Review' and 'Mountain News'. Doing more communication by email. Continuing to expand and enhance the website.

(4) Increase MDIA visibility in the community. Tabled at a variety of events. More articles about the Park in area newspapers. Gave several talks to community groups. Continue to distribute the 'Mount Diablo Review' in local community.

(5) Maintain MDIA traditional roles. The merchandising or sales agreement is a big revenue producer. MDIA still maintains two trails; Globe Lily and Black Point. Continuing fundraising. Continuing to lead many hikes. Docents staff the MCVV and Summit Museum. Continuing to create publications. Maintaining the telescopes. Revising the trail map. Continuing to remove debris. Enhancing the website. Trail signs continue to be maintained."

Awards were presented to 62 of the more active MDIA volunteers. The second annual "MDIA Hall-of-Fame Award" was presented to Frank and Edith Valle-Riestra for their 35 years of extraordinary selfless service that they have given to MDIA. They were presented an original watercolor painting of the mountain by the artist, Shirley Nootbaar.

Board of Directors were elected.

The new Park Superintendent, Roland Gaebert, gave an interesting talk about the state of the park, and his appreciation of MDIA volunteers.

The guest speaker at the meeting was Nancy Valente, an archaeologist specializing in bone interpretation. She displayed many bones, and gave a very interesting talk on animal bone identification. The next MDIA Annual Membership Meeting will be on Saturday, October 31, 2009. Mark your calendars now. Thanks!

Meet an MDIA Board Director:

SUE DONECKER

Sue, described as a whirling dervish by her husband Fred (who was her high school sweetheart), grew up in a suburb of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She sang in the high school choir, was a soloist with the dance band and participated in field hockey. The first part of her adult life was spent raising three sons in Philadelphia, Connecticut and California. Once the boys went out on their own she took a job as a pre-school teacher and went to college to take courses to enhance the practical experience she already possessed. She has also lived in Ohio and New Jersey and still spends many summers at the beach in New Jersey with her "boys", 11 grandchildren and 2 great grandchildren.

Sue has lived in Clayton, California in 3 separate time periods and has come to the conclusion that the Northern California area, especially Mount Diablo, is Nirvana. She belongs to a book club, hikes, bird watches and studies the flowers on the mountain, but still finds time to play bridge and tennis and quilt for Hospice.

MDIA FOUNDER BETTY ZILEN DIES

by Rich McDrew



One of MDIA's founders, Elizabeth Zilen (nee Burkitt), better known as "Betty", passed away peacefully on Friday, January 30, 2009, at the Stonebrook Convalescent Center in Concord. Betty was 96 years old. She had been a resident of Concord and Walnut Creek for over 50 years, and had been at Stonebrook for the past two years. Betty was one of a select group of eight visionaries who met in 1974, and chartered MDIA. She was a staunch supporter and champion of MDIA ever since. She will be missed.

Betty was born on April 24, 1912, in Tuscon, Arizona, and grew up in Alhambra, California. She graduated from Alhambra High School in 1928 and USC in 1933 with an MA degree in Education. Betty began her teaching career in a one-room county school with 25 elementary

students in the Mohawk area outside of Yuma, Arizona. She later taught in Bisbee, Arizona, and Newhall, California, ultimately becoming Assistant Superintendent of Schools in Baldwin Park, California. She was married to the late Anthony M. Zilen on August 20, 1949, and the couple moved to Walnut Creek in 1953 where Betty became Curriculum Consultant with the Mount Diablo School District from which she retired in 1973. Betty's career as an educational consultant also included 14 months in American Samoa in the mid-1960s, and teaching college extension courses.

Upon retirement, Betty enjoyed traveling around the world, becoming a member of the Century Travelers Club, and succeeding in traveling to all seven continents and 166 countries. She was fond of saying that she had been to many places in the world including Timbuktu.

Betty was also very active in the community as a member and in leadership positions with numerous organizations, such as Contra Costa and Mount Diablo Genealogical Societies, Contra Costa and Concord Historical Societies, DAR Acalanes Chapter, Daughters of 1812, Concord Ambassadors, Sierra Club, Diablo Valley Retired Teachers Association, Concord Garden Club, American Association of University Women, Ship of Hope, USC Alumni, Delta Kappa Gamma Sorority, Save Mount Diablo and, of course, Mount Diablo Interpretive Association. She was also a member of Concord's First Presbyterian Church.

Betty was an extraordinary woman who was ahead of her time and an inspiration to many. She will be missed by all who had the pleasure of knowing her.

A private internment was held at Forest Lawn in Glendale, California. A "Celebration of Life" service was held in Concord at the First Presbyterian Church, in Concord on, February 7, 2009.



Sue Donecker

Matching Gift Program

If you or your spouse work for, or retired from, a corporation that operates a "Matching Gift Program", your contribution to MDIA may be matched by your employer. Obviously, this doubles the financial impact to MDIA. In addition, if your employer conducts an annual charitable gift drive, you can designate MDIA to be the recipient of your payroll deduction gift. Please ask your employer's Human Resource Office if they have a "Matching Gift Program" or a "Workplace Giving Program."