

# MOUNTAIN NEWS

Spring / Summer 2010

**MOUNT DIABLO INTERPRETIVE ASSOCIATION**

*The Bi-Annual Membership Newsletter*

## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE.....**

It is an honor to serve as the new President of MDIA. I am excited to begin this year working with the other board members, Mount Diablo State Park staff, the many volunteers who support the park, and dedicated members of MDIA. It is a difficult task to step into the shoes of the past President, Rich McDrew, who for five years as President and a total of nine years on the board accomplished so much to fulfill the vision of MDIA. I want to extend, along with the entire membership of MDIA, a great thank you to Rich for all the work he has done to enhance the experience of visitors within the park. We all look forward to continuing to work with Rich on several MDIA committees and especially to seeing him continue with the task of removing non-indigenous material from the park.

By way of introduction to those whom I have not yet met, I am a native of the Bay Area, born in Oakland, raised in Orinda, and a graduate of UC Berkeley and Cal State Sacramento with degrees in Biochemistry and Chemistry. I continue to work in Research and Development at the Clorox Company, where I have spent the last 30 years. I have served as MDIA Board Secretary and Vice President, and enjoy many weekends as a docent at the Mitchell Canyon Visitor Center. Please feel free to contact me at any time with ideas and especially the desire to volunteer for the many opportunities MDIA and the park have to offer. You can reach me at 925-939-6421 or mitchell.mdia@gmail.com.

## **Annual Membership Meeting**

On the afternoon of October 24 in the picnic area of Mitchell Canyon, MDIA conducted its 35th annual membership meeting. We were blessed with sunny warm weather which, prior to the meeting, was enjoyed by many who took the hike through the canyon, guided by Ken Lavin. Those of us on the walk were lucky to find a "late fall" tarantula looking for a mate as it crossed the trail.

Nearly 50 MDIA members and guests attended the meeting. Since not all members were able to attend, following is a brief summary. Rich McDrew opened the meeting, dedicating it to the memory of Craig Lyon, a long-time member who gave many years of service to MDIA and the park as a board member, originator of the Mitchell Canyon Visitor Center/Docent program, and leader of the team that created the Trail Through Time. Craig will be missed by all who worked with him over the years.



*Jim Mitchell, MDIA President*

Rich reported that MDIA is in excellent financial shape with assets near \$175K and able to support the many MDIA sponsored projects in the park. Financial support is due in great part to the 325 wonderful members of MDIA who continue to renew their membership year after year. Since MDIA is staffed completely by volunteers, almost all of the money collected can be used for important programs in the park, and all financial supporters are greatly appreciated.

## **2009 MDIA Projects**

Several important projects were worked on this year:

- The Sixth Edition Trail Map of Mount Diablo State Park was completed thanks to the dedication of Warren Tighe and the map committee. This full-color map, printed on water-resistant paper, is available in and outside the park at visitor centers and local retail stores.
- Three benches were installed in Mitchell Canyon thanks to the leadership of Leslie Dawson and a donation

*continued on page 2*

from Peter Gochis and Sally Dalton in memory of Sally's horse Benraz Ali. One is in the Native Plant Garden behind the visitor center, and the others were placed along the Mitchell Canyon Road.

- MDIA's website continues to be upgraded and now includes a Virtual Tour that can help visitors plan their trip to the park and an audio tour of the Mary Bowerman Trail that can be downloaded to an iPod or MP3 player. These enhancements were made possible by work from Roi Peers and Ken Lavin.
- MDIA is also working with park staff on the Summit Visitor Center remodel. This major remodel includes complete redesign of the interior of the Center and new interpretive displays.
- A photographic art book of Mount Diablo featuring photographs from local photographer Stephen Joseph is being designed and should be available in late 2010. This book has been made possible through a generous matching grant from the Green family, past owners of the Greenhill Ranch, and leadership of the project by Rich McDrew.

MDIA also continues to play its traditional role in support of the Mitchell Canyon Visitor Center, Docent Program, Trash Removal Project, Trail Signpost Program, and Adoption of the Globe Lily and Black Point trails.

## State of the Park

During the annual MDIA meeting, Park Superintendent Roland Gaebert presented the state of the park, thanked MDIA for its many efforts, and mentioned that there are far more volunteers than staff working in the park. He noted that during these tight budget years, volunteers are not just helpful but required to keep the park running. Roland gave a brief update on budgets, which continue to be very tight. Park staff continues to look into areas to save money and are encouraged by the strong support of volunteers. Park challenges that are being addressed are as follows:

- The Summit Visitor Center roof
- Condition of Mount Diablo Scenic Boulevard
- Encroachment from private property bordering the park
- Degrading infrastructure (water, sewage, buildings)

## Mountain Lions Presentation

This year's guest speaker was Zara McDonald from the Felidae Conservation Fund. Zara gave an informative presentation about mountain lions and local studies into

their habits. She showed fascinating tracking results from lions in the Santa Cruz Mountains and mentioned that they would like to do similar studies in the East Bay. Interested individuals can find information at [www.BAPP.org](http://www.BAPP.org) and [www.felidaefund.org](http://www.felidaefund.org).

## Recognition

MDIA business was also conducted at this meeting, including recognition of the more than 67 docents and other volunteers who support MDIA and the park. Rich presented our 2009 Hall of Fame Award to Sam Smoker. This year's award is a photo of Mount Diablo by Stephen Joseph. In addition, Sam's name was added to the Hall of Fame plaque in the Mitchell Canyon Visitor Center.

Leslie Dawson, chair of the MDIA nominating committee, presided over the election of the 2010 MDIA board. Those reelected to the board for three-year terms were Burt Bogardus and Roi Peers. Those new board members elected to three-year terms were Jim Holmes, Ruth Ann Kishi, and Mike Woodring.

The annual meeting is an excellent way to connect with other MDIA members as well as learn about the park. I encourage all members to take advantage of the opportunity this year when we hold our 36th annual meeting. An invitation will be sent to all members as we approach the date, and I look forward to seeing you all there.

MDIA has accomplished a great deal this year, and we are committed to continuing to meet our vision of enhancing the park visitors' experience through support of programs and services at Mount Diablo. Information about the park and MDIA can be found at our website, [www.MDIA.org](http://www.MDIA.org). Please visit your beautiful Mount Diablo State Park, and I encourage you to get involved in the many opportunities we have to volunteer and contribute.

### **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."

## MDIA REMEMBERS CRAIG LYON



As John Muir once said, “The mountains are calling and I must go.” And so it was for our friend, Craig Lyon. The mountain called. Craig A. Lyon (1931-2009) passed away on September 14, 2009, after battling cancer for a number of months.

One of Craig’s passions was Mount Diablo State Park, or “The Mountain,” as he nicknamed it. Craig invested his heart and soul in the Park, accomplishing many things. A long-time member of MDIA, Craig made invaluable contributions of his time, talents and presence by participating in nearly every aspect of the organization, serving as MDIA Vice President and Board Member. Craig’s crowning achievements included establishing the

new Mitchell Canyon Visitor Center (MCVC) and development of the new Trail Through Time. For many years, Craig oversaw the MDIA docent staffing and training, watched over the Park’s merchandising, and brought organization and efficiency to the running of the MCVC. He also served on the MDIA map committee, watched over the organization’s publications and helped establish MDIA’s retail operations at the Summit. In 2007, Craig was the first recipient of the MDIA Hall of Fame Award.

A native of Iowa, Craig graduated from Iowa State University in 1955 with a Master’s degree in geology. After graduation, he signed on with Standard Oil Co. of California (now Chevron) as a geologist in oil and gas exploration and oil field development. He worked in the Western United States, ranging from the deserts of Utah and Arizona to the San Joaquin Valley and Santa Barbara Channel. He spent about half of his career in Alaskan oil exploration, finding some oil and gas and having a great time doing it.

Craig retired from Chevron Corporation after 37 years. After retirement, besides devoting much of his time to MDIA, he also volunteered at the Lindsay Wildlife Museum and at the Museum of the San Ramon Valley, giving lectures on the geology of Mount Diablo.

Craig is survived by his wife Peggy; son Steven and his wife Laura, and two grandsons of Texas; daughter Laurie Dewey and husband Tom of Colorado; sister Joan Brown of Nevada; three nieces and their spouses, five grandnieces and nephews, and one great-grandniece.

A touching memorial service was held on October 10, 2009, at the Clayton Valley Presbyterian Church. Steve Elliott, MDIA Treasurer and Board Member, offered these reflections at Craig’s memorial: “I

took over for Craig as the Park’s Docent Coordinator when he stepped out of that role. As we sat down to transition the job, I realized how thoughtfully Craig considered what staffing assignment each person would enjoy. I was most touched by how much Craig knew about each person. He cared deeply. He would make it a point to go visit with every docent when they were on duty. ‘Just checking in,’ he would say. What a blessing to have someone who just wants to ‘check in.’

When I first met Craig some years ago, I thought he must live at Mount Diablo as much as he was there. Heck, the last four digits of his home phone number, 3849, was the elevation of the mountain’s summit!”

Sue Donecker, another MDIA Board Member, who met Craig in 2001, remembers Craig’s sense of humor. “His knowledge of Mount Diablo was amazing, and he was more than willing to share it – always the teacher. Always the joker, too. You had to pay attention because he had a dry sense of humor. If you weren’t sure, you could tell by the twinkle in his eye when he was joking.”

To honor his memory and his service to the Park, friends of Craig contributed to the Craig Lyon Memorial Table. The picnic table has been placed at the foot of the walking path in the native plant garden in back of the Mitchell Canyon Visitor Center. Rich McDrew, former President of MDIA and long-time friend of Craig’s, encourages everyone: “When you are in Mitchell Canyon, make a point to go to the table and sit for a spell and reflect on Craig’s contributions to MDIA and the Park. He would like that!”

Craig will be sorely missed by his many friends at MDIA.



If you wish to submit articles or photographs for the  
***MOUNTAIN NEWS***,

contact Ruth Ann Kishi at 925-927-7222 or  
via email at [rakishi@mindspring.com](mailto:rakishi@mindspring.com).

Submission deadline for the Spring/Summer edition is February 1,  
and for the Fall/Winter edition is August 1.

## MDIA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jim Mitchell, President  
Leslie Dawson, Vice President  
Stephen Elliott, Treasurer  
Helene Crowley, Secretary  
&  
Burt Bogardus, Leslie Contreras,  
Sue Donecker, Jim Holmes,  
Ruth Ann Kishi, Ken Lavin,  
Roi Peers, Maria Tice, Nancy Topp,  
Mike Woodring, Ralph Wright



**From left:** Sue Donecker, Burt Bogardus, Ken Lavin, Leslie Dawson, Mike Woodring, Leslie Contreras, Nancy Topp, Jim Mitchell, Ruth Ann Kishi, Ralph Wright, Jim Holmes, Steve Elliott, Maria Tice, Roi Peers. **Not shown:** Helene Crowley.

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 address in this directory, please provide it to Nancy at [mnvtopp@pacbell.net](mailto:mnvtopp@pacbell.net). Please be assured that your email address will not be shared with any other organization or company without your permission.

Events /hikes about Mount Diablo 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!

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## MDIA BOARD MEETINGS DATES FOR 2010

*The MDIA Board meets from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at Sports Basement, 1881 Ygnacio Valley Road (across from Heather Farm 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 25
- April 22
- May 27
- June 24
- July 22
- August 26
- September 23
- October 28
- December 2

*Saturday, October 30, is tentatively set for the Annual MDIA Membership Meeting in Mitchell Canyon. The date will be confirmed later.*