

MOUNTAIN NEWS

Spring 2008

MOUNT DIABLO INTERPRETIVE ASSOCIATION

President's Message.....

It is my distinct privilege and pleasure to be your President for 2008. This will then be my fourth year as MDIA President, and eighth year on the MDIA Board. 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 myriad 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!

On November 3, 2007, MDIA conducted its Annual Membership Meeting (from 2 to 4pm) under the oaks in Mitchell Canyon. Food and drinks were arranged by Liede-Marie Haitsma. It was an interesting, fun, and productive meeting. We were blessed with good weather. Several luminaries attended, including Ron Brown (Save Mount Diablo's Executive Director), Beverly Lane (East Bay Regional Park District's Board Director), and David Loeb (BAY NATURE magazine's editor).

At noon, prior to the start of the meeting, Dr. Glenn Keator, noted authority on California native plants, led an interesting and informative two-hour walk in Mitchell Canyon for 30 members/guests.

About 55 MDIA members and guests attended the Annual Meeting. Since not all of the MDIA members could be at the Annual Meeting, herewith is an abbreviated "The State of MDIA" talk that I presented:

"Let me take a few minutes to highlight the MDIA accomplishments this year. There will be more details in the MDIA 2007 Annual Report that will go to all members in the first half of 2008. I'm proud to be able to say that MDIA is in super condition, both financially and operationally, in part due to our wonderful members. Membership roll is just over 300. 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 or services that are intended to directly enhance the visiting public's experience in the Park. As of September 30, 2007, MDIA's net worth was \$164,000. So, I'm happy to be able to report that MDIA is on solid financial



Rich McDrew,
President

footing. The Board has several initiatives underway to wisely spend that money for the benefit of the Park and the visiting public."

"MDIA had five major goals and objectives for 2007:

(1) Complete the 'Trail Through Time'. This Trail chronicles the 200-million-year-old geologic history of Mount Diablo utilizing twenty strategically located interpretive panels. This seven-mile Trail extends from the bottom of Sycamore Canyon to the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) telescope on the Mary Bowerman Trail near the top of the mountain. The free, in color, self-

guiding brochure is done, and at the printer. Sixteen of the interpretive panels are along the Trail, with four yet to be installed. We hope to officially open the Trail with a dedication ceremony in the Spring of 2008.

(2) Make Strategic Park Interpretive and Educational Investments. In other words, insure that MDIA spends its money wisely in the Park. A list of ten 'investments'/projects have been developed by the MDIA Board and Park management:

- Complete the 'Trail Through Time' (almost done).
- Do publications, e.g., MOUNTAIN NEWS, MOUNT DIABLO REVIEW, TREES AND SHRUBS OF MOUNT DIABLO (in process), BIRDS OF MOUNT DIABLO (in process).
- Create and install additional interpretive panels (in process).
- Help the Park to improve the interpretation along the Mary Bowerman Trail (redesigned interpretive brochure completed).
- Install an ADA telescope on the Mary Bowerman Trail (done).
- Continue with the Junior Ranger Program (continues to be successful).
- Hire a summer intern (not accomplished).
- Disposal of Park debris (ongoing), e.g., disposed of 50,000 lbs. of utility poles (hazardous waste).
- Create ADA compliant benches (ongoing).
- Install webcam at the Summit (ongoing).

(3) Enhance Communication with the MDIA Membership:

- Continuing to do the Annual Report.
- MOUNTAIN NEWS (twice yearly to the members).
- MOUNT DIABLO REVIEW (twice yearly to the members).
- Doing more communication by email.
- Continuing to expand the website.

(4) Increase MDIA Visibility in the Community:

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- Doubled the tabling of events in 2007, primarily because of MDIA/Park presence at the Sleep Train Pavilion concerts in Concord.

- More articles about the Park in area newspapers.
- Formal talks about MDIA and the Park to local community groups.
- Presentations to school groups visiting the Park.

(5) Maintain Traditional Roles:

- The merchandising or sales agreement with the Park is a big revenue producer.
- MDIA has adopted and maintains two trails in the Park; the Globe Lily Trail and the Black Point Trail.
- Continues fundraising through grant writing.
- MDIA continues to lead many hikes in the Park.
- The Mitchell Canyon Visitor Center (MCVC) continues to operate on weekends and holidays thanks to MDIA docents, and support is given to the Summit Visitor Center.
- Creating publications about the Park is a key role for MDIA.
- The telescopes on the Summit building observation deck are a source of revenue.
- The MDIA Trail Map is undergoing a revision (6th Edition).
- Trail signposts are installed throughout the Park. Trail signs continue to be improved.
- Debris removal continues with Park approval.
- The MDIA website continues to be enhanced."

After "The State of MDIA" talk, other important business was conducted. Awards were presented to 65 of the more active MDIA volunteers. This year, the Board initiated the "MDIA Hall of Fame Award" to annually recognize a member(s) who has consistently done work for MDIA and the Park over a long period of time that has been over and beyond the call of duty. The first recipient was Craig Lyon, who for the past 15 years has physically done work for MDIA and the Park on an almost daily basis. The MDIA Hall of Fame Award is in the MCVC. To recognize his contributions to MDIA and the Park, Craig Lyon was presented a gift of an original watercolor painting of the mountain by the artist, Shirley Nootbaar.

The following MDIA Board Directors were elected: Harvey Brosler, Leslie Dawson, Ken Lavin, Mike Nelson, Maria Tice, and Ralph Wright.

Park Superintendent, Craig Mattson, gave an interesting talk, and announced his retirement at the end of December after more than 30 years with the California State Park System. He has been at Mount Diablo State Park for two years. He said that the District Superintendent, Don Monahan, will be the acting Park Superintendent, until sometime in the summer of 2008.

The guest speaker at the meeting was Dr. Glenn Keator. Glenn gave an informative talk on gardening with California native plants. His latest book is entitled "Designing California Native Gardens - The Plant Community Approach to Artful, Ecological Gardens". Glenn is also the author of MDIA's newest publication (out in early 2008) entitled "Trees and Shrubs of Mount Diablo".

We had a number of merchandise items that were raf-

fled off to the attendees. On display was a huge barbed wire ball two feet in diameter, weighing 60 pounds. Attendees were asked to guess the length of the wire on the ball. The closest to the true length without going over would win an MDIA Life Membership. Burt Bogardus was the winner, but since he was already a Life Member, he opted to give it to the next closest, that being Leslie Contreras. The exact length was 1,336 feet.

Don't miss the next MDIA Annual Membership Meeting. It will be held on Saturday, November 1, 2008. Mark your calendars now. You'll be glad you attended.

Now, go out and experience and enjoy Mount Diablo State Park, and see for yourself what MDIA has done. The Park belongs to all of us.

If you wish to contribute articles or photographs for any of the MDIA publications, contact Mike Nelson at 925 686-9295 or via e-mail at <janmike@astound.net>.

Meet the 2008 MDIA Board Secretary:

Tom Nootbaar

A Bay Area native and a multi-generational Californian, Tom is a graduate of Acalanes High School in Lafayette, as well as UC Berkeley. He holds a Master's degree in International Management from the Thunderbird School of Global Management.

His work experience includes over a decade in New York City and San Francisco underwriting ocean marine insurance for the American International Marine Agency, where Tom was a senior underwriter and officer. He also has worked in London, Buenos Aires, and Rome, and has been fortunate to have traveled to over thirty countries on six continents.

He was past board president of The Association of Marine Underwriters - San Francisco, a professional organization founded in 1885.

Tom's current career includes commercial real estate as well as asset and financial management.

His earliest memories of Mount Diablo include swimming in the pool at Turtle Rock Ranch back in the sixties, scrambling around Rock City, riding his bike down the mountain at 11 years old, and viewing the '77 fire from afar, especially at nighttime. His respect and admiration for Mount Diablo stem from his parents. Tom's mother, artist Shirley Nootbaar, states that the mountain is her favorite subject to paint, and that affinity has been passed down.

MDIA Board Meeting dates for 2008

Meet 7:00pm at the Alamo Safeway Store, committee reports are presented every other month
MDIA members welcome to attend board meetings

February 28 — With Committee Reports

March 27

April 24 — With Committee Reports

May 22

June 26 — With Committee Reports

July 24

August 28 — With Committee Reports

September 25

October 23 — With Committee Reports

November 1—Annual Membership Meeting

Saturday at Mitchell Canyon

December 4—With Committee Reports

(January 22, 2009 — Annual Meeting of the Board)

His hobbies and interests include jazz, classical and world music, ancient Roman numismatics, swimming for the Walnut Creek Masters, volunteering at the Badè Institute of Archaeology in Berkeley, and, of course, spending time on Mount Diablo, particularly with the Trash Removal Project gang!

Tom resides in Walnut Creek with his wife of seventeen years, Lori; their daughter Jessa, who is 10 and attends Seven Hills school; and their pets - a dog, cat and two rats!

"I thoroughly enjoy being involved with MDIA and Mount Diablo State Park. The membership and board are an enthused, interesting, and dedicated group of volunteering individuals. It's a pragmatic organization of diverse talents that prides itself on getting the job at hand done. It's a privilege for me to learn from and be affiliated with the MDIA membership, its board, and the state park officials."



Tom Nootbaar,
Secretary, MDIA

Don DeFremery

HONORED WITH SIERRA CLUB NATIONAL AWARD

Don DeFremery, an Alamo resident, has been a long-time MDIA member, and former MDIA Board Director. The following was a Sierra Club news release on September 26, 2007, about Don:

"Don DeFremery, from the Mt. Diablo Group of Sierra Club, is the 2007 winner of the Oliver Kehrlein Award given by the National Sierra Club to honor a volunteer. The Kehrlein Award honors service to the Sierra Club Outings Program either at the local or national level over an extended period of time.

"In 1971, Don became involved with the [Sierra Club's] Mt. Diablo Regional Group of the Bay Chapter (now called Mt. Diablo Group). Don was on the Executive Committee of the Mt. Diablo Group from 1972 to 1976, and from 1977 to 2004. While beginning with an interest in trails and trail maintenance, he ultimately became the Group's premier outings leader. Don has served for twenty-five years on the Chapter Schedule Committee which produced the thrice-yearly printed Schedule of Outings.

"When leading outings for Mt. Diablo Group, Don did numerous things to make the outings special for participants. On the 31-mile East Bay Skyline Trail hikes, which he led or co- led for 17 years, he presented participants with Certificates of Achievement and commemorative T-shirts. For hikers who completed his Beginner Hike Series, he would present them with a Certificate of Achievement as well as a packet of maps for the parks in the East Bay Regional Park District. He provided detailed maps of his hike routes, indicating distances, where facilities

were located, and trail junctions. Having each participant carry this map helped make outings go smoothly because all participants knew exactly how to ration their food, water and energy. He led hikes at all levels of difficulty in order to attract people of all abilities to hiking, from 1A hikes to the annual 5D, the 31-mile Skyline Trail hike. For several years, he had a contest to see who had hiked the most miles with him during that year, awarding a small prize and plaque to the winner.

"Leading hikes for the Sierra Club and other organizations was just the end product of Don's contributions. He was involved every step of the way in making outings in the East Bay (Alameda and Contra Costa Counties) possible. He has worked, and continues to work, with the organizations whose



Don DeFremery

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main thrust is the acquisition and maintenance of public lands (Save Mount Diablo, East Bay Municipal Utility District, and East Bay Regional Park District). When new properties were acquired by the various entities, Don would be at the forefront in scouting, building and maintaining trails. He would then lead hikes into the newly opened areas so that others could enjoy them. His contributions went even further, as he was intimately involved with producing maps for several organizations and agencies. He was also invaluable in the Mount Diablo State Park's Trail Signage Project which was a cooperative effort between MDIA [Mount Diablo Interpretive Association], Save Mount Diablo, and the California Department of Parks and Recreation.

"Don's support of and involvement in the many organizations in Contra Costa and Alameda Counties which acquire property for open space, provide trails, provide maps of trails, and sponsor

outings is unprecedented in the East Bay. While working with numerous organizations in a variety of capacities, his first love has always been HIKING, and the majority of his hiking time has been spent leading Sierra Club outings."

Don was presented with this prestigious award on September 29, 2007, at the Sierra Club's Annual Dinner in San Francisco. Congratulations to Don! MDIA is very proud of Don, and that he was honored with this award.

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.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Rich McDrew—President, Jim Mitchell—Vice-President, Stephen Elliott—Treasurer, Tom Nootbaar—Secretary



From left to right: Roi Peers, Stephen Elliott, Mike Nelson, Sue Donecker, Rich McDrew, Verne Van Vlear, Maria Tice, Ralph Wright, Nancy Topp, Jim Mitchell, Leslie Contreras, Harvey Brosler, Tom Nootbaar, Ken Lavin, Burt Bogardus and Leslie Dawson.

Volunteers In Parks Program, Mount Diablo State

Volunteers are a vital component of the operation of Mount Diablo State Park. They play a vital role in the staffing of the Mitchell Canyon Visitor Center. Volunteers provide star gazing events at the Summit. They are involved in trash removal and native plant restoration. They perform trail maintenance and safety patrols of the backcountry by way of foot, horse, and bike.

In 2007, volunteers contributed 11,487 hours at Mount Diablo State Park! Many of these hours came from long-term volunteers who make up the Volunteers In Parks [VIP] Program. There are currently 181 registered VIPs at the park.

Are you interested in becoming a VIP? The first step in the process is to attend the Phase 1 Training - it serves as an introduction to the program. Phase 1 Training dates for 2008 are: Saturday, February 23 - Saturday, May 3 - Saturday, June 21 - and Saturday, September 20. You only need to attend one date; the session will last 2-3 hours. The training starts at 10 AM at the "Training Room" [located at the Service Yard near Rock City].

Following the Phase 1 Training, volunteer candidates will receive additional training in the specific volunteer group that they're interested in joining. For example, specialized training sessions are provided in such fields as trail maintenance, visitor center

operations, star gazing, mounted horse patrol, and bike patrol.

Volunteers who contribute 30 hours of service during a calendar year receive a District-wide Parks Pass with free day use entry to Mount Diablo State Park and places like Petaluma Adobe State Historic Park, Bothe-Napa State Park, Annadel State Park, and Benicia State Recreation Area. In 2007, 63 VIPs received this pass. Volunteers who contribute 200 hours during a calendar year earn a Statewide Parks Pass! Last year, seven of our VIPs received this prestigious acknowledgement!

For readers who are already VIPs, two dates to be aware of: the Earth Day celebration at Mount Diablo State Park will be held on Saturday, April 19, and the annual Volunteer Appreciation Dinner will be held on Saturday, November 15. More details will be announced as the dates get closer.

If you need additional information on the VIP Program at Mount Diablo State Park, contact me, the park's Volunteer Coordinator. My telephone number is (925) 837-6129; my email address is cnielson@parks.ca.gov. I greatly appreciate your interest in the VIP Program!

Carl Nielson, State Park Ranger