



RETIRED PUBLIC EMPLOYEES' ASSOCIATION OF CALIFORNIA

## Santa Clara County Chapter 031 Newsletter

Volume 53 #02  
February 2018

*An Association of CalPERS Annuitants committed to the goal of helping all public employees maintain their physical and economic health during retirement*

**NEXT MEETING – February 28 , 2018, at  
HARRY'S HOFBRAU, 390 Saratoga Avenue  
at Stevens Creek Blvd.**

**No-host Lunch at 11:30 - Meeting at 12:30**

### OUR CITY FOREST RHONDA BERRY, President & CEO

By Jo Pugsley



**O**ur speaker for February's meeting

is Rhonda Berry. Ms. Berry is the founder and President & CEO of Our City Forest, a nonprofit born in 1994. I have

personally used Our City Forest and can share with you what a interesting adventure it was. Rhonda will share her experiences with OCF and will surely captivate you into a new way of thinking about our environment and landscapes. If you look around this valley, you will see trees planted by OCF. In Campbell, the beautiful median strip on Winchester and Campbell Avenues has OCF trees planted.

Rhonda's unique experiences, talents and passions are visible today in the mission and services Our City Forest brings to so many San José area communities. She has a philosophy for Our City Forest that places community members from all walks of life and ages at the center of changing the urban landscape. She encourages residents and volunteers with a can-do attitude along with a sense of urgency, and the result is a burst of citywide planting activity and a burgeoning sense of neighborhood

pride. This philosophy has formed OCF's programs and service-delivery style for more than 25 years. What began with a staff of 3 and a \$150,000 budget, has grown to a team of 50, which includes 40 full-time service members, and a \$1.5 million budget.

OCF's popular programs include Green San José, Trees for All, Tree Amigos, and the newer LawnBusters program and innovative Community Nursery and Training Center. These efforts reflect a nonprofit that is anything but mainstream and ordinary works.

---

**IN MEMORIAM:** Our deepest sympathy to the families and loved ones of Gene Clough, Marlene Gertsch, Marjorie Honey, Rita Price, Lorraine Revallier, James Rogers, and Robert Sorensen.

*They will truly be missed.*

---

### A VERY WARM WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS!

**F**ollowing are the names of new members – Lydia Abrenilla, Victoria Beal, Ritha Canales-Rossi, Siva Darbhamulla, Christina Davis, Kristen Estelle, Odalys Garcia, Mario Guerra, Susan Hartman, Hossein Jafari, Stanley Lee, Katherine Linnemann, Nancy Mangano, Susan Schneider, Barbara Sigler, Leslie Smith, Hieu Tran, Charles Weidner, Patty Weidner, Diane Wilson, and William Wilson.

*Welcome Everyone!*

## SANTA CLARA COUNTY INFORMATION DESK

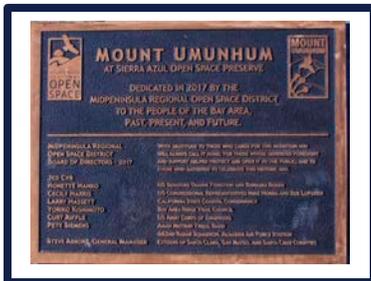
**T**hank **you** to the following members who staffed the Information Desk in January: Linda Baum, Mary Chaboya, Michell Cockerille, Gloria Courtney, Sara De Leon, Sue Farr, Judy Frey, Lydia Gonzalez, Bob Hagele, Tom Heim, Vi Hill, Connie Jimenez, Sherrill Martinez, Kathy Miller, Alan Miramon, Mary Mitchell, Gerri Nedley, Thu Nguyen, John Avery Palmer, Jean Platner, James Reilly, Pam Saunders, Joan Wahl, Carolyn Walsh, and Cathy Weisbrich.

Our apology to our volunteer, Alan Miramon, for omitting his name from our last issue. Mr. Miramon, thank you very much for volunteering!

---

### THE HISTORY CORNER

**Marianne Damon, Historian, RPEA Chapter 031**  
**A TRIP to the TOP of the MOUNTAIN!**



**A**fter a lifetime of wondering and waiting, I am finally able to say that I've been to the very top of Mt. Umunhum! Up so high, I felt serene

and peaceful. The gentle wind felt cleansing. The view of our valley, and the entire bay area, was amazing. Mary Mitchell and I took the trip together, so she can provide the photos and I can detail our adventure. We left my house in the Almaden area at 9:30 am under a clear, blue sky. Once onto Hicks Road the twists and turns and elevation gains began. Twenty minutes of driving brought us to the turn onto Umunhum Road. Another twenty minutes on the newly paved road took us past the parking lot for hikers, and on up to the large parking lot at the almost-top. Park there if you are able to negotiate multiple flights of stairs. If not, you can drive all the way to the top and get dropped off at the round-about, or, if you have a handicapped parking permit, you can park in one of the three spots. Mary and I parked in the lot, which also has a helipad and bathrooms (a permanent building with drop-toilets and hand sanitizer, no running water). We started our climb up the stairs. The steps have railings and there are multiple rest-

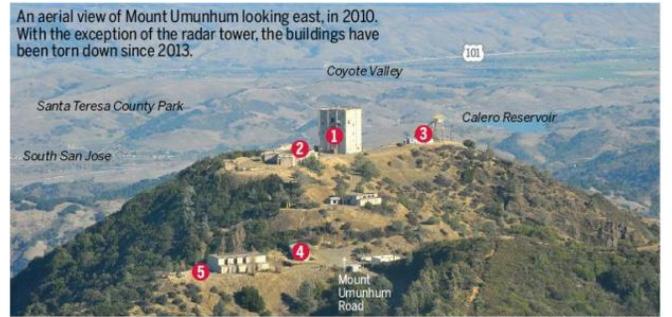
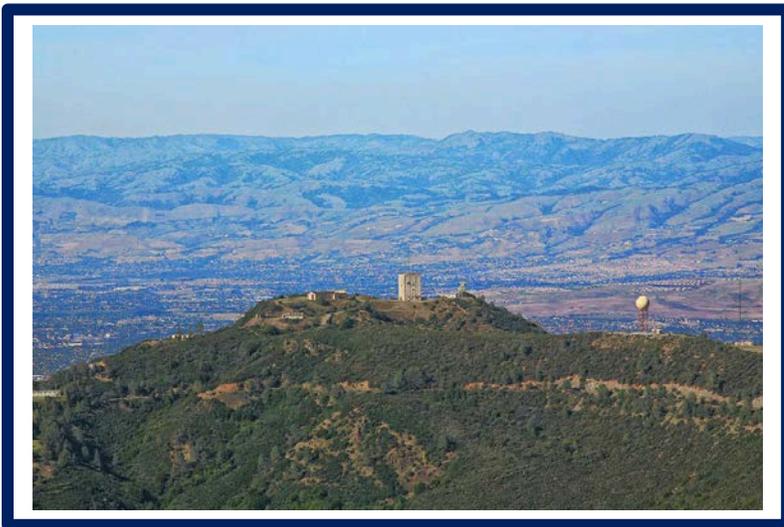
stops with a view (well, everywhere has a view!) and a bench or two. At the beginning, all of the stairs look a bit daunting, but once underway we just took our time and stopped at each landing. Up, up, up, to 3,489 feet of 360-degree views!

At the top there are wonderful interpretive signs as you walk around. At the dedication plaque (dedicated to us, the public!) we could see Santa Cruz and a very hazy Pacific Ocean. Pivoting just a bit I could spot Stanford, then San Francisco appearing to float in the mist, then the Golden Gate bridge...continuing to pivot, Mount Tamalpais, Mount Diablo...continuing to pivot, Mount Hamilton and Lick Observatory! Moffett Field with Hanger One is easy to spot, as is the San Jose airport. Walking on, we came to the Ceremonial Circle, created with input from the two local Ohlone tribal groups who now can return to this sacred space after an absence of nearly two hundred years. Umunhum means "resting place of the hummingbird" in Ohlone (the Anna's hummingbird is a year-round resident up here!). Moving on, the Cantilever Deck provides shelter, benches, and more interpretive signage. Here, you can read about the geologic history, the flora and fauna, the indigenous peoples' history and stories, the era of miners and settlers, the period of time between 1957 and 1980 when the Air Force operated a radar dish base, and since then, the efforts of The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District to acquire, protect and preserve this area.

During our visit the radar tower building and the hiking trail leading back down to the parking lot were temporarily fenced off, so we couldn't go right up to the building. I had heard that the trail was in need of some repairs. It was impressive to be right there, at the eight-story concrete tower that I've seen from a distance almost my whole life. The building used to have the large radar array at the top, and I remember when it was rotating our televisions and radios would "fritz" with each turn of the dish. It was a constant reminder of the Cold War, along with those air raid drills I vividly remember in elementary school (my group for evacuating and walking home—quickly, but no running—was Green Circle; I still remember my designated hand-holding partner).

We went on a Monday morning and there were just a handful of visitors and hikers and just a few bicyclists. That made driving up and back less stressful. In fact, I enjoyed going slow (you have

Continued to Page 3



to!) with no one in front or behind me. I brought my binoculars and shared the views with other visitors who were very appreciative. We brought water (there are no faucets or drinking fountains) and snacks. When it was time to leave the summit, we decided to walk on the road down to the parking lot, rather than take the stairs. This was doable because there were so few cars coming up that stretch; on busy days it probably wouldn't be a good idea. We passed two people walking up the road from the parking lot, which saved them the stairs. On the way down, I kept my car in lowest gear and had a slow, leisurely descent without having to use my brakes very much.

I could go on and on about more history of each of these eras of the mountain, but instead I'll give you the link to the official website. It is definitely worth taking a look, especially if you plan to visit. There is even an audio tour app to download before you go, Stories of Mount Umunhum. The audio tour is linked to the brochure that you pick up at the parking lot or up at the top. In summary, my good advice is to wait for a sunny, clear morning, find a driver who doesn't mind narrow, windy, steep driving conditions, take water, snacks, camera and binoculars, leave your animals at home (no dogs allowed in open space preserves), and use low gear when descending so you don't burn your brakes! The trip is well worth it, and I'm so proud that we have this wonderful place in the public domain. And did I mention? There are no parking or entry fees.

<https://www.openspace.org/mount-umunhum-sierra-azul>



## The RPEA Building Fund

*(For Your Information)*

Our Chapter contributes money to the RPEA Building Fund in memory of each member who has died. Last year we sent \$885 which was gratefully acknowledged by headquarters. The Building Fund was established to help cover maintenance expenses for repairs and renovations. Recent activity has included sidewalk repair, an automatic door opener, a three-ton heat pump, duct cleaning, sewer pipe repair, and gutter replacement. As any homeowner knows, the needs are endless. We have received many thank you cards from families, pleased that we have honored their loved-one. When you see the listing of members who have passed in the newsletter, remember that we, as a Chapter, have honored their memory in a meaningful way.