

UCSB Reception

A number of people asked me to include a copy of my speech in the newsletter; well, as requested, here it is:

Good afternoon.

It seems to me that change often gives us an opportunity to reflect on the past.

When Barbara asked me if I would say something today on behalf of the volunteers, I began remembering my first days of training here at the Reserve.

In late September 2000 we met in Duke's old studio. We were each handed a form asking what we wanted to do at the Reserve. After spending some time talking with my fellow students I wrote down "Does not play well with children!" Training began, and each week we had a talk by someone representing a different field of study relevant to the Reserve.

Well, my plans of not working with children were shot down with the first bus load of students and the docent coordinator saying "there are 60 kids on this bus and you will all be involved taking groups out today." I am not sure if you can imagine my apprehension that day. What made the difference was seeing Mike's enthusiasm as we met the bus and his excitement in sharing the Reserve with those inquiring young people. This excitement must have rubbed off, because since that day my fellow docents and I have introduced over 10,000 visitors to the Reserve.

Richard Louv in his book *Last Child In The Woods* quotes a fourth grader from San Diego: "I like to play indoors better 'cause that's where the electrical outlets are."

Mike and the people who work with him along with the docents have established a program that introduces kids to a world without Play Stations or MP3 players. It gives them a chance to look for insects and animals, to listen to the wind in the trees; to even get their hands dirty planting for the future.

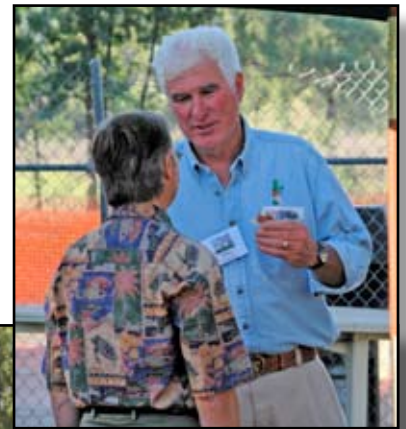
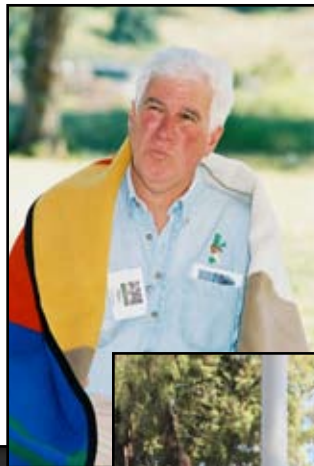
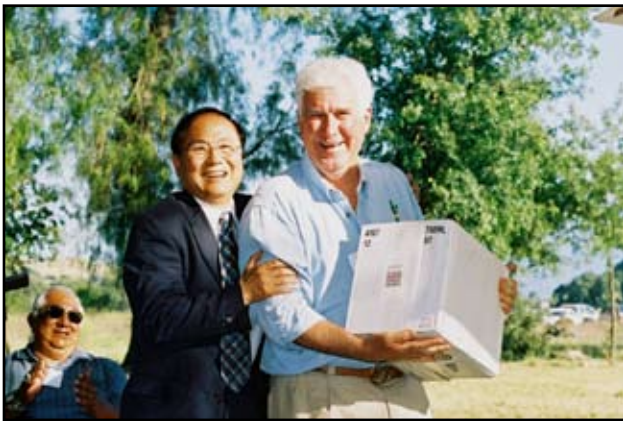
Thomas Berry wrote: "Teaching children about the natural world should be treated as one of the most important events in their lives."

Working with the Docents Mike has set a foundation for nature education that continues to expand with each new year. First the K-12 visits, then the KIN program, public hikes, Chumash summer classes, LA Conservation Corp—the list goes on. Those who have been with him know that hiking with Mike is always an education in plant ecology. For the docents he has opened a door to continuing education and service that I am sure will continue on into the future.

How does one say farewell to an educator, mentor and friend? I like the word "Aloha" because it combines both goodbye and hello. Goodbye for now and the potential of a future meeting.

Aloha Mike, thanks for all the laughs and adventures you have given us. We wish you and your family the best of luck.

Thank you
Andy



The Hiking Program

By Nick Di Croce

With some cool mornings in May, we decided to stretch the Public Hikes Program into the month of June. But the warm weather that set in during the first week of June threw us for a loop and the group was small – but hardy. Susan Brooks, Carolyn Rathbun and Mike Williams took a group around the Blue Schist Trail, and Steve Schulz and Elizabeth Quick took the “wheelies” on a nice stroll through the Bone Canyon area. A good day for all.

Docents can plan on hearing soon about the “Summer Sizzles.” Those are the hikes we will run during the summer and into the fall for our docents – in the early morning – just to keep ourselves in trim and to rehearse all those interpretive points we have been learning. We will probably give the docent guides that Lucy Thomas coordinated a checkout on these hikes. We will also try out some of the lesser-used upper trails so that we can learn them and use more of them during the normal Public Hikes. For those who want to sizzle with us, be prepared.



Where on the Reserve???



Many of you have been on this trail!

Last issue's Where on the Reserve?



This is the parking area below the dam and the trail head for the “Blue Schist Trail”