

Bill and Donna Truesdell

On one of the recent smoky afternoons, Marianne and I headed to Donna and Bill Truesdell's home for our visit. At first we were unsure if we were going the right direction since the familiar landmark of Mt. Diablo was nowhere to be seen. But it was well with the trip because, again, we had such an "entertaining" time. (I think we spend more time laughing with people during the interviews than actually getting work done.)

Bill was born in Minneapolis, Minnesota, but actually only lived there until he was about 5. His father lost his job as an accountant and informed his wife that he was going to California and within 2 weeks he would have a job and a home and would send for the family. His promise came true, he had a job as a salesman and a home, and the family joined him shortly after. (Bill's ancestral family actually owned 6 acres of land on Boston Hill.)

Eventually Bill graduated from high school and entered Fresno State where he majored in Business with an easy minor – Aerospace Engineering! He was in ROTC and actually was hoping to become a fighter pilot but was unable to do that.

Donna is another native Californian – in fact she is 3rd generation. Her grandmother actually came by wagon train across Canada and then took a train down to San Francisco in 1898. Her father was the Administrator of the Tulare County Hospital. Donna was born in Placerville where her father managed a gold mine! She eventually worked her way to Fresno State where she majored in Education. And guess who she met there?!? Later she also received a Masters at UCLA in Library Science.

Bill and Donna married in 1966 in Tulare County – and so if you are counting, it will be 42 years for the couple in August. They have 2 daughters and 3 red-headed, rosy-cheeked grandchildren. (The red-hair supposedly came from Bill.)

Bill worked for Pacific Telephone which became AT&T. He was transferred to New Jersey and then transferred back to San Francisco in 1982 and eventually retired from the phone company. He now does personnel management consulting through Management Advantage. He has actually written 5 books on various personnel topics.

When Donna wasn't staying at home with the kids she was the Director of the bookmobile for both Fresno and Santa Clara Counties. (Marianne commented that when she was a kid she loved when the bookmobile would come to the neighborhood – it gave such an opportunity for people who could not get to the library.) She is still working – at Rite Aid – which sometimes means she has to miss some of our tours.

They both enjoy collecting antiques – clocks, tins, pinball machines, sheet music, barbershop chairs and a variety of other things. Marianne especially loved the tins – it's a good thing she didn't have a big purse with her or some of them might be missing from Donna's collection.

Bill had always been interested in Model A's and his father had actually been the President of the Santa Clara club. In 1999 Donna and Bill purchased a 1929 sports coupe. They called her Sweet Pea. When we bought her we named her Sadie. She eventually ended up with Rosemary and Bob Estrella and is now in Spain. (In 1975 Bill's father bought a 1931 wide bed pickup which Bill and Donna now have, along with their sedan.)

In 2000 they joined the Diablo A's. Bill found us on the internet and called Steve Mick and the rest is history. Since joining our club Bill has been Secretary, President and Tour Coordinator. He is currently also director, producer, videographer, editor and copier of all our technical seminar videotapes and dvd's that have provided an extra income for the club. Donna was co-refreshment coordinator.

One of the most exciting experiences Donna had was when they took their first trip to Europe. She loved taking the canal boats along the rivers. But Bill's most exciting experience was flying in a P106 over Yosemite's Half Dome at Mach 1. (In fact he loved flying so much that he would hitch a ride with anyone he could.)

Donna would love to go to Australia to visit friends, while Bill says he's looking forward to driving to the Nationals in Vancouver in 2010.

Bill and Donna shared a lot of stories with us but, as usual, we don't have enough room for many of them, but one we have to share. One thing that may surprise you about Donna – mild mannered, easy-going Donna – is you don't want to mess with her. In 1976 they got their first, brand-new car – a beautiful Ford station wagon. One morning, while watching out the window, she saw the garbage truck pass by their house without stopping. She jumped into the new car, sped down the street and cut the truck off and made the driver return to pick up her garbage. When she told Bill about the incident he had visions of the new car being crushed by a garbage truck.

As we were leaving that's when the "entertainment" actually started. Their sheltie insisted on playing fetch with me. She was very persistent and it's hard to resist that perky little look. And then as we got to the living room Bill entertained us by playing *Rhapsody in Blue* on the piano. It's actually a 1927 computerized, reproducing piano and it was extremely fascinating to watch. Bill said he always wanted to learn to play the piano but at least this gives him the opportunity to listen to piano music whenever he wants. So we left their house with *Rhapsody in Blue* playing in the background.

