A few weeks ago, on the day of the Women’s March, in the middle of the (first) government shutdown, another event drew my eye from the larger headlines. Sadly, Naomi Parker-Fraley had died. She was 96. She was also an icon.

Ms. Parker-Fraley was one of the millions of American women who labored in shipyards and factories during World War II. In fact, she was the inspiration behind the seminal “Rosie the Riveter” poster, though she routinely downplayed the image that still stirs souls to this day. “I was just doing my part,” she’d say.

Last fall, as part of the SCA board of directors’ meeting in the San Francisco Bay area, we visited the Rosie the Riveter/World War II Home Front National Historical Park in nearby Richmond. We met with SCA interpretive interns at the converted shipbuilding facility, and spoke with two volunteer “Rosies”—Marian Sousa and Marian Wynn—who had worked on-site as a welder and draftswoman, respectively, in the early 1940s. The Rosies’ stories of catching an eyeful of hot slag and crafting blueprints for troop transports were, well, riveting, though they, too, insisted they were merely fulfilling their civic responsibilities.

I thought of these women as I read Naomi Parker-Fraley’s obituary, and my admiration for their collective, humble valor grew. I also thought of how SCA instills such a similar ethic of service, focus on the greater good, and practice of citizenship in the young women and men in our conservation programs. I thought of how SCA empowers them as leaders, and how they create a brighter tomorrow—not for themselves but for others.

I saw this in the actions of the 500 SCA volunteers who turned out on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day at Anacostia Park in Washington, DC, and I’m sure I’ll see it again at SCA’s upcoming Earth Day service projects and throughout the summer season. It’s been the modus operandi of SCA volunteers for 60 years and it’s not about to change now.

We do need change, however, when equality remains more of an ideal than a reality, when those in power feel free to prey on the less powerful, when our natural resources are more actively pitched to the highest bidder than the average American, and when our political system delivers shutdowns instead of solutions.

In fact, as I write to you, our nation is reeling from yet another school shooting. Interestingly, some of the most forceful figures in the aftermath of this tragedy are students advocating for transformational change.

Our society faces many threats today. Let us not be defined by them; rather, let us be defined by our response to them. Together, let us alter our course, protect and provide equitable access to our natural spaces, and cultivate a new generation of diverse leaders with deep conservation values and a commitment to service, justice, and community.

The time for positive change is again upon us. Please generously renew your support for SCA and let us move forward as one.

In a phrase: we can do it!
SCA Crew Makes Merrell Magic

Last summer, when outdoor retailer Merrell and Backpacker magazine were looking to showcase die-hard trail enthusiasts, their first choice was SCA. To salute trail volunteers everywhere, Merrell and Backpacker threw a surprise pizza and ice cream party for an SCA crew on Mount Rainier—a moment captured on camera to be featured in a global marketing campaign. As The GreenWay went to press, “Merrell Magic” was just hitting the internet with videos, profiles, and more.

“Connecting with the Student Conservation Association volunteers was a highlight,” Sue Harvey-Brown, Merrell’s director of consumer experience marketing, told the trade publication SNEWS. “Each of their backgrounds and ‘whys’ for volunteering were so different…but [they] still made the selfless choice to dedicate two weeks of their vacation to work on trails.”

SEE CAMPAIGN HIGHLIGHTS AND A BEHIND-THE-SCENES ACCOUNT AT THESCA.ORG/MAGIC.

“There Is No Off-Season” in Service

As depicted in many of the stories and photos in this edition of The GreenWay, SCA conservation volunteers are active throughout the entire year.

- In Houston, SCA is collaborating with Houston Parks and Recreation and Galveston Bay Estuary Program to aid city greenscapes in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey. Volunteers have planted native vegetation to deter erosion; reconstructed washed-out trails, bridges and boardwalks; removed sand and debris; and more. In the words of one local SCA member: “There is no off-season when it comes to being here for my community.” The 12-week program concludes March 31.

- On Martin Luther King Jr. Day, SCA mobilized 800 volunteers despite often bone-chilling cold. Five hundred turned out for our annual clean-up at Anacostia Park in Washington, DC. Another 250 individuals ranging from New York City Deputy Parks Commissioner Liam Kavanagh to the reigning Miss Manhattan, Lena Coco Hunter, removed invasives from Harlem’s St. Nicholas Park. And in Seattle, SCA’s Conservation Leadership Corps rallied community volunteers at Maple Wood Playfield.

- In February, SCA teamed up with employees of MUFG Union Bank to conduct community service projects in Atlanta, Chicago, and Tampa on the heels of similar joint efforts in Los Angeles, New York City, Oakland, Phoenix, and Seattle. Bank staff mentored SCA volunteers in each locale and the MUFG Union Bank Foundation donated $150,000 to support SCA’s “green” career training programs for young professionals.

- Looking ahead to April, SCA will host 60 Earth Day events—including a benefit concert—in a final, nationwide salute to our 60th anniversary.

See our events calendar and register to join us at one of these local projects at THESCA.ORG/CONNECT.
FREYA BAIRDSEN EMBRACED THE OUTDOORS EARLY ON. Growing up, her ecologist mom enthusiastically noted the natural phenomena around them. When it came to TV, Freya’s default was David Attenborough documentaries. But it was the day she job-shadowed a controlled burn specialist that really ignited her passions. “I asked her: ‘how can I be you?’” Freya recalls. “And she says, ‘Well, there’s this thing called SCA…’”

For the past two summers, Freya has repaired trails in New Jersey State Parks and the Great Smoky Mountains. Currently, the Pittsburgh high school senior is serving in her second straight Conservation Leadership Corps (CLC). An extension of the summer programs SCA offers in a dozen cities nationwide, the CLC is a mix of community conservation projects, outdoor field trips, and environmental education, held one weekend per month from November through May.

“I was excited to find out SCA had opportunities during the school year,” Freya says. “Aiding local parks helps you feel more connected to where you live. Taking care of those places is some of the most important work there is.”

If you thought SCA crews spent winters hibernating, this story is for you. And if you’ve wondered what drives some teens to never-stop-serving, their stories are for you, too.

“Our ocean ecosystems are threatened, the ice caps are melting. But we can’t give up trying to fix things. SCA is a step in that direction. A little effort goes a long way.”

That big-picture perspective is shared by Canaan Aklog of Washington, DC, who as a returning CLC member has earned the “Old Faithful” status granted to program veterans. He says maintaining trails at Rock Creek Park each month also allows him to maintain his commitment to his community.

“I don’t see the human race or the earth prospering if everyone is in it for themselves,” Canaan declares. “We’re interdependent on each other and we need to band together. SCA is a perfect example of impacting others’ well-being.”

Back in Pittsburgh, Freya Bairdsen feels that same urgency. “There’s a lot of work to be done in the next couple of decades,” she states. “I feel like it’s my duty to be there and pull my weight. If some think otherwise, I’ll pull their weight, too. I want to do everything possible to make things as good as they can be.”

Clearly, these teens’ resolve is higher than tree line. Yet as climate change and other ecological issues intensify, does local trail work really affect our earthly environment? Absolutely, contends Tim Nguyen, a Seattle high school sophomore who served last summer on Mount Rainier and returned to SCA this winter for a tour with the CLC.

“If we don’t maintain or build trails, people might swarm these parks and leave them in ruin,” Tim says. “To me, though, stewardship means being something of a mentor to people. And with global warming, making trails can inspire others to be an active conservationist and keep the world clean.”

“SCA makes your opinion matter. My voice has more power now.”
VINCENT HUYNH

“WE CAN’T GIVE UP”

When The Green Way asked Oakland CLC member Angela Ma if we could schedule a phone interview for this article, she texted back right away. “Sure,” Angela replied. “But I’m in practice till 5.6 on Friday.”

Classes. Sports. Friends. Jobs. College applications. Despite hectic schedules, SCA members give nonparticipation the cold shoulder even in the dead of winter. Why? They are just as concerned about our planet as you are.

“We should be doing a lot more to address and prevent further damage to the environment,” Angela states.
Please support the young men and women of SCA's Conservation Leadership Corps. 
GIVE NOW AT  THESCA.ORG/TGW
When Bruce Osterling learned he could spend his summer at Olympic National Park as an SCA volunteer, the 15-year old New Jersey boy immediately lobbied his dad to let him go. But this was back in 1958. SCA was a brand new organization and cross-country travel was far from routine, so Will Osterling told his son he’d look into it.

On a business trip to Manhattan, the senior Osterling arranged to visit SCA’s offices. One can only imagine his thoughts upon discovering that SCA was headquartered in the bedroom of then-24-year old Liz Cushman (Putnam), who’d started SCA just a year before and was still living in her parents’ apartment. But Will Osterling was impressed by Liz’s acumen and vision, and Bruce was soon on his way west. His younger brother, John, would also take the same SCA route to Olympic.

Years later, Bruce and his wife Lee encouraged their two daughters to volunteer with SCA. Wendy, their oldest, served at Vermont’s Merck Forest in 1989 and on Mount Adams in the North Cascades in 1990. Cynthia went to Denali in 1992. Their experiences were as formative as those of their father and uncle.

All this leads us to last December, when the Osterling daughters made a generous gift to SCA to commemorate their father’s 75th birthday, his 1958 Olympic crew, and all the organization has done to shape their family. Still, they wondered if they couldn’t do one more thing for their dad. Would it be possible, they politely inquired, for Liz Putnam to telephone Bruce on his birthday?

Talk about a gimme! Despite the intervening years, Liz well remembered the teenaged Bruce and the two breathlessly shared memories and updates over the phone. “What a fabulous call—and what a dear human being!” Liz exclaimed afterward.

As treasurer of a Boston area land trust and board member with Trout Unlimited, Bruce Osterling recently discovered a previously undetected population of brook trout in local streams. His brother and fellow Olympic alumnus, John, worked for SCA for years when we were headquartered on Vashon Island, where he lives to this day. Wendy can’t wait for her two young children, Molly and JR, to continue the Osterling’s SCA tradition. And Cynthia has recommitted her energy to SCA with an eye toward giving the organization as much as it has given this extraordinary SCA legacy family.
Pursuits such as these helped participating Scouts excel in the Council’s first-ever Get Outdoors Challenge, a summer program Ariel developed herself. “There were 140 activities to choose from,” she says. “Visit a national park, learn about a watershed, watch a sunset. There are a variety of difficulty levels as we have girls from kindergarten through Grade 12.”

More than 1,200 Scouts participated, earning points toward a special girl-designed badge. Ariel’s program spawned a follow-up Winter Challenge and, through the SCA interns’ connections with other Girl Scout councils, inspired other challenges around the country. “Anything that gets girls outdoors and appreciating nature is step in the right direction,” Ariel says.

The SCA-Girl Scouts collaboration was funded by a grant from the Pittsburgh-based Richard King Mellon Foundation. For most of its 60 years, SCA has partnered with federal agencies such as the National Park Service, but increasingly SCA is working with nongovernmental organizations to innovatively expand its reach and engage more youth in the outdoors.

As for Ariel, her internship with the Girl Scouts of Western Pennsylvania came to an end—but her efforts have not. The Council just hired her to the new position of outdoor program specialist. “We need to get more girls involved in the outdoors and the environment we all depend on,” Ariel states. “The only way to fix our planetary problems is to convince the next generation to be better stewards.”

THERE’S NO “OFF-SEASON” for Conservation Service

SCA creates hands-on experiences that transform lives and conserve lands.

SCA volunteers are active throughout the year and your annual fund support helps make this possible!

Now is a great time to renew your support for SCA and make your 2018 gift. Your commitment will empower more teens and young adults to strengthen urban parks, protect fragile habitat, and advance the youth conservation movement.

Please use the attached envelope or give securely online at THESCA.ORG/TGW.
The Student Conservation Association (SCA) is America’s largest and most effective youth conservation service organization. SCA conserves lands and transforms lives by empowering young people of all backgrounds to plan, act, and lead, while they protect and restore our natural and cultural resources. Founded in 1957, SCA’s mission is to build the next generation of conservation leaders.

BOARD CHAIR: Margie Brown
PRESIDENT/CEO: Jaime Matyas
EDITOR: Kevin Hamilton
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AS AN SCA INTERN WORKING WITH THE GIRL SCOUTS OF WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA, one of the first projects Ariel Barasch tackled was updating the Scouts’ outdoor skills guide. “I revised sections on how to take girls camping, how to cook over a fire, how to use a pocketknife,” she says. “The previous guide was so old it referred to coolers as ‘ice boxes.’”

Research indicates girls in particular benefit immensely from exposure to the outdoors and that nature-based experiences directly impact leadership potential. At the same time, surveys show that up to 60% of girls do not regularly spend time outside in Girl Scouts. That led Girl Scouts of the USA to join with SCA on a pilot program to get Scouts more active in the great outdoors.

In 2016, SCA conducted a nationwide recruiting campaign for young women with special outdoor skills and knowledge before embedding interns in Girl Scout councils in Alaska, Arizona, Michigan, and New York, in addition to western PA. “I worked on a lot of new programs,” Ariel states, “and while it was fun to create curriculum, it was much more fun to be out with the girls.”

Among other activities, she took her Scouts canoeing and white water rafting, and while SCA programs are highly experiential, Ariel cautions it wasn’t all adventure and adrenaline. “Every program I designed, I always ‘smooshed’ an environmental education opportunity in with the fun stuff,” she notes. “We might discuss water conservation while paddling, or speak with a park ranger afterward.”

(continued on page 7)