



Larry Castorena smiles as he collects garbage from the side of Mount Baldy Road on Thursday in Claremont. The Claremont Senior Bicycle Group volunteered to pick up trash along the roadway from Evey Canyon to Shinn Road as part of their weekly Thursday morning ride

COURIER photos/Steven Felschundneff



Claremont Senior Bicycle Group members Tom Shelley, left, and Randy Miller ride up Mount Baldy Road on Thursday during one of the group's weekly rides. Beginning about a month ago the Thursday morning group stops on the way to Shinn Road to collect garbage.

MT. BALDY CLEAN UP
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and feel good," Ms. Sulkin said. "I changed my whole outlook."
Equipped with gloves and garbage bags, Ms. Sulkin set to work. The result made her swell with pride.
"Every time I drove past, it made me happy to see my clean turnout. I was proud to be helping to improve the view for visitors and residents," Ms. Sulkin wrote in a recent newsletter. "It occurred to me that I had adopted the turnout...a light bulb turned on in my head."

Ms. Sulkin decided to spearhead a program for others who would like to get involved in similar cleanups. Despite working full-time and other responsibilities, she was up for the challenge.

"I am an organizer. It's what I love to do," Ms. Sulkin said, adding, "I wanted a way to give back to the mountain."

Ms. Sulkin wanted to provide that opportunity for others as well. Using Google Maps, Ms. Sulkin printed aerial pictures of Mount Baldy Road. The result was a map 15 feet in length, which she brought with her to the Mt. Baldy Town Hall meeting. The community latched on.

"It's similar to adopt-a-highway I suppose, but closer to home," said Baldy resident David Peel, who adopted one of the turnouts along with his wife. "These mountains are beautiful, but even more beautiful if we keep them litter-free."

Word of the program soon spread to visitors beyond the mountain village. At the Bighorn Music Festival, where Ms. Sulkin was invited to set up an information booth, she was approached

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It provides a sense of ownership...and ownership motivates people.
Tracy Sulkin
Mt. Baldy resident and Adopt-A-Turnout volunteer
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by Tom Shelley, coordinator for the Claremont Senior Bike Group. Mr. Shelley shared his interest in getting involved because so many of the turnouts are along the bike group's weekly route.

"Within 5 minutes, it was cleaned out," Mr. Shelley said of their first adopted turnout, adding that having an area to clean provided some of the advanced riders with something productive to do as they waited for other members to catch up. "It was really easy and took no time at all."

Of the 37 turnouts currently adopted, about a dozen are now under the guardianship of the Claremont Senior Bike Group, whose membership says that within 3 weeks of signing onto the program they already see a huge difference.

"It's contagious," Mr. Shelley said. "If you clean, others seeing you clean are encouraged to do the same."

Though the concept of a Mt. Baldy



Claremont Senior Bicycle Group member Tom Shelley cleans up a broken bottle during the group's weekly Thursday ride. The CSBG members have agreed to help remove trash from the turnouts on Mount Baldy Road every week.

cleanup wasn't entirely new to the community, it was hard to find a set time to get a group together for an organized volunteer effort, according to Ms. Sulkin. With Adopt-A-Turnout, participants can help whenever their schedule allows.

With the help of the Claremont bikers and others, Ms. Sulkin is pleased to see the volunteerism taking off. In less than 6 months since the program's implementation, about a third of the Baldy turnouts have been adopted by residents and visitors alike. Regardless of participation in the program, she hopes it gives Baldy residents and visitors a new

outlook on maintaining the regional open space.

"I can see a difference already," Ms. Sulkin said, though she admits the program still has a long way to go, and that many more turnouts still need to be adopted. "I am pleased that it is gaining momentum and that so many are embracing the idea."

To learn more about Adopt-A-Turnout or to get involved, email Ms. Sulkin at baldyhut@verizon.net.

—Beth Hartnett
news@claremont-courier.com