



Dedicated to the preservation, education and history of our incredible national treasure - Midway Atoll

VOLUNTEER STINT IS “FOR THE DUCKS” . . .

By Jim Waddington

My wife, Cindy, and I just completed six fabulous weeks of volunteer work at Midway. It was our fourth time to Midway but our first during the spring. The previous three times we were assisting with the nesting albatross census which always occurs during the Christmas holidays. This time we were treated to warmer weather, longer days, and unparalleled displays of wildlife: the antics of albatross chicks as they attempted flight, the courting of red tailed tropic birds, and the frolicking of monk seal pups to name a few.

But our primary mission as volunteers was to create and maintain habitat for Midway’s newest residents: the endangered Laysan Ducks. Last year 20 ducks were brought from Laysan to their new home on Midway. This year biologists are hoping to bring even more to the atoll. The ducks are secretive. They are active at night and hide out in tall grasses and sedges during the day.

Most mornings were spent in the greenhouse planting and caring for naupaka, morning glory, and native grass cuttings. In general these cuttings had mature enough roots for outplanting in 3-6 weeks. In the afternoon we would take 150-200 pots with mature roots from the greenhouse to be outplanted in the designated duck seep areas on both Sand and Eastern Islands. Fortunately we would plant 3 pots in each hole but that was still a lot of digging!

At least once per week we would weed the duck seep areas to rid them of the ever-present *Verbesina* (Golden Crown Beard). Interestingly, the ducks at this time don’t seem to appreciate our efforts. When they’re tracked, they are usually found nesting or foraging away from the seeps in areas thick with *Verbesina*!!



Darlene Moegerle presenting membership cards to Jim and Cindy Waddington

One diversion during our stay was the arrival of the Pacific Princess cruise ship. Our normal volunteer duties were put on hold and we helped set up and operate the FOMA gift shop. Darlene Moegerle, President of FOMA, was on hand to oversee operations. As new FOMA members, we were delighted when she presented our membership cards to us on Midway!

As always, we were sorry to leave the atoll. Its natural beauty, family atmosphere, and lack of traffic really provide a tonic to us city dwellers. We hope to return again soon!

HOFFMANN’S TO RETIRE

George and Dorothy Hoffmann will be leaving our board at the end of August. They have been on our board from the beginning and have served faithfully during that time. George served as FOMA President for several years and Dorothy served as the Treasurer since the group’s inception.

On behalf of the entire planet, we thank you for your dedication and service to the Island of Midway Atoll.



Dorothy and George in Ridgefield WA attending a Board meeting.

AHH, TO VISIT MIDWAY AGAIN. . .

by Darlene Moegerle

For 6 glorious days recently, I was fortunate to visit Midway. The purpose of the trip was to represent FOMA during the day-long visit of the cruise ship, Pacific Princess. But it was much more than that and I wish each one of you could have been with me.

First of all, I was so impressed by the way our favorite islands look. The staff and volunteers have done a marvelous job maintaining the buildings and grounds. Large areas of the invasive *Verbesina* have been eradicated. Four-foot wide plastic material has been laid next to some buildings with peeling lead-based paint. This discourages the Albatross from nesting there and thus, the chicks don't ingest the poisonous paint chips. The bowling alley is fully operational and we spent an enjoyable evening there. Food served in the Clipper House was simply superb and yes...the soft serve ice cream machine is located there and working very well, indeed!

Obviously, I was not the only person on the plane to Midway. Six or seven FWS personnel were aboard to assist with the setting up of the visitors' stations and to lead tours of the island when the cruise ship guests arrived. Interestingly, two representatives of the L. A. Times were with us during the visit. They were there to photograph and document the amazing amount of debris that is washed up on the beaches. They are developing a series of articles dealing with the massive amount of ocean debris that is threatening the maritime environment. Their articles should be published sometime around January of 2006. I hope some of our FOMA members in the Los Angeles will alert us when they appear in the newspaper.

One day I was invited to see the new neighborhood of the Laysan ducks. It is located on the west side of Sand Island and is a large area with a pond in the middle. It has been cleared of *Verbesina* and other nonnative vegetation. Native grasses, which were started in the greenhouse, have been transplanted to give cover for the ducks. It is amazing to me that fresh water is found just a few feet below the surface of this mid-ocean island. Not only do the ducks love the pond but also the water is convenient

for the constant watering of the newly transplanted grasses.

In the past during cruise ship visits, the FOMA Gift Shop was located in "the Mall". This became difficult to manage since the "stop and shop" portion was in the middle of the island tour and not everyone was ready to leave the store when their allotted time was up. To alleviate this difficulty, we decided to move the shopping experience to the end of the tour and turned the old boathouse out near the dock, into the

Laniawe and Greg Schubert. The Laniawes and Greg are long-term Midway volunteers, also.

On Memorial Day we all gathered at the Midway Memorial for a meaningful ceremony remembering the dead of all wars. Several veterans were present and offered short readings. At the conclusion, 5 leis were laid on the granite memorial. One was of purple orchids and provided by the Fish and Wildlife Service. Three were made by college volunteers of the beautiful bush lilies that were blooming at the time. The fifth one was made of red Hibiscus flowers. I was invited to help with making this



Veterans present for Memorial Day observance. Chugach employees and Keith Maxfield, husband of FWS representative Barbara Maxfield.

new gift shop. Within a few hours, six or seven volunteers transformed this very plain space into a charming and inviting shop with our merchandise attractively displayed. Our shop and merchandise were well received by the visitors and we sold a record amount of merchandise, even selling out of several items. It was lots of fun interacting with the cruise ship guests and we got some great ideas for new items to add to our "store". Keep watching the newsletter for these as we add them to our inventory.

Shortly before leaving for Midway, I received a new membership request from veteran Midway volunteers, Jim and Cindy Waddington. I hand carried their membership cards and personally presented them to the Waddingtons in front of the Clipper House. While on Midway, FOMA got an additional three new members, Charles and Lee

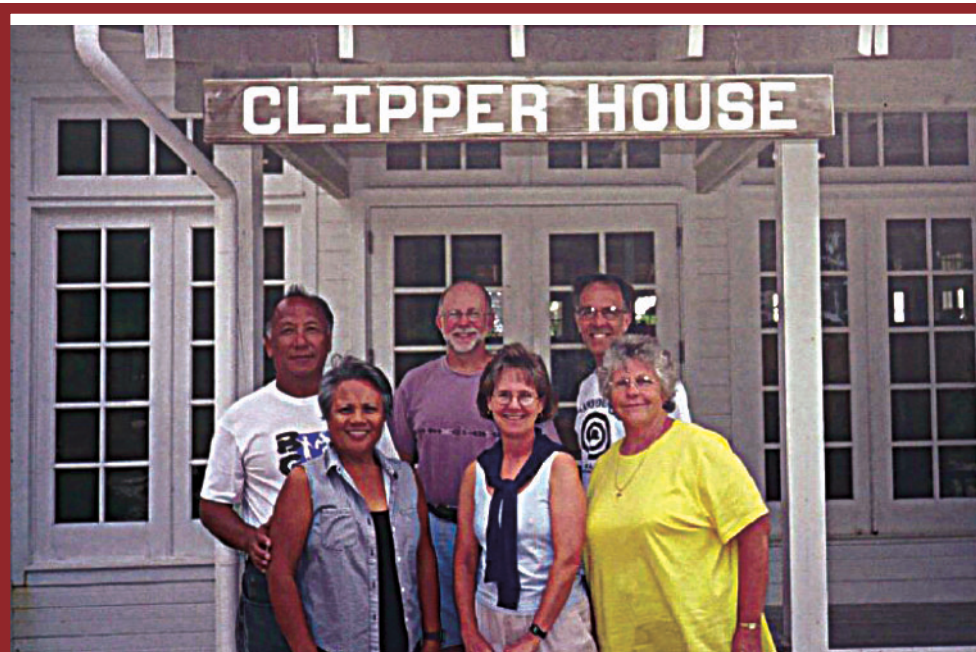
one. It was a learning experience as well as an honor to be involved in the creation. The ceremony ended with the playing of "Taps". Midway is certainly an appropriate place to observe Memorial Day.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) ship, *Hi'ialakai*, was visiting Midway while I was there. The purpose of their trip was to map the sea floor along the Hawaiian Archipelago. This is a project that has been underway for several years. In that time, a team of maritime archaeologists has discovered many ship and plane wreck sites in and around Midway. An interesting site they found was that of the USS *Saginaw* wreck, which was previously unknown. The side-wheel steamer *Saginaw* was lost in 1870 after leaving Midway and heading in to Kure to check for castaways.

Continued on back page.



Volunteers decorate former boathouse into the new FOMA store.



Left to right: New Members, Charles and Ligaya Laniawe, Greg Schubert, Cindy and Jim Waddington and President Darlene Moegerle



Your Dues at Work! Bikes are assembled and ready to ride! Carry-all baskets will be installed when they arrive on island.



Gooney is receiving needed repairs!

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It was fascinating to listen to this and other stories told by the Hi'ialaki crew members.

Currently, the Fish and Wildlife Service is seeking bids for a new company to operate and maintain the atoll as well as develop a visitors program. There is great hope that in the near future Midway will be open again to visitors. We will keep you updated on the progress. This is just a synopsis of the days I spent on Midway. It was certainly a pleasure to represent our Friends group on our refuge! There is no place on earth that has the character of Midway Atoll. It is my hope that we may all soon have the opportunity to meet in that special place.



Darlene Moegerly and Lee Ligaya making Memorial Day hibiscus lei.



Jim and Cindy Waddington (standing at right) happily selling T-shirts to island visitors in new FOMA store!

LOGO APPAREL AND MUGS CONTACT ELLEN TO ORDER!

To Order Merchandise Contact: Ellen Cashman at ellcash@comcast.net
 849 Dale Street, North Andover, MA 01845