

## Interview with Vicki Zeiger

Vicki Zeiger and I worked together at SDG&E for many years. I recently interviewed Vicki for this article.

By Samm McDonald



Vicki began working for SDG&E in 1968 in the El Cajon District Office as a General Clerk B. After about a year, Vicki called Bob Ball, then Call Center Manager to see about a transfer to the Call Center. Very shortly after that call, Vicki began working as a Call Center Representative, where, over the course of time, Vicki took on many assignments including occasional cashier, Traveling Rep, Task Force participation on the project to move from the paper system to a computer supported one and Customer Service Supervisor. In 1976, Vicki moved to Human Resources. She started as an Employment Rep which was followed by assignments in all of the areas of HR until she was named Vice President of Human Resources for SoCalGas and SDG&E after the merger. About a year before her retirement, the utilities separated the Human Resources function and Vicki retired as Vice President-Human Resources for SDG&E.

In 1984 Vicki met Carl (who was a widower at the time with 5 year old twins, Lauren and Philip) and they were married in 1987. Philip was married this summer and lives with his new wife, Kristen, in Aliso Viejo. Lauren works in Silicon Valley and lives in San Francisco.

Before Vicki retired in 2011, she admits she felt anxious about the idea of leaving SDG&E. She says her life had always been very structured and that she was used to working a demanding schedule. She was concerned that she would be bored and/ or feel she had lost her sense of purpose. Three years before

her retirement date, Carl suggested that she do some serious thinking and planning about what she was going to do. While it seemed to Vicki that everyone else was so looking forward to their retirement, she had her misgivings.

Once the “R” date was upon her, Vicki got right to implementing her retirement plan which included a regular Pilates class at 7:00 AM most mornings, which continues today after 5 years. “When I was working and raising our family, I never made time for exercise.” Once the Pilates habit was formed, Vicki took on other physical activities like spinning, running and biking. Vicki hopes to run in her first half marathon in May.

Vicki and Carl traveled quite extensively while they were working and travel continues to be part of their lives. They will be travelling to Detroit for the Motown Car Show; to Machu Picchu in March; and then in April, to Florida.

Vicki and Carl also got the theatre bug. Vicki is the newly elected Board Chair of the Old Globe Theatre and rarely misses a performance there. It’s thrilling to get to know the performers, staff and exceptional Artistic and Business Directors. She has been able to call upon many of the things she learned at our Company to apply as a Board member. “The things I enjoy most are the exceptional shows.” Vicki says. The Old Globe is the 6<sup>th</sup> largest regional theatre in the country and has had numerous shows go to Broadway, including the Steve Martin musical, Bright Star, which will be appearing in NYC in March, 2016. Steve will be launching a new show at The Old Globe later this year called Meteor Shower. The Old Globe has introduced a new program to take plays out into the community, including military bases, Senior Citizen Centers and homeless shelters, so that people who don’t have the opportunity to buy tickets to see a play can experience one. “I realize better now that arts and culture is important to a robust, thriving city.” Vicki said.

She also talked about the exposure we received as employees of giving back to our community and to those in need. Vicki and Carl, along with a handful of friends, put money together to launch a program for underserved kids in the Escondido, Vista, San Marcos areas. The after-school program, which is free to participating kids, is called A Step Beyond. Basically, this is a 501(c) (3) after school program to support underserved kids by combining dance, academic tutoring and direction, and family services and counseling. “The idea is to have kids start with us in the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and stay with our program all through high school with the ultimate goal to prepare them each for college or a vocational school.” Again, Vicki thinks her job at SDG&E helped her believe that with additional support, kids could prepare themselves for the best future possible. SDG&E and other companies and individuals have provided on-going financial support and SDG&E also helped support their summer program to build reading and math skills. The teachers and principals say they have seen a remarkable improvement in student performance and attitudes and have been extremely supportive and positive about the program. Enrollment has now reached 60, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> graders since opening 2 years ago, growing to 300 students at any one time. You can read more about this program at [www.ASTEPBEYOND.org](http://www.ASTEPBEYOND.org) or you contact her directly at [vzeiger@cox.net](mailto:vzeiger@cox.net)

Vicki is also a Board member of the Classic Car Club of America which has added fun and travel to their lives. Carl and Vicki both have an interest in Classic Cars and drove their 1941 Cadillac Convertible across country from New York City to San Francisco. Their most recent acquisition is a 1936 Packard 12, Convertible Sedan.



Vicki ended our interview by saying, "Like a lot of people I retired with, I still have a lot to give and want to keep active and have fun and still get things done." Sounds like Vicki is following her plan.