

MCM FIRST PERSON

PHIL LIESKE

Volunteers Needed

Back in the late Spring of 1993, there was a little blurb in the local daily paper asking for volunteers to do some trail clearing in the Prettyboy area of Baltimore County. Not playing as much tennis as I used to and living in the Prettyboy watershed, I called the number listed, got directions to the trailhead, and on one fine Sunday morning met Martin Larrabee. At the time Martin was about 83, and I soon learned that:

- He could still out-hike and outwork most MCM members. For those of you who were fortunate enough to have known Dan McQueen, Martin was the Dan McQueen of his era.
- On my first trail clearing day, there were more new volunteers than repeat volunteers.
- It was easily discerned that Martin's concept of time was different than most; for example, when he said "We'll just clear another hour or so," really meant "Late, but not too late to drive into Hereford and buy a 'frap'," basically an ice cream soda.
- If you survived the first Martin-led trail clearing trip, there was never a need to volunteer again, since Martin personally would call you and enlist your help and even sign up whoever answered the phone.
- If you stuck around long enough, eventually, on some very warm day, Martin would take off his shirt and you would notice the large scar on his chest from open heart surgery. I remember thinking, "I know I'll never have surgery like that because I'm never going to survive today's trail clearing."

Somehow, I did survive and during the times with Martin, I hiked and cleared most of Prettyboy's "Blue Cap" trail (which starts at Beckleysville Rd and runs about 9 miles to the dam) and many trails below the dam, joined the MCOM (in which he had been active during its formative early years), and was assigned – by Martin – to keep the last 3 miles of the "Blue Cap" trail clear. Tip of the hat to Mary and Ted for continuing to keep many sections of the "Blue Cap" open.

There many other "old timers" I met after joining the club, but I'll leave their stories to be told by others.