

THE ECHO

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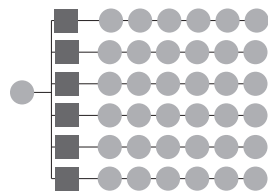
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PAC Board Elections

by Larry Cohen

The PAC Board consists of five members who each serve two-year terms. Of the four board members whose terms are ending this June, **Peggy Hill** and **Jay Shelfer** have decided to run; Jim Olson and Mike Hagerty have decided not to run. Our MVMCC community needs nominees for the PAC Board who are interested in representing the interests of the residents to the City of Novato, planning and overseeing the MVMCC budget, and working collaboratively with the Novato City Council and Novato City Staff.

- **Nominations** will be accepted from **10 AM, Sunday, May 15 until 5 PM, Saturday, May 21**. Please contact **Larry Cohen**, 415-883-7786, or email anila2@earthlink.net to nominate yourself or another resident. (If you nominate another resident, please make sure he or she is willing to be a PAC Board member and to serve a two-year term.) Nominees must be homeowners and/or residents of record at MVMCC.
- **Ballots** will be prepared and **mailed** to residents during the **week of May 23**.
- A **Meet the Candidates** evening will be held on **Tuesday, May 24** at **6:30 PM** in the clubhouse.
- **Completed ballots** will be accepted **May 25 – June 3**.
- Election **results** will be announced on **Saturday, June 4** at the PAC annual meeting.
- If the election is **uncontested**, the “white ballot” procedure will be followed and no formal election will be held.

Mail

Error in the Echo

The “Senior articles you can use” section this month has an article on reverse mortgages and recommends them. Unfortunately, no one offers reverse mortgages on mobile homes because we don’t own the land underneath. I have checked with FHA and with local lenders, and no one offers them. But if you hear of anyone, please tell me because they are helpful to some people.

Best wishes!

Mike Hagerty

Editor — The cover and everything after the monthly calendar are selected by the printer and are not part of the MVMCC content of the Echo. We have no access to those sections.

Silver Foxes

When I moved here a year ago, I started doing the Monday morning aerobics in the Fireside Room. (If I miss it, my whole week is messed up.) We follow a DVD that was recorded 30 years ago in which Richard Simmons leads five “Silver Foxes” (Sal Pacino’s and Dustin Hoffman’s father; Sylvester Stallone’s, Farrah Fawcett’s, and Simmon’s own mother.)

The other day I sent him an email: *Just want you to know: I and about 8–9 other women (in our 60s to 80s) here in our mobile home park have been staying alive and vital with you and your Grey Foxes! We thank you for doing something ages ago that is still rippling along making a difference in the world! Thank you!*

He replied: *Hey Joan! What a BIG SMILE you put on my face today! I am so proud of you and the other ladies who’re staying active working out with me. Please keep up the good work and DON’T STOP! Tell everyone I said HELLO and let them know, I’m cheering for ALL OF YOU ... every day! Is that a deal? Your Cheerleader! Richard*

Joan Nelson

THE
ECHO

APRIL 2016

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MOBILE COUNTRY CLUB

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PAC BOARD

PRESIDENT Jay Shelfer 415-883-6945
VICE PRESIDENT Peggy Hill 415-382-0185
SECRETARY Mike Hagerty mrhagerty@ucdavis.edu
TREASURER Larry Cohen 415-883-7786
AT LARGE Jim Olson 415-382-6292

MVEST STEERING COMMITTEE

LEAD Serena D’Arcy-Fisher 415-506-4235
John Hansen, Bill Davis, John Feld, Alan Gump

HOL BOARD

PRESIDENT Carolyn Corry 415-370-6403
VICE PRESIDENT, ACTIVITIES Cheryl Rebischung 415-883-4090
RECORDING/CORRESPONDING SECRETARY Miriam Dvorin-Spross 415-884-0607
TREASURER Gwendolyn Morgan 415-475-2629

MAR VAL BOARD

PRESIDENT Kathleen Dargie 415-884-2649
1ST VICE PRESIDENT Dan Sebastian 415-382-7738
2ND VICE PRESIDENT Pat Thurston 415-884-0740
SECRETARY Carole Gathman 415-884-2720
TREASURER Sandee Duncan 415-883-3034
DIRECTOR Dee Schneider 415-883-4182
DIRECTOR/BAR MANAGER Fred Dargie 884-2649
DIRECTOR/HOSPITALITY Larry Moore 883-0486
DIRECTOR/RESERVATIONS Carolyn Corry 370-6403

Please email all articles to the editor with the word “ECHO” as the first word of the subject line and a copy of the article in the body of the email to:

ermawheatley@gmail.com

Images and photographs should have a resolution of 300 ppi (pixels per inch).

Everything is due the
8TH of the month or sooner
for the following month’s edition.

PAC *Letter to Residents*

Greetings from the PAC Board,

Our financial situation is in order with regard to the Park's ability to meet the loan service ratio on the bank loan the City negotiated to refinance the original bonds used to purchase the Park from its previous owner.

2016-17 Budget

The Board is in the process of working with Al Frei's group and the City of Novato to develop next year's budget.

The planning elements of the Park, which include the three boards, MVEST, and residents, have submitted their wants and needs to the PAC and Park management. Mindful of the need to conserve and develop our long-term reserves, the PAC has approved and passed on its recommendations to Park management and onward to the City staff. We have concluded that for this year we would like — finally! — to air-condition the ballroom. There are several immediate needs, such as improved walkway lighting at the clubhouse, improved exercise equipment, and portable ventilation in the gym. Mar Val has requested an improvement to the locking system at the bar and several new tables to replace ones that have deteriorated in the ballroom.

IN MEMORIAM

James Grundy
171 Marin Valley Drive
January, 2016

Bill McInroy
8 Scenic Drive
February 17, 2016

TPL Lands Zoning Transfer

By the time you read this, the City will have announced the completion of the zoning transfer between the former TPL lands surrounding the Park and certain areas in the former Hamilton Air Force Base. \$250,000 was appropriated from our reserves to accomplish this, guaranteeing that those former TPL lands will be zoned for recreation and open space use only, putting a wildlife perimeter around most of MVMCC. The City will now be able to commercially develop the lands in Hamilton. We will have a more complete story after the March 15 City Council meeting. The meeting will be available online at <http://novato.org/government/city-council/watch-meetings>.

ADA Landscape Improvements

The City staff has initiated an ADA compliance study for the immediate area around the clubhouse. After the landscape architect and the City engineer submitted a plan at the last PAC meeting, the Board and residents requested that this and future planning for the community should be subject to prior input from the community members and Park management. Having heard our wishes, they returned with a somewhat revised plan and purposefully requested our input. The study now goes back with our expressed opinions for maintaining our identity, meeting the ADA needs, and keeping a pleasing, welcoming, usable environment.

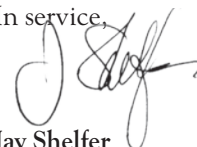
PAC Board Representation

Members of the PAC Board will be meeting with City staff later in March. They will report on matters discussed and resolved. It is noteworthy that the rewriting of the Delegation and Management Agreements between the City and the PAC board by **Mike Holland** and **Jim Olson** (PAC Board 2012) has resulted in a much more available and open communication.

When I write *we*, it is a collective *we*, as the PAC represents the residents. The decisions and actions taken always include suggestions from the residents of MVMCC. Some residents may like to second-guess actions taken by the Board, but let me assure you that decisions are always made with the needs of the community in mind and with input from all interested residents. PAC meetings are held every first Wednesday of every month, and we welcome your participation. It is in these meetings where your opinions are heard. An election for new PAC Board members will be held in May. If you or one of your capable acquaintances wish to run, please contact **Larry Cohen** for instructions (*see pg. 2*).

The next PAC meeting will be on **April 6**. Hope to see you there.

In service,



Jay Shelfer
PAC PRESIDENT
jjshelfer@yahoo.com

HOL Home Owners League Message

Dear Fellow Residents,

It is early March and we are keeping our fingers crossed for the predicted return of El Niño and the hope of rain. Please be diligent about keeping your gutters and drains cleaned and call Matt ASAP if you observe any problems. A sincere “thank you” to Pauline Hawkins – the daffodils are glorious and it is quite the sight to see ... turkeys with tail feathers spread amongst the yellow blooms.

HOL Elections – The Nominating Committee has begun its work to present the residents with a slate of candidates for the HOL Board on May 1. Please give serious thought about the Park and the direction you would like to see HOL head. Both your voice and your willingness to volunteer for HOL are vital to the continued success and viability of this organization. The Nominating Committee members are **KC Casey** (*grandmakc@comcast.net*, 415-506-4414) and **Owen Haxton** (*hornet5@pacbell.net*, 415-883-3375). They welcome and invite your suggestions and ideas.

Volunteer Appreciation Event – April 16, 2016. This annual event is held to honor those generous folks who gave of their time and talent to help promote and support Mar Val, HOL,

and PAC. Be sure to look for the details and reservation forms in this *Echo*.

Water Aerobics – Kamala Allen has very generously offered to lead a water aerobics class. Please contact Kamala for further questions and to express your interest in this class (*dr.allen108@gmail.com*, 415-306-6865).

Just One Hour – **Joan Nelson** is working very hard to revive/revise this much-needed committee. While many Park residents are fortunate to have a circle of friends to assist them when they need a little extra help, others need and would welcome a little assistance from their Park neighbors. Please give Joan a call if you are able to help on this committee (*figleafjoan@comcast.net*, 415-506-4166). Joan reports the following:

Neurology Research supports one of MVMCC Just-1-Hour goals.

Check out the Stanford University Center for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education. Or do a quick Google search of such words as “empathy,” “compassion,” “immune system,” and “longevity.” You will be amazed by the scientifically proven benefits likely to enhance your life if you volunteer as an MVMCC Just-1-Hour good neighbor. *Walk a dog. Run an errand. Bring in mail.*

Water plants. Take out trash. Hang a picture. Mend a hem. Most J-1-H services are limited to the type of simple, easily doable, in-and-out activities that appear on the sign-up sheet at the clubhouse desk. Try a one-time-only, simple, good-neighbor deed and check the personal reward.

For requests that are beyond your desire or capacity to fill, you can draw from a list of reliable community resources and referrals (some of them professionals who live right here in our little village).

J-1-H is an HOL-sponsored communication link. Its only purpose is to make requests for help within the Park. It will not make assessments or impose criteria (such as qualifications, exchange of monetary or other compensation, or exchange of personal information). All negotiations are to be made between the recipient and the volunteer.

Hope to see you at the next HOL meeting on **April 20** at **7PM** in the Fireside Room.



Carolyn K. Corry
H O L PRESIDENT
ckorry@comcast.net
415-370-6403

VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION DINNER — VOLUNTEERS

Please circle entrée choice

Circle the group/groups you volunteered for

RESIDENT _____ Salmon Chicken Vegetarian

PAC Mar Val HOL

Other _____

RESIDENT _____ Salmon Chicken Vegetarian

PAC Mar Val HOL

Other _____

VOLUNTEERS ATTENDING _____ @ \$10 each. Check for \$ _____ is enclosed. (NO CASH)
(Your check **will** be returned to you when you check in at the dinner.) Make checks payable to Mar Val.

Message from Mar Val

Dear Friends,

As you read this month's letter, you will be aware of a sign-up sheet in the office for volunteers and non-volunteers wishing to attend the **Volunteer Dinner on April 16, 2016**. We are requesting that those who will be honored please indicate the Park group you volunteered for during

the period of April 2015 – March 2016. Full details about the dinner are on the reservation form.

Now for the news you've all been awaiting. Our annual **Mexican Fiesta/Pub Night** will be on **Friday, Seis de Mayo**. Reservations are not required. You are welcome to enjoy a Mexican meal for \$5, and it goes without saying

that Mexican beer and margaritas will be flowing.

With the arrival of May, Mar Val's monthly events move outside to the deck beginning with the **Memorial Day BBQ on May 30**. For those of you wishing to plan ahead, the remainder of this year's 2016 schedule is:

Jazz Brunch 6/11
4th of July 7/04
Luau 8/13
Labor Day 9/05
Black Cat 10/29
Thanksgiving 11/19
Christmas 12/10
New Year's Eve 12/31

With warmest regards,

Kathleen Dargie
Kathleen Dargie
 MAR VAL PRESIDENT
 kfdargie@aol.com

VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION DINNER

APRIL 16, 2016

COCKTAILS 5:00 PM DINNER 6:00 PM

WILD-CAUGHT SALMON WITH MEYER LEMON SAUCE
 or

GRILLED CHICKEN BREAST WITH MEYER LEMON SAUCE
 or

VEGETABLE ALFREDO PASTA

FRESH STEAMED ASPARAGUS • GARLIC MASHED POTATOES

CHEESECAKE



Reservation Deadline: April 13 at 5:00 PM or when 140 reservations have been received.

Questions, call Carolyn Corry at 415-370-6403.

Volunteers — If you volunteered for Mar Val, PAC, HOL, or MVEST between April 2015 and March 2016, please complete the reservation form on pg. 4 indicating your entrée choice and the organization for which you volunteered. Include a check for \$10 per volunteer. When you check in at the event, your check **will** be returned to you. If you do not come to the event, this check will be cashed.

Non-Volunteers — If you did not volunteer during this period, you are still most welcome to attend.

Please complete the reservation form below indicating your entrée choice and include a check for \$15. This check will **not** be returned to you.

Separate checks are needed for volunteers and non-volunteers. No cash, please!

Reservation deadline is April 13 @ 5:00 PM or when 140 reservations have been received.

VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION DINNER — NON-VOLUNTEERS

RESIDENT _____

Please circle entrée choice

Salmon Chicken Vegetarian

RESIDENT _____

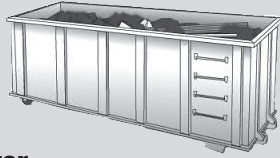
Salmon Chicken Vegetarian

RESIDENTS ATTENDING _____ @ \$15 each Check for \$_____ is enclosed. (NO CASH)

(Your check will **not** be returned.) Make checks payable to Mar Val.



Management Update



Dumpster

Dumpster Alert: Available for household debris disposal April 9-10 at the lower turnaround.

Please, no construction debris or cardboard accepted. Please put cardboard in your weekly recycling to avoid unnecessary overflow in the Dumpster.

Sewer System Blues

Please refrain from flushing Handi Wipes. They are a constant problem for our sewer pump system.

NO Poisons

Remember, Marin Valley is a NO poison community. There are many alternative methods to eliminate rats and gophers without the use of poisons. Owls and coyotes are harmed when they eat poisoned rodents.

Carports

Carports and porches are not to be used as storage facilities. Many residents need to be reminded of this rule. Having items stacked in your carport affects the Park and your neighbors' home value. Thanks for your anticipated cooperation with cleanup and removal of stored items. (Hint: See the first item in this list.)

RV Storage

Park Rule 21.4 RV Storage: RV parking is not to be used for vehicles that are inoperable or stored permanently without being used. Keep your RV space clean and void of garbage or stored items other than your RV.

Vehicle Repairs

Park Rule 21.3 Repairs: No repairing or servicing (whether major or minor in nature) of vehicles (including boats) will be permitted in driveways, carports, or streets.

Non-operable vehicles

Park Rule 20: Storing non-operable vehicles in your carport is not permitted and is potentially dangerous. If you are currently storing a vehicle in your driveway, please make plans to have it removed.

Pets

Register all pets. You are required to have a signed pet agreement for your pet. See the front desk for any assistance.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Matt Greenberg

GENERAL MANAGER
gm.mvmcc@gmail.com
415-883-5911, Fax 415-883-1971



by **Serena D'Arcy-Fisher**

Dear Neighbors,

Many communities within Marin and other counties across the nation are realizing how important it is to have their own organized community response teams in the event of an emergency or a disaster.

Even day to day, the number of professional responders available to deal with community needs is limited, so imagine a widespread disaster. It will be impossible for 911 to respond to all the needs of distressed communities, let alone individuals. That is why community response teams are so vital!

An organized neighborhood is a neighborhood that will save lives when a disaster strikes.

MVEST is part of a growing number of Neighborhood Response Groups, or NRGs, comprised of citizen volunteers joining businesses, schools, churches, and other entities to make their communities resilient.

After a major earthquake, fire, or flood, public safety officials are certain to be overwhelmed; thus you must be prepared to be on your own for several days. It is recommended you have enough food, water, and medicines for everyone in your household, including your pets, for 3 – 5 days minimum. More is better.

All NRGs are based on the principle that neighbors want to help their neighbors. The program works hard to develop a close sense of community.

What MVEST Means to This Community

Within our community MVEST **offers a framework to create a more resilient community in the event of a disaster, by:**

- providing residents **education** and **support** to become self-prepared
- **training** volunteers to assist others in an organized way.

The primary objective of any neighborhood response program like MVEST is to ensure that no one is overlooked and that the greatest possible aid is delivered to those in need. Achieving this goal has several requirements:

- **Knowing your neighbors:** Who might need assistance in the event of an emergency, including an evacuation?
- **Creating a plan in advance** for providing such assistance: neighbors looking out for neighbors!
- **Building a response capability:** mobilizing the human and other resources we have in our community.
- **Forming a group of volunteers** willing to manage the response.

Thanks to the support of many wonderful volunteers, MVEST is now an effective communitywide neighborhood response program. Marin County emergency staff and neighborhood teams are looking at the MVEST program and a few other similarly robust programs in the county to create a model that can be replicated.

MVEST leadership also advocates for **implementation of safety measures.** Because we alerted Management and the City to the danger of gas pipes breaking and causing fires in an earthquake, the old, often stuck gas valves requiring wrenches are now being replaced with the easy shutoff ball gas valves. This is one step forward in mitigating potential dangers.

We cannot rest on our laurels! MVEST still has much work to do to be prepared. We need able-bodied community members to step up and be part of this organized emergency response effort.

- We currently have areas within our Park that are **without block captains.**
- We also **need backup block captains,** to step in when BCs are unavailable during an emergency.
- Interested in a **leadership role?** There are many engaging opportunities within MVEST. We welcome your inquiry.

Please consider being a part of this vital community effort. It does not require a huge time commitment. MVEST provides guidance and training opportunities. Being a part of this team is also fun and a wonderful way to connect with neighbors and the community as a whole.

Please contact any of the MVEST steering committee members for more information. Thank you!

Serena D’Arcy-Fisher 415-506-4235
John Hansen 415-847-7155
Bill Davis 415-883-2824
John Feld 415-884-2675
Alan Gump 415-506-4235 ■



One of the easy shutoff ball gas valves now being installed by the City — an example of a safety measure MVEST strongly advocated to mitigate the dangers of gas pipes breaking and causing fires in an earthquake.

Block Captains – Who, What, When, Where, Why

by John Feld

Here in the *Echo* we often hear mention of *block captains*.

We have over 30 in the Park, and maybe we could all know more about what it means to be a block captain and what the title entails. Some people decline to be block captains because they assume the duties will be onerous and time-consuming.

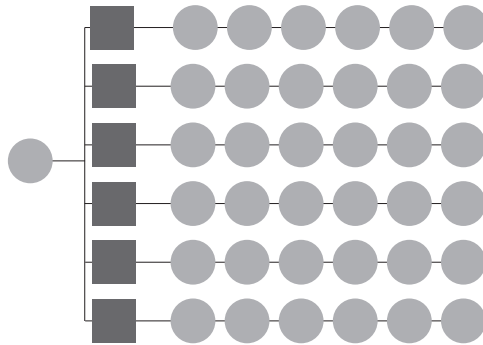
So let's look at what it means to be a block captain.

Block Captains

First, block captains have stepped up to the task of helping their neighbors and the community in emergencies. They each oversee 10 – 12 homes. That is, they should know who lives in these homes and how prepared they are to take care of their families, pets, and homes in an emergency.

When people first become block captains they are instructed in the correct radio procedures, and they get a brightly colored vest and a hard hat. The training is minimal. Block captains are basically using common sense and are looking out for their neighbors. It is good if they stay informed about any illness or limited mobility among the residents in their block, or if people move or are joined by relatives or caregivers.

In the case of an emergency such as a wildfire, earthquake, landslide, or flood, the block captains will get out their two-way radios and go check on residents. If there has been a call for an evacuation, they will help people get out of their homes and the Park. If we are instructed by authorities to shelter



in our homes, they will determine whether residents are in any danger or in need of comforting and reassurance. Using their radios, they can contact others if physical help or first aid is needed and to keep people informed of what is happening.

Once every 12 to 18 months, block captains will be asked by MVEST to knock on the doors of their few assigned homes and either give out some useful information or ask a few simple questions. There are also monthly radio drills, which usually take about a minute.

That's it — that's what a block captain does.

Each year MVEST provides additional training and visiting speakers — participation is voluntary; these trainings add new skills or refresh older ones.

Zone Chiefs

Some block captains take on additional roles within MVEST to help the community. Some are also trained to be CERTs, and some are also *zone chiefs*. The six zone chiefs are intermediaries between the block captains and *incident command* (the central information point and decision maker). Each zone chief has six block captains reporting to him or her, and they relay messages up and down the line. This means that

incident command does not have to deal with 30 or more block captains all calling in at one time and that local messages get communicated and understood quickly. Zone chiefs have the same time expectations as block captains during the year, probably about four hours including the questionnaires.

Of course, not everyone is here all of the time. So we ask block captains to recruit helpers and backups to fill in for them in case they have to be away. If they decide to step down, we also ask that they help find their replacements, ideally from the homes they oversee or nearby residents.

Incident Commanders

Incident commanders are selected from a group of volunteers who have gone through specific training. This training will probably be repeated each year, so if people want to become more involved there is ample opportunity.

Being a block captain makes minimal demands on you except in an emergency, when you will probably want to be as helpful as possible to your neighbors anyway. Additionally, our lives are constantly changing, causing some people to drop out after a time, and others are called on to step in to take their place.

Please consider signing up to be a block captain or a backup captain by calling 415-884-2675 or emailing johnmfeld@gmail.com, and we will get you a fancy identifying vest and hard hat to wear.

Thanks. ■

ART IN THE PARK



by Suzie Lahr

The MVMCC Gallery Exhibit is awaiting your visit! Please sign our guest book on the table of the Fireside Room. The artists enjoy seeing your comments, and we thank you for your ongoing support of our art community.

Next Resident Artists Meeting:

Monday, April 11 at 5:30 PM

Fireside Room, when we will discuss our upcoming **4th Annual Art in the Park** and assess whether we have enough participating artists to produce the event on **Sunday, May 22, 2016**.

The artist registration forms are on a table in the front lobby of the clubhouse for you to complete and return to **Suzie Lahr** or to **Matt Greenberg** at the front desk as soon as possible. Hopefully, with all of your participation we can once again present this popular event for our residents and guests. ■



In and Around Novato

Marin Community Foundation

5 Hamilton Landing Road #200
Tony King – 50 Years of Painting
January 27 – May 20

Marin MoCA – 500 Palm Drive

Phil Frank – The Art of Cartooning
February 27 – April 10

Ken Botto – Dark Worlds
February 27 – April 10

Altered Book Exhibition
April 23 – June 4

Opening Reception: April 23, 5 – 7 PM

Petaluma Art Center

230 Lakeville Street
Cast, Forged & Welded Metalworks
March 19 – May 1

Don't Die Alone

by Renee LaFarge

On March 6 a meeting was held in the Fireside Room to discuss updating the “Just One Hour” community outreach effort to extend assistance to those who may need help with various tasks. It seemed many people living in our community had not utilized the Just-One-Hour availability. Why? Although many different conversations took place, the notion of building up friendships and connection over time came up as a valuable and more utilized way for people to request and extend help to those in need.

Some in our community do not have friends, neighbors, or relatives to call on for help, for whatever reason. Given that two men recently died alone here — all alone — and were later found in their homes, and that approximately 1.6 persons die here every six weeks, the idea emerged of reducing the possibility of such occurrences in the future. The County demolished and removed the home of one of the deceased.

I accepted responsibility to investigate what could be put in place to avoid that situation from recurring. No official name was given to this potential and intimate project, but for now I will refer to it as *Don't Die Alone*. I have taken responsibility as requested at our meeting to discuss this with Matt, the General Manager, in order to set this process in motion.

I am a State of California licensed Marriage and Family therapist with a Ph.D. in clinical psychology and have a clear understanding

and respect for matters of confidentiality, working with families in crisis and the courts. Currently I see several people in the Park at no charge to provide ongoing emotional support. I want to do this as a way of giving and to extend my skills to serve my community.

So for now I will refer to myself as the point person to gather whatever information necessary to help prevent the aloneness so many here feel. I would like to invite one other person to join me who is interested in investigating and discussing the possibilities. I will be an active participant in facilitating a process in which neighbors who are concerned about situations of isolation can alert Matt, who can then contact me, and I can reach out to family members and provide emotional support if desired.

Clarification: What this is not: direct medical care, crisis/suicide prevention, case management, or hospice. This is a direct action project. Do write or call with any questions. ■

Renee LaFarge MFT, PhD

doclafarge@gmail.com
650-281-6788 mobile
415-493-0548 home



Community Dancing

Saturday, April 2
7-9 PM Free event!

Petroglyphs from the Bushman of Marin Valley

The other day I was diligently working my Ishi sticks and pressure flakers when one of my sisters came running by.

I exclaimed, "Hey, Sister, where are you running to so fast?"

She told me that she found where the Phoenix Bird lives and she was off to catch one and did I want to come along.

So I quick quit my knapping tools and ran with her. Sure enough, she had found where they live — in the juniper bush!

Together we chopped that juniper bush and fire-roasted that bird to perfection.

There is quite an overpopulation of these hard-to-catch Phoenix Birds.

Now that we know where they live, we can all eat well and peacefully sleep bellyful.

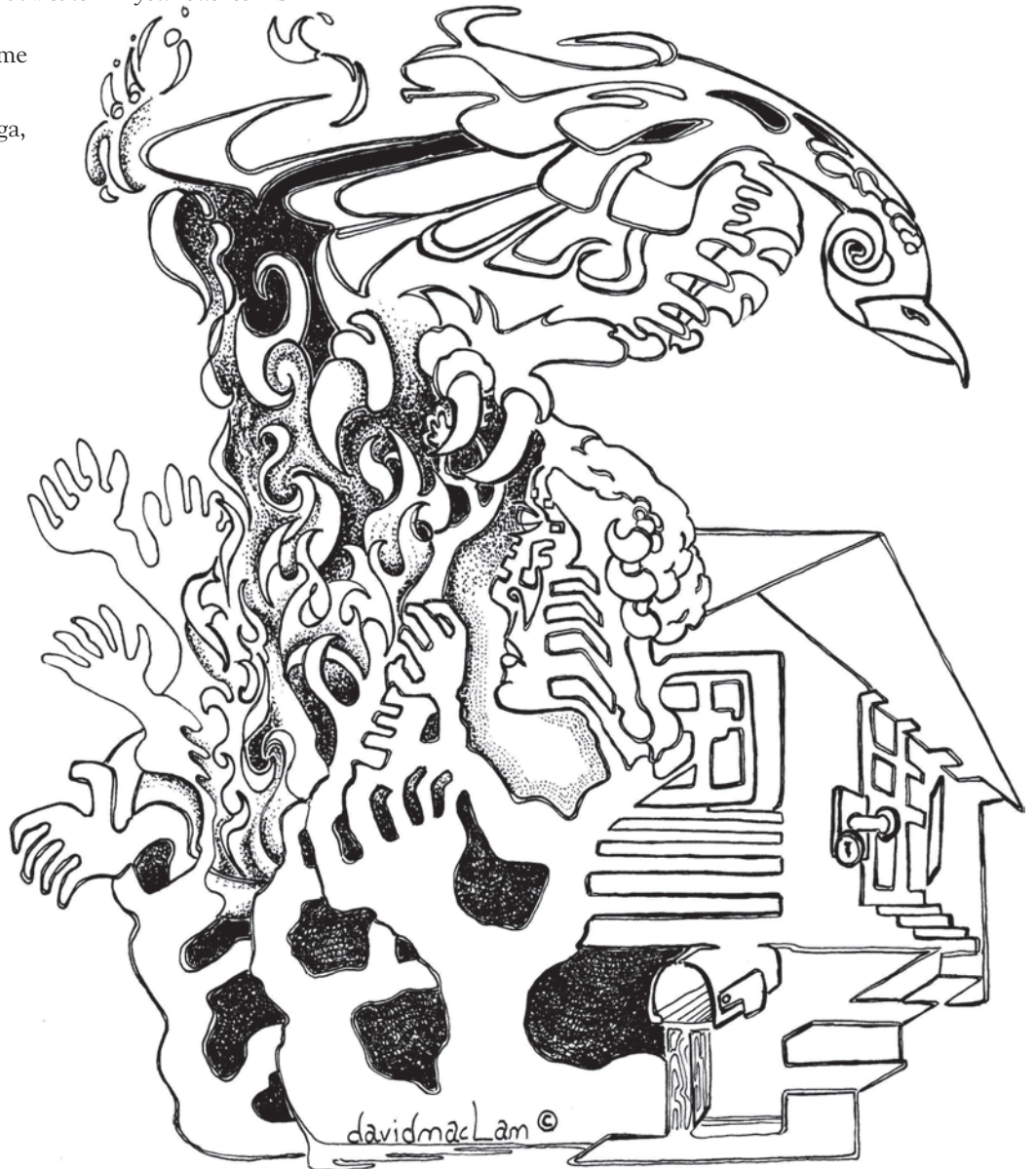
If you let me chop down your juniper bushes, I will cook one for you.

No need to pay me if I can keep what I catch in your bushes. •

Thanks to everyone who has let me hunt on their lands:

Pachara and Ray, Charles and Inga,
Serena and Alan,
Anila and Larry, Pauline,
Kathleen and Phred.

Sincerely,
Bonsai
davidmacLam@att.net



Fire-Safe MVMCC

by Nancy Warfield

Funds donated last year by the Novato Fire District to help remove highly flammable junipers have all been extinguished. Unfortunately this is not the case for all the junipers still in the Park.

Fortunately this year, **David MacLam** (davidmacLam@att.net, 415-382-1974) is generously assisting residents by helping them remove junipers free of charge. He has promised to continue until every unwanted juniper is removed from the Park. I bet he would not turn down any assistance in carrying out this monumental task.

Some residents are reluctant to part with their junipers, fearing they will lose their privacy screen or destroy habitat used by quail. The Fire District recommends many less flammable alternatives. Here are several resources for fire-resistant plants, many beautiful and fast-growing:

1) Privacy screen

Five fire-safe, beautiful, and drought-tolerant plants are outstanding choices for our Park. **Emerald Colonnade**, an evergreen holly, is easy to care for and well suited to containers, reaching 10-12 feet tall and 6-8 feet wide. **Sky Pencil**, a narrow columnar holly, has dark-green foliage all year with purple berries in the fall, growing 6-8 feet tall and 2-3 feet wide. **Green Tower Boxwood** is a dark-green evergreen growing in a columnar form up to 9 feet tall and 1-2 feet wide. **Yuletide Camellia** has glossy, darkgreen foliage with bright red and yellow blooms in the winter. It grows to 8-10 feet tall and as wide. Camellias, well loved for their showy blossoms, exist in a remarkable range of colors, forms,

and sizes. They tend to grow better in partial shade. **Gold Heart Ivy** is a fast-growing, low-maintenance evergreen and self-clinging climber for a wall or other solid structure. For more information, please see Charles Conaway's article in the January 2015 *Echo*, pg. 11 at mvmcc.com/documents/Echo_01_2015.pdf

2) Quail habitat

Quail love fairly dense, low shrubbery. **Ceanothus** (native evergreens with blue, purple, or white blossoms), manzanitas, bush eriogonums, salvias, dwarf oaks, Russian sage, and compact willows are a few appropriate choices. Ceanothus, manzanita, Russian sage, and salvia all provide food for quail as well! Learn more at pg.10 mvmcc.com/documents/Echo_11_2014.pdf

3) Please check out Charles Conaway's beautiful map of plants recommended as a demo garden. See pg. 9 at mvmcc.com/documents/Echo_05_2015.pdf

4) On the computer in the clubhouse library, click on Mike Krupp's *MVMCC Plant Catalog* on the desktop.

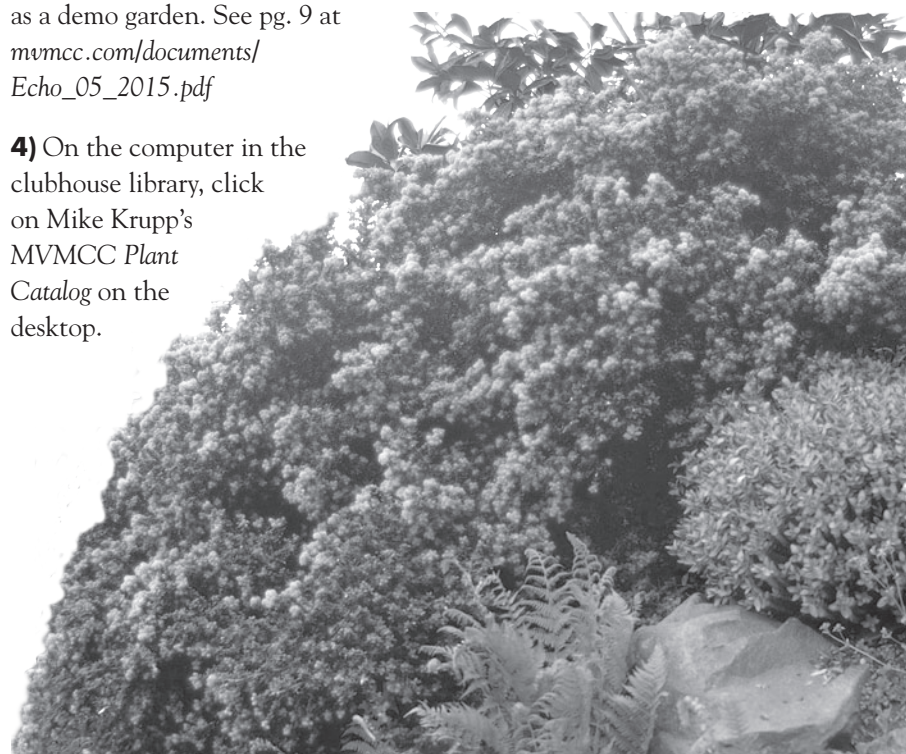
He gathered recommendations from UC Davis Extension, and some of the excellent gardeners in the Park picked their favorites from lists of fire- and drought-resistant plants; the plants will need minimal or no watering after they are established and do well in clay soil. These suggestions are provided as a service to MVMCC residents by the volunteer Tree & Shrub Committee.

Defensible space

A link to a Fire District document about creating your own defensible space around your home is mvmcc.com/documents/Defensible_Space.pdf

And for a list of plants **not** to plant that ignite readily and burn intensely, as well as a list of fire-resistant plants, see mvmcc.com/documents/UC_Plant_list.pdf

The Novato Fire District website is www.novatofire.org ■



Ceanothus

Magic Cutoff

Is there a magic cutoff period when offspring become accountable for their own actions? Is there a wonderful moment when parents can become detached spectators in the lives of their children and shrug, *It's their life*, and feel nothing?

When I was in my twenties, I stood in a hospital corridor waiting for doctors to put a few stitches in my daughter's head. I asked, *When do you stop worrying?*

The nurse said, *When they get out of the accident stage.* My mother just smiled faintly and said nothing.

When I was in my thirties, I sat on a little chair in a classroom and heard how one of my children talked incessantly, disrupted the class, and was headed for a career making license plates. As if to read my mind, a teacher said, *Don't worry, they all go through this stage, and then you can sit back, relax, and enjoy them.* My mother just smiled faintly and said nothing.

When I was in my forties, I spent a lifetime waiting for the phone to ring, the cars to come home, the front door to open. A friend said, *They're trying to find themselves; don't worry. In a few years you can stop worrying; they'll be adults.* My mother just smiled faintly and said nothing.

By the time I was fifty, I was sick and tired of being vulnerable. I was still worrying over my children, but there was a new wrinkle. There was nothing I could do about it. My mother just smiled faintly and said nothing. I continued to anguish over their failures, be tormented by their frustrations, and become absorbed in their disappointments.

My friends said that when my kids got married I could stop worrying and lead my own life. I wanted to believe that, but I was haunted by my mother's warm smile and her occasional, *You look pale. Are you all right? Call me the minute you get home. Are you depressed about something?*

Can it be that parents are sentenced to a lifetime of worry? Is concern for one another handed down like a torch to blaze the trail of human frailties and the fears of the unknown? Is concern a curse, or is it a virtue that elevates us to the highest form of life?

One of my children became quite irritable recently, saying to me, *Where were you? I've been calling for three days and no one answered. I was worried.* I smiled a warm smile.

The torch has been passed.

Submitted by Pauline Hawkins

Are You "Ready" for Success?

by Mike Holland

A few years into my health care administration career, I read with great interest, and dismay, an article in my USC alumni magazine about CEOs of large companies. They all had two things in common: they were very smart, and they worked long, hard hours. So why the dismay? Because although I considered myself to be a pretty smart guy, I knew I would never be willing to work as hard as they did. Hence, I was unlikely to be as successful as they were.

Many years later, in my college teaching career, I came upon some valuable research by leadership theorists Paul Hersey and Ken Blanchard. They synthesized the concept of "readiness," which clarified for me the nature of success, especially for those who make it to the top of their professions.

Readiness is composed of two elements: ability and willingness. Each must be present in large volume for one to be highly successful.

Ability refers to innate talent, such as intelligence, physical strength, speed, artistry, emotional control, and so on.

Willingness refers to working hard, i.e. rolling up

one's sleeves, putting one's nose to the wheel, breaking a sweat, and any other cliché you can think of. Ultra-successful people combine ability and willingness to produce spectacular results. I have never read a biography of a giant in his/her field who didn't have great talent and a tireless devotion to exploit it. Remember Michael Jordan the basketball great? He was the first to come to practice and the last to leave, and he treated the workouts like they were games.

When we personalize this concept of readiness to our own endeavors, we know what may be impeding our desired success. I'm a runner, and I train hard, but my level of success is limited by my ability. On the other hand, I train with some who have better natural running talent, but they don't want to put in the work. That's not a knock; it's just a statement of how much, or how little, success means to us. What are your levels of success in your endeavors?

The true measure of success will also be reflected by results. The football coach John Madden was asked once if he would prefer to have a player with great natural athleticism or a player who was a dogged workhorse. Madden said, "I want the one who plays the best." ■

Taiji Chuan

Philosophy and Practice

from the lost scrolls of M.T. Bows

by David MacLam



*Every day, all seven of them,
I make my way down to the back deck area of the clubhouse.
I begin before the fingers of dawn pull back the dark, starry covers of night.
The soundscape is rich.
Owls are talking about who's who in the Park.
Coyotes are discussing the upcoming election.
Frogs are talking all at once, and they are all in a party mood.
Crickets tuck into night corners and jam with the rhythm section.
The bellows of my breath breathe fire into my veins.
Shifting empty to full to empty to full, yin embraces yang,
the pendulum swings far out and back into my meditation in action.
The lightness is full of potential and intrinsic energy.
The current of a great river is within us all.
The eastern sky begins to glow, and deep purple becomes edged with brilliant blue.
Now we can see the graceful arms of Mt. Diablo embracing the horizon.
The ravens and redtails begin their rounds.
The morning sun warms my clothes, and my student arrives to begin practice.
You may join us. All are welcome.
There is no fee, for this is free Taiji.
If you are experienced, bring your style, and we can push hands or not, as you wish.
Drink up this West Coast Eastern Pacific magic before we plunge into the ring of fire.*

Barn Owl

by **Bill Noble**

It's just the sort of place, Owl explained, for an Ambush.

What sort of bush? whispered Pooh to Piglet. A gorse-bush?

My dear Pooh, said Owl in his superior way, don't you know what an Ambush is?

An Ambush, said Owl, is a sort of Surprise.

So is a gorse-bush sometimes, said Pooh.

Here in the Park, we have three kinds of owl:

the great horned owl

(big, ear-tufted, and hooting like we expect an owl to do);

the pint-sized western screech owl,

whose soft, musical bubbling is gracing our evenings right now;

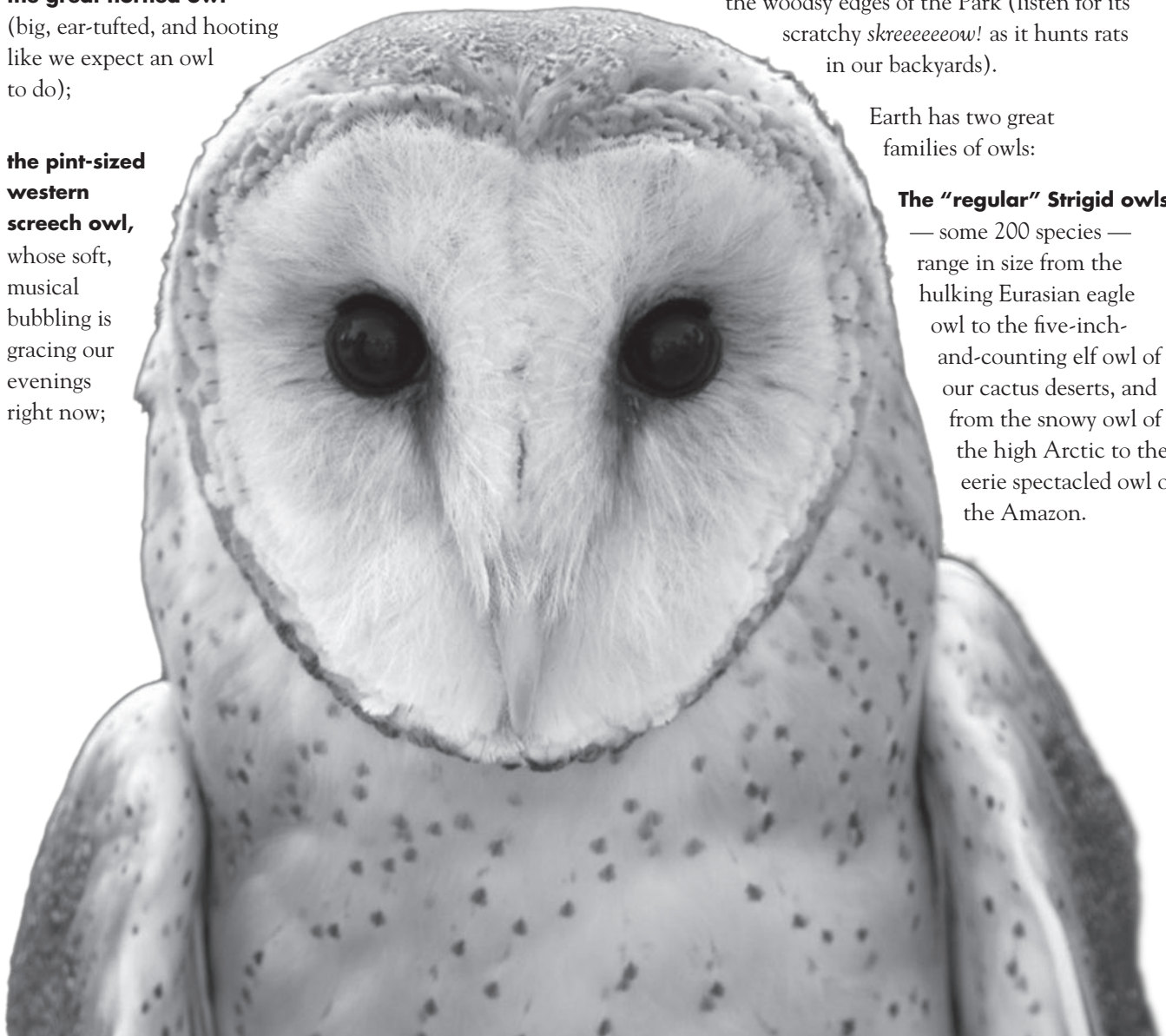
and the pale, otherworldly barn owl,

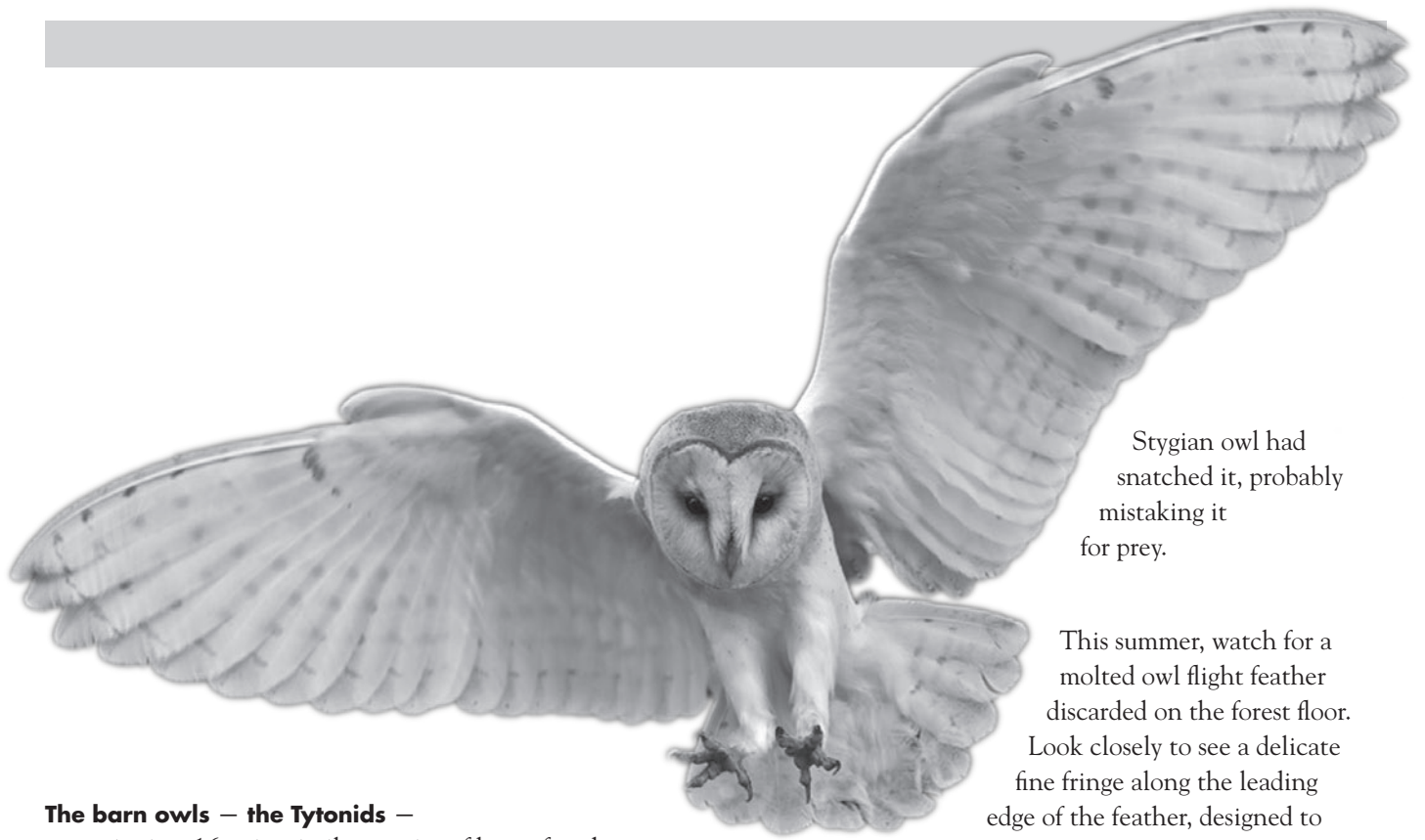
who nests in the big owl boxes here and there around the woodsy edges of the Park (listen for its scratchy *skreeeeeow!* as it hunts rats in our backyards).

Earth has two great families of owls:

The "regular" Strigid owls

— some 200 species — range in size from the hulking Eurasian eagle owl to the five-inch-and-counting elf owl of our cactus deserts, and from the snowy owl of the high Arctic to the eerie spectacled owl of the Amazon.





The barn owls — the Tytonids —

comprise just 16 quite similar species of heart-faced barn and monkey owls, found in temperate and tropical climates worldwide.

The barn owls, unlike the long-lived *Strigids*, are “disposables”: prolific early-maturing breeders, equipped with the same quick-turnover strategy as opossums that allows them to respond quickly to changes in food supply or the sudden appearance of novel opportunities. Barn owls also benefit from being unusually tolerant of the human presence and settlement patterns and from the access to rats and mice that gives them. They can breed year-round and often have multiple broods, and they take great advantage of haylofts, church steeples, and artificial boxes for nesting.

Going back to our opening quote from *Winnie the Pooh*, if anyone knows Ambush, it's the barn owl. Mountain lions, scorpions, and owls are all good examples of ambushers. Mountain lions and scorpions lie in wait to pounce, but owls actively search (mostly with a remarkably sophisticated auditory apparatus), then sail in for the kill on silent wings. George Cherrie, the naturalist on Teddy Roosevelt's 1913 expedition on the *River of Doubt*, recounts walking toward camp one night just after dark, when, without a whisper of sound, his hat vanished from his head. Only later was he able to discover that a

Stygian owl had snatched it, probably mistaking it for prey.

This summer, watch for a molted owl flight feather discarded on the forest floor.

Look closely to see a delicate fine fringe along the leading edge of the feather, designed to break the turbulence that causes




















the swoosh of a bird's wings and allow near-absolute silent hunting. The barn owl's distinctive heart-shaped face, outlined in unique bristles, is part of the most sensitive — and accurate — hearing apparatus among birds. It is able to detect the slightest movement of a mouse and perhaps even the sound of its heartbeat, and to pounce in absolute darkness with unerring accuracy.

As with many raptors, the female is bigger (though in owls that doesn't come with a lower-pitched voice), and in the case of barn owls, more strikingly marked — more cinnamon brown and marked with spots than the ghostly pale males of the tribe.

DON'T POISON OUR HAWKS AND OWLS!

Our owls provide major control of rats and mice around our homes in the Park. Don't use rat poisons! These get passed on and cause horrible death for the very creatures that help us. We can regularly find dead birds and mammals — and even pets — killed by the thoughtless use of rat baits. Retail sales of the worst poisons have now been banned for public sale in California, but professionals may still offer them. Don't take them up on it! ■

APRIL 2016

SUNDAY		MONDAY		TUESDAY		WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY		SATURDAY	
1-4 PM Mahjong 	3	6-8 AM Trash Pickup 9:30 AM Low-Impact Exercise 7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker 	4	5-6 PM Meditation	5	10 AM -2 PM Craft Group 11 AM -1 PM Whistlestop (call Roberta 415-883-0843) 7 PM PAC MEETING	6	9:15 AM QiGong <i>with Dove</i> 6:15-7 PM Silent Sitting 7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker 	7	4 PM Canasta  5-7 PM Pub Night 7:15 PM Bingo ECHO DEADLINE	8	10:30-11:45 AM Pre-TaiChi-Jay COMMUNITY DANCE 7-9 PM 	2
1-4 PM Mahjong 	10	6-8 AM Trash Pickup 9:30 AM Low-Impact Exercise 5:30 PM ART IN THE PARK MEETING 7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker 	11	5-6 PM Meditation	12	10 AM -2 PM Craft Group 11 AM -1 PM Whistlestop (call Roberta 415-883-0843) 6 PM MAR VAL MEETING	13	9:15 AM QiGong <i>with Dove</i> 6:15-7 PM Silent Sitting 7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker 	14	4 PM Canasta  5-7 PM Pub Night VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION DINNER 5 PM COCKTAILS 6 PM DINNER	15	10:30-11:45 AM Pre-TaiChi-Jay DUMPSTER 	16
1-4 PM Mahjong 	17	6-8 AM Trash Pickup 9:30 AM Low-Impact Exercise 7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker 	18	5-6 PM Meditation	19	10 AM -2 PM Craft Group 11 AM Ladies' Bridge 11 AM -1 PM Whistlestop (call Roberta 415-883-0843) 4 PM Book Club: <i>My Beloved World</i> by Sonia Sotomayor 7 PM HOL MEETING	20	9:15 AM QiGong <i>with Dove</i> 6:15-7 PM Silent Sitting 7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker  FULL MOON 10:23 PM 	21	4 PM Canasta  5-7 PM Pub Night	22	10:30-11:45 AM Pre-TaiChi-Jay	23
1-4 PM Mahjong 	24	6-8 AM Trash Pickup 9:30 AM Low-Impact Exercise 7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker 	25	5-6 PM Meditation	26	10 AM -2 PM Craft Group 11 AM -1 PM Whistlestop (call Roberta 415-883-0843)	27	9:15 AM QiGong <i>with Dove</i> 6:15-7 PM Silent Sitting 7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker 	28	4 PM Canasta  5-7 PM Pub Night	29	10:30-11:45 AM Pre-TaiChi-Jay	30