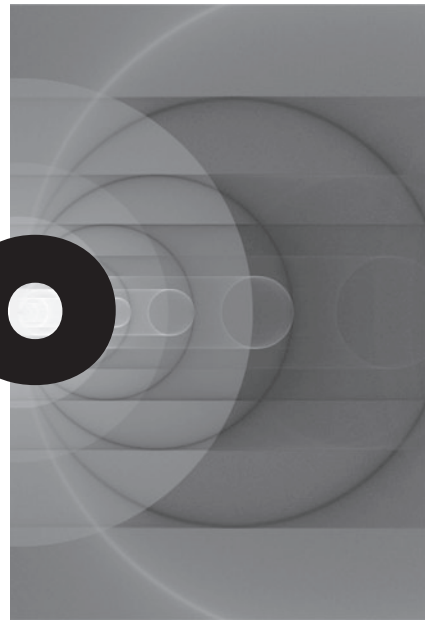


T H E

# ECHO

May 2015



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# Notices

M A Y

## Art in the Park final meeting

Saturday, May 2, 10:30 a.m. Fireside

## Conversations on Death and Dying

Sunday, May 3, 3:00–5:00 p.m. Fireside

## PAC board meeting

Wednesday, May 6, 7:00 p.m. Fireside

## PAC board nominations

Open Saturday May 9, 9:00 a.m.

Close Saturday, May 16, 4:00 p.m.

## Ed Collins to run Marin Human Race

“I am running a 5K race in the Marin Human Race on May 9. It would be simply marvelous and magnificent and swell if you would donate on my team page [www.marinhumanrace.org/goto/Edslifehousefunpage](http://www.marinhumanrace.org/goto/Edslifehousefunpage) and support Lifehouse and its work with developmentally disabled adults. My goal is 26 minutes. If I get over \$250, I will shoot for 25 minutes. (Last year I ran 25:46.)”

## Mar Val board meeting

Wednesday, May 13, 6:00 p.m. Fireside

## 3<sup>RD</sup> Annual Art In The Park

Sunday, May 17, 1:00–4:00 p.m.

## HOL board meeting and election

Wednesday, May 20, 7:00 p.m.

## Mar Val Memorial Day Dinner

Monday, May 25, 5:00 p.m.

## PAC Meet the Candidates

Wednesday, May 27, 6:00 p.m.

J U N E

## MarVal brunch

Saturday, June 13 (tentative)

## Candidates Needed for PAC Board of Directors

**T**wo PAC board positions are open: Larry Cohen's and Tom Miller's two-year terms are coming to an end. Nominees for the PAC board must be registered homeowners/residents of the Park and be willing to serve for the two-year term.

The nomination period begins **Saturday, May 9 at 9 a.m.** and ends **Saturday, May 16 at 4 p.m.**

If you are interested in running, please contact Peggy Hill (415-382-0185, [peggyhill@yahoo.com](mailto:peggyhill@yahoo.com)) during the nomination period; if you would like to nominate another resident, please make sure the person is willing to serve. If there are more than two candidates, there will be a formal election, which means that candidates need to hand in a half-page statement about background, interest, and qualifications by Monday, May 18 at 10 a.m. Ballots, bios, and instructions will be delivered to a professional printing company the week of May 18-22, and this voting package will be mailed to registered residents. The “Meet the Candidates” program is scheduled for Wednesday evening, May 27, 6:30 p.m. Voting begins immediately after the program and ends on Friday, June 5 at 4 p.m. Ballots can be deposited in the large wood ballot box at the Clubhouse or mailed to MVMCC. If you are going to be out of town during the voting period, you might want to make arrangements with a neighbor to forward the ballot to you and mail the completed ballot to MVMCC. Election results will be announced at the annual PAC Board meeting on Saturday, June 6.

**Peggy Hill**

*Election Committee Chair*

T H E **ECHO**

May 2015

**MARIN VALLEY**  
MOBILE COUNTRY CLUB

100 MARIN VALLEY DRIVE  
NOVATO, CA 94949  
415-883-5911

[novatofinancing@att.net](mailto:novatofinancing@att.net)  
[WWW.MVMCC.COM](http://WWW.MVMCC.COM)

EDITOR **Erma Wheatley**

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PRINTING/PRODUCTION **MHB Group Region 8**  
[www.mobilehomeboard.com/](http://www.mobilehomeboard.com/)

MARIN VALLEY MOBILE COUNTRY CLUB

GENERAL MANAGER **Matt Greenberg**

415-883-5911 415-883-1971 FAX  
[gm.mvmcc@gmail.com](mailto:gm.mvmcc@gmail.com)

### PAC BOARD

PRESIDENT **Jay Shelfer** 415-883-6945  
VICE PRESIDENT **Desiree Storch** 415-250-7297  
SECRETARY **Mike Hagerty** [mrhagerty@ucdavis.edu](mailto:mrhagerty@ucdavis.edu)  
TREASURER **Larry Cohen** 415-883-7786  
AT LARGE **Tom Miller** 415-244-5413

### HOL BOARD

PRESIDENT **Nancy Bingham** 415-883-7879  
1ST VICE PRESIDENT **Pauline Hawkins** 415-884-0494  
VICE PRESIDENT (MVEST) **Serena D'Arcy-Fisher**  
415-506-4235  
VICE PRESIDENT ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS  
**Carolyn Corry** 415-370-6403  
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/RESERVATIONS **Carolyn Corry** 506-2335

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](mailto:ermawheatley@gmail.com)

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

Everything is due the  
**8<sup>TH</sup> of the MONTH or SOONER**  
for the following month's edition.

# Letter to Residents

Dear residents,

Our finances are in good order.

It's budget time again, anticipating the needs of our community for the years 2015/2016. The three resident boards are preparing their recommendations and working with the Al Frei Management team to bring a budget to the City staff for final approval by the City Council in June. The budget is very much a moving target. There are many factors related to the infrastructure and the maintenance of MVMCC which are constantly being worked on and slowly revealing their complexity.

There is a chance that PG&E (encouraged by the California Public Utilities Commission) will undertake to renovate our gas & electricity infrastructure and take back the chore of billing the utilities to our residents. As we currently have those responsibilities, our cost savings would be considerable. We will hear more about this in May and find out what our part would be if we are selected for this pilot project.

Purportedly, when the City of Novato agreed to help us purchase MVMCC from the previous owner, they advised us that any and all expenses would be paid for by the MVMCC. In the bond agreement their anticipated oversight was agreed to be \$25,000 per year. Now, as the bond agreement has been superseded when the City assumed the title from the NFA, the billings from the City staff have increased over that amount. We are requesting complete transparency in this regard.

There will be an election in June for the PAC board. If you are interested in running or helping out, please contact Peggy Hill. The board of MVSC also will be holding elections for two officers; Bill Davis is your contact. Please participate, as it is your community and you should have a strong voice in it.

Our next meeting will be **May 6 at 7:00 p.m.** See you then.

In service,



**Jay Shelfer**  
P A C PRESIDENT  
[jjshelfer@yahoo.com](mailto:jjshelfer@yahoo.com)

# Management Report

Residents, please be aware of packages that may be delivered by UPS or FedEx. Multiple residents have reported packages disappearing after they are delivered to their front entrance.

Any new contact information you may have such as phone or email is needed for our new phone tree system so we may reach out to you with any important messages.

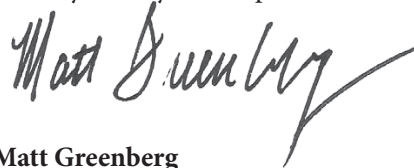
Parking any vehicle that is not in use due to inoperable conditions is prohibited here at Marin Valley other than under your carport. Many residents own multiple cars they do not drive and need a place to store them. They rest for many months without use, possibly leaking fluid or turning into a home for mice. We do not have enough room for all so please refrain from leaving these inoperable vehicles in guest parking or RV storage. Your neighbors who view inoperable vehicles in your carports also would prefer not to look at them each day.

Many residents have started spring cleaning in their carports and are doing a great job. More residents will catch on and remove stored items in the carports, creating a better condition for all to view. Thanks for all the effort.

For any after-hours emergency or maintenance issue, please call the answering service, and they will page either Mark or Greg to help with your concern.

Maintenance staff is taking higher education courses for pool operation, certification and cleaning techniques, to better serve the needs of the residents who use the pool.

Thank you for your cooperation,



**Matt Greenberg**  
GENERAL MANAGER  
[gm.mvmcc@gmail.com](mailto:gm.mvmcc@gmail.com)  
415-883-5911, Fax 415-883-1971

# HOL Message from Homeowners' League

Our April meeting was very exciting with discussions and voting by the residents on noise/music in the exercise room and the latest revised tree/shrub policy. Matt Greenberg discussed the reasons for keeping the pool key under Park management care and what days the pool will open early.

During our April meeting the process of accepting nominations for various offices of HOL continued. There will be an election of new HOL officers during the May meeting. Please step forward to serve on the board or one of the committees. Valerie Barbour and Richard Wilson are the nominating committee, so if interested, please contact them. Nominations will be accepted through the month of April and will be closed on May 1.

The Volunteer Dinner was a great success. What a pleasant way to thank everyone who helps make this a great community. This was the first time HOL gave an award to the resident you picked as an outstanding resident volunteer—Pauline Hawkins for untiring work to make our Park such a beautiful area.

I hope that everyone attended the Emergency Preparedness Fair taking home many tips to make our home and this community a safer place to live. Thank you to the entire MVEST for their tireless work on our behalf. See how many tips you picked at the fair that you can implement.

Water is a very big worry here, in Marin and the entire Southwest. Please conserve as much water as possible,

like catching the water when you are trying to get hot water to wash dishes. To meet the 25% reduction in water usage requested by the governor, we need to be aware of letting water run in sinks, toilets and yards. If you have a plumbing leak, get it fixed ASAP.

Please attend the next HOL meeting to be held **Wednesday, May 20**, at 7:00 p.m. in the Fireside Room. You will have an opportunity to express your concerns and make suggestions.

Thank you,



**Nancy Bingham**  
H O L PRESIDENT  
nancybingham@msn.com  
(415) 883-7879

# MAR VAL Message from MarVal

Dear Friends,

Mar Val's schedule of events for the month of May includes one function on the very first day of the month and another during the last week.

As you may know, we sponsor a Mexican Fiesta at Pub on the Friday closest to Cinco de Mayo.

This year the celebration will take place on Uno de Mayo, which is the **first Friday of the month**. Although

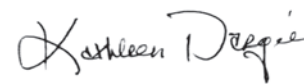
reservations are not required, a Mexican buffet is served for \$5.00 per person.

We will celebrate Memorial Day on **Monday, May 25**, with our first outdoor party of the year. Details of the menu will be listed on the reservation form available in the office.

Speaking of outdoor parties, Mar Val is currently planning a brunch (hopefully with live music) on **Saturday, June 13**. It is anticipated the painting of the

Clubhouse will be completed, and we will have the added pleasure of being shaded by the new awning on the back deck. Please mark the date on your calendar.

With warmest regards,



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

## MEMORIAL DAY RESERVATION FORM *Please circle entrée choice*

Resident \_\_\_\_\_ Hamburger Hot Dog Vegetarian    Guest \_\_\_\_\_ Hamburger Hot Dog Vegetarian  
 Resident \_\_\_\_\_ Hamburger Hot Dog Vegetarian    Guest \_\_\_\_\_ Hamburger Hot Dog Vegetarian  
 # Residents attending \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$10 each    # Guests attending \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$10 each.    Check for \$ \_\_\_\_\_ is enclosed. (NO CASH)

**Reservation Deadline is May 20 @ 5:00 p.m. or when 140 reservations have been received.**



# Strike a Match

by John Hansen and Bill Davis, RN

**A** wooden match is a **hazard**, but it can rest safely in its matchbox indefinitely with virtually **no risk** of bursting into flame. Remove the match, “strike it,” and we instantly have a powerful fire.

One of our jobs at MVEST is to identify **hazards** to our community, to evaluate their potential for causing harm, and to assess their **risk** or probability of actually happening.

We have a list of such hazards. It’s short but realistic. We are methodically addressing each hazard on the list to reduce or even eliminate its potential for harm. Some of the tools we use in this process are surely familiar to you, but some may sound new:

- **Prevention**—Don’t let it happen in the first place.
- **Mitigation** (*Mitigation: the action of reducing the severity, seriousness, or painfulness of something*)—Is it going to get out of control? We all know stories about flash fires in the kitchen and how they can jump out of control.
- **Preparedness**—Got a fire extinguisher within 5 steps?
- **Responsiveness**—Know how to use the thing?
- **Resilience**—After it happens and the smoke has cleared, life goes on, hopefully for the better.

**A MAJOR EARTHQUAKE** is at the top of our list. Here’s how we’re using these tools to help you to reduce the effects of an earthquake on you, your family, and our community:

- **Prevention.** If anybody knows how to prevent an earthquake, please let us know, and we can stop right here.

- **Mitigation.** If you’re standing in an open field during a major earthquake, you might get dizzy, but injury is unlikely. So what’s different in our mobile home park?

The bad news is that an unmitigated mobile home is **one of the most dangerous places to be** during an earthquake. The shaking knocks a mobile home off its piers, virtually destroying the home in the process. Then when it falls, the gas connection is broken, and a resulting fire can destroy not only the remnants of that home but those nearby as well. These are consistent observations at every major earthquake since the appearance of mobile home parks.

The good news is that an “earthquake-mitigated” mobile home is **one of the safest places to be** in an earthquake. The single most important mitigation for a mobile home owner is an **ERBS** or **Earthquake-Resistant Bracing System** to keep your home from falling off its piers. At less than \$3,000, it’s probably the best safety feature for your home.

For the community as a whole, the most important earthquake mitigation measure is the installation of a **Gas Excess Flow Valve** or **EFV** on each and every gas meter in the Park. This simple, inexpensive valve, when properly installed, stops the gas flow instantly and automatically if the gas line is broken. This can save not only the home with the broken line but possibly all its neighbors too. At MVEST, we are working diligently, tackling the usual bureaucratic hurdles—permits, regulations, etc.—toward our goal of simply and painlessly installing an EFV on every home in our Park.

- **Preparedness.** We hope you enjoyed and profited from our recent **MVEST Emergency Preparedness Fair**, as we in MVEST surely have.

We owe a huge debt of gratitude to Ray Schneider and the MVEST Personal Preparedness Focus Group for preparing a wealth of information and action plans for you. If you are not yet a recipient of this information, you soon will be.

- **Responsiveness.** At any one time there is a total of 22 fire personnel on duty in Novato. In a major disaster, they will be spread far too thin to be as responsive as they are in normal emergencies. We have been warned that we must be prepared to fend for ourselves for several hours or longer before help arrives. During this time we will be in **Neighbors-Helping-Neighbors** mode. Organized, trained, and prepared, we can be very effective. Please consider joining the growing ranks of MVEST. There is something you can do. Future articles in the *Echo* will describe MVEST’s **Incident Response** plans and capabilities and how you can participate.
- **Resilience.** Mar Val throws a great party for us every month. After the party’s over, the Clubhouse is quickly and efficiently returned to normal, due to Mar Val’s planning and preparedness. Similarly, a major incident can create a lot a chaos here in the Park, but careful foresight, planning, and preparedness can help bring things quickly back to normal.

These are the key elements of the MVEST Emergency Recovery Plan currently in preparation.

# Take a Hike

by Mike Holland



**M**issiles, prisons, golfers, airplanes, trains, skateboards, birds, and injured animals. That's quite a list, and all of it is, or recently was, only a mile from here, a short mile (as the crow flies) southward to the **McInnis Park** on Smith Ranch Road.

If you're looking for a quick trip for a nice hike, McInnis is the place to go. Most of us are very familiar with the area because it also houses the local 9-hole golf course and The Club, a very popular restaurant/watering hole. Two distinct walking paths are available, each 2–3 miles round trip.

**The first option** starts right at the golf course parking lot and follows the trail that parallels the first hole fairway. This counterclockwise walk is flat and takes you out along the creek that flows to the bay. It's not heavily traveled, hence is very quiet.

**Option two** also starts in the parking lot but heads to the north. I recommend taking the access road next to the batting cages and heading up until there is no more "up" left. You pass the tennis courts, the skateboard park, and summit on a mesa that affords a 360-degree view of the bay. There's a picnic table for seated—and sated—enjoyment of

the surroundings. As you move on and down, you pass by a relatively new water tower and then by the sanitation reservoirs.

Finally, you're at the entrance to "**The Ponds.**" This is where the wildlife takes over. These ponds house an abundance of wetlands bird life, and they always seem to be home. Otters have frequently been spotted here. The loop around the ponds is 2.1 miles. Again, it is flat. Great footing from start to finish.

So what about that list a few paragraphs ago? Well, the top of the mesa used to be a military base. The airplanes come from the Smith Ranch Airport. Just below the skateboard park is "The Vine", a substance abuse treatment facility. In its previous lives, it was a minimum security prison and then a juvenile detention facility. Its next incarnation will be as the new home for WldCare, the rehab center for injured animals. That's a good neighbor to have.

And, the best way to start and/or end one of these hikes is to grab a bite and a drink at The Club. Their patio is a resort on a warm day.

McInnis rates high as the closest place for a good hike. Next time we'll discuss the furthest point in Marin one can go for one of the most beautiful and exciting hikes you will ever experience.

# Art in the Park

by Suzie Lahr

**O**ur 3rd Annual Art in the Park event on Sunday, May 17 from 1-4 p.m. will both inspire and amaze you! What an awesome and talented art community we have right here in our midst. We have 24 artists participating this year with live art demonstrations, beautiful displays, and a few surprises. Since we have several new resident artists, the event will be expanded throughout the Clubhouse with displays in the ballroom, lobby and Fireside Room. While you visit, you can also enjoy our new gallery exhibit.

So mark your calendar and join us for a stimulating afternoon that will fascinate and educate you while you visit with the artists and enjoy gourmet refreshments.

The artists really appreciate the support of the community in our endeavors, and we invite you to sign and add your comments to our guest book that is on the small round table in the lobby.

See you on May 17!

# Interview

with

## Edgar Furlong

by Zoe Walton

**E**dgar's love affair with gardening and with being outdoors started at age five when his grandmother began sharing and teaching him her style of intuitive gardening. He remembers the very first seeds he ever planted were radishes. Edgar has always loved to feel the fresh air and see living things grow.

Edgar's education of the natural world continued at Rutgers Univ. in Nutley, New Jersey in Plant Genetics. (By the way, Nutley is home to Robert Blake, Annie Oakley, and Martha Stewart.) And recently, he has graduated from the Marin Master Gardener Program, which focuses on scientifically based gardening information from Univ. of California Cooperative Extension.

After university, Edgar attended the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, NY and became a chef. Later he worked and traveled all over the world cooking—New Jersey, San Francisco, Hawaii, and Asia. In his last cooking endeavor, he bought a farm in Bodega and opened the Bodega Estero Bed & Breakfast Farm. He is also a founding member of the Bodega Artisans' Co-Op in Bodega.

Edgar became an MVMCC resident in 2007, and many know that he is an incredible textile artist. He spins and weaves glorious textiles. He is well known among the weaving community and others in the textile arts world. He has an excellent eye for color. His favorites are green



PHOTO: ZOE WALTON

and orange. He says spinning and weaving is a little like gardening, since you see the fabric growing as you go along. He loves weaving and spinning, as it is wonderfully tactile and meditative.

Edgar loves Maya Angelou's quote: "I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."

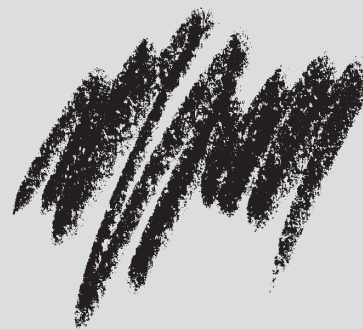
He feels that one of his missions in life is to share the knowledge he has gained. For him, growing older has its benefits, as he knows who he is—and knowing that, his choices are clearer about what is important and what is not. His partner Richard and pets Trudi (a beautiful poodle) and Feather (his Blue Persian cat) are on the top of his list.

**Don't miss Edgar's live spinning demos of his handmade yarns at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Art in the Park.**

3RD ANNUAL

# ART IN THE PARK

MVMCC  
RESIDENT ARTISTS  
EXHIBIT



**SUNDAY AFTERNOON  
MAY 17 • 1 TO 4  
MVMCC CLUBHOUSE**

**VISIT WITH MORE THAN  
20 OF OUR PARK ARTISTS  
AND VIEW THEIR WORK**

**MIXED MEDIA • PAINTING  
SCULPTURE • FABRIC ART  
PHOTOGRAPHY • POETRY  
ART DEMOS AND  
OTHER CREATIONS**

**ENJOY  
LIGHT REFRESHMENTS**

SPONSORED BY HOL

# Our Precious Water

by David King

**T**homas Fuller, a 17<sup>th</sup> century English historian wrote, “We never know the Worth of Water till the Well is dry” (*Gnomologia*, 1732). For those of us who live in California, Fuller’s metaphor has an absolute literal meaning. As California enters a fourth year of severe drought, Governor Brown has ordered a California first-ever mandatory water cutback, imposing a 25% reduction to make residents and commercial water users truly conserve, stating “People should realize we are in a new era. The idea of your nice little green grass that gets watered every day, that’s going to be a thing of the past”. The State Water Resources Control Board plans to release draft regulations mid-April with final approval in May. The record low of snow depth calculated in the previous worst drought of 1977 was 27". Today that value is calculated at 2". Not a typo —2"—the drought is severe.

How these new mandatory cutbacks will effect our water supplier, North Marin Water District (NMWD), needs to be seen. At the April 7 regular meeting of the NMWD a public hearing date of July 21 was set for review of the revisions to the NMWD “Water Shortage Contingency Plan” to address new State Water Resources Control Board Requests. I will report a summary of these revisions in a future edition of the *Echo*. Based upon a conversation I had recently with Ryan Grisso, the Water Conservation Coordinator for NMWD, our water is not dependent on the Sierra snow levels. NMWD acquires water from two sources, comprised of three reservoirs. About 20% of the water needs of the NMWD customers come from Stafford Lake. Stafford Lake lies four

miles west of downtown Novato and collects runoff from 8.3 square miles of watershed property. The other 80% comes from Lake Sonoma and Lake Mendocino. Lake Sonoma is about four times larger than Lake Mendocino. The Sonoma County Water Agency, which manages these two reservoirs, states on their website that Lake Sonoma can provide multiple years of water supply. According to their website, as of the end of March, Lake Sonoma is 89% and Lake Mendocino is 81% of capacity. Sonoma County Water Agency has agreements with NMWD to provide water from these two lakes to NMWD.

Even though our water supply is adequate in the short term, Ryan points out correctly, we need to take as many water conservation steps as we can. There is no doubt if further drought years approach, the cost of water can only increase. So it is not just environmentally a correct approach but an economical one as well to start conserving water. Ryan has suggested ideas that can support MVMCC residents to further conserve water.

- First, he has volunteered to come to the Park to speak to us about what he and NMWD have learned in the way of conservation efforts.
- Second, NMWD can perform a **Water Smart Home Survey**, at no charge to MVMCC or residents. An NMWD representative would visit each of our mobile homes to check for water efficiency, detect leaks, and provide free low-flow showerheads and aerators as needed. NMWD is offering many rebate programs—for instance, a rebate between \$100-\$150 for replacing a toilet older than 1993 with a low-flow model. See the complete list of interior

home rebates at [www.nmwd.com/conservation\\_interior.php](http://www.nmwd.com/conservation_interior.php). The Water Smart Home Survey can be done over a long period of time, where a group of mobile homes would be done each week. Matt and Ryan will be discussing how the Park could implement the program.

Here are some of the simple ways to save water from the NMWD:

## Indoors:

- Turn the water off
  - when brushing your teeth
  - between rinsing dishes
  - when soaping or shampooing during a shower
- Replace older non-low-flow toilets and showerheads
- Fix leaky faucets and toilets
- Run the dishwasher and washing machine only when there are full loads

## Outdoors:

- Water only in the late evening or early morning hours to reduce evaporation and interference from wind
- Repair leaks and broken sprinkler heads
- Add 2"–3" of mulch\* around trees and plants to reduce evaporation
- Upgrade to a “smart irrigation controller” that automatically adjusts watering times for hotter weather, and shuts down the system when it rains

For a complete list of water-saving tips see [www.nmwd.com/pdfs/conservation/Drought%20flyer%20Final%20March%202013.pdf](http://www.nmwd.com/pdfs/conservation/Drought%20flyer%20Final%20March%202013.pdf). Copies will also be on the counter in the office and on our website.

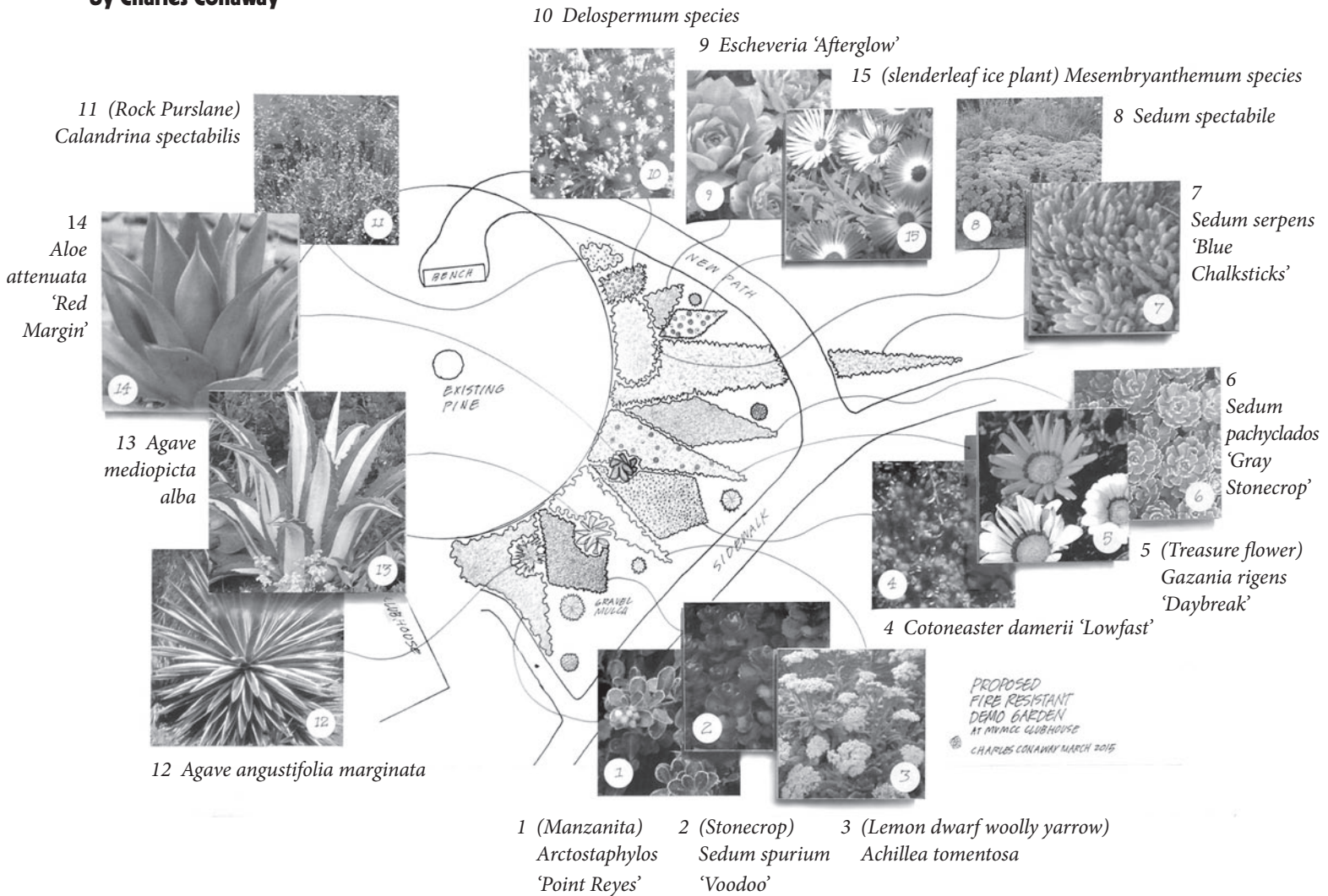
Since all Park residents are currently tied together in one water bill, all conservation actions we take not only save ourselves economically but also save all the other residents of the Park. Let’s do all we can to conserve water, and if you need support, it is available.

\*Editor’s note: Within five feet of a structure only noncombustible rock, gravel, concrete, pavers, or ignition-resistant plants are recommended. From 5’–30’, composted wood chips, Tahoe chips, and pine bark nuggets have the least hazardous mulch combustion.



# Proposed Fire-Resistant Demo Garden

by Charles Conaway



In response to the tremendous amount of highly flammable junipers in our park, the HOL tree and shrub committee recommended establishing a demonstration garden of flame-resistant plants. I volunteered to create one. I believe my horticultural skills can bring this project to fruition. The area chosen is south of the Clubhouse surrounding the large pine tree where all of the junipers were recently removed. Removal of the junipers left a large arc of land ready for cultivation.

I was inspired by the glorious view looking east over the bay where the sun and the moon rise. My concept for

this garden translates the rays of the sun into radiating beds of plants partially encircling the large orb of the pine tree. Each ray is planted with a single species of plant, allowing for easy identification. All of the plants are low growing, preserving the view for people walking and in passing vehicles.

I did not want to plant anything under the pine tree, which could act as a fire ladder. So almost two-thirds (11 species) of the plants are succulents because they are flame-proof. The other four plants are flame resistant. All of the plants are extremely drought resistant. They also are resistant to damage from deer,

hares, and other animals. They all flower, attracting hummingbirds and butterflies. Some also change foliage color with the revolving seasons. My plan also includes a path that will be created from the sidewalk to a new bench under the pine where you can sit and watch the sun and moon rise.

The garden will need some financial assistance from the residents. If you like the plan, which is on display in the Clubhouse lobby, and would enjoy seeing this “sunshine” garden become a reality, **please help by contributing.** Make checks out to HOL specifying “demo garden” and leave in the HOL box in the lobby. Thanks to all of you.

## Conversations on Death and Dying

**Sunday, May 3**

**3:00–5:00 p.m.**

**Fireside Room**

*Coffee and cake  
will be served in the kitchen*

How are you preparing  
for what's ahead?

What kind of death do you want?

What do you want your legacy to be?

Come talk about all of these issues  
and get practical advice on:

Paperwork (wills, medical  
directives, etc.)

Memorial arrangements

Type of ritual gathering

Disposition of the body

Music, speakers, etc.

Hospice services and caregivers

Following is an example of the  
practical advice we are making  
available to all residents.

# 10 Things the Funeral Home

by Karin Mortensen, Michael Hagerty, and the Death Forum

**T**here are so many tips out there for planning a funeral that you may feel overwhelmed by all options. Many of the guides and how-to manuals are by funeral homes, and, while most funeral information is truly meant to be helpful, there may be a few things the funeral home or director may not tell you unless you inquire specifically. Here are the most helpful and least-known tips we've discovered:

### 1. Preplan, but don't prepay

Preplanning your funeral and making your final arrangements in advance is a great idea. Not only does it save your loved ones from being forced to make difficult and emotional decisions, but it will give you peace of mind knowing that things are in order.

But preplanning does not need to mean prepayment; in fact, prepaying your funeral costs is generally a bad idea. Most prepayment plans do not include all costs, so your relatives will still have to deal with "additional fees" and other unexpected service charges. Also, if you outlast the funeral home (if it goes out of business), then everything you paid to the funeral home is lost.

Preplanning is recommended; just don't go in for prepaid funeral services.

### 2. You can rent a cremation urn or casket for the memorial service

Most funeral homes offer rentals which you can use for the memorial or funeral service. This is a great tip that can save you from paying too much for a casket you can't afford or an urn you don't want from the funeral home, and can also help you save on costly overnight shipping charges when ordering an urn or casket online.

### Casket rental

You can often rent a very attractive, high-end casket for use during the service. The body will generally be in a sturdy cardboard container which is placed inside the premium casket during the viewing and/or memorial service. Afterwards the cardboard container will be removed and buried or taken to the crematorium for cremation. This allows you to have the respectability of a beautiful casket during the public service without the premium cost attached to it.

### Urn rental

If you don't want one of the cremation urns that the funeral home offers, you can purchase one online. If you choose something unique or customized, it may take several days to several weeks to produce the urn. In the meantime, the memorial service can go forward using a rental from the funeral home. When a service is in the next few days and rush shipping charges on the cremation urn will double the cost—you can instead, rent an urn for the service, until the one you really want to use arrives soon after.

### 3. You can purchase cremation urns or caskets online much cheaper

Prices on the Web will almost always be more affordable than the same item at the funeral home. Despite any impression to the contrary you get from the funeral director, you are not required to purchase an urn or casket from them.

In fact, the funeral home is legally required to use the container you provide and will fill the cremation urn for you upon your request.

# Won't Tell You

## 4. Funeral homes usually keep low-cost caskets and urns in the back

If you're not comfortable shopping online or if you just don't want to hassle with another thing to do, you can still find more affordably-priced caskets and urns at the funeral home. Premium items are usually displayed in the showroom, along with a few cheaper models that give you the impression that you are looking at all the options. Ask if they have any more budget-friendly options in the back.

## 5. You can use an "alternative container" for cremation

There is no law that requires you to use or purchase a casket for cremation. Cremation service providers are required to inform you that alternative containers (i.e. cardboard) are available.

## 6. Veterans with honorable discharge get free burial

Veterans and spouses of veterans can obtain free burial and other services, such as perpetual care and personalized headstones, through the National Cemetery Administration of the U.S. Dept. of Veterans Affairs.

## 7. You can ask for a price list for all services

Many funeral homes will offer packages that ostensibly save you money, but those often include services you may not want or even need. Funeral homes are required to provide itemized price lists for all services if you ask for one. You can even do this without leaving your home—consumer protection laws require that funeral costs be provided over the phone if you call in.

## 8. Most services are optional

While most funeral directors are honest and helpful, you may get a pushy-salesman type who will try to sell you more than you need. Or perhaps you feel pressure from family and friends to make everything "just right." Or the vast range of options makes you feel like you need to accept more of the services the funeral home offers than you might under different circumstances.

Whatever the situation, remember that almost all of the services offered by the funeral home are optional, including:

- Embalming
- Viewing
- Burial vaults
- Flowers
- Transportation services
- Casket (you can rent and/or buy elsewhere)
- Urn (you can rent and/or buy elsewhere)
- Burial (you can choose cremation)
- Cremation (you can choose burial)
- Casket for cremation
- Seals, liners, etc.
- Warranties

In most states (excepting Louisiana, Nebraska, Illinois, New Jersey, New York, Indiana, Michigan, and Connecticut), **you are not required to use a licensed funeral home or director at all.** You can arrange and conduct the memorial or funeral in your home. However, it generally is advisable to have the knowledge, resources, and assistance that a professional can provide.

## 9. Funeral adjectives are relative

Since funeral arrangements are often a new experience for most people, the words and terminology used can subtly influence how you think about the options and services available at a funeral home.

For instance, many funeral homes or crematoriums will have **temporary urn** stamped onto the container in which the remains are returned to you. This can be misleading. It can imply that you need to purchase a **permanent urn.** While many people purchase a different container specifically designed to be a beautiful and lasting memorial, the "permanent urn" is any container you choose to house the remains.

Another term often used is **traditional**, which can exert a subtle pressure on you to conform to what people normally do. If you're presented with a "traditional" and a "budget" casket, don't decide based on the words used by the funeral home, but rather think through what you want and what you feel is appropriate to spend.

"Traditional" and "temporary" are common usage and helpful for explaining products and services within the funeral industry. Just be aware of the implications of certain terms (especially adjectives), and know that the final decision of what is right for your loved one is up to you and your family.

## 10. You can receive a written statement of costs before you pay

If you ask, funeral homes must give you a written statement and explanation of all costs associated with the funeral, burial, and/or cremation services you have chosen. This is helpful in making sure that you aren't charged unnecessary fees for services or products you do not want.

### Bonus tip:

Bring a friend. When planning a funeral, it's a good idea to bring another person along whenever you are shopping for or deciding on funeral services. Ideally, this is a person who was not as close to the decedent, as they will be able to offer a less emotionally invested opinion on the choices you'll be making.

Latitude N 38° 02' 37" Longitude W 122° 31' 19" Elevation 23 ft  
 Dawn: 06:23 Sunrise: 06:49 Moonrise: 21:04  
 Dusk: 20:03 Sunset: 19:36 Moonset: 07:32  
 Daylight: 13:40 Day length: 12:47 Moon Phase: Waning Gibbous



Welcome to Marin Valley, Novato, CA.  
 The weather station in use is the Davis Vantage Vue, and these pages are updated every 5 minutes. The meteorological day used at this station ends at midnight; the rain year starts on July 1st. Navigation links are at the foot of the page.  
 This weather station was initialised on 3/18/2015, which is why there are no readings earlier. It should not be considered infallible and may not reflect conditions even close by, as topological factors will influence readings of temperature, wind and rainfall.

Conditions at local time 16:50 on 05 April 2015

Temperature and Humidity			
Temperature	60.1 °F	Dew Point	38.7 °F
Windchill	60.1 °F	Humidity	45%
Heat Index	60.1 °F	Apparent Temperature	56.5 °F
Rainfall			
Rainfall Today	0.01 in	Rainfall Rate	0.00 in/hr
Rainfall This Month	0.01 in	Rainfall This Year	0.15 in
Rainfall Last Hour	0.00 in	Last rainfall	2015-04-05 11:25
Wind			
Wind Speed (gust)	8.0 mph	Wind Speed (avg)	2.0 mph
Wind Bearing	228° SW	Beaufort F1	Light air
Pressure			
Barometer	29.886 in	Steady	-0.007 in/hr

:now::gauges::today::yesterday::forecast::this month::this year::records::monthly records::trends::we



The home page shows the weather overview for the day. It also tells you the time of the dawn, dusk, sunrise, and sunset; the length of the daylight, the phases of the moon, and the times that the moon rises and sets.

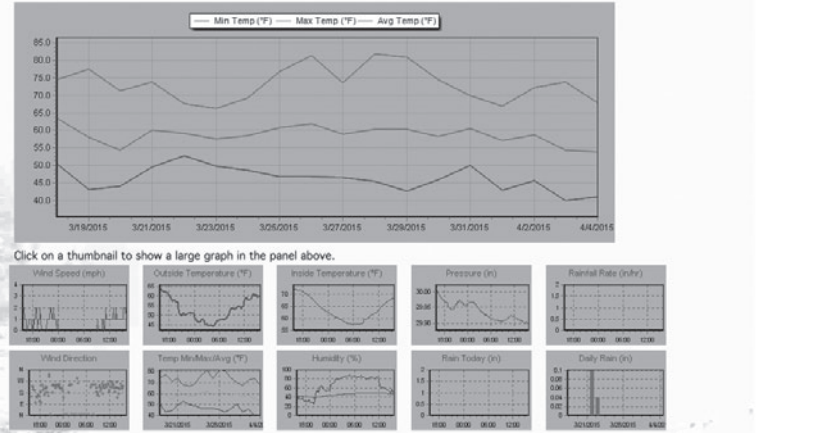


The monitoring device sits on the side of Peter's home.

These graphs show the high, low, and average temperature for each day. By clicking on one of the lower graphs, you can see details of rainfall, humidity, and wind direction.

Latitude N 38° 02' 37" Longitude W 122° 31' 19" Elevation 23 ft

These graphs present the temperature, pressure, rainfall, and wind speed trends for the last 24 hours. The thumbnail graphs are sampled every ten minutes. Click on a thumbnail to display the corresponding larger graph in the panel above it. The large graphs are sampled every minute.



# The New MVMCC Weather Station

[weather.mvmcc.org](http://weather.mvmcc.org)

by John Feld

Peter Dyke recently renovated and moved into a home on Club View Drive. He brought with him a high-quality weather station, which has been installed on the side of his home. It provides a highly detailed snapshot of the local weather. It measures high and low temperatures, wind speed and direction, air pressure, rainfall

The monthly statistics show temperature, dew point, humidity, barometric pressure, and rainfall ranges.

Records began on ----. Here are the month-by-month extremes recorded

[Jan] [Feb] [Mar] [Apr] [May] [Jun] [Jul] [Aug] [Sep] [Oct] [Nov] [Dec]

Records for the month of March

Temperature and Humidity	
Highest Temperature	81.8
Lowest Temperature	42.8
Highest Dew Point	59.7
Lowest Dew Point	30.8
Highest Apparent Temperature	83.7
Lowest Apparent Temperature	40.8
Lowest Wind Chill Temperature	42.8
Highest Heat Index	81.4
Highest Minimum	52.9
Lowest Maximum	66.3
Highest Humidity	97 %
Lowest Humidity	16 %
Highest Daily Range	38.1
Lowest Daily Range	14.8
Rainfall	
Highest Rain Rate	1.25
Highest Hourly Rainfall	0.10
Highest Daily Rainfall	0.10
Highest Monthly Rainfall	0.14
Longest Dry Period	8 day
Longest Wet Period	2 day
Wind	
Highest Wind Gust	16.0
Highest Wind Speed Average	5.0 mph
Highest Daily Wind Run	27.1
Pressure	
Lowest Pressure (sl)	29.96
Highest Pressure (sl)	30.31

:now::gauges::today::yesterday::forecast::this month::this year::records::monthly records

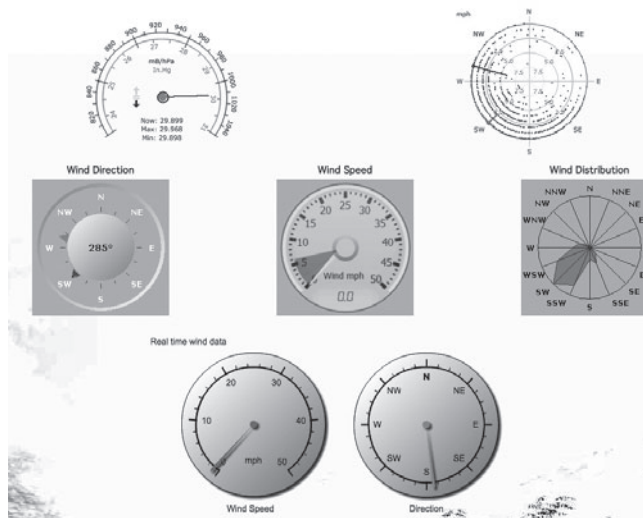
and many other metrics. These are collected and streamed onto a website: [weather.mvmcc.org](http://weather.mvmcc.org) and can be checked from any computer connected to the internet. The data is automatically updated every five minutes throughout the day and night.

There are graphs of maximum and minimum temperatures, humidity, dew points, rainfall for each day, and detailed graphs of wind direction. The device also measures how high the clouds are.

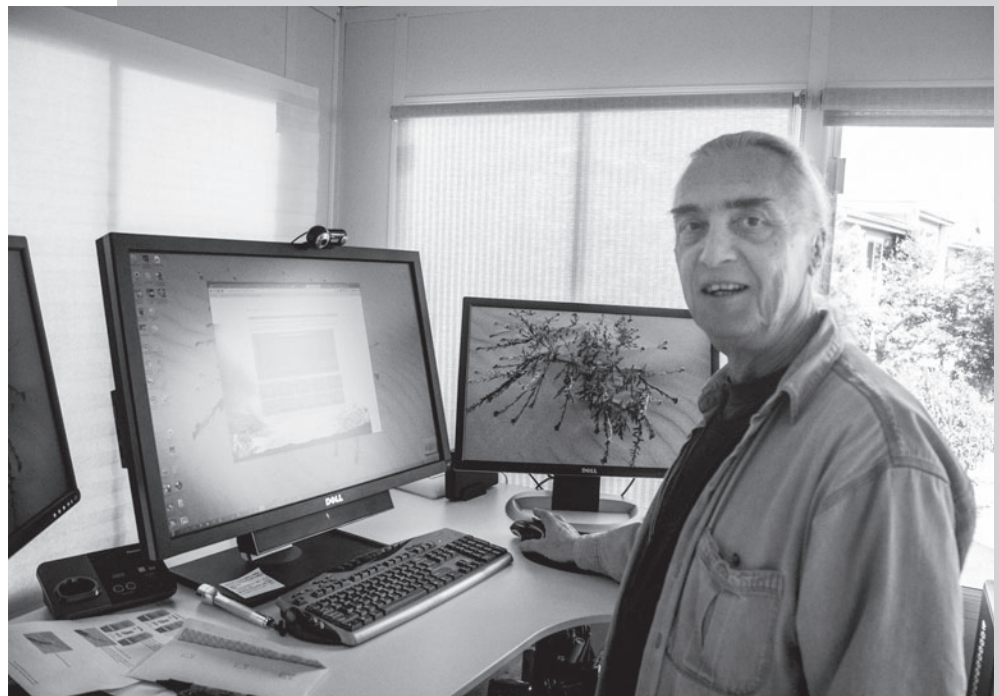
Peter is quick to point out that the readings at his house are not going to be exactly the same as at all homes in Marin Valley, but this is by far the closest weather station you will find. There is also a link to future forecasts.

There are 12 other weather stations in Novato; most weather sites on the Internet get information from Pleasant Valley near Novato Blvd.

Now you can stay abreast of *very* local weather.



*You can easily see the direction and speed of the wind at any time.*



*Peter Dyke standing at his computer where he monitors the weather station settings.*

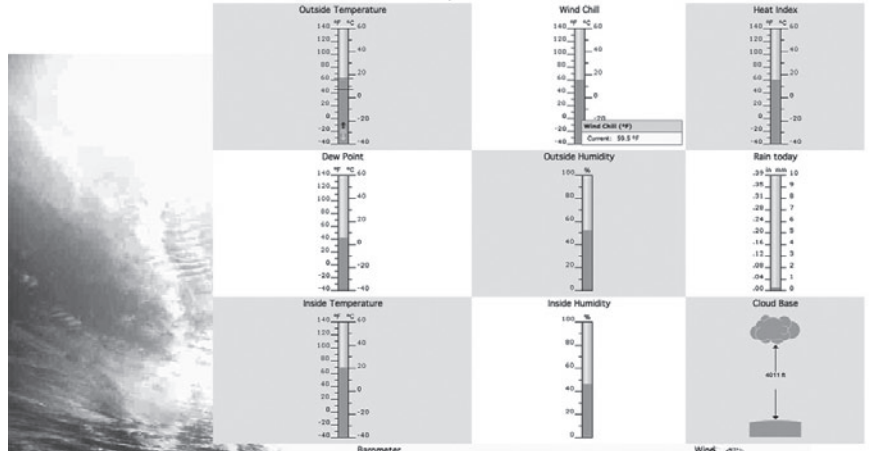
*This set of graphs shows temperature ranges, windchill, and the height of the clouds.*

Elevation 23 ft	
ded since then.	
"F	at 4:26 PM on 28 March 2015
"F	at 6:48 AM on 29 March 2015
"F	at 6:19 PM on 26 March 2015
"F	at 4:11 PM on 28 March 2015
"F	at 4:53 PM on 26 March 2015
"F	at 6:48 AM on 29 March 2015
"F	at 6:48 AM on 29 March 2015
"F	at 4:53 PM on 26 March 2015
"F	at 1:08 AM on 22 March 2015
"F	at 1:49 PM on 23 March 2015
"F	at 4:54 AM on 20 March 2015
"F	at 4:11 PM on 28 March 2015
"F	on 29 March 2015
"F	on 22 March 2015
in/hr	at 9:19 PM on 22 March 2015
in	at 9:29 PM on 22 March 2015
in	on 22 March 2015
in	March 2015
ms	to 31 March 2015
ms	to 23 March 2015
mph	at 6:02 AM on 31 March 2015
mph	at 2:24 PM on 22 March 2015
miles	on 31 March 2015
7 in	at 6:58 PM on 19 March 2015
3 in	at 10:54 PM on 23 March 2015
th::this year::records::monthly records::trends::webcam:	

mvmcc weather

Latitude N 38° 02' 37" Longitude W 122° 31' 19" Elevation 23 ft

Instrument view of current data at 15:45 on 05 April 2015



# The Starry Messenger

by Mike Krupp

**M**ay 2015

The skies are always changing. The evening star(s) will be spectacular this month.

**Venus** is brilliant as an evening star all month. Mercury may be visible as an evening star for part of the month—I say “may be visible” because the astronomical tables don’t allow for air pollution nor for the high elevation of our visible horizon towards the west.

To be visible an evening star must set late enough after sunset for it to show up in a sky that’s not completely dark. So this month:

- The sun will set between 6–7 p.m.
- Mercury will set around 9 p.m.
- Venus will set around 11 p.m.

**Venus** will be very bright much of the night, but around here you never know whether you will be able to see Mercury.

**Jupiter** will be bright and far from the horizon. If you can locate the Big Dipper, look at the two stars that indicate the side of the bowl to which the handle is attached. Imagine a straight line between those stars; extend it away from the opening of the bowl, and it should pass between two bright stars. The brighter one is Jupiter. The other star is Regulus, the brightest star in the constellation Leo (the lion).

## Event Calendar

**May 4:** Full moon.

This full moon was known by early Native American tribes as the Full Flower Moon because this was the time of year when spring flowers appeared in abundance. This moon has also been known as the Full Corn Planting Moon and the Milk Moon.

**May 5:** The New Horizon spacecraft is due to arrive near Pluto.

If all goes well NASA will show the first clear images either that day or the next. Even the Hubble telescope can’t give images as good as these will be.

As with the far side of the moon, this will be the first time human eyes will behold Pluto clearly. I plan not to miss this one!

**May 7:** Mercury is farthest away from the sun; this is called its “greatest elongation”; you have the best chance to see Mercury this evening.

**May 18–22:** The new moon will pass between Mercury and Venus.

If you can see Mercury and the moon is visible (it’s a new moon on the 18th, not visible) this will be something to see. Venus is the very bright star; Mercury will be much fainter than Venus and may be drowned out by the glow of the evening sky.

**May 20–22:** The new moon will pass close to Venus; it will be very close on the 21st.

This is one of my favorite astronomical events; I like to see it when the sky is a deep dark blue, shortly before full night. Gives me goose bumps.

**May 22–25:** The waxing moon will be between bright Venus and almost-as-bright Jupiter.

**May 23:** Saturn will be at opposition.

Opposition occurs when the Earth is close to a straight line from the sun to Saturn. At that time, we are as close as we will get to Saturn this year, which will be at its brightest. Look for it as a bright star high in the sky. It’s not nearly as bright as Venus or Jupiter, but it should be the brightest star in that area. To see the rings you will need a telescope.

**May 25–26:** The moon will be very close to Jupiter.

**May 30–June 1:** The moon will pass very close to Saturn.

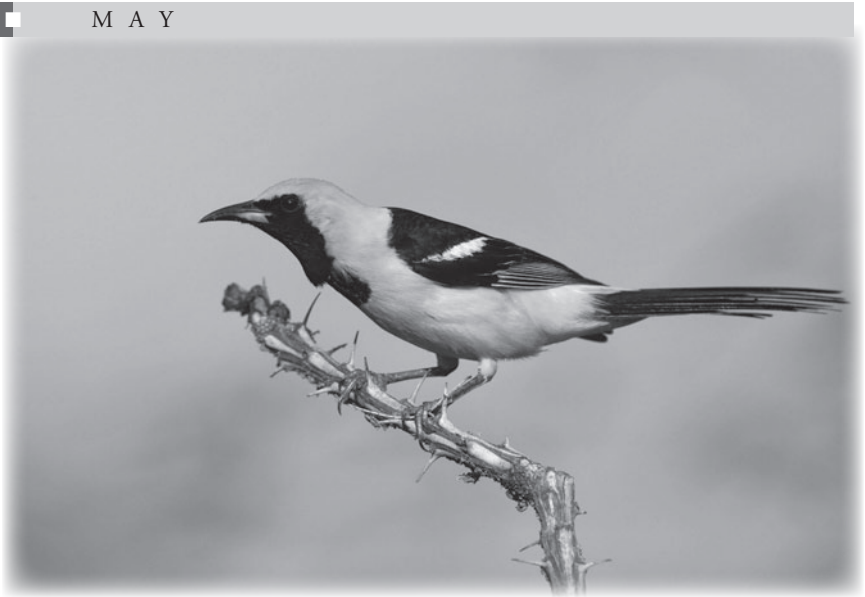
The moon will be nearly full, so it might drown out Saturn altogether. Look for the moon near Saturn on the 30th and 31st.

That’s about it for this month. Happy stargazing!

# Hooded Oriole

*One of the ones that Midas touched,  
Who failed to touch us all,  
Was that confiding prodigal,  
The blissful oriole.*

—Emily Dickinson



by Bill Noble

“**W**e have orioles?” a friend asked as I exclaimed over breakfast at the splendid orange, black, and white male sipping nectar in the bottlebrush just outside her window. She’d grown up back East, where caroling Baltimore orioles are feathered familiars who weave their purse-like, hanging nests in the treetops.

We do indeed have orioles; at MVMCC we have an unusually large community of hooded orioles in our fan palms. If it weren’t for our much-loved quail, they would likely be the park’s mascot.

Hooded orioles don’t just faithfully grace us with their presence every spring and summer; in a real sense, we brought them here. How? Originally, they lived only in desert oases and lowland forests tucked away south into Mexico and Belize. In California, they were inhabitants of oases in the Sonoran Desert. But as human populations grew, so did our gardens. One of the plants we admired was the Washingtonia fan palm, and we discovered that it did well in suburbia the length of the state.

Soon, the orioles discovered these graceful trees we’d planted—trees they have an ancient and intimate

relationship with. And the orioles realized suburbia comes with other temptations: fruits of all sorts . . . and hummingbird feeders, full of sweet syrup. Gratefully—or just opportunistically, but with great enthusiasm—they joined us. Orioles now nest north to Humboldt and Shasta, with a vigorous population in parts of eastern Marin.

The first males appear from their wintering grounds in Mexico in mid-March. Soon after, the plainer (but cleverer) females fly in.

There’s something paradoxical about hooded orioles; the males are visually stunning, but unlike most noisy, boisterous orioles, these birds are not conspicuous. Their songs are musical but quiet, and though they do chatter some, most of their call notes don’t attract attention, either. Unless you spot a male at your hummingbird feeder or sitting quietly at the tip-top of a neighborhood tree, the best way to spot one is this: (1) find at least two fan palms, not quite touching (easy in the Park); (2) listen for a thin, distinctive “vreeek” call, given frequently. Then watch, and in a minute or two, you’ll be rewarded.

The female of a pair picks a palm for her nest, almost always. She selects (quite secretively) a lower, still green

leaf, one that’s beginning to fold along its midrib. Dangling underneath, she pierces the leaf in multiple places, and then, using thin, strong fibers from the fraying leaf-edges of older leaves, she stitches her beautifully woven nest to the underside of the frond.

If your hummingbird feeder goes empty in an hour or two, it’s orioles. If you impale half an orange on a spike, orioles will find it. If you have long, tubular flowers in your garden, orioles are nectar thieves: rather than trying to reach the nectaries down the tube and helping with pollination, they simply slit the base of the flower and sip. Besides nectar and fruit, they gobble up insects and spiders.

In closing, here’s a fun fact about the Washingtonia palm itself. The leaf stalks on any palm under 15–18 feet are lined with large, hooked spines. But if you find a taller palm, the top fronds are spineless. Why? The answer is paleontological: until 10- to 15,000 years ago, giant ground sloths roamed California, munching the vegetation. The palms resisted being munched with their fierce spines, but even the biggest sloth couldn’t stretch higher than 15 to 18 feet. Looking carefully at our palms is a way of looking far back, to the time when humans first found the New World.

# May 2015

*Saturday*

*Friday*

*Sunday*

*Monday*














*Tuesday*

*Wednesday*

*Thursday*

*Friday*

*Saturday*

1-3 PM Mahjong 	6-8 AM Trash Pickup	10 AM-2 PM Craft Group	9:15 AM Qi Gong with Dove	4 PM Canasta 	10 AM Pre-Tai Chi with Jay
3-5 PM Conversations on Death and Dying 	9:30 AM Aerobics	11 AM-1 PM Whistlestop	6:30-7:10 PM Silent Meditation	5-7 PM Pub Night — Uno de Mayo Mexican Fiesta 	10:30 AM Art in the Park meeting
8-42 PM	7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker	7 PM PAC MEETING	7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker	7:15 PM Bingo	
1-4 PM Mahjong 	6-8 AM Trash Pickup	10 AM-2 PM Craft Group	9:15 AM Qi Gong with Dove	4 PM Canasta 	9 AM PAC Nominations open
5 PM Free-Form Dance & Movement 	9:30 AM Aerobics	11 AM-1 PM Whistlestop	6:30-7:10 PM Silent Meditation	5-7 PM Pub Night	10 AM Pre-Tai Chi with Jay
	7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker	6 PM MARVAL MEETING	7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker		
1-4 PM ART IN THE PARK <small>MWCC RESIDENT ARTISTS EXHIBIT</small> 	6-8 AM Trash Pickup	10 AM-2 PM Craft Group	9:15 AM Qi Gong with Dove	4 PM Canasta 	10 AM Pre-Tai Chi with Jay
	9:30 AM Aerobics	11 AM Ladies' Bridge	6:30-7:10 PM Silent Meditation	5-7 PM Pub Night	
	7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker	11 AM-1 PM Whistlestop	7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker		
1-4 PM Mahjong 	6-8 AM Trash Pickup	7 PM HOL MEETING	9:15 AM Qi Gong with Dove	4 PM Canasta 	10 AM Pre-Tai Chi with Jay
	9:30 AM Aerobics	10 AM-2 PM Craft Group	6:30-7:10 PM Silent Meditation	5-7 PM Pub Night	
		6 PM Meet the Candidates	7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker		
31 1-4 PM Mahjong 	MEMORIAL DAY MARVAL DINNER 5 PM 				

P A C N o m i n a t i o n s

c l o s e a t 4 P M