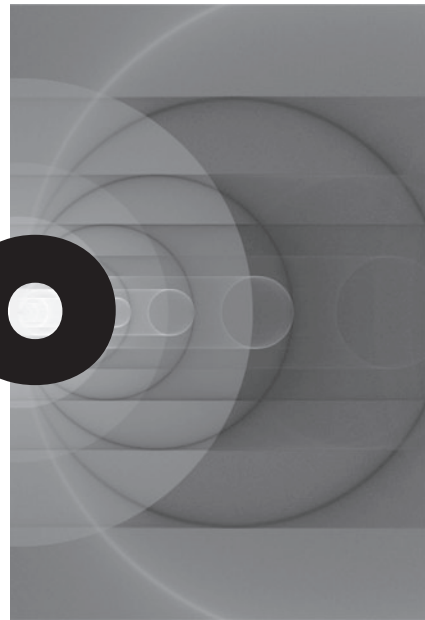


T H E

ECHO

June 2015



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Notices

MAY

PAC Meet the Candidates

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

JUNE

No QiGong classes in June

Class will resume July 2.

PAC board voting ends

Friday, June 5, 4:00 p.m.

Annual PAC board meeting

Saturday, June 6, 11:00 a.m. Fireside

Death Forum

Help for Caregivers with Progressive Loss, Compassion Fatigue, and Overwhelm.

Sunday, June 7, 3:00–5:00 p.m. Fireside

Novato City Council meeting

Monday, June 8, 6:30 p.m. Clubhouse

Mar Val board meeting

Wednesday, June 10, 6:00 p.m. Fireside

Mar Val Brunch

Saturday, June 13, 11:00 a.m. Deck

HOL board meeting

Wednesday, June 17, 7:00 a.m. Fireside

CPR Class

Saturday, June 27, 10:00 a.m. Fireside

JULY

Mar Val 4th of July Dinner

Saturday, July 4, 5:00 p.m.



Eric Carlson
125 Panorama Drive
April 2015



The life you save may be someone you love!

Adult CPR/AED Class

Saturday, June 27

10:00 a.m.–Noon

Fireside Room

- Respiratory and circulatory system
- Risk factors for heart disease, stroke, heart attack
- Adult hands-only CPR and choking
- Legal and ethical aspects of providing CPR
- Video of skills needed with multiple skills practice
- Review
- Exam—2-year certification with ASHI (American Safety & Health Institute)

\$20—please make check for \$10 payable to HOL (who will pay half)

CPR etc

Carole Gathman, RN

199 Marin Valley Drive

415-884-2720 • Fax: 415-234-6806

cpretc@comcast.net

www.cpr-etc.com

New Residents

Ellen Anderson

moved to 41 Club View
from 108 Panorama Drive

Kamala Allen

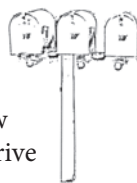
53 Marin Valley Drive
808-464-5171

Lucille Allison & John H. Reilly

34 Marin Valley Drive
415-328- 8292

Renate Vogel

24 Marin Valley Drive
415-305-9875



T H E **ECHO**

JUNE 2015

MARIN VALLEY
MOBILE COUNTRY CLUB

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

novatofinancing@att.net
WWW.MVMCC.COM

EDITOR **Erma Wheatley**

COPY PROOFING **Anila Manning**

PRINTING/PRODUCTION **MHB Group Region 8**
www.mobilehomeboard.com/

MARIN VALLEY MOBILE COUNTRY CLUB

GENERAL MANAGER **Matt Greenberg**

415-883-5911 415-883-1971 FAX
gm.mvmcc@gmail.com

PAC BOARD

PRESIDENT **Jay Shelfer** 415-883-6945
VICE PRESIDENT **Desiree Storch** 415-250-7297
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AT LARGE **Tom Miller** 415-244-5413

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Carolyn Corry 415-370-6403
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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

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,

The board has approved and sent to the City staff the Landscaping, Tree, and Shrub policy and the Clubhouse Events policy. A large and grateful thanks to all residents and volunteers, especially Jim Olson, former PAC board president; Nancy Bingham, HOL president; and the PAC, Mar Val and HOL board members who have worked so diligently and thoughtfully to form these policies. A copy is on the PAC bulletin board and the PAC and HOL pages of www.mvmcc.com. Approval by the current title holder, the Novato City Council, is pending.

Renewing Gas and Electric Infrastructure

We could hear later in the month whether we are accepted into the pilot PUC/PG&E program for the renovation of the gas and electric infrastructure. It would mean a savings of 2-3 million dollars. This potential opportunity could advance the timetable for redoing the balance of the infrastructure, namely the sewerage, waste water, and drinking water. While much of the infrastructure is still very usable, ample evidence reveals parts beginning to fail. Technology has improved over the years and we may benefit by upgrading when interest rates are low.

Rent Increase

Al Frei and the City staff have recommended a 2% rent increase in next year's budget to support increased costs and to save for upcoming infrastructure upgrades. This will be voted on by the City Council on Monday, June 8 when they meet

at the Clubhouse. At the May PAC meeting the board tabled support for this suggestion until the June 6 PAC meeting, to order to consider the financial implications of additional rent increases versus whether a future loan would be more appropriate to cover major structural changes, the size of increase, and whether many residents on fixed incomes can withstand potential increases. Your attendance at both meetings is needed and appreciated.

Please note

Annual PAC board meeting
Saturday, June 6, 11:00 a.m.

■

Novato City Council/MVMCC meeting
Monday, June 8, 6:30 p.m.
Clubhouse

Comcast Contract

Park management and the City's staff have agreed to cancel the Park-wide bulk contract with Comcast as of December 31 this year. When the bulk contract was started, Comcast agreed to supply basic TV reception at a fixed cost per home. It was thought that all homes would participate, therefore the park contracted to supply every home for a fixed cost. Household participation was voluntary. Many households have decided not to receive this service, and the Park has chosen to make up the difference rather than raise the cost to those households still using the service. This has resulted in a net loss of over \$60,000 a year. Starting next year each household will negotiate with the various providers for this service.

PAC Elections

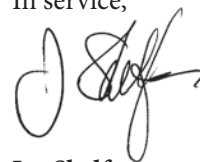
Tom Miller and **Larry Cohen's** PAC board positions are up for renewal and election. "Meet the Candidates" will begin at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, May 27. If there are new candidates, voting will begin after the program and end Friday, June 5 at 4:00 p.m. Election results will be announced at the annual meeting of the PAC board on **Saturday, June 6, at 11:00 a.m.** The incumbent candidates' terms will be renewed if they are the sole candidates.

Wish List

The PAC board has passed the items recommended by the wish list advisory committee. From Mar Val: new refrigerator, ballroom painting, stage curtain repair, and purchasing larger round tables. From HOL: personal lockers for the poolside changing rooms, a new shed, better pathway lighting along parking area walkways, and a new treadmill and StairStepper for the exercise room. The estimated cost for these items is \$22,900—less than 1% of the rental income for the park.

The Novato City Council will meet in the Clubhouse on **June 8 at 6:30 p.m.** to approve next year's budget and vote on the proposed rule changes to the Clubhouse Events policy and Tree and Shrub policy. You are encouraged to attend and make your opinion heard.

In service,



Jay Shelfer
P A C PRESIDENT
jjshelfer@yahoo.com

MVMCC Management Report

Preview of summer. Warm weather and dry conditions are coming. Please be fire safe and trim the dry grass for defensible space surrounding your home.

Remember if you are experiencing any issues with your gas system, please call the front desk first before calling PG&E. MVMCC is your gas company, and we have received training experience to help with any problems.

Rule #12 Carports: Keep up the good work and continue with your cleanup of stored items in your carport. Per Mobile Home Residency law, you are permitted only certain items in your carport. BBQ's and manufactured patio furniture are several accepted items. Parking is paramount with the number of resident vehicles here at MVMCC. Please be considerate

by cleaning out your carports and parking your vehicles under them.

Permits: Prior to any projects at your home, stop by the front desk to apply for any needed approvals or HCD permits. We can help you with this and guide you through the process.

If you ride a **motorcycle**, especially in the morning hours, please refrain from racing up the hill and causing noise for others to experience and wake up to. Abide by our 20 mph speed limit and please stop at all stop signs for the safety and consideration of others.

Water conservation is paramount. "Only" if absolutely necessary pressure wash your home. Pressure washers use 2.5 gallons of water per minute.

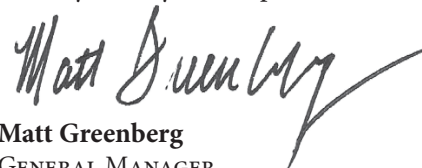
MVMCC Clubhouse is currently receiving an exterior facade upgrade. We are finding dry rot in all exposed

beams, fascia boards and some siding. Please excuse the scaffolding set up, as it is only temporary.

The MVMCC Clubhouse is now under 24-hour digital monitoring

Do you have concern over the condition of any retaining wall next to, or behind your home? I have a list of walls that need repair but I am sure there are some I have missed. Fill out a resident input form so I can inspect what is causing you concern and determine an appropriate repair.

Thank you for your cooperation,



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

MAR VAL Message from MarVal

Dear Friends,

As mentioned in last month's Echo, Mar Val is sponsoring a first time event which will hopefully showcase the ongoing improvements to the Clubhouse deck.

Please join us for

Jazz Brunch Under The Ragtop
Saturday, June 13
11:00 a.m.

The bar will open at 11:00 a.m. with brunch served at Noon. Musical entertainment will feature the Lee Waterman Trio. The menu will

include quiche, salad, fruit and pastries at a cost of \$10.00 per person. Reservations will close on Wednesday, June 10th or when maximum attendance is reached, whichever occurs first.

Having recently celebrated the amazing volunteers who are Marin Valley's most important asset, there are two groups within the Mar Val function deserving special attention for their ongoing contributions to the quality of life we all enjoy. I am referring to Bev Tanem and the team of ladies who so devotedly maintain

our library and K.C. Casey and the "Welcome" committee who ensure that new residents first impression of our community is both friendly and positive. I'm certain you join me in thanking these volunteers and encouraging them to continue their good work.

With warmest regards,



Kathleen Dargie
MAR VAL PRESIDENT
kfdargie@aol.com

HOL Message from Homeowners' League

It is that time of the year again—a new season is approaching with yearly elections of all the MVMCC boards. During our May meeting HOL elected the new Board of Directors. We should thank all the volunteers for stepping up to making this the best place to live. Also HOL wants to thank Valerie Barbour and Richard Wilson for chairing the nomination committee.

We still need volunteers for committee chairpersons. If the HOL board asks you to volunteer, please give the opportunity some serious thought. This community will only be as great as the many wonderful volunteers who make it so. Without them we would be nothing but another mobile community with no voice.

The Emergency Preparedness Fair was a huge success. I only hope that each one of you had a chance to attend.

One of the highlights of each year is the Art in the Park gala. As usual the quality and commitment of the art shown was beyond expressing. It was GREAT!! Thank You Suzie Lahr and all the artists that made this possible.

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

I would like to thank all of the residents and Park management for your support and guidance during this adventure as the HOL president. After two-and-a-half years as president and seven years as treasurer of HOL it is time to ride off into the sunset. I am

not going far and will still be handling the Contractor book. (Please fill out surveys.) Give your complete support and guidance to the new board and PLEASE volunteer to any one of the three boards you feel best suits your talents. Our Park is only as good as the residents make it through volunteering.

Please attend the next HOL meeting on **Wednesday, June 17, 7:00 p.m.** in the Fireside room to meet and install the Board of Directors. This will let them know the community supports them.

Thank you,

Nancy Bingham

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

BRUNCH RESERVATION FORM JUNE 13



Resident _____
Resident _____
Guest _____
Guest _____

Number Residents ____ @ \$10 each Number Guests ____ @ \$10 each
Check for \$_____ is enclosed (NO CASH—checks payable to Mar Val)

**Reservation Deadline is June 10 @ 5:00 p.m.
or when 140 reservations have been received.**

JULY 4TH RESERVATION FORM

Please circle entrée choice

Resident _____ chicken vegetarian
Resident _____ chicken vegetarian
Guest _____ chicken vegetarian
Guest _____ chicken vegetarian

Number Residents ____ @ \$10 each Number Guests ____ @ \$10 each
Check for \$_____ is enclosed (NO CASH—checks payable to Mar Val)

**Reservation Deadline is July 1 @ 5:00 p.m.
or when 140 reservations have been received.**



Highlights—Emergency

by Serena D'Arcy-Fisher



Novato Mayor Jeanne MacLeamy

Saturday, April 25, Marin Valley's Emergency Services Team's (MVEST) hosted the first Emergency Preparedness Fair in the Park. Representatives from local professional services offered information on fire-safe homes, pet care and other emergency procedures, and low-cost loans. Vendors offered earthquake bracing demonstrations, emergency supplies, and insurance. Novato Mayor Jeanne MacLeamy, Assistant City Manager Cathy Capriola, and Dave Jeffries, Head of the Novato Office of Emergency Services, attended the fair

showing the city's support for our volunteer efforts to make Marin Valley a safer community.

Advice from the 2014 Napa Earthquake

Kelly Doheny, Manager of the Napa Mobile Home Park damaged by the 2014 Napa Earthquake, kicked off the presentations with her account of what happened moments after the Napa earthquake. Kelly recounted how she was thrown from her bed and hit her face hard. Reaching for her flashlight she found it was no longer there—the quake had sent it across the room and she had to stumble around in the dark. Kelly's advise is to keep your flashlight anchored to your bed head, hanging from a doorknob, (or at least in a closed bedside drawer). Also recommended is to keep a pair of shoes under your bed, as broken glass will be a danger. Fortunately, Kelly said they had earthquake bracing under most of their mobile home, but the one area that was not braced was badly damaged. Sadly, a number of homes in her park burnt to the ground before the fire department could stem the fires. The biggest culprits were water heaters that fell out of closets due to the shaking, and the subsequent broken gas flex-lines. The leaking gas was ignited by the pilot light! It was heartening to hear about the community spirit that brought everyone together to help one another. In summary, Kelly advises being prepared by installing safely mitigations and taking care of yourself and your neighbors.

MVEST is promoting all of these factors in our community and thanks all our volunteers and residents for their support as we endeavor to make this community safer and more resilient.



Novato Fire Marshal/Battalion Chief Bill Tyler offers mobile home fire-safe recommendations

Preparedness Fair

Fire Department and Humane Society Recommendations

Novato Fire Marshal/Battalion Chief Bill Tyler offered some valuable advice on creating fire-safe mobile homes. Information from his talk will be covered in upcoming issues of the *Echo*. Captain Cindy Machado addressed pet preparedness. The Humane Society's goal is to have a list of all the pets in our community, including their medications and special needs on file, so that they can help take care of and reunite pets with owners in a disaster. MVEST Block Captains will be conducting another survey later this summer to help residents get prepared and we will include the pet questionnaire in this process.

If you would like to learn more about the professional services and their recommendations for being self-prepared and for creating a safer home, MVEST is developing an

information reference binder, which will be available in the Clubhouse library sometime in June.

Upcoming MVEST related trainings include CPR and Incident Command (IC) training. Please contact John Hansen for information about the IC training: johnhansen.emt@gmail.com.

The CPR class will be held on June 27, 10:00–noon. More details and a sign-up sheet can be found at the front desk of the clubhouse.

Thank you for your support of MVEST. ■



Our one-armed chef Bill Davis prepared and helped serve the delicious lunch



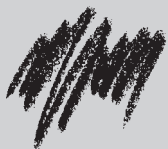
Welcome support from the Novato Fire Department



Napa Mobile Home Park Manager Kelly Doheny recounts her experience during the 2014 Napa Earthquake



ART IN THE PARK



ARTIST PROFILE

Michele Rivers



For current exhibits, purchasing art, and commissions, please contact Michele Rivers at 415-827-9793 or micheleandrivers@gmail.com

We hope you were able to attend our resident 3rd Annual Art in the Park. It was an exhilarating, educational and delightful day with several artists demonstrating the processes used in creating their arts. The attendees really enjoyed visiting with each

resident artist and seeing all the beauty they create here in our midst. We also had a dynamic surprise Flash dance onstage; you had to be there to see our very own Mike Hagerty and Tina his dance partner perform the Tango! Please stop by and visit our ongoing gallery exhibit in the

lobby and Fireside room when you are in the Clubhouse.

Following is a bio from Michele Rivers, one of our new artists in the Park and our first Artist Profile. We will be highlighting the artists in this column so you can get to know them as your resident neighbors. ■

Suzie Lahr

Michele Rivers — Renaissance woman...

celebrates life as an artist, author, an active C.P.I.T.S. (California Poets in the Schools) poetry teacher, photographer, designer and educator. Michele's artwork has been exhibited extensively in California, including solo shows at Commonweal, California Pacific Medical Center, and the Atrium gallery at the Marin Oncology. Her driftwood sculptures and altars have been selected for exhibition at The International Rumi Conference at The Robert J. Fullerton Art Museum. She is also the recipient of a Marin Art's Council grant and a California State Fair Recycled Art award winner. Michele has been the recipient of grants for her *Altar Workshops—Creating Sacred Space* by The Lloyd Symington and The Mental Insight Foundations.

She is the author of several books including: *Time For Tea—Tea and Conversations with Thirteen English Women* and produced and hosted *Time For Tea*—a six-part television series for Channel 26 TV. Michele recently moved to the Park where a rich community spirit and the landscape remind her of her homeland in the English countryside. ■

"Michele Rivers' sculptures made from wood shaped by the ocean evoke the mysteries of the contact points between earth, water, fire and sky. Those privileged to meditate on these sculptures are blessed."

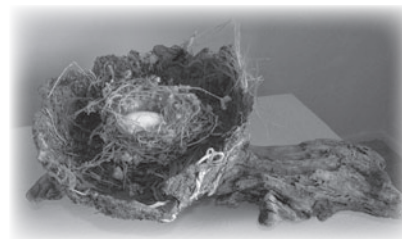
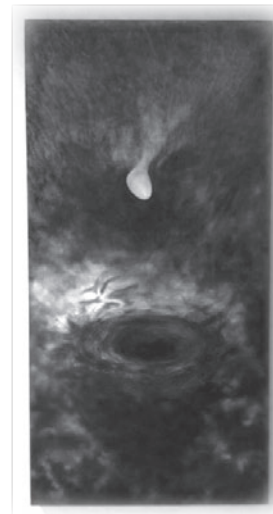
Michael Lerner

Founder, Commonweal;
Author, Choices In Healing

"Found woods, primary forms of ascendancy—ladders, altars, luminaries, inscribed with succinct words of wisdom typify Michele Rivers' work. Each of these elements contribute to a simple yet eloquent dynamic, focused upon an inherent duality in life—constancy and change, offering unfeigned comfort, and hope."

Lois Meredith

formerly Education Assoc.
The Whitney Museum



“Dear Residents of Marin Valley,

After over 14 years of being privileged to serve you all as Park Improvement Chairperson and gardener, I am sorry to say it is time to move on to other things in life. It has been a wonderful ride.

I want to thank all the residents who have supported PIC with your generous donations through the years and the many who gave above and beyond the years’ donations of \$10. The gardens and trees could not have come together without your financial help, and most of all thank you for putting your trust in me.

I remember well the first day I started the project by having all the junipers removed with my very first volunteers, **Dee Schneider, Mogens Schow, Burt Vreeland**, and myself.

Not to forget **Catheine Frey** who at that time was the chairperson of PIC—she really did not know anything about gardening, but she put her trust in me. And so we began—a pile of soil and a space that looked like a baseball field to me. At that time, I would design and work week-by-week—hours of research of what would and could survive in this given garden to be. Dee Schneider and I would drive miles to seek out native, and deer resistant plants.

We were very lucky and got a jump start financially from the Fire

Department with a grant, and also a very generous donation of \$2,000 from a resident, **Joanna Longfellow**. She knew I had taken on a large task and wanted to help financially any way she could. With the money from her contribution, all the trees planted in the main garden were planted.



Not to forget the many volunteers, **Tom Naldoski, Maria Schultz, Charles Conoway, Janet Bogardus, Dee Lind, Dee**



Schneider, Tony and Susan Hoff, who have helped plant, weed, and given of their time to support the gardens.

My very first wonderful garden volunteer was **Martha McConnell**. She was an early riser like myself and together we would work in the gardens for many years. It was a sad day for me when she finally stopped.

And also the residents who watered the newly planted trees for the period of two years to help them get established, who worked at daily jobs but gave of their time; also, **Bonnie Edwards** and **Julie Manson** and **Nancy Bingham**—Thank you.

And a Big Thank you to **Bob Tanem**, who advised and supported me with many decisions of plantings. He was always there for me.

I hope that I have not forgotten anyone who has helped me on this long journey I have taken.

May the daffodils that bloom every Spring be a memory of the footprints of all the volunteers that faithfully served through the years—starting with our own **Fred Dargie**.

So now I am reaching out to you residents to see if someone out there would like to be the next Park Improvement Chairperson, who is interested in gardening and maintaining our beautiful gardens, and to work with HOL and management.

Anyone who is interested feel free to call me, or contact the HOL board.

Thank you all again,

Pauline Hawkins

Park Improvement Chairperson”

EDITOR’S NOTE: Pauline will be 80 in July. It may take more than one person to replace her. Thank you, Pauline.

Help For Caregivers with Progressive Loss, Compassion Fatigue, and Overwhelm

by Karin Mortensen and Michael Hagerty

Death Forum June Meeting

Sunday • June 7
3:00–5:00 p.m.
Fireside Room

*Help For Caregivers
with Progressive Loss,
Compassion Fatigue,
and Overwhelm*

A short talk followed
by conversation with

Judy Long
Heartland Hospice

A final illness can be a long series of enmeshments of parts of ourselves, both as one facing death, and/or the caregiver/life companion who accompanies that person to the threshold of death. How do I hold to my center? How do I stay the course in the face of such a huge demand? What are these painful and sometimes angry feelings? What does it mean to put my own oxygen mask on first? Where is my mask?

Judy Long is an interfaith chaplain at Heartland Hospice, and at UCSF with oncology, Neurology ICU, and Neonatal ICU. She teaches Mindfulness-based stress reduction and the Stanford Compassion Cultivation training. She is also trained in Home Funerals and Green Burial.

If you need someone to cover for you with your caregiver so you can come to this meeting, please let us know in a timely fashion, and we will undertake to find someone to spell you. Contact Karin Mortensen 415-328-9612. ■

Last month, Death Forum sponsored a general discussion for residents. Helen McLam posed a series of questions that will help all of us plan the rest of our lives:

- (1) What kind of death do you want?
- (2) What do you want your legacy to be?
- (3) What do you want to do *before* you die?

Every resident had different answers to give their own lives meaning, but some common themes came out.

First—planning your own memorial service can be a great gift to your loved ones, who will be stressed out themselves. They would love to give you a memorial service that they know you want, so writing down your wishes is a gift to them.

Second—you aren't required to go to a funeral home, but can have a home funeral with friends visiting for up to three days (just put ice packs or dry ice around the body).

Third—you aren't required to purchase an expensive coffin. Many just want to display the body in a coffin for a few hours, then to be cremated. That was



SIPRESS

"Don't freak out—it's just a save-the-date."

Philip Wharton's wish, who died here two months ago. His wife Karen had a finely-finished wood coffin made for the funeral, and she has kindly donated it to the community if others want to use it. At first the idea sounds disrespectful or scary, but it recycles precious resources, and can save people thousands of dollars. A lot of folks decided that they would like to use it rather than get ripped off by funeral homes, but each person gets to make their own decision (and people who choose to be buried will need to purchase their own coffins).

Community coffin

Below is a photo of our new "community coffin" for anyone's use. We will engrave the name of each person who uses it, as their memory lives on in our community.



Finally, eight knowledgeable people volunteered to be available to talk anytime with residents about issues of death and dying, and they are now listed on the community bulletin board.

Overall, residents were thrilled to have a place to talk honestly about death and dying. Most of us are hesitant to talk about it, because we worry that others will feel uncomfortable. Instead, we had coffee and cake, and laughed and bonded. Everyone is welcome to drop in at this month's Death Forum. ■

PG&E Free Energy Efficiency Program

Starting again June 1, Synergy Companies in conjunction with PG&E will come to your home and do a completely free audit and tune-up of your heating and air conditioning system. For most homes, they will:

- Adjust the refrigerant
- Clean the electric coil
- Clean or replace the filter
- Replace caps
- Check the airflow
- Install an energy efficient blower motor
- Install an energy efficient fan controller
- Seal ducts
- Provide compact fluorescent bulbs
- Install water-saving showerheads and faucet aerators

There is no charge for these cost reducing energy-efficient enhancements for eligible* homes. It has already being paid from a small charge on the monthly utility bill. (*The program is not available for homes with overhead registers.)

Call Mandy at (559) 776-0084 or check in at the front desk at the Clubhouse.

Women's Inspirational Book Study

With Videos and Discussion Group

HOSTED BY JUDY VUCCI AND DAUGHTER GINA VUCCI

A series of five monthly meetings, will begin **June 1, at 7:00 p.m. in the Fireplace Room**. If you're not a big reader, you're welcome to come, view the videos, and join the discussion.

We will read Christine Caine's book, *Undaunted*, which tells her story of being abandoned at birth and abused as a child until she felt worthless. Through her faith in a loving God she regained her sense of value, and went on to become an acclaimed international

speaker. She and her husband have formed an organization that rescues victims of sex-trafficking in many countries around the world, helping them to regain their sense of self-worth and to learn skills that will help them build a new life. It is an amazing story, and she is a dynamite speaker as you will experience in her videos.

Description from the book's cover: "*Christine offers life-transforming insights about not only how to overcome the trials, wrong turns, and often painful circumstances we all experience, but also how to grow from those experiences and be equipped and empowered to help others.*"

We hope you will join us! Contact Judy for more details at 415-306-1331; judyvucci@gmail.com. ■



Smart Train spotting—from a trial run, May 6, 2015, after hearing a horn outside.

PHOTO: PETER DYKE

Helen MacLam

by Inga Grace

Interview



PHOTO: INGA GRACE

Today I Choose Joy

The winter before last, when Helen once again shoveled two feet of snow from the roof of her SUV, she began to think that living may be easier in California.

Other than the Brooklyn of her childhood, Vermont had always been the place she called her spiritual and geographic home. Living there and raising a family with her husband David, she enjoyed a career as an academic librarian at Dartmouth college. She also had a rich volunteer life, serving as a board member of a consumer co-op, doing lay counseling at a crisis center, and volunteering with the palliative care team at a nearby teaching hospital.

Yet, as Helen turned 80, widowed after a very long and happy marriage, she asked herself: “What comes next?”

Her son David and his wife Juliette already lived here at Marin Valley and with their encouragement Helen took the leap and relocated to her new, lovely home in our community.

“Growth and the ability to accept change are vital qualities for successful aging. If we are lucky, we continue to grow all of our lives. I think we, as human beings, have the capacity to grow indefinitely and to expand our horizons and appreciation of many things,” Helen responded when asked how she found the courage to move. “I have been extremely lucky to have been with people who have fostered spiritual/emotional growth. Love is the quality that keeps us all going.”

Helen received a kind of support from her late husband that was unusual for its time. He encouraged her to complete college and was equally supportive of her desire to pursue a graduate degree in library science, although it meant being separated for much of the year and him assuming family

responsibilities. Later, at the age of 50, again with his support, Helen began a second career, in publishing. This time it meant commuting weekly, 170 miles, between Connecticut and Vermont.

As a college freshman in 1952, Helen went as an exchange student to a black women’s college in North Carolina. “Experiencing the segregated South from the point of view of women of color was life-altering.” Later, on sabbatical leave from the Dartmouth library, she earned a Master’s Degree in Afro-American studies. This led Helen to a summer in Ghana, volunteering in a work camp and living with an African family in the village. She still supports the education of the children of her “African family.”

“For me singing is a spiritual activity—anything from Mozart to Gospel” and daily walks around the park, an informal walking meditation, are Helen’s way of “drinking in the beauty of this place and giving the mind a rest from daily concerns.”

With Helen what you see is what you get; her peaceful grounded presence has been hard-earned, however, and she attributes her spiritual core of authenticity to working sincerely to face difficult situations and continue to grow and expand. Exercise feeds this core; she works out at the local YMCA.

Being fully present to spirit, to who we are beyond personality, and simultaneously learning and growing, being open to what life has to offer. Choosing Joy!

That is the essence of Helen. ■

The Starry Messenger

by Mike Krupp

June Event Calendar

June 2

Full Moon. This full moon was known by early Native American tribes as the Full Strawberry Moon because it signaled the time of year to gather ripening fruit. It also coincides with the peak of the strawberry harvesting season and also known as the Full Rose Moon and the Full Honey Moon.

June 5

The International Space Station is supposed to be visible for about seven minutes in the early morning. She exits Earth's shadow at 4:37 a.m. halfway up the sky to the northwest; she is brightest at 4:39, and sets beyond the southeastern horizon at 4:44 a.m. She should catch your eye as a fast-moving, bright point of light.

June 6

Venus should be farthest from the sun for this period of her being an evening star; this is called her "greatest elongation." Binoculars will show her shaped like a half-moon. She will start apparently moving closer to the sun, and also closer to us. She will appear bigger each day because she's getting closer; she will also show crescent phases like the waning moon for the same reason as the moon's phases: we will be seeing less and less of her sunlit face. She will be between us and the Sun in July and not visible; then she will begin a tour as a morning star.

June 16

New Moon. The moon will be hardly visible this evening. Over the next

few days look for the thin crescent moon near very bright Venus. In the next few months Venus will become even brighter, and well worth seeing, especially close to the moon.

June 18 through the rest of the year:

Mercury is a morning star.

June 20 through July 8

Venus and **Jupiter** close together (in conjunction) to the west: two brilliant jewels.

June 21

Summer Solstice: the Earth's North Pole will be tilted toward the sun, which will have reached its northernmost position in the sky. The sun will be directly over the Tropic of Cancer at 23.4 degrees North latitude. This is defined as the beginning of summer for the northern hemisphere, where this day will be the longest of the year. For the southern hemisphere it will be the beginning of winter, and will be the shortest day of the year.

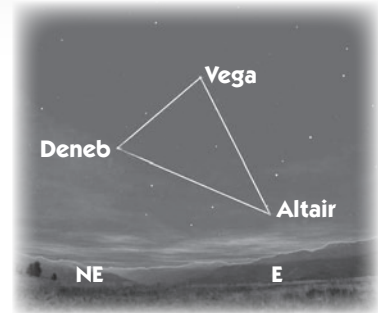
The thin moon will pass close to Venus, Jupiter, and bright star Regulus: another striking display. Jupiter will set first, sometime after 10:00 p.m. For us in the Park, it will disappear rather earlier behind our hilly western horizon, so look early and often.

June 30 and July 1

Venus and Jupiter are very cozy (in conjunction) glowing right next to each other.

And that's the schedule for June.

Now, go out and stargaze! ■



Look for the **Summer Triangle** in the east as the sky grows dark. These are three of the brightest stars in the sky:

Vega, the brightest, rises first a bit north of east;

then **Deneb**, farther toward northeast and the least bright;

and finally **Altair**, second brightest and almost directly east, at the narrow apex of the triangle.

It used to be called the "navigator's triangle" because it was easily recognized, and Altair rose nearly due east.

Venus will be a very bright evening star all month and won't set until after 11:00 p.m.

Famous Women Astronomers

by Mike Krupp

While researching the “Expanding importance of Henrietta Leavitt’s discovery that by observing certain kinds of variable stars, one could tell their distance relatively accurately. In fact, there were many significant women astronomers and more highly-qualified women than room for here. Very few women had access to formal education until recently; very few had academic positions or were considered professional astronomers; nevertheless, women made fundamental discoveries.

Caroline Herschel (1750-1848)

worked with her brother William who discovered Uranus; made pioneering contributions to our understanding of the large-scale structure of the universe. Best known for editing William’s notes and publishing his catalog of over 2500 nebulae.

Maria Mitchell (1818-1889)

—America’s first well-known woman astronomer and one of very few women scientists in the U.S. at that time. She was elected the first woman member of the American Academy of Arts & Science for having done significant, impressive work in astronomy; the next woman was elected 95 years later. Despite Maria’s lack of formal education, when Vassar College opened in 1865 she was appointed Director of the college observatory and full Professor of Astronomy.

Oh! I have slipped the surly bonds of Earth
And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings;
Sunward I’ve climbed, and joined the tumbling mirth
of sun-split clouds—and done a hundred things
You have not dreamed of—wheeled and soared
and swung
High in the sunlit silence. Hov’ring there,
I’ve chased the shouting wind along, and flung
My eager craft through footless halls of air....

Gillespie Magee, *High Flight*, 1941

Annie Jump Cannon (1863-1941)

Working as an assistant astronomer at Harvard, she established the system of classifying spectra of stars that with minor modifications is still used today. It’s called the “OBFGKM” series, in decreasing order of surface temperatures. During her lifetime she classified about 350,000 stars, more than anybody else had ever done.

Henrietta Leavitt (1868-1921)

As a “computer” (data analyst) at Harvard College Observatory, she discovered and cataloged stars whose brightness oscillates periodically (called “variable” stars). She found that the periods of Cepheid variables were related to their intrinsic brightness (their brightness at a specified distance). Since you can calculate distance of a star by comparing its intrinsic brightness with its apparent brightness, she had discovered the first distance-measuring scheme which worked at intergalactic distances. This work led to the discovery that the universe was much vaster than supposed, and was getting even bigger.

Cecilia Payne-Gaposchkin (1900-1979)

Gaposchkin was the first person of either sex to receive a Ph.D. degree in Astronomy. She studied spectral lines on photographic plates, then with new theoretical predictions of how temperature and the state of ionization in a star’s atmosphere affect the relative strength of those lines, she assigned surface temperatures to each type of star (using Annie Jump Cannon’s star types) which have not been significantly revised since—a fundamental contribution to knowledge. She also discovered that the Sun’s atmosphere was mostly hydrogen, with some helium. In 1956 she was appointed a full professor and Chair of Harvard’s Astronomy Department; she was the first woman to hold such a position that was not specifically designated for a woman.

Christa McAuliffe (1948-1986)

— an astronaut rather than an astronomer. While working as a high-school teacher she was selected from 11,000 applicants to be the first “ordinary citizen” (non-astronaut) teacher in space. She was to conduct experiments and teach lessons while in space; the lessons would be broadcast live, showing that NASA was made up of ordinary people. On January 28, 1986, she boarded space shuttle Challenger with six other crew members. Challenger exploded 73 seconds after lift off. As a memorial, a crater on the Moon and another on Venus were named “McAuliffe.” ■

Bicolored Blackbird

by Bill Noble

You can't avoid knowing this glossy-black bird with the scarlet "shoulders" and its ever-present, jangly song—though you may not know his quieter, brown-streaked mates, hard at work at their nests. The song of the red-winged blackbird provides one of the most familiar themes of native North America, from the fringes of the Arctic to the Mexican border and beyond.

I grew up in New England waiting every March for the first jubilant *konk-a-reeeeee* from the cattails along the Housatonic River, and though their song has a slightly different accent here in California, it's equally unmistakable . . . and in this milder climate I get to hear it year round.

But wait—I said "redwinged blackbird" and my headline says "bicolored blackbird. What gives?"

The Bay Area and the adjacent Central Valley are the home of a kind of redwing that's visually distinctive, and, scientifically, more than a little mysterious.

Most redwings have their brilliant red epaulets at the bend of the wing accented just below by a neat row of yellow feathers. In our bicolors, those yellow feathers are black, like the rest of the wing. We're the only place in their continent-wide range where that happens.

Or almost the only place. The mountain valleys of Mexico's southern Sierra Madre and "volcano zone" also have bicolored blackbirds. DNA studies tell us that these distant birds and ours are essentially identical. It may be that, long ago in harsher weather, Bay Area

exploded, and in the process, our special bicolors find themselves bumping up against lots of other red-winged blackbirds.

In nearly two years at MVMCC, I've seen only one other "standard" blackbird with its fringe of yellow feathers, but the genetic evidence is that bicolors' genes are being slowly diluted by the adjacent populations.

That's already happened to one Marin County bird. We had our own quite distinct subspecies of chestnut-backed chickadee here, darker and richer brown than the races around it, confined to just the Marin Peninsula. But as more and more trees got planted in the grassy hill country that formed a natural barrier between

Marin's forest and the Russian River country, the paler, widespread northern subspecies of chickadee spread south, and in just half a century or so has almost completely swamped the distinctive genetics of Marin chickadees. It's rare now to see a chickadee sporting the rich colors of our heritage bird.



Life is change. Our brilliant bicolored blackbirds may be destined to fade into the North American gene pool, but for right now, it's still our joy to hear their jingle-jangle morning song down at the ponds or up in our treetops. ■



Bicolored (Redwing) Blackbird PHOTO: WILLIAM E. WOODCOCK

bicolors went south for their winter, and some of them decided to stay. I don't know of another situation like this among the thousands of bird species of the world.

Bicolored blackbirds are an "incipient species"—almost distinct enough biologically to be their own unique kind of blackbird, one that without the agricultural explosion of the last two centuries might well have continued to evolve to full specieshood. But our agriculture turned out to be a boon for blackbirds. Their populations have

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>6-8 AM Trash Pickup</p> <p>9:30 AM Low Impact Exercise</p> <p>7:00 PM Women's Inspirational Book Study</p> <p>7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker</p>	<p>5:45-6:45 PM Meditation</p>  <p>8:34 PM</p>	<p>10 AM-2 PM Craft Group</p> <p>11 AM-1 PM Whistlestop call Roberta 415-883-0843</p>	<p>6:30-7:10 PM Silent Meditation</p> <p>7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker</p>	<p>4 PM Canasta ♠♥♣♦</p> <p>4 PM PAC voting ends</p> <p>5-7 PM Pub Night</p>	<p>11 AM PAC MEETING</p>
<p>1-3 PM Mahjong</p> <p>3-5 PM Death Forum: Help for Caregivers with Progressive Loss, Compassion Fatigue, and Overwhelm</p>	<p>5:45-6:45 PM Meditation</p>	<p>10 AM-2 PM Craft Group</p> <p>11 AM-1 PM Whistlestop call Roberta 415-883-0843</p> <p>6 PM MAR VAL MEETING</p>	<p>6:30-7:10 PM Silent Meditation</p> <p>7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker</p>	<p>4 PM Canasta ♠♥♣♦</p> <p>5-7 PM Pub Night</p> <p>7:15 PM Bingo</p>	<p>10:30-11:45 AM Jay's Pre-TaiChi</p>  <p>11 AM MAR VAL BRUNCH with the LEE WATERMAN TRIO</p>
<p>6-8 AM Trash Pickup</p> <p>9:30 AM Low Impact Exercise</p> <p>7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker</p>	<p>5:45-6:45 PM Meditation</p>	<p>10 AM-2 PM Craft Group</p> <p>11 AM Ladies' Bridge</p> <p>11 AM-1 PM Whistlestop call Roberta 415-883-0843</p> <p>7 PM HOL MEETING</p>	<p>6:30-7:10 PM Silent Meditation</p> <p>7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker</p>	<p>4 PM Canasta ♠♥♣♦</p> <p>5-7 PM Pub Night</p>	<p>10:30-11:45 AM Jay's Pre-TaiChi</p>
<p>1-4 PM Mahjong</p> <p>5 PM Free-Form Dance & Movement</p>	<p>5:45-6:45 PM Meditation</p>	<p>10 AM-2 PM Craft Group</p> <p>11 AM Ladies' Bridge</p> <p>11 AM-1 PM Whistlestop call Roberta 415-883-0843</p>	<p>6:30-7:10 PM Silent Meditation</p> <p>7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker</p>	<p>4 PM Canasta ♠♥♣♦</p> <p>5-7 PM Pub Night</p>	<p>10:30-11:45 AM Jay's Pre-TaiChi</p>
<p>1-4 PM Mahjong</p>	<p>5:45-6:45 PM Meditation</p>	<p>10 AM-2 PM Craft Group</p> <p>11 AM Ladies' Bridge</p> <p>11 AM-1 PM Whistlestop call Roberta 415-883-0843</p>	<p>6:30-7:10 PM Silent Meditation</p> <p>7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker</p>	<p>4 PM Canasta ♠♥♣♦</p> <p>5-7 PM Pub Night</p>	<p>10:30-11:45 AM Jay's Pre-TaiChi</p>
<p>1-4 PM Mahjong</p> <p>9:30 AM Low Impact Exercise</p> <p>7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker</p>	<p>5:45-6:45 PM Meditation</p>	<p>10 AM-2 PM Craft Group</p> <p>11 AM Ladies' Bridge</p> <p>11 AM-1 PM Whistlestop call Roberta 415-883-0843</p>	<p>6:30-7:10 PM Silent Meditation</p> <p>7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker</p>	<p>4 PM Canasta ♠♥♣♦</p> <p>5-7 PM Pub Night</p>	<p>10:30-11:45 AM Jay's Pre-TaiChi</p>
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June 2015



July 4