

THE ECHO

JANUARY 2016 CONTENTS

2

**Erma Wheatley
Dee Schneider**

3

**Jay Shelfer
Matt Greenberg**

4

**Carolyn Corry
Suzie Lahr**

5

**Kathleen Dargie
Scottish Night Dinner**

6

**Susan Harper
Pet Guardians**

**New Directory
Community
Dancing
Mail**



**PAC
MVMCC**

**HOL ART
IN THE
PARK**



7

**John Feld
CERT at MVMCC**

8

**Bill Davis
MVMCC Resident Receives Award**

9

10

**Mike Holland
Take a Hike**

11



Jean and John Starkweather Shoreline Park

12

Death Forum

13

Notices

14

Mike Holland

15

**Bill Noble
Bird of the Month**

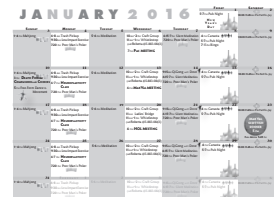
16

**Calendar
January 2016**

**Carole van Aelstyn, BSN
Compassion and Choices**
More Choices in
Planning for Your
"Good Death"



Inculcate Your
Way to a Huge
Vocabulary



Letter

from the Editor

2016-2017 Directory

You should have or will be soon receiving the new 2016-2017 Directory. Not everyone checked their name off in the master notebook in the lobby, so I wouldn't be surprised if the new directory doesn't abound with egregious errors. But not to mind, there will be a little more room between names to keep your copy updated with new information. Please note that subsequent editions of the directory will be updated from the resident information printed on this page in future *Echos*. If you want your information in the next directory to be different from what is printed in this new directory and for others to correct and keep their own new directories current, please contact Erma Wheatley at ermawheatley@gmail.com. I will include the corrections in the *Echo* and correct the master database. Special thanks to **Carol-Joy Harris** for her painstakingly careful editing of all the lists and what information we had to work with, and to **John Feld** for deciphering dubious handwriting and creating the master database and files.

Community Dancing

Pia Andersson, Inga Grace, and **Michael Hagerty** will be coordinating monthly HOL community dancing from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. on the first Saturday of the month. Starting in February listen for the catchy sounds of our own incomparable D.J., **Charles Watson.** **Louise Erwin**, our resident belly dancer, and a few of her belly dancing friends will show us how exercise can be fun.



Mail

Wounded Screech Owl

I want to thank the person who brought the injured screech owl to my front door about 6:30 p.m. on Monday, the 7th of December. I took the owl to the Humane Society, which then sent it to WildCare in San Rafael for treatment. Per a phone conversation with WildCare this afternoon, the owl is eating and gaining weight, is "clicking" (which is an owl's way of emitting a warning growl), and actually flew in a small circle. The owl has a severe case of parasites that WildCare is treating, but at this point the prognosis is good, thanks to you.

WildCare thinks the owl was hit by a car, but in the excitement of seeing an injured owl when you brought it to my door, I did not get your name or any details regarding what happened. I presume you are a resident of the Park because you obviously know of my interest in birds. In any event, I sincerely thank you for stopping, putting the owl in a cloth bag, and bringing it to my door rather than ignore an injured bird. All wildlife is precious, but we have so few screech owls in the Park, I am especially grateful that you took the time and effort to come to the aid of that injured animal.

Please call me at 415-883-4182 so that I may thank you in person.

Sincerely,

Dee Schneider

THE ECHO

JANUARY 2016

MARIN VALLEY MOBILE COUNTRY CLUB

100 MARIN VALLEY DRIVE
NOVATO, CA 94949
415-883-5911
novatofinancing@att.net
WWW.MVMCC.COM

EDITOR/DESIGNER Erma Wheatley

COPY EDITING

Mary Barbosa, Carol-Joy Harris, 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 Peggy Hill 415-382-0185
SECRETARY Mike Hagerty mrhagerty@ucdavis.edu
TREASURER Larry Cohen 415-883-7786
AT LARGE Tom Miller 415-244-5413

MVEST STEERING COMMITTEE

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

HOL BOARD

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

MAR VAL BOARD

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

Letter to Residents

Greetings from the PAC Board,

The financial health of MVMCC is stable and in good order.

We are all preparing for winter and the rains. Management has been taking care of the infrastructure—

- the clubhouse
- streets
- storm drains
- necessary tree trimming and removal.

We're attending to our homes and rain gutters.

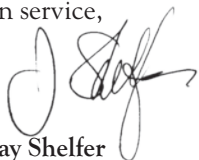
PAC, HOL, and Mar Val have acknowledged the rather formal budgeting process for MVMCC management and the City. This process is important as it outlines how we all can take an active role in the guidance of development here in the Park. If you have suggestions, you may contact HOL, Mar Val, PAC, or me.

Our main contact person with the City of Novato, Cathy Capriola, has been temporarily moved to the position of City Manager. Brian Cochran, the city's finance manager, will assume the role of interfacing with MVMCC. Cathy will still be advised and will play an active role when necessary.

Early in the coming year the city will be conducting a workshop regarding the rent differentials that exist in the Park. We look forward to this informative meeting.

I wish you all a very healthy, happy New Year.

In service,



Jay Shelfer
P A C PRESIDENT
jjshelfer@yahoo.com

CORRECTION: The December Bird of the Month article should be “a heart that’s beating a thousand times a minute” instead of a thousand times a second.

Management Report

Happy New Year: 2016!

Some things to remember for winter weather:

- Stow your garden umbrellas and secure any lightweight furniture and yard items that can be blown away or damaged from wind or rain.
- Clean out rain gutters to prevent clogging of downspouts.
- Keep extra flashlight batteries.
- Have several bottles of clean drinking water on hand.
- Use www.alertmarin.org/register for emergency alerts.
- Battery-operated radios are handy for weather updates if the power is out.
- Store extra food and up-to-date meds if you need them.
- Sandbags are free from the Novato Corporation Yard (550 Davidson Avenue, Novato), though you must fill them yourself.
- Please remain vigilant regarding strangers or people whom you do not recognize in the Park. Unattended packages delivered to your front porch are attractive to those who may want to steal them.
- The pool heater is off for the winter, but the spa is warm.

Sincerely,



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

HOL *Homeowners' League Message*

Dear Fellow Residents,

It is early December as I write this, and while we have had a few rains, we certainly hope for more. Please watch for drainage problems or other water issues and report any problems to Matt ASAP.

Shred the past

As we begin the new year, many of us feel the urge to clean, give away excess belongings, update our wills and other legal documents, rid our lives of "stuff," make and perhaps even keep some of those dreaded resolutions, lose some weight, exercise more, save more, be a better friend. HOL would like to help you with some of these projects. We hope to provide a shredding day at the Park, a time where your confidential documents can be shredded on site for a modest fee per box. So begin to gather those extraneous papers. Suzie Lahr is researching various providers of this service. Watch for further details in the February *Echo*.

Aerobics Class

When the pool opens for the year, we hope to be able to provide a water aerobics class taught by a resident. Any other classes, projects, or events you would like to see? Let us know about them.

Wish List

As mentioned last month, the budget process for 2016-17 is underway. I have received only a few suggestions for our wish list. Let your imagination go wild and let us know what you would really love to see in the Park. The City

Council voted to install gas shutoff valves for the entire Park; thus one of our wish list items will become reality and hopefully make our Park a safer place to live. If you put something on the wish list last year or longer ago and it was not fulfilled, please consider listing it again ... lists do not carry over from year to year, and each year presents different issues and possibilities. Please email/call me or put your suggestions in the HOL box in the clubhouse.

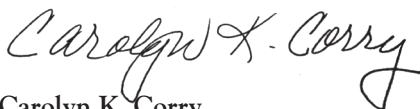
New Art in New Fireside Room

We eagerly await the presentation of the new art show—the Fireside Room has been painted, new lighting is being installed, and the necessary major repairs for the room have been completed. The new art-hanging system is scheduled to be installed in December and will provide an easier, quicker, and safer method for Suzie Lahr and Richard Wilson to hang each show as well as help preserve the integrity of the walls.

If you have not already done so, please complete the Emergency Information Form and return it to Matt. See you

**January 20 • 7:00 p.m.
Fireside Room**

The HOL Board joins me in wishing each of you a very Happy New Year.



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

ART IN THE PARK



by **Suzie Lahr**

A new MVMCC gallery exhibit should be on display in January 2016. HOL has generously purchased a professional exhibit hanging system, and the artists have generously offered their beautifully crafted works of art to create an exhibit gracing the MVMCC clubhouse walls for all residents to enjoy from January through June.

In January 2016 we invite you to stop by the clubhouse to view the exhibit and sign our guest book in the lobby. Don't forget to mark your 2016 calendar to save the date of Sunday, May 22 to visit with our resident artists and see their latest works at our **4th Annual Art in the Park.**

We thank you for your support of this flourishing artist movement in our jewel of a community right here in the Marin Valley Mobile Country Club.



Other exhibits in January:
Marin MOCA
500 Palm Drive

Wednesday–Friday 11:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.
Saturday–Sunday 11:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.
December 12–January 10

Thirty-Six Views of the Bay Bridge
by David Garnick

The American Car: A Family Portrait
by Gale S. McKee (Ron Collins Gallery)

Message from Mar Val

Dear Friends,

As we welcome the arrival of a new year, Mar Val wishes to express its sincere gratitude to the numerous residents who so generously volunteered their time and talent to the success of our 2015 events.

The first party of 2016 will be the

**Scottish Night Dinner
Saturday, January 23, 2016**

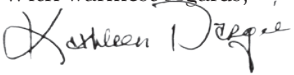
As those of you who have attended in

the past are aware, this event not only enables our bar manager to express his love for Scotland but also allows the rest of us the annual opportunity to don our wildest tartans and plaids. Please review additional details on the reservation form on this page.

Plans for February include celebrating the tried and true holidays of Valentine's Day and Presidents' Day, which are, of course, very worthy. This year, however, we are excited to also

present our first-ever **Mardi Gras Party** on **Saturday, February 13**. As details materialize, notices will be in the *Echo* and on the lobby desk.

The happiest of wishes to you and yours for 2016.

With warmest regards,

Kathleen Dargie
 MAR VAL PRESIDENT
 kfdargie@aol.com

SCOTTISH NIGHT

January 23, 2016 • 5:00 p.m.

M E N U

Salmon or Vegetarian Entrée
Potatoes • Vegetable
Dessert

Reservation deadline January 20 at 5:00 p.m. or when 140 reservations have been received

Checks only - Payable to Mar Val

Questions? Please call Carolyn Corry at 415-370-6403

SCOTTISH NIGHT RESERVATION FORM

Please circle entrée choice

RESIDENT _____ Salmon Vegetarian
 RESIDENT _____ Salmon Vegetarian
 GUEST _____ Salmon Vegetarian
 GUEST _____ Salmon Vegetarian

Checks only - Payable to Mar Val (NO CASH, PLEASE) for ___ (number of people) @ \$10 per person

— Reservation Deadline —

January 20, 5:00 p.m. or when 140 reservations have been received.

TOTAL \$ _____

Questions? Please call Carolyn Corry at 415-370-6403.



MVEST Message for Pet Guardians

by Susan Harper

As part of our Park's emergency plan, we also want to make sure our pets will be safe.



The most secure way of identifying your pet is by having him or her microchipped. A tiny chip, about the size of a grain of rice is implanted in a procedure no more painful than a routine vaccination, and in fact, many pets don't even seem to feel it.

Microchip Identification

The most secure way of identifying your pet is by having him or her microchipped. A tiny chip, about the size of a grain of rice is implanted in a procedure no more painful than a routine vaccination, and in fact, many pets don't even seem to feel it. Your name and phone number will be registered under the microchip's unique number, and if your pet is lost and taken to a vet, clinic, or animal shelter, he or she will be scanned with a safe "wand" that reads your contact information. You can then be notified and reunited with your faithful friend. Many wonderful "happy endings" have occurred due to animals being microchipped.

Microchip Vouchers Through January

The Marin Humane Society, at 171 Bel Marin Keys Blvd. in Novato, is offering microchips for dogs for \$25. Cats are currently being microchipped for free, thanks to a generous donor. If you feel you cannot afford the \$25 fee, you can contact MVMCC residents Susan Harper at 415-342-4807 or Serena D'Arcy Fisher at 415-506-4235, or stop by the front office and see Matt Greenberg for a special voucher that will enable you to get the microchip for \$10 per dog (a \$15 discount). If you are unable to afford \$10, please present the voucher to the Humane Society and ask them to kindly waive the fee altogether. The voucher is valid through the end of January 2016.

Marin Humane Society

The Humane Society is open Tuesday-Sunday, 10:00 a.m.–5:30 p.m., no appointment necessary. Be sure to take in your dog on a leash and cat in a carrier to the main shelter entrance.

If you need assistance, or need someone to come to your home and provide the service, please call Susan or Serena.

SHARE – Pet Care Assistance

The Marin Humane Society also offers pet care assistance to low-income seniors at least 62 years old. This SHARE (Special Human Animal Relationships) program might include delivery of pet food, transportation to the veterinarian, dog walking, pet grooming, litter box maintenance, or emergency boarding of pets in the event of a client's hospitalization. Pets must be spayed or neutered. More information can be found on their website: www.marinhumanesociety.org, or you can call Annie Humphrey at 415-506-6255. If you feel you might qualify, you can fill out the application found on the website, or call Susan Harper at 415-342-4807, and I will deliver a packet to you with more information and an application.

The SHARE program is supported by private contributions to MHS. If you would like to donate to this program, pet food deliveries to the shelter are welcome. ■

Become a CERT Expert—at MVMCC

Two-Day Weekend Training Here in the Clubhouse

by John Feld

Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) will hold a two-day class here at MVMCC at our own clubhouse on

**Saturday–Sunday,
January 30–31,**

at which the Novato Fire District will train residents on many emergency-related topics.

Normally these classes are held only at the fire stations in Marin, although occasionally large companies such as AutoDesk receive companywide training.

Our last training at MVMCC was two years ago, and now we have a special opportunity from the Fire Marshal for another on-site training. It is much more fun doing the training here among our friends and neighbors.

The CERT program is designed to train and organize volunteers to assist their communities before, during, and after disasters. CERT volunteers help others when professional responders are not immediately available, and they also can be asked to supplement and support the efforts of professional responders upon their arrival. It is an exciting opportunity and an informative class.

The CERT program educates participants about how to prepare for hazards that may impact our community and trains us in basic disaster-response skills.



After the training participants will be able to:

1. Size up situations
2. Apply basic disaster first-aid and triage
3. Extinguish small fires
4. Know about fire safety and fire suppression
5. Conduct search and rescue operations
6. Make the most of our resources

The training prepares us for any emergency—not just fire, but also flooding, earthquakes, and other situations in which we are most tried by circumstances. The basis of the training is to make sure we stay safe and are in a position to help others if our situation allows.

The CERT class takes 18 hours of training split into two days. We will learn about the Good Samaritan Law and the Disaster Service Workers programs, which provide compensation benefits to activated CERTs for injuries sustained when called to duty in an emergency or disaster.

Some of the other topics covered include:

- Commonsense matters such as shutting off the gas, water, and electric, which are not always obvious to everyone.
- Dealing with the real emotional possibilities of arising denial, anger, despair, and hopelessness in the face of emergencies.

Training prepares us so these do not have a crippling effect.

- How volunteers are organized into teams and how to help one another.

Although the training deals with local situations and CERT activity is always voluntary, CERTs can be called upon to help elsewhere.

CERT training is good for four years; after that you are requested to retake the training. The cost of the training is \$45, and MVEST will issue \$20 rebates to those who need it. Those who took the training before can sign up to audit the class at no charge.

As this class is being taught by a different person from the last training here, the presentation should be fresh and informative. You will find a sign-up sheet at the front desk.

Take the first step to your empowerment.

The more CERTs we have trained in the community, the better off we all will be.

Follow-up refresher courses are offered each year for those who want to participate and practice their skills at other sites. ■

MVMCC Resident Receives Grand Jurors' Award

by Bill Davis

Recognize the man in the picture? It is Lieutenant Colonel Owen Haxton, U.S. Army, and past president of both HOL and the PAC here in MVMCC. He looks a little different today; don't we all? Owen and family have deep roots in Novato and Marin County. He moved to this area as part of the military in 1968, serving five-plus years on the General Staff of the Sixth U.S. Army Headquarters, with primary oversight of ROTC in the 12 Western states, and retired in 1974 after 22 years in the service. With his wife, Virginia, they raised six children, who all subsequently graduated from San Marin High School. In 1991 Owen and Virginia downsized and moved into the Park.

I had lunch with Owen recently and discovered some fascinating stories from the dapper retired soldier who now sports a goatee. I asked Owen what were a couple of his proudest achievements in life. He smiled and without hesitation mentioned three events. His wife and family were clearly first. Then came his military service, pointing out that in Viet Nam, 1965 through 1966, his unit, that flew assault helicopters, sustained an absolutely remarkable record of no loss of any soldier's life. Owen has over 360 combat hours logged in the air "in harm's way." Third, was his service on the Grand Jury of Marin County and being the past president

of the Marin Chapter of the California Grand Jurors' Association. At this point I sat back in my chair and rolled my shoulders a little, thinking I should immediately stand at attention and put up an appropriate salute. I was facing no ordinary man, but a leader and significant contributor to our community and country.

Owen grew up in Ohio and graduated in 1947 from Rittman High School, and in 1952 from Kent State University as a math teacher and from the Army ROTC program as a 2nd Lieutenant. He met his wife while in a card game with her mother, who introduced the two. He still is an avid card player and plays twice a week in the Poor Man's Poker game in the clubhouse.



Teaching high school math to less-than-ambitious teenagers tried Owen's patience. Fortunately, in 1953 Owen was suddenly called to active duty by the U.S. Army and thrown into a more dynamic role as an officer at Fort Knox, KY in basic training of new recruits. In 1958 he received orders to deploy to Korea and served with the Artillery Corps for 13 months. In 1960 he was transferred to Fort Rucker, AL, where he served in a Transportation Aviation Test Activity. By then, Virginia and Owen had a growing family of three daughters, and their first son was born at Ft. Rucker.

In 1962 Owen and his family were transferred to Germany, where he served in operations of a Transportation Aviation Group. Son number two came along about three months before the President decided Owen was needed in Viet Nam. He left Germany in 1965, forming an Assault Aviation Company en route to Viet Nam. In the meantime his family moved to Corona, CA to await his return. After 13 months in-country, Owen returned to Fort Knox in 1966 to form an Air Cavalry Squadron, and returned to Viet Nam for his second tour of duty in September of 1967.

The California Grand Jurors' Association granted the Angelo Rolando Memorial Award to **Owen Haxton** of MVMCC for outstanding service to the association. Haxton was presented with the award at the association's annual conference held in November.

Traveling around the world and being "in harm's way" finally came to an end with a "really nice assignment," Owen says, when he received orders to serve the Sixth Army Headquarters in San Francisco at the Presidio. He and Virginia and their family, that had grown to six with the addition of son number three, could now call Novato home. In 1974 he retired after 22 years' service and still wears a beautiful smile and twinkle in his eye.



But retiring from the U.S. Army did not mean slowing down and taking it easy. Owen became an avid bridge player in the Marin Unit of the American Contract Bridge League (ACBL). He served in elective offices at various levels, culminating in the late 1990s as a member of the ACBL National Board of Directors.

Owen was president of the PAC here at MVMCC from 1995 to 2001. His leadership and influence were

principally responsible for the transfer of MVMCC from private ownership to public ownership by the Novato Financing Authority.

Wearing another hat, Owen was impaneled as a juror on the Marin County Regular Grand Jury from 2002 to 2004. Subsequently he joined the California Grand Jurors' Association and was president of the Marin chapter for two years. From 2010 to 2014 he served on the Awards

Committee of the Grand Jury Association to promote, preserve, and support the grand jury system through training, education, and outreach.

When I asked Owen about what he would like to see in the near future, again he did not pause. He stated clearly and directly that he feels the Grand Jury makes a major contribution to the public and that it needs media support and public recognition of the important work it does today and for our future.

Once again, in this lovely Park, the people we see and seem to know can surprise us with their stories of contributions to our community and country. What surprised me the most in this interview was how humble and non-self-aggrandizing Owen has remained. ■

Editor's Note: Since his service on the Grand Jury, Owen Haxton has inspired four other people to serve, one of whom lives in the Park and who will be writing an article about the Grand Jury in a subsequent issue of the Echo.

Take a Hike

by Mike Holland

WWe don't often think of San Quentin Prison or the San Rafael

Canal District as appealing hiking locations. They aren't! But there is a major trail that connects these two areas that is both inviting and beautiful. It's called the **San Francisco Bay Trail**, and it is sited within the **Jean and John Starkweather Shoreline Park**. Okay, that's a lot of place names to put into the beginning of an article. Let's start with some basics.

The aforementioned Shoreline Park is very close to the Marin side of the San Rafael Bridge. (Again, lots of names.) To reach it, drive east on East Francisco Blvd., turn left onto Shoreline Parkway (the street that houses Home Depot), and then turn right onto Kerner Blvd. Drive to the end of Kerner. You'll see the sign for the entrance to the J and J Starkweather Park.

The hike itself is a very flat 3.5 miles round-trip, almost all on bike path and gravel trail. There is one dirt path section that loops around the playing fields at Pickleweed Park. What makes this walk so enjoyable is that every step affords terrific views of water and mountains. As you travel outbound toward Pickleweed you have an unimpeded view of Mt. Tam on your left. Directly ahead is the San Pedro Ridge. On your right you gaze upon, and hear, the bay. The islands a few hundred yards offshore are the Marin Islands

Ecological Reserve. At several points in the hike you'll pass wildlife ponds that teem with birds.

This is an easy hike, but is most likely to be cool and brisk. I've never run here when it was calm. A jacket is a must, especially if you plan to stop at any of the numerous benches that practically beg you to picnic on them. There are even things to do within the hike. The new Target store is just off the trail, and it has one of the nicest Starbucks I've been in. The Pickleweed Park Community Center has a library and a variety of activity rooms.

There are always post-hike options. If you or a hiking companion are members of the Marin Rod and Gun Club you can treat yourself to a drink and a hot dog (good ones) on their patio and savor the bay view a bit more. For something even more unique, drive over to San Quentin Village and check out the prison museum.

Every now and then we need to tackle an urban hike. It reminds us that there is beauty everywhere. ■

Editor's note: The city of San Rafael created the Jean and John Starkweather Shoreline Park in 2003 in recognition of the work done by the couple to preserve and restore the wetlands along this three-mile stretch of marsh and bayfront. Jean Starkweather died on November 23, four days before her 86th birthday.





More Choices in Planning for Your “Good Death”

by **Death Forum** and **Compassion and Choices**

Most people don't want to make others uncomfortable by talking about death, but it will “probably” happen to you anyway. There are rich opportunities to plan a “good death” for yourself and your family that most of us don't know because we avoid talking about it.

Compassion and Choices is an organization that talks about many of those choices, and they will speak here:

**Sunday, January 10
3:00 p.m. • Fireside Room**

Below is one of the many ways to plan a good death, written by Jaime Longhi of West Cornwall, CT.

Dear Friends,

My mother, Gabrielle, was 90 when her husband of 64 years passed on. Although hardly able to walk by that time, she still read the *Times*, played chess, enjoyed a couple of cocktails, and loved chatting, all on a daily basis.

Slowly, over the next four years, Mom became more frustrated about her diminishing ability to remember what she read earlier in the day. Her chess games lasted only a few moves before becoming surreal, and she resented the coaxing to get her out of bed. She was running on empty.

She mentioned every other month or so that she really wished she “didn't have to be here anymore.” Her eyes deteriorated; she couldn't read anymore. Then her headaches began.

Even as she maintained a stoic attitude, she would remark that “hanging around like this is absurd,” adding: “This is not what Daddy would have wanted.” The

headaches were coming more often, sometimes keeping her awake through the night. As scary as they were, they were to be the key to her escape.

Mom's doctor responded to her worsening situation with awesome empathy and respect. When she asked him to help her “find a way out of this predicament,” he told her that if she went on a “hunger strike,” she would decline fairly rapidly into a coma and death. But there would be pain.

However, he promised her that once she had consciously refused food and water for 24 hours, he would provide her with medication to provide relief and sedation. I went over these possibilities with Mom to make sure she understood clearly the option being offered to her. She did, and she vacillated for some time between her own genetically programmed optimism, fear of dying, and the logic that dictated that she “get out now” while she was still in “almost one piece.”

A month later, Mom invited her kids and grandchildren over for a “joyous good-bye.” She lay on the sofa with her poodle, a vodka gimlet at hand. It was a love-in, punctuated by laughter, tears, and straight talk. Two nights later I got a call from her nurse. Mom was crying from the incessant pain and needed me. When I got to her apartment, I sat by her bedside, held her hand, and stroked her head. We had talked enough about “the way out.” I suggested to her that this was the right time. She nodded her head between sobs: “Please.”

I am so deeply indebted to the doctor and his colleagues who made it possible for my mother to end her life consciously, and with her personality intact.

Jaime Longhi ■

MARIN VALLEY DEATH FORUM

Sunday, January 10

3:00–5:00 p.m.

Fireside Room

Light refreshments

More Choices in Planning for Your “Good Death”

*The first Marin Valley Death Forum
of the new year will feature*

Carole van Aelstyn, BSN

from

Compassion and Choices

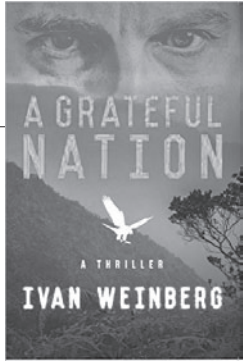
a nonprofit organization

working to improve patient rights

and choice at the end of life

Carole van Aelstyn, BSN from Sonoma State University, received her AA in Nursing and worked at Santa Rosa Memorial Hospital in the oncology ward. She helped develop services for dementia victims and their families with The Alzheimer's Respite Center; started the support group, Share & Care: Coping with Dementia; and was the first director of the Brain Impaired Adult Resource Center, a state-funded program for caregivers of brain impaired adults.

After two years in the Peace Corps, she became a hospice nurse. Introduced to Compassion & Choices by her son, Nico, a lawyer working for Oregon's Death with Dignity, she became California's director of End of Life Consultation Program, supervising volunteers who counsel clients about end of life choices. Now retired, she volunteers with the C&C Bay Area Leadership Council and speaks to groups about death with dignity.



The Marin Valley Book Club met in November at Charly McInroy's house to discuss their first book and to make plans for future meetings. Everyone agreed that reading was a major part of our lives and that it was good to talk about the books we read.

The January meeting will be the fourth Wednesday, **January 27 at 4:00 p.m. 47 Marin Valley Drive.**

We'll be discussing a first novel by a Marin writer, Ivan Weinberg, *The Grateful Nation*. All are welcome! Questions? Call 415 883-7823.

Shredding Event

Shredding will take place this winter in time for tax season. Start now going through all those unnecessary papers and files taking up space.

Anyone interested in shredding should fill out a reservation form, available at the front desk, and include a nonrefundable check to HOL for \$7 per box. We will let you know the exact date on the reservation form.

Preparedness Classes

American Heart Association Heartsaver First Aid Certification

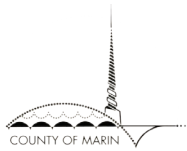
January 20 • 3:00–5:00 p.m.

Novato Oaks Inn
215 Alameda del Prado, Novato
\$70 Register: www.novatooprclasses.com/register?page_id=303

CERT Classes

January 30–31

MVMCC Clubhouse
Register: Clubhouse in January
See page 7 of this issue

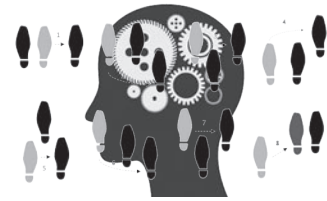


The Marin County Commission on Aging will be discussing the results of the recently disseminated community Needs Assessment. The open meeting time is Thursday, January 7, 10:00–11:00 a.m. People are welcome to stay for the business meeting to follow.



The Echo 2014–2015

Back issues of the new format *Echo* are available in a reference book, which can be read in the MVMCC library. The *Echo* is also accessible online in digital PDF format on our website: mvmcc.com



Neuroplasticity Classes—

Coordination, Balance, and Stress Reduction

Michael Hagerty will hold three classes on neuroplasticity:

Mondays

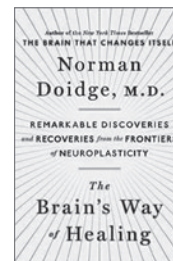
January 11, 18 & 25

6:00–7:00 p.m.

Clubhouse Ballroom

Drop in and learn about:

- new line dances for balance and coordination
- body scans
- ways to reduce stress and depression



In addition to the books recommended in the September 2015 *Echo* (pg. 9) is:

The Brain's Way of Healing: Remarkable Discoveries and

Recoveries from the Frontiers of Neuroplasticity, by Norman Doidge, M.D. Doidge's latest book updates the frontiers of neuroplasticity with chapters on reducing chronic pain and on the Feldenkrais method of retraining the brain.

Michael Hagerty is a retired professor at UC Davis and has published medical research on brain scans for exercises that keep your brain sharp and grow neurons as you age.

Inculcate Your Way to a Huge Vocabulary

by Mike Holland

To inculcate is to learn through repetition. That's how we were taught the multiplication table and the alphabet. It may be tedious, but it is effective. Teachers try to avoid it, fearing that students who memorize may miss the underlying significance of what they are memorizing. But, inculcation still has usefulness as an appropriate way to place information into our long-term memory. I have found it to be especially pertinent for expanding vocabulary.

All readers face the same dilemma: how to handle unfamiliar words when we come upon them. We can choose to ignore them, never to worry about what importance they lend to the sentence. After all, we still understand the context. Or we can guess their meaning. What's more likely is that we will reach for the dictionary and use the definition to fully appreciate the author's intent. Good for us if we do this. Unfortunately, unless we have a strong sense of recall the definition isn't likely to stay in our memory for long. It's frustrating to encounter the same word a few days (even hours!) later and have to retreat to the dictionary again.

That's the problem I faced until I devised an inculcation-based approach to make new words a permanent part of my vocabulary.

Here's how it works:

Step 1: Look up the unfamiliar word in the dictionary. Fit its meaning into the sentence as you normally do.

Step 2: Write the word and a brief definition (one or two words) on one of the blank pages at the back of the book (if it's yours) or on a bookmark. Same goes for magazines.

Step 3: At the start of your next reading session, review all the words you have written. You won't have as many as you think. Repeat this step each time until you have finished the book or magazine.

Step 4: Transfer your new words to your personal dictionary. This can be a computer file or just an old-fashioned notebook with alphabet tabs.

Step 5: But before you add the new word, review all the existing words listed under that letter heading. For example, if your new word is *doughty* (def.: valiant), you will review all the other "D" words before entering it.

I know, I know; that's a lot of repetition. I estimate I may be reviewing a word 10-20 times before completing the five steps. The payoff is that I remember it. The greatest satisfaction comes when I encounter the word in a later reading and discover that I have held the gain.

I've been using this technique since 1995. My personal dictionary is over 500 words, and now is growing very slowly. The only downside is that some of my friends think I am too compulsive about words. That's a criticism I can live with. ■

absquatulate

v. – to leave somewhere abruptly

bibulous

adj. – fond of drinking alcohol

bingle

n. – automobile collision

bucculent

adj. – having fat cheeks or jowls

chirocracy

n. – government by physical force

collocate

v. – arrange, put in proper order

contumelious

adj. – insulting, verbally abusive

deasil

adv. – clockwise

duende

n. – magnetism, charm

eldritch

adj. – weird, eerie, sinister, ghostly

emacity

n. – fondness for buying

gainsay

v. – deny or contradict, dispute

hugger-mugger

n. – disorder, confusion, muddle

impavid

adj. – fearless, not afraid

infucate

v. – stain, paint, daub, use makeup

jiffle

v. – fidget, move restlessly

lactarium

n. – a dairy

logorrhea

n. – excessive wordiness

louche

adj. – shady, disreputable, rakish

maw

n. – animal throat, jaws, gullet

pettitoes

n. – pig's trotters, especially as food

popinjay

n. – snobby, haughty, vain person

uxorious

adj. – being very fond of one's wife

Townsend's Warbler

by Bill Noble

A good reason to stay sharp-eyed as you stroll the 'hood: This black-and-gold feathered jewel is one of the delights of the season, browsing in an evergreen or oak, flitting among the lingering leaves of a liquidambar, or taking a sip from your hummingbird feeder. Stay aware, and I promise you'll spot one of the half-dozen or so that grace the Park every winter. Townsend's warblers are among the handful of New World warblers that spend northern winters rather than return to the tropics.

Like the hummingbirds, the 116 species of wood warblers are exclusive to the New World. Small and restlessly active, they originated in Central America. But some, early in their history, discovered the abundance in North America's summer forests, where they diversified into 56 brilliantly distinct kinds, ranging north to the limit of trees near the Arctic Circle. They're mostly reproductive "tourists," fleeing back to the tropics as our weather cools.



YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER

Here in coastal California, two kinds stay.

The ubiquitous **yellow-rumped warbler**, flitting in every sort of habitat, making a distinctive *chup* as they go. Just this morning I watched a gang of these "butter butts" and western bluebirds working their way along by the SMART tracks.




























TOWNSEND'S WARBLER

The **Townsend's** is our other brave northerner, its face instantly recognizable. They breed from Oregon's mountains north to the limit of big trees in Alaska, and then making a long nighttime migration south across the Western states, far into Mexico's Sierra Madre. But a sturdy tribe of them stays in the California coast region, including the Park. In favored places (I remember most Point Lobos) you can spot trees full of them!

Here, in this paragraph and the next, is some fun evolutionary biology. East to west, North America has a closely related tribe of "**black-throated**" warblers. If you grew up in the East, you might remember the buzzy *zee zee zee zoo zee* of the **black-throated green warbler**. The oak-and-juniper hills of Texas host the **golden-cheeked warbler**, while we Westerners have three distinct kinds: the **black-throated gray**, which breeds in dry forest (and here in Marin); the **yellow-faced hermit**, found in the tallest treetops in the coast ranges and the Sierras into northern Washington ... and our **Townsend's**, my favorite.

I grew up in the Berkshires of Massachusetts, warbler heaven. Once, at the height of spring migration when I was about 16, I had 13 species of warblers in one tree! The West has nowhere near the richness of species and much greater ecological separations. Every Eastern warbler species, which may have neighbors of a dozen different species, has a distinct, instantly recognizable song. That need for uniqueness breaks down in the West, so that it takes a trained ear to be sure of the song differences between our three kinds of black-throated warblers (but don't worry: Townsend's don't sing in the winter). ■

JANUARY 2016

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1-4 PM Mahjong  6-8 AM Trash Pickup 9:30 AM Low-Impact Exercise 7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker 	6-8 AM Trash Pickup 9:30 AM Low-Impact Exercise 7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker 	5-6 PM Meditation	10 AM-2 PM Craft Group 11 AM-1 PM Whistlestop (call Roberta 415-883-0843) 7 PM PAC MEETING	10 AM Marin County Commission on Aging 6:15-7 PM Silent Meditation 7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker 	5-7 PM Pub Night NEW YEAR'S DAY	10:30-11:45 AM Pre-TaiChi-Jay
1-4 PM Mahjong  3 PM DEATH FORUM: COMPASSION AND CHOICES 5 PM Free-Form Dance & Movement 	6-8 AM Trash Pickup 9:30 AM Low-Impact Exercise 6-7 PM NEUROPLASTICITY CLASS 7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker 	5-6 PM Meditation	10 AM-2 PM Craft Group 11 AM-1 PM Whistlestop (call Roberta 415-883-0843) 6 PM MAR VAL MEETING	9:15 AM Qi Gong <i>with Dove</i> 6:15-7 PM Silent Meditation 7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker 	4 PM Canasta  5-7 PM Pub Night	10:30-11:45 AM Pre-TaiChi-Jay
1-4 PM Mahjong  6-8 AM Trash Pickup 9:30 AM Low-Impact Exercise 6-7 PM NEUROPLASTICITY CLASS 7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker 	6-8 AM Trash Pickup 9:30 AM Low-Impact Exercise 6-7 PM NEUROPLASTICITY CLASS 7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker 	5-6 PM Meditation	10 AM-2 PM Craft Group 11 AM Ladies' Bridge 11 AM-1 PM Whistlestop (call Roberta 415-883-0843) 6 PM HOL MEETING	9:15 AM Qi Gong <i>with Dove</i> 6:15-7 PM Silent Meditation 7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker 	4 PM Canasta  5-7 PM Pub Night	10:30-11:45 AM Pre-TaiChi-Jay  FULL MOON 5:45 PM
1-4 PM Mahjong  6-8 AM Trash Pickup 9:30 AM Low-Impact Exercise 6-7 PM NEUROPLASTICITY CLASS 7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker 	6-8 AM Trash Pickup 9:30 AM Low-Impact Exercise 6-7 PM NEUROPLASTICITY CLASS 7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker 	5-6 PM Meditation	10 AM-2 PM Craft Group 11 AM-1 PM Whistlestop (call Roberta 415-883-0843) 4 PM MARIN VALLEY BOOK CLUB: 47 Marin Valley Dr.	9:15 AM Qi Gong <i>with Dove</i> 6:15-7 PM Silent Meditation 7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker 	4 PM Canasta  5-7 PM Pub Night	10:30-11:45 AM Pre-TaiChi-Jay
1-4 PM Mahjong  6-8 AM Trash Pickup 9:30 AM Low-Impact Exercise 7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker 	6-8 AM Trash Pickup 9:30 AM Low-Impact Exercise 7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker 	5-6 PM Meditation	10 AM-2 PM Craft Group 11 AM-1 PM Whistlestop (call Roberta 415-883-0843)	9:15 AM Qi Gong <i>with Dove</i> 6:15-7 PM Silent Meditation 7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker 	4 PM Canasta  5-7 PM Pub Night	10:30-11:45 AM Pre-TaiChi-Jay