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ECHO

AUGUST 2016

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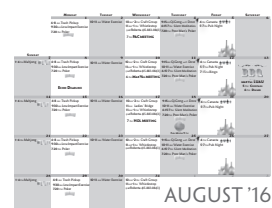
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Letter

from the Editor

Thank you **John Hansen** for a great job jumping in full speed ahead to produce the *Echo* July issue, as if he didn't have anything else to do — stepping up to being Vice President of PAC, heading the new PAC MVMCC Project Planning Standing Committee, representing MVEST for the new PAC MVEST Standing Committee, conducting Incident Command Training Sessions, along with coordinating, organizing, and setting up the new Incident Command Center in the PAC office. Thank you for your service.

Bill Davis recommended and coordinated reprinting an article close to home here about cats, catios, and protection of our birds and wild prey, which was recently published in the *Marin IJ* (see pg 10).

And thank you **David Gray** for keeping up "Bird of the Month" while **Bill Noble** was bird-watching in the Amazon (see pg 14).



IN MEMORIAM

Chet Willett
May 2016

2016-17 Directory Update

Anila Manning

anilahere99@gmail.com

Peter Harris 415-612-4106

New Residents

Tara and Stephen Plocher

51 Club View Drive

Taraplocher@gmail.com

415-302-5992

Stephnplocher@hotmail.com

415-302-9043



Mail

Quail Crossing

Dear Residents,

Please respect our Quail. This is the time of year for babies.

Last week a very inconsiderate person driving a white truck, could not take a moment to slow down so that a family of ten could cross. It ended in one baby being killed and another in shock. I know the majority of the residents value our wildlife, so please take a few minutes to allow families to cross the road.

Thank you,

Pauline Hawkins

dundeesmom@aol.com

Nextdoor.com

As a *Nextdoor.com* zealot, I'm still eager for us to find out if *Nextdoor's* private groups — open only to Park members — can provide a rewarding new form of communication and connection among Park members.

John Feld set up a general MVMCC group that is getting some action (although only 75 of the over 100 Park members on *Nextdoor* have yet joined it). I recently created a "Fun Activities" group as well as a DIY-ers group, and David MacLam set up his Taiji group.

The number of members is still a little small for the groups to be very effective, so if you're interested, please first join *Nextdoor.com's* Hamilton Woods Neighborhood (see instructions in the May *Echo* or go to the website), and once a member, sign up for any of the groups within the Park that you'll see listed in the lower left menu under "Browse all X groups." If you're having trouble, email me: jwtravis@mindspring.com.

Jack Travis

THE ECHO

AUGUST 2016

MARIN VALLEY MOBILE COUNTRY CLUB

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TREASURER Larry Cohen 415-883-7786

AT LARGE David King 925-708-7370

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MVEST Serena D'Arcy-Fisher, John Hansen,

Bill Davis, John Feld, Alan Gump,

David Gray, Carol-Joy Harris

MVMCC PROJECT PLANNING J. Hansen, J. Shelfer

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TREASURER Sandee Duncan 415-883-3034

DIRECTOR Dee Schneider 415-883-4182

DIRECTOR/BAR MANAGER Fred Dargie 884-2649

DIRECTOR/HOSPITALITY Larry Moore 883-0486

DIRECTOR/RESERVATIONS Carolyn Corry 370-6403

SUBMITTING ARTICLES

Email articles with "ECHO" as the first word of the subject line and a copy of the article in the body of the email to Erma Wheatley:

ermawheatley@gmail.com

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

DEADLINE 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,
August 2016,

Our finances are in their customary good shape.

The new fiscal year starts with two new members of the board, **John Hansen** and **David King**.

Project Planning Standing Committee

John Hansen, of MVEST fame, has been elected Vice President and heads up the MVMCC Project Planning standing committee. They will meet with City staff and management to discuss projects envisioned for MVMCC. The PAC board wishes to maintain the Park's viability as a home for low- and moderate-income seniors and at the same time maintain its culture and community.

Finance Standing Committee

One of the ways to advance our culture is to make certain that expenses are well regulated and funds budgeted and judiciously spent to assure the long-term viability of MVMCC. In this regard, we have established a standing Finance committee headed by the new at-large PAC board member, **David King**. He will be supported by a member of the community with a

CPA financial background, **Stephen Plocher**. David King will also be the PAC's representative to the Rent Differential committee.

Budget and Future Planning

**No Rent Increase
for 2016 - 17**

On June 13, the City Council passed the MVMCC budget for the fiscal year 2016-2017, in which they followed the recommendation of the PAC board not to have a rent increase this year.

Early on, the residents accepted a rent increase to permit the purchase of the Park from its previous owner, the Sades. The only current debt we have is a loan repayment of \$6.4 million to the Bank of Marin. Now, with prudent management of our expenses, we are able to put aside hundreds of thousands of dollars each year. These reserves won't be enough to fund a complete infrastructure renewal; however, along with City staff and management, the PAC will continue to assess this situation and search for creative solutions that will accomplish the goal and maintain MVMCC as a senior

citizen low-to moderate-income community.

Infrastructure

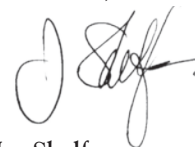
We assume that at one point we will have to deal with the renewal of the utility infrastructure. We have been told that, at the next City Council meeting here in October, a consultant will report on the status of the infrastructure work. The cost of this, when it might need to be done, and what support we may receive from the pending State Public Utilities Commission/PG&E renewal of the gas and electric infrastructure are still big unknowns.

Continuing to add to our reserves is prudent, so that means making sure our expenses are well regulated and focused on MVMCC needs.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be **August 3 at 7 pm** in the Fireside Room. You are most welcome.

In service,



Jay Shelfer

PAC PRESIDENT
jjshelfer@yahoo.com

Management Update

Swimming Pool

Come enjoy the swimming pool! Let's keep kids with diapers or who are not potty trained out of our pool and spa. Please, no food in the pool or spa. Have your snack or lunch at one of the tables under an umbrella. Let's take into consideration other residents or guests who are also using the pool and spa.

No Poison

Remember, Marin Valley is a NO poison community. There are many alternative methods to eliminate rats and gophers without the use of poisons.

Owls and coyotes are impacted when they eat poisoned rodents.

Toilet Paper Only

Please, NO flushing Handi Wipes or feminine products. They are a constant problem for our sewer pump system.

Carports — Park Rule 12

Carports and porches are not to be used as storage facilities. Many residents need to be aware of this rule. It affects the Park and your neighbor's home value to have items stacked in your carport. Thanks for your anticipated cooperation with cleanup and removal of stored items.

RV Storage — Park Rule 21.4

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

No Water in Saunas

Please do not pour water over the heating element in the men's and women's saunas. Due to prolonged misuse, the wood floors are now full of dry rot. This is extremely dangerous, as the 220 volt system is not watertight. These are dry heat sauna, not steam room units.

Vehicle Repair — Park Rule 21.3

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

Thank you and enjoy your community.



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



HOL *Home Owners League Message*

Annual Fun(d) Drive

Thank you if you have already responded to our ANNUAL FUN(D) DRIVE letter asking for your support of a \$20 contribution to HOL. I hope you all received our letter distributed on the hottest day of the year so far.

I think I may have dropped a few pounds delivering it! Please let us know if you did not receive our

letter and would like us to get one to you, or if you need someone to take your contribution to the clubhouse.

Delivery Tubes

We noticed that some delivery tubes are missing and we would like to replace them for you, so let us know that as well.

Up to Speed

We are in the process of working with management to upgrade clubhouse computing capabilities. We have been advanced from dial-up/DSL to cable thanks to Matt Greenberg, who has upped our monthly ante with Comcast. When we have the new cable to the library installed, we will then set up the Dell replacement computer with the 24-inch LCD screen. Shortly after that, we will get a 24-inch iMac desktop computer. We will also get an N wireless router to boost WiFi throughout the clubhouse. The phone line into the library will remain for the fax machine. By the time you read this, we will be up and running thanks to your contributions to HOL.

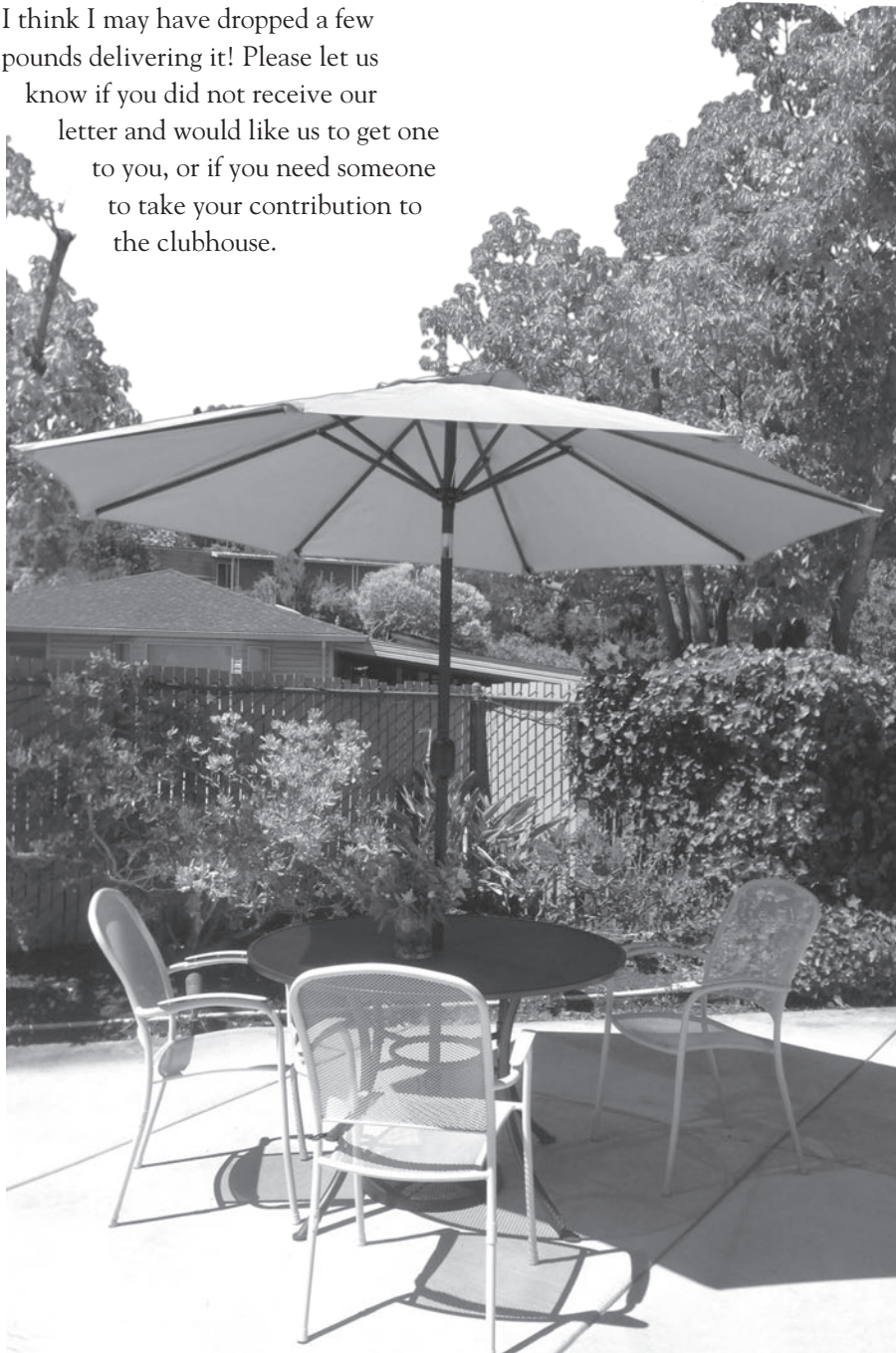
Meetings

Our meetings are held the third Wednesday of the month at 7 pm in the Fireside Room. HOL provides a voice for residents in matters involving management, facilities, social activities, health, and safety. You, your thoughts, and your ideas for new activities are always welcome.

Best regards,

Miriam Dvorin Spross
H O L PRESIDENT

OPPOSITE PAGE Water Aerobic Class in the newly refurbished swimming pool. LEFT: Some of the new pool furniture — an example of purchases made possible from your contributions to the HOL Annual Fun(d) Drive.



Message from Mar Val

Dear Friends,

Hopefully you were among those attending Mar Val's 4th of July celebration. Highlights of the event included presentation of a plaque, sponsored by HOL, honoring those remarkable residents who have reached 90 years of age and beyond. We were also treated to musical entertainment by **Brynda Foster** and the Tempos, who had just been awarded both Best Vocal Group and Best in Show ribbons

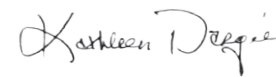
at the Marin County Fair. Clearly the partygoers were in full agreement with the judges' decision.

August Luau and September BBQ

August heralds our annual tribute to the tropics with the **Luau on Saturday, August 13**. The menu has been designed to transport both you and your taste buds to lands of sunny beaches and trade winds. In addition, the tantalizing Tiki Bar will be open and serving its exotic libations.

Finally, we wish to call your attention to the last outdoor event of 2016, namely the **Labor Day party on Monday, September 5**. Details are provided in the reservation form.

Warmest regards,



Kathleen Dargie
MAR VAL PRESIDENT
kfdargie@aol.com

Mar Val Labor Day Party

September 5, 2016

5 PM Cocktails • 6 PM Dinner

Join us for a



M E N U

BBQ RIBS

OR

TOMATO BASIL MUSHROOM POLENTA

STEAMED VEGETABLES

CAESAR SALAD

GARLIC BREAD

DESSERT

Reservation deadline — **August 31 at 5 pm** or when 120 reservations have been received.

Two guests per residence. • Please make checks payable to Mar Val.

For questions, call Carolyn Corry at 415-370-6403.

Community Connections Committee

by Joan Nelson

Readers Theater

Were you the star of your kindergarten or high school play? Or did you want to be? Do you love the fun (but not the memorization) of playing a part? Then MVMCC Readers Theater is just the thing for you!

We'll be doing readings for our own pleasure, remaining open to the possibility of a public reading.

Our first meeting will be Wednesday, August 17 at 4 pm at the home of **Yvonne Devine**. Our first play reading will be Oscar Wilde's comedy, *The Importance of Being Ernest*. To reserve a script, contact Yvonne at 415-506-1671.

At-Home Events

Shareen Akroosh will host the first 12 people who respond to the following invitation to A Summer Salad Supper on her newly refurbished patio. Saturday, August 6 at 5 pm. Call Shareen at 415-883-3077 to reserve a spot and to plan details.

MVMCC Book Group

The 4th Wednesday Book Group will meet August 24 at 4 pm in the Fireside Room. The book to be discussed is *The Plot Against America* by Philip Roth. Host is Penny Greene. For more information, call **Julia Mathews** at 415-883-7823.

Meditation

Meditation sessions will begin September 12 and continue weekly on Mondays. We will gather at 4:45 pm in the Fireside Room. A half hour of silence (preceded by a brief contemplation) will be introduced promptly at 5 pm. For details, contact **Joan Nelson** 415-506-4166, 415-595-6221 cell.

Just-1-Hour

Need a few minutes of help with a brief, one-time task? Pick up a current Just-1-Hour Volunteer List from the Just-1-Hour wall box. ■



MAR VAL LABOR DAY PARTY

September 5, 2016

DINNER RESERVATION FORM

Please circle entrée choice

RESIDENT _____	BBQ Ribs	Mushroom Polenta
RESIDENT _____	BBQ Ribs	Mushroom Polenta
GUEST _____	BBQ Ribs	Mushroom Polenta
GUEST _____	BBQ Ribs	Mushroom Polenta

Residents attending _____ @ \$12 each Make checks payable to Mar Val.

Guests attending _____ @ \$12 each **Check for \$_____ is enclosed. (NO CASH please)**

Reservation deadline is **August 31, 2016 at 5 pm** or when 120 reservations have been received.





Taking Heat – From Two Sources

by Bill Davis

Consider this situation, which is more probable than possible this year:

Governor Brown has issued a plea to conserve electrical power and to set your thermostat to 80 degrees. You walk outside and notice it is 102 degrees in the shade and climbing. The news says the Los Angeles basin will top out at 115 degrees today. An extreme heat warning is in effect for the North Bay, extending to Redding, of 105 to 108 degrees. Expect brownouts. Finally, our own very local weather station, built by Peter Dyke of Club View Drive (weather.MVMCC.org), shows an expected high of 106 degrees. There is a high-pressure system overhead. Most residents in the Park have their air conditioners running almost constantly if they are not already in the pool, which is now overcrowded. The summer heat, driven by El Niño, has arrived in Northern California.

Whether or not you heed global warming warnings, most weather experts predict this summer to be a very, very hot one. **So what can you do to prepare for this forecasted heat?**

Condensers

First, is your air conditioner condenser clean? The condenser is the large, radiator-looking heat exchanger with a fan inside of it that sits outside your home. Is it clean on the outside? Even if it looks clean, you can make sure by taking your garden hose and rinsing the outside of the fins with high pressure. You will probably see dirt wash out of the fins. This should be done when the unit is not running. It will take no longer than five minutes. There are two reasons to do this simple procedure: The condenser will perform much more efficiently, and this is going to save you cash on your summer electric bill. (You can thank me later.)



Fans

Finally, I want to share with you a personal story. I like warm weather, always have. There is nothing so pleasant as a gentle, cool breeze, or almost any breeze, for that matter. Quiet, oscillating fans can be very helpful when it gets hot. They can often generate enough of a breeze to keep you from having to resort to the air conditioning. In fact, I'm sure many of us can remember when we had no air conditioning and fans are what got us through the miserably hot weather. I try to use fans, two of them, in our house as much as possible when it is warm until either the heat is too much or I get a not-too-gentle reminder from my wife Carol-Joy about being too hot. "Bill, the fans are not doing it. It's time to turn on the air conditioner, please." That's when I acquiesce and turn on the air conditioner — with its clean condenser and new filter, of course. Because there is really only so much heat one can take — from the summer and the spouse.

New trainings

Although reduced during the summer, MVEST is planning a fairly active training schedule for the rest of the year. Included will be a Block Captain orientation and recap for those who have been doing this for awhile; another Incident Command training for anyone who would like to become involved; a search-and-rescue exercise; more radio training; and First Aid for Disaster Response training. This last class will be useful for all residents of MVMCC. More information as the summer progresses. ■

Filters

Second, change the filter on your heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) unit. If you have pets, it is recommended you change your filter every 30 days, but I think that is a bit much. Do it at the beginning of summer and at least once every two to three months thereafter. Again, there are several very important reasons to change this filter. For one thing, you will be breathing cleaner air after it travels through those long labyrinths of your home's ductwork, something that is very important to us residents in this 55-and-over Park. And you can again smile as you tap your checkbook, because a clean filter allows your air conditioner to work much more efficiently, saving you multiple dollars on your electric bill (a dollar saved is \$1.30 gross earned in today's market). I think you will be surprised when you pull out your old filter and see what it has trapped since it was last changed.

MVEST Bits and Pieces

by John Feld

CERT Classes

There is no CERT training in Marin until the fall. The classes for the remainder of this year are:

Mill Valley — October 1

Nicasio — October 15

Kentfield — November 5

San Rafael — November 12

Each class is two days long (16 hours) and is usually conducted on consecutive weekends.

You are welcome to attend a class anywhere in Marin County! The cost is \$45 and includes a backpack, goggles, a helmet, and an identification card upon completion. Scholarships are available to cover the course fee. Contact us if you need assistance. If you have any questions, please call the CERT coordinator, Maggie Lang, at 415-485-3409. The registration form can be found at <http://bit.ly/29DJZNi>.

Citizen CPR Class

A Citizen CPR Class will be held on 8/16/2016 at 6 pm at Novato Fire Station 61, 7025 Redwood Blvd. in Novato. The cost is \$15. Participants must sign up for CPR classes at least 48 hours prior to the class. Sign up at NFD Administrative Office, 95 Rowland Way, Novato. If you have any questions, call 415-878-2690. If you can't make this one, another class will be held in September.

Know Your Block Captain

It is always good to know who your block captain is. This person should know a little about you and your needs. She or he can help you learn how to shut off your gas, water, and electric in emergencies. If they know you have no air-conditioning, they can check up on you when the heat gets excessive. (Remember, there is air conditioning at the clubhouse if your house gets too hot!) Just let them know. If you do not know who your block captain is, or if you would like to become a block captain, please call John Feld at 415-884-2675.

Misting Stations

If there are blackouts, the clubhouse has a generator, so there is no need to be in the dark or in excessive heat, and soon we will have misting stations to help you cool off.

Support Groups for Loss of Pets

There is a support group for people who have recently lost their loved pet. This is held on the first Monday of every month, from 6 to 7:30 pm at the Marin Humane Society, 171 Bel Marin Keys Blvd., Novato. It is facilitated by a professional Hospice by the Bay grief counselor and allows you to connect with others who have experienced the loss of a loved pet. The grief we experience when we lose an animal companion is unique, and if you have experienced a similar

loss, come share your grief and learn skills to help you on your journey toward healing.

Registration is not required. For additional information, please contact Hospice by the Bay at 415-526-5699, griefsupport@hbtb.org.

Nixle

If you want to know about all local emergencies, you can sign up for the Nixle call service.

Nixle is a community information service helping you stay connected to emergency information. You stay connected to your local police department, your local community agencies and organizations, and the important information from other locations throughout the county that are relevant to you. Information is sent to your cell phone via an SMS message and/or to your email. You never need to talk with anyone, just stay informed.

There are not a lot of calls; about 14 have come in, in the last six months. These have all been advisory notices about potential flash floods, burglary suspects, and asking for help identifying criminals, etc. There have been a couple concerning countywide emergency initiatives.

Of course, you can change your preferences or cancel at any time. If you would like to sign up for the service, go to <http://bit.ly/2a11zsj> and register. ■

Many Reasons to Keep

by Lisa Bloch, *Marin Humane Society*

Like most Americans who grew up with cats, ours went outdoors as they pleased. While I enjoyed seeing them laze about in the sunshine and climb trees, I didn't enjoy the "presents" they would bring us: mice, lizards, rats, and beautiful birds. It was heartbreaking—

and often horrifying—to see. One of our cats, Kiki, was particularly adept at catching and killing birds. It always bothered me, but the adults around me just shrugged and said, "That's what cats do."

Walking home from school one day in seventh grade, I found Kiki by the curb on a busy street. She had been hit by a car, and her gorgeous fur was covered in blood. I was devastated. Yet we endured a subsequent pet cat getting hit by a car and two more going missing before I graduated college.

When it came time to get my first cat as an adult, I asked my veterinarian what he thought about letting cats outdoors.

"Your cat will be safe from cars and from fights with other cats and live a healthier, longer life if you simply keep her inside. You'll also be saving a lot of small creatures," he said.



A study by the Wildlife Society and the American Bird Conservancy suggests that nearly one-third of free-roaming house cats are capturing and killing wildlife. The study attached "KittyCams" to 60 outdoor house cats near Athens, Georgia. About 30 percent of the sampled cats were successful in capturing and killing prey, and those cats averaged about one kill for every 17 hours outdoors, or 2.1 kills per week. The study also found that cats brought only 23 percent of their kills back to a residence.

Injured wildlife in Marin is often brought to WildCare.

"We treat roughly 500 wild animals a year that have been victims of cat attacks," according to WildCare director of animal care, Melanie Piazza. "And these are only the animals that cat owners find alive and

bring to us. Any wildlife rehabilitator can tell you how maddening and heartbreaking it is to treat or have to euthanize the never-ending flow of mangled and suffering animals that are caught by well-fed and well-loved cats year after year."

While cats are adept predators, they can also become prey—from loose dogs and, here in Marin in particular, coyotes. Coyotes generally eat rodents, insects, fruit, etc., but they are opportunistic and will snatch cats if given the chance. Cats are also at risk of being hurt in fights with other cats and of contracting diseases.

Your Cats Indoors



bright colors give most songbirds enough time to notice the cat and fly away.

I love Magic and Mischief, but I also respect wildlife, so at my home the kitties stay inside. ■



Catios— Patios For Cats

Some cats will demand to go outside, so what's a viable alternative? Both the Marin Humane Society and WildCare strongly recommend what's called a "catio." Catios are enclosures (usually made from wood and wire) that sit adjacent to your home. They can range in size and configuration, from a simple window box to large porches. Many people build their own, but some purchase prefab catios and others have them custom made. You can learn more about them at MarinHumaneSociety.org/CatEnclosures.

My cats, Magic and Mischief, have a catio that sits outside one of my bedroom windows. They simply use a cat door cut into the screen to go in and out to enjoy the sunshine and stretch out on one of the platforms inside (they have their choice of varying heights). When I don't want them going in and out, I simply lock the cat door.

And don't worry, there are plenty of fun indoor activities and toys for your kitty to keep from getting bored (some as simple as a balled-up piece of paper they can bat around and, of course, the gold standard—a string dragged around by you).

If you still feel strongly that you want your cats to roam outside*, please try to keep them in during dawn and dusk when wildlife is most active.

Check out products such as the Cat Bib or BirdsBeSafe collars, whose

*(EDITOR'S NOTE: MVMCC Park rules state "ALL PETS MUST BE INDOOR PETS ONLY".)

Lisa Bloch is the marketing and communications director for the Marin Humane Society, which contributes "Tails of Marin" articles at www.marinij.com and welcomes animal-related questions and stories about the people and animals in our community. Go to MarinHumaneSociety.org, [Twitter.com/MarinHumane](https://twitter.com/MarinHumane), or email lbloch@MarinHumaneSociety.org

ABOVE AND BELOW LEFT: Catio and window catio courtesy of www.catiospaces.com, CENTER, <http://katniplounge.blogspot.com/>; RIGHT ABOVE, www.readersheds.co.uk/; BELOW, window catios, www.thecatcarpenter.com.

Two Resident Best-of-Show, Plus First, Second, Third, and Honorable Mention Awards at the 2016 Marin County Fair



Kathryn McMudie was awarded best of show and a first-place ribbon in the Floriculture, Cacti — All other Echinocactus — ball clustering. This Echinopsis is a large genus of cacti native to South America. The flowers last only 24 hours.

Of her 17 awards, another first place was in the Cacti category for the Clustering Ball Mammillaria. Five additional first-place ribbons were for succulents — Kleinia (Senecio), Medusa's Head Type Euphorbia, Any other Crassula, and Mesembs; and for her green zucchini in the Vine Crops category.

Three second-place ribbons were for two succulents — Sedum and Gasteria, and for a cactus in the All other Echinocactus category.

Third-place ribbons were for her succulents in the Sedum and the Any other Succulent Variety categories; her sea shell won the Miniature Container Gardens category.

Fourth-place ribbons went to her succulents for Any other Crassula, Any other Succulent Variety, and Container of 3+ Varieties.



Brynda Foster and the Tempos were also awarded the best of show ribbon for Best Musical Group on July 2 and first-place for best vocal in the singing competition.



Susan McMudie's scratch board squirrel received first-place; her camel, second-place; and a third-place in the Miscellaneous Crafts category.



Laura Kradjan was awarded a second-place ribbon for her needlework entry — T-shirt imagery appliquéd onto a sweatshirt.

Her painting “Retro Mellow Marshall” received an honorable mention in the special Fair exhibit called “Scenes of Marvelous Marin” — an acrylic on wood panel, done recently from sketches done in the 1980s of

the town of Marshall when the hotel was still standing before it burnt down in the 90s. The painting sold the first day of the fair.

Her 22-page 1967 memoir won an honorable mention ribbon in the creative writing division — the story of how and when she got to California and her first year in Marin, a very different place in those days. ■

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

by Ann Gronvold

— WANTED —

Nature Guides at Wildcare

If you like nature and children, Wildcare's Terwilliger's Guides would love to have you join their team as a Nature Guide. There will be a

**Once-a-Year
Volunteer Orientation
Saturday, August 6
11 AM — 12:30 PM
Wildcare
76 Albert Park Lane
San Rafael**

If, after the orientation, you'd like to sign up, training begins in August: once a week for seven weeks, plus accompanying at least two guided nature walks. A \$50 fee covers the training materials. After that, you would lead small groups of five to eight elementary school children on two- to three-hour hikes twice a month (though you can schedule more if you wish) to one of these areas: Muir Woods, Miwok Meadows in China Park, Spring Lake in Santa Rosa, or Ring Mountain in Corte Madera.

It's great fun; the other guides are a delight; and you'd learn more about plants, animals and local habitats as well as teaching techniques. And every year there are advanced trainings by different experts — talks and walks in local parks.

To register for the orientation, please call Eileen Jones at Wildcare: 415-453-1000, ext. 12. ■

Handles to the Back, 2 Feet Apart, and Please — Don't Make a Vase

The fully automated collection trucks, which pick up the recycling, trash, and compost every Monday morning, use a hydraulic gripping claw to grab the carts. This enables the driver to never have to leave the truck and helps prevent injuries. But it also means it is very important that carts are set out correctly.

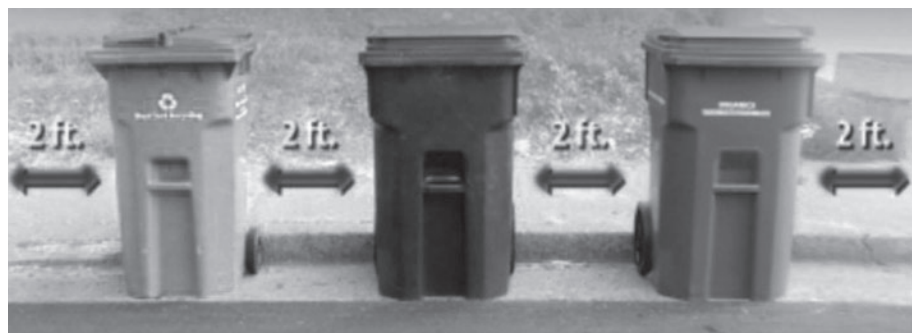
Wheels Against the Curb — Away from the Street

Please place your cart so the wheels are against the curb and the handles are toward your home and away from the street.

Carts 2 Feet Away from Each Other

Keep carts at least 2 feet away from each other and also from cars, mailboxes, or anything else that may hinder the automated arm from accessing the carts.

Wheels and handles should face away from the street at the curb to help prevent carts from being tipped over as they are serviced by fully or semi-automated collection systems. So, handles to the back, 2 feet apart, and please don't make a vase out of your container. ■



Merlin

Article and photograph by David Gray

We have a taiga merlin (*Falco columbarius columbarius*) who graces our Park on occasion. It is a smallish raptor, only slightly larger than a kestrel and about half as large as a redtailed hawk. Our merlin likes to sit in and atop trees in the Park; I've seen it sitting in the oak trees and atop the redwood near the clubhouse. I also watched one hunt the fields near the ponds south of the park. The photograph of the sitting merlin is from the peak of Deer Island.

Merlins like to hunt from perches and are extremely maneuverable when attacking prey, primarily small birds. They quickly accelerate upon takeoff due to their musculature and wingspan-to-weight ratio. They will fly low (as low as 3 feet!) using bushes and tall grasses as cover in order to surprise their prey.













Like most small hunters, it appears fearless when confronting a larger bird of prey, so much so that this is an identifying characteristic of the species. Merlins are found in Europe and Asia as well as the Americas, but their genetics of the American subspecies diverged from the Eurasian ones about one million years ago or longer. Recordings of its calls and its range may be found at: www.xeno-canto.org/species/FalcoColumbarius

AS A REMINDER:

If you have a mouse problem, please avoid using poisons such as rodenticides. These anticoagulants kill mice slowly and make them easy but deadly prey for our local predators. Not only do these "poison pills" kill birds of prey and carrion eaters (owls, hawks, falcons, eagles, vultures), they also kill foxes, bobcats, coyotes, and mountain lions. Natural predators are incredibly important to our local ecology. ■

EDITOR'S NOTE: Thanks to David Gray for "Bird of the Month" while Bill Noble was bird-watching in the Amazon.



	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 6-8 AM Trash Pickup 9:30 AM Low-Impact Exercise 7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker 	2 10-11 AM Water Exercise	3 10 AM -2 PM Craft Group 11 AM -1 PM Whistlestop (call Roberta 415-883-0843) 7 PM PAC MEETING	4 9:15 AM QiGong <i>with Dove</i> 10-11 AM Water Exercise 6:15-7 PM Silent Meditation 7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker 	5 4 PM Canasta ♠♥♣♦ 5-7 PM Pub Night	6
SUNDAY	7 1-4 PM Mahjong 6-8 AM Trash Pickup 9:30 AM Low-Impact Exercise 7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker 	8 10-11 AM Water Exercise	9 10 AM -2 PM Craft Group 11 AM -1 PM Whistlestop (call Roberta 415-883-0843) 6 PM MAR VAL MEETING	10 9:15 AM QiGong <i>with Dove</i> 10-11 AM Water Exercise 6:15-7 PM Silent Meditation 7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker 	11 4 PM Canasta ♠♥♣♦ 5-7 PM Pub Night 7:15 PM Bingo	12 
	13  MAR VAL LUAU 5 PM COCKTAILS 6 PM DINNER					
	14 1-4 PM Mahjong 6-8 AM Trash Pickup 9:30 AM Low-Impact Exercise 7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker 	15 10-11 AM Water Exercise	16 10 AM -2 PM Craft Group 11 AM Ladies' Bridge 11 AM -1 PM Whistlestop (call Roberta 415-883-0843) 7 PM HOL MEETING	17 9:15 AM QiGong <i>with Dove</i> 10-11 AM Water Exercise 6:15-7 PM Silent Meditation 7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker 	18 4 PM Canasta ♠♥♣♦ 5-7 PM Pub Night	19 
	20			21 1-4 PM Mahjong 6-8 AM Trash Pickup 9:30 AM Low-Impact Exercise 7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker 	22 10-11 AM Water Exercise	23 10 AM -2 PM Craft Group 11 AM -1 PM Whistlestop (call Roberta 415-883-0843) 7 PM HOL MEETING
	24 9:15 AM QiGong <i>with Dove</i> 10-11 AM Water Exercise 6:15-7 PM Silent Meditation 7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker 	25 FULL MOON 9 PM	26 4 PM Canasta ♠♥♣♦ 5-7 PM Pub Night	27	28 1-4 PM Mahjong 6-8 AM Trash Pickup 9:30 AM Low-Impact Exercise 7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker 	29 10-11 AM Water Exercise
	30 10 AM -2 PM Craft Group 11 AM -1 PM Whistlestop (call Roberta 415-883-0843)	31	1 10 AM -2 PM Craft Group 11 AM -1 PM Whistlestop (call Roberta 415-883-0843)	2	3	

AUGUST '16