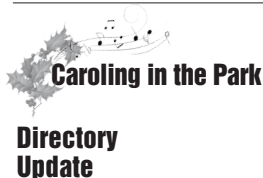


T H E  
**ECHO**

**DECEMBER 2016**  
C O N T E N T S

**2**

**Erma Wheatley**  
Letter from the Editor



**3**

**Jay Shelfer**  
**Matt Greenberg**



**4-5**

**Kathleen Dargie**  
Holiday Party and New Year's Eve Dinner



**6**

**Miriam Spross**  
HOL Message



**7**

**Joan Nelson**  
**Inga Grace** Review



**8-9**

**John Feld**  
Staying Dry



**9**

**Vicki Waddell**  
Thankful

**10-11**

**Bill Davis**  
Saving Our Bacon — BC Jeff Veliquette



**12-13**

**Marianne York** Resident Couple  
**Suzie Lahr** Art in the Park



**14-15**

**Bill Noble and David Gray**  
Bird of the Month — Quail



**16**

**Calendar**  
December 2016



## Letter from the Editor

### Many Thanks to the Many Who Make the Echo Possible Each Month

**O**ur community magazine, the *Echo*, only happens because so many people volunteer their time and talent. A very special thanks to copy editor **Mary Barbosa** for her careful and insightful editing and also for proofreading along with **Carol-Joy Harris** and **Anila Manning**, who meticulously comb each issue for clarity and nuanced detail.

Month after month articles come in that are newsworthy, provocative, and actually interesting and worth reading — thanks to **Jay Shelfer**, PAC; **Kathleen Dargie**, **Carolyn Corry**, Mar Val; **Carolyn** again and **Miriam Dvorin Spross**, HOL; **Matt Greenberg**, Manager; **Bill Davis**, **John Feld**, **Serena Fisher**, **Alan Gump**, and **John Hansen**, MVEST; **Joan Nelson**, Community Connections; **Mike Holland**, “Take a Hike”; **Suzie Lahr** and all the artists, “Art in the Park”; all the contributing writers over the year, **Patricia Akroosh**, **Nancy Bingham**,

**Larry Cohen**, **Ed Collins**, **Peter Dyke**, **Michael Hagerty**, **Carol-Joy Harris**, **Inga Grace**, **Ann Gronvold**, **Pauline Hawkins**, **David King**, **Renee LaFarge**, **David MacLam**, **Anila Manning**, **Karin Mortensen**, **Jim Olson**, **Dee Schneider**, **Jack Travis**, **Nancy Warfield**, and **Marianne York**; and to our photographers, **John Feld**, **David Gray**, **Alan Gump**, **Alan Wong**, and **Marianne York**.

It is with much appreciation to **Bill Noble** for his poetry and “Bird of the Month” that we say farewell and wish him the best with his move up north.

Thank you, **Doug Muhly**, for overseeing all the *Echo* deliveries and to all the deliverers who month after month deliver the latest issue into the tubes: **Mary Barbosa**, **Eileen Cedrun**, **Paul Gruner**, **Mike Holland**, **Bob Kuder**, **Julie Manson**, **Tom Nadolski**, **Dan Sebastian**, **Ellen Scherba**, **Ellen Schulz**, **Pat Thurston**, **Richard Waibel**, and **Anne Wilson**.

May 2017 be better than our best hopes.

Carolers—we will provide words to the songs. Don't worry if you think you “can't carry a tune.” Just come have a good time with us, dress warmly, and bring a flashlight, and your friends too. Following will be refreshments to warm us.

*'Tis the season for caroling and joy!*

#### 2016-17 Directory Update

#### New Residents

**Linda Steenman**

134 Sunrise Lane  
415-272-7233 cell  
lgsteenman@prodigy.net

# THE ECHO

DECEMBER 2016

## MARIN VALLEY MOBILE COUNTRY CLUB

100 MARIN VALLEY DRIVE  
NOVATO, CA 94949  
415-883-5911 / 415-883-1971 FAX  
WWW.MVMCC.COM

EDITOR/DESIGNER Erma Wheatley  
COPY EDITOR Mary Barbosa

#### PROOFREADING

Mary Barbosa, Carol-Joy Harris, Anila Manning

A PUBLICATION OF MHB Group Region 8  
[www.mobilehomeboard.com/](http://www.mobilehomeboard.com/)

MARIN VALLEY MOBILE COUNTRY CLUB  
GENERAL MANAGER Matt Greenberg  
[gm.mvmcc@gmail.com](mailto:gm.mvmcc@gmail.com)

#### PAC BOARD

PRESIDENT Jay Shelfer 415-883-6945  
VICE PRESIDENT John Hansen 415-847-7155  
SECRETARY Peggy Hill 415-382-0185  
TREASURER Larry Cohen 415-883-7786  
AT LARGE David King 925-708-7370

#### STANDING COMMITTEES

FINANCE David King, Stephen Plocher  
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

#### HOL BOARD

PRESIDENT Miriam Dvorin Spross 415-884-0607  
1<sup>ST</sup> VICE PRESIDENT Marianne York 415-717-0696  
2<sup>ND</sup> VICE PRESIDENT Helen MacLam 415-612-4155  
SECRETARY Joanne Woodward 415-506-4568  
TREASURER Gwendolyn Morgan 415-475-2629

#### MAR VAL BOARD

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

#### 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](mailto:ermawheatley@gmail.com)

Images should be as large as possible to enable a 300 ppi resolution (*pixels / inch*).

**DEADLINE Everything is due the 8<sup>th</sup> of the month or sooner for the following month's edition.**

MVMCC  
*Caroling in the Park*  
Sunday, December 18  
Meet at the clubhouse at 5 PM

**E**veryone is invited to join our twelfth annual holiday caroling party. We sing to bring the holiday spirit to those who may be ill, house-bound, or in need of a lift.

Please contact Carol-Joy Harris (415-883-2824) if you would like the carolers to visit your or your neighbor's home (no promises, but we'll try).

# Letter to Residents

Greetings from the PAC Board.

## Finances

Our finances are in order. The debt service on the bank loan financing the purchase of MVMCC is 2.70 as of September 31, 2016, well above the required 2.0.

## Novato City Update

With the new City Manager Regan M. Candelario now on board, we await the realigning of positions governing MVMCC and the prioritizing of the issues already under discussion with the City. No specific data has been provided yet in three important areas: subsidizing the rents of our residents, attempting to realign the rent differentials on leases carried over from previous owners, and setting a date for the next City Council meeting here at MVMCC.

## Street Parking

We are in the process of working to resolve several issues, two of which are on-street parking and the option of renting additional parking and storage spaces for our cars. Your cooperation is requested. Our manager is forced to spend too much time trying to resolve these issues, wherein our cooperation could be so helpful. We saw how an emergency could quickly be complicated and obstructed by

unlawful on-street parking. For the health and safety of our community, please cooperate.

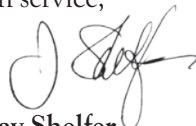
## Pool and Spa

Coming up is the new filtration system for our pool and spa. Taking showers just before—not several hours before—you use the pool and spa will lessen the amount of chlorine needed to keep these areas safe for our use. We are installing state-of-the-art filtration and purification systems that calibrate the minimum amount of chlorine necessary. Using the pool without showering will automatically cause our new system to react. For the enjoyment and health of all who use the pool and spa, please observe this simple rule of showering first.

## MVEST and CERT

The great community builders and fine organizations devoted to safeguarding all of us are our own MVEST and CERT teams. Please read their articles carefully and participate and follow their directions.

In service,



Jay Shelfer  
PAC PRESIDENT  
jjshelfer@yahoo.com

# Management Update

Happy Holidays, Marin Valley!

## Storm Drain System

The Parkwide drain inspection and cleaning is complete prior to winter weather.

## V-Ditch and Sump Pump Systems

V-ditches are clean of debris. These lead to the storm drains for water evacuation during rainstorms.

## Fire Abatement Work

120 days of logged-in labor is complete for deep cutbacks of fire-prone plants. This second phase of fire abatement work will complete the spending line item for this type of work for the year.

## Retaining Wall Projects

The last four retaining walls complete our work for this fiscal year.

## 171 Marin Valley Drive New Home

Installation is complete for this Park-owned home.

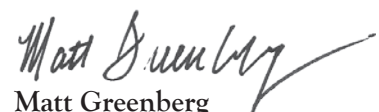
## Pool Equipment Replacement Project

Completed project with new saline system including saline commercial salt chlorine generator, Bioshield; UV filters for exceptionally clean water in the pool and spa; energy-efficient, state-of-the-art heaters and pumps.

## See and Be Seen

Now that it gets dark earlier, please remember to wear reflective clothing while walking at night on our streets. Several residents have expressed concern over not being able to see dog walkers at night.

Thank you,



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

# Message from **MAR**



## HOLIDAY PARTY

December 10, 2016

5 PM Cocktails 6 PM Dinner

### ENTRÉE CHOICES

Pork Loin with Apple ■ Salmon ■ Vegetarian

Mixed Green Vegetables

Roasted Potatoes

Cheesecake

**Reservations are limited to two people per residence.**

Reservation box will be on the counter December 1.  
Early reservations will not be accepted.

**Reservation deadline is December 7 at 5 PM  
or when 140 reservations have been received.**

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

Dear Friends,

The Mar Val Board joins in extending our best wishes for a happy and healthy holiday season to the residents of MVMCC.

Prior to detailing the exciting events planned for December, I must acknowledge our appreciation to all who participated in the Black Cat. Thanks to all of you, Mar Val cleared just over \$2,000, making this year's event even more successful than last year.

We are delighted to confirm that HOL is once again joining with Mar Val in presenting the annual Holiday Party, Saturday, December 10, beginning at 5 pm. The reservation form on this page provides information with regard to menu choice. Although the dinner is free of charge, a check for \$12, payable to Mar Val, must accompany each reservation. The check will be returned when you arrive at the party.

One word of caution: Please be aware that the **cutoff will take place in the first week of December or when we reach 140 reservations.**

As the old song asks, "What are you doing New Year's Eve?" Well, if you have ever attended Mar Val's festivities marking this holiday, you are doubtless counting down the days until December 31. We are thrilled to confirm our own **Charles Watson** has agreed to provide his special magic, ensuring that the dance floor will continue its now legendary reputation.

With warmest regards,

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

### 2016 HOLIDAY PARTY RESERVATION FORM

Please circle entrée choice

RESIDENT \_\_\_\_\_ Pork Loin Salmon Vegetarian

RESIDENT OR GUEST \_\_\_\_\_ Pork Loin Salmon Vegetarian

Checks only (payable to Mar Val—NO CASH, please) Number of attendees \_\_\_\_ at (\$12/person) TOTAL \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Reservation deadline — December 7 at 5 PM or when 140 reservations have been received.**

**Reservation box will be on the lobby counter December 1 (early reservations not accepted).**

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



# Mar Val

## **HOL / Mar Val Holiday Party December 10, 2016 • 5 pm**

Single residents may bring one guest to the party; if there are two attending residents in your home, no guests are allowed.

To confirm your reservation, include a CHECK (CASH WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED) made payable to Mar Val for \$12 per person. When you arrive at the party, your check will be returned to you – if you do not attend the event, your check will be cashed.

**Reservation deadline: December 7 at 5 pm** or when 140 reservations have been received. Reservation box will be on the counter on December 1. Early reservations will not be accepted.

## **Mar Val New Year's Eve Party December 31, 2016 • 6:30 PM**

\$12/person for residents, \$15/person for guests, limit of two guests per home. Reservation deadline: December 28 at 5 pm or when 120 reservations have been received.

Separate checks and reservation forms are required for each event. Put reservation forms and checks for both events in the box.

*For questions, please contact Carolyn Corry at 415-370-6403.*



## **NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY**

**December 31, 2016  
6:30 – 9 PM**

*Buffet  
Champagne Toast  
Dancing*

**Charles Watson will again be the DJ!**

**\$12/person for Residents**

**\$15/person for Guests**

**Limit of two guests per home**

**Reservation deadline is December 28 at 5 PM  
or when 120 reservations have been received.**

*For questions, please call Carolyn Corry  
at 415-370-6403*

### 2016 NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY RESERVATION FORM

RESIDENT \_\_\_\_\_ RESIDENT \_\_\_\_\_

GUEST \_\_\_\_\_ GUEST \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Residents attending \_\_\_\_ at \$12 each: \$ \_\_\_\_ Number of Guests attending \_\_\_\_ at \$15 each: \$ \_\_\_\_

Checks only (payable to Mar Val—NO CASH, please) TOTAL \$ \_\_\_\_

**Reservation Deadline—December 28 at 5 PM or when 120 reservations have been received.**

**Reservation box will be on the lobby counter December 1 (early reservations not accepted).**

*For questions please call Carolyn Corry at 415-370-6403*





# HOL *Home Owners League Message*

**Clean Up the Park Day** was a great success! Special thanks go to organizers **Gwendolyn Morgan** and **Gail Chadbourne** and to more than twenty volunteer movers, shakers, and scoopers. Thank you all for your spirit of camaraderie and care for our communal well-being.

These two “shmutz” categories were found to be the biggest offenders:

**Cigarette butts** are the most commonly discarded piece of waste worldwide. They are not biodegradable and contain all the carcinogenic chemicals, pesticides, and nicotine that make tobacco use the leading cause of preventable death worldwide. Carelessly discarded burning butts have caused deadly fires. Portable pocket ashtrays such as those made by Bic and Zippo are a quick, easy, and cheap solution. For information, visit [www.cigwaste.org/](http://www.cigwaste.org/).

**Pet waste** contains fecal bacteria that transmit dangerous pathogens that spread disease. The EPA designated pet waste a dangerous pollutant in the same category as toxic chemicals and oil. Kudos and commendations to Park pet owners who carry bags and pick up after their dogs. We need every MVMCC dog walker to be responsible for his or her pet’s poop. Here’s a link to more “poop scoop” from a professional pet waste management company in Oregon: [www.dispawsal.com/why-scoop/](http://www.dispawsal.com/why-scoop/).

We are working with Management to get doggy bag dispensers and signage for the two biggest “shmutz” trouble spots:

- The grassy open area overlooking San Pablo Bay to the right of the clubhouse and the chain link fence.
- The open-space field at the end of Sunrise along the back of the homes on Club View Drive.

## **Computer orientation**

HOL will be offering basic orientations for the clubhouse library Dell PC and iMac computers. Please add your name to the signup sheet in the Park office if you are interested. We will get in touch with you to “make a date.”

## **Holiday Dinner Partner**

HOL is pleased and proud to partner with Mar Val to sponsor the annual MVMCC Holiday Dinner for residents on **Saturday, December 10**. Please be our guests. Come and enjoy!

Best wishes to you and yours for a happy and healthy holiday season.

Warm regards,



**Miriam Dvorin Spross**  
HOL PRESIDENT



PHOTOGRAPH: MARIANNE YORK

HOL team left to right: Joanne Woodward, Gwendolyn Morgan, Gail Chadbourne, and Helen MacLam.

*A bad neighbor is a misfortune as much as a good neighbor is a great blessing.*

HESIOD

Which one are you?

by **JOAN NELSON**

**W**hy ... before I even saw or smelled the fire ... did my next-door neighbor call to alert me?

Because we had already agreed to be “buddies.” With a deep appreciation of my good-neighbor connection, I grabbed my (all-too-incomplete) go-pack and evacuated my home.

This wake-up call prompted me to attend the November MVEST event, where I learned how to complete my go-pack. I went home and did so. Secure in the knowledge that I had taken one

potentially life-saving step, I proceeded to another clear and doable task (please take note and do likewise):

Do this now, before the next (possibly life-threatening) emergency arises, as emergencies do: suddenly and unexpectedly. For more information about this, about the Just-1-Hour volunteer program, or various other ways of connecting the community, contact

**Joan Nelson**

*figleafjoan@comcast.net*  
415-506-4166  
415-595-6221 cell

■ **INSERT ALERT** ■

## Re: THE EMERGENCY INFORMATION SHEET

**On the enclosed sheet, UPDATE the emergency information you provided when you moved into the Park!**

On the lower part of the form, please complete the near-neighbor BUDDY information that could make a life-or-death difference in case of a personal emergency. You and your buddy(ies) merely agree to maintain a conscious level of awareness regarding any unusual activity (or lack of activity).

In the process of discussing what might happen in an earthquake, my neighbors and I got to know one another in a richer, fuller way. I'm sure you will have a similar experience.

Then **return the form to Matt in the office (perhaps include it with your rent check).**

# Earthquake Bracing

## Five-Star Review

by **INGA GRACE**

**D**ave from Quality Mobile Home Services, Pleasanton, came to give us an estimate for earthquake bracing and tie-downs for our older mobile home. Following a presentation, he went under the house for some time and then gave us an estimate of \$22,500 for top-of-the-line work. Yes, you read that right. Then another estimate for \$12,500, and when asked about tie-downs only, he reluctantly offered that for \$6,215.

Thinking this was too expensive, we called another company for an estimate.

Kain Campos of Goodie and Sons visited to give us his price for acquiring an earthquake tie-down system. We also asked about earthquake bracing. Kain gave an excellent presentation, with photos, of the many homes the company worked on after the Napa earthquake. After looking under our house, he informed us that the previous owner had already installed solid tie-downs as well as sufficient bracing—and we needed nothing!

Needless to say, we were extremely grateful to Kain Campos for his honest assessment as well as his expertise, kindness, ability to explain clearly and to take time to answer questions.

If you already have bracing in place, his company offers earthquake tie-downs for a flat fee of \$2,500 for mobile homes.

Sounds like an excellent deal — if you need to add tie-down earthquake protection for your home! ■



# Staying Dry

by JOHN FELD

**B**efore the very wet October we had, the last rain to fall on Marin Valley was on May 7. One hundred forty-six dry days ensued, ending with our first major fire. Since then, it has been raining cats and dogs. In October we had 7.41" of rain. The average for the month of October is 9 mm, or what statistics says is 0". According to the *Marin Independent Journal*, only 14 Octobers since 1921 have exceeded 6" in the Northern Sierras.

This 7+" is not flood conditions, nor is it enough to end the Northern California drought that has persisted for the past six years. So what have we in store for the coming rainy season? As we all know, weather predictions are somewhat less than reliable. News weather forecasters are probably correct in their estimations about half the time, and you do not have to be a meteorologist to foretell our weather in July.

The *Marin IJ* says we are probably in a La Niña year, as opposed to the El Niño we were promised last winter. In La Niña years, the oceans near the equator are cooler than usual, and

this tends to make for about 95% less rainfall than average. Yet most long-range forecasts suggest that we can expect the coming months to be wetter than usual.

## Preparations to Keep Dry

So what do we need to do to prepare for a possible soaking in the next few months?

- Of course, if you have seen any leaks recently, these should get fixed as soon as possible.
- Make sure your windows and doors are closing snugly and that no rain is getting in.
- If you walk around the Park, you might notice grass and other small plants growing in the gutters of some homes. This means that the gutters are almost certainly blocked with dirt and leaves. Either climb up a ladder and clean these out all around your home or get someone younger and fitter to do it for you. This is especially likely to happen if you live in the vicinity of tall trees that drop their flowers, needles, seeds, and leaves.
- Don't forget your carport's gutters.
- If you have a roof over your back door, there are gutters there, too. If these and the downspouts are not cleaned out, the water will find other ways down, usually by running over your walls. Blockages can also cause gutters to leak or even break.
- Once these are all cleared away, then you have to make sure that the water coming down the drainpipe has somewhere to go other than under your home.
- Some homes flood under the house year after year, often leaving standing water. This water can have several not-very-nice consequences: It can cause the foundation on which your home sits to sink, which makes your house uneven and results in sloping floors, sticking doors, and misaligned windows. It can also lead to increased dampness inside the house and decay in the wood and materials that your home is made of. None of these consequences is good, and the damage is compounded the longer they persist.



PHOTOGRAPHS: JOHN FELD



# A Reason to Be Thankful

by VICKI WADDELL

- So make sure your downpipes direct the water away from the house. You can do this by applying extensions to the pipe, which can be roll-up tubes, →



or fixed piping that either lies on top of the earth, ↓



or buried under the soil. →



They have to take the water away from the house toward the street, and not onto your neighbor's property.

- Lastly, if your house gets damp, make sure you air it out as it dries, to avoid problems with mold. Some people are so anxious not to lose expensively produced heat, they turn their homes into sealed boxes with little or no ventilation. As well as being bad for your health, this can create huge dampness problems, so make sure there is always some provision for air circulation.

**Stay dry!** ■

**A** lot of work has been going on in our home this past year, and we're confident both from a fiscal point of view and the time spent on each project that we can now settle back and enjoy the holidays feeling very good about ourselves, having performed all our maintenance duties to keep our home safe and operating efficiently. Some of our accomplishments consisted of getting rid of ancient documents that date back to the '30s (much to the delight of our kids); decluttering our abode by donating stuff to the Salvation Army that is no longer relevant to our lives; installing additional support piers; releveling the house; working on our "go bag" just in case an earthquake hits; powerwashing the house; and installing a new stovetop. Yes, we felt rather smug that we had everything under control. At least that's what we thought...

During — what we hoped would be — our last visit to Home Depot, a man approached us to ask when we had last changed the filters in our furnace. Ed and I looked at one another and nodded our heads — of course, we always change filters. Oh, maybe that was the coffee pot? Our quizzical looks prompted this man to suggest a \$15 visit just to check the condition of our furnace. We concurred, even though by that time we were bleeding money, so what's another \$15?

Early the following week, a heating and air-conditioning man arrived. Besides confirming that we had not changed our filters in recent years, he spent some time dismantling the guts of the furnace only to find burnt-out coils! He concluded that the damage that was done recently to our hillside in last month's fire was nothing compared to the damage that could have happened as a result of a fire starting in our home and then spreading throughout the Park — a very, very scary thought!!!!

So we are grateful to this company for their gentle nudge. And we're grateful to have the *Echo*, where we can pass along this experience to our neighbors. Some of our homes are almost 50 years old, so this is a lesson to all of us that, as our infrastructure continues to age, we also must keep a watchful eye over our appliances. Just because they are still working doesn't mean they are safe.

Blessings to you all this holiday season. ■

# Saving Our Bacon

by **BILL DAVIS**

**W**hat most of us know about the fire on September 30 is what we saw, what our neighbors told us, and what we read in the newspaper. That is very limited and inadequate. Some of us almost got burned or otherwise hurt or lost everything we own.

I would like to share with you some of what I've learned about the potential of that fire and how all that was averted by our Novato firefighters. With their spring-loaded response, they protected everyone in this Park, first, from actual bodily harm, and second, from having our homes burn up in the rapidly advancing fire. How did they do it?

Someone saw smoke at the top of the hill near the water towers, from the road leading out of the Park. They called 9-1-1. The emergency communication center in San Rafael suddenly was flooded with 50-plus calls reporting a wildfire. The call center dispatched Engine Company 65 (a captain, an engineer, and a paramedic) to the site. Only four minutes elapsed from the time of the first 9-1-1 call until the first of many fire engines arrived.

All four other fire stations in Novato were also responding. Battalion Chief (BC) Jeff Veliquette in his command vehicle was immediately driving to the fire, and the Novato Fire Chief and multiple other chief officers were en route as well. The Marinwood, San Rafael, and Marin County Fire Departments responded for mutual aid. Cal Fire was dispatched from

Charles M. Schulz Airport in Santa Rosa, providing two air attack tankers filled with retardant, plus a helicopter and a spotter plane. Engine companies from as far away as Marin City and Point Reyes were also immediately driving our way. All in all, 15 units were dispatched, including a bulldozer and two hand crews of 20 firefighters each.

The first engine company arriving at the site of a fire reports on the condition: burning grass, burning brush, burning trees, wind direction, speed of the fire, and the size of the fire. When the battalion chief, who has been listening since the beginning of the call, arrives, he takes over as the Incident Commander.

On the September 30 incident, Fire Chief Mark Heine and other battalion chiefs provided support and oversight for the Incident Commander, BC Veliquette. What they saw when they arrived was an obviously complex fire on a hillside, split into two legs, advancing downhill, driven by a shifting wind from the north, and with plenty of fuel in its path. It presented a huge potential of expanding quickly.

Marin Valley is what the firefighters call a wildland/urban interface due to the close proximity of the homes to the flammable vegetation. Given the dangerous situation that day, we clearly needed the best of the best to save our residences and our lives.

To get a better understanding of what happened on that day, I sought the help of Fire Chief Heine. I requested a half-hour interview with the Incident

Commander of the fire, and Chief Heine agreed. After one-and-a-half hours with BC Veliquette, I left in awe and admiration for this polite man and his leadership capabilities in the face of this volatile situation. He was quick to humbly point out that he is only one necessary part of an effective team.

From the time he arrived at the scene on September 30 and up to and including its after-effects, BC Veliquette was in control of and responsible for all operations. Here he is: The fire is advancing rapidly downhill (a unusual event), the fire has two legs, and a north wind is pushing the fire toward a mobile home park of senior citizens on one side and a housing development on the other. This is not a time to think about what to do next; one has to know, through training and experience.

Older mobile homes are in and of themselves a particular challenge. I was talking to my son, who has been a firefighter for the City of Sacramento for 20 years and is currently a captain. I said, "Our homes must be pretty safe in a fire because they have metal roofs and metal siding." He laughed and said, "Wrong, Dad!" He pointed out that the aluminum siding when in a fire gets hot and peels off, which exposes the stud bays and 1/8" interior wood walls. The fire rips through that dry stuff into the house and roof. "We do what we can to save lives within the home," he said, "but the old mobile homes burn super fast."

He also said that it is not unusual for a fire to spread quickly to other



PHOTOGRAPH: ALAN GUMP

*Battalion Chief Jeff Veliquette on watch in his command vehicle the evening after the fire, looking out for slow-burning, buried embers.*

units, and that five to ten units can get involved in an area, making suppression very difficult. The newer manufactured homes are much safer and meet new fire codes, but in this Park they are still very vulnerable due to close proximity to other homes and to wildlands, and due to pyrophytic vegetation in the Park, like junipers.

Back to September 30. BC Veliquette saw that the fire was rapidly advancing and could have become “extreme.” “I set up for the worst possibilities,” he said. The fire could have sent embers into our Park and set off internal fires in homes. The front-page photo in the *Marin Independent Journal* pictured an advancing 25-foot firewall with a firefighter manipulating hoses in front of it. Can an ordinary person imagine what a threat that presents? The advancing fire front

will destroy everything in its path unless swift and decisive action is taken to save lives and property. It takes an unusual person to not run but stand and challenge that threat, putting oneself in harm’s way. These people — this team — were our last hope of salvation before the death and destruction that could have ravaged this beautiful Park. Wow.

At the same time, BC Veliquette told me, the other leg of that shifting, wind-driven fire was heading toward the apartments on Hutchins Way and had fuel in front of it. He coordinated with the spotter plane and called in a retardant drop. “The drop was spot on,” he said, and stopped the advance successfully.

But the work was not over. The crews worked through the smoke and ashes

and low levels of burn that needed to be extinguished with water.

A huge amount of resources had been deployed in an extremely short period of time. The Fire Monster had been suppressed and contained through multiple agencies — local, county, and state — working in coordination with each other. Any one of us bystanders only saw one tiny portion of the entire concerted effort.

I was out of the Park during the fire and returned that afternoon. Late that evening I walked the perimeter of the fire with my neighbor Alan Gump to survey the burn and the debris. From the bottom of the hill I looked up, and at the top there was BC Veliquette in his command vehicle calmly looking down on the parched hill. From a distance it struck me as an image of a



warrior or general looking at a battlefield after a major battle. He appeared to me as a conquering hero who could have lost the battle but didn't, and now he paused in solitary silence to ponder the events of the day.

Alan and I approached him respectfully. After exchanging a few pleasantries, we quizzed him about the complexity of the fire, to which he responded simply, "I would put it in the upper third of complex fires."

Wow. Let me explain what I mean by that "wow." Jeff Veliquette has been a firefighter and paramedic for 26 years. He has been deployed over 25 times on strike teams on wildland fires across California. This year he was deployed twice to Monterey for the Soberanes Fire (California's biggest ever in terms of cost) as a division supervisor. He served as a strike team leader responsible for the five engines assigned from Marin County. He was deployed to this year's Clayton Fire in Lake County. He was a division chief supervisor in the Tully Fire in Humboldt County this summer. So when he said that in his opinion the fire here was in the upper third of complexity, I was shocked.

He told us that he would have a firefighter posted on the hill all night and that he was taking the first shift. He reminded us that in the Oakland Hills fire, although it was at first put out, its dreadful, devastating return came from a restart, from slow-burning and buried embers that were pushed by a north wind. He was making sure that would not happen to us.

I returned home, got the ashes and smoke off my pants and shoes, and took a hot shower. I felt like a little kid that night who knows he is being watched over by his parents. I would be safe and warm, and tomorrow I would wake up to play with all my stuff again because someone was watching over me, my family, and my community.

Thank you, Novato firefighters and the many other agencies who provided the essential support that saved our bacon. ■



## ART IN THE PARK



by **SUZIE LAHR**

**A**re you searching for creative and unusual gifts for the holidays? Walk through the MVMCC clubhouse gallery and see what our resident artists have to offer. If you would like to contact an artist for a special order or to buy a piece on display, you can find their contact information on the coffee table in the lobby entrance.

### News

**Track lighting** will be installed in the lobby in 2017 to enhance the lobby art.

The resident artists will be meeting in January to reconnect and discuss our 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Art in the Park. If you would like to be added to our artist email list, contact [suzielahr@aol.com](mailto:suzielahr@aol.com).



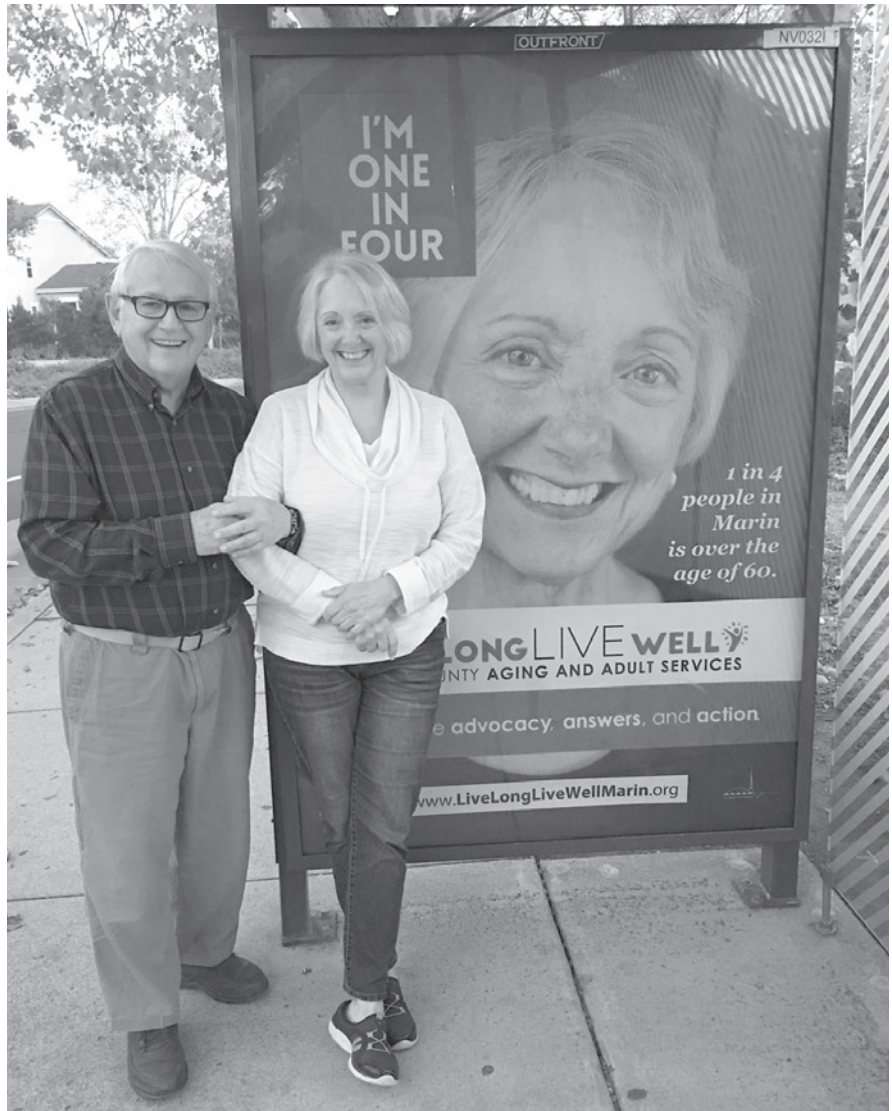
# Resident Couple Here, There, and Everywhere

by **MARIANNE YORK**

**A**s a Commissioner on Marin's Commission on Aging, I have been working with the County's Media Team on our "Live Long Live Well Marin" campaign. Its purpose is to educate the community about aging issues and inform people about services for older adults in our county. One of the projects involved my taking portraits of older adults, which ultimately turned into bus shelter ads.

The ads highlight a key statistic: One out of four people in our county is 60 and over. They also inform people of the "Live Long Live Well Marin" website, [www.livelonglivewellmarin.org](http://www.livelonglivewellmarin.org) — a great resource. Out of all the people I photographed, the designer chose our neighbors, **Janie** and **Mark Klimes!** You can find their ads all over the county. ■

PHOTOGRAPHS: MARIANNE YORK



## Local Art Classes and Exhibits In and Around Town

### Marin Art School

Classes and workshops by

#### Dorallen Davis

74 Digital Drive #11

Bel Marin Keys

415-884-9795

### Inspired Drawing

Taught by **Janet Bogardus**

Sunday, December 11, 1–5 pm

Marin MOCA — Hamilton

500 Palm Drive Studio #208,

CONTACT: [janetbogardus.net](mailto:janetbogardus.net)

### Marin MOCA

Palm Dr., Hamilton

For hours and directions, see

[MarinMoca.org](http://MarinMoca.org)

Fall Juried Exhibit

*Waste Not: The Art of Recology*

October 29 – December 4

*Featured Creatures*

Sandi Mott: *The Medium Is the Muse*

December 10 – January 8

### Marin Community Foundation

5 Hamilton Landing #200

Om Prakash – *Intuitive Nature Painting from 2004-2015*

Through January 13, 2017

Weekdays, 8 am – 5 pm ■



## AARP Driver Safety Course

**Save the Dates: January 17 and 19**

from 9:30 am to 1:30 pm both days, \$15 for AARP members and \$20 for non-members. Sign up (again, please) at the front desk. This is an HOL sponsored event open to MVMCC residents only.

# California Quail

by **BILL NOBLE**

Photograph by **DAVID GRAY**

**T**he California quail, with its unmistakable teardrop tassel, has been our official state bird since 1931, and we couldn't have made a better choice. Ubiquitous in chaparral and oak forest, and happily adaptable to our farmlands, parks, and suburbs; their calls, their explosive flights, and the unbearable cuteness of their scurrying fluff babies are dear to the hearts of Californians.

Our quail even have their own book: A. Starker Leopold's monumental 1977 biological and management monograph, *The California Quail*.

Laperouse, the great French explorer of the 18th century, visited Monterey in the 1780s and was awed by the abundance of grizzlies, elk, and the coveys of "many hundreds" of quail. Those great coveys are gone, reduced initially by the vast changes in vegetation with the coming of Europeans, but now facing mass predation from house cats, rats, crows, and ravens, along with all their usual predators. Currently the quail population of San Francisco, despite dedicated conservation efforts, consists of one lone male in the Botanical

Garden in Golden Gate Park. The villains? Feral cats, and a 2000% increase in ravens, who have adapted well in recent years to human cities.

MVMCC is rightly proud of its abundant quail. Their calls are part of every morning stroll. We find their babies huddled under a bush at the edge of our porch, or in an overturned plant pot. And it's nearly impossible to drive in or out of the Park without a gaggle of them whizzing across the road in front of us. How do they ever move their tiny legs so fast?

The biggest quail covey I've seen in the Park was 53 birds, early one August morning on Meadow View. But home-invasion quail? Last spring, all our doors open to a bright, flowery day, I became aware of a quiet murmuring behind me as I sat at my computer. I turned my head, carefully, to discover a much-in-love pair of quail wandering through our living room making barely audible sweetheart affirmations. They'd come in our front door, strolled not three feet from me, and finding nothing of culinary interest, shuffled out through the utility room back to Tom's garden.


































It's tempting to see our quail as paradigms of True Love (my apologies to *Princess Bride* Marigold and Wesley), but they're much too countercultural to fit our conventional projections. Both males and females may find other mates at any time, and not a few hens find it convenient to enchant several males at once. But they're superb parents, the male leading the family while he scouts for danger or guarding his family from the summit of a rose bush, the female herding the babies constantly and warning them to freeze at the slightest sign of danger. Quail love coveying so much that several moms may amalgamate their irresistible dust-kitten babies into one giant dustball of peeping cuteness.

What do our quail ask of us in order to thrive here? We've already given them the greatest gift — indoor cats. That's the single reason we have such a thriving village of quail. But right now, with our urgent fire-control clearing surging ahead, our challenge is to discover — quickly — how to replace the dense cover mature junipers have provided. We must find suitable, non-incendiary shrubbery and get it planted, or our quail will enter a steep decline. ■





# DECEMBER 2016

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>1-4 PM Mahjong </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>4</p> <p>5</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>6</p> <p>7</p> <p>10 AM -2 PM Craft Group</p> <p>11 AM -1 PM Whistlestop (call Roberta 415-883-0843)</p> <p>7 PM PAC MEETING</p>	<p>8</p> <p>9:15 AM Qi Gong with Dove</p> <p>6:15-7 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>1</p> <p>2</p> <p>9:15 AM Qi Gong with Dove</p> <p>6:15-7 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>3</p> <p>7-9 PM COMMUNITY DANCE </p>	
<p>1-4 PM Mahjong </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>11</p> <p>12</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>13</p> <p>14</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 PM MAR VAL MEETING</p>	<p>15</p> <p>16</p> <p>9:15 AM Qi Gong with Dove</p> <p>6:15-7 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>17</p> <p>18</p> <p>9:15 AM Qi Gong with Dove</p> <p>6:15-7 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>19</p> <p>20</p> <p>10 AM -2 PM Craft Group</p> <p>11 AM -1 PM Whistlestop (call Roberta 415-883-0843)</p> <p>2-4 PM Readers' Theatre Group</p> <p>7 PM HOL MEETING </p>	<p>21</p> <p>22</p> <p>9:15 AM Qi Gong with Dove</p> <p>6:15-7 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>1-4 PM Mahjong </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>18</p> <p>19</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>20</p> <p>21</p> <p>10 AM -2 PM Craft Group</p> <p>11 AM -1 PM Whistlestop (call Roberta 415-883-0843)</p> <p>2-4 PM Readers' Theatre Group</p> <p>7 PM HOL MEETING</p>	<p>22</p> <p>23</p> <p>9:15 AM Qi Gong with Dove</p> <p>6:15-7 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>24</p> <p>25</p> <p>9:15 AM Qi Gong with Dove</p> <p>6:15-7 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>26</p> <p>27</p> <p>10 AM -2 PM Craft Group</p> <p>11 AM -1 PM Whistlestop (call Roberta 415-883-0843)</p>	<p>28</p> <p>29</p> <p>9:15 AM Qi Gong with Dove</p> <p>6:15-7 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>25</p> <p>CHRISTMAS</p> <p>PUBLIC HOLIDAY</p>	<p>26</p> <p>27</p> <p>10 AM -2 PM Craft Group</p> <p>11 AM -1 PM Whistlestop (call Roberta 415-883-0843)</p>	<p>28</p> <p>29</p> <p>9:15 AM Qi Gong with Dove</p> <p>6:15-7 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>30</p> <p>31</p> <p>MAR VAL NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY &amp; DANCE 6:30 PM </p>	<p>31</p> <p>MAR VAL NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY &amp; DANCE 6:30 PM </p>	<p>30</p> <p>31</p> <p>MAR VAL NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY &amp; DANCE 6:30 PM </p>	<p>31</p> <p>MAR VAL NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY &amp; DANCE 6:30 PM </p>

