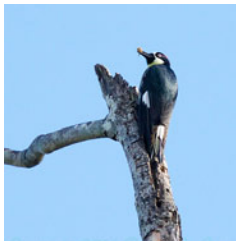


T H E
ECHO

NOVEMBER 2017

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Christmas Craft Faire

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 2017
11 AM to 4 PM in the Ballroom

- Dolls ■ Hats ■ Cards ■ Jewelry ■
 - Homemade Cookies ■ Knitted items
 - Hair Clips and Hair Bands ■
 - Tiny Paintings ■ and Baskets
- 10% goes to HOL

Contact: **Tara Plocher**
415-302-5992, taraplocher@gmail.com

WARNING: If your mail tubes are on the ground, distributors are sometimes unable to make deliveries. To ensure receiving the Echo, contact Matt to have your mail tubes securely fastened.

Writer's Group?

Are there any writers (poets, fiction or nonfiction writers) who might like to join a writer's group to meet monthly or bimonthly?

We are two poets, **Kate Proctor** and **Lee F. Dunne** who would like to meet with other writers. Kate is a painter as well as a poet. Lee has just moved to Marin Valley. Her experiences with writer's groups in Boston, MA; Santa Fe, NM; and Fort Myers, FL has confirmed that poets, fiction writers, and nonfiction writers benefit from others' perspectives. The meetings keep us writing and editing! We propose establishing a regular monthly or bimonthly meeting. It can take place in Lee Dunne's home. If this idea calls to you, email Lee at leefdunne@gmail.com.

Ukulele Class

It appears the timing of the ukulele class did not work for people, so it is cancelled. However there still seems to be quite a bit of interest. Therefore, if you would like to learn to play the ukulele and/or play with others, please contact **Jeanne Skybrook**, 415-302-3010 about your availability for a more convenient time.

Water Aerobics Class

will be ending on October 31. No more classes after that until next year.

THE ECHO NOVEMBER 2017

MARIN VALLEY MOBILE COUNTRY CLUB

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NOVATO, CA 94949
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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 should be as large as possible to enable a 300 ppi resolution (*pixels / inch*).

DEADLINE

Everything is due the 8th of the month or sooner for the following month's issue.

Letter to Residents

Greetings from the PAC Board.

Our finances are in order.

Fires

In early October we saw, experienced, and heard of the devastating fires in Sonoma and Napa. Friends and families were affected. We all should be extremely grateful for the work of John Hansen, PAC, MVEST, Firewise, Matt Greenberg, and the Novato City Staff for initiating, planning, and implementing fire safety protocols for our homes. For sure, one day our homes will be endangered by the presence of fire in our area. As a result of their fine, focused work we will be that much safer. As of early October, more than 130 homes signed up to have their fire-prone plants removed by management with no cost to the homeowner.

City Meeting with PAC: Mudslides, ADA, Drainage

The PAC's Project Planning Committee (John Hansen and Jay Shelfer) and Matt Greenberg, along with Assistant City Manager Peggy Flynn and Deputy Director of Public Works Chris Blunk, met and planned out a series of programs to deal with the

mudslides that occurred last year, ADA-approved access to the clubhouse, and clearing of the drainage ditch behind Club View Drive. These formulated plans seem to be adequate and obtainable this year barring unforeseen circumstances. A summary of the meeting will be on the clubhouse PAC Board.

Rent

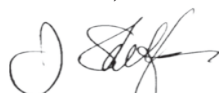
The deferred rent plan approved by Novato's City Council is still slated for commencement at the end of the year. Both the City and Management are asking that it be made available for residents sooner.

Rules and Regs

The PAC committee (Peggy Hill and John Hansen) dealing with suggestions for the coming revised Rules and Regulations for residents is continuing its work. Management will further review before passing on our suggestions for revision to Novato City Staff.

November Meeting
Wednesday, November 1,
at 6 pm.

In service,



Jay Shelfer
PAC PRESIDENT
jjshelfer@yahoo.com

Management Update

Welcome to Fall

Management is busy directing projects prior to winter weather, which include the continued fire-prone plant removal project, Parkwide tree maintenance, and preventative pruning care. You will see workers cleaning the V ditch for drainage as well as making other preparations for wet weather.

Park Improvement

HOL has a new shed for its storage needs in the breezeway.

Retaining walls

Several are in progress.

Drainage

Several French drains and tracks to evacuate standing water are in progress or complete by the time this is published.

PG&E Path

Vegetation is filling in, and the large trees have been pruned.

Pool

The pool will close for the winter with the cold weather, but the spa will remain heated.

We continually find cigarette butts on the street, which is very concerning especially after the fires. Please, if you smoke do not throw a burning or nonburning cigarette out the car window. There is too much dry fuel, and it is very disrespectful to your neighbors.

Thank you.



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

Message from Mar Val

Dear Friends,

Once again we are delighted to announce the beginning of Mar Val's holiday schedule. This year the festivities start with Thanksgiving Dinner on Saturday, November 18, 2017. Please refer to the reservation form below for details. We would remind you that this event is traditionally the most well attended of the year, and therefore, you are urged to submit your reservation as soon as

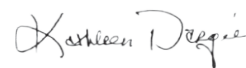
possible since we are limited to 120 attendees.

The annual Holiday Party hosted by HOL and Mar Val is scheduled for Saturday, December 16. Full details of this event will be available in next month's *Echo*.

Finally, as I write this letter, we are just three weeks away from the October 28 Black Cat. On behalf of Mar Val, I wish to express our most

sincere appreciation to all residents who demonstrated their support by donating items for sale, baking goodies, and volunteering to assist in making this event a success.

With warmest regards,



Kathleen Dargie
MAR VAL PRESIDENT
kfdargie@aol.com



MAR VAL

Thanksgiving Dinner

NOVEMBER 18 ■ 5 PM COCKTAILS ■ 6 PM DINNER

M E N U

TURKEY, DRESSING
SWEET POTATOES
GREEN BEANS WITH ALMONDS
MASHED POTATOES WITH GRAVY
CRANBERRY SAUCE
ROLLS
PUMPKIN PIE

NOTE: There is NO separate vegetarian entrée for this dinner.

Thanksgiving Dinner Information:

Limit of two persons per home.

Reservation Deadline is November 15 or when 140 reservations have been received.

Even if you have generously volunteered to cook or carve a turkey, sell tickets, or volunteer in any capacity, YOU STILL NEED TO MAKE A RESERVATION BEFORE THE DEADLINE.

Checks only ... made payable to Mar Val. Payment is due at time of making reservation.

Reservation box will be on the clubhouse counter on November 1, 2017.

Questions – call Carolyn Corry @ 415-370-6403.

Thanksgiving Dinner Reservation Form

RESIDENT _____ RESIDENT/GUEST _____

Check (payable to Mar Val) for \$ _____ (\$12 per person)

Home Owners League Message

A big thank you goes to everyone who contributed to this year's Homeowners League drive for monetary donations! Now, don't be afraid to tell us what we can do for you. Got ideas? Got complaints? Bring 'em on!

One of the many benefits of residing in this special community is HOL's continuing educational program. Check out these November offerings.

Wellness Presentation



November 7 • 7pm • Fireside Room

Marin Valley resident Jack Travis will tell us how he left mainstream medicine (which focuses on illness) to forge a path of wellness.

Come to his presentation to learn about his work and how it might apply to you. For background, check out: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Travis_\(physician\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Travis_(physician)).

Veterans Day Stories



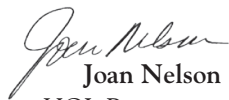
November 11 • 5pm • Fireside

Ever served in the military? World War II? Korea? Cold War? Viet Nam? Persian Gulf? Invasion of Panama? Somalia? Haiti? Bosnia? Kosovo?

Serbia? Afghanistan? Iraq? Pakistan? Libya? Perhaps you cared about someone who served? Got a story? You might be surprised how many Marin Valley residents (those folks you see at Pub, using the library computer, sweeping their sidewalks, walking their dogs, or savoring the view) have had direct or near-direct involvement with the US military.

Whether you or a loved one served in the military, you have a story. Come share it and/or learn things you might never have guessed about your neighbors. (P.S. It's assumed that we're all mature people who will refrain from entering into right/wrong arguments about specific wars.)

Light refreshments will be served at both events. The next HOL meeting will be **Wednesday, November 15, at 6 pm** in the Fireside Room.


Joan Nelson
HOL PRESIDENT

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

Community Connections

Thursday • November 2 • 7 pm • Ballroom



FILM NIGHT
will show *Lars and the Real Girl*.

Saturday • November 4 • 7-9 pm • Ballroom



COMMUNITY DANCING
with guest DJ Brodie Auld
(Pia's dance partner)

Tuesday • November 7 • 7pm • Fireside Room



WELLNESS PRESENTATION
with John W. (Jack) Travis

Wednesday • November 11 • 5pm • Fireside



VETERAN'S DAY STORIES

Wednesday • November 15 • 2:15pm

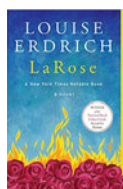
READERS' THEATRE GROUP

Thursday • November 16 • 7pm • Ballroom



FILM NIGHT
will show the 1999 *Flawless*.

Wednesday • November 22 • 4:30 pm • Fireside



BOOK GROUP
will discuss *La Rose*. Louise Erdrich's latest novel asks a deceptively simple question: Can a person "do the worst thing possible and still be loved?"

Sunday • November 26 • 11am - 4pm • Ballroom



CHRISTMAS CRAFT FAIRE



Red Flag Warning!

by JOHN HANSEN



What Does It Mean?

I am sure most of us get the general idea of what a “Red Flag Warning Day” means. But a little more information might make this designation more useful for you. The National Weather Service (NWS) has developed an array of information designations to simply describe the scale or intensity of the full spectrum of hazardous weather conditions.

Most of these designations begin with an **Advisory** for the lowest or earliest level of alert.

The next level is **Watch** for a growing or approaching concern.

The highest level is a **Warning**. This means that whatever the concern, it's here and now!

When the concern is **Fire Weather**, the same relative terms apply. Fire Weather Advisories are common during California's “golden phase” and can appear as late into the year as December or even January in very extreme years. A Fire Weather Watch is generally issued as far ahead

of an approaching warning condition as the NWS can confidently project, usually a few days but up to a week or more for a confident forecast.

When severe conditions arrive, a Fire Weather Warning — commonly called a Red Flag Warning — is issued. These may occur any time from June through November, and rarely into December. The conditions that merit this ominous declaration can vary from one NWS regional office to another, but always include high temperature, low humidity, and wind. Here in California, NWS also includes a measurement called “Fuel Moisture.” This is measured by collecting samples of specified grasses, herbs, and brush; weighing the samples; and drying and reweighing. Lower moisture content means greater fuel flammability.

So what does all this mean for us?

The Middletown fire a couple of years ago, the Marin Valley fire last year, and the disastrous Sonoma and Napa County fires this October are examples of what can happen during

Red Flag conditions. The combined four factors comprising Red Flag conditions are a formula for disaster: fire behaves differently, ignition is much easier than normal, and fire growth is best described as explosive. That's how a fire can grow from a spark to over 20,000 acres in just a couple of hours.

Closer to home, here's the Red Flag scenario we are trying to prevent with our fire-prone plant removal program ...

A careless, accidental, or incidental spark or stray ember ignites a residential juniper bush. In less than five seconds the juniper explodes into an intensely hot inferno. The aluminum or vinyl siding and the glass-wool insulation subsequently melt to a puddle on the ground. In 10-15 seconds, still fueled by the intense juniper heat, the fire is burning through the thin wall paneling. In less than a minute the home is hopelessly aflame. In three minutes the home is totally engulfed in flame and threatening adjacent homes.

We have one of the best fire services in California right here in Novato. But a three-minute response is a tall order. In five minutes the original home is lost, and one or more adjacent homes is likely to be involved. And, if the fire service response is delayed at all, then, well I think you can see where this could go. This was the recent fate of the Journey's End Mobile Home Park next to Kaiser Santa Rosa.

What Should We Do?

On Red Flag Days please be especially aware and careful, and PLEASE help us to protect you, your home, and your neighbors — allow Park Management to remove your fire-prone vegetation. We're all in this community together, and we each must share the responsibility for our own safety. ■

Hopefully the fires will be out when this issue arrives, but generally for up-to-date information TV Channel 7 had the best coverage; also social media, www.nixle.com/, and NextDoor.com have been pretty good, although Sandy Wargo has been gone lately.

*From the recent fire devastation —
“Even the barbecue melted, and
that’s built to take heat.”*



by JOHN FELD

For those of you who wish to step beyond preparing your own home for emergencies and reach out to help your community, you can train to be a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) member. This 18-hour national program will teach you skills to organize and help out in your neighborhood and community in the event of a large-scale emergency/disaster. You can attend any class in Marin.

CERT Classes:

- Mill Valley** November 4 FULL
- San Rafael** November 4 and 11
- Kentfield** November 11 and 12

If you would like to attend one of these classes, please go to <http://readymarin.org/calendar/> and register.

If you are already a CERT member you can audit these classes free of charge.

Why Me?

said the juniper (trembling at its tips)
to the (straight-limbed) spruce.
Clouds roiled like twisted
comforters in the clay sky,
metal rooftops clicked to mute.
Spruce took a long green pause,
in which he tried to deny his own
relief at the onset of the pogrom,
opted for distance, detachment,
knowing in his roots that he, as well,
was formed of flammable toxins,
volatile waxes, terpenes, oils, saps
and resins. Oh, God. What to say.
Gazing over the top of juniper,
he squelched compassion as dangerous,
scrambled for pragmatism, shallow wisdom.
*Well, it's genetic, you see, nothing
You can do...life is suffering...
it could happen to any of us.*
Oh, how pathetic. Spruce recovered,
assumed a professorial role, mentioned
the history of holocausts and pogroms,
slaughters, genocides. Juniper looked up,
amazed, puzzled by his friend.
That's how it ended.

*Lee Firestone Dunne
New resident*

Wellness Movement Began in Mill

by JOHN W. TRAVIS, MD, MPH

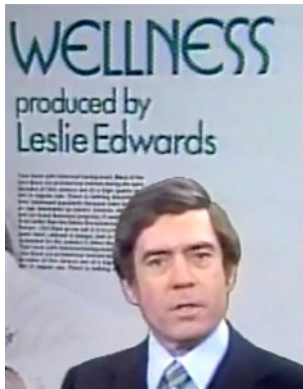
When I opened the Wellness Resource Center at 42 Miller Ave in Mill Valley, in November 1975, the word was so unfamiliar that we had to spell it out on the phones. A few of you, such as Joan Nelson, Anila Manning, and Irv Katz, were aware of my antics back then thanks to the *Pacific Sun*, but few others. And a lot has happened since.



LEFT TO RIGHT: Drs. Don Ardell and John W. Travis from Mill Valley days.

In the 80s the word, but not the concept, was taken up, first by many holistic/alternative treatment practitioners and then by the manufacturers of such diverse products as pet food—the current top Google ranking for “wellness.”

If I hadn’t had a best-selling book in the 80s with “wellness” in the title, I would have stopped using the word then. Together, Don and I have spent over 80 years trying to revive Dunn’s original focus of health being a balance of body, emotions, mind, and spirit.



When Dan Rather covered our work on 60 Minutes in November 1979, he opened with,

“Wellness, now there’s a word you don’t hear every day...”

But that program and the many wellness presentations that my Mill Valley colleague, Don Ardell, PhD, and I had been giving around the world, along with books we published, probably were key in bringing the word “wellness” from obscurity to its current status of half a billion Google hits.

Unfortunately, the meaning of the concept, which inspired both Don and me after reading the 1961 classic, *High-Level Wellness* by Halbert L. Dunn, MD, PhD, got lost along the way.

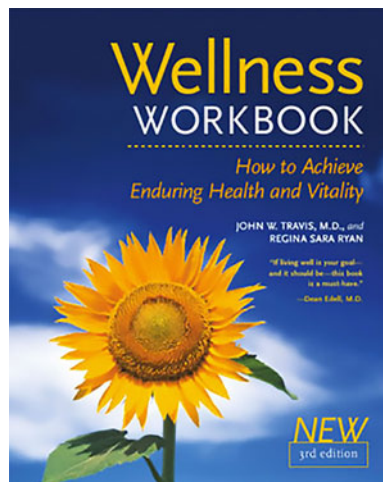
I’ve just returned from three weeks in Eastern Europe where two younger wellness counterparts, professional women trained as Wellness Inventory coaches, sponsored my three public presentations to help redefine the misunderstood word “wellness” in Europe. As in the US, the word also caught on there, a decade later in the 90s, but became equated only with relaxing and being pampered in spas.

Polish and Czech translations have also just been published of my “Wellness Inventory,” which began as a pamphlet in 1975 and has now matured into an automated online program that is used in US universities, nursing schools, healthcare institutions, and even the Army.



In Czechia, I spoke largely to university students and wellness center managers; and in Poland, to business consultants who wanted to know more about wellness. In February of next year, I’ll be keynoting a conference of 500 health professionals in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on the same topic.

Three years ago, Yvonne and I, along with Don and his wife, were flown to Marrakech, Morocco, and treated like royalty at the Global Spa and



Valley — 1975

Illness-Wellness Continuum

I'll be presenting a localized version of wellness history and my key wellness concepts, such as the Illness-Wellness Continuum, which has been reprinted in many health textbooks around the world and recently adopted by UNESCO.

This entertaining presentation has many colorful wellness images (and some embarrassing old photos) and will be offered in the clubhouse on **November 7 at 7 pm**. Hope to see you there.

Wellness Summit, where we received a lifetime achievement award for our work in wellness.



LEFT TO RIGHT: Yvonne Devine, Dr. John W. Travis, Dr. Don and Carol Ardella.

I received a similar award last June at the 42nd annual National Wellness Conference in St. Paul. I'm surprised at this recent resurgence of interest in my work, which I had largely left behind in the 90s to focus on infant wellness—the all-important and overlooked precursor to adult wellness.

That work led to my discovery and naming of Male Postpartum

Abandonment Syndrome in the early Oughts—an explanation of why having children in a nuclear family ultimately destroys many marriages.

It's described in *Why Dads Leave*, by my former wife Meryn Callander and me. Recently this work has been funded by our nonprofit, Alliance for Transforming the Lives of Children, as the “Connected Couples—Thriving Families” project. The goal in the next three years is to reach 10,000 professionals working with troubled new parents with this important relationship wellness material and to provide resources to make up for the single-parent trap and for the inadequacies of the nuclear family.

In the Teens, I realized that my work could be summed up by six words: “The currency of wellness is connection.” So, full circle—a revival of interest in Dunn's as-yet-unrealized 60-year-old broad visions of wellness along with an increasing awareness of the cost of the barely noticed disconnection rampant in American culture.

Yvonne's and my discovery of Marin Valley three years ago fulfilled our dream of finding true community — never imagining that we could afford to live in Marin again. So it seems appropriate to share with the community here my long path that began with a small office in Mill Valley 42 years ago and helped contribute to a growing global wellness movement (now estimated to be a \$3 trillion/year “industry”), however narrowly it got redefined. ■

Resources

Wellness Workbook, first published in 1981 and now in its third edition at nearly a quarter of a million copies, is available on Amazon, and for free in bite-sized pieces at thewellspring.com

“The Wellness Inventory”:

WellPeople.com

For the book, *Why Dads Leave*: visit WhyDadsLeave.com

The Connected Couples—Thriving Families website: cc-tf.org

For a free pdf copy of Halbert Dunn's book, *High-Level Wellness*, visit TinyURL.com/HLW123

ART IN THE PARK

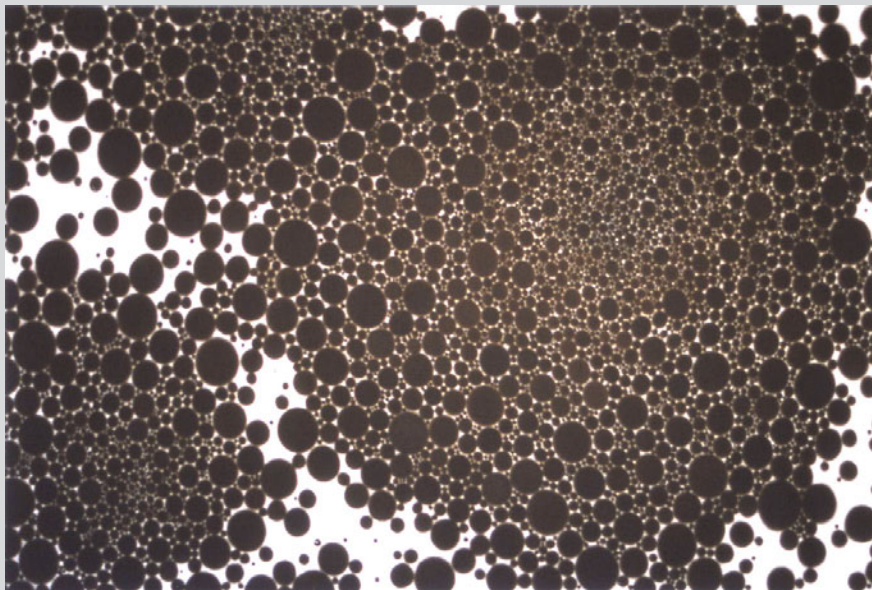


by **SUZIE LAHR**

November already! Time flies this time of year, summer into fall with pumpkins, autumn leaves and the scents and spices of the season, AND new resident art work in our Marin Valley Gallery! The Marin Valley art community is alive and thriving,

hopefully with your appreciation and support for our efforts. Please do stop by, visit our onsite gallery, and sign our guest book to show us your support.

We have several new resident artists joining us for this exhibit. **Dianne Romaine** and **Michael Sudheer** along with 14 other resident artists will be showing their creations for your viewing pleasure. This exhibit will include all mediums and all styles, from abstract to landscapes and everything in between, so there should be something that appeals to everyone. Remember, a holiday gift of art is always a gift of beauty and creativity in our lives.



LEFT TO RIGHT: *Flux #92* by Dianne Romaine, *Fading Glory* by Michael Sudheer



ART AROUND THE PARK

Marin Community Foundation

Hangar #5, Hamilton Landing,
Jean-Marc Brugeilles
Supercosmos of Dreams
Through January 12, 2018
Open Mon. – Fri., 8 am – 5 pm

Marin MOCA

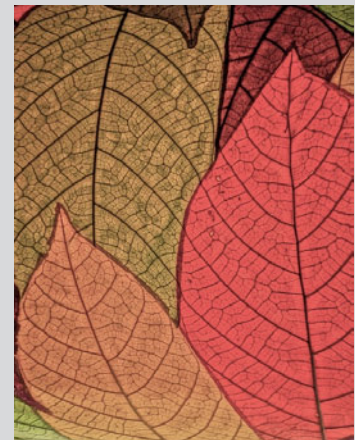
500 Palm Drive, Hamilton Landing,
AbstrAction and *The Artists of Cedars*
October 14 – November 19, 2017
Open Wed. – Sun., 11 am – 4 pm

Petaluma Art Center

230 Lakeville Highway, Petaluma
PAC Members Juried Exhibit
November 14, 2017 – January 6, 2018
Open Tues. – Sat., 11 am – 5 pm

Marin Civic Center Gallery

*Variety of Vision: Through the Eyes
of Marin County Employees*
Through January 11, 2018



Neighbors Fulfilling Their Dreams

I went to Macchu Pichu. It was on my bucket list.

Marianne York
September 2017

Lars and the Real Girl

Thursday • November 2 • 7pm

(2007) Comedy, Drama, Romance

106 minutes

Director Craig Gillespie

Starring Ryan Gosling, Emily Mortimer

Oscar nomination for best original screenplay.

Lars Lindstrom is an awkwardly shy loveable introvert whose emotional baggage has kept him from fully embracing life. After years of what is almost solitude, he invites Bianca, a friend he met on the internet, to visit him. He introduces Bianca to his brother Gus and his sister-in-law Karen, and they are stunned. They don't know what to say to Lars or Bianca — because she is an inflatable life-size sex doll, not a real person, and he is treating her as though she is alive. But sex is not what Lars has in mind, rather a deep, meaningful relationship. They consult the family doctor, who explains this is a delusion Lars has created and suggests that they should all go along with it. What follows is an emotional journey for Lars and the people around him.



Film Night

First and Third Thursdays ■ Clubhouse ■ 7 pm

PLEASE, NO FOOD OR DRINK—but feel free to bring your comfortable chair

Contact: johnmfeld@gmail.com



Flawless

Thursday • November 16 • 7pm

(1999) Comedy, Drama 112 minutes

Director Joel Schumacher

Starring Robert De Niro, Philip Seymour Hoffman

A retired security guard deeply conservative and set in his ways, falls victim to a debilitating stroke. His doctors prescribe an extensive program of physical therapy once he's released from the hospital, including singing lessons to help him regain his full powers of speech. As it turns out, there's a vocal instructor living next door to the guard, so he signs up only to discover that his new teacher is a flamboyant drag queen awaiting a sex-change operation. Can a homophobic former rent-a-cop find happiness learning to sing with a man in a dress? That's the big question in this comedy-drama.

"It's a predictable odd-couple scenario with the mutual antagonists learning to love each other — and themselves — but it's saved by a cracking performance from Hoffman."

Peter Bradshaw

The Guardian ■

Point Reyes Hostel Hike

by **MIKE HOLLAND**

Photograph by **DAVID GRAY**

I think there are two types of bucket lists. The first is the traditional one, the list of all the things we want to do before we don't have the time, energy, or ability to accomplish them. The second type of bucket list is a revisit list, i.e., those things we've done and enjoyed before but have neglected to do recently. Why? There are plenty of excuses; most of them are lame or lazy.

A month ago I realized that I seldom go out to Point Reyes National Seashore. I had become complacent and comfortable confining my outdoor exercise activities to the, admittedly, great places that are more nearby. That realization was all I needed to kick-start my Point Reyes reawakening. And that's where we are headed for the next Take a Hike.

Point Reyes has thousands of acres of seashore, mountains, estuaries, meadows, rain forests, rivers, and wetlands. It also has every bird and animal you would expect to see anywhere in Marin County. One could spend a year of weekends in Point Reyes and still have a fresh hike up next on the agenda.

Our hike this month starts at the Point Reyes Hostel, located just off Limantour Road about two miles from Limantour Beach. It's an easy 45-minute drive from Marin Valley, several miles past the town of Point Reyes Station. Bring water and snacks because you will want to take your time on this walk.

The hike is a five-mile counter-clockwise loop that starts and ends at the Hostel. You can always make it shorter by going out and turning back, but you would miss the full splendor

of this area. Begin your walk by taking Coast Trail (well marked and broad) all the way to the beach. Keep your eyes peeled for a large herd of elk that like to congregate in the creek to the



left of the trail. Coast Trail bends to the left and parallels the ocean for about one mile until it intersects with Coast Camp, which is a backpackers' overnight camping site. If you want,

you can improvise when you first see the ocean by walking out to the shore and travelling south the one mile down to Coast Camp. Thousands of birds line the shore in this area.



At the Coast Camp/Coast Trail intersection look for Fire Lane (sometimes called Fire Road) Trail. This begins the return portion of the hike. Fire Lane Trail is a gradual uphill, single-track path that takes us through the most heavily vegetated part of this region. Where there is vegetation there is wildlife. Try not to step on the tiny rabbits that dart in and out of the bushes. It's harder than you might think. An important direction comes when Fire Lane Trail intersects with Laguna Trail. Fire Lane forks to the right. **DO NOT STAY ON FIRE LANE.** If you do, you will walk back to Marin Valley. Take Laguna Trail (the left fork) and follow it through a large fern forest until it ends at a Park residence. The Hostel is about one-quarter mile from here as we complete our counterclockwise loop.

Five miles of walking and a lungful of sea air should give you an appetite for coffee and a snack. Everybody always goes to the Bovine Bakery in Point Reyes Station. How about something different? Try coffee and a pastry at Toby's Feed Barn, or something heartier at the Cowgirl Creamery.

While you're sitting, drinking, and eating, consider two things.

First, why don't we pronounce Reyes the way we should (Rey-es)?

Second, what else should be on your other bucket list? ■



Acorn Woodpecker

Article and Photography by DAVID GRAY

The acorn woodpecker (*Melanerpes formicivorus*) is also aptly known as the harlequin woodpecker. We have perhaps two extended family units of about ten birds that live in the oaks in the green space surrounding our Park. With their distinctive chuckling calls, it is easy to know when they are present. They have a clownish appearance, with a face that is ever so slightly greenish in tint. Their faces have bold black areas around the eyes and bill. The bright red cap on the males is also a clue for identification, but these woodpeckers have no crest.

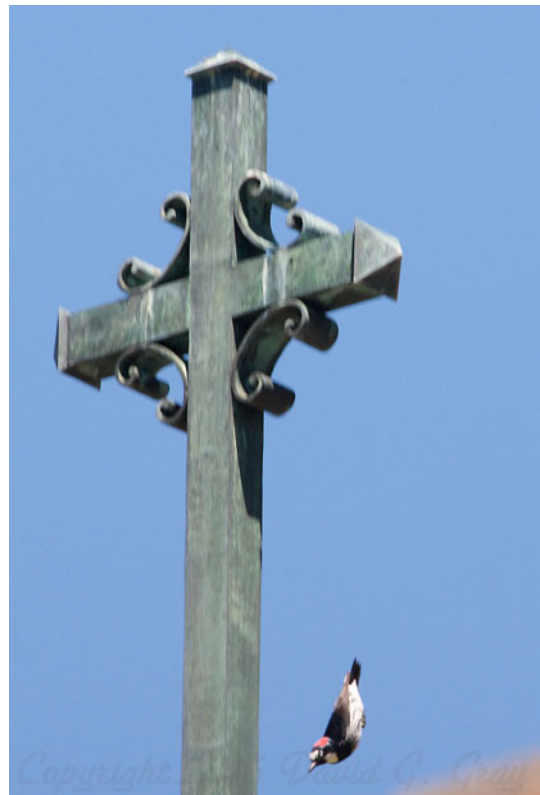
They hunt for insects as well as collect and store acorns, as their name suggests. One might happen upon an old tree or even a telephone pole that is riddled with holes, each holding an acorn; this is the distinctive work of the acorn woodpecker. This is their granary tree, and it is defended assiduously by the acorn woodpeckers against marauders. Some granary trees can have as many as 50,000 acorns stored!

These funny birds have an unusual flight pattern, flapping three or four times in quick succession, at which point the white patches on their wings are prominent. They then rest for a similar amount of time, dropping somewhat precipitously. Imagine the main support cables on the Golden Gate Bridge; this sloping pattern approximates the acorn woodpecker's flight path.



Their takeoff is also alarming. As can be seen in the sequence of photos shot at the Santa Sabina Retreat Center in San Rafael, the acorn woodpecker launches itself out into space and plummets for quite a while before opening its wings. This one seemed alarmed to find itself sitting on a crucifix.

Their family units are unusual, so much so that their behavior has been studied in depth. They group in sets as small as five adults (three males, and two females); one of a rare species of bird that practices cooperative breeding. These collectives can grow to as many as seven males and three females. How they know to avoid inbreeding is unknown, but it is often the case that the males are brothers and the females are sisters (and unrelated or very distantly related to the males).



A medium-sized adult woodpecker weighs in at about three ounces. Their lifespan has been measured in excess of 17 years, and they are a year-round presence. Enjoy these riotous birds as they cut their catenary arcs through the sky. ■

