

Letter

from the Editor

Cities Decide to Not Request "Quiet Zone" for Unincorporated Area



Even though SMART chief engineer Bill Gamlen personally assured me at the SMART public meeting in Terra Linda last year that if both Novato and San Rafael established "quiet zones" — an area where the train horn does not blow — then the unincorporated areas between them, which include the passenger crossing at St. Vincent's Drive, would also become a quiet zone, but this turned out not to be the case. Instead, each city must include that area with their formal requests. Neither did. The paperwork, regulations, and requirements of the Federal Railroad Administration turned out to be so complex and challenging that the cities do not want to now jeopardize their initial requests by starting all over again, changing their applications in time for the opening of the trains in December, for fear of losing the quiet zone designation for the main city areas.

Granted, the process uncovered unexpected surprises of where a quiet zone can officially start and stop, but the unincorporated area has been completely left out of requests for a quiet zone. The blaring horns at St. Vincent Drive and beyond affect many people, including hundreds of seniors. Hopefully this can be addressed by a formal request for a quiet zone for this area and, for now, at least have it be included in the ongoing discussions taking place with Congressman Huffman's office in seeking flexibility.

Mail

Adopting Red Oaks

To be lucky to have volunteers to help in any capacity in our Park is special. In my haste to find fairy godmothers for my little trees, I forgot to name three people in the Park who are presently caring for some of the trees.

Thank you, **Sue Meyer**, who is caring for two of the crepe myrtle shrubs up close to the bench along Marin Valley. They were transplanted from the open area at the clubhouse and were struggling. Thanks to Sue, they are starting to get stronger, and we might see blooms hopefully next year.

Thanks also to **Janet Bogardus** and **Quentin Childs** for nurturing a very small dawn redwood down in the open land near the ponds. This was a little three-inch seedling when I received it from a resident; it is slow-growing. It loses all its leaves in winter and comes to life in spring.

I am blessed to have found three new fairy godmothers. Thank you, **Jan Thomas**, **Martha McConnell**, and **Julie Manson**. I still need one more person, please. Since the trees will be planted along Marin Valley, all you have to do is stop and water on your way out of the Park. I am waiting for the cooler weather, and then I will plant them. Once the rains start, they should survive through winter. The watering is needed for about seven months during warm and extremely hot weather. This is a two-year commitment; hopefully, after that they can survive on their own. Please give it a thought. Thank you.

Pauline Hawkins

415-884-0494, dundeesmom@aol.com



THE
ECHO
OCTOBER 2016

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MOBILE COUNTRY CLUB

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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 edition.

Letter to Residents

PAC

Management Update

MVMCC

Greetings from the PAC Board.

Our financial situation remains in good order.

City Council Meeting

The City Council is scheduled to meet here in October. Either concurrently or separately, BKF Engineers, Surveyors, and Planners will give us an updated report on the infrastructure. Watch the website and clubhouse front door for meeting details.

Rent Differential Workshop

Plans to hold a workshop on the rent differential question in October are still on schedule. Watch the website and clubhouse front door for meeting details.

Pool

We are delaying the implementing of new filtration for the pool until cooler weather. The work will take several weeks, and why close the pool in the middle of warm weather?

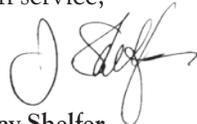
Current Affairs

Please take note of further current affairs by reviewing the Management Update and MVEST articles reported elsewhere in this issue of the *Echo*.

Next Meeting

Our next meeting will be at **7 pm, October 5**, and we shall report on the latest 2x2 meeting with the City.

In service,



Jay Shelfer
PAC PRESIDENT
jjshelfer@yahoo.com

Retaining Walls

Management is currently in the process of replacing and/or repairing multiple retaining walls.

Fire Abatement

Fire abatement work is ongoing to remove fire-prone material in common areas to help make MVMCC fire-safe. All palm trees have been pruned to remove dry or dead palm fronds.

Gas Valves

The gas valve replacement project is now complete. If you need a demonstration to show you how to turn your gas valve on or off, please call Matt at the front desk.

Pets

Please keep all pets indoors unless out for a walk and on a leash. Please, do not leave your dog unattended, as he or she will bark or cry for you and disturb your neighbors.

A/C in the Ballroom

Come enjoy the cool air conditioning in the ballroom! Yes, we now have A/C.

Wi-Fi

"mvmcc" is the Wi-Fi signal in the clubhouse and needs no password to log in.

Dumpster

Dumpster alert: 10-15-16, lower turnaround. PLEASE, NO early trash drop-off prior to Dumpster arrival! After it is full, please do not leave trash for management to pick up and transport to Redwood Landfill. This is an accommodation for the residents, not outsiders or contractors. No construction debris or cardboard.

Management appreciates your cooperation.



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



Gutters Got Gardens?

This is a good time — before it rains — to clear out all things growing and what is helping them grow in gutters.



Juniper — the Good, the Bad,

by JOHN FELD



They burn so hot that they can ignite fires more than 30 feet away, either in other plants, buildings, or anything flammable. Once a twig catches fire, the whole plant can explode in a tall mountain of fire and sparks in less than 20 seconds.

Some of the nice things about juniper bushes include: they require almost no upkeep apart from a yearly trim; they need never be watered; they are adapted to our environment; they seem to live forever; they do not spread uncontrollably; they are evergreens, so no bare branches in winter; and they come in various sizes and colors, from dark green to blue-gray, bright green, and yellow-green, with some varieties changing to purplish-red shades in the winter.

The worst thing about juniper is that it is incredibly flammable and is among the least fire-resistant plants you can use in your landscape. Juniper foliage burns quickly because of its texture. It also contains a relatively high concentration of flammable, volatile oils and resins, identifiable by their strong odor and sticky sap. Juniper bushes frequently harbor dry or dead wood and leaves. All these elements create a virtual tinderbox for a potential fire, all of which will burn almost better than anything else.

With our multiyear drought, these plants are even more deadly than in normal weather conditions. American Indians often used dry juniper branches as kindling. A large juniper — and they can get very large — acts rather like a

Fourth of July Roman candle firework. They ignite very easily with a minimum of heat, and they explode in a firestorm of sparks that travel long distances in even a slight breeze. They burn so hot that they can ignite fires more than 30 feet away, either in other plants, buildings, or anything flammable. Once a twig catches fire, the whole plant can explode in a tall mountain of fire and sparks in less than 20 seconds.

Once you have been warned about the dangers of juniper, some insurance agencies are reluctant to pay for your fire claims. Foremost Insurance says they handle each case on an individual basis, but close junipers may affect any claim you may make. Junipers within 15 feet from a home — and especially tall ones that can grow up to the eaves of our homes — are all considered very dangerous to the home, the homeowner, and their neighbors.

Another often unknown issue with juniper is that the male versions produce large amounts of pollen. On an allergy scale, juniper pollen from male plants scores 9 out of 10, while female plants score only 1. The pollen is released several times a year. It has been estimated that a majority of allergy sufferers are affected by the pollen without

knowing it. Juniper pollen can cause asthma, hay fever, and allergic conjunctivitis.

Junipers are also subject to numerous plant diseases and insect pests, including leaf blight, twig blight, cankers, bark beetles, miners, aphids, and spider mites. All things considered, a better choice is probably to consider another plant for your landscape.

Some juniper grows as tall as 130 feet; others, those used as shrubs, tend to stay low, although it is not uncommon for them to reach the roof height of our homes.

Juniper was once a staple of many California landscapes. It was a preferred plant selection due to its rapid growth and its ability to hedge quickly and become a living fence. Unfortunately, many people had them planted too close to their homes, too close to walkways, and too close to the street.

Another issue with these ubiquitous bushes is that their dense foliage can hide many dangers under their leaves and branches. While they are one of the many plants to offer protection for our much-valued quail, they also provide homes for many of the rats, snakes, and small critters that we do not want around our homes. They present an

and the Dangerous

additional hazard because they trap large amounts of combustible debris underneath the plants. The same is true for ivy, which is not so flammable.

Common sense, fire departments, and insurance companies all recommend that junipers be at least 30 feet from any building or from each other; some suggest 100 feet is the safest distance.

Juniper is the major vegetation threat for mobile homes.

The most dangerous location is touching or especially close to the home, and near or under the eaves. Once a fire starts in the eaves of mobile homes, it is almost always unstoppable. Juniper is the major cause of fires spreading to nearby homes, and juniper fires are incredibly hot, which causes other nearby plants and buildings to catch fire. Some whole blocks of mobile homes have been destroyed because one person, despite numerous requests and warnings, refused to address their fire issue.

Although the most common cause of juniper-related house fires is cigarettes, most of these

fires have not been started by residents, but by people passing by and flicking away their lit cigarette butts.

Juniper is not the only flammable plant; many conifers, hollies, almost all tall grasses, manzanita, saw palmetto, wax myrtle, and all bamboos are also considered dangerously flammable, as well as all dried or dead leaves and branches. Even the most fire-resistant plants tend to burn very quickly if dead or starved of water.

There are at least 75, but probably many more, houses in our community that have potentially dangerous junipers around them. The Park gets grants to remove these plants and replace them with safer alternatives, but many people are very attached to their junipers and do not want to have them touched by Park management. So far, Matt Greenberg has been assisting those people who want them taken out. But we are all in danger from our holdout neighbors until we get these plants removed from all homes. It's possible. You can ask Matt for help. ■

MVEST trainings: CERT trainings:

Radio training for newcomers and experienced radio users —
 Wed., Sept. 28 and Sat., Oct. 1
 9:30 am – noon
 MVMCC clubhouse

Marin City
 Sat., Oct. 1 and 8
 Marin City Senior Center
 630 Drake Ave.

Nicasio
 Sat., Oct. 15 and 22
 Marin Co. Corp. Yard,
 5600 Nicasio Valley Rd.

Kentfield
 Sat., Nov. 5 and 6
 College of Marin
 835 College Ave.

San Rafael
 Sat., Nov. 12 and 19
 San Rafael Fire Station
 210 3rd St.

Nonflammable alternatives abound.

Below is a start. Also, in the "Fire Resistant Plant Catalog" on the library computers you can see images of drought-tolerant plants that grow in our clay soil.

Shrubs

Blue Fescue
 Blue Mist Spiraea
 Bush Cherry
 Butterfly Bush
 California Fuchsia
 California Redbud
 Chokeberry
 Cinquefoil
 Clematis
 Common Yarrow
 Concha
 Cotoneaster
 Creeping Mahonia
 Crested Wheatgrass
 Dwarf Periwinkle
 Euonymus
 Flowering Quince
 Forsythia
 Fourwing
 Golden Currant
 Hardy Purple Ice Plant
 Honeysuckle
 Juneberry
 Kerria
 Lavender
 Lilac
 Mock Orange
 Moss Pink
 New Mexico Privet
 Oregon Grape
 Perennial Sweet Pea
 Polygonum
 Potentilla
 Prickly Pear Cactus
 Pyracantha
 Red Trumpet Creeper
 Rose of Sharon
 Sage
 Shrub Roses
 Silver Buffaloberry

Snow in Summer
 Snowberry
 Spiraea
 Spurge
 Stonecrop
 Sunrose
 Thyme
 Viburnum
 Witch Hazel
 Yucca

Trees

Apple
 Ash
 Catalpa
 Crabapple
 Ginkgo Biloba
 Golden Rain
 Hackberry
 Hawthorn
 Honey Locust
 Hornbeam
 Horsechestnut
 Japanese Pagoda
 Laburnum
 Linden
 Liquidambar
 Maackia
 Maidenhair
 Maple
 Mulberry 47
 Osage Orange
 Pear
 Plane
 Plum or Cherry
 Robinia
 Smoke
 Sweetgum
 Sycamore
 Toyon
 Tulip

Message from Mar Val

Dear Friends,

As excitement grows in anticipation of the 2016 Black Cat/Halloween party, I would remind residents that for over a quarter of a century Mar Val has relied on this annual fundraiser to help offset expenses including the liquor license, the Christmas party, and Mar Val's volunteer dinner.

The Black Cat portion of the event is based on residents generously donating items that are in turn sold to other residents at bargain prices. Effective **Monday, October 10**, you will be able to leave Black Cat items on tables located in the ballroom.

**The sale begins concurrently with the Halloween party
Saturday, October 29 at 5 pm**

Now to the second part of the event — the Halloween party, which includes the following:

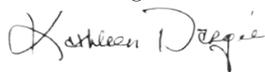
- Lasagna dinner, salad, and garlic bread @ \$12.00 per person (reservations not required)
- Dessert available for purchase at our onsite bakery booth
- Costume parade with cash prizes awarded to best male, best female, and best couple
- 50/50 raffle — winner receives one-half of the total cash collected in the raffle

To ensure the success of this important event, we are requesting **volunteers** to serve as salespeople and cashiers, as well as **bakers** who are willing to prepare their specialties for sale in our bakery. We will have signup sheets on the counter in the clubhouse beginning **Wednesday, October 19** for those interested in helping with either or both of these needs.

We eagerly look forward to receiving your donations and to your participation in the Halloween activities on

Saturday, October 29, at 5 pm

Warmest regards,



Kathleen Dargie
MAR VAL PRESIDENT
kfdargie@aol.com



HALLOWEEN PARTY

Annual Black Cat Fundraiser and Dinner

Saturday ■ October 29

*Your opportunity to clean out
cabinets and closets
as well as recycle your treasures!*

Donations accepted

Monday, October 10 – October 24

Please place donated items—which should be clean and in good repair—on tables in the ballroom.

Unfortunately, we CANNOT accept:

- furniture ■ shoes ■ clothes
- cookbooks ■ candles
- electronic items (TVs, computers, monitors or printers)
- cosmetics ■ anything with an expiration date.

Dust off your Halloween costume and join the fun. This is your chance to discover a treasure you have always wanted.

VOLUNTEERS

We always need volunteers for this fun event. We have volunteer openings for **bakers** and for two shifts as **salespersons** and **cashiers**.

Shift 1: 5:00–6:00 pm

Shift 2: 6:00–7:15 pm

Many thanks from the Mar Val Board!

HOL Home Owners League Message

Crank Calls

Caller ID “spoofing” occurs when a caller deliberately falsifies the information transmitted to your Caller ID display to disguise their identity. You may not be able to tell right away if an incoming call is spoofed. Be careful about responding to ANY request for personal identifying information. In this same nefarious league are scammers who don’t even bother to “spoof,” such as the robocalls I got at 7 a.m. every day last week claiming to be the “Internal Revenue Service.” I found out I could easily block those pesky phone calls

by dialing *60 and following the prompts to enable call screening, as shown in this video: www.youtube.com/watch?v=L1HO1P59Jfg. For XFINITY customers, here are Voice Call Screening tips: <https://customer.xfinity.com/help-and-support/phone/call-screening/>. Another powerful deterrent is registering your phone numbers on the National Do Not Call Registry at www.donotcall.gov/.

WiFi Throughout Clubhouse

THANK YOU to Matt Greenberg and Peter Dyke for making our open WiFi Internet access throughout

the clubhouse happen. The SSID that comes up when your mobile device searches for WiFi is “mvmcc.” No password is required. In other computer news, our new shades have been installed in the library to save our eyes as we “compute.” Soon there will be a three-foot USB 3.0 extension cable for each of our library computers. No more crawling on our bellies to plug a flash drive (USB memory stick) into the Dell!

Best regards,

Miriam Dvorin Spross
HOL PRESIDENT

HOL-Sponsored Activities

- Book Group** meets 4th Wed. Filled.
Community Dancing 1st Sat. 7–9 pm
This month will meet Oct. 8 — Inga Grace, Pia Andersson, Michael Hagerty
Craft Group Wed. 10 am–2 pm
— Jeannine Freedom, Tara Plocher
Low-Impact Aerobics Mon. 9:30 am
— Peggy Hill
Meditation Mon. 4:45pm — Joan Nelson
Silent Meditation Th. 6:15–7 pm
— Zoe and John Hansen
Wet Water Workout Tu/Th. 10–11 am
— Kamala Allen

HOL Standing Committees

- ART IN THE PARK** — Suzie Lahr
COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS
At-Home Potlucks, Buddy System, Just-1-Hour, Readers’ Theatre Group
— Joan Nelson
CONTRACTOR/HANDYPERSON
— Nancy Bingham
DIRECTORY — Erma Wheatley
WILDLIFE — Dee Schneider

Community Connections

by JOAN NELSON

- **Readers’ Theater** — Read a character’s lines...just for the fun of it!... Usually meets third Wednesdays at 2 pm. Location varies.
- **At-home Potlucks** — The At-Home Potluck Patio Dinner at **Shareen Akroosh’s** was attended by six Park residents who were able to relate in a broader way than would otherwise have been possible. **Charly McInroy** will host the next At-Home dinner on **October 8**. Reservations are open for the first 10 responders. Contact Charly 415-506-4339. Don’t know her yet? All the better! The point is to acquaint yourself with neighbors you didn’t know before!

Anyone can schedule a small At-Home Potluck event where you will enjoy a potluck selection of people as well as potluck edibles — a great way to engage with new, interesting faces!

- **Just-1-Hour** — Need a few minutes of help with a brief, one-time task? Or want to volunteer to do a small favor for a neighbor? Pick up a current Just-1-Hour volunteer list from the Just-1-Hour clubhouse wall box.
- **Buddy System** — If you haven’t yet arranged with a close neighbor to be “buddies,” with access to one another’s homes in case of suspected emergency, please do so soon. Then fill out the “Buddy” form recently inserted into your Park message tube and return it to Matt.

For details on any of these Community Connections, contact **Joan Nelson** — figleafjoan@comcast.net, 415-506-4166 c: 415-595-6221.

Notices



Take the Bus

Want to go shopping and don't drive or don't want to drive?

Every Wednesday **Whistlestop** comes into the Park and can drive you to Costco, Safeway, and Macy's from 11 am until 1 pm. The cost is \$2.00 each way. Please call **Roberta Urquhart** at 415-883-0843 in advance.



Community Dancing

Saturday, October 8
2nd Saturday this Month ONLY
7-9 PM Free Event!

For another lovely evening of great music, dancing, and good fun, please note that the next Community Dance will be on the 2nd Saturday of the month, **October 8**. Future dance dates will continue on first Saturdays.

ART IN THE PARK



by **SUZIE LAHR**

Visit the stunning new gallery exhibit gracing the walls of our clubhouse. We look forward to having you view the work of twenty of our talented resident artists, some of which is shown on the following page.

Extend a thank you to the artists by signing the guest book in the lobby beside the price list. Did you see a piece you would love to have in your home or to give as a gift? Now you can buy it directly from the artist. Maybe this will get your creative juices flowing so you can be part of next year's exhibit! Mark your calendar for Sunday, May 21, 2017 for our sixth annual Art in the Park.

Be part of our resident artist group and come to our meetings resuming this fall. Email suzielahr@aol.com.

NEXT PAGE TOP LEFT TO RIGHT:
Laura Krajan-Cronin, *An Artist's Allegorical*; **David MacLam**, *Raptor Brings Buffalo Ghost*; **David Gray**, *Male Northern Flicker Fledging*; **Brynda Foster**, *Badlands, South Dakota*; **Michele Rivers**, *Become Seeing*; **Marianne York**, *Succulent #2 and #1*; **Karin Mortensen**, *Yukon Forest*; **Gail Camhi**, *Portrait of a Woman*; **Dorallen Davis**, *The Sailor*; **Tara Plocher**, *Fairy Waldorf Doll*; **Jae Tillinghast**, *Chileno Valley Road*; **Carole Rosvold**, *Shannon and Carole*; **Julia Mathews**, *Bay Trail 3*; **Janet Bogardus**, *Stormy Weather*. ■



The **Craft Group** led by Jeannine Freedom and Tara Plocher meets on Wednesdays from 10 am – 2 pm in the ballroom. Bring a lunch and something to work on. The first group, held on September 7, was attended by six people. There was dollmaking, quilt seam ironing, mending, talking, knitting, and even some exchanging of sewing notions. All crafters are welcome. Some painters and jewelry makers would be nice.

Qigong Class

Every Thursday morning 9:15 am to 10:15 am, Dove holds a Qigong class at the clubhouse. If you are interested in trying this low-impact exercise, please do come and join our class.

Roberta Urquhart
415-883-0843



Driver Safety Class

Want to have one at MVMCC?

AARP offers an 8-hour and a 4-1/2-hour renewal Driver Safety Course. The 8-hour class is usually given in two 4-hour sessions on two different days. Both courses are for drivers 50 years or older. Auto insurance discounts may be available upon completion. The cost for each course is \$15 for AARP members and \$20 for nonmembers. Registration is required. Classes are available in Marin County and could be taught in the Park if residents account for 20% of attendees. Please sign up at the front desk or contact **Marianne York** at 415-717-0696.

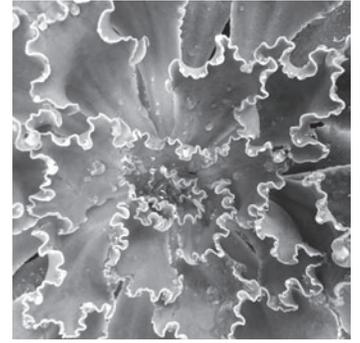
READERS' THEATRE GROUP



PLAY A PART
READ SCENE SCRIPTS FOR FUN

WEDNESDAY ■ OCTOBER 19
2 – 4 PM ■ PLAY TBD

If you are not on the email list, you must call **Yvonne** – 415-506-1671 to reserve a place and learn location.



Travel Tips from an Airport Refugee

A woman passenger sparked a major alert at Frankfurt Airport by entering the departure area without completing a security check



by **INGA GRACE**

As I awakened 4 a.m. August 31st, my first thought was how wonderful it would be to return home again after visiting family and friends in Europe for several weeks.

Arriving timely in Frankfurt, a huge major hub with countless connections, I spent a few hours relaxing and waiting at the gate.

You may have seen in the news what happened next. As boarding began, there was a sudden announcement to evacuate the entire A and Z terminals. Passengers were herded by police into an increasingly smaller area that quickly filled to maximum capacity. Later it was confirmed that 100-plus flights were cancelled that morning and some 5,500 people stranded.

Many incoming flights were prevented from landing as well and rerouted to other airports in Europe, leaving passengers scrambling to figure out how to make connections and reach their destinations.

Helpfully, Lufthansa paid for taxi fares, train tickets, etc. throughout this logistical nightmare.

At the time, though, we knew nothing except to keep moving and take the train to another terminal, where we were promised food and water. However, there was none. Confusion and concerns escalated as the temperature increased and the air became stale. The crowd grew restless and scared of being kept captive, mostly standing room only.

Information sharing was virtually nonexistent except for occasional announcements to move one direction or the other, causing opposite flows of folks getting nowhere in the enclosed area.

The incoming flights that did land added numbers of tired travelers, also prevented from exiting. Wi-Fi was not working well, yet someone managed to get online news that a woman had left a suspicious bag, therefore triggering a security alert. A few hours later she was found; she had forgotten her luggage, and the entire affair had been a nonevent.

However, for us stranded airport refugees, this adventure was far from over.

As the Z terminal reopened early afternoon, I ran to the gate of the next SFO flight departure, only to be told that my boarding card was now invalid and to wait in line for a new ticket. Many planes left empty as they were needed at other, mostly U.S., airports.

The mentioned rebooking line was literally a mile long, stretching through the entire terminal building. And it was barely moving. By midafternoon we got some water, but by midnight we had long given up on any food.

A second evacuation almost occurred as a woman left her bag to buy a sandwich and an abandoned luggage security alert went out. I am proud to have been the one sprinting after the police, yelling to cancel the call — as the woman returned right at that moment.

Late evening, the booking office closed for the night, scheduled to reopen at 6 a.m. Exhausted passengers slept on the floor to keep their place in line. A fellow traveler arrived at 5:30 a.m., waited five hours, and got on my flight!

I was very lucky; a kind German woman finally got through to the booking office on her mobile (being on hold for an hour w/o an international plan could cost a small fortune) and passed her phone to our small group of, by now, bonded travelers. Getting rebooked via Munich the following afternoon was a most welcome relief! Later, folks waited on hold all night, unable to get through.

Our small group of friends consisted of a young Danish hippie, a Bolivian businessman, a student from Ecuador,

a woman returning from Ethiopia, an American back from a safari in Kenya, an Indian woman late for a U.S. wedding ... I don't know their names and we will likely never see each other again, yet during that shared time of waiting we were closer than most — and I will remember their kind faces and good hearts.

The young student from Ecuador had no money left and was traveling on the last day of her visa, therefore unable to leave the airport until the next flight to Bogotá, two days later.

Being a refugee for one very long day reminded me of the plight of real refugees, their presence clearly seen and felt many places in Europe. They frequently spend weeks, months, and sometimes years waiting ... and waiting ... not knowing what may come next.

A few tips for overseas travel:

Carry with you —

- Your phone charger (with adapter)
- Clean clothes and a toothbrush
- All your valuables
- Food and an empty water bottle for refill
- Cash

Also —

- Wear very comfortable shoes and layered clothing good for sitting on the floor
- Consider purchasing an international calling plan for your cell phone
- Do not travel on the last day of your visa!

So grateful to be safely back home at beautiful Marin Valley — and two days later my suitcase was delivered, too. ■

Your Input into the City's General Plan

by ANILA MANNING

Novato's General Plan is the principal policy document guiding our development and conservation, reflecting the vision and values of the City. It was last updated in 1996, and since then new state regulations have been enacted, and our perspectives on land use and environmental issues have changed. They are looking for resident feedback via a series of workshops, open houses, and neighborhood meetings from now through mid-October. Meetings are scheduled for **Thursday, October 6, 7-9 pm** and **Thursday, October 13, 7-9 pm**.

Find out more, and when and where, at <http://novato.org/government/community-development/general-plan-update>

MVMCC has its own section in the plan, and you can see it on p. 13 at http://mvmcc.com/documents/City_of_Novato_Strategic_Plan_2015-2018_update.pdf

Got suggestions?

Give the planners the info they need to make a city that works for everybody.

Afternoon Visits Inside San Quentin Prison

by HENRY FRUMMER

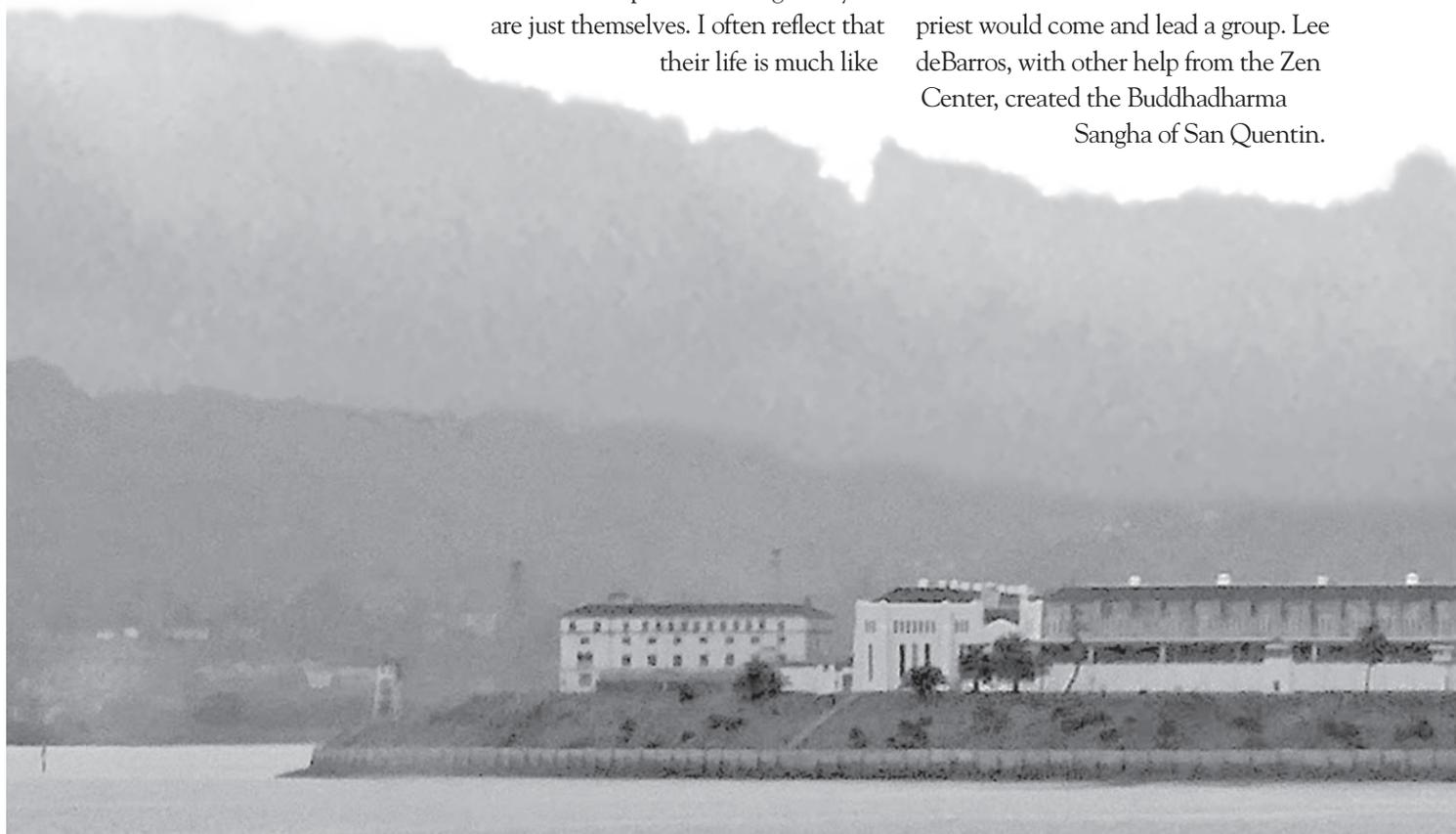
Someone calls out, “Gate!” There is a loud clang as the sally port door opens. We walk into the ten-foot-long entry room with barred doors at each end. We show our IDs to the guard behind bulletproof glass, and the same call marks the opening of the second sally port door so that we can exit. We then walk through a medieval-looking solid metal door and enter a large, pleasant, well-landscaped courtyard bounded on four sides by very different buildings. Behind us is an admin building containing the “Captain’s Porch,” in front of us is a remodeled hospital, to the right are Catholic and Protestant chapels, and to our left is the Orwellian-named “Adjustment Center,” aka solitary. We are heading to a low, rectangular building that looks

just like an ordinary rec room inside. It is transformed regularly into a mosque, a Jewish temple, a zendo, and a yoga studio. But first we have to sign the group in at “Four Post,” the third place we must sign in before starting our day. From here, the inmates are notified that our program is ready to start.

As the inmates arrive, we transform the plain, linoleum-floored room into the familiar zendo. The inmates set up a beautiful rolling altar made in the prison’s furniture shop, adorned with statues of the Buddha carved by one of the men. In the room, the men (we often refer to the inmates in that way) are relaxed and happy to see us. In that room, they are people and not prisoners. There is an openness created by the feeling of people meeting people just to connect that is quite refreshing. They are just themselves. I often reflect that their life is much like

life in a monastery: They all wear the same clothes, eat the same food, and sleep in small cells. They have limited choice of how to spend the day. They have to be selfless in many of their activities. They have little personal power over the administration or other inmates. They have to exercise caution and self-control every day. They find themselves sharing a tiny cell with another inmate whom they might not really like for years at a time. They have to negotiate that small space just big enough for a bunk bed, a sink, and a toilet every day.

The Buddhist group was started in 1999 by several inmates who were meditating together on the yard. They approached the warden requesting a Buddhist program. They then contacted the San Francisco Zen Center and asked if a priest would come and lead a group. Lee deBarros, with other help from the Zen Center, created the Buddhadharma Sangha of San Quentin.



He has been coming ever since. He recently retired and turned over the group to his main student, Jiryu, a Dharma heir living at Green Gulch Farm. Since the group's founding, it has met on Sundays with a typical small-group schedule. There are periods for meditation, service, and dharma talk. Recently, a new program has been added, which is a discussion group in the afternoon that meets for 2½ hours on various Buddhist topics. This new program has become extremely popular with the men, as it gives them a chance to talk about their lives and how Buddhism has affected their lives. Most of these men have had arduous journeys from being violent criminals to acquiring a deep desire for the Bodhisattva ideal (the desire to save all beings). It is a spiritual transformation that most religious seekers only dream about. Their stories are rich with emotion and insight. Their take on Buddhist teachings is often deeply insightful. These are stories of broken childhoods, drug addiction, gang memberships, abandonment, betrayal, bad choices, hope, joy, forgiveness, and love. Often a stretch in solitary can be the place where people wake up — the



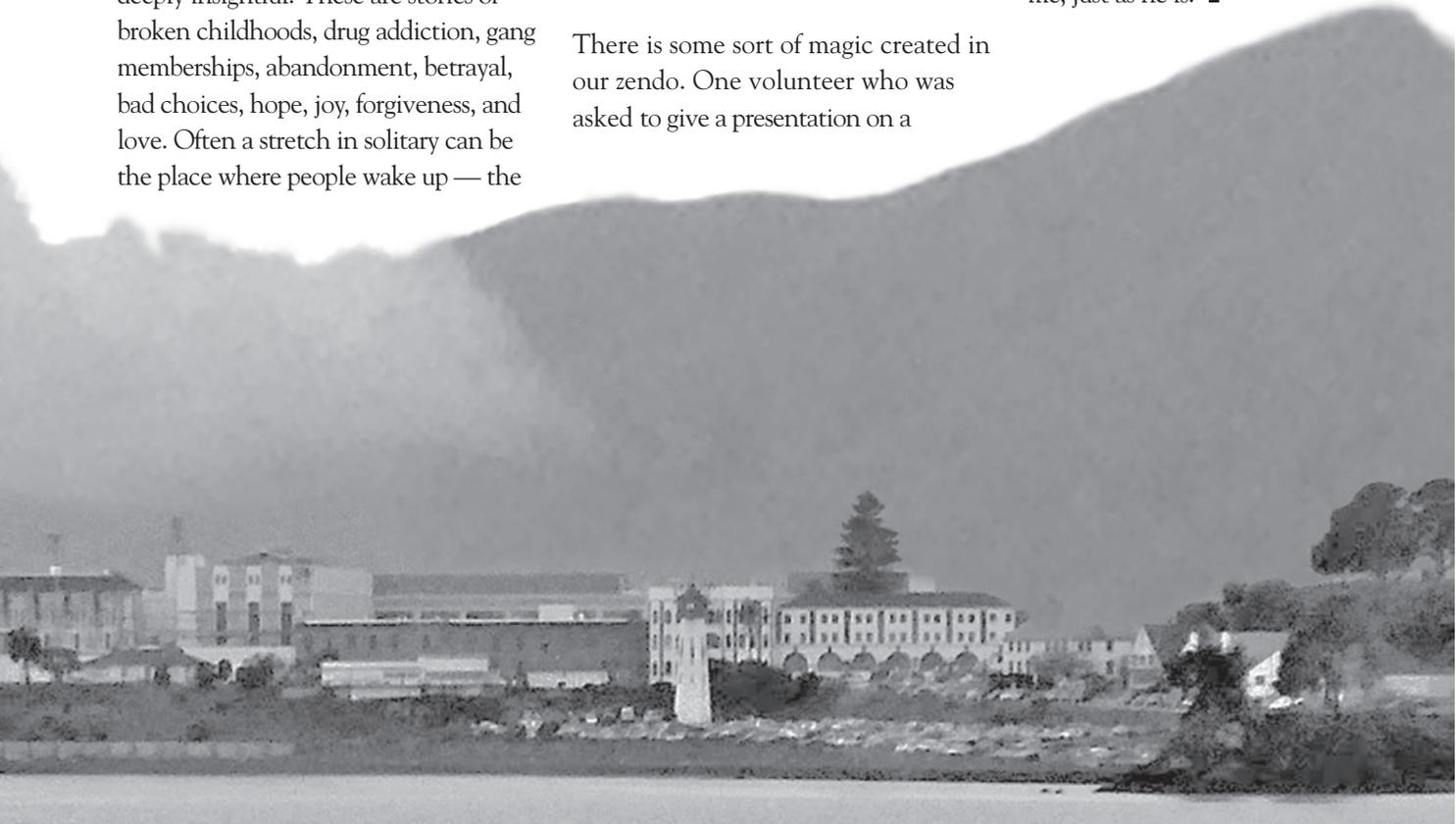
LEFT TO RIGHT: Resident Henry Frummer, visiting Thich Nhat Hanh teacher Sister Jewel, and Jiryu of Green Gulch Farm outside San Quentin California State Prison after an afternoon meeting with inmates of the Buddhadharma Sangha of San Quentin.

place where they find there is no one left to blame. One inmate found a copy of a Buddhist book tucked away in an otherwise empty cell; another had a Buddhist magazine land in front of his cell that was swept down from an upper tier. Most were invited to attend the Buddhist group by a fellow inmate who appreciated the quiet meditation and relaxed teaching that was free of any pitch to join.

There is some sort of magic created in our zendo. One volunteer who was asked to give a presentation on a

topic reported being nervous until she realized that being in that room is in fact a safe place to share one's feelings. There is a level of acceptance of volunteers not often found on the outside. It's not that the men put us on a pedestal, but it's odd to feel complete appreciation just for showing up; it seems out of place.

They have spent most of their lives having to read people, having to be alert at all times, yet they are all different, and the volunteers' interactions with them are all unique. We seek out the people we best communicate with. Personally, I try to find a way to connect with each of the men in a significant way. Sometimes it takes patience. I don't judge them; I'm glad I'm not put in a position to do that. I can simply meet the person in front of me, just as he is. ■





The Great Egret

*Snowy wings, soft flight
Wind whistles through glossy feathers
As the water flies by below.
Flap, Flap, Whoosh!
Dark feet sink into the mud*

*Eyes snap back and forth
Long neck held still.
Shot like a white shafted arrow
Gold, razor beak plunges into the reeds
True is its aim as a frog is caught unaware*

*A swift snap of the bill signals the meal's end.
Snowy wings, soft flight
Wind whistles through glossy feathers
As the Great Egret flies home.*

Written by 12-year-old Eve Moylan

Great Egret

by **BILL NOBLE**

Photograph by **DAVID GRAY**

Let's start with names. Your bird book probably calls this large, stately, snow-white creature a "Common Egret," which is what the New World populations were called till we decided that similar birds in Asia, Europe, Africa, and Oceania all were actually one cosmopolitan species.

Astonishingly, the Great Egret and its smaller cousin, our golden-slipped Snowy Egret, once again widespread, were nearly exterminated in the United States. From 1870 to 1910, heron rookeries — the great breeding-season gatherings — were "harvested" by commercial hunters seeking the birds' long, graceful nuptial plumes to adorn the then-current fashions in ladies' hats. More than 95 percent of our birds were slaughtered; for 75 years, not a single Great Egret was seen in California, until birds from Mexico slowly began to repopulate our marshes and rivers and shores.

The National Audubon Society, whose symbol is this egret, was founded to protect these birds. Its first sanctuary warden, Pressley Reeves, along with several state game wardens throughout the South, were murdered by plume hunters. Congressional legislation in 1910 ended the plume trade and other market hunting (we forget how widespread it was only a century ago: One commentator found 2,500 dead robins for sale, as meat, in a single street stall in Washington D.C.; Eskimo curlews, now extinct, were shot by the wagonload with multi-barreled guns) after three decades of citizen organizing and lobbying.

Here in our Park, Great Egrets are common and often fearless in our winter ponds, feasting on the great annual gathering of the tree frogs. Even as the ponds dry, egrets will stalk the meadows for voles and pocket gophers. Raise your gaze higher, too: I love the glimpses I get of one perched like a particularly brilliant cloud on the tip of a pine on View Ridge, or the grand vision of one rowing high over the Park in sunset light, on its way from the Hamilton restoration to a nighttime island roost at Las Gallinas ponds.

Heron rookeries are sprawling, squawking mini-cities with wide-winged angels floating in and out. They're often, even usually, multispecies. In Northern California, the "anchor" species are Great Egrets and their even larger cousins, Great Blue Herons. Our most spectacular rookery is likely the one on the smaller of the two Marin Isles, off San Rafael, home to both kinds of egrets, Great Blues and Black-Crowned Night Herons. The Las Gallinas wildlife ponds have a similar noisy island village. Off Bel Marin Keys Boulevard is another configuration, in the top of towering eucalyptus trees, known because of its proximity to the Anubhuti Retreat Center as the "Egret Retreat." Two rather famous local heronries: a roost and a rookery of night herons on a steep, shrubby hillside a few blocks from downtown Sausalito, invisible to unobservant humans except in the late dusk, when the air above town fills with the hollow *skwoks!* of birds flying out to the bay edge to snatch fish and crabs. Our most unusual rookery is likely the one on the shrubby median of West 9th

Street in Santa Rosa, surrounded by whizzing cars, with earnest municipal signs to protect the birds.

And now let me write personally for a moment. In early September, Cristina Noble — Tina — my wife of 45 years, died here at home with us after an 11-year journey with Alzheimer's disease. Her death was both a blessed relief and a wrenching sadness for me and all our family.

The epitaph I chose for Tina is an old Maori saying, *He kotuku rerenga tahi*, which translates as "the white heron flies once."

Tina's grandparents were from the South Island of New Zealand. Her godmother was Maori (one of the Polynesians who arrived at those remote islands centuries ago). The "white heron" — the Great Egret — is not native there, but for thousands of years individual birds have been storm-blown from Australia. Seeing one of these great snowy birds was an event likely to be "once in a lifetime," and so the Maori saying.

Around the time of the first European colonization, a small group of storm-borne Great Egrets began to nest at a remote location on New Zealand's western shore, and individuals dispersing from that tiny rookery still give Kiwis (the human variety) a sudden, wondrous glimpse. While my son was at university in Christchurch, he saw one on a morning walk along the harbor. Tina — anthropologist, world traveler, inspired teacher, multilingual mom — was our white heron, our once-in-a-lifetime. Think of her as your next egret takes flight over the marsh. ■

SATURDAY 1

7-9 PM COMMUNITY DANCE



ECHO DEADLINE



Dumpster



Full Moon
7:33 PM

SUNDAY 2

1-4 PM Mahjong

6-8 AM Trash Pickup
9:30 AM Low-Impact Exercise
4:45 PM Meditation
7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker

MONDAY 3

6-8 AM Trash Pickup
9:30 AM Low-Impact Exercise
4:45 PM Meditation
7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker

TUESDAY 4

10-11 AM Wet Water Workout

WEDNESDAY 5

10 AM-2 PM Craft Group
11 AM-1 PM Whistlestop
(call Roberta 415-883-0843)
7 PM PAC MEETING

THURSDAY 6

9:15 AM Qi Gong with Dove
10-11 AM Wet Water Workout
6:15-7 PM Silent Meditation
7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker

FRIDAY 7

4 PM Canasta
5-7 PM Pub Night

8

SUNDAY 9

6-8 AM Trash Pickup
9:30 AM Low-Impact Exercise
4:45 PM Meditation
7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker

MONDAY 10

6-8 AM Trash Pickup
9:30 AM Low-Impact Exercise
4:45 PM Meditation
7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker

TUESDAY 11

10-11 AM Wet Water Workout

WEDNESDAY 12

10 AM-2 PM Craft Group
11 AM-1 PM Whistlestop
(call Roberta 415-883-0843)
6 PM MAR VAL MEETING

THURSDAY 13

9:15 AM Qi Gong with Dove
10-11 AM Wet Water Workout
6:15-7 PM Silent Meditation
7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker

FRIDAY 14

4 PM Canasta
5-7 PM Pub Night
7:15 PM Bingo

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SUNDAY 16

6-8 AM Trash Pickup
9:30 AM Low-Impact Exercise
4:45 PM Meditation
7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker

MONDAY 17

6-8 AM Trash Pickup
9:30 AM Low-Impact Exercise
4:45 PM Meditation
7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker

TUESDAY 18

10-11 AM Wet Water Workout

WEDNESDAY 19

10 AM-2 PM Craft Group
11 AM Ladies' Bridge
11 AM-1 PM Whistlestop
(call Roberta 415-883-0843)
2-4 PM Readers' Theatre Group
7 PM HOL MEETING

THURSDAY 20

9:15 AM Qi Gong with Dove
10-11 AM Wet Water Workout
6:15-7 PM Silent Meditation
7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker

FRIDAY 21

4 PM Canasta
5-7 PM Pub Night

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SUNDAY 23

6-8 AM Trash Pickup
9:30 AM Low-Impact Exercise
4:45 PM Meditation
7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker

MONDAY 24

6-8 AM Trash Pickup
9:30 AM Low-Impact Exercise
4:45 PM Meditation
7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker

TUESDAY 25

10-11 AM Wet Water Workout

WEDNESDAY 26

10 AM-2 PM Craft Group
11 AM-1 PM Whistlestop
(call Roberta 415-883-0843)

THURSDAY 27

9:15 AM Qi Gong with Dove
10-11 AM Wet Water Workout
6:15-7 PM Silent Meditation
7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker

FRIDAY 28

4 PM Canasta
5-7 PM Pub Night

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MAR VAL
BLACK CAT
HALLOWEEN PARTY
FUNDRAISER SALE
COSTUME PARADE
AND DINNER
5 PM



NOVEMBER 5

7-9 PM COMMUNITY DANCE



OCTOBER 2016

1-4 PM Mahjong

6-8 AM Trash Pickup
9:30 AM Low-Impact Exercise
4:45 PM Meditation
7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker

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