

THE ECHO

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Plans for new clubhouse landscaping will be first on the agenda with the landscape architect and the City engineer at **7PM**, at the **PAC** meeting on **March 2**. See p. 3.

Mail

Our Community

I was thinking about the word “community” and how I’ve always thought of it in a rather general sense. One definition of community is a group of people living in the same place and having particular characteristics in common. In our Marin Valley community we have in common our ages (over 55), retirement, and mobile homes. Living so close to each other as we do here, the sense of community — or not — becomes crystal clear.

I am recalling our neighbor Tom who died several years ago. We in our cul-de-sac have lived here in double-digit years — 16 years for me. Our cluster of five mobile home occupants lived here together but separately quite blissfully for most of those years because we were always considerate of each other, gave each other space, and when we crossed paths exchanged friendly pleasantries. Civility came naturally.

When Tom’s health began to fail, each of us completely without

discussion or planning among us took care of Tom. Chris took care of his cat; Sharon picked up his prescriptions and groceries; Ed got his mail, did his recycling, and provided male companionship; and I cooked good food for him. We quietly watched over him for many months. We functioned individually but really we were a team.

When he died, we contacted his family and made sure everything was handled quickly and efficiently. I continue to marvel at the fact that we just did it. It was so smooth we didn’t even notice that what we were doing was quietly and collectively watching over Tom until the end.

Remembering that harmonious time when we seamlessly and quite naturally filled in to make Tom’s life easier, I realize that very special experience is the true meaning of community.

Patricia Akroosh

Screech Owl

Follow-up to the follow-up, Ray and I have heard a screech owl three nights in a row, which is exceptionally rare in our experience. Whether or not this is the owl we released on January 8 we have no way of knowing, but it is heartwarming to speculate that the owl we are hearing is the one that was rescued, saying, “Thanks for the help.”

Sincerely,
Dee Schneider

2016-17 Directory Update

Phone number change for

Cecil Sherrod

104 Panorama
415-506-4423

THE ECHO

MARCH 2016

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Please email all articles with the word “ECHO” as the first word of the subject line and a copy of the article in the body of the email to the editor at:

ermawheatley@gmail.com

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

Everything is due the
8TH of the month or sooner
for the following month’s edition.

PAC *Letter to Residents*

Greetings from the PAC Board,

We are meeting the debt service ratio necessary for compliance with the loan from the Bank of Marin.

PAC Board

Jim Olson, former president of PAC, has accepted our invitation to hold the seat vacated by **Tom Miller**. We thank Tom for his dedicated service and wish him well in his future endeavors.

PAC Board Elections

The annual election for the PAC board will be held later this spring, chaired by Larry Cohen (415-883-7786). Four seats are open. Residents interested in serving on the board or helping run the election should contact Larry. The PAC board is charged by the titleholder to participate in the making of the annual budget and, very importantly, to work with the Park's management to manage the Park.

Novato Finance Authority

The City of Novato has detailed to some degree the administrative and legal expenses not billed to MVMCC for the past three years. The total amount is \$165,100, or an average of \$55,000 per year. In the previous seven years under the Novato Finance Authority, the administrative fee averaged \$40,800 per year. Now with the City spending more time on the management of MVMCC, these costs have increased and are billed back

to funds available for our needs. The legal expenses alone for these past three years were \$101,000, or \$33,400 each year. PAC has requested that it be permitted to participate more actively with Park management to mitigate these expenses.

Charge for Residents Contacting City about MVMCC

Keep in mind that an understanding between residents of MVMCC and the City of Novato was reached many years ago. That understanding was that all of the City's expenses incurred in addressing Park concerns would be charged back to MVMCC. All meetings with City staff eventually are charged to MVMCC accounts. We can see this reflected in the yearly audited statements as well as in the documentation of the Bank of Marin loan to refinance the original bonds used to purchase the Park. In that light, the Park would be best served if residents would exhaust all avenues of redress within the Park before approaching the City. We have HOL and PAC as well as Park management available to address our concerns before reaching out to the City. We are residents of Novato, but as residents of MVMCC we are treated a little differently.

Clubhouse Landscaping

GSM Landscape Architects, Inc., and Tony Williams, Senior Civil Engineer from the City of Novato, detailed preliminary landscape plans for the clubhouse area. An active discussion ensued with the residents and PAC

as to our anticipated needs and current usage preferences that now will go into the mix. In light of PAC's recommendation that it have a more active role in the pre-planning of projects to reduce the scope and costs of future MVMCC projects, Tony Williams and landscape architect Gretchen McCann will attend the next PAC meeting on March 2 to provide residents an opportunity for input on the actual design.

PLEASE COME EARLY — THEY WILL BE FIRST ON THE AGENDA.

Wish Lists

The PAC board has received the wants and needs of the HOL, Mar Val boards, and residents in the form of wish lists. These will be reviewed by a PAC ad hoc committee and be reported on at the next meeting.

City Council Meeting at MVMCC

The next Novato City Council meeting at MVMCC will be in the ballroom on a Tuesday evening in March at 6:30 PM. Watch for the exact date on the lobby counter, PAC bulletin board, and our website at www.mvmcc.com.

The next PAC meeting will be on **March 2**. Hope to see you there.

In service,



Jay Shelfer
PAC PRESIDENT
jjshelfer@yahoo.com

Message from Mar Val

Dear Friends,

This year the month of March includes much-anticipated highlights such as the start of daylight savings on March 13, the first day of spring on March 20, and Easter Sunday on March 27. In addition to this positive outlook, it would be remiss of me not to include the news of Mar Val's annual **St. Patrick's Day** dinner on **Saturday, March 12**. Please join us for the traditional corned beef and

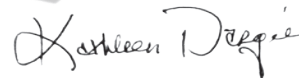
cabbage dinner. As you will note from the reservation form, cutoff for signing up will be Wednesday, March 9.

Volunteer Dinner

April 16, 2016 is the date for the volunteer dinner hosted by HOL and Mar Val for those who volunteered their services to any of the Park organizations during the period of April 2015 to March 2016. Sign-up sheets for this party will be available at the clubhouse beginning Monday,

April 4. As is the case with the Christmas party, attendees are required to include a check for the dinner when making reservations, and the check is returned at sign-in on the evening of the party.

With warmest regards,



Kathleen Dargie
MAR VAL PRESIDENT
kfdargie@aol.com

Management Update

Solicitations

Unauthorized solicitation from outside organizations trying to sell vacuum cleaners, frozen food, and/or home services — all have at times been reported to the front desk. A knock on the door can be unnerving, and against Park policy, so please alert the front desk if you have been solicited so we may contact the service provider. Never let a stranger into your home even if they seem friendly and with good intention. Call the front desk for assistance.

Digging

Prior to any digging, please alert management so we may do a thorough utility location inspection. This inspection can prevent costly repairs to underground wire and pipe. It will also prevent residents from losing power, water, or gas during the investigation and repair.

Debris Box — No Construction or Cardboard

April 9 — save the date. Management will be supplying a debris box for personal garbage and home cleanup debris. No construction debris will be accepted. Cardboard should go in the weekly recycle pickup and not take up room in the debris box, to avoid unnecessary overflow. Location will be at the Club View lower turnaround.

Coyotes and Pets

Residents have alerted management that a coyote is roaming the streets. Please keep your cats and small dogs safe and indoors per Park rules.

Carports

Cooperation from residents cleaning up and disposing of stored items in the carports is much appreciated. Please

continue this good work. Per Park rule #12, carports are not to be used for storage. People who cannot park in their respective carports impact others by parking in guest spaces.

Laundry Cost Increase

Residents who use the on site laundry will notice a 25-cent increase in washing fees to \$2.00 per load.

Thank you for your continued cooperation.

Sincerely,



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

ST. PATRICK'S DAY DINNER

MARCH 12, 2016

5:00 SOCIALIZING AND COCKTAILS

6:00 DINNER



M E N U

Corned beef and cabbage

OR

Vegetarian rice pilaf

Potatoes/carrots/rolls

Cheesecake

Please make checks payable to Mar Val

\$10 per person (no cash, please)

Reservation deadline – March 9, 2016 or

when 140 reservations have been received

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

ST. PATRICK'S DAY DINNER RESERVATION FORM MARCH 12, 2016 • 5:00 PM

Please circle entrée choice

RESIDENT _____	Corned beef and cabbage	Vegetarian rice pilaf
RESIDENT _____	Corned beef and cabbage	Vegetarian rice pilaf
GUEST _____	Corned beef and cabbage	Vegetarian rice pilaf
GUEST _____	Corned beef and cabbage	Vegetarian rice pilaf

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

— Reservation Deadline —

March 9, 5:00 PM or when 140 reservations have been received.

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

TOTAL \$ _____



HOL Home Owners League Message

Dear Fellow Residents,

MVEST Appreciation

I am writing this on February 1, having just completed the CERT training over the weekend, and I stand in awe of the MVEST team, comprised of **Serena Fisher, Alan Gump, Bill Davis, John Hansen, and John Feld**. This team has spent hours gathering information, materials, and supplies that will help all MVMCC residents in the event of an emergency such as an earthquake or a mudslide, wildfire, storm, etc. MVEST arranged to have the Novato Fire District provide the CERT training at our clubhouse. It was an 18-hour class packed with information and practical, hands-on exercises. We all owe these folks a large debt of gratitude for their foresight in giving us ways we can help ourselves and our neighbors during a disaster. Please seriously consider taking a CERT training class; it possibly could save your life or that of a loved one.

Resident Input Forms

The procedures for Resident Input Forms (RIFs) have changed since the recent adoption of the new HOL bylaws. Your completed RIF goes directly to Matt Greenberg. If for any reason you feel your issue was not resolved to your satisfaction, you can then put a copy of your RIF in the HOL box in the clubhouse. HOL will then talk with you and management in an attempt to resolve your issues.

Shredding Update

Shredding date is **March 29**, with a sign-up deadline of March 21. Please see the February *Echo* for the shredding details, or check the counter in the clubhouse next to the shredding sign-up sheets.

HOL Elections

Election of HOL Board of Directors will be held at the May 18 meeting, and new officers will be taking office July 1. The Nominating Committee will begin its work in April and would welcome your thoughts, your suggestions, and most of all your volunteering to be a nominee. Boards function best with infusions of new thoughts, new ideas, new proposals, and heaps of fresh enthusiasm. Board experience is not needed — what is needed is a willingness to participate in the continuation of the rich HOL history of providing residents with a voice in the Park for over 44 years. The Park is changing and so must we residents, so please think long and hard and help us keep HOL as an integral part of MVMCC.

Hope to see you at the next HOL meeting on **March 16 at 7 PM** in the Fireside Room.

Carolyn K. Corry

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





Fire Chief's Weekly Report February 5, 2016



CERT Training in Marin Valley

Fire Prevention Specialist Sandy Wargo taught Community Emergency Response Team training to 22 new students and 4 returning students wishing to sharpen their skills in the Marin Valley Mobile Country Club neighborhood.

In the event of an emergency, our first responders will be overwhelmed. It is critical for citizens to be prepared to take care of themselves, their neighbors, and their community for at least 3 days, and preferably 5-7. The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training is a national program to train citizens to help fill the gap between a disaster or emergency, and the arrival of professional services.



Fire Prevention Specialist Sandy Wargo (L) teaches a CERT student how to use a fire extinguisher.

After completing the course, CERTs will be able to provide immediate assistance to handle small fires, turn off utilities, give basic first aid, perform light search and rescue, and collect information to provide arriving professional first responders. The CERT class curriculum covers History of CERT, ICS System,



Fire Captain Don Fletcher teaches CERT students.

Disaster Psychology, Disaster First Aid, Fire Suppression, Light Search and Rescue, Wildfire Awareness and Drill Scenario. Participants find the class engaging, fun, and very informative. For details on what happens during the class, see the Curriculum Overview below.

The next CERT class is February 24 and February 26. To learn more about CERT, click here <http://readymarin.org/cert/>

"To care for, protect, and serve our communities".



Marin Valley Mobile Country Club CERT Team.

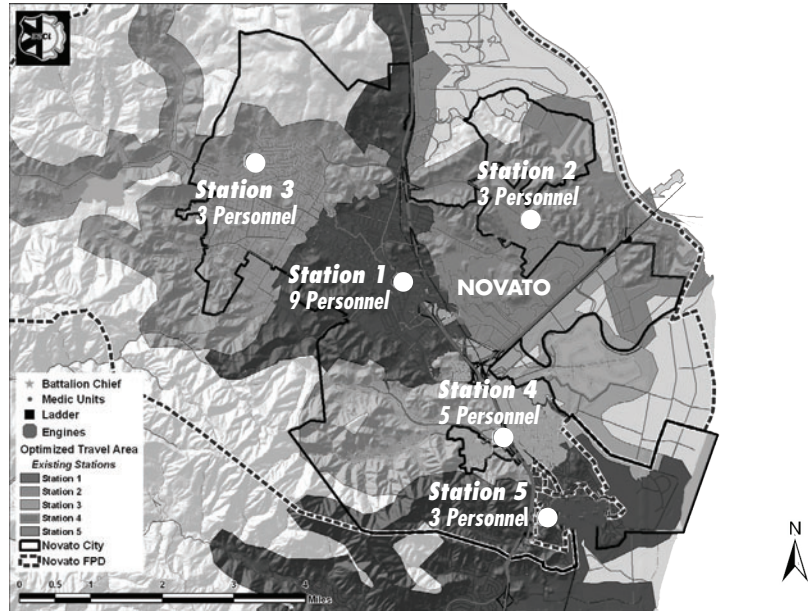




Our Local Heroes

by Serena D'Arcy-Fisher and Alan Gump

When there's a 911 call in the Park, **Captain Jeff Davis**, **EMT Erin Rhoades**, and **Engineer Joe Doherty** or their colleagues are at your service — usually within minutes. How many minutes depends on whether they are out on another emergency call. Their resources are stretched thinner than you might imagine for prosperous, upscale Marin. To cover all of Novato, including the Highway 101 corridor, only 19 fire personnel and one battalion chief are on duty at any given time. South of Highway 37, the number drops to four.



The Novato Fire District is an independent special district governed by a five-member elected board of directors, independent from the City of Novato. Each of the five stations in the Novato area has a 12-minute travel maximum.

Fire Station 5

On February 6, the MVEST Steering Committee visited Fire Station 5, located at 5 Bolling Drive just around

the corner from the Park. The station personnel and **Battalion Chief Gerald McCarthy** spent over an hour with us explaining their services, their challenges, and coverage.

Following are the highlights of our meeting.





Station 5 team, left to right: EMT Erin Rhoades, Captain Jeff Davis, and Engineer Joe Doherty.

#1 Step – Emergency Supplies

- The SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT step we can take is to store food, water, medicines, and clothing sufficient to sustain us for at least five days. If you have pets, you must provide food, water, and shelter for them as well. Checklists for emergency supplies can be found on the Get Ready Marin website: <http://readymarin.org/plan-prepare/>

You may also check out the MVEST binder in the clubhouse library or contact your MVEST block captain.

Priorities for Limited Resources

- In the event of a major fire, fire crews will concentrate their limited resources where they determine will make the greatest impact. A unit with pyrophilic plants growing up against a wooden deck is likely to be bypassed in favor of a unit that can be more easily saved.

Over 5,000 Emergency Calls/Year

- Each fire station in Novato always has one engineer and one paramedic on duty. Station 5 responds to more

than 5,000 emergency calls per year — over 100 per week. Station 5 personnel visit the Park virtually every day on calls.

Sustaining Efforts Community-wide

- The battalion chief and Station 5 team applaud our community-wide efforts to prepare for emergencies. Chief McCarthy stressed how important it is to sustain these efforts. They particularly appreciate the fact that over 60 community members are CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) members. While we are among the few Marin communities with this level of commitment, we must sustain our efforts because we cannot predict when a major event will occur. Notably, MVEST Steering Committee members **Bill Davis** was recently appointed to the Novato Fire Protection District Board of Directors and **Serena D’Arcy-Fisher** has joined the Marin County CERT Steering Committee.

Welcome, New Neighbors

MVEST would like to welcome the new Los Robles Mobile Home

Park managers **Kelly** and **Darrell Doheny**, who were the managers at the Napa Mobile Home Park during the 2014 Napa earthquake and attended the CERT course held here at MVMCC in January. They have first-hand experience with how susceptible mobile homes are to fire, and they also stress that securely strapped water heaters, earthquake bracing and tie-downs, and fire safety zones maintained around units substantially reduce the likelihood of runaway fires.

For questions, please contact the MVEST Steering Committee: **Serena D’Arcy-Fisher, Bill Davis, John Hansen, John Feld, or Alan Gump.** ■

Upcoming CERT classes:

Kentfield — March 19
 Mill Valley — April 2
<http://readymarin.org/calendar/>

Get Ready Novato

Tuesday, May 3
 All Saints Lutheran Church
 2 San Marin Drive
 To register — 415-897-4361

ART IN THE PARK



by **Suzie Lahr**

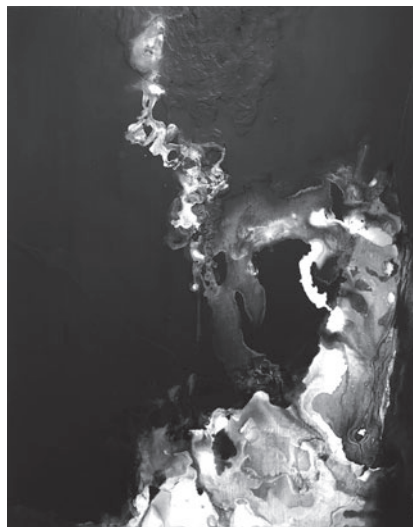
Our latest gallery exhibit at the MVMCC clubhouse has received rave reviews from our visitors. Please stop by the clubhouse to view all the talent and support the contributing resident artists. We would love to hear your comments, so please sign our guest book alongside the price list book.

These artists and others will be presenting our **4th Annual Art in the Park** on **Sunday, May 22** from **1 to 4 PM**. for all of you to meet and visit with artists of many talents, enjoy sumptuous refreshments, and listen to mellow jazz in the background while spending an afternoon with your neighbors and friends.

Call to MVMCC Resident Artists

All MVMCC resident artists are invited to join us for an informal artist get-together and meeting on **Tuesday, March 15** at **10 AM**. This is one of several meetings in the next few months to meet and talk with fellow artists about joining the Art in the Park event on Sunday, May 22. Please note: this year you will be allowed to sell your work onsite, with 20% of your sale proceeds donated to HOL for sponsoring this event. Learn more about this at our monthly meetings. The registration contract for participation in Art in the Park is now available at the clubhouse at the front desk.

If you have any questions or comments regarding the arts in the MVMCC community, please contact Suzie Lahr at suzielahr@aol.com or 415-884-9611. ■



Janet Bogardus was awarded 2nd Place in the *Layers: Artists of Marin MOCA Member Show* for her entry "Estuary 2".



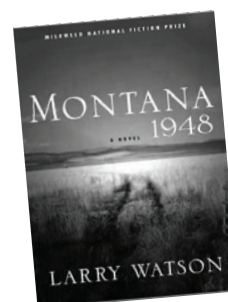
Notices



Community Dancing

Saturday, March 5

7:00-9:00 PM Free event!



The Marin Valley Book Club

will meet the fourth Wednesday of the month, **March 23** at **4 PM**, at Yvonne Devine's house, 15 View Ridge Drive, to discuss *Montana 1948* by Larry Watson. Contact Julia Matthews at 415-883-7823 with any questions.

Travels with Phil: The Art of

Cartoonist Phil Frank

February 27 – April 10, 2016

Marin MOCA

500 Palm Drive • Novato

Reception – Main Gallery:

Saturday, February 27, 5 – 7 PM

RESERVATION FORM FOR SHREDDING

RESERVATION DEADLINE: March 21 • 5:00 PM

BOXES DROP-OFF: March 29 • 8:00-10:00 AM

Name _____

of boxes _____ @ \$7 each box Total \$ _____

Check payable to HOL for \$ _____ must be included with form.

DEATH FORUM to Discuss Just-1-Hour

by Joan Nelson

MVMCC's

revitalized **Just-1-Hour** neighbor-to-neighbor program is gearing up and under way. The project is already helping relatively able-bodied volunteers to learn about unmet needs in the Park that they can help fulfill.

The **Sunday, March 6, 3 PM Death Forum** meeting will be a Fireside Room conversation (with refreshments). If everyone is on time, the conversation itself can be limited to just one hour.

The process has already begun. People are signing up to be good neighbors at various levels of ability and availability. Others are asking for neighborly assistance.

SO PLEASE FILL OUT a Just-1-Hour volunteer application found on the desk counter in the clubhouse. Place your completed form at the bottom of the stack of applications.

They say "It takes a village." So come and tap into this process that will deepen and enrich your life and the vitality of our village community.

Examples:

- Rides
- Phone calls
- Meals
- Laundry
- Plant care
- Letter writing
- Sewing/mending/ironing
- Help with meals
- Emotional support and coaching
- Shopping and errands
- Computer/office help
- Bookkeeping
- Handyman (or -woman)
- Light housekeeping
- Full housecleaning
- Trash takeout on Sunday nights
- Accompanying to appointments
- Visiting (with therapy dogs or cats, to read or chat ...)
- Spiritual/emotional guidance

If you are (temporarily or permanently) unable to do an important task and want help, we will try to find a match. But we need those sign-ups first!

For more information or if you have any questions, contact **Joan Nelson** figleafjoan@comcast.net 415-506-4166, 415-595-6221: cell. ■

There Goes the Neighborhood

by Karin Mortensen

I lived in a houseboat in Sausalito for 37 years. In the 32nd year of my residency, the termites arrived. My boat, on the shoreline on the southern end of the property, got the first hit. Soon one could see fumigation tents popping up along my dock, and by the next year the dock to my north was also showing fumigation tents. Termites have wings: they just showed up one day. There goes the neighborhood.

Rats and Mites

It may be common knowledge that most homes in MVMCC probably have, or have had, rat residents. The rats that showed up in my place, however, had MITES. There goes the neighborhood. I live on the southern end of the Park, bordering our open space.

Wicked ITCH

These practically invisible mites, though they are not contagious and carry no known diseases, BITE for a blood meal and leave behind a highly irritating protein in our circulatory system. These bites in their multitude can last for weeks, and they ITCH TO DISTRACTION.

Fear Not

Do not fear to visit a mite-infested home, inasmuch as the mites do not live on

humans: we are merely their fast-food restaurants. If a mite goes for a ride on your clothing, it may bite you into an itch or two but it hops off when done and heads home to the rat nest where it lives and then dies. They cannot reproduce without rat blood. Get rid of the rats and the mite population dies off.

But it can take months after the rats are gone to be free of the mites that hatch after their departure.

Unfortunately for me, I developed a hypersensitivity to the mite protein. The mites have been a source of overwhelming suffering for me for over four months now.

On the Move

Our neighborhood rats are moving into their winter quarters under our homes now. If one home on the south side of the Park has mites today, those mites will surely be visiting neighboring homes with rats.

Aside from a hole in my roof, being professionally cleared and protected from rats would be at the top of my list for spending money on my home.

Please, get a pest inspection and learn what it takes to keep your home rat-mite free. ■



Take a Hike

by Mike Holland

Sage advice to a medieval regent who knows not if he will see the dawn. But better advice to a Marin Valley resident might be: “Easy lies the path where the hiker treads the crown.” The crown referenced here directs us to one of the most popular and loved hiking/biking/running/dog-walking fire roads on the slopes of Mt. Tam, i.e. Crown Road.

Look on a map and you probably won’t find **Crown Road Fire Road**. That’s because its official name is **Southern Marin Line Fire Road**. It was built years ago by the Marin Municipal Water District to transport water from Bon Tempe Lake to south county towns. The actual

“Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown.”

24-inch-diameter transporting pipe is mainly under the road and extends from Ross to Mill Valley. If you know the topography of this area you can appreciate the engineering and construction complexity of the project. What’s great about large public works jobs is that they frequently provide wonderful outdoor activity spin-offs as side benefits. And that’s exactly what Crown Road offers us.

The fire road is a meandering, dead flat (honest!) 2.8-mile journey from Kent Woodlands to Mill Valley. Hence, it’s 5.6 miles round trip; shorter if you turn around earlier. The road has several trailheads along its path. Those ascending take you to the



– *Henry IV*, Shakespeare

Blithedale Ridge; those descending go into heavily wooded Baltimore Canyon. These are iconic Marin County hiking areas, especially so because they are steep and technical (rooted and narrow in spots). Save these for another outing. Your first visit to Crown Road should be devoted to a leisurely stroll with focus upon the great views of the regions below. If you forget water, don't despair. There is a refreshing, ice-cool fountain (partially built by the Tamalpa Runners) about halfway out.

Crown Road is about 30 minutes from Marin Valley. From 101 take Sir Francis Drake west. Turn left at College Ave. Turn right at Woodland Road (right after Woodlands

Market). Turn left at Evergreen. Go up the hill and turn left on Crown Road. The road dead-ends at the start of the fire road.

You ARE going to be hungry when you finish this hike. If you want coffee and great pastries, you have Rustic Bakery near the College of Marin. Or for a lesser known but equally wonderful treat, try Café Ross in Ross Common. They have a terrific outdoor patio that is peaceful and botanical. More hearty fare can be found at the incredibly popular Half Day Cafe or the Woodlands Cafe, both on College Avenue.

Tread the Crown! You won't be sorry. ■



White-Crowned Sparrow

by Bill Noble

Mornings this month, the Park is a musical jangle of red-winged blackbirds, the moans of mourning doves, and the clear, bright whistles, radiating from every bush, of our two kinds of “crowned” sparrows.

The bigger bird, coming into its spring colors this month, is the golden-crowned sparrow, with a black mask and a crown of old gold. Golden-crowns are the curse of spring gardeners: prepping for their trek to Alaska, they gobble emerging seedlings and nibble pea vines to skeletons.

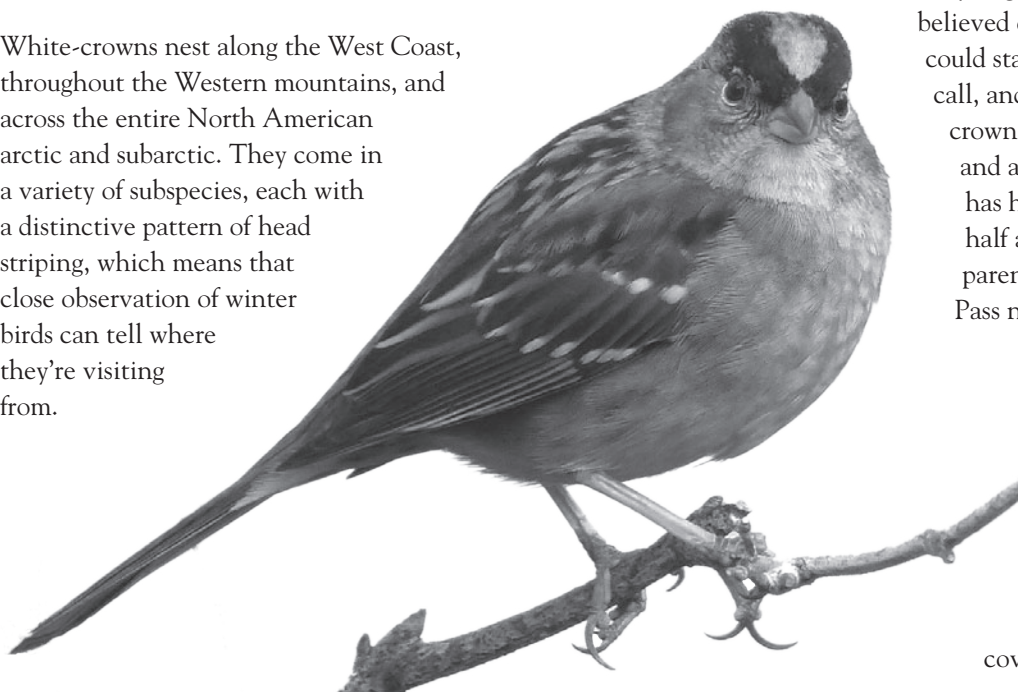
Nobody gets mad at white-crowned sparrows, though. Their spiffy black-and-white head stripes, bright pink or yellow bills, and cheery songs are disarming and endearing. Their springtime abundance is a delight, but we have the added treat of some of them staying with us to breed.

White-crowns nest along the West Coast, throughout the Western mountains, and across the entire North American arctic and subarctic. They come in a variety of subspecies, each with a distinctive pattern of head striping, which means that close observation of winter birds can tell where they're visiting from.

It turns out we've learned a lot from white-crowned sparrows — about how birdsong develops and about the intricate mix of genes and youthful learning that assemble into an adult's song.

But telling you that brings me to one of the most fascinating, brilliant human beings I've ever known: Luis Baptista of the California Academy of Sciences. He was born a Portuguese Catholic in Hong Kong to a family with centuries-old roots in Macau. Until his sudden death in his fifties, he was curator of ornithology at the Academy. Luis loved birdsong and opera almost equally, but his great contributions to science grew from his insights into the music of birds.

His specialty became the songs of white-crowned sparrows. In Luis's *New York Times* obituary, Jim Harris of the Academy said this: “Luis was the Henry Higgins of the bird world. He believed dialect was history. Luis could stand in the park, hear a call, and declare, ‘That white-crowned had a Canadian father and a Californian mother. It has half an Alberta accent and half a Monterey accent. The parents probably met at Tioga Pass near Yosemite.’”



One of the stories I love about Luis is that he could sit on the grass in his Sebastopol yard and imitate quail so flawlessly that he could gather the neighborhood covey around him.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY WILLIAM E. WOODCOCK

Opposite page: golden-crowned sparrow. Above: white-crowned sparrow.

Luis said this about what brought him to birds and their music: “In Hong Kong, the top floor of teahouses was reserved for bird lovers. You brought your caged birds and drank tea and enjoyed their songs. My father would take me and I loved it. Also, my brother and I would often go to the countryside near where we lived to watch the wild birds. So when I learned that there was such a thing as ornithology, I thought, ‘Good Lord, you can actually be paid to go out, watch birds, and study their songs.’”

















White-crowned sparrows, Luis and his students and collaborators discovered, come with a generalized built-in template of their species song, but their finished adult

song is constructed from the songs of adult males within their hearing when they are nestlings and fledglings between 10 and 50 days old. They learn a bit of the song, practice, learn some more, and keep practicing. It turns out that refining that basic song, improving its clarity and delivery, is a devoted, lifelong process — like becoming a guitar virtuoso — one that will determine a male sparrow’s success in attracting mates and in competing with other males for territory.

What’s in a tune?

It turns out, at least for the tunes of the white-crowned sparrow, a lot. ■

MARCH

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1-4 PM Mahjong  3-5 PM DEATH FORUM Just-1-Hour	6-8 AM Trash Pickup 9:30 AM Low-Impact Exercise 7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker 	5-6 PM Meditation ECHO DEADLINE	10 AM-2 PM Craft Group 11 AM-1 PM Whistlestop (call Roberta 415-883-0843) 7 PM PAC MEETING	9:15 AM QiGong <i>with Dove</i> 6:15-7 PM Silent Meditation 7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker 	4 PM Canasta  5-7 PM Pub Night	10:30-11:45 AM Pre-TaiChi-Jay COMMUNITY DANCE 7-9 PM
1-4 PM Mahjong  TURN CLOCKS AHEAD	6-8 AM Trash Pickup 9:30 AM Low-Impact Exercise 7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker 	10 AM ART IN THE PARK MEETING 5-6 PM Meditation	10 AM-2 PM Craft Group 11 AM Ladies' Bridge 11 AM-1 PM Whistlestop (call Roberta 415-883-0843) 7 PM HOL MEETING	9:15 AM QiGong <i>with Dove</i> 6:15-7 PM Silent Meditation 7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker 	4 PM Canasta  5-7 PM Pub Night	10:30-11:45 AM Pre-TaiChi-Jay ST. PATRICK'S DAY DINNER 5 PM Socializing 6 PM Dinner
1-4 PM Mahjong  FIRST DAY OF SPRING	6-8 AM Trash Pickup 9:30 AM Low-Impact Exercise 7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker 	5-6 PM Meditation	10 AM-2 PM Craft Group 11 AM-1 PM Whistlestop (call Roberta 415-883-0843) 4 PM BOOK CLUB	9:15 AM QiGong <i>with Dove</i> 6:15-7 PM Silent Meditation 7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker 	4 PM Canasta  5-7 PM Pub Night	10:30-11:45 AM Pre-TaiChi-Jay COMMUNITY DANCE 7-9 PM
1-4 PM Mahjong  EASTER SUNDAY	6-8 AM Trash Pickup 9:30 AM Low-Impact Exercise 7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker 	8-10 AM BOXES DROP-OFF FOR SHREDDING 5-6 PM Meditation	10 AM-2 PM Craft Group 11 AM-1 PM Whistlestop (call Roberta 415-883-0843) FULL MOON 5:28 PM 	9:15 AM QiGong <i>with Dove</i> 6:15-7 PM Silent Meditation 7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker 		

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