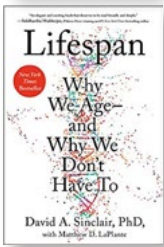


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ECHO

JANUARY 2020

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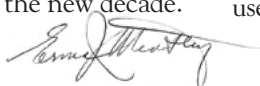
From the Editor

Echo and marinvalley.net

If you are reading this issue in full color, it means the publisher has their new color printer set up with the intent of issuing all their monthly publications in color—a cause for the lateness of the December issue, but when properly working, a definite plus for future months. Having a printed *Echo* in color means that a digital color version no longer needs to be emailed directly. If you would like an early peek before the printed *Echo* arrives, it will be available on our website marinvalley.net sooner than the printed version. Please note that mvmcc.com no longer exists. The software was discontinued, preventing having a link from the old site to the new one.

Marin Valley YouTube Channel

Some of the Biography Night talks, Marshall Krause's Supreme Court talk, Chair Yoga, as well as future filmed or recorded events will also be available on our website home page with a link to our Marin Valley YouTube channel. These videos can also be accessed at <http://bit.ly/2LWQeNQ> or directly from YouTube—search for “Marin Valley”. A big thank you to **David Tetta** for getting that set up and also to **Anila Manning** and **David** for all the help, suggestions, and updating of the website. We are still curious about any suggestions you have for the website and, of course, would appreciate any help keeping it current. “Under construction” pages still need to be populated. Maybe next year. Welcome to the new decade.



Mar Val 2020 Schedule*

Saturdays unless indicated

- January 18 *Scottish Night*
 - February 22 *Mardi Gras*
 - March 14 *St. Patrick's Dinner*
 - April 18 *Volunteer Appreciation*
 - May 1 (Friday) *Cinco de Mayo Pub*
 - May 25 (Monday) *Memorial Day*
 - June 13 *Jazz Brunch*
 - July 4 (Thursday) *BBQ—July 4th*
 - July 24 (Friday) *Pasta Night Pub*
 - August 15 *Luau*
 - September 7 (Monday) *Labor Day BBQ*
 - September 25 (Friday) *Oktoberfest Pub*
 - October 31 *Black Cat Fundraiser/Dinner*
 - November 21 *Thanksgiving*
 - December 19 *Holiday Party*
 - December 31 (Tuesday) *New Year's Eve*
- * also listed on our website marinvalley.net under Mar Val / Monthly Dinners

Letter to the Editor

Outreach

As many residents might be aware, Marin Valley has two humanitarian funds. One is financed by the City of Novato and is set up in our general budget for the assistance of Park residents who find themselves in financial difficulties—generally for short-term issues such as bill paying during sickness or temporary unemployment—and is administered confidentially under the sole discretion of Matt, our general manager.

The other humanitarian fund is made up of donations, typically by residents—of note, our late friend and Realtor, Marv Weissensee, who would contribute a portion of his commission from each home he sold in the Park. This is one reason why Marv received so many recommendations as a good Realtor. This fund is used at the discretion of both Matt and the PAC committee and is made up of money that Marv, and some others, had contributed. Typically, these monies are used to help people who cannot afford to get

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

THE ECHO JANUARY 2020

MARIN VALLEY MOBILE COUNTRY CLUB

100 MARIN VALLEY DRIVE
NOVATO, CA 94949
415-883-5911 / 415-883-1971 FAX
www.marinvalley.net

EDITOR/DESIGNER Erma Wheatley
COPY EDITOR Mary Barbosa

PROOFREADING
Mary Barbosa, Carol-Joy Harris, Anila Manning

A PUBLICATION OF MHB Group Region 8
www.mobilehomeboard.com

MARIN VALLEY

GENERAL MANAGER Matt Greenberg
gm.mvmcc@gmail.com

PAC BOARD

PRESIDENT Jay Shelfer 415-883-6945
VICE PRESIDENT John Hansen 415-847-7155
SECRETARY Carol-Joy Harris 415-883-2824
TREASURER Larry Cohen 415-883-7786
AT LARGE Stephen Plocher 415-302-9043

STANDING COMMITTEES

FINANCE Stephen Plocher
MV PROJECT PLANNING John Hansen, John Shelfer
MVEST John Hansen, Bill Davis, John Feld,
Carol-Joy Harris, Kevin Mulvany,
Stephen Plocher, Erma Wheatley

HOL BOARD

PRESIDENT Janie Crocker 281-414-3984
1ST VICE PRESIDENT Ed Collins 415-377-7696
2ND VICE PRESIDENT Yvonne Devine 415-747-7617
SECRETARY Kamala Allen 415-306-6865
TREASURER Tara Plocher 415-302-5992

MAR VAL BOARD

PRESIDENT Kathleen Dargie 415-884-2969
1ST VICE PRESIDENT Dan Sebastian 415-382-7738
2ND VICE PRESIDENT Pat Thurston 415-884-0740
SECRETARY Ducki Mathias 415-842-7185
TREASURER Sandee Duncan 415-883-3034
DIRECTOR/BAR MANAGER Fred Dargie 884-2969
DIRECTOR/HOSPITALITY Larry Moore 883-0486
DIRECTOR/RESERVATIONS Carolyn Corry 370-6403
DIRECTOR EMERITUS Dee Schneider

ECHO DEADLINE

Articles are due the 8th of the month or
sooner for the following month's issue.

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*).

MVMCC Management Update

PAC Letter to Residents

Happy New Year MVMCC, 2020!

Winter weather is here.

- Clean out rain gutters to provide clear drainage for your roof and downspouts.
- Have extra flashlight batteries in that kitchen drawer you can easily get to.
- Store your garden umbrellas and secure any lightweight furniture and yard items that can be blown away or damaged by wind or rain.
- Several bottles of clean drinking water are good to have on hand.
- Register for emergency alerts at www.alertmarin.org.
- If the power is out, battery-operated radios are handy for weather updates. (See pages 4-5)
- Stocked food and up-to-date meds if you need them are also good to have handy.
- Sandbags are free from the Novato Corporation Yard (550 Davidson Avenue), although you need to fill them yourself.
- Please remain vigilant regarding strangers or people whom you do not recognize in the Park. The unattended packages delivered to your front porch are attractive to those who may want to steal them.
- While you are walking your dog or just exercising at dusk or after dark, please wear reflective clothing so drivers are sure to see you.
- Pool heater is off for the winter, but the spa is 103°.
- 15 MPH speed limit signs are in process of installation, so be aware of new police patrols that will be ticketing speeding vehicles.

Thank you,



Matt Greenberg

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

Greetings from the PAC (Park Acquisition Corp.) Board.

Finances: Our finances are in order. The debt service coverage, year to date, on the bank loan that refinances the original bond issuance for the purchase of MVMCC is 2.40. This was, at the the end of October 2019, well above the required 2.0. Our cash, plus medium- and long-term reserves, hovers at nearly 5½ million dollars.

Speeding: The positioning of the new 15-mph speed limit signs is nearly finished. Its completion will signal the Novato police to begin enforcing traffic rules. Should you value your privilege of operating a vehicle in California, please observe the rules.

Fire: The fire season is over. Management has been cleaning out the gutters along the streets preparing for more rain; let them know of anyplace that requires special attention. Please heed MVEST's recommendations for you and your neighbors' safety.

City Council: The designated PAC Board members met with the city staff on December 9. For the report on the outcome, join us at the next Board meeting.

Ongoing activities concerning PAC's MVEST, your HOL, and MAR VAL are reported on elsewhere in the *Echo*. I urge you to investigate and participate in these activities.

The Board is enriched by residents' participation in our monthly meeting. We encourage your participation with your observations and suggestions on how we can better serve the needs of our community.

Please give us the items you would like to see the PAC Board discuss up to 72 hours before the meeting, at which time we post the agenda. Instead of the first Wednesday, the next board meeting will be **Tuesday, January 7, 2020**.

In service,



J Shelfer

Jay Shelfer
PAC PRESIDENT
jjshelfer@yahoo.com

their weeds pulled, have their home power-washed, and other one-time costs. Marv wanted no say in how this money was spent. Sadly, Marv died not so long ago, and now no one is adding to this account. At a recent get-together, some friends and I started to talk about how this valuable resource might soon cease to exist as the money runs out.

We hypothesized that if only there were a way to do so, some residents would probably gladly contribute to this cash reserve. So we have arranged, with the assistance of Larry Cohen (PAC treasurer) and Matt to receive checks as donations. These donations can be made monthly, annually, or occasionally in any amount. When discussing this we thought that it would likely be feasible for some to contribute a check for \$5 or \$10 a month with our rent checks, and if many residents were to do this it would add considerably into the fund. Some people in the Park could afford more than this, and donations can be made over as short or long a time frame as one wishes. No amount is too small or too large. This money would go toward making the Park more attractive and welcoming and at the same time make living here more gratifying for those on limited budgets who just can't afford the maintenance that some of our homes require. Imagine, for example, if all of our roofs were painted white to save on electric and heating bills.

If you think this is an idea you could support and would like to contribute to this fund, please make a separate check payable to PAC with "Humanitarian Fund" written in the memo section of the check. You can enclose these with your rent checks (please do not include extra amounts in your rent checks) or at any other time; just give them to Matt or place them in the letter slot in the office door.

The fund administrators will not publicly announce the names of donors, and there is absolutely no pressure to give. But if you feel you can do so, all involved will be very grateful.

Respectfully,
John Feld



Emergency Alerts

by JOHN HANSEN

Alert Marin

Currently, ALERT MARIN is the only system available to us for receiving local emergency alerts issued by the Marin County Office of Emergency Services. Nixle, Nextdoor, and other social media are great for information and updates, but if there is something we must *do*, ALERT MARIN is the only technology for alerting us. Marin County officials have spent years with its development, and it is basically an excellent system. Its only flaw is its dependence upon a totally undependable communications infrastructure—cellular, landline, and internet. Within a short time during an electrical power interruption, life-saving alert messages cannot reach us; during our last PG&E-sponsored public safety power shutoff (PSPS), some Marin residents received their emergency alert only after the communications infrastructure was restored—several days after the alert was issued. That's a big problem begging a big fix, but at least a significant improvement is underway.

SAME (Specific Area Message Encoding) Radios

NOAA Weather Radio, operated by the National Weather Service, has been

around for decades, and a special alerting service introduced a few years ago has greatly enhanced this weather radio service. It's called SAME (specific area message encoding). SAME-enabled radios can be programmed to deliver emergency alerts and messages for advisories, watches, and warnings for dozens of different kinds of emergencies. You can choose just the ones to which you want to be alerted to for up to 25 areas, although most of us are interested in just our local situation.

Marin County officials have been working with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to tap into SAME technology for broadcasting Alert Marin messages, and have very recently struck an agreement with NOAA. Details of this breakthrough deal have yet to emerge but are sure to do so before the next fire season. The benefit to this partnership is that our local weather station transmitter (NOAA Channel 2) is located very close by on Big Rock Ridge, between Ignacio Valley and Lucas Valley. It has its own backup power to keep it running indefinitely and independently of power interruptions, and, best of all, our location in Marin Valley gets excellent reception.

Many choices exist for emergency alert weather radios, but only a handful are SAME enabled. Two of the most popular configurations include portable, battery-powered models with solar backup, and plug-in models with battery backup. Prices start at about \$20, but plan on spending \$30–\$50 for the better ones.



Qualities to look for:

- SAME programmable capability
- Long battery life or battery +, built-in solar, multiple power options
- Simplicity—some come with many bells and whistles, most of which either you don’t need or are too wimpy to be useful

The Eton NFRX5 is a portable model featuring a good-sized rechargeable battery with hand-crank, solar, and external power supply charging options to get you through a PSPS. These and other SAME-enabled models are available on Amazon and other online retailers and at some local stores, so you can shop around.

Here are a couple of examples of popular models:

The **Midland WR-120** is a compact desktop model. It holds backup batteries that will last just a few hours in a power outage. It would be a good choice if you have backup power such as a generator. A nice feature of this model is that you can attach an external audio or strobe alarm for the hearing impaired, but it requires backup power.



AR (Atmospheric River) Storms

You don’t have to wait till fire season to benefit from using a SAME-enabled weather radio. Winter weather is upon us, and numerous alerts have already been issued by the National Weather Service—and with the increasing frequency of “Atmospheric River” (AR) storms, many more alerts will likely be issued this winter.

In fact, AR storms have increased so much in both frequency and strength due to global warming that meteorologists at Scripps Institute have created a scale to describe them, much like the familiar scales for hurricanes and tornados:

Atmospheric River Scale

Category 1—Weak

beneficial and not hazardous

Category 2—Moderate

more beneficial than hazardous

Category 3—Strong

equally beneficial and hazardous (e.g. may be beneficial to fill reservoirs and harmful to recent fire scars)

Category 4—Extreme

more hazardous than beneficial

Category 5—Exceptional

mostly hazardous

We will see these categories used much more frequently in future weather reports. SAME-enabled weather radios are quickly becoming an essential for the well-stocked year-round emergency cache. ■

On the Road

You’re on
The road

You’ve been
Makin’

Your entire
Life

© Tom Bowlin 2019

Message from Mar Val

Dear Friends,

As we salute the close of 2019, the Mar Val Board wishes to acknowledge the myriad volunteers whose support was so vital in ensuring the success of our events. Further, we also wish to thank you, the residents who continue to support Friday night Pub and our monthly dinners.

Turning to the new year, we will begin 2020 with the Scottish Dinner on Saturday, January 18. For those of you who have attended this event in the past, you will be aware that the ballroom is filled with partygoers resplendent in their most colorful plaids and tartans. We cordially invite you to begin the year by joining in this Celtic celebration.

The board is excited about plans for the coming year and hope you and yours will have a very happy and healthy 2020.

With warmest regards,



Kathleen Dargie

Kathleen Dargie
MAR VAL PRESIDENT
kfdargie@aol.com



MAR VAL SCOTTISH NIGHT

January 18, 2020 ■ 5 PM Cocktails ■ 6 PM Dinner

M e n u

Salmon or Red Pepper Lentil Bake

Garlic Mashed Potatoes

Green Vegetables

Salad

Dessert

\$15

Reservation deadline is January 15 at 5 pm or when 140 reservations have been received.

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

SCOTTISH NIGHT RESERVATION FORM

Please circle entrée choice

RESIDENT _____

Salmon Red Pepper Lentil Bake

RESIDENT _____

Salmon Red Pepper Lentil Bake

GUEST _____

Salmon Red Pepper Lentil Bake

GUEST _____

Salmon Red Pepper Lentil Bake

Residents attending ___ at \$15/each. Check for \$_____ is enclosed. (NO CASH, please)

Guests attending ___ at \$15/each. Checks payable to Mar Val. Questions, call Carolyn Corry at 415-370-6403.

Reservation deadline is **January 15 at 5 pm** or when 140 reservations have been received.

Home Owners League Message



Computer Committee: Ed Collins will be in charge of a new HOL committee, "Computers."

Ladies' Locker Room: Waiting for shower anteroom benches.

Village Holiday Craft and Collectibles Fair: A great and festive time was had by all. Special thanks to **Tara Plocher** for arranging all the vendors and getting them set up, to **Ed Collins** and **Terri Fuchs** for getting the food, to **Kamala Allen** for advertising, and to **Yvonne Devine** for the wonderful decorations. Thanks to the "Girls' Night Out" trio (**Carol-Joy Harris**, **Maggie Siegfried**, and **Mary Keydash**) for the caroling. And to our horde of volunteers who made the event possible. Thanks to **Janet Bogardus**, **Cherrie Dougherty**, **John Feld**, **Jessa Gabriel**, **Ann Gronvold**, **Meg Jordan**, **DeeDee Kausen**, **Dianne Romaine**, **Lorna Sass**, and

Janet Shouldis. Thanks also to those who contributed to the bake sale. Did you know that 10 of our talented residents had tables at the fair?

Are You Ready to Play with Clay?

Join **Michael Karasik**, a Marin Valley resident and experienced potter for two days of fun with clay. The workshop dates are Wednesday, January 15 and Wednesday, January 29 at 10 am–noon in the ballroom. This is a free workshop for people who have no experience with clay. We will be hand building, not working on a ceramics wheel. The class is limited in size to 12 students, and the sign-up sheet will go on the front desk in the clubhouse on January 6. Any questions, contact **Marlene Montalvo** at marlene24@comcast.net.

Activities and Interest Survey:

Be looking in your tubes for the 2020 Activities and Interest Survey. Every

year we ask for your input in planning events for the upcoming year. Just fill it out and return it to the cubbyhole next to the HOL bulletin board by the main desk.

Two suggestions have already been offered: a **bulk shredding event**, which HOL could possibly arrange if there is enough interest, and a **Medical Resources Binder** (similar to the Handyman/Contractor Binder), in which people could review their experiences with medical professionals. There will be a space on the survey for your input.

NOTE: The next HOL meeting is **Wednesday, January 15, 2020 at 6 pm** in the Fireside Room. Please join us.

Janie Klimes-Crocker



Janie Klimes-Crocker
HOL PRESIDENT
janieklimes1948@gmail.com
281-414-3984 cell



Community Garden

HOL recently provided monies to **Susan McMudie** and me to decorate the corner garden on Panorama at the cement path sidewalk.

As you can see in the photo, we need more rocks around the

perimeter. If you have any good-sized rocks, please feel free to outline the garden with them.

If you happen to have more succulents or cacti, bring them to my home (123 Sunrise Lane, 415-517-8353), and I will transplant them into this community garden.

Thank you, HOL, for making our garden pretty, and special thanks to **Tom Nadolski** for watering and helping the **McMudies** with the gardening. Many people have contributed the succulents and cacti, and thank you as well.

Warmly, **Kathryn McMudie**

Biography Night



Linda Steenman

Carole Rosvold

January 9 • 6:30 pm

On Thursday, January 9 join **Linda Steenman** and **Carole Rosvold** in the Fireside Room from 6:30 to 8 pm.

To speak about **YOUR** life for 20 minutes to an appreciative audience, contact **Kim Holscher**, kimholscher51@gmail.com



HOL COMMUNITY PRESENTATIONS

1st and 3rd Thursdays • Clubhouse • 6 pm • Please, no food or drink • Feel free to bring a chair

FILM
NIGHT

All the President's Men

Drama, Romance (1976) 2 hrs 18 min

Thursday • January 2 • 6 pm

Director Alan J. Pakula **Starring** Dustin Hoffman, Robert Redford

Oscars Best— Supporting Actor; Writing; Art Direction; Set Decoration; Sound

Oscar Nominations Best— Picture; Director; Supporting Actress; Film Editing

17 Wins, 21 Nominations

The *Washington Post* reporters Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein uncover details of the Watergate scandal that leads to President Richard Nixon's resignation.



Inception

Action, Adventure, Sci-Fi (2010) 2 hrs 28 min

Thursday • January 16 • 6 pm

Writer Christopher Nolan **Starring** Leonardo DeCaprio, Joseph Gordon Levitt,

Ellen Page **Oscars** Best— Picture; Writing, Best Achievement in— Cinematography;

Sound Mixing; Sound Editing; and Visual Effects **Oscar Nominations** Best

Achievement in— Music for Motion Picture; Original Score; and Art Direction.

156 Wins, 208 Nominations

A thief who steals corporate secrets through dream-sharing technology is given the inverse task of planting an idea into the mind of a C.E.O. ■



Buy Nothing

by DAVID TETTA

Have you ever thought about becoming a member of a gift economy? Such economies have a rich tradition—from the Moka culture in Papua New Guinea, to Native American potlatches, to Burning Man.

One organization has taken on this concept on and grown it across this country and in other countries around the world. It is called the **Buy Nothing Project**, and there is some interest in the Park, including among HOL members, to start a Buy Nothing group here.

The website for the organization is: <https://buynothingproject.org/>.

The way the group works is that once you sign up, you can list something you want to donate that is then seen by other members who have signed

up; people who are interested in that item then contact you via Facebook Messenger, and you can decide who among those people you want to give the item to. It is also a great way to find items you need that other people no longer do. The types of items range from small furniture to clothing, household cleaners and paint, and sometimes food. Occasionally services are also offered or requested, a bit like the Just One Hour program here in the Park. All exchanges are free; no sales are allowed as part of the group.

Groups are established by neighborhoods of varying size, and strict geographic controls govern who can join a group. Potential members must answer a series of questions, which include their street intersection, and if that does not fall within the geographic area that defines the

neighborhood for the group, they are not allowed to join. Each group has an administrator who is responsible for ensuring that only members of the community are able to join the group, and also for managing discussions.

We'd like to know if you would want something like this created for our community, with the geographic boundaries of the Park being the limit for the group. Do you think it is something you would participate in? Would you like to have an active role in seeing it established? Conversely, do you have any concerns about it being established here?

Please email any thoughts or comments to: marinvalley.net@gmail.com. Use "Buy Nothing Project" in the subject line. Thanks in advance for any feedback you can give us! ■

Being a Good Neighbor

by VICKI WADDELL

On November 16, many of us met to share our experiences about the recent PG&E power outage. We covered a lot of ground, but one subject that caught my attention was the Buddy Program. I thought it might be a good time to get an update from its coordinator, my friend, **Ray Schneider**.

Ray said it's important to keep track of your buddies and your friends, but the Buddy Program is more of a one-on-one program to look out for one another. Being a good neighbor means looking out for more than just a single neighbor. Buddies, like good neighbors, are a phone call away, but a buddy may not be within eyesight of your home.

Of course, we need more buddies, but as Ray said: "The PG&E outage made it plain how critical it is for all neighbors to look out for one another. Thankfully, the clubhouse was available, which was a big help to a lot of residents. Even so, neighbors still need to look after each other every day since unwelcome circumstances can befall any of us even when PG&E has not shut off the power."

Ray's comments led me to ask how we can pursue being a good neighbor. Here's what he had to say:

Who Should We Consider a Neighbor?

Neighbors looking after each other goes beyond the Buddy Program. Neighbors are all those homes you can see when you stand on your front porch. They can be next door, in a cul-de-sac, across the street, or even up and down the street.

How Do We Become a Good Neighbor?

Being a good neighbor is especially important if a neighbor lives alone, is housebound, does not have relatives who live close by, or is unable to call for help. Know your neighbor's daily routine. Some may want to share house keys which means you and your neighbor have given mutual permission to enter one another's homes. Other neighbors may want you to keep a watchful eye when they are away on vacation.

How Do We Determine When Something Is Not Right with a Neighbor?

Keep an eye out for anything that doesn't seem right, such as: mail overflowing from the mailbox, newspapers not being picked up, the car not being driven, a dog barking

incessantly, or lights on at all hours of the night when you know your neighbor generally goes to bed early.

What Steps Do We Take if We Find Something Out of Order with a Neighbor?

First, call them to find out if all is OK. If there is no response, knock on their door and loudly call their name—pound the door if need be. If you still don't get an answer and you don't have a key, call 911 (from a cell phone: 1-415-472-0911) as well as the Park office: 1-415-883-5911. If you do have a key, enter their home, calling out their name, to see what has happened. What you see could very well necessitate a call for assistance. Remember, do not move anyone who is prone on the floor as you might injure them further. Offering a pillow and blanket until help arrives is generally OK.

Ray's Final Comment:

Being a good neighbor can also mean helping with a small task for someone who for one reason or another is unable to do something themselves. This always brings joy to the neighbor in need and usually brings as much or more joy to the neighbor who provides the helping hand. ■

AARP Tax-Aide Coming to Marin Valley

Each year many people from Marin Valley go to North Marin Community Services or to the Margaret Todd Senior Center to have their taxes prepared and submitted by AARP Tax-Aide Services volunteers. Tax-Aide is a free, one-on-one, confidential income tax preparation service for low- and middle-

income taxpayers who file basic income tax forms. This year AARP Tax-Aide is bringing its service here on Wednesday, February 26. For those unfamiliar with our services, more details will be in the February *Echo*, or contact **Anita Flantz** (aflantz50@comcast.net). Thank you, HOL. ■

Mary Carman Barbosa

by LORNA SASS

Mary was born in San Francisco and has pleasant memories of her early childhood in the Sierra foothills in Placerville—where her father held his first position out of law school—of playing with her three siblings, climbing oak trees, and attending a two-room schoolhouse where her first-grade teacher was named, prophetically, Mrs. Brazill. Her family settled in Corte Madera when she was nine.

An early love of learning Spanish led to a summer of studying in Guadalajara and another administering vaccinations in Ecuador during high school, and ultimately to a focus on Latin American studies at UC Santa Cruz. This passion dramatically changed the course of her life.

The year was 1978, and Mary found herself on an airplane headed for São Paulo, Brazil, where she would spend her junior year as an exchange student, *meanwhile*, she said, *undoing my years of progress in Spanish while adopting Portuguese*. There she met the man who would become her husband of thirty years and the father of her two sons.

After graduating and spending an unenamored period working for Brazilian and Portuguese banks—first in Washington, DC, then in San Francisco—Mary earned a Certificate in Publishing through UC Berkeley’s extension program. She quickly landed a job with Jossey-Bass Publishers in San Francisco, where she worked for five years, the final four as production manager of the journals department. She turned to freelancing after the birth of her first child, and in 1999, now with two children in tow, ages two and nine, her family relocated to the outskirts of Natal



in the Northeast of Brazil, beginning two decades of dividing her time between Brazil and Marin that still continues.

Another time Mary decided to take the road less traveled was when she became dissatisfied with the education her youngest son was receiving in Brazil. Knowing that Kaio would be exposed to more creative schooling at an intentional community she hopped on a plane with him to Auroville, in the Pondicherry region of India, and lived in a hut in this community for four-plus months in 2010 while he attended a semester of middle school among international classmates and she continued her freelancing; they returned the next year for a repeat performance. *I felt that I had been in ‘training’ for India for years by living in tropical Brazil*, she told me. *My husband José needed to remain in Brazil to tend to his cashew-roasting business, but he joined us later that first year, and the three of us traveled widely in the north of India. Living in Auroville was a growing experience for all of us*, she reminisced.

Mary’s career as a freelance copy editor has been ideally suited to her peripatetic

lifestyle since it enables her to work from anywhere. Her main employer over the years has been Stanford University Press, for whom she edits books related to Latin America. *When I’m working on a book, I become single-minded and deeply focused*, she told me. *I barely leave the house for days at a time*.

When Mary returned to the States after twelve years abroad, in 2012, she and Kaio joined forces with her father, Lynn, in San Rafael for three years, until Lynn bought a home on Marin Valley Drive where Mary has continued living since he died at age 90 in 2017.

Mary said she will be leaving for the warm breezes once again in late January and is excited about her family’s plan to reunite, for the first time in a decade, in Brazil.

When I asked Mary about her current passions, she answered without hesitation: the environment. *I am a hyperrecycler*, she said. *I don’t buy anything new if I can help it, and I save, reuse, and recycle everything. Recently I took two years’ worth of bottle caps to Subaru for their recycling program. I throw very little away.* A vegetarian for 15 years, Mary is also one of Marin Valley’s “ambassadors” for the Rollin’ Root farmers market that delivers produce to the Park every Thursday.

I was very impressed with her dedication to recycling and requested a brief tour of her kitchen, where I saw storage for cartons and plastic bags and for food waste headed for the green bin. The small paper garbage bag was practically empty.

The ideal is to have no garbage at all, she said, *which will only truly have an impact if the whole world joins in*. It was clear to me that she walks her talk. ■

Scientists Propose Living to 150 Years Old Is Not Far-fetched Anymore

by MEG JORDAN

Living to 150 — the mere idea of it struck me as not only impossible but undesirable.

Why on earth would I want to live past 100 if the next 50 years were filled with disability and dementia? But the idea has tremendous appeal to David Sinclair, PhD, longevity researcher at Harvard and author of *Lifespan: Why We Age and Why We Don't Have To*. When I discovered that many of my doctor and nurse friends were reading Sinclair's bold vision of the future, I decided I had to see how this latest longevity book compared to the current rash of antiaging ideas pitched today.

It was the endorsements that first grabbed my attention. Three pages of names—from Dean Ornish to Mark Hyman to Dale Bredesen—extolling Sinclair's treatise as the last health book you'll ever have to read, with comments like “*stepping on the moon*,” “a tour de force,” “the most important message of our time.” Wow. I was under the impression that a gentler, kinder zeitgeist had entered the cultural conversation with expert critiques of overmedicalization and appeals for comfort care over end-of-life heroics. What's this renewed interest in living so long?

Aging has never been popular in the U.S. We seem culture-bound to buy any product or buy into any trend that promises to halt our telomeres from fraying or keep our gut microbiome from raising hell.

From obsessive paleo diets to centenarians living in Blue Zones, I've been reporting on the latest breakthroughs on the aging front for several decades. Remember Aubrey de Grey? The longevity researcher with the Rip van Winkle beard? He announced 20 years ago that his rejuvenation alternative would make him live as long as Methuselah. Then when scientists discovered that free radicals damage DNA, inventor Ray Kurzweil started swallowing about 120 antioxidant supplements a day, giving rise to legions of tech-savvy biohackers.

Now, according to Sinclair, those theories of why we age prematurely are outdated. Antioxidants do indeed scavenge those pesky free radicals that damage chromosomes, but now it appears that free radicals also do some good. Basic science has moved forward.

A New Theory of Aging

Sinclair's new “theory of everything” is an information theory underlying the entire theme of *Lifespan*—that *aging is a disease*. The book, written with Matt LaPlante, gives credit to over 60 international scientists who are each contributing a part of that information puzzle. Sinclair calls this collection of findings and extrapolated hypotheses the 9 Hallmarks of Aging (see sidebar).

Now, with groundbreaking but complex research findings at the nano level, it's harder for the average health-conscious consumer to keep up. With

What Actually Makes Us Age?

Here are the 9 factors (the 9 Hallmarks of Aging) that when combined, make us “age”

1. Telomere attrition
2. Mitochondrial dysfunction
3. Stem cell exhaustion
4. Altered intracellular communication and production of inflammatory molecules
5. Loss of proteostasis (protein maintenance)
6. Senescent cell accumulation (cells that don't fully die off, wander around where they shouldn't, causing problems)
7. Deregulated nutrient sensing (decreased ability to monitor nutrients like sugar, lipids, amino acids)
8. Alterations to the epigenome (chemical compounds and proteins that can attach to DNA and direct such actions as turning genes on or off, controlling the production of proteins in particular cells)
9. Genetic instability (genetic mutations that interfere with repairing DNA, i.e., BRCA1 and BRCA2)

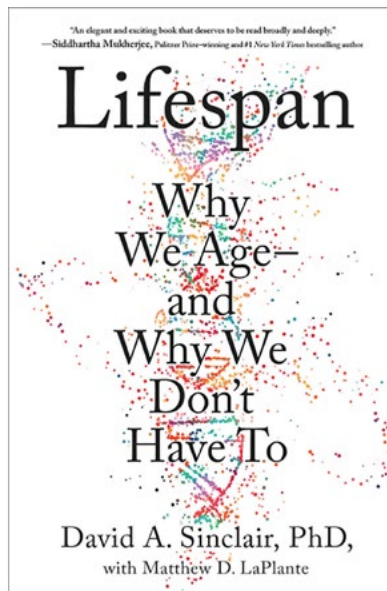
instantaneous genome mapping and amazing CRISPR technology allowing scientists to replace one gene at a time, scientists can venture deeper into cellular mysteries. Researchers can monitor several new pathways of aging, such as the mTOR pathway, which regulates how cells can be dormant (quiescence), or die off (senescence), or reactivate as stem cells. Scientists just discovered a sort of “aging dance” of DNA loops, known as TADs (topologically associating domains). They have figured out how to remove troubling, cancer-inducing methyl groups from chromosomes (hence the expression at Functional Medicine meetings, “If you’re a poor methylator, you might be a cancer maker”). Very recently, they are able to manipulate certain enzymes to reprogram the way our cells respond with characteristic youthful markers instead of typical aging.

Have I Lost You Yet?

This is what it’s like plowing through Sinclair’s book—truckloads of scientific jargon and biochemistry. Finally, there was one chapter that had me hooked. One of Sinclair’s post-docs had a major breakthrough in longevity research when he crushed a mouse’s optic nerve, then injected three of the four enzymes known as Yamanaka factors into a virus, then injected the virus into the mouse and witnessed, over time, the nerve growing back, restoring sight. Downright miraculous, hailed Sinclair’s team. (We owe a lot to lab mice.)

Optic nerves don’t just regenerate, but Sinclair’s lab managed to demonstrate that they can. Glaucoma and vision loss are serious conditions of aging eyeballs. Wading through the compilation of biochemistry in this book made me realize why it garnered the over-the-top endorsements.

Still, we want the bottom line and ask:



Ok, but what can I do now?

Sinclair is careful not to make recommendations in his book, but he talks about putting his elderly father on the same personal regimen with good results, namely: a plant-based diet, no desserts, exercise, one gram of NMN (nicotinamide mononucleotide), one gram of metformin, and assorted other supplements. While anecdotal tales don’t make for good science, Sinclair hopes to conduct a first human clinical trial within a few years, not on extending lifespan, but on glaucoma.

Activating Your Longevity Pathways

Science has taken great strides into understanding new pathways of aging. Perhaps the most pertinent finding is that mice and humans (and probably other mammals) have built-in longevity pathways that can be activated with either a molecule called NMN or one called NR (nicotinamide riboside).

Metformin, a prescription-only pharmaceutical drug prescribed for diabetes, also seems to favorably impact the built-in longevity pathways. Doctors have known for some time

that patients on metformin don’t seem to get Alzheimer’s or certain cancer or heart diseases at the same rate as others their age.

What Makes Good Science?

The longevity mystery has just become more complex, and the jury is still out as to whether this new cluster of information is actually pertinent in extending life. In fact, David Brenner, PhD, the scientist who discovered NR, told me, “Sinclair is a great storyteller, but his hypothesis is not testable. He doesn’t have a falsifiable hypothesis.”

Science makes progress by working with falsifiable hypotheses—these are statements that have the capacity to be proven wrong, an essential feature of the scientific method. For example, the statement: Take these supplements and your life will be longer. So does that mean that the opposite is true? Not taking these supplements will shorten your life? Uh, no, you can’t prove that, so you can’t call it good science.

But that hasn’t stopped Sinclair or dozens of others excited about research on sirtuin, the family of proteins that regulate cellular health. There are seven types of sirtuins, and at least four are known metabolic regulators that control gene expression. Sirtuins are to this decade what antioxidants were to the ’90s—the latest darling in the quest for causal factors of aging.

Brenner discloses that he has a vested interest in the patented substance, nicotinamide riboside, commonly called NR. Both NR and the molecule that Sinclair ingests, NMN, are precursors to a fundamentally important molecule, nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide (abbreviated, in its oxidized form, NAD+), which is in every cell of your body but starts to decline at about age 40 or

50, depending on how deleterious your lifestyle is (i.e., sun exposure, chemo/radio-therapy damage, poor diet, sedentary habits).

Brenner has other problems with Sinclair's ideas. Promoting wide-scale use of metformin does not strike him as sound. "If people are looking to age better, we know that high levels of physical activity, mental and social engagement are positively associated with wellness. We have recently learned that metformin blunts improvements in physical fitness due to exercise. My reading of the literature says that healthy people should not take metformin."

Brenner also warns that "we don't know what's in some of the NMN capsules going around. We know for a fact there's a company with an NAD-boosting product that adds caffeine, nicotinamide, and vitamin C, and perhaps unknown contaminants. The caffeine alone might account for why people report feeling energized." Others contain ingredients that may boost cholesterol levels. "The only supplements people should take are ones with proven safety trials from clean, inspected labs."

5 Things That May Increase Your Longevity

- 1. Fast intermittently.** Try to be a little hungry each day. Stop any late-night snacking. Then go from your dinnertime to eating a late lunch—skipping breakfast. Aim for 12 hours of fasting to start. Stretch to 16, or try two days a week with 500 calories or less.
- 2. Eat a primarily plant-based diet.** Cutting back on meat means that you are lowering your amount of amino acids, which your body recognizes as hunger, creating slight starvation. This is all about not overactivating the mTOR pathway. If it's overactive, you're at greater risk for heart disease, Alzheimer's, and certain cancers.

3. Give up your thermal comforts.

Try to be shivering cold at least once a day. Scientists don't fully understand why being cold is linked with turning on longevity pathways. I found this one to be wildly unpopular among my women friends, who may all have compromised thyroids.

- 4. Exercise, of course.** Adjust your routine to high-intensity interval training (HIIT). After a brief warm-up, force your heart rate to climb as you fully exert for 30 seconds, then recover back to near-resting levels for 90 seconds. Repeat 6 to 8 cycles. This will take less than 15 minutes, 2–3 times a week.

- 5. Boost your NAD levels** with a proven nicotinamide riboside, such as Niagen, or NMN.

So that's the good news. According to Sinclair, we alter the epigenome and, thus, genetic expression, when we shiver, are hungry, and move a lot. Contemporary life is not so great for us, since it dampens this long-life genetic activity.

Really? I can hear my epidemiology colleagues saying, "ridiculous." The strides in public health, sanitation, clean water, agricultural and protein production, infection control, vaccination, and first-responder networks have all extended the average lifespan, primarily by reducing infant mortality.

This leads me to conclude that for us health-conscious folks who have a pretty good life and want to be around to enjoy it fully without disability, dementia, or despair, these lifestyle adjustments might be worth the discomfort. Aging with grace, dignity, and a youthful spirit—that seems to be a personal choice, no matter what you swallow. ■

Should You Take One of the New Supplements?

NMN or NR: Which supplement makes sense?

The real powerhouse in the 9 Hallmarks of Aging—the one that you and I can take part in right away—may be ingesting a dietary supplement that helps support NAD+ levels in your cells. NMN is expensive, about \$80 a bottle online, and not always easy to find. NR has been patented and shows up in several products. I was sent a bottle of 300 mg capsules of TRU Niagen®, and I must say, I feel great on this stuff. (And I don't usually notice the impact of dietary supplements.) It's also been licensed to other supplement companies, such as Life Extension, which offers a bottle of 100 mg capsules online for less.

The other things you can do are well within your grasp. And I'm sorry to report that they all involve departing (briefly) from your cushy modern human life and acting more like an early Homo sapiens cave dweller. You've got to get uncomfortable. Step out of the civilized zone where we have evolved into extensions of our AI environments with Alexa-controlled thermostats and keystroke-delivered meals.

Kestrel

**Article and Photography
by DAVID GRAY**

The American kestrel (*Falco sparverius*) is the smallest raptor found in the United States. It is also commonly known somewhat misleadingly as the sparrowhawk, but it is a falcon and not a hawk. They are the most common falcon in the Americas, found across the continental US and into Alaska, across Canada nearly to the Arctic Circle, and through Mexico and most of subtropical South America.

Weighing up to 4.1 ounces as an adult with a wingspan of about 22", these birds are fast and maneuverable in flight. The females are slightly larger than the males by as much as 15 percent.



All the photographs here are of the same female, taken near the mouth of the Russian River near Jenner; the rufous barred wings are indicative of her sex, as is the barring of her tail. In contrast, the male's wings are bluish gray, and his tail is rufous with a black band near the end, finishing with a white tail tip. The rufous coloring will allow you to distinguish a kestrel from our slightly larger Park resident falcon, the merlin.



The American kestrel eats insects, lizards, small rodents, and birds up to the size of a sparrow. They like to hunt in meadows and brushy fields. They hunt mostly from a perch, but also hover with quick, shallow wingbeats once they detect movement below. Their pectoral muscle mass as a percentage of body weight is about half that of the peregrine falcon. Their diversity of diet, energy-efficient hunting methods, and low muscle mass mean that they don't have to eat a lot every day.

They are primarily cavity dwellers, relying on holes in trees (thanks, woodpeckers!), birdhouses, and openings in buildings. The female is the primary scout for the nesting site and takes on the bulk of its construction. She arrives about two weeks earlier than the mate does in the nesting

season. Many sources make a lot of the primary nest-building cement: their own feces, squirted and allowed to dry. They raise one brood per year of four to seven eggs. Both parents incubate the eggs, and the eggs hatch in about a month. Both parents also help to feed the chicks until they fledge, taking turns keeping their young warm and safe. About a month after hatching, the young kestrels are starting to fly. After another couple of weeks of feeding, the parents will have taught them how to hunt, and the feeding stops.

Happy New Year to all, which is past the winter solstice and on our way to mating season (need I add, for the birds, people!), so keep looking up! ■

JANUARY 2020

WEDNESDAY 1		THURSDAY 2		FRIDAY 3		SATURDAY 4							
NEW YEAR'S DAY		7-9:30AM Taiji MacLam/Deck 9:15AM QiGong Dove/Fireside 11AM The Rollin' Root 12PM Clubhouse Parking Lot 3-4:30PM DrawOn! Bogardus/Bamboo Room 6PM Film Night ALL THE PRESIDENT'S MEN	4PM Canasta Fireside Room 5PM Pub 7PM Game Night Fireside Room										
SUNDAY 5		MONDAY 6		TUESDAY 7		WEDNESDAY 8		THURSDAY 9		FRIDAY 10		SATURDAY 11	
1PM Mahjong Fireside Room		5:30AM Trash Pickup 9:30AM Low-Impact Exercise Fireside Room 10-11AM Line Dancing Ballroom 6PM MVEST Meeting Fireside Room 7:15PM Poor Man's Poker Card Room	7-9:30AM Taiji/MacLam Clubhouse Deck 10-11:30AM Chair Yoga John Marino Fireside Room 4-5:30PM Nonviolent Communication Study Fireside Room 6PM PAC Meeting	11AM-1PM Whistlestop call Roberta 415-883-0843 12-2PM Craft and Chat Library 6PM MarVal Meeting ECHO DEADLINE	7AM Taiji 9:15AM QiGong 11AM- The Rollin' Root 3PM Draw On! 6:30PM Biography Night <i>Carole Rosvold</i> <i>Linda Steenman</i> Fireside Room	9-11:15AM FIRESafe Marin Ballroom 4PM Canasta 5PM Pub 7:15PM Bingo FULL MOON 9:12PM							
SUNDAY 12		MONDAY 13		TUESDAY 14		WEDNESDAY 15		THURSDAY 16		FRIDAY 17		SATURDAY 18	
1PM Mahjong		5:30AM Trash Pickup 9:30AM Low-Impact Exercise 10AM Line Dancing 6PM MVEST Meeting 7:15PM Poor Man's Poker	7AM Taiji 10AM Chair Yoga	10AM-12PM Michael Karasik Clay Workshop Ballroom 11AM Whistlestop 11AM Bridge / Fireside Rm 12PM Craft and Chat 5PM SCOTTISH NIGHT RESERVATION DEADLINE after 140 Reservations 6PM HOL Meeting	7AM Taiji 9:15AM QiGong 11AM The Rollin' Root 3PM Draw On! 6PM Film Night INCEPTION	4PM Canasta 5PM Pub	MAR VAL presents SCOTTISH NIGHT 5 pm Cocktails 6 pm Dinner						
SUNDAY 19		MONDAY 20		TUESDAY 21		WEDNESDAY 22		THURSDAY 23		FRIDAY 24		SATURDAY 25	
12- Private Event 6PM Ballroom/Kitchen 1PM Mahjong 4PM Salon in the Park <i>New Beginnings</i> 33 Club View Dr.	5:30AM Trash Pickup 9:30AM Low-Impact Exercise 10AM Line Dancing 6PM MVEST Meeting 7:15PM Poor Man's Poker MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY	7AM Taiji 10AM Chair Yoga 4-5:30PM Nonviolent Communication Study	11AM Whistlestop 12PM Craft and Chat	7AM Taiji 9:15AM QiGong 11AM The Rollin' Root 3PM Draw On!	4PM Canasta 5PM Pub	10AM-4PM Lion's Club Bingo Ballroom 							
SUNDAY 26		MONDAY 27		TUESDAY 28		WEDNESDAY 29		THURSDAY 30		FRIDAY 31		SATURDAY 1	
1PM Mahjong		5:30AM Trash Pickup 9:30AM Low-Impact Exercise 10AM Line Dancing 6PM MVEST Meeting 7:15PM Poor Man's Poker	7AM Taiji 10AM Chair Yoga	10AM-12PM Michael Karasik Clay Workshop 11AM Whistlestop 12PM Craft and Chat	7AM Taiji 9:15AM QiGong 11AM The Rollin' Root 3PM Draw On!	4PM Canasta 5PM Pub	February 1 COMMUNITY DANCE 7-9PM • Ballroom						