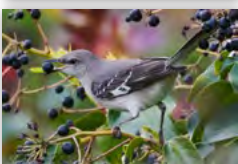
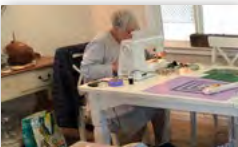


T H E
ECHO

May 2020

C O N T E N T S



2 Erma Wheatley NEED HELP? FROM THE EDITOR
Larry Cohen PAC ELECTIONS

MVMCC • PAC • MVEST

3 Matt Greenberg MVMCC MANAGEMENT UPDATE
Jay Shelfer PAC LETTER TO RESIDENTS
4-5 John Feld MVEST—*Be Prepared*
I Protect You, You Protect Us

MAR VAL

6 Kathleen Dargie MESSAGE FROM MAR VAL—*Reservation Form:*
Memorial Day BBQ

HOL

7 Janie Crocker HOL MESSAGE
HOL COMMUNITY PRESENTATIONS
Kim Holscher BIOGRAPHY NIGHT
Suzie Lahr ART IN THE PARK

8-9 David Tetta REDUCING YOUR TRAVEL FOOTPRINT

10-11 David Gray BIRD OF THE MONTH: *Northern Mockingbird*

12 CALENDAR: *May 2020*

PAC Elections

by LARRY COHEN

Three seats held by Jay Shelfer, John Hansen, and Carol-Joy Harris are up for election. As we go to press all are running for reelection along with JudiPurdum. With more than three nominations, balloting is required. Delaying the election will be determined at the May PAC meeting (on Zoom).

Nominations accepted by election committee

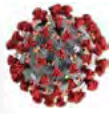
Saturday, May 9 –
Saturday, May 16

IF MORE THAN THREE NOMINATIONS:

- **Election committee prepares and mails ballots**
Monday, May 18 –
Friday, May 22
- **Meet the Candidates**
Tuesday, May 27 (6 pm)
or to be determined or postponed
- **Ballots accepted at a place to be determined**
Thursday, May 28 –
Friday, June 5 (3 pm)
- **Votes counted**
Friday, June 5 (4 pm)
- **Results announced at PAC Annual Meeting**
Elected PAC Board members introduced
Saturday, June 6

Contact

Larry Cohen
(415-883-7786) for
more information



Need Help?

Contact:

- Matt for our Humanitarian Funds
- Our Marin Valley website for links and updates:
marinvalley.net/coronavirus-information/
- **Whistlestop** for transportation, food, deliveries, and meals for qualifying seniors. Contact **415-456-9062** and/or whistlestop.org/nourish
- Marin HHS COVID-19 Hotline—**415-473-7191**
- California state seniors' hotline—**833-544-2374**

From the Editor

As we witness the terrible tragedies inside hospitals, ERs, and ICUs, don't forget we are also visually and audibly invited inside museums, concert and opera halls, libraries, and television news, programs, documentaries, and series. All the magazines and books still waiting for their moment are ready to be opened.

These things can help make use of the extra time shown in the surprisingly empty May calendar, with few events, which may or may not happen. Looking at this spacious calendar shows what a lively and diversified place Marin Valley has been with events, classes, and pubs in addition to dinners and special events every month. Events that stopped in March will not be starting anytime soon. Watch our website at marinvalley.net for updates. According to Matt, "even after shelter in place is lifted, there will need to be some reassurances and/or community outreach for questions/answers before any events start."

A Good Time for a New Editor

With these few events and the *Echo* printer requesting no more than 12 pages for the near future, this is a good time for this issue to be my last as editor and designer. Along with announcing news and events, a new editor who enjoys writing and would like to explore the community could provide a showcase for their own and the many talented residents' creations. The *Echo* can have a whole new look and be produced in a writing program such as Word, as a place for residents to share their experiences. We have good writers, and a talented copy editor and proofreaders who provide invaluable quality work, and who I thank profusely. Content is submitted by the 8th of the month for the 15th of the month publisher deadline. Please contact Matt.

THE
ECHO
MAY 2020

MARIN VALLEY
MOBILE COUNTRY CLUB

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www.mobilehomeboard.com/

MARIN VALLEY

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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, Jay Shelfer |
| MVEST | John Hansen, Bill Davis, John Feld, Stephen Plocher, Carol-Joy Harris, Kevin Mulvany, Erma Wheatley |

HOL BOARD

| | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| PRESIDENT | Janie Crocker 281-414-3984 |
| 1 ST VICE PRESIDENT | Ed Collins 415-377-7696 |
| 2 ND 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 |
| 1 ST VICE PRESIDENT | Dan Sebastian 415-382-7738 |
| 2 ND 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 |

SUBMITTING ARTICLES

For now, email articles with "ECHO" as the first word of the subject line with a copy of the article in the body of the email to MATT: gm.mvmcc@gmail.com

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

ECHO DEADLINE

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

MVMCC Management Update

PAC Letter to Residents

May 2020

During shelter in place please be aware of packages delivered by Amazon Prime, UPS, or FedEx. Residents have reported packages disappearing after delivery.

The clubhouse, gym, and pool are closed until further notice. Thank you for your patience.

Any new contact information you have, such as phone or email, is needed for our robocall system so we can reach out to you with any important messages.

Parking any vehicle that is not in use due to inoperable conditions is prohibited here at Marin Valley. Some residents own multiple cars they do not drive and need a place to store them. They sit months without use, possibly leaking fluid or turning into a home for mice. We do not have enough room for all, so please refrain from leaving these inoperable vehicles in guest parking or RV storage.

Many residents have started spring cleaning in their carports and are doing a great job. More residents will catch on and remove stored items in the carports, creating a better condition for all to view. Thanks for all the effort.

For any maintenance issue, please call the answering service, and they will page either **Mark** or **Greg** to help with your problem. 415-883-5911.

Thank you,



Matt Greenberg

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

Greetings from the Park Acquisition Corporation Board.

We are sheltering in place. We hope you are all benefiting from the health and environmental restrictions that are taking place.

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 approximately 2.2. Our cash, plus medium- and long-term reserves and prepaid expenses, is over five-and-a-half million dollars. A healthy portion of this will be expended to redo the sewage lift stations in the Park this year. This is a top priority and is, of course, one of the reasons we have been building the reserves over the years. Several other projects such as ADA accommodations around the clubhouse will be put off until next year. For the coming budget year with the coronavirus slowing all activities, only essential work is contemplated.

Budget The PAC Board, management, and the City are drawing up next year's budget for the Park to reflect both our needs and potential. We still want to push ahead with our solar electrical panels for the clubhouse roof and other available areas. With electrical billing of nearly \$300,000 a year, developing our own energy source will certainly help to lower these costs and will result in more cash reserves and possibly lower rents eventually. With 25-year financing available and payback on investment achievable in less than 10 years, solar energy will be a big win for all. We are investigating different possibilities. Should you have any input on this procedure, there will be public meetings and an ad hoc

committee working on it. You may contact **Steve Plocher** or me.

Slow Down Please continue to slow down and obey all Park traffic signs.

Goats The goats are coming back in late spring.

2x2 Meeting The PAC Board representatives will meet with the City's staff whenever the opportunity presents itself. With the city shutdown, only essential activities are taking place. We will work on putting together an electronic meeting much like those the PAC Board and MVEST have been having.

Election The PAC's Board meetings are enriched by the residents' participation. Your observations and suggestions on how MVMCC can better serve your and the community's interests are always welcomed. Come to the meetings, now on **Zoom.us**, or email us.

Three seats on your PAC Board are scheduled for election in May. See pg 2. Details for holding the election during sheltering are still being worked out. Updates will be listed on our website, marinvalley.net.

Upcoming Meetings Agendas for the coming PAC meetings are posted 72 hours before the meetings outside the clubhouse. Email **Anila Manning** at anilahere99@gmail.com if you'd like them emailed to you along with the Zoom address. The next Board meeting is **Tuesday, May 5** on Zoom with your computer/smartphone.

In service,



J Shelfer

Jay Shelfer
PAC PRESIDENT
jjshelfer@yahoo.com



Be Prepared

by JOHN FELD

While we are spending more time inside our homes and doing a lot more cooking than usual, let's consider home fires, especially fires in the kitchen and laundry. Not something we like to ponder, but something we should nonetheless consider.

Research by Underwriters Laboratories found that it took the average mobile home built 30 years ago about 17 minutes to burn to the ground and that today's new manufactured homes may burn in just three or four minutes!

One major reason for the quicker burn is a lack of natural materials in newer homes, synthetic materials burn hotter and faster. Nearly all of our houses were constructed elsewhere and were transported here by truck. To make that feasible, they are constructed of lightweight materials to make transporting easier. Lightweight materials generally burn much quicker and often hotter than traditional houses. If you have refurbished your home with sheetrock and fireproof siding, etc., these times may get doubled or even tripled. This is still not a long time. What would you do if you

were to wake up in the middle of the night to the screeching of your fire alarm or smelled burning, or even saw smoke? Since we spend at least a quarter of our time in bed, or at least asleep, we are quite likely to be in bed when a disaster strikes. Remember, the smell of actual smoke may not be coming from your home, but from outside or a neighbor's house.

Although not usually connected with nighttime fires, the most common fires in mobile homes (and many more traditional homes) are connected with the kitchen and clothes dryer.



Stoves

Kitchen fires are often caused by frying flare-ups, and people's first reaction to these is often to pour water on the burning pan. This will cause the flames to spread uncontrollably and can set your whole kitchen on fire in under two seconds. Instead, immediately cover the flames with a lid or reach for the fire extinguisher waiting in your kitchen.



Dryers

The second most common cause of home fires is excess lint in the clothes dryer flue. Lint often ends up in the main pipes venting the hot air out and can easily catch fire when the temperatures get hot from the dryer. Ideally, apart from cleaning out the lint trap between each use, this hose should be cleaned at least once a year, although it usually entails moving the dryer, which can be an issue for many of us. But it is really worth doing, or getting done, to make your home safe. Do as much as you can while we are still sheltering in place.

Escape Routes

Do you have a plan for getting out of your home? Let us assume there is a fire in your house. If it is in your bedroom, can you get to the door? If it is a wastebasket fire or a small fire outside your door and not spreading, find your fire extinguisher (you should have at least one in the kitchen and one in your bedroom) and quickly use it to put out the fire. Remember, if curtains or furniture are ablaze, an

extinguisher is not going to work. But if you do use one, aim the extinguisher at the base of the fire and sweep side to side until the flames go out. The extinguisher may last 10 to 25 seconds, depending on how large it is. If you can easily lift it in one hand, it probably is good for only about 10 seconds, while a 30-lb. extinguisher can last for about 25 seconds. If the fire is not completely out in the time you douse it with the spray, then you must leave the house immediately. Don't add water to the fire; don't look for another extinguisher—just leave.

You should know and familiarize yourself with the different routes out of your house. If the fire is in your bedroom and you can't exit the bedroom door, then you have to use a window! I know many of us will not do too well jumping out of our bedroom window, but even a broken arm or hip is better than burning alive, so know which window in your bedroom opens the easiest. Open it, push out the screen if there is one, and then launch yourself through the opening. It sounds dramatic, and it will be at the moment, but you can survive. If you are not fit or at least supple enough to climb out, just take a dive while covering your head



attempt to stop it from spreading to other homes and they can take care of you at the same time. Each of our fire engines has an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) on board.

Don't try to fight

the fire with a garden hose. It almost certainly will not work and can endanger you, especially if the fire reaches electric wires or panels.

If you are well organized, you may be able to pick up your grab-and-go bag on the way out. This should have basic clothes, a first-aid kit, a flashlight, any medications, and maybe even some snacks. If you are really well organized, this or your safe-deposit box will also contain scans of ALL your important papers: bank accounts, mortgages, passport, insurance details, investments, deeds to your home, copy of your address book, and maybe even copies of all your family photos. It should also contain cash in small bills. Remember that if your home burns to the ground, what is in your grab-and-go bag might be all you will have to start over with.

We have had only one house catch fire and burn to the ground in the Park in over 40 years. It can and does happen. Be prepared, and be safe! ■

with your arms. If there is a large bush just outside your window preventing a quick exit, cut it down now before it contributes to getting you stuck in a fire.

If you can get out of your bedroom door, leave your house as quickly as you can. We nearly all have at least two doors leading to the outside; go quickly to the safest one, and leave. Scream "FIRE" as loudly as you can to let your neighbors know what is happening. You may have to leave without having time to get to your phone, photos, computer, etc. What you will want most of all are shoes. Not those sturdy walking boots with complex lacings, but something you can slip on quickly and easily. If the fire has caused a window to break, you don't want to have to walk over broken glass to get out.

If you do get out with your phone, call 911 immediately when you are safely away from the fire. The fire department might not get there quickly enough to save your home, but they will

Be prepared, and be safe! ■

I Protect You You Protect Us

by JOHN FELD

We have flyers in our mail tubes, banners, and robocalls. Do we read, pay attention, or listen? Many residents do, but some do not. This may be because they have not signed up for robocalls with Matt, don't look at the banners around the Park, or just don't read the brightly colored rolls of paper in the tubes. I know that after noticing flyers in the tubes, some days later some are still there. OK, some folks are sheltering elsewhere, but many are here and just don't read them.

The flyers are important and often contain information that can greatly affect our health or even life.

What is this pressing news that people have been trying to communicate to us? Most recently it has been about:

1. Residents Only—

Keeping nonresidents from entering the Park, to minimize our contact with the outside world.

Doing this means that fewer people come into Marin Valley and thus reduces the risk of you and everyone else coming into contact with the virus.

Park Management has asked that we NOT allow people to come into our homes, whether they are friends, neighbors, cleaners, gardeners, pet sitters, contractors, or just about anyone. This does not include those who are considered ESSENTIAL, such as health care providers, emergency service providers—and that is about all. Delivery people should never come into your home, but leaving stuff on your front porch is fine. So, DON'T have your dog groomed, your garden weeded, your roof or anything else cleaned. If you see people who are doing this, please remind them or ask them (from 6' or more away) to stop. If you feel uncomfortable doing this, ask Matt to do it for you.

2. Masks—

Covering our mouths and noses to prevent us from breathing potential viruses onto others or inhaling them from others.

The California Dept. of Public Health, the Marin County Dept. of Health and Human Services, and Bay Area health officials are all recommending that people cover their nose and mouth when leaving

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

MAR VAL Message from Mar Val

Dear Friends,

Our shared experience of the past weeks once again demonstrates how very fortunate we are to live in this special community where neighbors so generously seek to ensure each other's welfare.

Mar Val was naturally disappointed to have to cancel the St. Patrick's Dinner (particularly the opportunity to celebrate our dear **Patrick Wheatley's** 91st birthday), the Volunteer

Appreciation Dinner, and, of course, our Friday night Pub.

Looking forward, we hope to restart our social calendar with the Memorial Day Bar-B-Que on Monday, May 25. With regard to Pub, we look forward to recommencing these social gatherings as soon as the quarantine is lifted. For those of you who had hoped to enjoy our annual Cinco de Mayo event, it has been decided that even if we are able to gather as early as Friday,

May 1st, we would not be sufficiently prepared to cater the Mexican dinner.

The Board of Mar Val joins in congratulating our community for the positive manner in which this crisis has been managed.

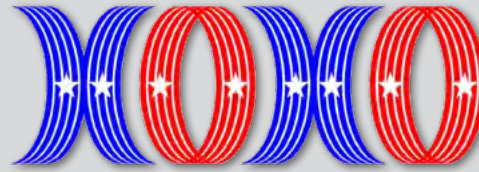
With warmest regards,



Kathleen Dargie

Kathleen Dargie
MAR VAL PRESIDENT
kfdargie@aol.com

REMEMBERING ON MEMORIAL DAY—THANK YOU, VETERANS!



MAR VAL MEMORIAL DAY DINNER

MONDAY, MAY 25

5 PM COCKTAILS ■ 6 PM DINNER

M e n u

Hamburger or Hot Dog or Veggie Burger

Potato Salad ■ Baked Beans ■ Ice Cream Bars

Reservation deadline — May 20 at 5PM or when 120 reservations have been received.

\$15 per person – checks payable to Mar Val – NO CASH

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

MAR VAL MEMORIAL DAY RESERVATION FORM

(Please CIRCLE entrée choice)

| | | | |
|----------------|-----------|---------|---------------|
| RESIDENT _____ | Hamburger | Hot Dog | Veggie Burger |
| RESIDENT _____ | Hamburger | Hot Dog | Veggie Burger |
| GUEST _____ | Hamburger | Hot Dog | Veggie Burger |
| GUEST _____ | Hamburger | Hot Dog | Veggie Burger |

residents/guests attending ___ @ \$15/each. Checks payable to MarVal for \$_____ enclosed. NO CASH

Reservation deadline — May 20 at 5PM or when 120 reservations have been received.

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

Home Owners League Message

HOL



Well, hasn't Covid-19 CHANGED our Activities Calendar????!!

All HOL-sponsored events are currently on hold until we get the all-clear to open again. Then we will have to reschedule all the upcoming events, which will take quite a bit of planning and coordinating. Right now, the only event not on hold is the shredding event June 15. We will

let you know in the next *Echo* if that date has to change. If we have to notify you pertaining to any event, it will be by flyer distribution in your tubes.

Even though the *Echo* is not an HOL product, we want to thank **Mark Crocker** and **Ursula Pedersen** on our behalf for volunteering to take on its distributing. Please call Mark at 281-757-4456 if you do not receive one.

NOTE: The next HOL meeting is Wednesday, May 20, 6 pm on Zoom. Please send me your email address to receive the HOL Zoom link.

Janie Klimes-Crocker



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

HOL COMMUNITY PRESENTATIONS

Biography Night by **KIM HOLSCHER**

Biography Night continues temporarily via Zoom, one speaker at a time. To participate

and be notified of dates and times, email Kim at kimholscher51@gmail.com with your name and email address. To

view past biography speakers, go to YouTube channel and search for "Marin Valley." ■



"6 Feet Apart" by Suzie Lahr

The resident artists have been given a challenge to create a piece of art that represents this time in life. We will then put these pieces on display for you, our residents, in our next Marin Valley Gallery exhibit once our clubhouse reopens. The exhibit will be given an appropriate title, such as "Virus Visual Victory."

Creativity abounds right now in the midst of this worldwide pandemic. How can one be bored when there is so much to do?



by **SUZIE LAHR**

- Pull out all those art supplies that have long been abandoned and play with creativity.
- Look at every morsel of food in the refrigerator or pantry and make up a new recipe so as not to waste.
- Salvage that piece of paper to use in a variety of other ways.
- Create a new routine in your home to include exercise and brain training.
- Amend your budget for the rough road ahead.
- Create new ways of keeping in touch with family and friends.
- Do something to aid others in this crisis.

- Walk through your outdoor space and cut and create a bouquet for your table.
- Do that project you have been putting off forever.
- Turn off that TV news and do something to benefit you positively.
- Reread that book you loved and saved that has been sitting in your bookcase for years.

One of the gifts of creativity right now and always is that it benefits you in your life. To reap the rewards, stay busy, and you will have creations to feed your soul and to give to others when this pandemic ends, and it will! All of us in this village look forward to celebrating with you in our clubhouse with a new Marin Valley Gallery installation!

Artists, please send an email with a photo and title of your Virus Visual Victory creation for our next exhibit installation to suzielahr@aol.com ■

Reducing Your Travel Footprint

by DAVID TETTA

One of these days we will be through with the worst of the coronavirus pandemic, and for some of us that will mean enjoying the freedom to travel around our beautiful county and state again. If our past habits are any guide, we may go back to creating about 15 tons per year of greenhouse gas emissions from our car and air travel, which equates to about 4,500 tons per year for the 300+ homes in the Park.

Automobile Travel

Although it's a financial commitment if you're not currently looking for a car, the main way you can make a difference in your travel footprint is by purchasing or leasing an EV or plug-in hybrid. And one of the great things about Marin Valley is that there are enthusiastic, knowledgeable people here (several EV owners and several plug-in hybrid owners) who can help you figure out what to do to make this kind of car work for you. They've been happy to share their

experiences.



Steve Plocher talks about "feeling good that I'm not adding auto exhaust

to the atmosphere ... loving not having to fuel up with gas at a gas station regularly ... not needing tune-ups or oil changes or any maintenance at all ... driving a totally quiet and smooth-running vehicle ... having the torque to quickly get on the highway or pass a car when necessary." Steve wrote a great article on the benefits of EV ownership in the February 2018 issue of the *Echo* (marinvalley.net>Living Here>Echo Magazine).

Kamala Allen notes the "amazing zip" and "incredibly low maintenance." Plus, "it feels good to know that you are doing something good for the environment."



PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVID TETTA

Matt Greenberg, a Honda Clarity plug-in owner, has been impressed with its reliability and how well it

drives: "This is a real car." EV owners mention the need to know the charging stations in your area, and to plan ahead if driving longer distances.

David Gray and Nancy Warfield, Chevy Bolt owners, have noticed a "huge boom" in charging



stations in the past few years. You should also pay attention to rebates, as they can vary significantly depending on the model you get and can add up to thousands of dollars.

A useful resource, Resilient Neighborhoods' *EV Guide* provides some basic information about the advantages of buying an EV, along with some useful links for further information. The Golden Gate Electric Vehicle Association has a handy rebate guide, as well as a Cars page, with links to different models that are available in the SF area. PlugShare, ChargeHub, and ChargePoint have maps of EV charging stations around the U.S. and offer apps for iPhone and Android. These online resources (along with many other footprint reduction ideas) are summarized at

marinvalley.net under Living Here>Green Living. Charging could get significantly easier here in the Park, as the PAC Board has proposed installing two charging stations at the clubhouse.

What difference does this all make in terms of your footprint? PG&E has around 40% renewables in its power grid mix, meaning that the average EV in our area is emitting about the same amount of CO₂ as a car that gets 120-150 miles per gallon. By comparison, the average new-model sedan is getting around 30 mpg.

Want to drop your car travel footprint even further? Think about ways to reduce the amount of miles you put on your car. Per capita driving in Marin averages close to 30 miles per day, and that figure is actually projected to increase over the next decade. Reducing your vehicle miles is clearly more easily said than done, but there are some organizations that can help in this regard. Although in these coronavirus times, mass transit and carpooling may be a harder sell, helpful resources include: Marin Commutes' Share a Ride page, Marin Transit's Transportation Guide, and 511SF Bay's Carpool Resource page. Carpooling from the Park to different spots in San Rafael and Novato is also worth looking into and discussing with your neighbors.

Air travel

The last major component of this footprint category is air travel. In the U.S. one cross-country trip generates about 20 percent of the greenhouse gases that a gasoline engine car emits over an entire year. While offset programs do exist to help reduce your air-travel impact, their effectiveness has often been poor. Taking the train is often cited as the least carbon-intensive way of traveling long distance, but in this country that's often inconvenient at best. Thus good options are scarce in this category, unfortunately, other than to evaluate our necessity for each plane trip, to utilize the existing offset programs when we do fly, and to use the train when and if possible.

Please send email comments or other ideas about reducing your car/travel footprint to: marinvalley.net@gmail.com. ■

While we are sheltering in place don't forget to run your car a little each week so the battery doesn't go flat.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5



Janie Crocker sewing masks.

home for exercise; for essential travel such as doctor appointments, grocery shopping, or pharmacy visits; or for any reason that makes us leave our house and garden.

There are several reasons to wear masks at ALL times when you are out of your house. They minimize any particles that can be expressed from our bodies; noses, mouths, lungs, and throats can all potentially contain the coronavirus, and we can easily infect others without even knowing we have the virus. Carriers can be presymptomatic or asymptomatic. Presymptomatic carriers are people who have the virus and are not yet aware of it but are already contagious. It can take up to two weeks for symptoms to arise. Asymptomatic carriers are people who have the virus and are not affected by it, but can still pass it on to others. Sneezing without a mask or without a hanky or tissue can spread the virus many feet

in a semicircle around you. Its liquid molecules (aerosols) can remain in the air for up to 20 minutes and can be carried by the wind. The same is true with coughing and even speaking.¹

The short supply of medical-grade masks calls out the need for other kinds, such as ones that are homemade. Although not the specialized N95 masks, the ones MVEST handed out recently are good but are not washable. Many mask patterns are available online, and our own **Janie Crocker** and members of our crafts group are also making masks. Donations are appreciated but not necessary. The nice thing about cotton handcrafted masks is they can be washed as often as you want.

An effective face mask is one that fits well around the nose, mouth, and chin. It should be able to filter out particles that could contain the virus. Fabric with a high thread count is recommended.

When you do wear a mask, it is important to use it properly. Take it off by the straps and either wash or discard it—without touching the front of it.

But don't let wearing a face mask give you a false sense of security: you can still become infected while wearing one, and washing your hands frequently is vital whether you wear a mask or not. Make it a habit so you don't forget. ■

¹ Micro Droplets Suspending in Air <https://tinyurl.com/s7sgo3k> from the NHK (Japan Broadcast Corporation) full documentary Covid-19: Fighting a Pandemic <https://tinyurl.com/v64aqhx>



Northern Mockingbird

Article and Photography
by **DAVID GRAY**

The Northern mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*) is a member of the *Mimidae* family of birds. It truly lives up to its Latin name. This ubiquitous bird plays “bird jazz” all day long and into the night, borrowing motifs from other birds and weaving them together in sets of variations that are dizzying to follow. According to the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, a mockingbird male may learn up to 200 songs in its lifetime. The female sings, too, but more softly than the male and with fewer variations.





About two-thirds the size of a robin, these thin gray birds have big white patches on the tops and bottoms of their unfolded wings. The male flaunts these highly contrasting patches during mating season, when he will find the tallest landing spot possible and leap a couple of feet in the air with a fluttering display of his patches, all while singing at the top of his lungs. The mockingbird's belly and breast are a light gray, with its head and back being a darker gray. It has light brown to yellow eyes, a black bill, and a black eye stripe. In direct sunlight the eye looks yellow. When sitting, it has white wing bars against a very dark gray wing.

The mockingbird is found throughout North America, from Mexico up to the lower parts of the southern Canadian provinces. We have several of them in our Park, and all the photographs in this article were taken here during our time of COVID-19 sheltering in place. They nest in bushes and trees and are very protective of their nests. Back in the mid-1990s, I was hit squarely in the back by a mockingbird defending its nest in a hedgerow as I walked past, unaware of the nest. The male does most of the rough nest construction, making a bowl-shaped arrangement of twigs that the female then lines with softer materials: grass, leaves, bits

of plastic(!). They lay two to three clutches a year averaging four eggs per clutch. The eggs are light blue-green with white areas and spots of red and brown.

Mockingbirds eat insects and berries, focusing on insects in the summer. I photographed one of our resident mockingbirds eating some berries in early April.

These musicians are known to live to almost 15 years, and with their ever-growing repertoire, the older they get, the richer the song. I sure hope you enjoy the concert! ■

