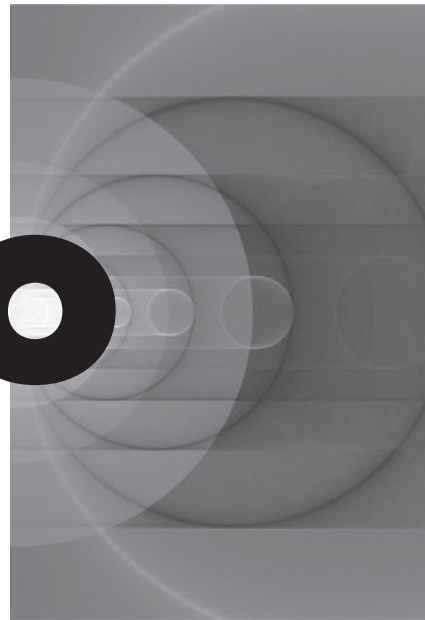


T H E **ECHO**

JANUARY 2015



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Letter

from the Editor

As we approach another new year we'd like to thank everyone who advertised with the *Echo* over the years, now, and in our previous format. We appreciate your support and wish you the best in the new year.

We are fortunate to have living here a number of people here who have quite a story to tell from a world gone by. As we say goodbye to 2014 we welcome the unpredictable surprises that await us. Sometimes that is appreciated by knowing more about the past. There are years that many of us never experienced and have no idea what life was like. Got a story? The *Echo* would like to share some of your adventures and how the world appeared over the years. Please contact us at 415-884-2675 ermawheatley@gmail.com Interviewers are standing by.



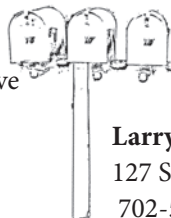
San Rafael is moving forward to establish a citywide quiet zone along the Smart Train line after overwhelming support from residents. If approved, along with Novato, the unincorporated area between the two cities will also become a quiet zone, which will include St. Vincent's Drive, a half-mile south of MVMCC.

A Joyful New Year to all.

New Residents

Cheryl Prussia
115 Marin Valley Drive

Anne Glasscock
57 Marin Valley Drive
415-601-3047



Larry Moore
127 Sunrise Lane
702-596-6897

Gloria Gregg
415-608-7338 and
Michael Mitchell
190 Marin Valley Drive
415-298-0442

Mail

Marin Valley Mobile Park in all it's idyllic isolation is still a part of the city of Novato. Though we treasure our Park's unique location and the residents strong local identity, we are not exempt from the usual legal jurisdictions. Our MVEST team prides itself on building a safe environment in emergency situations, but on an everyday basis some residents fall short on their responsibilities. A sign which I recently saw in downtown San Rafael would be well positioned here. "Don't Roll Up" stated on a red lawn sign at an intersection expressed the message to drivers, that following the simple rule of law to stop at STOP signs was needed to remind people that safety is a first priority in any neighborhood. Because I often walk the streets of our park and live between two closely spaced STOP signs, I regularly observe drivers rolling through or even ignoring these directives. The Park office suggests notifying them with license plate numbers in these cases, but I believe that we can all take it upon ourselves to ensure the safety of our neighbors and ourselves when driving. If you wouldn't go through a STOP sign in another neighborhood, then ask yourselves how you justify it in your own neighborhood.

Richard Waibel

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100 MARIN VALLEY DRIVE
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Please email all articles to the editor, 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:

ermawheatley@gmail.com

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

Everything is due the
10TH OF THE MONTH OR SOONER
for the following month's edition.

PAC Board Update

Dear Residents,

The finances of MVMCC are as expected and stable.

Manager **Matt Greenberg** and staff in conjunction with the city have done a terrific job of preparing MVMCC for closing down the fire season and starting up the rainy season. As of today with the downpour in progress, our storm drains are functioning well. The storm drain through the former TPL land has been aided by the new culvert under the Smart Train tracks. The clearing of the drainage ditch by the farmer on the other side has allowed the water to flow through.

Next month **Desiree Storch** and I will start a panel of residents and other board members to begin the process of drawing up next year's budget. Your input will be welcome. Meetings will be posted and noticed in the *Echo*.

Anila Manning and **Mike Krupp** reported on the juniper removal and supplemental planting project they are working on. There is a terrific amount of data on

replacement plantings on the computer in the Library. (See top of page 11)

The Tree and Shrub Implementation Committee chaired by **Michael Hagerty** is working very diligently gathering helpful contacts and information to assure the residents of a policy that can benefit us all.

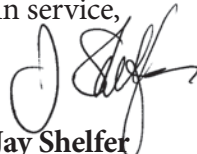
Judy Vucci and others are starting up their committee again to review the rent disparities in the Park. You may contact her to add your voice and input to the study. (See page 4)

Please join us for the January meeting.

Wednesday, January 7, 7:00 p.m., Fireside Room

Until next month—

In service,



Jay Shelfer
PAC PRESIDENT
jjshelfer@yahoo.com



PHOTO: MIKE KRUPP

HOL *Message from Homeowners' League*

HOL wishes all residents a HAPPY NEW YEAR. Hope you enjoyed the Christmas gathering provided by MarVal and HOL. Be sure to attend the New Year celebration in the clubhouse.

We want to thank the residents who quietly offer help to neighbors during these stormy times by assisting them with transportation or little chores around a home. Neighbors helping neighbors is one of the many things that make this Park so great. Also want to thank residents who have contributed so generously to HOL.

HOL will be sponsoring CPR training during the next couple of months. You will be able to register for class at the front desk, and a notice will appear in the *Echo* with the exact date and time. There is usually a small fee paid by the resident with the majority of the cost being paid by HOL.

You may have noticed that many residents have been digging small holes in the ground, placing bulbs in them and then covering them like a dog covering a bone. Not to worry! This is the Park Improvement Committee hard at work planting daffodils for the spring. We are really looking forward to the show. Many of the bulbs were donated by residents in the Park.

The next HOL meeting will be held

Wednesday, January 21, 2015, 7 p.m.

in the Fireside Room. We look forward to having you attend. You will have an opportunity to express your concerns and suggestions. You will be heard.

Thank you,



Nancy Bingham

HOL PRESIDENT

nancybingham@msn.com

(415) 883-7879



Art in the Park Update

by Suzie Lahr

Our upcoming *3rd Annual 2015 Art In The Park* held in the ballroom will take place on Saturday, May 16th. Mark your calendar to enjoy meeting our talented resident artists and see their works, watch artists demonstrations, enjoy music performed by resident musicians and taste delicious refreshments compliments of the artists and HOL.

Our next artist meeting will be held in January for all fellow artists to reconnect. You are welcome as an MVMCC resident artist to join our other artists and participate in the *3rd Annual Art In The Park*. I will let you know you when the next meeting will be held by email.

We have received rave reviews on the new gallery exhibit in the MVMCC clubhouse. This column is also a great way to let our Park residents know of any gallery shows you might be having. Just let me know via email and I will include it in this column each month. I look forward to an exciting and creative new year with all of you.

Contact suzielahr@aol.com to become part of our art community in this exceptional, creative Park!

New Tai Chi Chuan class

A noonday one-hour Tai Chi Chuan class is forming. Contact Jay Shelfer (jjshelfer@yahoo.com) with your day of preference.

Rent Differential Committee

Notice to all Residents: The Rent Differential Committee, as authorized by the PAC Board, is beginning to meet again to develop one or more proposals to submit to the PAC Board concerning the inequity of rents in Marin Valley MCC. If you are interested in joining the committee, please contact Judy Vucci, 51 Club View Drive, judyvucci@gmail.com, 415-306-1331.

Management Report

Message from MarVal

Welcome to winter.

Things to remember for our incoming weather patterns, for preparation for winter is paramount here in the North Bay:

- Batten down your umbrellas, and secure your furniture and any yard items that can be blown away or damaged from wind or rain.
- Have your rain gutters cleaned of clogged leaves or debris.
- Keep extra batteries for your working flashlight.
- Candles are also helpful in a power outage.
- Fill a few bottles with water and freeze. In case your power is out, you can use these in your fridge to keep your food fresh.
- Register for emergency alerts at www.alertmarin.org.
- Have a battery-operated radio for weather updates.
- Verify you have ample food and up-to-date meds if you need them.

MVMCC has sandbags prior to storms. They are free from the Novato Corporation yard although you need to fill them yourself —50 Davidson Avenue, Novato.

The clubhouse power will be on due to our emergency generator.

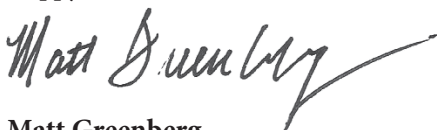
If you need help re-lighting pilot lights, call the front desk.

Please provide updated contact info if you have anything new so we have it at the front desk.

Also please update us with any medical issues or if you may need assistance in a time of emergency or power outage.

The pool heater is off for the winter, but the spa is hot and open for resident use.

Happy New Year!



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

Dear Friends,

Happy New Year from the Board of MarVal. We are excited about our plans for the 2015 social events in the Park and hope to welcome you at our monthly parties.

Although the traditional year-end holidays have passed, our Scottish Bar Manager believes a celebration of “Burns Night” in late January qualifies for international consideration. This year we will celebrate

Scottish Night **Saturday, January 24, 2015**

While we will not have the traditional bagpipes this year, we will have live Scottish music. As this letter goes to print, the menu has not been finalized. However, there will as usual be a choice of meat or vegetarian entree (haggis is NOT one of the choices). As soon as the menu is determined, we will be happy to provide the information at the MarVal reservations box in the clubhouse. Reservation deadline—January 21 or when 140 reservations have been received.

We urge you to don your plaids and tartans and join us on the 24th.

With warmest regards,



Kathleen Dargie
MAR VAL PRESIDENT
kfdargie@aol.com



Bingo Winners List—November 14

Single winners: Joan, Barbara, Vern, Clara, and Rose. *Double winners:* Jerry and Kathy. *Single good neighbors:* Nancy, Millie, Sandy, Donna, Sally, Maria, George, Myrette, Mary and Barbara. *Double good neighbors:* Angela, Julie and Pat.

We did not have 50 players, so the \$250.00 could not be given for the blackout.

Many thanks to Charles, our wonderful caller.
Join us next month and bring a friend.

Connie and the Bingo crew



New Year Greetings

by **Serena D'Arcy-Fisher**

The MVEST Steering Committee wishes all our volunteers and MVMCC neighbors a healthy, happy and fulfilling 2015.

As we begin this new year, we want to thank all our dedicated resident volunteers for their time and energy and support for MVEST in 2014. We look forward to collaborating with you all in the coming year. Our vision is that together, as functioning teams, we can be a more disaster-resilient community.

In 2015, MVEST is committed to continuing to build our volunteer corps strengths and skills by promoting professionally-lead as well as in-house training opportunities. These training and skills development opportunities are not only fun and engaging, but so important to ensure that we can offer assistance within our capabilities in an emergency/disaster situation. We always welcome new residents and new volunteers to this vital organization.

Over the past year, we hope all our residents have come to know their Block Captains. These wonderful resident volunteers are here to encourage and help us to be personally ready for a disaster situation, whether it is to be prepared to shelter at home or to evacuate the Park. They can also offer guidance for how to shut off your gas and water in an emergency. If you don't know who your Block Captain is, please let us know, and we will be happy to connect you.

Some 2014 key highlights:

August 2013: MVEST took on a new incarnation. A robust Steering Committee was formed that now includes John Hansen, Bill Davis, Alan Gump, John Feld and Serena Fisher.

November 2013: Sponsored first public meetings including GET READY and the Novato Fire Department Community Preparedness presentations

January, 2014: Formed and trained Block Captains and Zone Chiefs

February: Trained and certified 25 community members in CERT (Community Emergency Response Team)

March: Conducted community-wide door-to-door preparedness questionnaire

April: Formed the MVEST Disaster Council with Focus Group Leads

July–August: Practiced radio trainings for Block Captains and Zone Chiefs

September: Oversaw the successful community-wide evacuation drill under the auspices of the Novato Fire Department

As you can see, 2014 was an exciting year with a lot of activity. Our dedicated volunteers include Block Captains, Zone Chiefs, and Incident Command functions as well as Disaster Council Focus Group Leads. Many residents have taken CERT, offered by local fire departments. As a "current" CERT you have Disaster Service Worker's status, which

provides protection against liability when offering help as long as you function within the limits of our training. We encourage all capable residents to get this fantastic training. MVEST also subsidizes part of the \$45 fee for the two-day course for residents who request it. MVEST always emphasizes personal safety first, so these trainings are invaluable as a service worker. Please contact John Feld (johnmfeld@gmail.com, 415-884-2675) if you are or have recently become a CERT.

In 2015, MVEST will continue to create programs that raise the MVMCC community's disaster awareness/preparedness levels, including a Disaster Preparedness Fair. We will build our MVEST volunteer corps and deepen skills through training opportunities including conducting more in-depth disaster scenarios with the community. We will rehearse disaster management and communications in a live evacuation drill setting and build up our Disaster Council Focus Groups to address many aspects of disaster preparedness.

We welcome new volunteers! Please contact us so we can share with you some of the exciting opportunities to get engaged in this wonderful, community-building effort.

With all good wishes,

MVEST Steering Committee Team
**Serena D'Arcy-Fisher (Lead),
John Hansen, Bill Davis,
Alan Gump and John Feld**

“Live Long, Live Well”

Sign Your Health Care Proxy

by Michael Hagerty, Suzie Lahr, and Marianne York

*L*ast month we wrote about two items that have saved thousands of lives in an emergency: a Medical Alert device, and the Vial of Life. This month we write about the third item that emergency room doctors sometimes need: your signed Health Care Proxy. If you take a fall and lose unconsciousness, or if you are in a diabetic coma, your wishes will still be carried out if you have signed a Health Care Proxy designating someone you trust to make decisions for you while you are unconscious. Your proxy may need to transfer you to a higher-care hospital, contact your insurance, etc. Below is one of the best proxy forms, featured in *Time* magazine, called Five Wishes.

If you already have a Health Care Proxy, there is no need to change. Just review it to make sure that your designations are still current. These preparations will save your family much stress and will get you back home as quickly as possible.

The Person I Want To Make Health Care Decisions For Me When I Can't Make Them For Myself.

If I am no longer able to make my own health care decisions, this form names the person I choose to make these choices for me. This person will be my Health Care Agent (or other term that may be used in my state, such as proxy, representative, or surrogate). This person will make my health care choices if both of these things happen:

- *My attending or treating doctor finds I am no longer able to make health care choices, AND*
- *Another health care professional agrees that this is true.*

If my state has a different way of finding that I am not able to make health care choices, then my state's way should be followed.

The Person I Choose As My Health Care Agent Is:

First Choice Name

Phone

Address

City/State/Zip

If this person is not able or willing to make these choices for me, *OR* is divorced or legally separated from me, *OR* this person has died, then these people are my next choices:

Second Choice Name

Third Choice Name

Address

Address

City/State/Zip

City/State/Zip

Phone

Phone

Picking The Right Person To Be Your Health Care Agent

Choose someone who knows you very well, cares about you, and who can make difficult decisions. A spouse or family member may not be the best choice because they are too emotionally involved. Sometimes they **are** the best choice. You know best. Choose someone who is able to stand up for you so that your wishes are followed. Also, choose someone who is likely to be nearby so that they can help when you need them. Whether you choose a spouse, family member, or friend as your Health Care Agent, make sure you talk about these wishes and be sure that this person agrees to respect

and follow your wishes. Your Health Care Agent should be **at least 18 years or older** (in Colorado, 21 years or older) and should **not** be:

- Your health care provider, including the owner or operator of a health or residential or community care facility serving you.
- An employee or spouse of an employee of your health care provider.
- Serving as an agent or proxy for 10 or more people unless he or she is your spouse or close relative.

I understand that my Health Care Agent can make health care decisions for me. I want my Agent to be able to do the following: (Please cross out anything you don't want your Agent to do that is listed below.)

- Make choices for me about my medical care or services, like tests, medicine, or surgery. This care or service could be to find out what my health problem is, or how to treat it. It can also include care to keep me alive. If the treatment or care has already started, my Health Care Agent can keep it going or have it stopped.
- Interpret any instructions I have given in this form or given in other discussions, according to my Health Care Agent's understanding of my wishes and values.
- Consent to admission to an assisted living facility, hospital, hospice, or nursing home for me. My Health Care Agent can hire any kind of health care worker I may need to help me or take care of me. My Agent may also fire a health care worker, if needed.
- Make the decision to request, take away or not give medical treatments, including artificially-provided food and water, and any other treatments to keep me alive.
- See and approve release of my medical records and personal files. If I need to sign my name to get any of these files, my Health Care Agent can sign it for me.
- Move me to another state to get the care I need or to carry out my wishes.
- Authorize or refuse to authorize any medication or procedure needed to help with pain.
- Take any legal action needed to carry out my wishes.
- Donate useable organs or tissues of mine as allowed by law.
- Apply for Medicare, Medicaid, or other programs or insurance benefits for me. My Health Care Agent can see my personal files, like bank records, to find out what is needed to fill out these forms.
- Listed below are any changes, additions, or limitations on my Health Care Agent's powers.

If I Change My Mind About Having A Health Care Agent, I Will

- Destroy all copies of this part of the Five Wishes form. *OR*
- Tell someone, such as my doctor or family, that I want to cancel or change my Health Care Agent. *OR*
- Write the word "Revoked" in large letters across the name of each agent whose authority I want to cancel. Sign my name on that page.

Signing The Five Wishes Form

Please make sure you sign your Five Wishes form in the presence of the two witnesses.

I, _____, ask that my family, my doctors, and other health care providers, my friends, and all others, follow my wishes as communicated by my Health Care Agent (if I have one and he or she is available), or as otherwise expressed in this form. This form becomes valid when I am unable to make decisions or speak for myself. If any part of this form cannot be legally followed, I ask that all other parts of this form be followed. I also revoke any health care advance directives I have made before.

Signature: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Date: _____

Witness Statement - (2 witnesses needed):

I, the witness, declare that the person who signed or acknowledged this form (hereafter "person") is personally known to me, that he/she signed or acknowledged this [Health Care Agent and/or Living Will form(s)] in my presence, and that he/she appears to be of sound mind and under no duress, fraud, or undue influence.

I also declare that I am over 18 years of age and am NOT:

- The individual appointed as (agent/proxy/surrogate/patient advocate/representative) by this document or his/her successor,
- The person's health care provider, including owner or operator of a health, long-term care, or other residential or community care facility serving the person,
- An employee of the person's health care provider,
- Financially responsible for the person's health care,
- An employee of a life or health insurance provider for the person,
- Related to the person by blood, marriage, or adoption, and,
- To the best of my knowledge, a creditor of the person or entitled to any part of his/her estate under a will or codicil, by operation of law.

(Some states may have fewer rules about who may be a witness. Unless you know your state's rules, please follow the above.)

_____ Signature of Witness #1	_____ Signature of Witness #2
_____ Printed Name of Witness	_____ Printed Name of Witness
_____ Address	_____ Address
_____ Phone	_____ Phone

In Memoriam

Jim Gruber	Mike Cronin
127 Sunrise Ave	58 Club View
November 14, 2014	December 6, 2014

Do It Now!

New Years is a memorable time to change all the batteries in your fire alarms so you don't have to remember to do it *someday*, or when you are awakened with an annoying buzzing reminder, or if you get no reminder at all.

30 Plantings to Replace your Juniper

Now that you've decided to remove your explosively flammable juniper, what can you choose to replace it?

Mike Krupp has a list of fire-safe, beautiful, drought-tolerant plants that should grow well in our Park. It's easy to use: choose from (privacy screen, hedge, plants that attract birds or butterflies), browse color pictures and text of 30 trees and shrubs. On the clubhouse computer click the folder MVMCC Plant Catalog, then click to open the PDF inside. On the title page click on Landscaping Uses; then click each plant name. If you click View on the top bar, then Page Display, then Two Page View Scrolling, you can see each plant: flowers, fruit, and how they grow. Email krupplml@gmail.com with any great plants we missed.

Privacy Plants

by Charles Conaway

For homeowners wishing to grow a privacy hedge, I would like to present four outstanding plants that are perfect for this job—two hollies, a boxwood, and a camellia. The two holly's grow in full sun. The boxwood will grow in full to partial sun, and the camellia needs morning or filtered sun.



Ilex EMERALD COLONNADE

A handsome new male (no fruit) evergreen holly. This versatile shrub is ideal for a superb hedge screen or windbreak. It's an easy care plant that needs full sun and is well suited to containers. Once established it needs only occasional watering. Small creamy flowers. Produces no fruit. It can reach 10 to 12 feet tall and six to eight feet wide, but it is very tolerant of shearing to control size.



Ilex SKY PENCIL

This narrow, columnar holly is just right for small areas. Dark green foliage holds its color year round, sporting purple berries in the fall—outstanding for use as a vertical accent near entryways or as a privacy screen. Needs regular watering—weekly after established. Moderate grower six to eight feet tall and two to three feet wide.



Buxus GREEN TOWER

The perfect evergreen hedge for tight spaces. Very columnar form produces lustrous dark green leaves with a light green underside. Medium to finely textured foliage does not brown out in winter. Full to partial sun. Needs regular watering—weekly. Moderate growing in a columnar form to nine feet tall and one to two feet wide.



Camellia sasanqua YULE TIDE

Single bright red blooms centered with bright yellow stamens make an elegant statement in the winter. Glossy, dark green foliage creates a handsome natural hedge. Morning or filtered sun. Regular water. It is a moderate grower eight to ten feet tall and as wide.

All of these plants will do best in a well prepared and amended planting area. Don't scrimp on the root zone. Your plants will thank you by looking healthier, and growth will be faster. They can also be grown in containers or sturdy planter boxes. All can be sheared to control width and height. Both hollies have soft rounded leaves—no prickles.

These four plants are not exactly drought tolerant. They will do best with weekly waterings until well established. They are fire resistant to a degree, and as far as I know they are fairly pest-and varmint-free.

I have high regard for these shrubs. They are all grown by Monrovia Nursery and can be seen at West End Nursery in San Rafael. Check them out. One just might be the perfect solution for that tight spot where you want privacy and yet want to look at something alive. Happy gardening.

Take a Hike

by Mike Holland

When you're driving up 101 near the Marin County Airport and you look to the east, you see lakes, wetlands, and low hills. In fact, you see all the way to the hills that create the Sonoma Raceway at Sears Point. What you DON'T see are houses. We can thank the birds for that. Well, not the birds themselves, but the people who care the most about the birds—the Audubon Society. Several years ago there was an approved development plan that called for the building of hundreds of houses on the wetlands near the existing Bahia community. The Audubon Society marshaled a public relations and major fund-raising campaign. They purchased the land and created a permanent wetland aviary sanctuary. They, with the Marin County Parks Department, also created a fabulous place to hike, run, ride, and relax.

We call it **Rush Creek.**

The best way to access the Rush Creek trailhead is to take the Atherton exit from Hwy. 101. Turn left almost immediately at the Park 'n Ride lot and proceed about 50 yards to the start of the trail. There is plenty of street parking.

The terrain is mostly flat, and the trail is wide, so the footing is good. You will encounter some mud during the rainy season but not enough to discourage you. Your first surprise

comes about 400 yards into the hike. Off to your left is a large lake. On a calm day it perfectly reflects the hillsides of Mt. Burdell and the Buck Institute from across the freeway. If you stare at this long enough, you lose sense of what is real and what is reflection. Kind of like the 1960s.

The most manageable hike is a five-mile out-and-back that includes another lake at the turnaround point. Wildlife abounds, especially the marsh birds. If you are really ambitious, you can take the trail all the way to Bahia. This round trip would be about seven to eight miles. The trail meanders in and out of the wetlands, so you get a sense of being in fjords. See if you can count how many fjords there are. If you don't want to do the return from Bahia, consider parking a car at the end of Bugeia Lane for the drive back.

For me, the best part of a hike or run is the after event. My favorite spot to have coffee in this region is Dr. Insomniac's in Old Town Novato. They make every type of coffee drink imaginable and have a pretty decent food menu as well. (The BLT was a pleasant surprise.) Enjoy it all on their wonderful garden patio in the back. It's quiet and isolated.

If you want something a little less tame than coffee or tea, I suggest the Trek Winery tasting room. They have both a beautiful indoor lounge and a lovely outdoor patio. Trek is on Machin Avenue, one block north of Grant.

I hope you'll be out there to hike, drink, and enjoy. And don't forget to thank the birds!





PHOTO: JOHN FELD

A Joyful Noise!

by Bill Noble

On December 3rd, as darkness settled and the rain tapered off, our park was washed with a deafening tidal wave of celebration. Ten thousand inch-and-a-half-long voices began to sing and shout:

The ponds are full! The ponds are full!

The King James version of the Hundredth Psalm, “Make a joyful noise,” is, for me, about those moments when we stumble into uncontrollable, overflowing gladness for life. After four years of wimpy rain, both we and our frogs had reason to celebrate!

Creeeeee-eeek.

All through sunny summers, we hear that tiny sound from our backyard Abelia bush, from the space under the front steps, from our window box full of geraniums. It’s a male *Pseudacris sierra*, a Pacific chorus (or tree) frog announcing his faith that Wet will return (the females, perhaps more confident in the cycle of the seasons, don’t need to keep reassuring themselves). These tiny creatures travel thousands of hops each season from our yards to their breeding ponds.

They eat insects, sow bugs, spiders, slugs—anything meaty and small enough, caught on the end of long, sticky, lightning-fast tongues.

As the rainy season draws close, males creak more often, and both sexes start drifting toward where our ponds will eventually appear. When that first

magnificent night of Wet arrives, each male finds a place, which he’ll defend from others, and begins to clamor:

Marry me! Marry me!

(which to human ears sounds more like *ribbit! ribbit!*).

It’s a familiar sound, not just because these frogs are one of the widely distributed keystone species of the West Coast, but because many years ago when Hollywood needed frogs, they just stuck microphones out their windows. That call—of the closely related *Pseudacris hypochondriaca*—has become the frog sound of movies; it’s the soundtrack stand-in for Africa, the Amazon, a desert oasis, even, for one Kurosawa flick, *Siberia*.

“*Ribbit*” isn’t their only call. Listen closely amongst the din, and you’ll hear a loud trill too; it can warn off other males, or it can mean:

PLEASE, PLEASE marry me!

Mostly the frogs we see in our garden are brown or gray, because that color absorbs the least heat. But, like us, they have versatile wardrobes: in a moment or two, they can fade or darken or even develop spots and stripes to help conceal themselves. Over weeks, they can morph from brown to brilliant green. That’s a more heat-absorbing color and great camouflage in the winter pond, so you’ll see more greenies in winter and around the ponds.

This great winter gathering of food—sorry, I mean frogs—attracts hungry predators. Around our ponds, watch for egrets and great blue herons and even crows and kestrels to come to the harvest. At night when a pond falls silent for a few minutes, it may mean a raccoon or skunk is wading past on the prowl.

Another gathering to watch for—the folks of our local Marin/Sonoma Mosquito & Vector Control District. During the winter, they regularly visit our vernal ponds. With well-practiced cooperation from environmental organizations, they do a sophisticated job of IPM (Integrated Pest Management), using mostly biological controls, like summer mosquito fish in the clubhouse pond and *Bacillus thuringiensis* larval controls). It’s worth reminding ourselves that as recently as the 1800s, malaria was the single biggest killer in California.

What can we do to protect and honor this great wildlife spectacle right in our own backyard?

Avoid pesticides in our gardens.

Don’t spill motor oil and the like in our driveways and streets, where it’ll wash into habitat with the rains.

Don’t tramp around the ponds or let our dogs run loose in them.










And remember: Make joyful noise!





PHOTO: ERMA WHEATLEY

January 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>1-4 PM Mahjong</p> <p>5 PM Free Form Dance & Movement</p>  <p>7:14 PM</p>	<p>6-8 AM Trash Pickup</p> <p>9:30 AM Aerobics</p> <p>7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker</p> 	<p>5:45-6:45 PM Meditation</p>	<p>10 AM-2 PM Craft Group</p> <p>11 AM-1 PM Whistlestop</p> <p>7 PM PAC MEETING</p>	<p>NEW YEAR'S DAY</p> <p>9:15-10:15 AM Qi Gong with Dove</p> <p>6:30-7:10 PM Silent Meditation</p> <p>7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker</p> 	<p>4 PM Canasta</p> <p>5-7 PM Pub Night</p> <p>7:15 PM Bingo</p>	<p>10 AM Pre-Tai Chi with Jay</p>
<p>1-4 PM Mahjong</p> <p>5 PM Free Form Dance & Movement</p>	<p>6-8 AM Trash Pickup</p> <p>9:30 AM Aerobics</p> <p>7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker</p> 	<p>5:45-6:45 PM Meditation</p>	<p>10 AM-2 PM Craft Group</p> <p>11 AM-1 PM Whistlestop</p> <p>7 PM MAR VAL MEETING</p>	<p>9:15-10:15 AM Qi Gong with Dove</p> <p>6:30-7:10 PM Silent Meditation</p> <p>7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker</p> 	<p>4 PM Canasta</p> <p>5-7 PM Pub Night</p>	<p>10 AM Pre-Tai Chi with Jay</p>
<p>1-4 PM Mahjong</p> <p>5 PM Free Form Dance & Movement</p>	<p>6-8 AM Trash Pickup</p> <p>9:30 AM Aerobics</p> <p>7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker</p> 	<p>5:45-6:45 PM Meditation</p>	<p>10 AM-2 PM Craft Group</p> <p>11 AM Ladies' Bridge</p> <p>11 AM-1 PM Whistlestop</p> <p>7 PM HOL MEETING</p>	<p>9:15-10:15 AM Qi Gong with Dove</p> <p>6:30-7:10 PM Silent Meditation</p> <p>7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker</p> 	<p>4 PM Canasta</p> <p>5-7 PM Pub Night</p>	<p>10 AM Pre-Tai Chi with Jay</p> <p>SCOTTISH NIGHT MARVAL DINNER 5 PM</p>
<p>1-4 PM Mahjong</p> <p>5 PM Free Form Dance & Movement</p>	<p>6-8 AM Trash Pickup</p> <p>9:30 AM Aerobics</p> <p>7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker</p> 	<p>5:45-6:45 PM Meditation</p>	<p>10 AM-2 PM Craft Group</p> <p>11 AM-1 PM Whistlestop</p>	<p>9:15-10:15 AM Qi Gong with Dove</p> <p>6:30-7:10 PM Silent Meditation</p> <p>7:20 PM Poor Man's Poker</p> 	<p>4 PM Canasta</p> <p>5-7 PM Pub Night</p>	<p>10 AM Pre-Tai Chi with Jay</p>