

THE ECHO

July 2021

CONTENTS

	MVMCC • PAC
2 Matt Greenberg	DIRECTORY UPDATE, MVMCC MANAGEMENT UPDATE
3 Jay Shelfer	PAC LETTER TO RESIDENTS
	MVEST
4-6 John Feld	MVEST: Ready to Re-Engage
John Hansen	Thank You
	MAR VAL
7 Kathleen Dargie	MESSAGE FROM MAR VAL
	HOL
7-8 John Feld	HOL MESSAGE
John Feld	HOL COMMUNITY PRESENTATIONS
9 Timo Navsky	CONTRACTOR RATING GUIDE
10 Suzie Lahr	BARK IN THE PARK
Kamala Allen	MARIN VALLEY GALLERY
	ACCESS YOUR INNER ORACLE™ CLASS
11-13 Kamala Allen	HEROES OF LIFE-THREATENING ILLNESS
14 Mary Barbosa	OUR PERUVIAN GOATHERD
15 Aneesha Dillon	BIRD OF THE MONTH: <i>Birds in My Basket</i>
16	CALENDAR: JULY 2021



THE
ECHO
2021

MARIN VALLEY
MOBILE COUNTRY CLUB

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

EDITOR/DESIGNER **Anila Manning**

COPY EDITOR **Mary Barbosa**

PROOFREADERS **Mary Barbosa, Carol-Joy Harris**

CALENDAR COORDINATOR **Carolyn Corry**

PARK DISTRIBUTION/DELIVERY **Mark Crocker**

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 **Stephen Plocher** 415-302-9043
AT LARGE **Vicki Waddell** 415-382-8684

STANDING COMMITTEES

FINANCE **Stephen Plocher**
MV PROJECT PLANNING **John Hansen, Jay Shelfer**
MVEST **John Hansen, Bill Davis, John Feld,**
Stephen Plocher, Carol-Joy Harris, David Gray,
Kevin Mulvany, Erma Wheatley, Pam Berkon

HOL BOARD

PRESIDENT **John Feld** 510-495-4138
1ST VICE PRESIDENT **Ed Collins** 415-377-7696
2ND VICE PRESIDENT **Timo Navsky** 415-279-5935
SECRETARY **Kamala Allen** 415-306-6865
TREASURER **Tara Plocher** 415-302-5992
EVENTS & ACTIVITIES **Janie Crocker** 281-414-3984

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 OF LOGISTICS **Larry Cohen** 883-7786
DIRECTOR EMERITUS **Dee Schneider**

SUBMITTING ARTICLES

Email articles with "ECHO" as the subject to
Anila Manning: anilahere99@gmail.com
with a copy of the article in the body of the
email. Images should be as large as possible.

ECHO DEADLINE

The 8th of the month or sooner
for the following month's issue

Directory Update
Change

New email for David King
davidpersonal1945@gmail.com

Management Update

Water conservation is important: Please do not water your gardens between the hours of 9 am and 7 pm. Water only incrementally at night or very early in the morning. If you need help with setting your timer for your sprinkler system, please contact the front desk.

Carports: Continue with all of your efforts to remove stored items from your carports. Still, many residents have items not permitted in a carport. If residents cooperate, the Park will look that much better.

Smoking in the Park: MVMCC residents continue to alert the front desk to cigarette butts being found in the gutters where dry material is close by and potentially could ignite from a burning cigarette butt. Dog walkers, please do not smoke or drop butts in the gutter or the field below Club View Drive. Fire season is here. This is very important, so please follow these simple rules.

Speeding: Remember to follow the 15 MPH speed limit and watch out for dog walkers and people exercising.

Parkwide tree pruning will be in progress soon. All trees surrounding resident homes will have a five-foot setback from roofs and carports.

Trash cans in the breezeway are for clubhouse trash only. Please keep on separating your own personal trash into your containers at home.

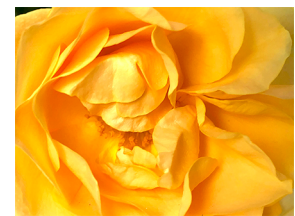
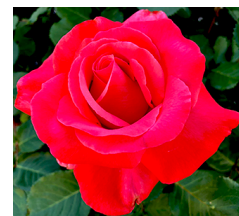
Thank you for your continued cooperation,



Matt Greenberg
Matt Greenberg

GENERAL MANAGER
gm.mvmcc@gmail.com

415-883-5911 ■ 415-883-1971 Fax



Left to right: Epiphyllum grown and photographed by Pauline Hawkins; flowers in the Park by Marianne York

Letter to Residents

Greetings from the Park Acquisition Corporation Board,

Our finances are in order. Our cash, plus medium- and long-term reserves, is at more than \$6.5 million. The City is hard at work balancing its budget, and as staff are spending more time with us, their bills for service are increasing.

The '21/'22 MVMCC budget for both operations and maintenance has been approved by Novato without any rent increases. Funds are included for ADA improvements for the pool and spa and perhaps an outdoor bathroom and shower.

The City of Novato has requested inclusion of Marin Valley in the PUC program to have PG&E revamp the infrastructure for our gas and electric distribution. We'll keep residents updated.

Our thanks to Peggy Hill for her continued development of aid and support of PAC's ad hoc committee on yard maintenance. This program joins with management to aid low-income residents to manage their lots for fire safety and improve their lots' appearance. HOL has donated additional funds to this program. See Matt Greenberg for details. Last month seven homes benefited from this program. Matt also has lined up outside organizations to support this effort.

The PAC Board is reviewing the Rules and Regulations concerning living in this community. The Park will be living with these R&Rs for a long time, so we want to get it right. Years ago, the PAC committee worked diligently with residents to get feedback and to update what was believed to be the consciousness of how we wanted this community to function. The City's legal counsel sat with these suggestions for three years. The draft has returned via the ad hoc Rules and Regulations committee and is now being further revised with input from residents.

Feedback was constricted during the lockdown, but the PAC Board is reviewing these updated R&Rs and will consider the appropriate actions. When the board returns them to the City, residents will still have many opportunities to comment on them before they become the law of the Park.

Concerning the two vacating PAC Board positions, Steve Plocher, our current treasurer, has volunteered to stay on, and long-term resident Vicki Waddell applied for the other vacating position. As there were two applicants for the two positions, there was no reason to have an election. This so-called white ballot is provided for by the PAC's election rulebook to allow unopposed candidates to be seated on the Board.

I urge you to investigate and participate in ongoing activities concerning PAC's MVEST, your HOL, and Mar Val reported on elsewhere in the *Echo*, while being mindful of the contagious viruses that are around. There are many resident participation opportunities this month and next; see MVEST and HOL's letters in this *Echo*. With the expected reopening of the clubhouse this month, real community get-togethers will again be possible.

The PAC Board's meetings are enriched by resident participation. Your observations and suggestions on how MVMCC can better serve you and the community's interests are always welcomed. Come to the video presentations or email us.

The next PAC meeting will be on July 6 at 6 pm. Agendas for the coming PAC meetings are posted 72 hours prior, and are also available to those on the mailing list. Contact **Carol-Joy Harris** at caroljoyharris@comcast.net to be added to this list. To be included in the videoconferences see the links provided on the agendas, or watch on Comcast Channel 26. A recording of the June meeting is at <https://youtu.be/hNhYj7k9qhc>.

In service,




Jay Shelfer
PAC PRESIDENT
jjshelfer@yahoo.com



Ready to Re-Engage

by **JOHN FELD**



MVEST (Marin Valley Emergency Safety Team) is an organization that exists to help residents prepare and train for emergencies in our community. Generally, these emergencies are fire, earthquakes, and storms/flooding. A steering committee meets every week on Mondays at 5 pm, and a large group of volunteers prepares for and is ready to act when that bad day happens.

Organization

MVEST has been through many iterations over the years. The main infrastructure of MVEST is reliant on volunteers to become block captains or zone chiefs, run an incident command center, and

form teams that can provide first aid, emotional first aid, communications, and other services. MVEST receives a yearly grant from the City and occasionally grants for creating defensible space, hiring goats to eat flammable materials near our homes, and chipper days to get rid of fire-prone plants. It also focuses on crime prevention and pollution and other environmental issues that can affect our health and well-being. MVEST has organized the Park as a Firewise Community, part of a national organization of communities that is set up to combat wildfires, and encourages local solutions for safety by involving homeowners in taking individual responsibility for

preparing their homes for the risk of wildfire. It is also closely associated with local agencies, such as the Novato Fire District and the local police department. It works closely with Park Management and the City of Novato.

Chain of Communication

Block captains are people allocated to approximately 12 neighboring homes to be concerned about in an emergency. This means knowing how many people live in each house and if they can take care of themselves, especially in times when we might have to evacuate. Each block captain has a walkie-talkie to communicate with

their **zone chiefs** – who organize and coordinate each zone, which consists of five or six block captains. The zone chiefs communicate with the **incident command center**, usually in the Clubhouse. Of course, this does not happen often. Over the past five or six years, we have had two house fires, one wildfire in an adjoining field (pictured), and one major electrical outage. There have been, and will be again, regular trainings to cover these eventualities from time to time during the year. Additionally, MVEST organizes first aid training, practices for evacuations, and writes articles for the *Echo* on how to keep ourselves and our homes safe and prepared.

Moving Forward

During the past year we have all been in lockdown, lying low, and now we are starting

to work at reorganizing the community. We are reaching out to block captains, zone chiefs, backup block captains, and other volunteers to engage them with the organization, to find out where we go from here in a post-pandemic world and to recruit others who wish to lend a hand. We want to make sure that each volunteer is ready and able to continue with their allocated tasks and to recruit new members to fill in for those who are unable to or have moved.

Block captains and zone chiefs are asked to participate in their tasks about one or two hours a month. This involves primarily reviewing radio use and occasionally training and practice in first aid, basic search and rescue, occasional presentations, and checking on the residents in their block. These are good opportunities to learn new skills, meet other

community members, and have fun at the same time.

If you are ready to become reinvolved or would like to become involved, please get in touch with the MVEST steering committee. The steering committee has weekly meetings open to all residents (on Zoom, soon back in the Clubhouse) that usually take one hour and can be very informative. If you would like a Zoom invitation, agendas of meetings, and/or to read the minutes of these meetings, please email johnhansen.emt@gmail.com or johnmfeld@gmail.com.

The link is also on our website at www.marinvalley.net on the home page. If you are already a volunteer who wants to do something else or can no longer volunteer, we would love to hear from you too.

Thank You

by **JOHN HANSEN**

Wildfire risk has been rapidly increasing in recent years and has become increasingly noticeable by all, as has the ever-growing participation by Marin Valley residents. THANK YOU, Marin Valley, for your diligence.

Here's a timeline of some key developments in our response to the looming wildfire threat.

It began with a grant in 2014 to conduct a comprehensive Vegetation Management Study of Marin Valley. The study was overseen by the Novato Fire District (NFD) and completed in 2015. This well-documented and illustrated

report has been key to our wildfire mitigation efforts ever since.

Also, in 2014 MVEST began anew with an invigorated program to improve overall safety in Marin Valley, including wildfire safety. MVEST aggressively pursued cooperative relationships with state, county, and local agencies to accelerate our preparedness efforts. We have since attained representation on the boards of directors for both NFD and FIRESafe MARIN. THANK YOU, MVEST leaders.

In 2016, shortly after our scary local wildfire, MVEST attained national recognition for Marin

Valley as a Firewise Community. Our first campaign was to try to make juniper an “endangered species” in Marin Valley due to its extremely dangerous explosive flammable potential. THANK YOU to all of you who participated over the past few years in meeting our goal of virtually eradicating junipers.

In 2018, with yet another grant, we were able to clear vegetation a safe distance along both sides of Marin Valley Drive, our primary evacuation route. Overall, from 2014 to present, Marin Valley has been the recipient of over \$105,500 in wildfire mitigation grants, primarily through FIRESafeMARIN and strong support by the NFD. THANK YOU, FIRESafeMARIN, for helping to make us a model Firewise Community.

Last March 3, 2020, Marin voters approved Measure C, which created the Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority (MWPA) and a \$20 million annual budget to help prevent catastrophic wildfires throughout Marin. NFD is a major participant in MWPA and receives its fair share of the budget. While Marin Valley is not a significant contributor to the property taxes that support MWPA, NFD has elected to include Marin Valley in NFD programs that are financed by MWPA. THANK YOU, Novato Fire District for your goodwill.

Near the end of April this year, the most visible of the MWPA-funded programs that benefit us directly was recently experienced by Marin Valley residents. NFD’s team of Wildfire Mitigation Specialists (WMSs) provided all participating residents with a “drive-by” evaluation of their respective home wildfire-risk potential, and an offer to come back and provide a more thorough evaluation and detailed report for no charge and no obligation. And NFD went a step further by offering to contribute **matching up to \$500 for improving landscape fire resistance and up to \$2,500 for home hardening**. Scores of Marin Valley residents took them up on these generous offers, and we invite and encourage more of you to do the same. Each responsive participant makes our entire community a little safer. THANK YOU to the residents who

participated in the WMS program. The program is not going away, so you can still take advantage of this offer. Call: 415-878-2622 and ask for the program manager, Yvette Blount, or email her at yblount@novatofire.org.

And Then There Were Goats... I can safely refer to this as our annual goat program. Our manager, Matt, acted deliberately on our initial suggestion for goat grazing to augment our annual fuel-break maintenance in 2019. This experiment, encouraged by FIRESafeMARIN, turned out to be quite successful and repeated last year. This year we have twice the budget allotted, so the goats will proceed to chew up the entire Park perimeter to a variable 100–200-foot span, technically called a “shaded fuel break.”



Before and after: The goats ate even the short dry grass, as shown on the right side.

Next year, we have an excellent chance for a \$50,000 NFD grant to repeat this year’s effort. THANK YOU, Matt Greenberg, for your initiation and excellent management, and all your critical contributions to our wildfire safety.

Park safety is a diverse and endless task. The MVEST organization is a volunteer standing committee of PAC; no one is expected to serve endlessly, so volunteers regularly come and go. THANK YOU to all of you who have donated your valuable time and energy to MVEST over the years, and THANK YOU to new recruits as you step forward. If you are interested in contributing to our safety challenges or learning more about MVEST, call me at 415-847-7155 or John Feld at 415-884-2675.

And finally, to all of you for your ongoing support of MVEST, a big THANK YOU!

Message from Mar Val

Dear Friends,

While I find it hard to believe, it is nonetheless true that Mar Val has plans underway to hold our first social event of 2021.

As I submit this article we remain uncertain as to what requirements and/or regulations we will have to follow; however,

signs point to the strong possibility we will be able to celebrate Independence Day with a BBQ on the Clubhouse deck on Sunday, July 4, 2021.

Assuming all considerations remain favorable, we will be providing information during the month of June pertaining to location of reservation forms,

choice of meals, and relevant details. Mar Val is delighted to once again invite our neighbors to join in a community celebration.

Warmest regards,



Kathleen Dargie

Kathleen Dargie
MAR VAL PRESIDENT
kfdargie@aol.com

Home Owners League Message

Welcome,

By the time you read this, hopefully our clubhouse will have reopened, and life will be returning to some sort of normality.

This June brought us our first blast of heat for the year, and it seems there is plenty more to come. As you know, we have had minimal rain this year, and the Novato Fire District is expecting that wildfires will accompany this renewed heat. Stay vigilant, and make sure you have N95 or KN95 masks for when the bad air happens. You can also check the daily air quality in the Park with our Purple Air monitor at <https://bit.ly/2TAZmP2>. Bookmark this link for easy reference. You can also find this link on our website, www.marinvalley.net, where you can also find other useful information about our wonderful community.



HOL is again assisting us to purchase healthy food from The Rollin' Root. We will be giving out \$5 tokens to the first 40 people while they last starting July 1-2. Rollin' Root needs to occupy four parking spaces when it arrives, typically the four spaces to the west of the handicap spaces. HOL puts out cones and a sign, but cars still occupy these spaces and

owners have to be found and asked to move them. It would be helpful if people just avoided these spaces on Thursdays and Fridays till 1:30 pm.

Pauline Hawkins has taken wonderful care of our communal gardens and shrubberies. She and her helper are having issues with dogs relieving themselves in the garden in front of the clubhouse. Please be aware that your dogs share this space with people, who routinely have to use their hands where your mutt relieves itself.

The new online Contractor Rating Guide is now available (marinvalley.net/contractors-rating-guide/); you should have received an email explaining how to access it. If you have difficulty, please email marinvalley.net@gmail.com. A binder containing the same data will be available in the library shortly after the clubhouse reopens.

This Echo includes a story about Bark in the Park, at which 30-40 people and about 20 dogs came out to enjoy a lovely day in the meadow. Every dog got gifts and prizes, and we all had a marvelous time. Hopefully, it will become a regular yearly event. Thank you, Timo, Aneesha, Betty, Janie, and Ed for organizing and helping.

The Yard Maintenance Committee, led by Peggy Hill, has helped beautify our Park by assisting people in getting their yards rid of overgrown weeds and plants that can possibly contribute to fires. HOL has contributed \$1,000 to the Marin Valley Humanitarian Fund toward paying for this work. A group of volunteers surveyed the Park for gardens in need of some TLC, and Matt contacted those people to see if they wanted help. If you would like to be considered, please contact Matt. If you are able, please contribute to the Park's Humanitarian Fund, which will help keep this worthwhile effort going. Put donations in the HOL box next to the breezeway bulletin board.

We are officially in a serious drought from July 1 to November 1. Residents watering their yards have the options of using a handheld hose with a shutoff nozzle, using a drip irrigation system, or using a

container (e.g., watering can) with the following exceptions:

- Above-ground irrigation is allowed only three days/week:
- Above-ground irrigation is allowed only during the hours of 7 pm to 9 am.
- Keep drip systems to a minimum.

If you would like to receive copies of the agenda before the meetings, including the Zoom address for the meeting, please drop me a line at johnmfeld@gmail.com, and use the same address to request copies of the minutes. Stay healthy,



HOL COMMUNITY PRESENTATIONS

by **JOHN FELD**



When it comes to hiring someone to do work around the house, how do you find the right person? *Can I afford them? Do they understand mobile*

home construction? Are they reliable? Usually, the best recommendations come from your neighbors. Now you can get references from the whole community in the new *Contractor Rating Guide* on our website, an up-to-date version of the *Handyman's Binder* that lived in the library.

If you have access to the Internet, you can find the new Guide at <http://marinvalley.net/contractors-rating-guide> with instructions on how to make an entry, and for those not connected there is a binder in the clubhouse library where all the online information is printed out. You can complete an entry online, or on paper (available in the Clubhouse breezeway by the noticeboards) and we will enter it for you.

Your entry will help others find who they are looking for.

Contractors are any person or company that

you have paid to work on or in your home, such as a handyman, plumber, electrician, house cleaner, window washer, painter, gardener, carpenter, earthquake bracing specialist, carpet cleaner, pet groomer, etc.

The Guide is for the residents of Marin Valley ONLY. It has no advertising, and reviews – good or bad – will stay online for three years and are accessible only to residents.

If you have difficulty getting online or need help accessing the Guide, send an email to marinvalley.net@gmail.com

Bark in the Park

by **TIMO NAVSKY**

On Saturday, May 22nd, a gathering of Park doggies and their owners gathered in the meadow for some fun and enjoyment! About 20 dogs and 40 people came together to meet their neighbors and enjoy meeting local pups. We had chairs set up, a tent for shade, drinking water for the pups, and water and cookies for the adults. The event was sponsored by HOL, and a Pet Committee was formed; Timo Navsky, Betty Cianciarulo, Aneesha Dillon, and Janie Klimes Crocker inspired and organized the event.



Every dog received at least one prize. There were prizes for Best Costume, Best Trick, Youngest Dog, Oldest Dog, Smallest Dog, Furriest Dog, Most Hairless Dog, and for which person had

owned the most dogs in their lifetime! The audience voted with much applauding and cheering, and we learned a lot about our Park dogs and their human owners. The finale featured a short parade so that everyone could admire the dogs and their owners.

What was especially wonderful about the event – besides so many of us gathered together after a very long time due to the pandemic – was that a significant number of non-dog owners came to enjoy the entertainment and festivities. A good time was had by all!



A special BIG THANKS goes to two very generous donations of prizes, treats, samples, and toys to our event. Thank you for your generosity and giving to our community: **Pet Club on Tamalpais Blvd. in Corte Madera and Woodlands Pet Store on Ignacio Blvd. in Novato!**

Each of these stores went above and beyond in their generosity, and we hope all of you owning pets in our community will shop there and support them.



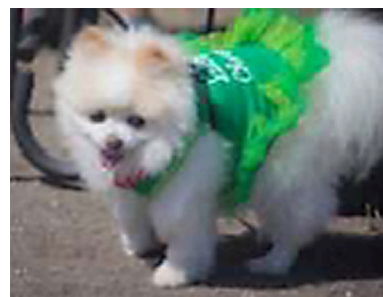
We will hold the event again next spring, and just so you know,



everyone is welcome. Please come and join us next year for some great entertainment, some good laughs, and a chance to participate in a community event where you can meet your neighbors!

Contact me, Timo Navsky , if you'd like to join the committee for next year! 415-279-5935 or

pgemsky@comcast.net



Marin Valley Gallery Is Coming Back!

by **SUZIE LAHR**

Finally we are tentatively scheduled to install a new exhibit on July 19–21. So get ready, artists! This is the time to complete your works of art and have them framed, wired, and ready to go up on the walls in the next few weeks!

Once we complete this phase, we can meet to plan an opening reception! I will soon email all of you on my artist list with the logistics of times and exact dates for

pickup of the pieces that have been there since 2019, and delivering your new piece. The lobby, hallway and library are all newly painted white; new lighting is being installed, and all the carpets and windows are sparkling clean. This will all make the art stand out beautifully!

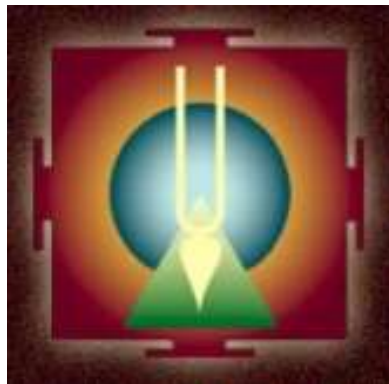
I am thrilled to be starting anew with all of you and your creations of creativity and beauty. I know we are all breathing a sigh of relief and looking forward to new beginnings together! If you have any questions, please email me at suzielahr@aol.com.

Class: Accessing Your Inner Oracle™

by **KAMALA ALLEN**

Ninety-minute free introductory class in the Fireside Room. Date to be announced by flyer and robocall. Introduction will be followed by four free weekly classes.

Everyone has an Inner Oracle™ that shows up differently in each person, and there's a way to access it at will when it's needed. Sometimes certain people can tap into this inner wisdom spontaneously, but in most cases it takes some learning and practice. The information provided comes through when alone with oneself, or out of a present-time encounter with another person or group. When it occurs there's an energetic intelligence that impels deeper understanding and peace along with an intensity that often



creates a noticeable shift in the room.

Oracular intelligence doesn't have to do with thinking about something or even getting quiet and waiting to see what the next thought is. It's not channeling, since there are no intermediaries involved, and it's not a psychic reading, since it doesn't involve going into a trance-like state. Instead, it's accessing a deep field

of consciousness that leads to dropping down into a greater perspective.

Though this is my first attempt teaching this to others, I believe anyone can learn it. There won't be any demand for something to happen in this class, because I find that wisdom intelligence has its own timing. If nothing comes through any of us at a particular time, that's okay, but understanding and practicing this skill will help us learn what activates and brings forward our own inner wisdom. For more information call Kamala Allen: 415-306-6865 or email dr.allen108@gmail.com

Heroes of Life-Threatening Illness

by **KAMALA ALLEN**

My experience of the following persons is that they are graceful, courageous, and wise in the way they handled or are handling their life-threatening illnesses. In writing this article, I wanted both to honor them and to glean their wisdom for others to make use of. Though many residents have faced or may be facing such a challenge, and they also have much to offer us, I wanted to interview the individuals I personally know who are going through it now and who have been an inspiration to me. I hope these interviews will inspire, encourage, and enlighten. Thank you to Jeannine, Marianne, and Terry for sharing your journeys in such a profoundly personal way, and may all our journeys end (and begin) with grace.



Jeannine Freedom

How have you shifted your perception of this illness since first learning about it?

It was less than three weeks from the diagnosis to my surgery, so it was fast and surreal. I had to integrate the speed, and it was scary. I was in denial up until they told me for certain that I had cancer, but denial worked for me. Cancer isn't necessarily a death sentence. There are so many treatments for it now. And there are many counseling programs offered for cancer patients.

What is getting you through it now?

Worry doesn't help. Stay with the here and now. Take in people's sayings and let them serve you. I use a mantra, "I'm alright right now." In the morning, when I go for walks in the Park, I bless with unconditional love the houses I pass, and chant, "May all beings be at peace; may all beings never be separated from joy."

What have you learned, and what has this experience given you so far?

Love your cancer. None of us will get out alive, so we all have to find a way of facing suffering to get through it. I was a nurse and taught patients how to release pain through relaxed breathing. The more you can relax the contraction, the more you allow the body to

do its job. We can't be certain of anything but the breath, in and out, and the more we can breathe through it, and allow it, the more we can love what is. After surgery, I sat in the meadow and enjoyed the community and the energy of the dancing. It helped me to see everyone living and loving. I learned a better appreciation of life and connection from this experience with cancer and the importance of honoring my connection with everyone. Before this happened I was asking myself, *What's my next thirty years going to be like?* Now I know it's just connection and showing up, trusting Spirit to bring me people I can help. Focus on others.

What is one (or more) thing you could pass on to others who might be experiencing a life-threatening illness?

Keep up your practices and your physical routines that give you stability and ground you in present time, like eating regularly, three times a day. And during my cancer, I often grounded myself in Mother Earth. I opened up eyes in the bottom of my feet, established a cord to the core of the earth and pulled energy up. The more earth energy you pull up, the more spiritual energy you pull down. It helps to clear the stuff in our cells from our past and from our ancestors.



Marianne York

How have you shifted your perception of this illness since first learning about it?

Three weeks after having been given a clean bill of health, I was diagnosed with stage 4 metastatic colon cancer. I had just started getting a foothold on life after my husband's sudden death in 2018, and I wanted to live. Initially, I heard this as a death sentence but remained hopeful that I would go into remission since I was doing all the "right things" for myself. Then the scans kept coming back saying chemo wasn't really controlling it, so I went from thinking it would be cured, it could be contained and I could continue to live, to where I am now. I took my good genes and good health for granted, but I take

nothing for granted now. A recent trip to the ER confirmed that for me. I am happy to be alive and living life as fully as I can.

What is getting you through it now?

I'm staying in the present moment and doing a lot of inner work to find out who I really am. As a professional social worker I helped people cope with challenging health situations, but it's really different when it's you. Over time, I had developed a repertoire of self-healing techniques – meditation, acupuncture, massage, Reiki, music, walking in nature, etc. – but the diagnosis threw me out of my depth. I've now integrated some of these practices, and they sustain me. Happily, I don't feel much pain, but when I do, I deep breathe and it helps. I have been a do-er all of my life, but now I am a be-er. I spend a lot of time letting my body rest. I enjoy sitting in my zero-gravity bed and just letting myself be.

My diagnosis was a few months pre-COVID, and I honestly felt I might die any day. I had energy at the time and became highly organized. During COVID, I gave away countless possessions to family members, organized my entire estate, and edited 35 years of photographs and negatives. Happily, University of Mass/Boston is archiving this professional work. It's my legacy, and it's helped me get closure. Everything is pretty much wrapped up. I'm also in regular contact with family and friends around the country.

What have you learned, and what has this experience given you so far?

I'm staying in the present moment like never before, embracing everything, the good and the bad. I'm embracing the richness of every single moment. Not every moment is fun, but I've really learned I have to hold everything. And I'm accepting love. I used to think that my husband was my source of love, so his sudden death shocked me, because the source of my love disappeared. Through all of those who came to support me, I learned that there's so much love out there, and we don't realize it. I even got lucky and met a remarkable man who continues to love me, no matter what my circumstances. We are fortunate to live in this amazing neighborhood/community. I feel like I get a big hug every time I see someone. If this is the beginning of the end for me, I'm going to go out with love. So I affirm what the Beatles said, "All You Need Is Love."

What is one (or more) thing you could pass on to others who might be experiencing a life-threatening illness?

Life is impermanent; everything changes. We have the illusion that we're in control until something like a health crisis happens. Death walks by my side now; I'm going to die probably sooner than I thought. Embracing the Big Unknown, the mystery of it, can be scary. That's why staying in the present moment and feeling love makes sense. Accept things as they are, not as we wish them to be. My bottom line is to enjoy every moment; this is all there is. And listen to your gut. It's important to know what you really want. Take the time to listen to yourself. Make decisions by getting the best people around you, and if you want to do something, just do it.



Terry Patten

How have you shifted your perception of this illness since first learning about it?

When I first learned about it, I was in shock. It happened on my 70th birthday, on April Fool's Day, coinciding with Easter and Passover weekend. I thought, *This might be your time; accept and appreciate it; surrender and be open to whatever is next.* However, that changed because there wasn't a lot of information about the illness. My oncologist didn't have much experience with this type of cancer, because it's very rare. So I was kept in this not knowing for so long. And I realized, with all these coincidences and the lack of information, I just have to relate to it as a spiritual instruction, as a spiritual practitioner.

What is getting you through it now?

Right away, I received all this tremendous love and support from a number of communities I'm involved with that were deeply embracing. I was overwhelmed by how much I'm carried in the arms of love – maybe out of this life, or perhaps through a healing crisis out of which I could continue on for a while. I love our community – the dances – and not just those, but in all kinds of ways. We've become better friends over the last year and a half of the pandemic, and I think we're a source of support and healing for one another. I feel very much loved, supported, and cared for. The circumstances I'm in are so well-favored: I have loving relationships; I don't have karmas; if I have to let go, I can let go full-heartedly into the Mystery. I'm not afraid of what happens in my dying. I feel grateful to be so at peace, but I have an obligation to the people who love me and depend on me to stick around as long as I possibly can. And not just that, but to be especially here for the Miracle of Life. I want to live, and every living being wants to stay alive and not just

let go. But it's okay. I'm doing what I need to do to open to grace and become an opening for grace to be felt by others, too. I'm brightening the moments I'm spending with others, and that gives me a sense of purpose. I'm being a source of life and brightness and positivity, and I feel I've got a good reason to be here.

What have you learned, and what has this experience given you so far?

I feel as much peace as I know how to feel, but I'm also humble with relation to death because it kicks your ass. It's not like it's just a breeze, but it's a natural process. My awareness of it is not merely as a spiritual lesson, but the demand – a kind of strict one – for what's the very best in me has just intensified. It feels like when in those strict Rinzi Zen schools you slightly slump with your posture and you get hit with a stick. I recognize what's really going on is that if I'm "awake," I'm amazed and grateful for this very moment. It returns me to a sense of gratitude and wonder, and to really showing up right now. It's okay that I often feel I'm in a situation trying to cope. I cope better some days and worse on others, and sometimes I feel better than other times about how I'm dealing with it all, but that's the superficial level of it. At a deeper level, it's really this divine revelation. To the degree that I fall into the conventional way of relating to it, I'm fundamentally not very happy. To the degree that I wake up out of that, then I'm just grateful for every moment of being alive. And that's what it's all about.

All the news I've gotten so far from the oncologist hasn't been terribly encouraging. Now I'm seeing holistic practitioners and learning some things that magnify my own vitality and well-being. So I guess I'll be doing more to positively heal. It's inoperable, stage 4, too pervasive to use radiation, and incurable. So

they're trying to buy time mainly with chemo, some immunotherapy, and targeted therapies, but their tendency is not to expect me to live that long. They're trying to help, and they're good people, but if I get locked into their more conventional approach, I'm going to let my attitude be a self-fulfilling prophecy. And yet, I want to learn from, respect, and benefit from all the things they know. They have a worldview, and then there's this worldview that you can create your own reality. Some of that's a little ungrounded for me, but there are aspects of it that are profound and have truth. What makes sense to my heart is to suspend any belief system to surrender into the unknown, miraculous nature of the present moment, and out of that, all the grace and healing can come. But I'm not trying to work at healing to get it to come out the right way, not visualizing myself in perfect health. It became immediately clear to me that, to the degree I fight this in resistance to what is, I will just suffer. If I don't have that much time, I want to enjoy and appreciate every moment of life, and that's what's going to extend it.

What is one (or more) thing you could pass on to others who might be experiencing a life-threatening illness?

I would encourage everyone to be really compassionate to the scared, confused, hurting parts of themselves and yet notice that they are so much more than just that. Do whatever they can do to get in touch with, and really lean into, whatever experience they have of the wonder of existence, the sense of it as a gift for which they feel grateful, or the present moment of aliveness as something truly sacred and divine. The process is about really concentrating on your relationship to (there are so many names for it) God, the present moment, the Mystery.



Our Peruvian Goatherd

by **MARY BARBOSA**



As everyone has delightedly noted, the goats are here!

I paid a visit to our goatherd, Raúl Conchari Sullca, 43, to find out more about his life and duties as sole caretaker of the goats.

Although he may have goat-speak down pat, English still eludes him, but we managed to have a fairly flowing conversation even with my rocky Spanish about his life on the job.

Raúl hails from Peru and has been tending goats for three years. Prior to that he was a shepherd in the Calexico area on the Mexican border for seven years. His employer, Goats R Us, is based in Orinda and rents out goats all over the greater Bay Area, employing about 12 goatherds year-round. Even in rainy weather, goats will merrily masticate wherever they are needed. Raúl has tended the goats at Marin Valley for the past three years, and when he leaves here he will head down the road to Unity Church for just under a week.

And so it goes, year-round. Every three years his work visa allows him to return to his hometown of Huancayo, Peru, to spend time with his wife and two sons, ages 23 and 13. It's not easy, he says, to maintain a close connection with them from a distance, but they telephone regularly and do their best. Raúl left Peru, where he had been employed at a brick factory, a decade ago to try his luck in the US, when his youngest son was just two years old.

A huge part of Raúl's job is to erect fencing for an area of 200–500 square meters for the goats to spend about one day mowing it down, and to then move it to an adjacent area, multiple times over the weeks. The battery-operated fencing gives off a minor electrical shock when touched, enough to keep the goats from stampeding over it but not enough to harm someone who accidentally touches it.

Installing and uninstalling, unassisted, umpteen yards of fencing on uneven terrain is a modern twist to the

age-old profession of shepherding; dogs were traditionally employed to help keep a shepherd's charges in check. Raúl does have a dog, his "best friend," Uchi, for company and for any unforeseen cases of straying goats, but generally the goats pass seamlessly from one fenced pasture to the next.

A vital element of the goats' eating success is access to sufficient water – the more they drink, the more they eat. Raúl provides the hose but depends on nearby houses to give permission to hook up to a water line for a day or two at a time as the herd circles the Park. Some people allow it; some do not – oddly, since MVMCC absorbs the cost of residents' water usage. The same goes for electricity to run the electrical needs of Raúl's trailer, which is parked in the meadow for most of his stay. Happily, Deb McNeil readily agreed to provide an outlet for Raúl's extension cord – in the nick of time, because his refrigerator and other essentials were running on a diminishing tank of propane – and another neighbor provided a faucet for Raúl's water hose to his trailer. Raúl's employer visits him every two weeks to supply him with his choice of groceries but the business relies on the communities being served to provide the basics.

It seems like a lonely life, or at least solitary, but Raúl says he's used to it and feels quite content. He works hard, sleeps, and repeats. He speaks with pride of the work ethic of Peruvian shepherds and, by extension, goatherds, which seems to elevate their employability abroad.

Kudos to Matt for bringing in the goats, and many thanks to Raúl for making it look easy.



PHOTOGRAPH: TARA FLOCHER

The Birds in My Basket

by **ANEESHA DILLON**

When I bought my little doublewide from Tatini and Max in 2015, they told me that pairs of mourning doves sometimes nested in the hanging baskets on the porch. However, five years passed, and so far that had not happened. Gradually I let go of the idea.

Then, this spring, mourning doves commandeered the hanging basket on my porch. It stood barren for five years, and this year I am on my third brood, and it has been a terribly exciting and educational time for me!

When the first pair of doves appeared in early March, fussing around in the basket, adding twigs to the scrawny old nest, I started to get excited! Several mornings they appeared, and the female tried out the scrappy nest for a while; then for the rest of the day they were nowhere to be seen. I peeked in...no eggs. Would they really choose my basket?

Yes! And soon after, two little eggs appeared. Thus began the “ordeal” of the first pair. On my birthday, March 10, the marathon began, and the winds and rain went on for days. I was rooting for that persistent mom, who kept her eggs warm through the hardship of cold winds blowing night and day. And Dad hung in for regular relief breaks and fended off the nasty bluejays that tried more than once to intimidate the little family. After two long weeks, two chicks popped out, and I watched them grow big and feathery.










The parents began leaving them alone more often, and one evening about two weeks after hatching, one chick stood on the edge of the nest observing his parents clucking around on the ground below. He wobbled there for some

minutes and then took a flapping jump and cascaded onto the ground. His sister waited until the next morning when she too fluttered crazily to the ground.



They spent the next 10 days huddling in my backyard, being fed by the parents, uninterested in flying, it seemed. Then one day they were gone. In the meantime, the next pair – or maybe it was the same pair; I have no idea – took up residence, and it began all over again. This time there was only one chick, but the cycle followed the same timing. And I noticed that the parents sat on the ground with the lone chick more than when there were two. Those birds know what they’re doing!

Just as I started to miss the birds in my basket, a third pair flirted with the nest for about a week and finally took the jump and moved in. I haven’t been able yet to peek in and see how many eggs are there, but it will become known soon enough! It’s still only the third week of May, and I’m thrilled that already three little families have allowed me to observe them, sing to them, talk to them, share their space.... Thank you, little doves in my basket! Be welcome.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>JULY 2021</h1>				1	2	3
				11AM-12PM The Rollin' Root \$5 tokens free to 1 st 40 shoppers clubhouse parking lot 	1:00-1:30PM The Rollin' Root 	
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
10-10:30 Meditation <i>Zoom/contact</i> <i>Michael</i> <i>Hagerty</i> INDEPENDENCE DAY	6AM Trash Pickup 5-6PM MVEST Meeting <i>Zoom/contact</i> <i>John Hansen</i>	1:30PM Elder Support Group <i>contact Erma</i> <i>Wheatley</i> 6PM PAC Board Meeting <i>Zoom/contact</i> <i>Carol-Joy Harris</i>	6PM HOL Board Meeting <i>Zoom/contact</i> <i>John Feld</i>	11AM-12PM The Rollin' Root  ECHO DEADLINE	9AM-11:00 AM FIRESafe MARIN meeting 1:00-1:30PM The Rollin' Root 	
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
10-10:30 Meditation	6AM Trash Pickup 5-6PM MVEST Meeting			11AM-12PM The Rollin' Root 	1:00-1:30PM The Rollin' Root 	
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
10-10:30 Meditation	6AM Trash Pickup 5-6PM MVEST Meeting Gallery hanging	1:30PM Elder Support Group Gallery hanging	Gallery hanging	11AM-12PM The Rollin' Root 	1:00-1:30PM The Rollin' Root 	FULL MOON
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
10-10:30 Meditation	6AM Trash Pickup 5-6PM MVEST Meeting	6:00 PM FIRESafe MARIN webinar: Fire Insurance <i>Zoom/contact</i> <i>John Hansen</i>	4:00 PM Book Club <i>Zoom/contact</i> <i>Carol-Joy Harris</i>	11AM-12PM The Rollin' Root 	1:00-1:30PM The Rollin' Root 