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**August 2023**



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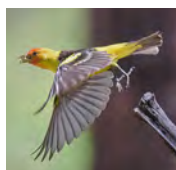
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CALENDAR: AUGUST 2023

## Editors Note

Thank you **Mark Crocker** for your years of service coordinating the distribution of the *Echo* and the many trips up the hill to see if it has yet arrived. Your efforts are greatly appreciated.

We look forward to working with **Cecil Sherrod** who has volunteered to be the new coordinator in chief. Now if we can only get the *Echos* from the printer on time, she will be able to portion them to the many volunteers who deliver them to the 315 tubes. (If you don't have your tube yet, please help our deliverers by making sure there is a place for an *Echo* delivery.) The printer apologizes for the lateness of the recent issues, held up by supply chain problems of getting parts for the printer, enough ink to print, and now a supply of paper to print on. Remember, even before the printed version arrives you can find the latest issue on the home page of our website at [marinvalley.net](http://marinvalley.net), as well as all the back issues since 2015 at <https://marinvalley.net/echov2/> which is also found under Living Here > Echo Magazine.

## Pumping Station Project Update

by **DAVID STIER**

*Associate Engineer, Vice President of Nute Engineering*



**P**roject work continued to progress during the month of July. Special coatings and paints were applied to piping and concrete structures for corrosion protection. Installation of the electrical and mechanical components will continue through August, working toward a goal of having the new pump station operational in September.

Any questions about the project can be directed to Elisa Sarlatte, project manager for the City of Novato, at [esarlatte@novato.org](mailto:esarlatte@novato.org) ■

### Directory Update

#### Change

Lucinda Daly's new email address: [suzyq8460@gmail.com](mailto:suzyq8460@gmail.com)

## T H E ECHO 2023

### MARIN VALLEY MOBILE COUNTRY CLUB

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### SUBMITTING ARTICLES

Email articles with "ECHO" as the subject to **Anila Manning: [anilahere99@gmail.com](mailto:anilahere99@gmail.com)** with a copy of the article in the body of the email. Images should be high resolution.

### ECHO DEADLINE

The 8<sup>th</sup> of the month or sooner for the following month's issue

# MVMCC Management Update

# PAC Letter to Residents

**Fire Abatement** We are paying close attention to fire safety and abatement issues here in the Park. Our budget for this specific type of work was reduced by \$100,000 from last year, so we are doing just the minimal for defensible space. The goats have helped and are here by way of a much-appreciated grant from Novato Fire District.

**Trees** Our tree budget was also reduced by \$95,000. Only emergency tree services will be performed. The general pruning is not available this season.

**Pets** Please keep all pets indoors unless on a leash out for a walk. Multiple cats are on report with the front desk as unattended and/or outside. Remember, the young quail are vulnerable to cats.

**Barking** Also remember, your dog barks when unattended, so please keep your dogs with you. Your neighbors will thank you for that.

**Water** Water is precious, and we should conserve as much as possible. Please do not water your gardens between the hours of 8 am and 6 pm. Use water incrementally at night or very early in the morning. This gives your plants a chance to absorb as much as possible. If you need help with setting your timer for your sprinkler system, please contact the front desk. We will set your timer.

**Carports** Continue with your efforts to remove stored items from your carports. Still, many residents have items not permitted in a carport. Pride of ownership ...

**Rule 10.1** Please do not hang laundry in your yard to dry. Your neighbors do not appreciate this.



*Matt Greenberg*  
**Matt Greenberg**  
GENERAL MANAGER  
[gm.mvmcc@gmail.com](mailto:gm.mvmcc@gmail.com)

415-883-5911 ■ 415-883-1971 Fax

Greetings from the Park Acquisition Corporation Board.

## Possible Sale of MVMCC

On June 13, 2023, Dean Moser, HCA Management, made an unsolicited offer of \$30 million to the Novato City Council to purchase the land under our homes. The City of Novato has not decided on the possible sale (as the *Echo* goes to print). The City Council met twice, on June 27 and July 11, to discuss a potential sale in closed session meetings. The turnout by MVMCC residents at these City Council meetings was exceptional – about 80 residents at the first meeting and about 150 at the second meeting. The PAC Board members and many residents went on record to voice our concerns. The PAC Board has engaged the services of legal counsel to guide us.

We will keep residents informed regarding a possible sale. The board is communicating with residents primarily via email, so please be sure that Erma Wheatley ([ermawheatley@gmail.com](mailto:ermawheatley@gmail.com)) has your email for this purpose.

## Finances

A Marin County Civil Grand Jury report was released on June 8, 2023, showing MVMCC operating at a significant deficit for each of the last four years. Accounting by MVMCC's management company, the Helsing Group, using actual expenses, shows that we have operated in the black with a surplus for each of the last four years. The PAC Board is now working to understand why our figures and the City's figures are so different. A 5 percent rent increase has been approved, and we will advise as to when this becomes effective.

## Vaccine

COVID and its new variants are still around. Do not let your guard down. Practicing social distancing and continued masking are advised but not

required. The CDC still reports you are less likely to be seriously sick if you have been vaccinated and avoid transmittable situations.

### Projects

A new clubhouse roof with solar heating for the pool are the next projects we are planning to accomplish. Work on the sewer pump station near the clubhouse has resumed. We were informed that the City's engineering group will work to accomplish these tasks before summer's end.

### Activities


Management, MVEST, HOL, and Mar Val are all very active on your behalf, and their activities are reported on in articles in each month's *Echo*. I urge you to investigate and participate. By the time the *Echo* is printed, some events have already passed. It is best to see the notices at the front desk and our website ([marinvalley.net](http://marinvalley.net)) to take advantage of these worthwhile events.

### Participation

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

or email us. The recent meetings have been greatly enhanced by the many residents attending.

### Meetings

Agendas of future PAC Board meetings and the Zoom link are posted 72 hours before the meetings and are available to those on the mailing list. To be added to this list, contact PAC secretary Carol-Joy Harris at [caroljoyharris@comcast.net](mailto:caroljoyharris@comcast.net). You can also find the Zoom link on our [marinvalley.net](http://marinvalley.net) homepage next to the PAC  logo.

Recordings of the PAC meetings are available on our website at <https://marinvalley.net/pac-minutes-2023/>. The July 3 meeting is also available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9x2RAGf44MA>, and the recording of the July 6 meeting at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=plKX9da4EY>. The next board meeting will be Tuesday, August 1, at 6 pm.

In service,



PHOTOGRAPH: JOHN HANSEN

Marin Valley residents present before the Novato City Council July 11, 2023 – MVMCC price and payment terms closed session.



# Update

by **JOHN HANSEN**

In light of the current Park existential crisis and our cumulative efforts to manage it, it seems best to postpone MVEST meetings and activities until we can invest some attention in them. In the meantime, MVEST will be addressing emergency issues as they arise, as we have already planned for extreme heat, wildfire, Red Flag Days, power failures, and more.

## Never Ever Ignore a Red Flag

by **BILL DAVIS** Director on the Novato Fire District Board of Directors

**E**xactly WHAT is a Red Flag Warning of wildfire risk put out by your Novato Fire District on hot and windy days?

### What NOT to Do in a Red Flag Warning

- Don't use barbeques or outdoor firepits.
- Don't use gas or electric power tools outdoors.

Nearly 85 percent of wildland fires in the United States are caused by humans. Human-caused fires result from campfires left unattended, the burning of debris, equipment use and malfunction, negligently discarded cigarettes, and arson.

Lightning is another cause of wildfires but not our biggest threat in this region. The Novato Fire District closely watches reports from the National Weather Service, coordinates with the other fire agencies in Marin, and monitors the dryness of the ground fuels (grasses and leaves). When they issue a Red Flag Warning you are put on high alert to exercise extreme care to not set Marin Valley Mobile Country Club on fire. ■

### A Red Flag Warning

means that

- warm temperatures
- low humidity and
- strong winds

are expected to combine to produce an elevated risk of fire starting and spreading rapidly.

You will want to exercise extreme caution because one spark could ignite the dry grasses or dry leaves and start a wildfire, with the winds tossing the embers wildly and spreading the fire. Critical fire weather conditions have the potential to cause wildfires to increase rapidly in size and intensity before first responders can contain them, if they can.

**Never ignore a Red Flag Warning.**

**Register with Alert Marin**  
 to receive emergency alerts from  
 Marin County [www.alertmarin.org](http://www.alertmarin.org)  
**415-473-6376**

# Message from MarVal

Dear Friends,

The goats are busily eating their way around the Park, and isn't it fun to watch and to hear them munching away on the hillside – hearing the dog at night, not so much fun, but we are ever so grateful for the goats.

Mar Val would like to thank Jill Allen for her most generous donation. It is through her gift and others like it that Mar Val is able to offer events to residents at most reasonable prices.

Folks, let's have some fun and have some laughs. Mar Val plans to end the summer season with these two events:

- The **Pink Flamingo Party** on August 12, with fun decorations and prizes for the best costumes, along with some Moonshine Over the Bay

- The **Labor Day Dinner** on September 4 – the last of the evenings on the deck – an old-time Americana BBQ ... burgers and dogs.

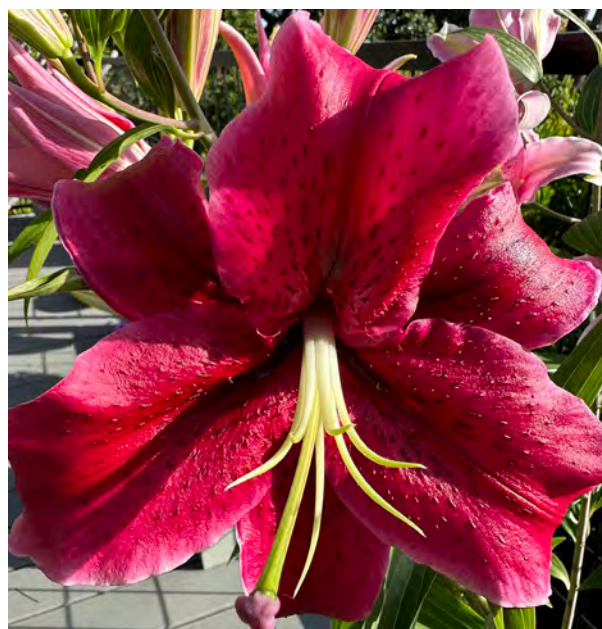
Please check the flyers in this *Echo* for details on MarVal events and join us for some down-home fun.

Mar Val would like to thank Sandee Duncan for years and years of outstanding service in a variety of offices and duties. Although stepping down as Treasurer, she will remain on the Mar Val Board as Director at Large and will still take charge of volunteers, the library, shopping, decorating, and all of those pesky other “tasks as assigned.” Sandee, we thank you. We are delighted to welcome Vicki Waddell as our new treasurer ... she has worked diligently with Sandee to take over

the “books,” and the transition has been seamless.

Mar Val always welcomes volunteers ... opportunities abound to serve our fellow residents: selling tickets for drinks or raffles, serving in the kitchen, decorating tables for events, bartending, and setting up/ putting away tables and chairs, for starters. Please come join us ... yes, we work hard, but we have a lot of fun. Please call Sandee Duncan, 415-883-3034 for more information.

Hope to see you soon.



PHOTOGRAPH: MICHELE RIVERS



**Mar Val presents**

# THE PINK FLAMINGOS PARTY!

**Saturday, August 12**

**5 pm Cocktails 6 pm Dinner**

Special Drink **Moonshine Over the Bay**

Contest for the **Best Pink Flamingo Outfit!!**

## **MENU**

Roy's Meatloaf • sides of Myrna's Mac & Cheese,  
Peas & Carrots, and Coleslaw • Pink Bird Dessert

or meatless

Myrna's Mac & Cheese as an entrée • sides of  
Peas & Carrots and Coleslaw • Pink Bird Dessert

**\$15 per person**

Reservation **deadline is August 9** @ 5 pm or when 120 reservations have been received.

No Cash. Make checks payable to Mar Val. Questions – call Susan Hoff @ 707-365-9426



**Mar Val**  
**LABOR DAY DINNER**

**Monday, September 4**

**5 pm Cocktails 6 pm Dinner**

**MENU**

Hamburger or Hot Dog  
(Chili available)

or

Impossible Burger or  
Morning Star Veggie Burger

Macaroni Salad      Green Salad

Frozen Dessert

\$15 per person

Reservation deadline is September 1 @ 5 pm  
or when 120 reservations have been received.

No Cash. Make checks payable to Mar Val.  
Questions – Call Susan Hoff @ 707-365-9426



# Home Owners League Message

Greetings,

Due to the long lead time of writing anything for the *Echo*, I am writing this in early July. By the time you read this, we may have a quite different perspective.

Pretty much everything concerning HOL has seriously subsided in the past few weeks as we all look into the future with worry, and at least for me, sadness.

Our thriving and nourishing community seems to be holding its breath, awaiting answers to lots of questions and possibilities.

I can really only speak for myself when I say I am left with many unanswered questions – principally, will I be living here a year from now and will I be able to stay here until the end of my life? I moved here with that prospect, and I still love and value everything and everyone here in Marin Valley. I don't need to tell you, the residents, about how wonderful Marin Valley is or how elated I felt at the June 27 and July 11 Novato City Council meetings, when about 100+ people turned out to tell the council and staff that we want to live here in security and happiness.

We are all heavily invested in remaining in our homes, which constitute a large part of our wealth. Few of us have alternative homes or sufficient savings to relocate. Many people have been imagining their exit strategies "just in case." Some cannot

imagine any alternative to living here; indeed, many have none. For others, it could mean living away from Marin or California, moving into houses with relatives, or even getting a camper van. Still others choose to ignore the whole situation and await an outcome without a backup plan.

Like many people in Marin Valley, I have heard my share of rumors and speculation along with some folks' extraordinary impressions from the newspaper articles, from the Marin Grand Jury report, and from what was said and not said at the City Council meetings, while we all wait to see if someone can find a way out of this mess. People blame the City and staff, the council, our history, and many other unfathomables.

I would suggest that each of us needs to keep our ears and eyes open, read the news, and not believe everything we read, especially circulating emails that attempt to predict the outcome. There are some outlandish stories going around. If it is too good or too bad to comprehend, then I suggest you don't try.

Suggestions abound regarding attorneys, grants, money-making schemes, and someone's uncle's neighbor who knows someone who can rescue us. Mostly these ideas and emails do not amount to anything and are not worth repeating or forwarding. I am not suggesting that all ideas should not be followed through on,

but until they are proven to be realistic, it seems wise to not put undue faith in them.

We are very fortunate to have a group of people here in Marin Valley who have experience working with the City staff and council members, and who know enough to talk meaningfully with attorneys, etc. It is important to let these folks get on with the marvelous work they are already doing, and to pass information only through the channels that are just now being set up. If you have good ideas, sending them to our board members will ensure that your brainwaves will be read, carefully considered, and passed on accordingly to the correct people.

Until there is an end in sight, and we have worked out how to save our tremendous community, try and stay calm, don't start or spread rumors, and talk with your neighbors. We do still live in a magnificent place. Let's keep it that way as long as we can. Now is a good time to enjoy the long-awaited summer, read a good book, sing in a chorus, dance in the meadow, and worship in the place of your choice. We are still here, and I hope we remain so.

Best wishes to everyone,

  
  
**John Feld**  
HOL PRESIDENT  
[johmfeld@gmail.com](mailto:johmfeld@gmail.com)  
510-495-4138 cell

# Grandkids Day

by **JOHN FELD**



**Sunday, August 13 • 2 – 4 pm • Clubhouse**

**O**n August 13, HOL will host a day to celebrate our grandchildren. It will be a free event held in the ballroom for an afternoon of fun activities geared toward children. Get ready for games and activities for kids, parents, and grandparents along with yummy food (not all sugar!) and lots to do.

Sign up at the clubhouse counter. Please list the number and ages of children and the number of adults in each party.

The organized activities will not include the swimming pool. Parents or guardians will be solely responsible for their children in the pool, as no lifeguard will be on duty. If you would like to help organize or plan and run activities,

please let Janie know at [janieklimes1948@gmail.com](mailto:janieklimes1948@gmail.com).

We want to involve all the family. Children must always be accompanied by their parents or grandparents. This is not a babysitting event.

Our first-ever Grandkids Day should be a wonderful time for us all to come together and have a fun afternoon. ■

## New Game Night?

by **Ed Collins**

**F**riday Night Games doesn't work for your schedule?

A steady but fairly low turnout is typical for First Friday Game Night. I'm aware that this time slot conflicts with Pub night, Friday dances, and sometimes other activities.

Some residents have voiced interest in attending but are busy on Friday nights. I am thinking of hosting another night monthly. Perhaps Thursday evening or even a weekday afternoon. Any interest in this? Please text or call me at 415-377-7696 or email me at

[mretc@hotmail.com](mailto:mretc@hotmail.com) if you would like to find another time to play an exhilarating, mind-enhancing game. Remember, games can range from simple to complex, from short to long, from cards to social games to party games! Games are provided or bring your own. ■



# Monthly Book Club

**Last Wednesday of Each Month • 4 pm • Fireside Room**

by **DAVE THORNGREN**

Next meeting on August 30

August Book

*Listen, World!*

by Julia Scheeres & Allison Gilbert

Welcoming New Members  
(Men & Women)

We alternate fiction and nonfiction

INTERESTED?

Contact Carol-Joy Harris

[caroljoyharris@comcast.net](mailto:caroljoyharris@comcast.net)



# Emeritus Students College of Marin (ESCOM)

by **JOHN FELD**

Rather than classes, ESCOM promotes clubs on numerous topics, including:

Book Club

Current Events

Film Night

Moral-Ethical and Legal Issues  
Round Table

Reading Great Plays

Spanish

Philosophy

Encouraging Writers

Who Done It?

Chess

Astronomy

Meditation

Digital Cameras

Humanities

Table Games

They also encourage volunteers to start up new clubs.

**A**t the July HOL meeting, ESCOM Vice President Leonard Weingarten talked about the pioneering and innovative use of community colleges for adults that ESCOM provides to enhance the lives of the community.

Its diverse selection of clubs and events is offered online, or at COM's Kentfield, and Indian Valley campuses. He said that Novato mayor Susan Wernick recommended that they connect with Marin Valley as a perfect crossover of similar interests.



Membership of ESCOM is free of charge. They invite Marin Valley residents to join their ranks and encourage new members to attend their monthly council meetings on the third Thursday of each month (excluding June, July, and December) from 10 am to noon. You don't have to be an alumni.

As a member, you will automatically receive ESCOM's two monthly electronic publications, *Club Notes* and the *Events & Activities* newsletter (<https://escom.marin.edu/join-escom>).

Six times per year the organization publishes the *ESCOM Journal*, which contains stories, poems, and photographs from locals.

Check their website for locations, as they alternate between the two campuses. For more information, <https://escom.marin.edu/>.

Look for flyers on our clubhouse counter. ■

# Resident Work Accepted into Fair

by **ERMA WHEATLEY**

All three submissions by Susan McMudie were accepted by the juried Fine Arts and Fine Crafts Exhibition in the Pastels division at the 2023 Marin County Fair. They were *Mama and Baby Elephant*, *RBG*, which won 2nd Place, and an Honorable Mention for *Reflexion*.



McMudie: *Mama and Baby Elephant*



RBG



*Reflexion*

In the Oil Painting division, both paintings by Erma Wheatley were accepted including *Crashing California Coast* and *Imminent*, which won the \$150 Helen Willms Award.



Wheatley: *Crashing California Coast*



*Imminent*



Katherine McMudie won four First Place blue ribbon awards. Class: Cacti, Mammillaria – Any Ball Type Clustering category; Class: Succulents – Aeonium category and Any Other category; and, shown here, Class: Other Horticulture – Any Other category

# Protecting Your Personal Information, Part 2

by **VICKI WADDELL**

**O** Some of you are computer wizards. Oh, I long to be you! If, on the other hand, you are only somewhat knowledgeable and need all the help you can get (like me), read on as there is more you need to know and understand to protect yourself from the crooks, scammers, and all-around bad guys out there in “cyberville.” I’ll start with a few definitions:

## **Spam**

This is unsolicited/unwanted email sent by strangers. It’s plain old junk, and we get plenty of it in our household! You have several options to manage it: ignore it, opt-out, unsubscribe, delete it, or mark it as spam. For a while we ignored our spams, but then we ended up receiving over 500 emails a week! We tried opting out, an option that is sometimes offered at the bottom of emails. This method takes time, during which the scammer might use the guise of contacting you again just

to confirm your choice. Don’t respond, as this is a ruse to get you hooked again. Best practice is to drag the message to your junk box. Marking spam as “junk” or “spam” allows filters to recognize similar messages as spam and send them directly to your spam folder.



## **Phishing**

This is a method in which crooks acquire information from you for the purpose of stealing your identity without making it clear who they are or what they want. They might use names of companies you recognize, such as Publishers Clearing House, and you respond because who doesn’t

want to win a million dollars? Most of these companies want to sell you something (magazines, cookies, cheap gadgets, etc.). The actual sales don’t generate much revenue, but selling your name and email address can make them a bundle of money. If you

respond, you will likely get a response — but not from PCH or the company you think you are corresponding with. Rather you will get an email from an impersonator who acquired your name from one of the lists they bought over

the internet with your name on it! Be careful. These crooks are crafty. They might ask you to open a link, download an attachment, or call a phone number — all of which put your computer at risk. Best practice: If you don’t know the people at the other end of the link, don’t respond. How to tell if a crook is lurking? Look

for typos, urgency, requests for personal information, and generic salutations and signatures.

## Social Media

Blame it on dopamine, but humans crave connections, whether it's in the form of friendships, education, discovery, support, or just plain old fun. These are all good reasons to use social media, but "hacking" lurks within their portals. Here are some caveats:

1. Never give out sensitive information over social media
2. Set your Facebook profile so only your friends (not "public") can see your page
3. Avoid linking different social media accounts
4. Always log out when using a public computer or public WiFi.

## Junk Mail

If you get a lot of this, and we do, it means you are on multiple mailing lists that scammers can use to contact you. My research has taken me to three ways to get rid of junk mail:

### 1. DMAChoice

[www.dmachoice.org/](http://www.dmachoice.org/)

Registering with this company stops mail from companies you have purchased from or made donations to.

### 2. OptOut Prescreen

<https://optoutprescreen.com/?rf=t>

This company purports to stop credit card offers. They charge \$4 for 10 years.

### 3. National Do Not Call Registry

[www.donotcall.gov/](http://www.donotcall.gov/)

This service only helps those who sell their products and services online.

The police NEVER call to ask for money. These calls are scams.

Want to know the most aggressive, deceptive, and abusive junk mailers who have selected us as a winner in their fake sweepstakes? National Cancer Center (NCC), Veterans in Defense of Liberty (VIDOL), and companies feigning the identity of Publishers Clearing House. Winning money is tempting, but just know that for every one survey sweepstake donation you make, 10 more will take its place. We are still

eating our way through the remaining 10 cookie tins we ordered. We also have 15 new magazine subscriptions, and believe me neither of us has the time to accept all the one-time offers to make us look younger and more attractive, lift 100-lb. barbells, or become sufficiently deft to win the Bay to Breakers!

## Smartphones

Besides turning on some form of biometric identification to keep thieves from logging onto your phone, be sure you also add your phone/tablet to the antivirus software service you chose for your computer.

I personally don't like companies that automatically renew subscriptions and increase their prices without telling me in advance of renewal. This happened to me with Norton. For six months I tried unsuccessfully to cancel them and get my money back. Finally, the consumer rights advocate "7 On Your Side" came to my aid and poof I got my money back. Goes to show, nobody likes bad press!

Stay tuned for next month's article on credit cards, skimmers, and credit reports. ■

# Books: Friends and Fortress

by **LORNA SASS**

I think it's fair to say that I have always had too many books, but recently things really started getting out of hand.

I couldn't help but notice that a pile along the wall near my reading chair

grew and grew until it created a three-layer-deep book fortress between me and the outside world. So I decided to explore what it is about books that I find so irresistible.

Going back as far as I can remember, I acknowledge my mother for inviting me into this deep love affair with books. One day some seven decades ago, when I was about to take off for elementary school, my mom was sitting at the breakfast table totally engrossed in *Jane Eyre*.

When I said goodbye, she barely looked up and her eyes told me that she was someplace very far away from our suburban Long Island home.

When the school day ended and I returned some six hours later, mom seemed startled — as if a

stranger was interrupting her voyage into another dimension. When she looked up, I saw tears streaming down her cheeks. The breakfast dishes were still on the table, and I became very curious about the mysterious place she had escaped to.



It surely had something to do with the book she was reading! Her example offered me the escape route from the harsh reality of my difficult childhood home.

My younger brother was

born when I was four and it became apparent fairly soon that he was not developing normally. As my family life became more and more tumultuous and my parents' attention went more and more to my brother, libraries became the refuge where I could spend hours on end in the fascinating yet safe world of my imagination.

My memory of the early years is sketchy and vague, likely because they are too painful to recall, but I imagine that my mom read children's books to me from time to time. Since she had her hands full with my brother and getting dinner on the table every night, I'm pretty sure that she pushed me to become independent of her and learn to read on my own. Indeed, I felt very proud and excited to have my own library card by the time I entered kindergarten!

And oh, how I loved going to the library! My mother took me often and I always checked out the maximum number of books allowed. At home, I took refuge more and more in my upstairs bedroom, having these beloved books for



solace and company. All those books I could lose myself in ... the lives and people in those tomes were so compelling.

So when I began to look for a role model and found none in my neighborhood, the first place I looked was in books. The only interesting female character I could find before I was old enough to read Jane Austen and *Jane Eyre* was Nancy Drew. I started reading the Nancy Drew mystery stories when I was about eight and gobbled up the series one by one. I tried to emulate the fearless Nancy at a time when girls had few options beyond becoming a teacher or a secretary.

From there, I soon moved to the Brontë sisters and Anna Karenina. Yes, when Anna threw herself in front of the train, I was shocked and frightened, but her experiences seemed a whole lot more real and exciting than what was happening in my dull suburban neighborhood.

During my 45 years in Manhattan as a food historian and cookbook author, I acquired literally thousands of cookbooks, including some rare handwritten volumes. Realizing that I had limited space but still making books an essential priority, I designed bookshelves behind closed doors in a unit that acted as a room divider between my bedroom and sitting room.

I even had a bed built with large, deep drawers underneath so I could store books there as well. (When I moved to California, I donated these books to a New York cooking school, thereby creating its entire reference library!)

I love our Breezeway Boutique but must admit that it is dangerous for me since many of our residents pass along fascinating books that I can't resist. The irony is that my power of concentration has diminished and I know I'll never end up reading most of them, but I take them home anyway! I realize as I am writing this essay that the habit of surrounding myself with books started when I was very young and has been going strong for seven decades!

Having read the wise Gabor Maté's words on addiction, I now know that in some way this obsession with books has been a survival strategy, allowing me to shield myself from early childhood trauma. That understanding has helped me be more compassionate with myself about my irrepressible collector's instincts. And I've taken to joking with friends: "Books are better than cocaine!"

Now I'm thinking that there needs to be an AA-type group for bookaholics. Perhaps I should found it. Would you like to join? ■



*Succulent triplets*

PHOTOGRAPHS: LORNA SASS

# Tanagers

Text and Photography by **DAVID GRAY**

**A**ugust is the month for colorful birds!

The Western tanager (*Piranga ludoviciana*) is an amazingly colorful bird; my first sighting occurred while visiting California for the first time in 1988, driving through Kings Canyon National Park. One flew across the road in a blaze of red, orange, yellow, green, and black and was so startling that I almost ran off the road. The male is the brightly colored one; females lack the brilliant red head, and their yellow coloring is comparatively muted. We occasionally see Western Tanagers here in the Park during the spring breeding season. I saw this one in Prescott, Arizona, in June 2023, at about one mile in elevation (and 15 degrees cooler than Phoenix).

Tanagers primarily eat insects. The scads of grasshoppers I saw in the forests around Prescott made for a lively foraging environment for these birds, which are slightly smaller than robins.



I also spotted for the first time a few hepatic tanagers (*Piranga flava*), both male (red) and female (yellow), while in the Arizona mountains. Their name derives from the Latin word for the liver, which seems a bit off to me as a color description. These are birds whose lives are spent primarily in South and Central America, coming up to the Southwestern US for breeding season.



Bonus bird: Cooper's Hawk in-flight

What an amazing world we live on! ■



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1 style="text-align: center;">AUGUST 2023</h1>		1	2	3	4	5
		<p>10-11AM Water Aerobics</p> <p>2-3PM Craft &amp; Chat</p> <p>4-5PM Taiji</p> <p>6PM PAC Board Meeting Zoom/ Carol-Joy Harris</p>	<p>10-11AM Water Aerobics</p> <p>2-3PM Craft &amp; Chat</p> <p>6PM HOL Board Meeting Fireside Room</p> <p>6:30PM Dancing Deck</p>	<p>10-11AM Chair Yoga Fireside Room</p> <p>11AM-12 PM Rollin' Root </p>	<p>10-11AM Water Aerobics</p> <p>12PM Mahjong</p> <p>4-5PM Taiji</p> <p>5-7PM Pub</p> <p>6-10PM Game Night Ed Collins</p> <p>6:30PM Dancing Meadow</p>	<p>6:30PM Dancing Meadow</p>
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
<p>10-10:30AM Meditation Zoom/ Michael Hagerty</p> <p>4-5PM Taiji Deck/ David MacLam</p>	<p>5AM Trash</p> <p>10-11AM Water Aerobics</p>	<p>4-5PM Taiji</p> <p><b>Echo deadline</b></p>	<p>10-11AM Water Aerobics</p> <p>2-3PM Craft &amp; Chat</p> <p>5PM Pink Flamingos Party deadline</p> <p>6PM Mar Val Board Meeting Ballroom</p> <p>6:30PM Dancing</p>	<p>10-11AM Chair Yoga</p> <p>11AM-12 PM Rollin' Root </p>	<p>10-11AM Water Aerobics</p> <p>12PM Mahjong</p> <p>4-5PM Taiji</p> <p>5-7PM Pub</p> <p>6:30PM Dancing</p>	<p>5PM Mar Val Pink Flamingos Party</p> <p>6:30PM Dancing</p>
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
<p>10-10:30AM Meditation</p> <p>2-4PM Grandkids Day</p> <p>4-5PM Taiji</p>	<p>5AM Trash</p> <p>10-11AM Water Aerobics</p>	<p>4-5PM Taiji</p>	<p>10-11AM Water Aerobics</p> <p>11PM Ladies' Bridge Private, Fireside Room</p> <p>2-3PM Craft &amp; Chat</p> <p>6:30PM Dancing</p>	<p>10-11AM Chair Yoga</p> <p>11AM-12 PM Rollin' Root </p>	<p>10-11AM Water Aerobics</p> <p>12PM Mahjong</p> <p>4-5PM Taiji</p> <p>5-7PM Pub</p> <p>6:30PM Dancing</p>	<p>6:30PM Dancing</p>
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
<p>10-10:30AM Meditation</p> <p>4-5PM Taiji</p>	<p>5AM Trash</p> <p>10AM Water Aerobics</p>	<p>4-5PM Taiji</p>	<p>10-11AM Water Aerobics</p> <p>2-3PM Craft &amp; Chat</p> <p>6:30PM Dancing</p>	<p>10-11AM Chair Yoga</p> <p>11AM-12 PM Rollin' Root </p>	<p>10-11AM Aerobics</p> <p>12PM Mahjong</p> <p>4-5PM Taiji</p> <p>5PM Pub</p> <p>6:30PM Dancing</p>	<p>6:30PM Dancing</p>
27	28	29	30	31	<p>Please check our website <a href="http://marinvalley.net">marinvalley.net</a> for late-breaking news and for Zoom links.</p>	
<p>10-10:30AM Meditation</p> <p>4-5PM Taiji</p>	<p>5AM Trash</p> <p>10-11AM Water Aerobics</p>	<p>4-5PM Taiji</p>	<p>10-11AM Water Aerobics</p> <p>2-3PM Craft &amp; Chat</p> <p>4PM Book Club Carol-Joy Harris</p> <p>6:30PM Dancing</p>	<p>10-11AM Chair Yoga</p> <p>11AM-12 PM Rollin' Root </p>		