

T H E
ECHO

December 2023



**2 John Purdue
Vicki Waddell**

Holiday Cheer! DIRECTORY UPDATE;
Our Friend Rick Kennedy

MVMCC

3 Matt Greenberg

MANAGEMENT UPDATE

PAC

3-4 Jay Shelfer

PAC LETTER TO RESIDENTS

MVEST

5-7 John Feld

What Is MVEST?

8 Jim Gronvold

Ours

MAR VAL

8 Carolyn Corry

MESSAGE FROM MAR VAL

**9-10 Carolyn Corry,
Susan Hoff**

Event Flyers

HOL

11 John Feld

HOL MESSAGE

HOL COMMUNITY EVENTS

**12 Beverley Wood
Carol-Joy Harris
Michale Dancer**

Mayflower Chorus

Come Carol Joyfully with Carol-Joy and Maggie

2nd Annual Winter Holiday Decoration Competition

13 Tara Plocher

Heads Up for the HOLIDAY Fair

Janie Klimes

Help! I've Fallen and I Can't Get Up

14-15 John Feld

Free Food

16 Michele Rivers

Sharing the Love

17 AARP

Is It ... COVID, the Fu, or a Cold?

Elizabeth Lev

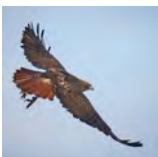
Sharing the Warmth

18-19 David Gray

BIRDS OF THE MONTH: *Raptors of Salt Point State Park*

20

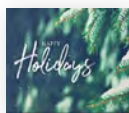
CALENDAR: DECEMBER 2023



Holiday Cheer!



Opening our holiday season will be the **Mayflower Chorus** caroling in the breezeway on Thursday, November 30, around 2 pm when the Free Food is given away. Stay and sing and have some hot cider. The **HOLIDAY FAIRE** is two days later on Saturday, December 2, from 12 to 3 pm in the ballroom to find special presents and have lunch on HOL. You can also sing along with Carol-Joy Harris and Maggie Siegfried on Sunday, December 10, in the Fireside Room for **Christmas Carols**. By then the Park should be lit up with all the holiday lights for the **Winter Holiday Decoration Competition**. See pp. 11-13.



Signing up early helps guarantee you a reservation for Mar Val's **Holiday Party** on December 16 and for the **New Year's Eve Party** goodbye to 2023. See pp. 8-10.



Directory Update

Brad Witherspoon

415-218-9583, spoonsf@yahoo.com

New Residents

Ray Cobane

193 Marin Valley Drive 415-244-8099, rcobane@mac.com

IN MEMORIAM

Our Friend Rick Kennedy

As told by Rick's friends John Purdue and Vicki Waddell

Much to our consternation, our friend Rick Kennedy, who was born and raised in Marin County, passed away this past September. He lived on Marin Valley Drive and you could always recognize his house as the one that had the white service van with multiple ladders on top, ready to travel to the aid of someone's electrical needs. He started developing many of his natural talents while

CONTINUED on page 4

THE ECHO 2023

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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 high resolution.

ECHO DEADLINE

The 8th of the month for the next month's issue.

MVMCC PAC Management Update Letter to Residents

Clubhouse roof patching is ongoing. We hope to be able to replace the entire roof system next summer.

Retaining wall replacement projects are finished for the season.

We had the **streets restriped** in the entire Park; please stop at all stop signs and remember the Park speed limit is 15 mph.

If you see any **storm drain** near or around your home that is clogged, call the front desk and let us know.

With the rainy season here remember to have your **gutters cleaned** of leaves and debris so the water will flow easily. If your gutters get clogged the weight from all the water – especially on your carport – will bend the supports.

As of November 29 the **heater** for the pool has been turned off for the winter. The **spa** will remain heated through the winter at 104 degrees, so come and enjoy from 9 am to 10 pm.

Happy holidays to all our residents.



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

Greetings from the Park Acquisition Corporation Board.

Ad Hoc Committee The Ad Hoc Committee, consisting of Representatives Mark Milberg and Tim O'Connor of the Novato City Council, and John Hansen and myself from the PAC Board, has met twice. The committee is reaching for a solution to the goal of maintaining an affordable community of senior citizens in perpetuity here at Marin Valley. The apparent goodwill of the City Council to achieve this goal is refreshing after our recent experience of the Council entertaining a proposal to sell the Park to a private operator. There are many details to work through to create an entity to hold title and a way to keep it affordable for our number of low- and low-to-moderate-income residents. An **independent income survey** is currently being conducted to aid us in this endeavor. **We encourage your rapid response to this survey.**

The committee is being attended by several members of the City of Novato's staff, which has been helpful to work through several issues regarding maintenance and accounting.

The PAC committees that have researched the ownership, funding, and history of MVMCC have been instrumental in moving the Ad Hoc Committee forward

to achieve our mutual goals. To ignore the past is to risk repeating the same difficulties that faced previous negotiations between the City and MVMCC residents. Simply put, discussions have been ongoing since 1998 and similar intentions existed before then. None of the participants in the present discussions were around during those significant milestone discussions about ownership questions. Thus, having documentary evidence of what was understood and factually agreed to during those previous discussions has been foundational to current negotiations. Previous understandings or agreements do not bind the current committee, but having the factual history is important.

The PAC Board will continue to put out "Resident Updates" to all on our mailing lists with the current state of affairs as the situation develops as well as in our PAC Board meetings and postings at the clubhouse. Please add your email to our lists by contacting caroljoyharris@comcast.net. The next meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee will be December 1.

Finances The DSCR (debt service coverage ratio) is currently well within positive range. We are reaching out once more to the community for donations to continue to retain legal counsel to ensure we achieve our goals. This is

an investment in your future. It is an important moment in the life of MVMCC and we want to get it right. Locking it in now legally is the way to go.

Projects Pump station #1 is nearing completion. We are developing a patchwork workaround to seal up the clubhouse roof for renewal next year. We are working with PG&E to repair and replace the main electrical transfer switch coming into the Park as part of our efforts toward the renewal of the electric infrastructure of the Park under the PUC/PG&E program to convert mobile home parks back to PG&E control and operation. The Ad Hoc Committee has been very helpful in achieving these actions.

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 as the state and country relax the mandated precautions to avoid the transmission of COVID. The CDC still reports you are less likely to be seriously sick if you have been vaccinated, and avoidance of transmittable situations is encouraged.

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. It is best to see the notices at the front desk to take advantage of these worthwhile events. By the time the Echo is published, some events have already passed.

Participation The PAC Board's meetings are enriched by resident participation. Your observations

and suggestions on how MVMCC can better serve your and the community's interests are always welcomed. Come to the board meetings or email us.

Agendas For future PAC meetings in the ballroom agendas 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. The Zoom link is also on our homepage at marinvalley.net.

Meetings The next regular monthly board meeting will be on Tuesday, December 5, at 5 pm.

In service



CONTINUED from page 4

attending Catholic high school, tinkering with electrical components and working as a stereo system installation technician. Upon graduation, he began working in the family printing business in San Francisco, where he learned how to sell and positively engage with all types of people.

After the family business faltered as a result of jobs moving to Asia, he reinvented himself by becoming an electrician. Electricians specialize in three areas: new construction, maintenance, and repair. Rick was an especially clever "troubleshooter." According to John, Rick had a unique ability to figure out even the most unusual

electrical problems where others in the trade were frequently dumbfounded. Rick recently installed a new electrical panel and all new wiring in Vicki's home. Since then, every time a contractor observes the panel, they are amazed at what they see: the design is a work of art where everything is properly labeled and meticulously organized! He took great pride in his work and was respected by his fellow electricians. Rick will be remembered lovingly as a quiet and enduring friend. Often you would find him around the barbie enjoying a cookout with his many friends, or socializing at the San Rafael and Loch Lomond yacht clubs.

During quieter moments after a busy day, you would find Rick in his easy chair, book in lap along with his two cats vying for their favored position.

Rick was so friendly and such a great listener; we had no idea what political party he favored. Regardless of his personal beliefs, Rick respected and encouraged our comments and we just kept talking endlessly while he stood there with a big smile on his face. He found great support in socializing and fellowship, and he offered the same to those around him.

Rest in peace, dear friend. You will not be forgotten



What Is MVEST?

by **JOHN FELD**

First, a huge thank you to everyone who attended our first Trauma First Aid class in November. We had professional instructors who are residents of the Park: Pauline Clucas, NP; Bill Davis, RN; and John Hansen, EMT. It was well received, and people said they learned a lot about serious trauma accidents and how to deal with them. There will be more classes and refresher classes this winter and spring.

Lest we forgot, or never knew, the following is a synopsis of what MVEST is, does, aspires to do, and who it works with. MVEST is a work in progress and is run completely by volunteer residents for the well-being and safety of all who live here.

What Does "MVEST" Stand For?

Marin **V**alley **E**mergency **S**afety **T**eam. This team has been around for many years and has evolved to keep pace with changing needs, resources, and the evolution of professional services. The present version has been around for about nine years.

MVEST's mission is to identify hazards within the community and risks that could cause property or vegetation damage, personal injury, or mortality; to reduce risks through community awareness, preparedness, and prevention; to provide safe, organized, volunteer responses to incidents when professional responders are delayed; to augment professional emergency response; and to prepare the community for expedient incident recovery.

The MVEST program is based on guidelines established by the US Department of Homeland Security, FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency), the American Red Cross, and Cal OES (California Office of Emergency Services).

MVEST Meetings

MVEST holds monthly meetings (the second Monday of the month) over Zoom, or sometimes in the Fireside Room. These meetings are open to everyone.

What Does MVEST Do?

MVEST promotes individual and neighborhood preparedness through education and training and multiple opportunities for practice to be a disaster-resilient community.

<https://marinvalley.net/mvest/>

Who Are MVEST Members?

By being a resident in Marin Valley you are automatically a member of MVEST. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to participate at whatever level you are comfortable. Everyone involved is a volunteer. People step up to take on specific tasks and continue for as long as they feel comfortable. Some attend to get information.

How Is MVEST Financed?

Each year the Marin Valley budget allocates \$5,000 for our operating expenses. Like all things in our budget, this money comes from our savings. The City of Novato does not contribute any money to MVEST.

Just as the best way to really understand anything is to teach it, the same is true with participating in MVEST.

You don't have to ALREADY know about fires, floods, prevention, and how to deal with emergencies. The best way to GET informed is to come to MVEST events and meetings, where the realities of emergencies are discussed — a chance to pick up tips, tricks, and insights from experts in the field in similar situations in a variety of neighborhoods — for what works best.

Times are changing.

Block Captains

This team is the “boots on the ground” of MVEST. Marin Valley consists of 315 homes, with approximately 425 residents. The Park is divided into six zones, each containing an average of about five “blocks.” A block captain is



assigned to each block to communicate messages to individual residents about personal preparedness, prevention, and emergency mitigation measures. During an emergency such as a power outage, fire, earthquake, or flood, block captains also provide rapid local assessments and status reports to Incident Command (IC) – and in return, rapid and thorough dissemination of information and directives to residents from the IC as the community responds to the emergency. Backup block captains stand in for others who are absent in times of need. Block captains also perform a “neighborhood watch” function. <https://marinvalley.net/mvest/#about>

Incident Command

These are volunteers who, in an emergency, will be stationed in the small clubhouse office and coordinate what happens in the rest of the Park until emergency responders arrive. This could be 10 minutes to maybe a few days in a large-scale emergency. They are in communication by walkie-talkies with the block captains and other MVEST teams. They keep detailed records of events during emergencies and establish contact with outside resources. When first responders arrive, they hand over all operations to the professionals. Practice days to help reinforce the communication protocols are ongoing.

Emergency Medical Team

This team is made up of people who are or have been employed as nurses and doctors. They are here to assist those injured in a crisis.



First aid training practice with Tenaya Asan and Jae Tillinghast.

As part of keeping us all safe, MVEST recommends certain procedures and practices. These include:

Resident Pods



Pods are groups of at least three or preferably four neighbors, who look out for one another. Pod members should live in close proximity to each other to offer emergency assistance when needed quickly – be it for falls, illness, getting out under evacuation orders, or generally looking out for one another. They can alert their pod mates to dangers and evacuations, help them evacuate, perform basic first aid, and basically respond to any threat when three or four heads are better than one, or six to eight ears are better than two.

A pod is expected to self-organize and to prioritize duties among pod members. At least three members are needed: a victim, someone to call for help, and one to begin treatment. A fourth member would be backup. MVEST will assist you and help train and provision your pod. May 2023 <https://marinvalley.net/echov2/>

Home Hardening


Home hardening is the process of making a home more resistant to wildfires. It involves preparing your home for wildfire or ember storm (embers carried by the wind in advance of an oncoming fire). It does not mean fireproof. Home hardening includes retrofitting homes with fire-resistant materials and creating defensible space around homes and communities.

Defensible Space

Defensible space is a buffer between a building and the surrounding area. It is designed to slow or stop the spread of wildfire and protect your home from catching fire. This includes:

- a 3-5' zone around our homes devoid of combustible material
- clean gutters
- no low-hanging tree limbs
- reducing flammable plants within the community.

Red Flag Days



The National Weather Service and the Marin County Fire Department issue Red Flag Warnings. They consider temperature, moisture (or lack of) held in local plants, relative humidity, and local winds. On appropriate days, defined by our fire department, we hang red flags in front of the clubhouse and at the top of the hill coming into the Park.

A Red Flag Warning means that critical fire weather conditions are expected. It indicates that the potential for fire is high and a simple spark is capable of causing a wildfire, as can smoking and the use of certain machinery. On Red Flag Days:

- No barbecues
- No outdoor power tools
- Be prepared to evacuate if directed.

MVEST works with many local and national organizations. These include Firewise, MWPA, Fire Safe Marin, and the Marin Center for Independent Living.

Firewise



Firewise is a national organization that encourages homeowners and communities to prepare for fire risk. Marin Valley has been a Firewise community since 2016. Since that time, we have nearly cleared out all juniper and other highly flammable plants. The Firewise Committee is a part of MVEST and does what it can to mitigate the wildfire risk and share appropriate knowledge with the community. Through Management, Firewise has helped:

- increase defensible space around our homes and to an approximate 100-200' perimeter around the Park (budget permitting)
- continue education of our residents about homeowner fire preparedness and prevention.

MVEST alerts residents to important Firewise presentations on our website marinvalley.net.

The MWPA



The MWPA (Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority) is a coalition of local fire agencies, emergency service providers, and cities, towns, and county government whose primary goal is to develop and implement a comprehensive wildfire prevention and emergency preparedness plan for most of Marin County.

What Is a Shaded Fuel Break and Where Is Ours?

A shaded fuel break is a strip of land where vegetation is modified into defensible landscape. The amount of combustible material is reduced so that when a fire hits the shaded fuel break it will decrease in intensity and become safely accessible to firefighters.

The Greater Novato Shaded Fuel Break, established by the MWPA, includes a fuel-reduction zone within 200 to 300 feet from structures adjacent to the wildland-urban interface (WUI) and heavily vegetated areas with a history or potential of ignition, and the thinning of dense tree cover and removal of underlying brush. It covers areas to the north, west, and east of our community and is funded by county taxation. All the work done in this shaded fuel break is financed by our tax dollars and grants, and the work is carried out by local fire departments

MVEST is always on alert and available 24/7/365. Fortunately, we almost never experience the emergencies we work to prevent. But given the isolation of our community, its location in the WUI, and the demographic of our residents, MVEST is an essential service to Marin Valley.

We urge you to join our team in any manner. Please contact **John Hansen** (415- 847-7155), **John Feld** (510-495-4138), **Erma Wheatley** (510-495-4137), or any of the MVEST team. Your participation is greatly welcomed. Your help helps us all. ■

Ours

**We matter to each other
more than the stars**

**that gave us the
matter that we are.**

**More than memories
or memoirs.**

**More than our
favorite fantasies.**

**More than then or when,
while now can still be ours.**

Jim Gronvold

Message from Mar Val

Dear Friends,

The annual Holiday Party will take place on December 16, and once again Mar Val is delighted to join with HOL in providing a complimentary drink for each attendee. Please remember that the drink ticket you will be given as you check in for this event is good only at the holiday event.

Reservations will be accepted after the Thanksgiving dinner. Please make your reservation early as this event is quite popular.

Mar Val will once again be ringing in the new year with a festive evening of friends, food, and fun. Charles Watson has been our DJ for many wonderful years but currently his equipment is kaput. We are very excited to welcome the Meadow Dancing DJs – Steven Plocher, Ed Collins, Linda Steenman, David Tetta, Janet Bogardus – to NYE this year. One (or more!) of these dynamic tune-spinners will enthrall you throughout the evening with their crowd-favorite musical numbers. Please see the flyers for the specifics for these two events.

There continue to be questions regarding event reservations.

Here are the steps:

1. Sign the reservation sheet on the counter in the clubhouse and indicate your entrée choice.
2. Deposit your check in the reservation box.

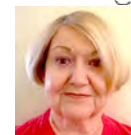
You do not have a reservation for an event until you have completed both steps. In the continuing effort to keep prices as low as possible, Mar Val purchases and prepares food only for those folks with paid reservations.

Please remember to bring your flashlights ... it is very dark entering and leaving the clubhouse.

The Mar Val Board wishes each of you a wonderful holiday season and a happy and healthy new year. Looking forward to seeing you at the next Mar Val event.

Mar Val Events – 2024

January 20	Winter Warmup
February 10	Mardi Gras
March 16	St. Patrick's Day
April 20	Spring Fling
May 3	Cinco de Mayo
May 27	Memorial Day
June 15	Jazz Brunch
July 4	Independence Day
July 26	Pasta Pub
August 10	Summer Festival
September 2	Labor Day
September 27	Oktoberfest
October 26	Black Cat
November 23	Thanksgiving
December 14	Holiday Event
December 31	New Year's Eve



Carolyn K Corry

Carolyn Corry
MAR VAL PRESIDENT
ckcorry@comcast.net
415-370-6403 cell



Mar Val Holiday Party

Saturday, December 16

5 pm Cocktails 6 pm Dinner

MENU

Pork Loin with Cranberry Apple Compote

or

Fettuccine Alfredo

Vegetables and Salad

Roasted Potatoes

Cheesecake

Reservations: \$15 per meal

Limit: 2 persons per residence

Reservation deadline: Wednesday, December 13, 5 pm
(or when 120 reservations have been received)

Reservations will NOT be accepted prior to December 1

Questions? - Call Susan Hoff at 707-365-9426



New Year's Eve Party

Monday, December 31 6:30 to 9 pm

Buffet

Champagne Toast

Dancing to the Music
from our Meadow Dancing DJs

Reservations - \$15 per resident, \$20 per guest
(Limit of 2 guests per residence)

Reservation deadline: Wednesday, December 27, 5pm
(Or when 120 reservations have been received before the deadline)

Questions? – Call Susan Hoff @ 707-365-9426

Home Owners League Message

Greetings,

Holiday Lights HOL is once again having a holiday lights competition. We will be offering cash prizes for the best in category. These categories are:

- Most original
- Most humorous
- Best use of theme (seasonal, religious, environmental, other creative ideas)
- Best overall decoration

The decorations must be viewed from the street or your cul-de-sac, must not block the mailbox or fire hydrant, and must not have any political themes, open flames, or loud music. Any lights and sounds that might disturb neighbors should be turned off by 10 pm, and please be considerate of neighbors by not projecting lights onto other homes. To be as “green” as possible, please try to use LED lights. The judging will take place the week before Christmas; winners to be announced by HOL. We really look forward to your creative ideas, so step up and make the Park a fun holiday extravaganza!

HOLIDAY Breezeway Faire, Art Show, and Lunch The fantastic Marin Valley HOLIDAY Faire takes place in the clubhouse ballroom on December 2 at 12–3 pm (setup is from 11 am to 12 pm) with a complimentary lunch. There will be crocheted items, knitted items, all kinds of homemade pastries, jewelry, dolls,

pottery, handwoven baskets, cards, sachets, vintage items, beaded items, handmade bags, and some surprises.

While you are looking for suitable holiday presents, please step inside the Marin Valley Gallery and select a painting, photograph, drawing, or sculpture to add to your gift giving. But you had better be quick as items from the present show have already been sold.

Holiday Party Once again, HOL is joining with Mar Val to give each attendee of the Holiday Party a free drink ticket. Sign up early, as reservations sell out early.

Mayflower Chorus The Mayflower Chorus will be singing holiday carols and songs in the breezeway on Thursday, November 30, starting around 2 pm during our free food giveaway. HOL will serve hot cider. Come for some holiday food and holiday cheer and to join in.

Hawaiian Concert The Na Leo Nahenahe Chorus is returning after a seven-year absence. Three of our Park residents perform with this group. Look for them in early January '24.

Just One Hour Lisa Jackler (415-686-7048) has fielded a few requests recently for Just One Hour, usually to water plants while on vacation or rides to the doctor or airport. She is actively looking for anyone who can volunteer support for gardening, moving furniture, light home repairs, dog

walking, driving, or just sitting or reading with the ill, bedridden, or merely lonely. It is always uplifting to both the receivers and givers in these tasks, and it only takes one hour. You can make a huge difference to others while giving back to the less agile.

Marin Valley Health Fair We are planning a one-day health fair at the clubhouse in the spring, and we encourage you to ask your health care professionals if they would like to partake. We can provide a table or two in the ballroom and possibly a slot for a 30-minute presentation in the Fireside Room. They can be masseurs, bodyworkers, hearing and sight practitioners, Reiki specialists, acupuncturists, health coaches, osteopaths, hypnotists, yoga teachers, energy therapists, or mind-body educators. If you think they may be of help to our community, we welcome them here to tell us about what they do. Please give them my email address (johnmfeld@gmail.com) if they wish to attend. We will not charge them or you!

No HOL meeting in December

But we look forward to you all joining us on January 3 in the Fireside Room.

Stay safe and warm,



Mayflower Chorus



Thursday, Nov 30 • 2 pm • Breezeway

The Mayflower Chorus will be singing holiday carols and songs in the breezeway on Thursday, November 30, starting around 2 pm during our free food giveaway. HOL will serve hot cider. Come for some holiday food and holiday cheer, and you are welcome to join Beverly Wood singing in the chorus. ■

Come Carol Joyfully

by **CAROL-JOY HARRIS**



Sunday, Dec 10 • 6 pm • Fireside Room

Please join Carol-Joy Harris and Maggie Siegfried singing Christmas carols in the Fireside Room.

It doesn't matter if you think you can't carry a tune – Maggie and Carol-Joy will help you carry it! ■

2nd Annual Winter Holiday Decoration Competition

by **MICHALE DANCER**

Spread Fun, Joy, and Holiday Cheer!

After last year's wonderful and colorful event, let's again add your creativity to make our sweet neighborhood bright, safe, and happy during the darkest days of winter.

Prize Categories

- Most original
- Most humorous
- Best use of theme (seasonal, religious, environmental, other creative ideas)
- Best overall decoration

Rules of Participation

- Must be viewed from street or cul-de-sac
- Must not block mailbox or fire hydrant
- No politics, open flames, or loud music
- 10 pm deadline for lighting and sound to be turned off
- Be considerate of neighbors: no blinking lights or projected lights onto neighboring homes
- Use LED lights if possible

The judging will take place the week before Christmas; winners to be announced by HOL. ■

Heads Up for the HOLIDAY Faire

by **TARA PLOCHER**

Saturday, Dec 2 • Noon – 3 pm • Clubhouse

The clubhouse will be decorated and free lunch will be served by HOL.

Bigger and better than the Breezeway Boutique!

Items for sale – many of them handcrafted by our residents – will include baked goods, jewelry, cards, dolls, pine-needle baskets, bookmarks, paintings, lavender hearts, potholders, patchwork bags, finger puppets, clothes, and useful household items. ■



Help! I've Fallen and I Can't Get Up

by **JAMIE KLIMES**

Famous funny words, until it happens to you! Here's a staggering statistic: Per various studies, $\frac{1}{3}$ of people over 65 who fracture their hip, die within one year (Peter Attia, MD, from his new book, *Outlive*). Increased strength and balance to prevent falling is now on offer for free by Vivalon, Marin's central resource hub for older adults.

For over 65 years, Vivalon has provided multiple opportunities for our population, including rides, meals, classes, care, and advice. They now have two programs: **Bingocize** and **A Matter of Balance**. **Bingocize** combines exercise and health education through the game of bingo. It is a 10-week series with two, hour-long classes per week. **A Matter of Balance** consists of an 8-week series, with one, two-hour class per week. It is especially designed for older adults who fear falling (don't we all!) and to improve activity levels, with exercises beginning in week 3. To respond to Vivalon's initial outreach, I need to find out the level of interest for these programs in the Park.

Sign-up sheets and flyers are at the front desk. Feel free also to go to www.vivalon.org to find out more information and figure out which program is best for you. The sign-up sheets will remain throughout November and December, and I will then coordinate with Vivalon to let them know our interest and needs. Depending on interest, sessions will begin after the first of the year. Both programs are FREE and sponsored by HOL. Questions? Email janieklimes1948@gmail.com or text 281-414-3984.

Vivalon is looking for potential instructors for these courses. They can pay instructors a stipend, or you could volunteer. You would need to attend coursework and complete their instruction. For more information, contact Maeve Murphy, Program Administrator, at 415-456-9062 x102 or mmurphy@vivalon.org.

On a sidenote, I highly recommend *Outlive*, the book mentioned above. It is a textbook about how to improve your health span and includes useful information including stability exercises. ■

Free Food

by **JOHN FELD**

I often assist with the delivery and distribution of the free food when it comes to the breezeway, and I have to say it is a tremendous joy and privilege to be involved. I see people who I don't normally run into and have become more than just an intermittent acquaintance with many of them. I cherish this new contact, however brief. Nowadays, when I walk around the Park, I am hailed by Free Food friends, which has added to the value I already place on my membership in this awesome community.

People come with smiles, anticipation, and patience. The delivery times depend entirely on the volunteers from the places providing donations. At times they come earlier than expected and other times much later. Many residents arrive earlier than the posted arrival times, before our email is sent out, to secure a good place in line. Those who wait for the email before leaving their homes invariably have less to choose from, as the early birds get the first choice. But whenever you come, it is always wonderful to see you selecting your food.

Good to remember:

- Bring a **bag** to carry your food. If you forget, we usually have spare bags donated by others.
- We appreciate **your patience** in waiting for us to
 - (a) sort the food and fill bags for the homebound who rely on us to deliver their food to them
 - (b) dispose of overripe and rotted items.
- Most delivered food is at or near the end of its life. It is best to **use it quickly** to avoid having to toss out veggies or prepared foods that are past their prime.
- If you see a **limited number of items**, please don't take more than one! Items that are more expensive or rare — mushrooms, soups, yogurts, raspberries, quiches, etc. — are subject to limited distribution.
- **Bagels** and **bananas** are often in excess.
- We now **divide** up some items such as large cakes, entrées, and

loaves of bread into smaller portions. We will always be glad to assist if you want just a couple of cookies, two bagels, or one Danish pastry instead of a full package. Just ask.

- We **compost** food that overstays its welcome and begins to turn or arrives in that condition.
- Please remember to **sanitize** your hands as you get in line. The food you handle but don't take is often eaten by someone else.
- If you are infirm or otherwise **housebound**, please let me know and we can arrange **home deliveries** to you. Our volunteers work hard to make sure you get some sustaining and occasionally fun items. But if you can get to the breezeway, please come and select the food you like best.
- If you come **after the distribution** has finished,



check the silver stainless steel fridge in the clubhouse kitchen for cold items.

- **Bags** you don't want or need are a great gift to us if they are clean and not ripped.
- Please contribute to the **donation jar** if you can afford to. We use that money for bags, containers, sanitizer, new cupboards, disposable gloves, etc.
- **Saturday** is **Lucky's** day at around **11 am**. Mostly baked goods and sweet foods, but also some salads and sandwiches.
- **Sunday** around **2:15 pm** the **Marin Farmers Market** delivers a lot of fresh produce.
- **Monday** is **Nugget** day at around **12:30 pm** – one of the two most popular days – offering a wide variety of sustenance such as exotic salads, fruit, cakes, and breads.
- **Tuesday** night **Novato Farmers Market** deliveries have ceased for the winter months.
- **Thursday** is the other well-attended day with two deliveries. At about **12:45 pm** some fine produce comes from

Costco, and around **2 pm** the **Food Bank** comes with donations from numerous food markets of healthy vegetables, fruit, and unusual items that can make meals more interesting.

One of my greatest pleasures around the Free Food program is seeing everyone together and socializing. People who tend to stay at home or who normally get all their food from a supermarket are beginning to participate. It is a joy to see people interacting and starting to get out and meet their neighbors – especially those who live alone or who might feel shy around others. Some people bring their caregivers, visiting friends, or family. Some folks come early and wait in line and chat with others; some bring a book or magazine to read, and still others just sit quietly and patiently. Additionally, some come after the rush, and although they get less choice, they can take their time sorting out the best of what remains.

Altogether the Free Food program is a remarkable expression of our community coming together and taking advantage of this bountiful surplus of nourishing food that would previously have been relegated to the garbage dump.

Once in a while, volunteers' life changes cause them to stop volunteering or to take a break for a while, and we have a need to find alternatives. If you feel like stepping up – for a short or extended time – ask Joanne Woodward (our fearless leader) if she needs help.

As a special treat we occasionally have musicians entertaining us while you are in line, which increases the joy and celebration a great deal.

When you come, please take a moment to say hello to others in line and to speak to those you don't know well. People might feel a little uncomfortable if they don't know anyone around them, and we want this to be a joyful, fun, and comfortable experience for everyone. ■



Sharing the Love

by **MICHELE RIVERS**

Thanks to John Feld for mentioning how challah bread makes great French toast.



I tried it. No kidding. It was like eating a fluffy, eggy cloud! Completely delicious. The cranberry and orange glaze on the challah made a lovely, subtle added flavor.

Thanks also to Nugget Market for donating this treat to The Park Market (my new name for our marvelous free food area). We are so fortunate.



For anyone who doesn't know how to make French toast – it's beyond easy.

Here you go:

Whisk a couple of eggs in a bowl with some milk, I add a little nutmeg. Soak your slices of bread in this milky, eggy concoction so it absorbs well. If you are short on fluid, add a bit more milk. In the meantime, heat up some butter in a frying pan and then cook both sides of the eggy bread until each thick slice is a dark golden brown.

Serve hot with maple syrup – you can be a bit naughty and add a dollop of cream or plain yogurt. Of course, it's a yummy addition to add fruit. Bananas are great, or heat some soft fruits for a delish compote to top your challah.

This is the type of breakfast to enjoy on a lazy Sunday morning along with a cup of Earl Grey tea.

P.S. True confession time:

There was enough eggy mixture for one more slice of cloud heaven, so rather than wasting it ... (I could have saved it for the next day but I am really, really naughty).

So here's a fab jam I like from TJ's – raspberry, organic, and low sugar (well, a girl has to be careful) – on the rare occasion. I spread it on the challah and went for it with a dollop of my fave organic goat milk yogurt from Costco.

Wow! This is seriously divine.

Now, another true confession: this was Monday around four o'clock – no waiting for Sunday breakfast or brunch! ■



Is It ... COVID, the Flu, or a Cold?

Suggested by **INGA GRACE** from the **AARP**



It's likely COVID if ...

For adults over 65, a fever is considered one thermometer reading higher than 100 degrees Fahrenheit multiple thermometer readings above 99 degrees or a rise in temperature greater than 2 degrees above normal body temperature.

- ▶ **Fever or chills**
- ▶ **Sore throat and cough**
- ▶ **Runny or stuffy nose**
- ▶ **Muscle aches**
- ▶ **Headache**
- ▶ **Fatigue**
- ▶ **Nausea or vomiting**
- ▶ **Diarrhea**
- ▶ **Shortness of breath**
- ▶ **Loss of taste or smell**



It's likely THE FLU if ...

- ▶ **Feels as if you got hit by a truck suddenly**

- ▶ **Fever and chills**
- ▶ **Sore throat and cough**
- ▶ **Runny or stuffy nose**
- ▶ **Muscle aches**
- ▶ **Headache**
- ▶ **Fatigue**



It's likely A COLD if ...

- ▶ **Comes on slowly over two to three days**
- ▶ **Sneezing**
- ▶ **Watery eyes**
- ▶ **Nasal mucus that starts clear but turns to white, yellow or green after two to three days.**

- ▶ **Fever (rarely)**
- ▶ **Sore throat and cough**
- ▶ **Runny or stuffy nose**

Sharing the Warmth

by **ELIZABETH LEV**



Each year we do a collection of hats, gloves, and socks for the homeless.

Greatly preferred are brand-new items, but used and squeaky clean are also accepted. Please drop off on my front porch starting **December 10**. Last day to drop off will be **December 31**.

Please join me in this venture to help our homeless neighbors during the winter cold.

Elizabeth
107 Marin Valley Drive
(Blue door) ■

Raptors of Salt Point State Park

Text and Photography by **DAVID GRAY**

In between our longer campervan excursions, I got a chance to spend a night on the California coast at Salt Point State Park in northern Sonoma County. I didn't know quite what birds might show up, and was pleased to have the company of several raptors.

Salt Point is known for its intricate sandstone rock with weathering patterns created eons ago by the surf.

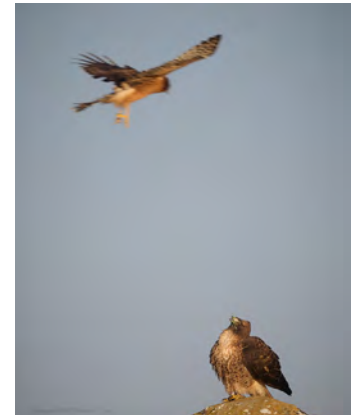
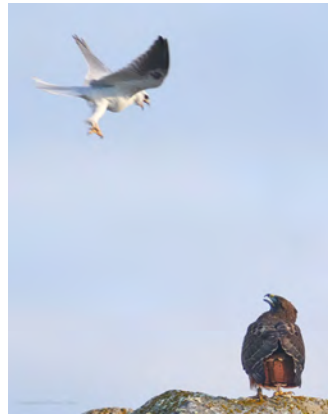


Early the following morning as I was walking among the rock outcrops, I watched a beleaguered red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*) being set upon by an immature Northern harrier (*Circus hudsonius*) and then a white-tailed kite (*Elanus leucurus*).



My sunset walk turned up a male American kestrel (*Falco sparverius*) with prey (a lizard?).

Kestrels are the smallest falcons in the US and have a range that extends across all of North America.





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Eventually, the red-tailed hawk had had enough and flew off.

That night a pair of great-horned owls (*Bubo virginianus*) sang me to sleep.

Bonus:
Harbor seals
on the rocks.

Happy
holidays
to you
all! ■



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1 style="text-align: center;">DECEMBER 2023</h1> <p style="text-align: center;">Please check our website marinvalley.net for late-breaking news or Zoom links</p>				NOVEMBER 30 7:30-9AM Taiji <i>Deck/David MacLam</i> 10-11AM Chair Yoga <i>Fireside Room</i> 11AM-12PM Rollin' Root 2PM Mayflower Chorus <i>Breezeway</i> 6-10PM Game Night <i>Ed Collins</i>	1 7:30-9AM Taiji <i>Deck/David MacLam</i> 12-3PM HOLIDAY FAIRE <i>Ballroom</i> 12 PM Mahjong 4 PM Dancing <i>Meadow</i> 5-7 PM Pub	2
				3 7:30-9AM Taiji <i>Deck/David MacLam</i> 10-10:30AM Meditation <i>Zoom/Anila Manning</i>	4 5AM Trash 7:30-9AM Taiji <i>Deck/David MacLam</i> 4PM Line Dancing	5 7:30-9AM Taiji <i>Deck/David MacLam</i> 10:30-11:30AM Craft&Chat 6PM PAC Board Mtg <i>Zoom/Carol-Joy Harris</i>
10 7:30-9AM Taiji 10-10:30AM Meditation 6 PM Caroling Joyfully <i>Fireside Room</i>	11 5AM Trash 7:30-9AM Taiji 4 PM Line Dancing	12 7:30-9AM Taiji 10:30-11:30AM Craft & Chat	13 7:30-9AM Taiji 5 PM Mar Val reservation deadline 5 PM Dancing 6 PM Mar Val Board Meeting	14 7:30-9AM Taiji 10-11AM Chair Yoga 11AM-12PM Rollin' Root 	15 7:30-9AM Taiji 12 PM Mahjong 4 PM Dancing 5-7 PM Pub	16 5 PM Mar Val Holiday Dinner 4 PM Dancing
17 7:30-9AM Taiji 10-10:30AM Meditation	18 5AM Trash 7:30-9AM Taiji 4 PM Line Dancing	19 7:30-9AM Taiji 10:30-11:30AM Craft & Chat	20 7:30-9AM Taiji 11AM Ladies Bridge <i>Private, Fireside</i> 4 PM Dancing	21 7:30-9AM Taiji 10-11AM Chair Yoga 11AM-12PM Rollin' Root 	22 7:30-9AM Taiji 12 PM Mahjong 4 PM Dancing 5-7 PM Pub	23 4 PM Dancing
24 7:30-9AM Taiji 10-10:30AM Meditation	25 5AM Trash 7:30-9AM Taiji Christmas Day	26 7:30-9AM Taiji 10:30-11:30AM Craft & Chat	27 7:30-9AM Taiji 4PM Book Club <i>Carol-Joy Harris</i> 4 PM Dancing 5PM New Year's Eve reservation deadline	28 7:30-9AM Taiji 10-11AM Chair Yoga	29 7:30-9AM Taiji 12 PM Mahjong 4 PM Dancing 5-7 PM Pub	30 4 PM Dancing
31 6:30PM New Year's Eve Party	Christmas Day					