

T H E ECHO

February 2024



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Letters to the Editor

Warm Hands and Feet



Enormous thanks to all of you who dropped off gloves, mittens, and socks for the homeless. We had a resounding response which, of course, means that many of our neighbors – who might otherwise have gone without – had warmer clothes for the winter weather.



Best wishes for 2024!

Elizabeth Lev

Thank You,

to all those who left anonymous gifts at my door. And thank you to all who have supported me with food, help, visits, phone calls, emails, and loving kindness.

With love and gratitude,

Linda Steenman



PHOTOGRAPH BY MARIANNE YORK

Giraffe sculpture outside Linda's yard created by Gary McClendon.

THE ECHO 2024

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A PUBLICATION OF MHB Group Region 8
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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 *Management Update*

Your Gas System

Remember, if you are experiencing any issues with your gas system, please call the front desk first before calling PG&E. MVMCC is your gas company. Maintenance personnel and Management have received training to help with any problems.

Alert First, Then Dig

Prior to any digging, please alert Management so we may do a thorough utility location inspection. This inspection can prevent costly repairs to underground wire and pipes. It will also prevent residents from losing power, water, or gas during the investigation and repair.

Vegetative Privacy

MVMCC Tree and Shrub policy is in place to protect residents' privacy and to also protect our trees from unlawful removal or pruning — especially oaks, as they are protected. Ask the front desk for any assistance. We are here to help.

Carports

Rule #12 Carports: Keep up your home's curb appeal, and continue with your cleanup of stored items in your carport. Per Mobile Home Residency law, you are permitted only certain items in your carport; BBQs and manufactured patio furniture are among several accepted items. Parking is paramount with the number of resident vehicles here at MVMCC. Please be considerate by cleaning out your carports and parking your vehicles under them.

Permits

Prior to any projects at your home, call the front desk to apply for any needed approvals or HCD permits. We can help you with this and guide you through the process.

Thank you for your continued cooperation.



PAC *Letter to Residents*

Greetings from the Park Acquisition Corporation Board.

Ad Hoc Committee

The Ad Hoc Committee, which consists of Mark Milberg and Tim O'Connor of the Novato City Council and John Hansen and me from the PAC Board, has met twice. Though the next meeting is scheduled for January 26, there is not yet an Exclusive Negotiation Agreement (ENA) in place. It is anticipated that the City Attorney and our attorney, Dana Dean, will be working on that and finalizing it before any more meetings can occur.

Progress Toward Maintaining an Affordable Community of Senior Citizens at Marin Valley

The Independent Income Survey, currently being conducted in a safe and secure manner, will aid us in this endeavor. We encourage your rapid response to this survey. It is key for obtaining grants, funding, and aid in possibly obtaining title in the future. Regardless of your income, having everyone participate will aid in our negotiations. The update is that we now have over 80% participation. We are still reaching for a 90% response from residents.

Resident Updates

The PAC Board will continue to put out "resident updates" to all on our mailing lists about the current state of affairs as the situation develops as well as providing

updates in our PAC Board meetings and postings at the clubhouse. In order to receive any information it is important that we have your name and contact information so we can add you to the lists that inform the community. Please be sure to add your email to our lists and to let us know if you don't have an email address. Contact Carol-Joy Harris at caroljoyharris@comcast.net or 415-883-2824.

Novato Rent Control Program for Mobile Home Parks

The City of Novato is reviewing the ordinance put in place in 1997. MVMCC along with the other mobile home parks in Novato are being asked to advise the City if the current ordinance is sufficient for our needs.

The PAC Board is reviewing the ordinance and will give residents an opportunity to discuss the issue at a PAC meeting. In March the Novato City Council will review the ordinance and consider making any changes.

Finances

The DSCR (debt service coverage ratio) is currently well within positive range. We are in dialogue with the City of Novato concerning billing that may have not been budgeted for the current year. We are requesting more details to assure that MVMCC is the beneficiary of these expenses.

Legal Expenses

We are current with the billing for our legal adviser. Going forward we will continue to need to be advised by legal counsel. The suggestion is to make monthly contributions to this legal fund. This will spread out your cost of helping the community and equally remove the burden of the PAC needing to continually reach out for funding. Consider it an investment in your future here at Marin Valley.

Projects

We are working with PG&E to repair and replace the main electrical transfer switch coming into the Park as part of our efforts to move forward 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.

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. By the time the *Echo* is published, some events have already passed. To take advantage of these worthwhile events, check the current notices at the front desk and at marinvalley.net

Participation

The PAC Board 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 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 marinvalley.net homepage.

In service,



Jay Shelfer
PAC PRESIDENT
jjshelfer@yahoo.com
415-250-0375 cell

Update on Ownership Options under Consideration

by **PAC BOARD ROD COMMITTEE**

January 14, 2024 – From the ROD Committee of the PAC Board, members Mary Currie, Serena Fisher, Alan Gump, John Hansen, and Dave Tetta.

ROD Committee

Last summer, the PAC Board formed the ROD (Resident Ownership Discovery) Committee to specifically assist the board in understanding the existing options regarding resident ownership. The overarching goal of any ownership option is to permanently maintain MVMCC as an affordable, moderate-to-low, and very-low-income, over-55 community.

Decisions

Nothing has been decided yet. When the time comes, the PAC Board will make the necessary decisions only after input from residents.

Possible Positive Choice

The ROD Committee is currently exploring in greater detail a resident ownership model that appears to offer a positive choice. At this juncture, the committee believes that the LEHC (Limited Equity Housing Cooperative) model provides an opportunity to realize our goal of long-term security and affordability.

LEHC Model

While a LEHC model appears to be our most promising route forward to date, it is still “too early in the game” to make a definitive choice and eliminate other options. A little more time will tell.

LEHC Expert Technical Support

The LEHC model involves taking advantage of the extensive expert technical support from ROCUSA (Resident Owned Communities) and CCCD (California Center for Cooperative Development). It is the model that was presented to residents on December 6, 2023 (the presentation link is on marinvalley.net). **To date, ROCUSA has successfully helped 300 communities become self-owned.**

LEHC “Forgivable Loans”

The LEHC ownership model affords various “forgivable loan” options and grant-funding opportunities for both Park purchase and capital expenses related to deferred maintenance and replacing our aging infrastructure.

We will continue to keep you updated.

The LEHC
(Limited Equity
Housing Cooperative)
model provides an
opportunity to
**realize our goal of
long-term security
and affordability.**



To date, **ROCUSA**
(LEHC) has
successfully helped
300 communities
become self-owned.

Community Love

by **MICHELE RIVERS**

IN MEMORIAM

Marian Pilotte

May 29, 1923

December 31, 2023



The Camellia symbolizes love and devotion. The Chinese believe that the petals reflect the spirit and beauty of a woman. Rosemary is for remembrance.

On New Year's Eve our beloved one-hundred-year-old Marian Pilotte left us to be with the angels. Like many others, I am deeply sad at her passing and will miss her — I already do. However, I want to share with you the last few days of her life at Marin Valley. I think this is a fitting tribute to a wonderful lady and to how important our community was to her.

I was one of Marian's many friends and her next-door neighbor. After delivering some Christmas gifts, I sat down to listen to how much she enjoyed the Christmas dinner and seeing so many of her longtime friends. *I had a marvelous time*, she said with a twinkle in her eye. On Christmas Day, Joan Cervisi picked Marian up and brought her to her home for dinner. Marian told me, *There were eight at the table, the*

meal was delicious, and we had lots of laughs. Smiling, she added, *I'm a bit tired.*

Several times that holiday week, Gunnel Bergstrom popped in from across the street to see Marian, visits that Marian always enjoyed. Marian never missed an opportunity to say, *I have such wonderful neighbors.* Gunnel, Joan, and Joanne Woodward have been truly wonderful friends to Marian for which I, too, am so grateful.



Bottom row left to right: Carol-Joy Harris, Michele Rivers, Marian Pilotte. Back row: Juliette MacLam, Serena Fisher, Bill Davis, and friends.

On Boxing Day (the 26th) I had a small party at my home which included dinner, games, and singing carols. I thought it would be lovely for us to sing carols to Marian so, clad in coats and scarves, we trooped next door. Oh my goodness, what a precious time that was. When I asked Marian if she would like to share my caroling book, she said *I don't need it, I know all the words.* I will never forget the look on her face as she sang "Joy to the World" with us. After the finale — "We Wish You a Merry Christmas" — Marian clutched my hand and couldn't stop thanking us all for coming by to sing to her.

When I stopped in the following day with a bag of cookies, Marian was quick to tell me that she had told her daughters all about the caroling and what a lucky woman she was to have such wonderful friends in the Park.

IN MEMORIAM

JoAnne Barbara Hammond

March 2, 1953 – January 8, 2024
Montreal, Quebec Novato, California
Canada United States

by **SUSAN GIBBS**

JoAnne moved to Marin Valley in the last century to live with her parents, John and Anne Gibbs. After they died (in 1995 and 2000, respectively), she remained in the home at 128 Marin Valley Drive. She is survived by her sister, Susan Gibbs, of Tiburon. susan_gibbs@mac.com.

She will be remembered for her robust sense of humor and for the conviviality and jokes she shared with her water aerobics pool buddies.



The Mighty Rower — This photograph shows Joanne's spirit rowing across the mighty Lake Winnepesaukee in New Hampshire. Maybe not all the way across. That's me in the bow, with the Rev. John Gibbs, later appointed Deacon of the Church of Nativity in Marinwood, patiently coaching from the stern.

Message from Mar Val

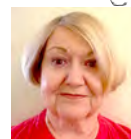
Dear Friends,

It is Mardi Gras time (whatever happened to 2023?). Come join us February 10 for a New Orleans dinner and some wonderful music. Once again, we are delighted to welcome Virginia Tichenor and Marty Egger for some toe-tapping, hand-clapping Dixieland jazz for cocktail hour. Laissez les bon temps rouler.

Mar Val would like to thank Janet Bogardus, Aneesha Dillon, Meg Jordan, and Steve Plocher for being our DJs for New Year's Eve ... the crowd obviously loved your musical choices and spent much time on the dance floor. The evening was a lovely welcome to 2024.

Mar Val is able to offer residents both Pub and the monthly dinner events because of the volunteer support of fellow residents ... we once again appeal to anyone who enjoys these events and would like to help us. We all work hard, but we also have lots of fun. If you wish to volunteer in any capacity, please call Sandee Duncan at 415-883-3034.

While the lighting at the clubhouse has been improved, we still urge you to bring your flashlights and "neon" vests ... let's all stay safe.



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

Mar Val Presents



Laissez les bon temps rouler

Mardi Gras **in the** **Park**

Saturday, February 10

5 pm Cocktails/Music 6 pm Dinner

Featuring

Dixieland Jazz Music

Welcoming back

Virginia Tichenor & Marty Eggers

M E N U

Red Beans/Rice with Sausage or Vegetarian Red Beans/Rice

Corn Casserole and Salad

Dessert

***Don your Mardi Gras beads and mask and come enjoy the
fabulous, toe-tapping sounds of this musical duo.***

\$15 per person. Make checks payable to Mar Val.

**Reservation deadline: Wednesday, February 7, by 5 pm
or when 120 reservations have been received.**

For questions, call Susan Hoff @ 707-365-9426



Mar Val Presents

St. Patrick's Day

Saturday, March 16

5 pm Cocktails 6 pm Dinner

Featuring Irish Coffee!!

(same price as our cocktails – only \$6)

MENU

Corned Beef/Cabbage or Vegetarian Shepherd's Pie
Potatoes Carrots Rolls
Dessert

\$15 per person, Make checks payable to Mar Val

*Deadline for reservations: Tuesday, March 12, by 5 pm
(or when 120 reservations have been received)
For questions, call Susan Hoff @ 707-365-9426*

HOL *Home Owners League Message*

Greetings,

HOL is looking forward to an exciting and action-packed spring and 2024.

Health and Wellness Fair

On Saturday, February 24, we are pleased to present the Health and Wellness Fair. See page 11.

Holiday Lights Competition

Our Second Annual Holiday Lights competition was a great success. See pictures of the winners on page 13.

Park Market

A great cheer to Rick and Sue Oltman for the donation of the much-appreciated gas heater and several tanks of gas. Now you can keep warm while waiting for the food deliveries.

We all thank Lucinda Daly for the donation of the fridge. This allows us to keep most of the food in the Boutique shed and not have to use the silver fridge in the kitchen.

The Extra Food food delivery volunteer drivers are sometimes unreliable in notifying us of their arrival times, or don't arrive at their stated times. Thus we are moving toward picking up the food ourselves. If you would like to be a food deliverer, we need drivers with cars or vans of any size. To volunteer for this task, you must be qualified by Extra Food in a short, simple lesson and test.

Please do not place any of your personal food donations in the Boutique fridge. It is for Extra Food donations ONLY.

We also want to thank the many people who bring us empty containers. At present we only need clean containers like the one attached to our notice board. All donations of bags and supplies are appreciated, as is propane gas to keep residents and volunteers warm while waiting in line and while preparing the delivered food when it gets windy and cold. The heater has been a godsend, but it needs feeding.

Special thanks to the Park Market volunteers for making this such a wonderful and fun place to live.

Keep the Gym Tidy

It was revealed at the HOL meeting that people have been less than tidy in the exercise room/gym, especially by not putting away weights or replacing chairs and other objects where they belong. We ask that if you move any equipment, please return it to its rightful place. Also be sure to wipe down the apparatus after you have used it. A quick wipe will remove your sweat so the next user won't have to.

Dump Run

We had a very successful and perhaps the largest-ever dump run in December. Our next one is planned for March.

Breezeway Boutique

The Breezeway Boutique is still gathering lots of interesting items, and there are some treasures to be found on the shelves and racks. We all need to thank the good-natured and always helpful Kevin Mulvany for taking excess items to thrift shops every Wednesday, and our own Tara Plocher for tidying it up several times a day.

Battery Recycling

The Novato Recycling Center now places a substantial charge on deposits of batteries. Until another solution can be found, you can drop off batteries at Pini Hardware for no charge. Thanks for your patience while we move through this transition.

Art in the Park

Several pieces from the Marin Valley Gallery have already been sold and new pictures by the same artists are in place. Suzie Lahr hopes artists are busily getting ready for the next exhibition on March 3. See page 14.

Breeze Market

The February market will be on February 10 just in time for Valentine's Day.

Stay safe and warm,



John Feld

John Feld

HOL PRESIDENT

johnmfeld@gmail.com

510-495-4138 cell



Health & Wellness Fair

Saturday, February 24
12 – 4 pm

Hearing-Aid Maintenance and Repair		Back Pain and Osteoporosis	
Heart Rate Variability	CBD in Health	Hospice	Feldenkrais Bodywork
Yoga	Balance	Taiji	Herbalists
Electromagnetic Healing Devices	Chair Massages	Blood Pressure	
Green Burials	Eye Testing (Lions Club)		

by **JOHN FELD**

Join us for HOL's Health and Wellness Fair at the clubhouse from noon until 4 pm, with a light lunch complimentary for all attendees.

In the **Ballroom** — delve into a diverse range of expertise and discussions on individual health products and services.

In the **Fireside Room** — sit down for informative presentations.

This isn't your typical health fair with HMO sign-ups or insurance sales pitches. You can attend without the worry of high-pressure or a hard sell. Instead, discover the latest offerings and resources available in Marin. Many presenters

reside in the Park, offering you the chance to ask questions and feel at ease.

Learn about options to address your aches and pains, explore alternatives to regular medications, and discover holistic solutions for your well-being. Find health strategies through activities like blood pressure testing, herbal alternatives to conventional medicines, Feldenkrais bodywork, and chair massages. Additional tables will showcase specialists in back pain and osteoporosis, CBD in health, yoga, balance, Taiji, biofeedback, heart rate variability, hearing aid tuning/maintenance and repair,

electromagnetic healing devices, hospice, and green burials — all providing information at your pace, potentially offering solutions to persistent worries or pains.

Unlike a typical doctor's visit, this fair offers a unique experience. While many presenters will cover familiar strategies, numerous alternatives may be new to you. Attend, ask questions, gather information, and make valuable connections. To make the most of the event, approach it with curiosity, learn something new, and explore potential solutions.

Explore new possibilities for a long and healthy life. ■

Art Hub (like Pub, only making art)

by **MEG JORDAN**

Hey,
Artists!

Here's an opportunity to gather for a shared art-making experience in the clubhouse.

Once a week, as desired, the "bamboo" room on the lower level in the clubhouse will be dedicated to resident artists gathering to work on their individual pieces. The idea was approved for consideration at January's HOL meeting, when Joan Leopold and I brought it up.

We realized how much we appreciate the sacred space that's created when a small group of artists dive into this special quiet, creative, intense time together, which inevitably blooms when people concentrate on creating something — time that is



punctuated with the occasional chitchat and laughter. We are thinking that possibly:

Tuesdays 12 – 4 pm or maybe
Wednesdays 1 – 5 pm would be ideal, but we're up for input.

We're developing some simple guidelines that would allow us to keep materials and fold-up easels along one cabinet or wall.

Guidelines would include:

- no storing of toxic materials
- drop cloths for messier projects
- old sheets or cloths to cover tables
- donations of adequate bins (with locks) for anything of value you'd like to leave in this room.

Most of us don't have adequate space in our homes to leave projects out, but this would give

us that opportunity.

Please contact Joanie at joanleop@yahoo.com or Meg at megjordan21@me.com with your ideas and willingness.

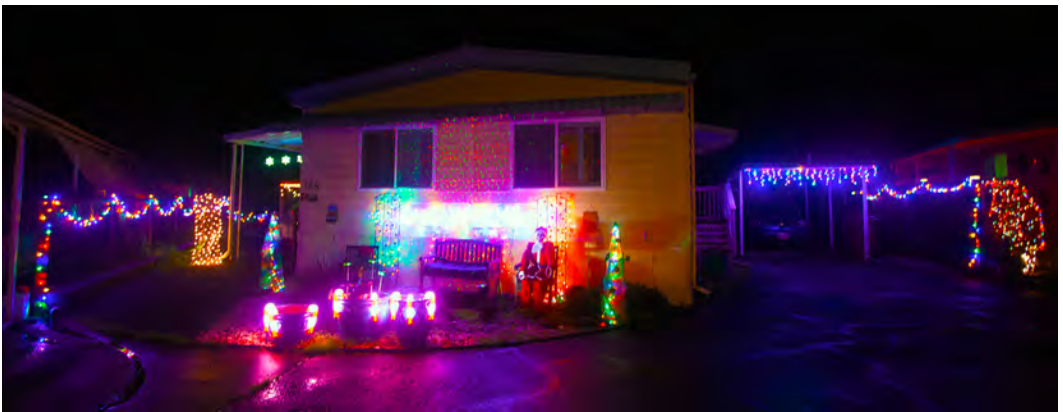
We hope to start in February. ■

2nd Annual Holiday Lighting Decoration Competition

The HOL holiday lighting competition's dazzling array of lights brought joy to the Park and the coveted Grand Prize to **Bob Shannon and Julie Riedstra**, residing at 40 Marin Valley Drive.



Adding a touch of humor to the festivities, **Lee Pochapin**, located at 108 Panorama Drive, presented the most amusing display.



Meanwhile, **Janie Klimes and Mark Crocker** of 124 Sunrise Lane earned recognition for the best use of a theme.



Jo Ussery of 126 Marin Valley Drive captured the most original display title.

A heartfelt thanks to all who illuminated the season with lights and decorations and to those who contributed their winnings to the PAC Legal Fund. ■



First Chance/Last Chance/Good News!

by **SUZIE LAHR**

First Chance to Join Us on March 3!

Are you a resident artist who has never joined us before in our gallery exhibits? This will be your opportunity to show your creative work to our community and visitors to our Park. The resident artworks in the Marin Valley Gallery really add ambiance to our clubhouse. We do not jury, and we accept all levels of talent and all types of media that can either hang on the wall or create a small tabletop display.

We welcome you with open arms and hope you will join us. In the years we have been exhibiting resident artworks, we have had to send back only a few pieces to artists due to not fitting in the allotted space or not hanging properly on our professional exhibit system. If you need perimeters for participating, please call me at 415-884-9611 to give you guidelines.

Last Chance to View Our Current Exhibit!

If you have not viewed our current exhibit in the lobby and Fireside Room gallery, take an opportunity to do so as this exhibit will be coming down and a new one installed on March 3. Many thanks to the numerous contributors to the current exhibit, and we welcome many of you back with even more creations for the next one.

Good News!

And we know the world needs more of that right now with what's going on in this universe. We are all so fortunate to be here in this openly loving community. The good news is that five pieces in the current exhibit have sold. Artists David Gray, Meg Jordan, Susan McMudie, and George Winters have each sold their work. It is very special to gift yourself artwork for your

own pleasure as well as much appreciated to be gifted a piece of art. Even the Marin County Library purchases artwork now!

They did just that with Susan McMudie's *Lynx* pastel for their new "On the Wall" art-lending program. Sometime this year you will be able to check out her *Lynx* on your library card.

This gallery is truly a team effort. So step up to the plate with art in hand on March 3, and our community will support your artistic endeavors. ■



Lynx pastel by Susan McMudie

No More Complaining

by **LORNA SASS**

In my New York, where I spent most of my life, complaining is a way of life, and just about everyone does it.

So it was only when I moved to California at age 67 that I began to notice that I was the only one complaining — along with a few other New York Jews who had also migrated to the West Coast and become friends.

As I looked around at all of the beauty surrounding me, my complaints began feeling like thorns on a rosebush, and I became increasingly curious about the origin of my habit.

So I took myself to the Marin County Free Library website and entered “Jewish complaining” in the search engine. I almost gasped out loud when I came upon a book called *Born to Kvetch* by Michael Wex. (*Kvetch* is the Yiddish word for “complain” that deliciously includes a strong dose of onomatopoeia and chicken fat.)

I opted for the audio version of *Born to Kvetch* and listened to it in the car while riding thru the lush green fields of Marin, a very unlikely setting for the author’s delightful Yiddish accent, which reminded me touchingly of my maternal grandmother, whose first words were uttered in that rich tongue and who gifted me with

old-world lullabies she had learned as a child.

Much to my surprise, the author traced the origin of kvetching back to the Bible. He recounts how Moses led the Jews out of slavery in Egypt; the Red Sea parts and the Jews after much challenge make it through to the promised land.

And what do the Jews say to Moses as soon as they get a chance to catch their breath?

Moses, why did you bring us here? they demand in petulant tones.

Can’t you see that there is nothing good to eat?!

When I tell this story, those lines always get a knowing laugh, and, sure enough, I laughed too when I first heard them. But quickly the author posits an explanation for kvetching that hit me right in the gut: Jews began complaining because if anyone knew how good we had it, they would surely take it away.

Ah, I thought. Now I get why I complain so much, and it makes all kinds of sense. I’ve made myself feel and look like a victim so no one will know how privileged my life has been. If they see my good fortune, they’ll find a way to hijack it.

Then the truth beneath the truth revealed itself to me like

a photograph in a darkroom coming up with stark clarity in the hypo: Yes, my habit of kvetching was initially cultural and deeply rooted. Sadly, it has become an addiction and, like all addictions, is imprisoning me in “poor me” mode.

In fact, I had been so stuck in the mud of complaining that I didn’t realize how I had been hiding the goodness and bounty of my life even from myself.

I began noticing more and more when complaints surfaced, either in my thoughts or in my conversations with friends. I started catching my “kvetches” before they became spoken and turned the complaints upside down with statements of gratitude. To further shift my thinking, I created a gratitude practice by stating five things I’m grateful for each morning and evening.

Some days I’d forget, but little by little I managed to wash off the ancestral mud that was keeping me stuck in fear and victim mentality.

And the biggest gift of all is the deep knowing that after living for six decades with the belief that my cup was half empty, I now know with certainty that it is full to overflowing.

How about you?

The Relationship between Toxic Chemicals and Our Sleep

by **SERENA FISHER**

Dear neighbors,

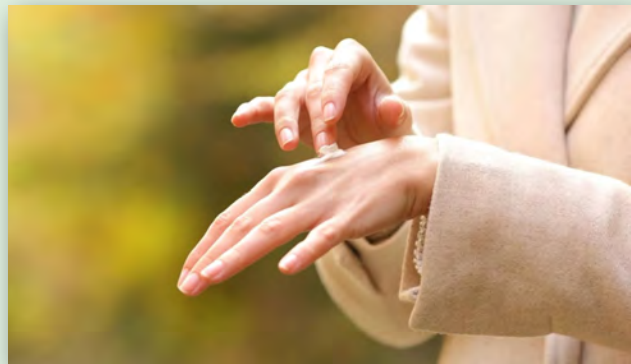
I am sharing excerpts from a 2023 article by the Environmental Working Group that provides research on the toxic relationship between sleep/health maintenance and the harmful chemicals in our everyday cleaning and laundry products.

“The products you use could be putting your health at risk by exposing you to harmful chemicals. It’s important to consider your total sleep environment – the bedtime products you use and what you sleep in and on.



Some moisturizers, eye creams and serums contain **PFAS**, also known as “forever chemicals.” They don’t break down in the environment, and they build up in our bodies. Scientists have linked PFAS to **cancer, reproductive harm and immune system damage**.

Parabens are another group of chemicals used in moisturizers, cleansers and anti-aging products for their antimicrobial and preservative properties. They are **endocrine disruptors** that increase the risk of cancer.”



Fortunately, “California is leading the way in making personal care products safer. In 2020, the state passed the **Toxic Free Cosmetics Act**, which banned 13 PFAS, as well as a number of phthalates and parabens, from personal care products.” However, there is more to do.

It is very important to “pay attention to what cleaning products you use to wash and dry your sheets, and PJ’s, as many products contain harmful chemicals that envelop you in unseen chemicals while you sleep.” This also applies to the clothes you wear during the day. You may be walking around in a chemical haze from your laundry process. Air fresheners are also an issue to be aware of.

Laundry products, especially fabric softeners and heat-activated dryer sheets, can contain chemicals that are harmful to your health and pollute the air around you and the environment. Chemically fragrant **dryer sheets are known to be toxic to bees and other pollinators, too**.

“Quaternary ammonium compounds, or quats, are used in fabric softeners, disinfectants and sanitizers. They help make clothes feel soft after washing, but they are also known to trigger



asthma and skin irritation and may harm the reproductive system,” and they are known to accumulate in our bodies.

Scented laundry products can make your sheets smell fresh, but it’s usually with a mix of fragrance chemicals. Ingredient labels often list “fragrance” but not the exact chemicals that make up that particular scent. The term can hide thousands of fragrance chemicals in common household products.

“Research shows exposure to some fragrances can be harmful, leading to mild to severe health harm. Health problems include breathing difficulty, allergies, migraine headaches, skin rashes and asthma attacks.”

Laundry cleaners can also contain PFAS, known as “forever chemicals.” If enacted, a new California bill, Assembly Bill 727, would ban PFAS from household, industrial and institutional cleaners.

EWG’s *Healthy Living Home Guide* contains guidance on buying healthy products for your washing and household. www.ewg.org. You can also find safe personal care products in EWG’s **Skin Deep®** database, www.ewg.org/skindeep, which rates more than 90,000 personal care products based on potential hazards and health concerns from their ingredients. You can download their app to research safe products on the go: www.ewg.org/apps/

Recommendations

- Buy unscented products labeled **FREE & CLEAR** – as they do not have harmful artificial chemical fragrance - to help reduce your exposure (and that of your neighbors) to toxic fragrance and harmful chemicals. Most of our major local stores, including Costco, Whole Foods, Trader Joe’s, Safeway, and Nugget sell chemical and fragrant-free, biodegradable products that are kind to the earth and our bodies, as well as the environment.
- As an alternative to toxic fabric softeners, EWG recommends you “add a half-cup of distilled white vinegar to your washing machine during the rinse cycle. Don’t worry – the smell doesn’t linger on clothes.”
- To reduce static, a healthier, and much cheaper and reusable alternative to chemical dryer sheets are the Australian /New Zealand pure wool balls, which are also recommended by EWG. Trader Joe’s sells a bag of 4 balls for \$6 (\$1.50 each), and they last for many years. You only need one ball in your dryer, so share them with family, friends and neighbors.



Know your environment.
Protect your health.

- I highly recommend you visit ewg.org to find out more about living a healthy, chemical free life.

Wishing you many healthy, restful nights, and days in a chemically fragrant-free and toxic-free environment.

Great Blue Heron

Text and Photography by **DAVID GRAY**

Happy Valentine's Day!

The great blue heron (*Ardea herodias*) lives in marshlands throughout North and Central America, and as far south as northern South America. They are also found on the Caribbean and Galapagos Islands. I was surprised to see one by the statue of Neptune in the Boboli Gardens at the Palazzo Pitti in Florence, Italy, last May. You can find it in the photo on the right-hand side of the island statue.



Wikipedia says that the great blue heron is occasionally found in the Azores (islands belonging to Portugal in the Atlantic Ocean), calling those seen in Europe “rare vagrants.”



Great blue herons are mostly gray and slate blue with reddish highlights on their shoulders and the leading edge of their wings. They have a white crest surrounded by black, with a couple of black plumes extending

down the back of their necks, and gray plumes running down their chest and back. Their beak is long and sharp, black on top and bright orange-yellow underneath. Clear yellow eyes miss nothing. Long, gray legs give them a stately gait as they walk across the fields while hunting on land. They prey upon small mammals as well as fish and amphibians.

The GBH who was hunting in the saltwater reflecting pools at Salt Point State Park was finding small fish and crabs to eat.



Our ephemeral ponds are filling up, and the chorus of frogs is in full swing. We can expect the great blue herons, the black-crowned night herons, and various egrets to return for a feast. ■



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<div><h1>FEBRUARY</h1><h2>2024</h2></div> <div>Please check our website marinvalley.net for News and Events and Zoom links</div>				1 7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji Deck/David MacLam 10-11 ^{AM} Chair Yoga Fireside Room 11 ^{AM} -12 ^{PM} Rollin' Root 4-5 ^{PM} Depression & Anxiety group Fireside Room/ Michael Hagerty	2 7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji Deck/ David MacLam 12 ^{PM} Mahjong 4:30 ^{PM} Dancing Meadow 5-7 ^{PM} Pub	3 4:30 ^{PM} Dancing Meadow
				4 7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji Deck/David MacLam 10-10:30 ^{AM} Meditation Zoom/ Anila Manning 4 ^{PM} Line Dancing Ballroom/ Janet Shouldis	5 6 ^{AM} Trash 7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji Deck/ David MacLam	6 7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji Deck/ David MacLam 10:30-11:30 ^{AM} Craft&Chat Library 5 ^{PM} PAC Board Meeting Ballroom/Zoom Carol-Joy Harris
11 7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji 10-10:30 ^{AM} Meditation 4 ^{PM} Line Dancing	12 6 ^{AM} Trash 7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji	13 7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji 10:30-11:30 ^{AM} Craft & Chat	14 7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji 11 ^{AM} Ladies Bridge Fireside/Private 4:30 ^{PM} Dancing	15 7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji 10-11 ^{AM} Chair Yoga 11 ^{AM} -12 ^{PM} Rollin' Root 4-5 ^{PM} Depression & Anxiety group	16 7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji 12 ^{PM} Mahjong 4:30 ^{PM} Dancing 5-7 ^{PM} Pub	17 4:30 ^{PM} Dancing
18 7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji 10-10:30 ^{AM} Meditation 4 ^{PM} Line Dancing	19 6 ^{AM} Trash 7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji	20 7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji 10:30-11:30 ^{AM} Craft & Chat	21 7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji 4:30 ^{PM} Dancing	22 7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji 10-11 ^{AM} Chair Yoga 11 ^{AM} -12 ^{PM} Rollin' Root 4-5 ^{PM} Depression & Anxiety group	23 7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji 12 ^{PM} Mahjong 4:30 ^{PM} Dancing 5-7 ^{PM} Pub	24 12-4 ^{PM} Health & Wellness Fair 4:30 ^{PM} Dancing
25 7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji 10-10:30 ^{AM} Meditation 4 ^{PM} Line Dancing	26 6 ^{AM} Trash 7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji	27 7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji 10:30-11:30 ^{AM} Craft & Chat	28 7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji 4 ^{PM} Book Club Carol-Joy Harris 4:30 ^{PM} Dancing	29 7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji 10-11 ^{AM} Chair Yoga 11 ^{AM} -12 ^{PM} Rollin' Root 4-5 ^{PM} Depression & Anxiety group		