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March 2024



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MVMCC Management Update

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.

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.

After all the heavy wind and rainstorms, we notice some resident yards are covered in trash and debris that blew in from fallen trash cans – or? Let's get it all cleaned up and keep the Park looking great.

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.



Thinking of selling your home? Management requires an intent-to-sell form to be filled out. We have blanks at the front desk.



Important Community Meeting

The ROC Path for MVMCC to Become an LEHC

Wednesday, February 21 • 2–5 pm • Ballroom

with Representatives from ROC USA  & CCCD  California Center for Cooperative Development
 to inform us and answer our questions (see p. 4-5).

Directory Update

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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.

Letter to Residents

Greetings from the Park Acquisition Corporation Board.

Ad Hoc Committee

The Ad Hoc Committee consisting of Mark Milberg and Tim O'Connor of the Novato City Council, and John Hansen and myself from the PAC Board, has met twice. The PAC Board has received a draft of the Exclusive Negotiation Agreement (ENA) from the City and has re-sent it back to the City with our comments and changes. This ENA, which limits the City's negotiations exclusively with MVMCC is being reviewed by the City of Novato. The next meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee is set for February 23. It will be necessary that both parties agree to the terms of the proposed ENA for this meeting to take place.

Progress Toward Maintaining an Affordable Community of Senior Citizens

The PAC and other residents present at the meeting February 6 received the Resident Ownership Discovery (ROD) Committee's recommendations and updated report. The Board approved the ROD's continued investigation of MVMCC becoming a resident-owned nonprofit Limited Equity Housing Cooperative. The ROD Committee will conduct open meetings with residents and meetings with Resident Owned Communities-USA and the California Center for Cooperative Development to further explore this option. Stay tuned. Updates will be forthcoming from notices in the *Echo*, information in the

"Ownership" section of our website marinvalley.net, and notices for schedules and meetings. One is planned for February 21 at the clubhouse (see p. 5).

Additionally, the PAC Board will continue to put out "Resident Updates" via the Constant Contact service, and post to all on our mailing lists the current state of affairs as they develop in our PAC Board and committee meetings. Please add your email to our lists.

Novato Rent Control Program for Mobile Home Parks

Novato City is reviewing the ordinance put in place in 1997. MVMCC along with the other mobile home parks in Novato are asked to advise the City if the current ordinance is sufficient. The PAC Board has sent a letter to the City asking that a workshop be held with all affected mobile home park residents in Novato to understand and offer recommendations to the existing ordinance.

Finances

The DSCR (debt service coverage ratio) is currently well within acceptable range. We are in dialogue with the City of Novato concerning billing that may not have been budgeted for the current year. We are asking for more details to ensure that MVMCC is the beneficiary for these expenses. The process of formulating next year's MVMCC budget has begun. It will be reviewed with residents in an upcoming PAC Board meeting. Watch for it on a coming agenda.

Legal Expenses

We are current with the billing for our legal advisers. 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 MVMCC.

Projects

The recent storm played havoc here in the Park, and repairs are in progress where damage occurred. 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. 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

Agendas and the Zoom link for future PAC Board meetings are posted 72 hours before the meetings and are available to those on the mailing list. To be added to this list, contact PAC Board Secretary Carol-Joy Harris at caroljoyharris@comcast.net. You can also find the Zoom link on our marinvalley.net homepage.

Meetings

The next regular monthly Board meeting will be on Wednesday, March 6, at 5 pm. Starting in April, the PAC Board meetings will take place on the first Monday of every month.

In service,




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

What's Happening with Park Ownership?

Resident Ownership Discovery (ROD) Committee

UPDATE to Residents — February 8, 2024

by The **ROD COMMITTEE**: John Hansen, Serena D'Arcy-Fisher, Alan Gump, Dave Tetta, with either Jay Shelfer or Mary Currie

The PAC Board appointed the **Resident Ownership Discovery (ROD) Committee** to research viable options for becoming a resident owned community (ROC). To this end, everyone in the community received a three-page document in their tubes (dated February 1) with an important update on the ROD Committee's findings and recommendations to date.

At the February 6 PAC Board meeting, the ROD Committee provided a summary of its recommendations and received approval by the PAC Board to continue researching the path to becoming a Limited Equity Housing Cooperative (LEHC).

Understandably, many residents have questions and concerns about our future. The ROD Committee has within reasonable parameters researched several ownership options for the Park using several key benchmarks: overall cost and the ability to maintain the Park as an affordable, low-income, and secure senior community, as well as the support and expertise required to be successful as a self-owned co-op community.

Models Considered

Given several possible models (below) including a **long-term lease**, **Mutual Benefit Corporation**, and a **community land trust**, the ROD Committee believes the **LEHC*** model provides us the best option at this time.

1. Long-term lease with the City of Novato

The PAC Board has stated that this is not a viable option on the table right now.

2. Self-Ownership as a Mutual Benefit Corporation

This path has been set aside for now because of several concerns. It requires a considerably high initial investment per household. Grant funding is less easily available. Creating a legal framework for this option involves more uncertainty and greater attorney involvement (and expense). These drawbacks could jeopardize our goal of creating an affordable low-income community.

3. Community Land Trust (CLT)

ROD Committee research on a CLT model indicates the following, with some nuances:

- a. The land trust has to find the funds to buy the Park.
- b. The land trust would own the land.
- c. Residents would be renters with a 99-year land lease.

- d. Residents would not have control of our board. The structure of the new board under a CLT is: 1/3 residents, 1/3 from the local community, and 1/3 to include public officials, community leaders, and nonprofit workers, to name a few.
- e. Other important considerations under the land trust model include:
 - i. The resale values of our homes are considerably restricted (based on a formula).
 - ii. All home improvements must be preapproved, and certain upgrades are not included in your base cost when calculating your permissible resale price.
 - iii. Our homes must be sold for less than market value.

*4. Limited Equity Housing Cooperative (LEHC)

We recommend this model. As an LEHC:

- a. We would own our own land.
- b. Residents control who is elected to our board from members within our community.
- c. We can engage expert technical support from two organizations that specialize in helping communities like ours become resident owned:



Resident Owned Communities USA (ROC USA)

and the



California Center for Cooperative Development (CCCD),

which is a CA nonprofit and serves as a certified technical adviser to ROC USA assisting communities in CA to become self-owned. CCCD understands CA law. All of its paperwork complies with CA State requirements.

- ii. ROC USA has helped 317 communities become resident owned communities across the country, with a 100% success rate.

Together, ROC USA and CCCD have extensive in-depth knowledge of the legal, financial, and community-building work that is needed if we are to become self-owned. You can learn more about these organizations and their work at rocusa.org and ccd.coop, (rocusa.org/meet-the-communities)

The ROD Committee is working with these experts to develop a preliminary financial assessment of the impact of becoming self-owned and how residents' rents may be impacted.

As a nonprofit LEHC, funding options for Park acquisition and future Park improvements, including grants and loans with favorable funding terms, are more readily available.

In Summary

The ROD Committee believes that becoming a resident owned community (ROC) provides long-term security for our residents as well as the responsibility that comes with ownership. Residents will have an important voice and must get involved in community decisions around budgets and improvements, and must understand the requirements expected by ROC USA, CCCD, and our potential lender.

Next Steps

The ROC Path for MVMCC to Become an LEHC Wednesday, February 21 • 2–5 pm • Ballroom

To help our community understand the LEHC model, we invited key staff from ROC USA and CCCD to provide an in-person community presentation on February 21 in our clubhouse to lay out the ROC path for MVMCC to become an LEHC. These professionals will address community questions.

For our digital readers of this March Echo, make sure you come and bring your neighbors.

It is vital that we as community members stay informed by reading posted and distributed updates and attending PAC Board- and ROD Committee-organized meetings.

A special page on the Marin Valley website has been created where information will be available to keep us informed. Please bookmark this page: <https://marinvalley.net/ownership-options/>

Important Notes

First – no decision on any option for Park ownership will be made without a vote of residents.

Second – it will take several months to get to a recommended decision, and the timing cannot yet be determined.

Third – the ROD Committee and PAC Board are committed to realizing our goal of remaining an affordable and secure low-income senior community. ■



First Aid Training

by **JOHN HANSEN**



Sunday, March 24 • 10 am – 12:30 pm • Ballroom

SORRY for being blunt, but are you prepared to save your own life or another's when a personal emergency strikes? You've read about it, and words can express good ideas, but your mind is a busy place, and without some repetitive, hands-on training and experience, even great ideas can quickly fade to oblivion.

The thing is, when your life's on the line you only get one shot; you don't get to rewind and try again. We may think: *I will know what to do when the time comes, or that just doesn't happen to me, or "___"* (fill in the blank). But in reality ...

the shock of suddenly being confronted with a life-threatening emergency immediately triggers your sympathetic nervous system – your mind goes blank – you freeze like a deer in the headlights,

UNLESS ...

You learn to store your memory where it doesn't fade – in your body. You do this with sleeves-rolled-up hands-on training and regular practice. So it's time we help you change the old narrative.

The next MVEST personal emergency first aid training is **Sunday, March 24**, at the clubhouse.

Participation is limited.

The training will include:

- It takes a team of three or more
- What a 9-1-1 dispatcher will ask you
- Signs of a stroke or TIA and what to do
- Signs of heart attack and what to do
- Severe injury and what to do
- What to hand off to arriving paramedics
- Vial-of-Life, POLST forms, and DNR templates
- An MVEST first aid kit with the essential supplies that are demonstrated in the training
- Refreshments

Quarterly Refresher Trainings

Depending on the demand, we're currently planning to offer our first aid trainings and brief refresher trainings quarterly for your convenience and sustained personal preparedness. This will be a fun, informative, and fast-moving event – and most of all, it just may save your life.

Sign up at the clubhouse front counter.

Free First Aid Kit and

Lunch included

Past relevant *Echo* articles: *Is Your Number Up?*

(November 2022) and *What's a Safety Pod?* (May 2023) ■

Message from Mar Val

Dear Friends,

Some months ago we discussed some Mar Val Myth Busters. There are new residents in the Park, as well as many long-time residents, who have questions, misconceptions, and fallacies regarding Mar Val events.

Do you have to drink to attend Pub?

Absolutely not – the bar offers a selection of alcoholic and nonalcoholic drinks. There is no cover charge or minimum charge

for your attendance. You are most welcome at Pub even if you choose to drink only a glass of water or to drink nothing ... come join us for a time to be together, to chat with your neighbors, to meet some new folks, and to enjoy a snack if desired.

May I bring in my own drink?

Absolutely not – Mar Val has a liquor license and operates under the same rules as any other restaurant/facility that serves alcoholic beverages ... bringing in any outside

beverage is not allowed. This includes nonalcoholic beverages as well ... there are no exceptions ... this is the law in California.

May I just buy a drink to go?

Absolutely not – our license is for in-house consumption only. This applies to both alcoholic and nonalcoholic beverages.

Are the rules rational, wise, and practical?

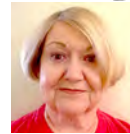
Absolutely not – but they are the rules of the California Alcoholic Beverage Commission.

And Mar Val keenly abides by each and every one. We ask for your understanding and cooperation in maintaining our license.

We can all still celebrate St. Patrick's Day in grand fashion on March 16, with corned beef and wonderful Irish coffees.

Hope to see you soon,

Carolyn K Corry



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



Mar Val Spring Awakening

Saturday, April 20

5 pm Cocktails 6 pm Dinner

Try our Spring Sangria!

MENU

Salmon with lemon caper sauce or Quiche

Mixed Salad, New Potatoes, Rolls

Dessert

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

Deadline for reservations: Wednesday, April 17, by 5 pm (or when 120 reservations have been received). For questions, call Susan Hoff @ 707-365-9426



*Happy
St. Patrick's
Day*

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

Home Owners League Message

Greetings,

I hope this message finds you well.

Extra Food We are all very grateful for the generous donations we continue to receive from Extra Food. It's heartwarming to witness how the food helps many individuals save money. Through our efforts, we not only share food but also extend our support to those who are unable to visit us due to health reasons. The gatherings at the breezeway provide sustenance along with fostering a sense of community, allowing people to socialize and exchange news. It's truly a win-win situation on many fronts.

However, it's important to acknowledge the expenses incurred in maintaining this initiative. HOL and our Park Market leader, Joanne Woodward, spend a significant amount on replenishing our containers, supplies, including essentials such as disposable gloves, hand sanitizer, cleaning supplies, and refills for the propane gas heater. While we strive to minimize our environmental impact, we are currently constrained by the cost of ecofriendly alternatives. Your donation box contributions are greatly appreciated and help sustain our efforts.

A Matter of Balance Vivalon is offering a complimentary series of classes starting on Monday, March 25, titled "A Matter of Balance," aimed at promoting health and independence among seniors. **For enrollment, please contact Ariana at Vivalon, 415-456-9062 as soon as possible.**

Keeping the Gym Tidy While there has been some improvement, there is still room for more. I urge everyone to return weights and equipment, etc., to their designated places after use, ensuring a tidy environment for all.

Last Monday Lectures I'm excited to announce the launch of our monthly lecture series in the Fireside Room, initiated by Marshall Krause and Marty Gelman. These lectures, held on the last Monday of each month, cover a range of topics relevant to seniors. Your attendance and suggestions for future topics and presenters are highly encouraged.

Contractors Guide I'd like to highlight the importance of the *Contractors Guide*, a valuable resource for our community. Your reviews and ratings of contractors and service providers contribute to its effectiveness, especially for newcomers. Please take a moment to share your experiences. The guide is available at marinvalley.net, and there is a paper copy in the library.

Earth Day April 22 As Earth Day approaches, HOL is sponsoring a cleanup initiative at the turning circle at the entrance to the park. If you're interested in participating, please reach out to Peggy Hill for further details, peggyhill@yahoo.com.

Dump Run The next dump run is scheduled for March 23rd. Contact Ed Collins to have anything picked up. Text or email him at mretc@hotmail.com or 415-377-7696 but, please, do not call.

Next Meeting Our next meeting will be held on Thursday, March 7 at 6 pm in the Fireside Room, a day later than the usual first Wednesday of the month. All are welcome.

Thank you for your attention, and best wishes to you all.



John Feld

John Feld
HOL PRESIDENT
johnmfeld@gmail.com
510-495-4138 cell

HOL COMMUNITY PRESENTATIONS

A Matter of Balance

by **JOHN FELD**

Mondays

March 25 - May 13

10 am - 12 noon

Fireside Room

Vivalon is presenting a series of eight complimentary classes designed for seniors to address the dangers of falling, called "A Matter of Balance" – a collaborative effort between Boston University and MarinHealth

The program will empower attendees with exercises to improve balance and restore confidence in walking by helping to perceive falling as a manageable issue, diminishing falls, as well as alleviating the fear associated with falling. Participants will be guided in making lifestyle adjustments to minimize the risk of falls at home, setting goals, and learning exercises to enhance strength and balance.

Beginning March 25 and concluding May 13, the eight classes will occur every Monday from 10 am-noon in the Fireside Room.

For enrollment, please contact Ariana at Vivalon, 415-456-9062. ■

Circle of Friends

by **ANEESHA DILLON,**
TIMO NAVSKY



Don't Let California Write Your Estate Plan

Tuesday, March 12 • 4 pm • Fireside Room

Guest Speaker: **Lon Lazar**

Circle of Friends is pleased to present guest speaker attorney Lon Lazar, who specializes in everything to do with End of Life legal documentation such as wills, trusts, medical directives, and powers of attorney.

Navigating End of Life paperwork can be confusing and often difficult to manage. This is a great opportunity to ask all your questions and get clear about the legal ins and outs of these important documents.

All are welcome! ■

Dump Run — Saturday, March 23

by **ED COLLINS**

We are looking for volunteers.

Help in the morning starting at **9 am** or with the second run about **noon**, or sign up for the whole day if you can stand soooooooooooooo much fun!

No cardboard. If you can break up items and put them in your trash bin, please do.

Toxic materials such as chemicals, oil, paint, and pressure-treated wood are **not** accepted.

You can take those items to the **Recology Sonoma Marin Recycling Center** 7576 Redwood Blvd., Novato, 800-243-0291.
<https://www.recology.com/recology-sonoma-marin/novato-recycling-center/>

Electronic items are also **not** accepted. You can drop them off in Bel Marin Keys at

The Computer & Technology Resource Center, 42 Digital Dr. #3, Novato, 415-883-1428.

There is also **Renew Computers** in San Rafael.

Donations are appreciated. HOL will cover the dump fee, but there is a cost for renting the trailer and there is a **\$25 fee for large items** such as mattresses and appliances.

To have anything picked up please email me in advance at mretc@hotmail.com or text to 415-377-7696. Again, please, no phone calls unless necessary. ■



PHOTOGRAPH: GARY YOST



Music, Meditation, and Psychedelics to Enhance Our Creativity

Monday, March 25 • 4 pm • Fireside Room

by **MARSHALL KRAUSE,**
MARTY GELMAN

Guest Speaker: **Gary Yost**

Residents and guests will be treated to a series of talks called “Last Monday Lectures,” starting in February. The lectures take place on the last Monday of each month at our clubhouse. We will choose the lecturers and will be warmly open to your nominations and suggestions. We are, of course, looking for topics of special interest to our senior community.

February’s lecture: the thrills and hazards of wilderness traveling with our lecturer, Robert Wolfson, captain of ships and cofounder of Wilderness Travel.

The **March lecture** will be **Monday, the 25th at 4 pm** on “**Music, Meditation, and the Use of Psychedelics to Enhance Our Creativity.**”

Our lecturer **Gary Yost** lives in Mill Valley and has a very special relation to the peaks of Mt. Tamalpais. He has made distinguished photographs, films, and videos for 50 years with wide viewing through PBS and elsewhere. He is an accomplished player of the soulfully beautiful handpan and is sometimes accompanied by his friend Lucky, the raven.

In earlier years Gary was the inventor and team leader for the creation of the world’s most popular animation

system for Autodesk, and recently he was nominated for an Emmy for his VR film about the pandemic.

The psychedelic part of the discussion arises from Gary’s use of “soul medicine” to enhance his connections with nature and as a tonic to enliven his life. His description of how he achieved his creative goals with the use of these substances will be a part of the discussion.

Portfolio: www.garyyost.com

Wikipedia page: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gary_Yost

Musical/visual compositions: www.bit.ly/thelastplace ■

Keep Your Eyes Open for Our New Neighbor

by **CHARLES WATSON**

Inga and I were trimming our front yard at the end of Scenic Drive about 11 am February 3 when I glanced over at the green hills to the north of us.

Hmmm ... I don’t remember that big brownish lump near the dirt road. Maybe it’s a boulder? I squinted, and the lump stood up on four legs and moved away. It was the size of a large dog, with a long tail ... a **California mountain lion!** It was pouncing around in the grass,

having a fine time until I lost sight of it behind some bushes.

They are rare, and mostly hunt at night. As long as we humans and pets keep our distance, we can all be happy. Each lion’s territory can easily encompass 20 square miles. Don’t bother them, and they won’t bother you. Keep your pets indoors, in a secure yard, or on a leash. Find out about these shy beauties at mountainlion.org. ■



IN MEMORIAM: Gail Warren Edgar

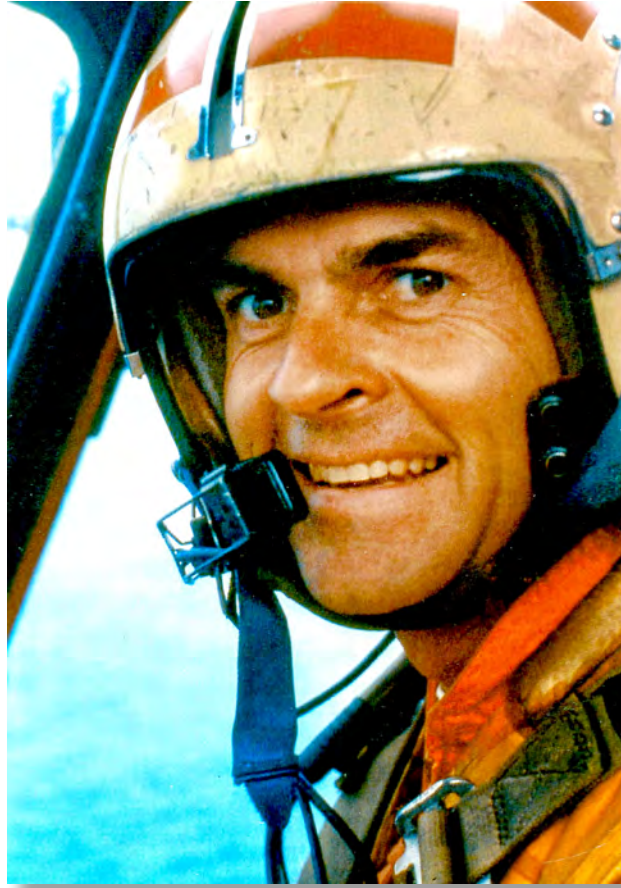
March 2, 1934 – November 26, 2023

by **DAVID EDGAR**

Warren was born to Dr. Jean Rogers Edgar and Bertha Anna Gash Edgar in Bakersfield, CA. He became a big brother to David Edgar at 8½ years old.

Warren grew up in a loving and adventurous family. They traveled in the US and abroad. In 1946 his father purchased a 2,000-acre wheat ranch in the Carrizo Plain of San Luis Obispo County. For six years his family flourished through challenges as well as beautiful harvests. The ranch would remain the topic of many family stories and the place where Warren and his brother would return annually to share their part in the history of the house and land. While living on the ranch, Warren traveled to Atascadero for high school, where he stayed in a dormitory each week due to the distance from the ranch. It was there he encountered a Spanish teacher who ignited in him a love for the language. In his retired years, Warren made several trips to Mexico and South America to immerse himself in the culture and become fluent in the language.

After graduating from Atascadero High School in 1953, he went on to receive his Associate Degree from Bakersfield College before entering the US Navy in 1955. Warren had a distinguished Navy career, flying 10 different aircraft including helicopters and fixed-wing planes. He served in the Vietnam war and



between deployments enjoyed duty stations in Hawaii, Alaska, Kansas, California, Florida, and New Jersey. Additionally, he served as a Navy flight instructor in Pensacola, FL, where his T34 now hangs on display in the Naval Air Museum. While he had many aviation accomplishments to be proud of, he was deeply honored to be a part of the historic Nautilus journey. Warren was selected as the pilot who flew the Nautilus navigator over the Arctic to chart the top-secret course for the world's first undersea crossing of the North Pole. He wrote about his adventure here: [Marin Valley ECHO February 2022.pdf](#)

Warren retired from the Navy as a Lieutenant Commander in 1975, settled in Marin County, and began a successful second career as a realtor. He enjoyed selling homes for many years, but what he loved most were the countless lifelong friends (both clients and fellow realtors) that his work brought into his life.

In 2005, after a battle with liver cancer, Warren received the lifesaving gift of a liver transplant. He lived with immense gratitude to his donor family for granting him nearly 20 additional years of great health.

Warren had a love for the things of yesteryear, including cars, planes, and memorabilia from his childhood. He collected

vintage fans and china and enjoyed car shows as well as air shows.

Warren never married, but he was loved by his family and his close-knit circle of friends who felt like family.

Warren is survived by his brother David Edgar (Angi); niece Kristen Ferrante (Paul); grandniece Melieka; grandnephew Bryce; niece Kerrin Tomek (Alex); grandnephew Nathanael; grandniece, Camille; and a beautiful group of friends. ■

IN MEMORIAM: Richard Alan Wilson

January 9, 1936 – January 25, 2024

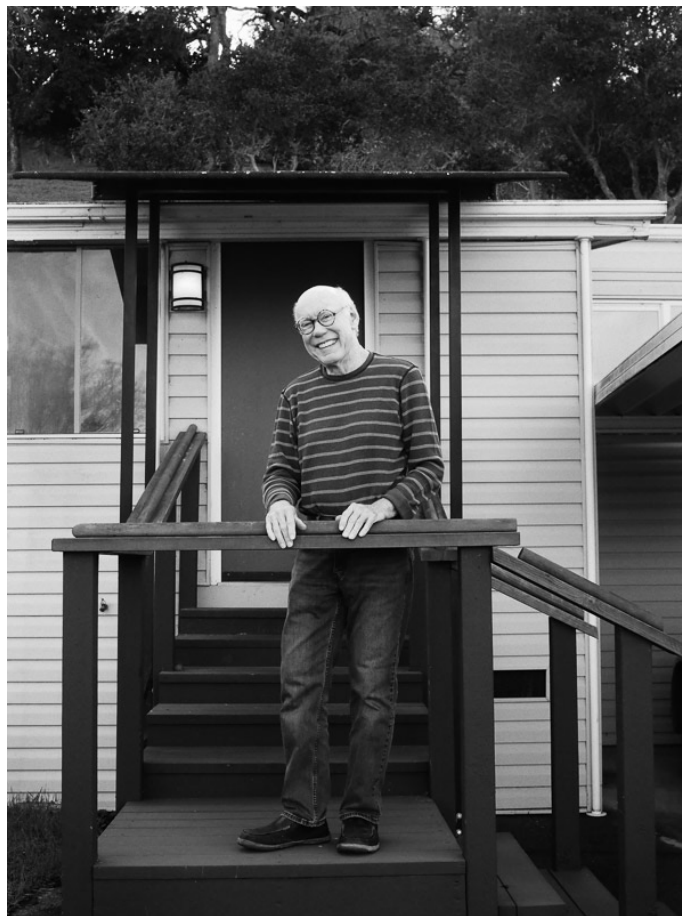
by **VALERIE ZOE BARBOUR**

Richard's recent death came as a shock even though his life was fraught with problems from the rapidly worsening dementia that his beloved father had died from at the age of 92. He did not want to live with this. He was in remarkably good physical shape for a man of 88 years, and as he said, he'd had a wonderful life. He was born in Hollywood and lived for most of his boyhood in Altadena in Southern California.

Richard was born an artist and for the majority of his working life was an art director and graphic artist. After graduating from the SF Art Institute he worked for most major advertising agencies in the Bay Area and for the last years had his own studio in San Rafael. During that time, among many different projects, Richard designed advertising for most of the major retail chains, including major shopping malls in Marin County (The Village, Town Center, etc.).

He was also missing the fact that he could no longer go on day-long hikes to savor the beauty of the beautiful Marin and Sonoma countryside. He complained about a lack of inner strength. His favorite reminder of peacefulness consisted of the question: *How do I achieve happiness?*

The answer: *Acceptance.* ■



A Celebration of Richard's life will be held on Saturday, April 13, from 2 – 4 pm at the clubhouse.

Time Marches On

by **SUZIE LAHR**

One of the good things in life for many of us in Marin Valley was having Richard Wilson as a resident here. He was a dear friend of mine for many years, and I would like to dedicate the new March Gallery exhibit to Richard.

When I originally began Art in the Park upon moving here in 2011, I met Richard on one of my early morning walks. I discovered that Richard was a graphic artist and fellow hiker, and we became fast

friends. At that point the AIP event was table setups in the ballroom and clubhouse lobby for the resident artists to display their work for one or two days. When we needed a logo, who was the person I called? Richard, who designed the logo we still use today, as well as all the handwritten signage we posted throughout the lobby for the event. Even his handwriting was implemented in artistic style. Once we began hanging exhibits, Richard was my go-to guy to help me hang

the artworks by putting actual nails in the walls! It was all very creative, and when we went on hikes and had lunch together we would come up with all kinds of new ideas for our own home decor. The next step was to install a professional gallery system, which is right up my alley having done that as a career. Richard bowed out at that point.

Alas, time marches on and so do many of the remembrances full of memories. ■

Sharing the Love: The Orange Wonder Veg

by **MICHELE RIVERS**

Wow, Carrots!

They boost immunity, improve eyesight, can help to reduce the risk of cancer, improve the digestive system, aid weight loss (when not served with cheesy toast), help to control diabetes, improve dental health, can regulate blood pressure, help with healthy skin, boost memory, enhance hair growth, and promote liver health. They are amazing immunity boosters, full of vitamins like A and E that are vital to regulate the functioning of your system. The vitamin C in carrots helps in the production of collagen, which is very important for preventing infection and healing wounds. Want to know details?

Go to: mixedarticle.com/carrot-benefits

Last week I selected a large bag of carrots and an onion from the Park Market. I was determined to make a batch of soup to help get me through an upcoming very busy workweek. I find a hearty container of soup the best standby to have in my fridge, especially when I get home late and starving, but with little enthusiasm to do the whole cooking thing.

One of my favorite times “on the bench” while waiting for the Park Market to open, is the sharing of ideas of how to use the abundance of food we are gifted. I am often inspired by John Feld (a gifted cook). “Carrot soup, a great idea.” Later, I noticed that quite a few of us selected bags of carrots to take home.

Eagerly, I chopped the onion into quite small pieces and sautéed them in the bottom of a large, deep saucepan. After washing the carrots in a 50-50 white vinegar and water solution (Serena D’Arcy-Fisher’s guidance to clean and healthy fruit and veg), I chopped up the whole bag of carrots and they joined the onions – now semitranslucent. I poured in a whole carton of Trader Joe’s organic chicken



stock, added salt, pepper, and dried basil (sadly, no fresh basil in the depths of winter).

I let my concoction simmer away until the carrots were soft – actually, the pot sat simmering on the stove for quite some time as I was distracted with a work project. As the brew was a little too thick, I added hot water (I had used my last carton of stock). Next was the transportation of the carrot-oniony mixture to the liquidizer (what Americans call the blender). I was feeling so chuffed (proud) of myself for making this healthy soup, I forgot to double check that the clip on the blender was secure. With the flick of one little black switch – orange goop flew everywhere! And, I mean everywhere: the stovetop, all over the upper and side cupboards and on the floor; it coated the vinegar and olive oil bottles, the countertop, and the front of my sweater; and “the evil orange” successfully scorched my right hand!

Needless to say – but I will – some hearty swear words flew from my lips to join the carnage. It really did look like a bloodbath in my kitchen. I now wish I had taken a few photos, just to give you readers a good laugh.

Fortunately, there were masses of soup left, which turned out to be quite delicious. For three nights I had a bowl; it felt great to be enjoying a healthy, homemade soup along with – the not-so-healthy – hot cheesy toast.

Beyond the time it took to clean up the mess, it was such an easy process and so much better than the boxed tomato soups I was used to. I’ve made tons of mixed veggie soup but had never thought to make carrot. I lapped it up plain and simple, as I was enjoying the delicate carrot flavor, but one could always add a splash of sour cream and/or sherry – Harveys Bristol Cream if you want a little British touch.

So I close this sharing with one obvious piece of advice – doublecheck the clips on your blender and GO FOR IT. If you’ve never made soup, it’s darn easy, affordable, and so good for you. Enjoy. ■

– Blessings from Michele

What I Love about Marin Valley

by **TRISH BRADY**

I am excited to share this news with you. I have transitioned from being a CPA to a REALTOR with Coldwell Banker in Novato. This career combines my 20 years business experience with my passion and commitment to serve folks who are in transition. I love being part of the Marin Valley community and look forward to helping you with any questions related to real estate, and I will be donating a percentage of my commissions to the PAC and Humanitarian funds. In addition, I have a list of service providers in case you are looking for a painter, landscaper or handyman.

I recently connected Dick Park with the perfect buyer for his (former) home, 12 View Ridge. It was sold for the asking price before it went on the market. Please welcome our newest resident, Nancy Warren, who moved here in early February and is looking forward to getting involved in all things Marin Valley.

What I Love about Marin Valley by Trish Brady

The first glimpse of the bay and surrounding hills as I drive over the hill, which takes my breath away every time

The turkeys who slow me down and remind me that whatever's on my mind is not that important, and to slow down and smell the roses when driving through the Park

The goats in the trees. Who knew they could climb trees?

Our communal dances and how no one seems to care how foolish I look

Joining water aerobics this summer and witnessing the joy on each other's faces

The community drive and spirit banding together in times of need and, more recently, making lemonade out of lemons in working tirelessly to secure the future of our Park

The endless parties that create for me an excellent opportunity for visiting with old friends and making new ones

Mostly I love the people here who care deeply about each other's well being and the ferocity in which we protect our unique and viable community for the sake of all. ■



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Discovering the Natural World

by **LORNA SASS**

The first time I went to Sedona, I barely left the car. I was a grad student in my late twenties living in Manhattan and traveling with my then-boyfriend, a fellow grad student who also displayed no enthusiasm for emerging from the car.

So we ended up experiencing the magnificent red rocks solely through the windshield — the same windshield that shielded us from the powerful healing energies of that extraordinary place.

How was it that we academic book people had enough curiosity to travel to Sedona but experienced no impetus to connect up close and personal with its sacred places?

Sad to say, I was raised in the Long Island suburbs of the postwar fifties. My family lived in a little-box house built under the auspices of the GI Bill and purchased by my parents for a mere \$4,500.

The rooms were small, and there weren't many windows. What windows there were looked out either onto the cement front sidewalk and asphalt street or into the neighbors' living room.

One oak tree had been planted in front of every house, a pretend bow to nature, each so small and scrawny that it didn't have a clue how to provide shade. The small backyard had little more than a wooden slide proudly built by my carpenter



Central Park by Lorna Sass

grandfather in the shape of a giraffe, whose long neck provided the downhill slope and occasional splinters that speared my rump right through my overalls.

Behind the giraffe was a tall hedge separating our yard from the neighbor's house behind us. The top of the hedge was cut so straight across that it became a frozen green wall, so carefully maintained that no branches were given freedom to reach for the sky.

I don't recall ever hearing any human sounds coming from behind that opaque wall. In those days, few adults spent time outside unless they were pushing a lawn mower or on hands and knees pulling crabgrass out of their tiny, manicured front lawns, aiming for the artificial look of perfection.

Fast-forward to my life chapter as an undergrad at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, an absolutely gorgeous, woodsy part of the world. My senior dorm room was on the 21st floor of a highrise, and I remember looking out the large window that fall, admiring the stunning, lush, tree-covered mountain as the leaves turned red, orange, and gold. But did I take even one hike or sit under a tree with a book? It never even occurred to me as a possibility! I was too busy studying at the library, aiming to rise to the top of the class and graduate summa cum laude ...

Then, settling in Manhattan after college graduation, the closest I got to the natural world was time spent in Central Park. Yes, a true miracle in the middle of buses, taxis, subways, and crowds rushing by, but initially the only time I entered the park was to walk across to the Metropolitan Museum of Art — and that was risky in the seventies since the park had pretty much been taken over by addicts and thieves during that time.

And, like any good New Yorker, I became very busy in the world of achieving, getting, and spending. In short, I became a workaholic, the recommended and commended way to make it in the city that never sleeps.

One day, when I found myself contemplating jumping off the fire escape of my seventh-floor apartment onto the killer-hard cement below, something in me knew I had to seek an answer beyond the world of computers, deadlines, and dressing for success.

I have always been curious and inquisitive, so when I started attending meetings of the New York Theosophical Society, I began to see an opening to a world beyond the closed indoor box I was inhabiting. Soon I learned that the Society had a weekend retreat camp in the Berkshires of Western Massachusetts.

I felt quite drawn to check it out but scared in equal parts. The Society was offering a course on the spiral patterns of nature – a notion that had never occurred to me – and I was sufficiently intrigued to overcome my fears and hop on a bus headed for the country.

Once there, I was escorted to a modest wooden cabin that served as the girls' dorm. It felt more creepy than charming to this NY Jewish princess, and I dropped my suitcase on the rickety steel bunk bed and rushed out to attend the first lecture on nature's spiral patterns. Soon the handsome, young instructor sent us into the woods on a quest to discover living examples.

I quickly saw spirals everywhere I looked, in the unfurling flowers and leaves and the cabbages growing in the edible garden. But most unexpectedly, I began sensing spiral movements among the dancing fairies who inhabited the woods. I soon learned that

the theosophists firmly believe in the existence of fairies and create rituals to make them feel welcome. I watched in awe as the fairies spiraled up and down among the spring-blooming bushes and along the branches of steadfast maple trees, weaving in and out of the gliding hawks and prancing with glee on the rocks.

After this “fairy-tale” awakening to the natural world, my life slowly began to pivot from indoors to out. Soon I began walking around the Central Park reservoir daily with a friend, carefully observing the change of seasons and noticing with relief how the trees dropped their leaves with ease, absent of any struggle to hold on tight.

Soon I began daring to walk alone in the Ramble, the wildest section of the park, where woodpeckers guarded their secret nests and raccoons hustled quickly off the paths into hiding when they heard my footsteps. I often sat quite still on the benches, eyes closed, taking in the sounds of the birds and the bees.

In those quiet moments, I was no longer in bustling New York City but in a slowed-down world where nature prevailed. I watched as the leaves turned imperceptibly from green to red and gold and rejoiced when some of them landed in my lap. I sat in silence, a silence I had only just begun to discover, a quiet place where I dissolved into the nothingness and everythingness of this life on earth. ■

The Art of Graciously Growing Older

by **VICKI WADDELL**



PHOTOGRAPH: MARIANNE YORK

Are you looking for a New Year's Resolution but so far nothing has inspired you? Rather than giving up something, how about contemplating how you want to be going forward in your life?

I have a friend, Myrna Fleckles, who belongs to a writers club in Santa Rosa. I found her entry in the club's latest anthology to be quite inspirational, so I decided to share it with you. Not to imply that you need to heed what she has to say, but I, for one, can always use a little fine tuning from time to time. I especially love the last phrase because each one of us is so unique and special.

GOALS FOR AGING

Be graciously old,
Not grumpily elderly
Complaints not welcome.

Be self-aware old.
Forego much that used to be.
Embrace parts of now.

Be forgiving old.
Use wisdom gained, overlook.
Throw away grudges.

Be quietly old.
Listen more, speak less, be calm.
Respect your instincts.

Be content old.
Do not surrender values.
They are who you are. ■

Costa Rica Birds and Friends

Text and Photography by **DAVID GRAY**

Happy Spring! Hopefully the winter storms are behind us, our reservoirs are full, and ample snowpack in the Sierras will mean a calmer fire season this summer.

I spent most of February in Costa Rica on a photo safari, so this month's article will cover some more exotic birds and wildlife, as well as some of our familiar local friends. I managed to visit five very different ecosystems — from a Pacific rainforest, to Caribbean jungles, to mountainous/volcanic central Costa Rica, to Pacific dry forest, and beaches.

Monkeys were ubiquitous: the most prevalent of the four endemic species is the ornate spider monkey (*Ateles geoffroyi ornatus*), named for its spindly limbs. Its prehensile tail functions as a fifth limb and can support the monkey's entire weight.



There were incredibly vibrantly colored species that almost defy one's perceptions.

The bright yellow and venomous eyelash viper (*Bothriechis schlegelii*) is easily balancing on a palm frond, while a nighttime shoot in the jungle turned up a gorgeous red-eyed tree frog (*Agalychnis callidryas*).

Many species that we see in our Park also live in Costa Rica, including the great egret (*Ardea alba*), snowy egret (*Egretta thula*), and yellow warbler (*Setophaga petechia*).

With any luck, I hope to put on a Costa Rica slide show in the clubhouse ballroom in April after I get back from South Africa and Botswana. ■



