

T H E
ECHO

May 2024



2 Matt Greenberg

MVMCC

MANAGEMENT UPDATE

Notary Public; DIRECTORY UPDATE



3-4 Jay Shelfer

PAC

PAC LETTER TO RESIDENTS

4 Mary Currie

PAC ELECTIONS

5 Serena Fisher

ROD UPDATE: Response to Our Letters

5-6 John Feld

Incident Command



7 Carolyn Corry

MAR VAL

MESSAGE FROM MAR VAL

**8-9 Carolyn Corry,
Susan Hoff**

EVENT FLYERS



10-11 John Feld

HOL

HOL MESSAGE

HOL COMMUNITY EVENTS

11 Kamala Allen

The Pool Is Open!

**12 Aneesha Dillon,
Timo Navsky**

CIRCLE OF FRIENDS: *Inside Hospice Care*
Guest Speaker: Sharon Damerell

Kathryn McMudie

Please Help Us Organize Marin Valley Pride Day

**13 Marshall Krause,
Marty Gelman**

LAST MONDAY LECTURES: *Playing Fair*
Guest Speaker: Matt Weinstein

Charlotte Kells

Marin Valley Saturday Morning Walking Group

14 David Gray

Come on a Costa Rican Safari with Me!



15-16 Lorna Sass

Don't Fence Me In

17 Erma Wheatley

Taking the Train Is Not Only SMART, It's FREE

18-19 David Gray

BIRD OF THE MONTH: *Yellow-Rumped Warbler* and

How to Prevent Bird Strikes

20

CALENDAR: *May 2024*



MVMCC Management Update

Pool Now open for resident use for the summer. Remember to shower first and read the signs on the gate.

Standing Water Check outdoor pots and saucers. Water should be dumped to prevent mosquito larvae from hatching.

General Repairs In this year's budget we have requested larger line items for the tree/fire abatement and general repairs, as well as roof replacement funds and electrical upgrade funding. We hope to have the funds released soon to rebuild the clubhouse roof and install new thermal solar panels to heat the pool.

Security Bright Star locks up the pool and clubhouse around 9:30-10 pm, and they come by at random times in the night to check doors and activity.

Streetlights Streetlight bulbs are continually burning out and being replaced. A couple of poles fell over and were replaced.

Water Usage Water usage reports come out every two months.

Thank you for your continued cooperation.



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



Notary Public

Kathryn McMudie is retiring as Marin Valley's Notary Public, effective June 1. If you need anything notarized, you can contact our own **Susan Hoff**, who lives here in the Park and has been a notary for 20-odd (some very odd) years. She will take care of you.

Text (or call): 707-365-9426.
Email: sghoff@live.com ■

Directory Update

New

David King
2 Wild Oak Drive
cell 925-708-7370
davidpersonal1945@gmail.com

THE ECHO 2024

MARIN VALLEY

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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 Novato Mayor Mark Milberg and Tim O'Connor of the Novato City Council, and John Hansen and myself from the PAC Board have met twice. The PAC Board has received a draft of the Exclusive Negotiation Agreement (ENA) from the City and has sent it back with our comments and changes. The City of Novato is reviewing this ENA. These negotiations are nearly finished, so we expect to be meeting soon. This is a repeat of last month's update and is the current updated status.

Progress toward Maintaining an Affordable Community of Senior Citizens at MVMCC

Our current efforts are to work closely with ROC (resident-owned communities) USA and its California affiliate, CCCD (California Center for Cooperative Development), to achieve our long-term goals. ROC USA has helped over 300 US communities achieve these goals.

MVMCC residents voted on March 6, 2024, to pursue establishing a resident-owned nonprofit LEHC (a nonprofit public benefit corporation). The vote was a resounding confirmation of the steps being

taken by the PAC Board to achieve long-term stability and financial viability for our community.

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

Novato Rent Control Program for Mobile Home Parks

We submitted to the City the consensus of our meeting with residents concerning the mobile home rent control ordinance.

1. Rents to be increased by no more than the amount of increase of the CPI as currently designated in the existing ordinance.
2. Banking of the previous year's unused portion of the allowable rent increase to this and future years rent increase. Not in favor of this.
3. Increases to be applicable to all leases. Short and long. One month-yearly.
4. The notice period of Beneficial Capital Improvement (pass through costs to residents) should remain at 90 days, not 30, to enable resident review.
5. Administrative and ordinance wording to be reviewed in light of the attached comments.

Park resident Michele Rodríguez provided the PAC Board with an outstanding review of the ordinance, which we attached for the City's review.

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 ask for more details to ensure that MVMCC benefits from these expenses. The process of formulating next year's MVMCC budget has begun. It will be reviewed with residents in upcoming PAC Board meetings. Watch for it on the coming agendas. We will want to include in the coming budget a number of impending work projects that need to be completed sooner rather than later.

Legal Expenses

We are current with the billing of our legal advisers. Going forward, the need for legal counsel will continue, and a monthly contribution to the MVMCC legal fund is suggested. 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 at Marin Valley.

Projects

Winter storms played havoc here in the Park, and repairs have been made where damage occurred. We are collecting bids for replacement in late spring of the clubhouse roof, including preparing to install solar panels on the roof.

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 Park's electric infrastructure under the PUC/PG&E program to convert mobile home parks back to PG&E control and operation. We will need cost estimates so these projects can be included in next year's budget of July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025.

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 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 secretary Carol-Joy Harris at caroljoyharris@comcast.net. The Zoom link is also on our marinvalley.net homepage.

Meetings

The next regular monthly board meeting will be on Monday, May 6, at 5 pm. PAC Board monthly meetings now take place on the first Monday of every month.

In service,




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

PAC Elections

by **MARY CURRIE**

The seats currently held by Jay Shelfer and John Hansen and Carol-Joy Harris are up for election.

Monday, May 6 – Sunday, May 12

Nominations accepted by the election committee. Contact:

Mary Currie
415-795-8420
ggbmedia@yahoo.com

If there are more than three nominations:

• **Monday, May 13 – Friday, May 17**

Election committee prepares and mails ballots

• **Saturday, May 18 (11 am)**

Meet the candidates – Fireside Room

• **Monday, May 27 – Friday, May 31 (3 pm)**

Ballots accepted at the clubhouse voting box in the lobby

• **Friday, May 31 (4 pm)**

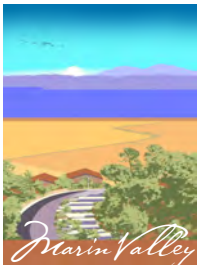
Votes counted.

Saturday, June 1 (11 am)

PAC annual meeting (in lieu of the first Monday of the month regular PAC Board meeting unless otherwise notified);

New PAC Board members introduced. ■

Response to Our Letters



Resident Ownership
Discovery (ROD) Committee
UPDATE to Residents —
April 12, 2024

by **SERENA FISHER**
for the ROD Committee: John Hansen,
Serena Fisher, Alan Gump, Dave Tetta,
with either Jay Shelfer or Mary Currie

Dear neighbors,

Thank you for all your efforts to send letters to our representatives in support of the State replenishing the MORE grant. Even though some of us heard back that the State is making budget cuts and not likely to put more funds into this grant, it appears from our friends at ROC USA that it is making a difference.

Others also received the following reply:

Thank you for taking the time to reach out to me about the MORE program and the situation at Marin Valley Mobile Country Club. Hearing from constituents about the impact of spending decisions is always tremendously helpful to the Senators as they determine how best to allocate our state's public resources. I will convey the content of your message and your request for additional funding for the MORE program in 2024-25 to the members of the Senate to whom I provide counsel on budgetary matters.

Sincerely,

Timothy Griffiths

Housing and Homelessness, Economic Development

Timothy.Griffiths@sen.ca.gov

If you haven't had a chance to send the letter provided to residents on April 6, please send it, as it is not too late. Contact Mary Currie if you need a hand (ggbmedia@yahoo.com or 415-793-8420).

At present, ROD is focusing on the importance of residents having a significantly greater level of involvement in Park governance through various committees. We will keep you informed what they will be, and if you have a particular interest or expertise, especially in grant writing, please contact one of us. ■



Incident Command

by **JOHN FELD**

MVEST is tasked with making the community as safe as possible, especially in times of emergency, and assisting residents in preparing for the many dangers we face living, as we do, in a wildland urban interface (WUI). These dangers are numerous, and the main ones MVEST concentrates on are:

1. Home fires
2. Wildfires
3. Smoke events from regional fires
4. Earthquakes
5. Power outages
6. High heat events
7. Medical emergencies
8. High winds and storms (winter weather)
9. Public health issues
10. Crime

This list can be broken into three important parts:

- those we can do something about ahead of time
- those we can do something about while they are in progress
- and those we can do little to prepare for.

There are times when a central organizing group needs to be in the mix, either as an agency to coordinate

efforts or to report and collect information from an outside organization. This is where the Incident Command (IC) team steps in. At these times the group of volunteers occupies a small office in the clubhouse in order to coordinate and record activities.

MVEST has a series of identified tasks they undertake, and volunteers lead each of these teams. Ideally these team leaders will also be IC volunteers, as they best understand their area of responsibility, and we also need backups for them in case volunteers are not in the Park when an emergency happens.

There is always a team leader (usually the first person to arrive), a radio operator, and a scribe. IC is usually a short-lived undertaking. It can last from 30 minutes to perhaps days at a time. If there is an ongoing power outage or a large earthquake, it could be active for an extended period. Other times, it will set up and be active for a short time. When first-responder help arrives from outside, the IC passes on its notes and history, updating first responders concerning the details that have taken place, then takes a back seat to whatever transpires next.

At certain times IC may be tasked with getting specific help from outside, and it will organize ways to do this.

Incident Command has a minute-by-minute record of radio messages from other MVEST volunteers via our two-way radios, personal visits from residents, and even rumors. It also is there to inform concerned residents of the current state of the emergency, to troubleshoot potential hazards and issues, and to dispel rumors.

If there is a power outage, the clubhouse generator will supply the clubhouse with electricity, heat, and air-conditioning. MVEST maintains a whiteboard with the latest news, times, and important information to keep everyone informed and provides power strips for people to charge their phones and other devices.



MVEST has emergency batteries for medical devices, and in extreme situations they may even prepare emergency food and rations.

For other situations, MVEST has a mister in the breezeway to cool people off during times of extreme heat. Plus, they supply N95 face masks to aid breathing when needed.

As with other MVEST activities, there are standard operating procedures written down that each team learns and follows to ensure that all needed steps are taken in a timely fashion. They also deal with dispatching first aid teams and getting assistance where needed.

If an event lasts for more than an hour or so, other trained volunteers are called upon to spell the operators.

Lastly, IC keeps track of spontaneous volunteers who may come and offer help. As for all MVEST volunteers, practice days are held to help reinforce the ongoing communication protocols.

Incident Command is not often called upon, but when it is, it is essential to our safety. If you would like to find out more about what IC volunteers do, or to jump in, we invite everyone to come to our next IC training. ■

<p>Register with ALERT MARIN to receive Marin County Emergency Alerts</p>	<p>www.alertmarin.org 415-473-6376</p>
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Message from Mar Val

Dear Friends,

This month Mar Val is saying an enormous thank you to two very dedicated, longtime volunteers: Pat Thurston and Tom Nadolski.

Tom has “retired” after some 20 years of assisting with Pub and all Mar Val events. Even if you do not personally know Tom, I bet you have seen him walking the Park, clad in his ever-present baseball hat, T-shirt/sweatshirt, and shorts (no matter the weather), and his infamous muttonchops. In 2004, Tom was initially asked by Nancy Lahr if he knew how to carve a corned beef; well, he did, and that was the beginning of a long relationship with Mar Val.

Pat and Brynda moved to the Park in 2000, and Pat being Pat immediately volunteered to do almost anything. She wanted to help folks and she loved to cook. At the time, some residents were less than welcoming to a new upstart butting into their perfectly well-oiled machine, someone who might have new ideas or suggestions; perish the thought that anything should ever change. Pat won that battle with her perseverance, determination, loving presence, and scrumptious dishes. She was finally welcomed to the group with open arms.

Tom and Pat were the movers and shakers for years at Pub ... they would arrive early and get everything set up on the food tables. Always they had cooked dishes at home to share with

the residents: a pot of stew, soup or chili, vegetable casseroles, cakes and breads, and of course, Pat’s “world famous” deviled eggs. Kathleen Dargie said that when Pat started cooking for Pub, the food was so delicious that residents would bring guests to enjoy the delectable meals. At that time residents contributed food for a true potluck at Pub. At the end of the evening Tom would meticulously wash and return each dish to the appropriate person ... then he would scrub the kitchen until it was bright and shiny.

Tom and Pat have for so many years served the Irish coffees, decorated and set the tables for events, and helped decorate the clubhouse for the holidays. Tom’s specialty was the large Christmas tree on the stage.

As time moved on and COVID invaded us, Pub needed to change its format. Tom became the shopper of the many different bagged goodies; he displayed them, packed up the remainder for the following weeks, and once again made sure the kitchen was spotless. Pat and Tom worked hand in hand to set up Pub food, and Pat of course continued to make her deviled eggs, brownies, and monkey bread.

In his letter of resignation, Tom stated, “Now in my 80th year and slowing down, it is time for me to yield the baton to new residents 20 years younger with their fresh ideas and energy.” Mar Val is most fortunate that Tim Hoke has

volunteered to step into Tom’s shoes. You will see Tim setting up the food table and closing it down at the end of Pub. Thank you, Tim, for picking up the baton.

While Tom has resigned from the board, he will still be assisting Larry in the kitchen, decorating for the monthly events, and being an all-around helping hand.

Mar Val is delighted that Pat is continuing in her role as 2nd Vice President of the Mar Val Board and, as always, decorating for events and preparing for Pub each Friday. AND thankfully for us, Pat will continue to delight us with her deviled eggs, brownies, and monkey bread ... how fortunate are we?

To Pat and Tom, Mar Val sends our heartfelt thanks to each of you for your years of diligent work toward providing residents with many delectables. We look forward to continuing working with you both in the future.

Come to Pub and enjoy the new pizza choices: \$5 per person; popcorn remains complementary. We hope you have your reservation for May 3 for Cinco de Mayo, and we look forward to seeing you for Memorial Day on the deck, weather permitting.

Sincerely,



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

MAR VAL PRESENTS

Tercero de Mayo

Pub Event

Friday, May 3

5 pm Cocktails

5:30 pm Dinner



**Try our
Margaritas
on the Rocks!**

M E N U

Pork Chili Verde

Chicken or Cheese Tamales

Refried Beans, Rice, Tortillas

\$10 per person. Make checks payable to Mar Val.

**Deadline for reservations: Tuesday, April 30, by 5 pm
(or when 120 reservations have been received)**

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

Thank You, Veterans!!



Mar Val Memorial Day Dinner

Monday, May 27

5 pm Cocktails 6 pm Dinner

MENU

Hamburger or Hot dog OR Impossible Burger or Veggie Burger

Potato Salad, Baked Beans

Ice Cream Bars

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

Deadline for reservations: Friday May 24, by 5 pm
(or when 120 reservations have been received)

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

Home Owners League Message

Dear Community Members,

Visit from ROD

At our April board meeting we had the privilege of hosting **David Tetta** and **John Hansen**, who provided a concise overview of the progress and upcoming steps regarding efforts by the Resident Ownership Discovery (ROD) Committee. Their presentation shed light on our journey toward owning and governing our Park independently, free from external obligations. It was an enlightening session, enriching us all. We encourage you to engage with them, ask questions, and gain a deeper understanding of this pivotal initiative.

Gay Pride Month

This June, in celebration of Gay Pride Month, Marin Valley will proudly fly the Gay Pride rainbow flag on our flagpole throughout the month. Mark your calendars for the Pride Parade on June 9, commencing at 10:30 am and lasting until noon. Following the parade, we'll gather at the clubhouse for engaging conversations, food (feel free to contribute to our

potluck), and joyful camaraderie. All are welcome to participate, irrespective of orientation. If you're interested in volunteering for organizational tasks, please reach out to **Kathryn McMudie** at mcmudie@hotmail.com.



Volunteer of the Year

It brings us great pleasure to announce our Volunteer of the Year: **Joanne Woodward!** With unwavering dedication, Joanne has spearheaded the Extra Food program, infused the Park Market with joy, and consistently inspired us with her infectious enthusiasm. Her commitment to inclusivity and setting a vibrant example has been truly commendable. Joanne also coordinates efforts for Park volunteers to collect food from local stores in Marin, reducing our reliance on external delivery services and ensuring a more timely provision of food.

All the Dirt on the Dump Run

Our recent Dump Run — led by **Ed Collins** and supported by dedicated volunteers including

Sean Casey, Susan Hoff, Deb McNeil, Kevin Mulvany, and Tom Teixeira — was a resounding success. After contributions, the event incurred a total cost to HOL of \$167.82. Your contributions are greatly appreciated. For

future dump runs, please refrain from disposing of building materials, and if you have large items for disposal, kindly inform Ed in advance.

Just One Hour

Our Just One Hour initiative continues to offer assistance with various tasks around the Park, including providing rides, household repairs, companionship, reading sessions, and gardening. We're here to support your needs. Contact **Lisa Jackler** for any needs or support.

Home Match

We're exploring a partnership with Home Match Marin, also known as Front Porch, for our future endeavors in Park ownership. This initiative aims to pair carefully selected seniors,

thereby reducing living expenses and fostering companionship. Stay tuned for further details.

David Gray Expedition

We hope you enjoy **David Gray's** captivating photo presentation on Thursday, May 23 about his bird and wildlife expedition to Costa Rica. Look forward to another enlightening presentation on his recent journey to Botswana and South Africa once he completes organizing his extensive collection of thousands of photographs. Meanwhile, you can view some of his work at the Marin Valley Art Gallery.

Marin Valley Gallery

Regarding the gallery, three pieces have already been sold from the current exhibition (as of April 5). We invite you to come and appreciate the remarkable art created by Marin Valley residents. If you're interested in contributing to our next exhibition, please contact curator **Suzie Lahr**, at suzielahr@aol.com.

Circle of Friends Talk

Join us for an enlightening discussion in the Fireside Room on May 25 at 4 pm to learn more about getting the best possible care with Hospice. Meet new resident Sharon Damerell, a dedicated and experienced Hospice nurse who will share her wealth of knowledge to assist us in making better life choices. Sharon will delve into the intricacies of care, offering insights on selecting the right Hospice service. This talk is relevant to all of us, as we may require such care in the future.

Enjoy an HOL Meeting

Our HOL meetings are characterized by warmth and camaraderie. With an informal setup and plenty of laughter, they provide a refreshing contrast to typical meetings. We welcome both regular attendees and newcomers, as your diverse perspectives contribute to the vibrancy and experience of our gatherings. Come join us and experience the joy firsthand!

Don't Get Too Comfy

Lastly, we urge everyone to remain vigilant as we anticipate a significant fire season due to abundant rainfall and vegetation growth. Please take precautions to mitigate fire risks around your homes, including clearing leaves from gutters and pathways. The Novato Fire District still offers free inspections of your home along with some great advice.

HOL monthly meetings are being held on the first Thursday of each month, still at 6 pm in the Fireside Room.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone for contributing to the warmth and vibrancy of our community.

Regards,



HOL COMMUNITY PRESENTATIONS

The Pool Is Open!

by **KAMALA ALLEN**

Water Aerobics classes have begun every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 10 to 11 am. Come join us for fun, friendship, and, oh yes, EXERCISE!

Please remember to shower before entering the pool. We'd love to see you there . . . ■





Circle of Friends

Inside Hospice Care

Guest Speaker: Sharon Damerell

by **ANEESHA DILLON, TIMO NAVSKY**

Saturday, May 25 • 4 pm • Fireside Room

In the world of End-of-Life care, one of the most discussed topics is Hospice Care for people who are terminally ill.

Our guest speaker on Saturday, May 25, at 4 pm in the Fireside Room, is Sharon Damerell, RN, a new resident of the Park and long-time Hospice nurse. Her 30-year career has contributed to a deep understanding of all aspects of Hospice Care.

Hello. My name is Sharon Damerell. I have been a certified Hospice RN in the Bay Area for more than 30 years. I have worked for several of the Bay Area's large hospices and remain employed at Kaiser Martinez Hospice. My sincere passion is to teach the public about the Medicare hospice program. Over the years, I have found there is a lot of myth and confusion about hospice in most communities. I would like to help clarify these issues for people, and to assist them in understanding the program in order to make an honest, informed decision about whether the hospice program meets their needs at this phase of their life.

Her presentation will cover

- What is Hospice Care?
- How to choose the right hospice for you.
- How the hospice industry has changed and evolved and what you should know about it.

Since the beginning in 1974, when the first Hospice in the US opened its doors, more than 5,800 hospice programs have sprung up all over the country. They have helped thousands of people meet life's end in their home with their family present. Their focus is on comfort, excellent pain control, and emotional support for both patients and their family members. ■

Please Help Us Organize Marin Valley Pride Day June 9

by **KATHRYN MCMUDIE**

Hello everyone ...Let me introduce the Marin Valley Pride Committee to you:



Michele Rodriguez,
Cecil Sherrod,
Nancy Warren,
Brad Witherspoon,
and myself.

We have been meeting every Tuesday morning at 9-10 am in the Fireside Room. If you are interested in helping, please text me at 415-517-8353.

The Marin Valley PRIDE Parade and Celebration is a symbol of our support and love for all our residents: gays, lesbians, transgenders, bisexuals, their families, and their allies. It is a reminder that all people are free to love, regardless of their background or sexual orientation. This celebration is open to all residents and their family members.

To kick off the celebration, the Park will be flying the "gay" flag during the month of June. On June 1, there will be a dedication at 10:30 am in front of the clubhouse. If you wish to attend this flag ceremony, please arrive around 10:15 am.

We need to have an estimate of those who wish to walk in the parade; those who are disabled and need to ride in the back of a truck/car, and those who will be only attending the celebration at the clubhouse. Sign-up sheets are available at the clubhouse. If you cannot make it up to the clubhouse to sign up, please text me at 415-517-8353.

If you have a convertible or a truck you wish to drive in the parade that could provide transportation for disabled people, please let me know. The parade route will be decided at a future meeting.

We are all looking forward to June 9th. ■



Playing Fair

Guest Speaker: Matt Weinstein

by **MARSHALL KRAUSE,**
MARTY GELMAN

The annual Memorial Day dinner requires a change in the Last Monday Lectures for May. This month's lecture will be on **Tuesday, May 28, at 4:30 pm.** Subsequent meetings will also be at 4:30 pm.

Our speaker is Matt Weinstein, founder of Playfair, the successful producer of about 400 entertainment events for corporate and college groups each year, and a member of the National Speakers Association's Hall of Fame.



Tuesday, May 28 • 4:30 pm
Fireside Room

People have known for centuries that laughter and play are good for our health: Proverbs 17:22 tells us that ***a merry heart doeth good like a medicine.*** In this playful and high-spirited session, we will learn the benefits of noncompetitive adult play to nourish ourselves both physically and mentally.

Laughing and playing together is a powerful way to build community, and to bring more instant joy into our lives. Come prepared to have some serious fun! As Ashley Montagu states,

My goal in life is to die young – at a ripe old age. ■

Marin Valley Saturday Morning Walking Group

by **CHARLOTTE KELLS**



Please join us for a walk on Saturday mornings. We will meet at the clubhouse at 10 am for a morning hike. We can carpool over to Hamilton and walk for about a 40- to 60-minute stroll (two or so miles?). It would be fun for those of us who love to walk to have this be a regularly scheduled event. Please let me know if you plan to meet. Also, know that the cars will leave the parking lot at 10:05, so please be on time. If it rains, assume we will cancel. I hope many of you will join us! charkells@gmail.com – text to 617-306-0265. ■

Come on a Costa Rican Safari with Me!

Text and Photography by **DAVID GRAY**



Green and black poison dart frog. Its skin contains enough poison to kill 12 adult humans.

Thursday, May 23 • 7 - 9 pm • Ballroom

In January 2024 I visited ecological parks in Costa Rica's Pacific southwest, Caribbean southeast, volcanic mid-central, riverine northwest, and northwestern Pacific beaches. It was an extravaganza of colorful, whimsical, bizarre, and even deadly wildlife. The show has about 250 slides, including videos of Costa Rica's incredible diversity of life (highest per square km in the world). Everything from insects to crustaceans, amphibians, reptiles, bats, birds, and all four species of monkeys.

Don't Fence Me In

by **LORNA SASS**

There I was in my beloved gentle yoga class, lying in the familiar dead-to-the-world corpse pose, when I was suddenly startled by the rustling of someone arriving late. I lifted the edge of my purple lavender-scented eye bag and spied an elderly woman rolling out her shocking-pink yoga mat in the very slender nonspot slot between my mat and the wall.

How dare she?

Let me explain something this invader didn't realize. I come to yoga class early specifically so that my inner feline can mark her territory, staking out a spot close enough to the wall to make it impossible for someone to squeeze beside me. I need my space! It's bad enough that there are other people in the class, but to have someone intrude upon my territory is unconscionable.

So I did what every good New York Jew does when threatened: I went immediately from deep relaxation to full, unmitigated rage.

The unsuspecting woman had no idea that a full-scale attack was about to take place and proceeded to get her props, as if she was doing nothing wrong and had every right to that sweet spot.

I catapulted out of corpse pose like a sleeping tiger instinctively pouncing to protect her cubs, my amygdala switched on high alert and fire coming out of my nostrils.

But it was yoga class after all, so I put on the nicey-nicey, pretend-you-are sweet-girl attitude — the one I was taught while still in the womb — and said in a gentle purr: “Next time, will you please not set up so close to me?”

The woman looked a little startled (you are not supposed to speak in yoga class) but sweetly nodded her head. I couldn't help but notice that she was a few years older than I (which makes her pretty damn old) and looked like a gentle soul just trying to take a few deep breaths and stretches before getting on with her day.

The teacher quickly came running over to intervene in what she intuited might become a massive girl-cat brawl. “Lorna, I’ll take care of it,” she said and beckoned me back to my mat to reassume corpse pose. But she immediately returned to the center of the room and resumed teaching without saying a word to the invader.

So now I began enjoying deep exhales of fire, aiming them not only at the late student, but at the teacher as well.

That’s how she handled it? I asked myself. By doing nothing? How very yoga-like ... I hate yoga. My inner shrew insisted on asking probing questions and offering judgments when I was supposed to be counting my in-and-out breaths.

Bitches, I muttered, cursing those two women silently but conclusively as I played dead and buried in shavasana pose, with my thighs feeling their heaviness on the bolster and my arms splayed open and almost bumping into my unwelcome neighbor.

But like a good-girl yogini corpse, I resumed deep breathing with intention. After about five minutes of belching fire, the breathing began to do its magic. Soon the teacher said, “Roll onto your sides and assume a fetal position.” As I hung out there like a baby, I silently whimpered and felt a tear of sadness and some shame fall over me like a shroud.

Then we got on hands and knees and did cat-cow, and each time I arched my back followed by dipping it, I could sense my spine becoming more flexible. Then we sat on our hips and spread our arms wide. The tardy little woman was hanging as close to the wall as she possibly could, making it impossible for her to stretch out her left arm when requested. She deserves that, I thought and then thought better of it.

By the end of class, I was full of remorse. My nervous system had calmed down and my inner, deep-breathing, compassionate guru had come alive. Hey, I thought to myself, my inner wise woman taking charge. She isn’t Hitler after all!

“I apologize,” I said to her in purring tones, this time real and heartfelt. “I have an issue around space,” I explained. “I seem to need a lot of it!”

And then it came to me and I sang to her in a gentle lilting tone full of wonder and remorse the Paul Simon lyric “Still crazy after all these years”—and a godzillion hours of therapy. ■

Taking the Train Is Not Only SMART, It's FREE

by **ERMA WHEATLEY**

Seniors ages 65 and older, as well as youth 18 and under, can ride SMART for FREE! This new fare is a pilot program running from April 1, 2024, until June 30, 2025. The goal of this pilot program is to promote use of public transit among these age groups.

Seniors and youth do not need to use a Clipper Card or the SMART e-ticket app, but if you have a Clipper Card, you'll be charged \$0 when you tag on. Train conductors may ask for proof of age, like a student ID, state ID, or driver's license (unless, of course, you look the part).

"With more individuals choosing to use rail transit over personal vehicles, we're making gains in reducing our region's carbon footprint and contributing to a cleaner and greener environment," said Eric Lucan, chair of the SMART Board of Directors. "By removing financial barriers for youth and seniors, we're not only facilitating easier mobility but also contributing to a cleaner, greener future for the communities we serve."

Seniors and youth collectively represent 42 percent of the population of Sonoma and Marin counties yet currently account for just 25 percent of SMART's ridership. SMART's free fare initiative aims to provide economic and recreational opportunities to this underserved demographic while cultivating habits of utilizing sustainable transportation options.

You can plan your trip and view the train schedule at:
<https://tinyurl.com/SMART-schedule> ■



Yellow-Rumped Warbler

Text and Photography by **DAVID GRAY**



The yellow-rumped warbler (*Setophaga coronata*) is a common visitor to our Park. With a vast range comprising almost all of North and Central America, we tend to see them during their nonbreeding phase of life. They migrate to Canada and Alaska for their breeding season.

Per its name, the yellow-rumped warbler has a bright yellow patch on top of its tail where it joins the bird's body. It's particularly visible when the bird is flying away. Ask me how I know :-)

Like all warblers, these birds never sit in one place for more than about a second.

I photographed this Audubon's warbler (*Setophaga auduboni*), one of three subspecies of the yellow-rumped warbler, up at Mount Lassen last year. The male Audubon warbler has a bright yellow crown and throat and underwing patches in addition to its yellow rump.



Bird Strike Prevention

We all know that birds hit windows, and most of us would want to prevent that from happening. But what if we don't know it's happening? What does evidence of a bird strike look like?

Sometimes there will be a stunned or dead bird as evidence. But often it's merely a feather stuck to the window.

This tiny feather was left by a sparrow when it ran into our window that looks out through our carport. I watched it happen. The feather is minute, about as big as your pinky fingernail.

Take some time to periodically look at your windows and sliding glass doors. If you see small feathers stuck to them, it's because a bird hit that glass.

Why do birds fly into glass panes?

Because the glass reflects the blue sky. When a bird sees that blue sky, it flies toward what it believes is a safe place. WHAM!

What can we do to prevent bird strikes?

Window decals are available in the shape of avian predators that dissuade the bird from flying toward the reflection of the sky. We bought some at Wild Birds Unlimited and put them on our hillside-facing sliding glass door after I saw a bird feather stuck to it. No more bird strikes!



Wild Birds Unlimited marin.wbu.com/
Vintage Oaks Shopping Center
104 Vintage Way. Ste A-7

Their maple leaf translucent decals reflect UV that birds can see, but the UV reflectivity fades over time after exposure to sunlight. Recommended interval for replacement is about every 3-4 months, or periodically using a blacklight source to gauge when reflectivity has faded.

