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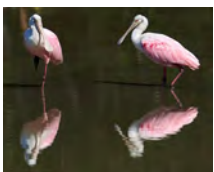
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Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

I want to thank Mary Currie for her excellent "Frequently Asked Questions" article in the February *Echo*.

I think we sometimes forget that, as the endless months of negotiations roll by, a sharp, determined group of volunteers tirelessly works to secure Park ownership for all residents today, and for all who will be fortunate enough to live here tomorrow.

Kevin Mulvany

Dear Editor,

I would like to express my appreciation for Mary Currie's informative write-up in the last issue of the *Echo*.

Her ability to answer our most pressing questions about what concerns us all at Marin Valley in clear, concise, and factful language is fantastic. That transparency is most welcome, I believe, by all of us here.

Thank you, Mary, for keeping us informed and taking the time to answer our questions. With deep gratitude to all of you who give so much of your time and energy for the benefit of our community.

Inga Grace

(In the following Letters to the Editor, responses below each item raised have been prepared by PAC Board VP Communications Mary Currie.)

Dear Editor,

The February 2025 issue of the *Echo* presented two articles, "A Few Frequently Asked Questions — with Answers" which included valuable and informative information about the current activities of the PAC and the RODC. We see a need for more information; here are our questions and comments.

In the section "Questions About How the Park Operates Financially Now"

Point 2 states: The money generated by rents currently used to pay down the loan "will likely be used for capital improvement projects." The money would only be available for capital improvements if it weren't needed for the purchase of the Park.

Response: Currently, rents pay \$651,000 per year on the Bank of Marin loan. Per the loan agreement, rents must generate net revenues of \$1.3 million yearly, twice the amount of one year's loan payments. The other \$651,000 funds capital improvement projects or is held in reserves.

Directory Update

Change Ginger Christie • 133 Panorama Drive

Echo Deadline to Submit Articles

Email articles by the 8th of the month for the next month's issue with the subject "Echo" to Anila Manning at anilahere99@gmail.com.

THE ECHO 2025

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A MHB Group Region 8 Publication www.mobilehomeboard.com

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The PAC Board is intending to fund the purchase through a loan from ROC USA Capital. We are also talking to Bank of Marin to compare rates. The point being made is that \$651,000 that is presently used to pay off the loan each year will be freed up to be used for the Park in some manner, either by paying down the new loan for purchase, or for capital improvement projects. Keep in mind that once we own the Park, the funds are MVC funds and the operating and capital budgets, developed by the MVC Board, will be ratified by MVC members.

In the section “Questions About Purchasing the Park”

Point 2 states: “The City has indicated its interest in selling the Park to residents.” This assertion seems to be based on the fact that the City and the PAC have entered into an Exclusive Negotiating Agreement (ENA). An ENA does not imply a desire to sell. It only prohibits negotiation with any other party.

Response: *Having a signed ENA with the City signals a serious intent for both parties to negotiate toward a potential sale. It doesn't mean a sale will be the result, but it sets the intent to negotiate a sale. As the ENA states in Section 1.1 Good Faith Negotiations, “The Parties shall negotiate diligently and in good faith toward a potential agreement concerning the sale of the Property from the City to the PAC.” This statement is a clear signal that the City wants to sell. An entity would not likely enter an agreement like this without an intention to sell.*

In June 2007, the NFA entered into an ENA with MVSC. Mary

Neilan, Assistant City Manager, responded on May 29, 2008, in a letter to all the residents of Marin Valley, explaining why the Park's offer was not accepted. Her main concern was, “The proposal seeks to transfer the property for significantly less than the appraised value without demonstrating a public purpose sufficient to offset that difference.” She went on to say, “Neither the NFA nor the City Council is pursuing or intends to pursue any sale of MVMCC to any other entity or person.” The entire letter can be found at <https://marinvalley.net/park-documents/>, titled “2008 Letter from Assistant City Manager Ending Negotiations with MVSC and Denying Transfer of Title.”

Response: *Regarding Neilan's statement, “The proposal seeks to transfer the property for significantly less than the appraised value without demonstrating a public purpose sufficient to offset that difference,” it has been 17 years since this memo was written. The landscape has changed immensely. The City demonstrated in June 2023 that it is interested in selling when they entertained a fully formed offer. With regard to demonstrating sufficient public purpose, I can't give specifics other than this statement is being scrutinized now as it pertains or doesn't pertain to purchasing the Park.*

Point 3 states: “In 1997, residents were verbally told by the NFA that the title would be turned over to them after the \$18 million loan was paid off in December 2027.” The use of the word “loan” is misleading. The financing of the NFA purchase was via tax-exempt

bonds. This is important because a requirement for the issuance of those tax-exempt bonds was that no pledge could be made to transfer title to any other body while they were still extant. Members of the PAC Board have stated, in last month's *Echo* and previously*, that there is documentation of NFA's desire for the residents to own the Park.

Response: *This bond history has nothing to do with a potential sale to residents in 2025, as we are no longer under the obligations set forth in the bonds. There are numerous documents from the NFA and the City that discuss a possible transfer of MVMCC from the NFA to residents. As many residents know, a possible transfer was discussed for a number of years, from about 2004 to 2012. Here is just one example of the types of statements made by the NFA that I was referring to regarding documentation of NFA's desire for the residents to own the Park: (From NFA notes to component unit financial statements for fiscal year ended June 30, 2004.) “The Authority (NFA) anticipates transferring all of its rights, title and interest in the Project (MVMCC) to a yet-to-be incorporated 501(c)3 corporation, at that time, all of the duties and obligations would be assigned to the corporation.”*

Question 6 states: “We don't know how much it will cost” to buy the Park. Has the PAC developed any pro forma financial projections based on different potential purchase prices, and explored the financing that would have to be secured to close a sale? These would be useful in estimating the impact on monthly space rents.

Response: *This work is being undertaken. As reported in this month's Echo, the PAC's finance committee is working with ROC USA and CCCD to develop pro forma budgets for various scenarios for purchase. A sound offer cannot be developed without developing pro forma budgets. This activity has been underway for some time and has been mentioned at a number of PAC Board meetings and ROD Committee workshops.*

***In the December 2024 ROD Committee Update**

Question 3 states: "the intention to transfer the property to residents is evident in a number of documents, and this will be a primary factor in negotiating a price with the City." Prior research has not found any written evidence of such NFA member statements.

Response: *Members of the ROD committee and several resident volunteers spent hours looking through NFA and City documents and found documents that use such wording, including the example provided above, and another one: (Chair Eklund stated in NFA meeting minutes, December 17, 1999) "The NFA, since the beginning, has been committed to helping MVMCC become a resident-owned park."*

Larry Cohen and Mike Holland

Dear Editor,

I would like to take the opportunity to thank Mary and the other board members who put together the FAQs in the February *Echo*. The list of questions are indeed frequently asked. To have these questions

and answers all together is a great help to understanding the basics.

There is an additional question I have heard that is important to understanding where we stand with the City. (Perhaps I've just heard it in my own head.)

Given that we have \$6M in reserves and an additional \$650K per year profit once the loan is paid off: What is to keep the City from absorbing these funds into the City's general budget and passing along future capital improvements as special assessments to the Park residents?"

Tom Weeden

Response: *When we are successful in purchasing the Park,*


the scenario you present won't be an issue, as all funds generated will belong to MVC. The City currently owns the Park, and they've been clear with us that the additional \$651K is their money. Although they do add the \$651K to the Park's reserve account, they still claim these funds as theirs. This is an ongoing issue, and our attorney is keeping an eye on it. I can't say more, other than the PAC Board strongly believes the reserve funds belong to the Park. If we do not purchase the Park, your scenario could possibly become a reality — perhaps all the more reason to continue on our path toward acquiring the Park?

MVMCC Management Update

We have been busy with standard monthly procedures for January and February.

- One emergency water valve replacement occurred, which involved turning off the water for 30 homes.
- Management completed and turned in the midyear budget review to PAC and the City of Novato. We requested additional funds for tree service and fire abatement.
- The heavy rains produced severe water intrusion in both the lower card room and billiard room. We may need to file an insurance claim for water damage.

- Management began gathering estimates for replacing the water-damaged flooring in the lower card room and men's gym changing room.
- Maintenance began moving items that had been stored in one of the sheds in the Breezeway to provide more space for the Park Market.
- Manager has been working on the possessory interest tax report for the County of Marin.


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Letter to Residents

PAC

Greetings,

It's March, and we're one step closer to spring. "March" is named for the Roman god of war, Mars. However, I'd much prefer to think of it as the beginning of spring!

Three Projects

Three projects the City of Novato agreed to work on continue to inch forward — the clubhouse roof, the main electric switch, and upgrades at the clubhouse associated with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The City has not provided a timeline for completion.

Property Condition Assessment (PCA)

As reported in the February 2025 *Echo*, the City *did not* authorize moving forward with the budgeted project to hire a consultant to undertake a PCA. This assessment would help us understand the current condition of the property we are hoping to purchase.

As you learned from the recent emailed Resident Update on February 5, and a tube flyer on February 8, the PAC Board is broadening the purpose of the Legal Fund to include this necessary assessment, which includes inspections of all utility systems and infrastructure — including roads, common buildings, electric, water, sewer, and gas. It provides us with much-needed information about the remaining useful life of these

systems and the estimated cost of any needed repairs. Having this information is instrumental in forming a sound purchase offer. We reached out to three engineering firms and secured a bid from a reputable national firm, Partners Engineering and Science, Inc., for \$13,010. This work typically costs upward of \$40,000. (Mary Currie was able to secure a deep discount for us.)

Engineering Contractor

At the February 4 PAC Board meeting, the board voted to move forward with contracting, Partners Engineering and Science, Inc., to conduct the PCA, pending raising \$13,010 for the work. Funds were received within seven days. This firm is a leading provider of engineering and environmental services for real estate transactions and have performed PCAs at numerous mobile home parks. A kickoff meeting with the project manager and the client relations manager was held on February 7 with John Hansen, Mary Currie, Matt Greenberg, and CCCD's Randy Keller.

Pro Forma Budget

The PAC Finance Committee is working diligently to prepare several versions of a pro forma budget using differing assumptions to help us fine-tune the strategy for negotiations with the City regarding Park acquisition. The committee is comprised of myself (PAC

President John Hansen), plus three financial wizards: David King, Steve Plocher, and Brad Witherspoon. Todd Rodgers, a former CFO, serves as an adviser. More to come, as we're making good headway.

Get Emailed Resident Updates

To receive emailed Resident Updates, be sure to give your email address to PAC Board Secretary Carol-Joy Harris at caroljoyharris@comcast.net. You must OPT-IN to receive robocalls from Park Manager Matt Greenberg, as these calls share emergency information and critical path announcements. To OPT-IN, contact Matt at 415-883-5911 or gm.mvmcc@gmail.com.

Happy spring to all



A Few MORE Frequently Asked Questions — with Answers

by **MARY CURRIE**

Questions About the Exclusive Negotiating Agreement (ENA) and the Status of Negotiations

The ENA with the City of Novato (City) allows us to negotiate in good faith through December 2025. What happens if we are still in negotiations after December 31?

The PAC Board entered into an exclusive negotiating agreement (ENA) with the City to protect the Park from being sold to another entity. Per the ENA terms, the

exclusive negotiating period ends on December 31, 2025. However, the ENA states, “The Negotiating Period may be extended for two (2) additional six (6)-month periods by the mutual written agreement of the Parties if sufficient progress toward a mutually acceptable Acquisition Agreement has been made during the Negotiating Period to merit such extension.”

Where are we in the negotiations with the City?

By June 30, 2025, per the ENA, a Financing Plan is due to the City, showing our financial ability to acquire and operate the Park. This plan will provide the necessary information to negotiate acquisition terms with the City.

As we’ve been reporting, PAC Board members John Hansen, Mary Currie, and Stephen Plocher along with the PAC Board Finance Committee are very involved in gathering the accurate data needed to complete the Financing Plan:

1. Reliable Budget Projections

The Finance Committee comprises residents who are well-versed in a range of financial matters, including Stephen Plocher, David King, and Brad Witherspoon. John Hansen participates as PAC Board President. Resident and former CFO Todd Rogers also provides oversight. The committee works closely with ROC USA and CCCD. The committee is developing several versions of a pro forma budget, based on financial assumptions that vary, to aid in negotiating the terms of the acquisition. The final budget, based on the purchase price, will determine space

fee charges (for members of Marin Valley Cooperative) and rent (for non-Marin Valley Cooperative members). It will reflect projections for operating expenses, debt service, and capital improvement projects and will also include successfully obtained grants and loans.

2. Property Condition Assessment

To support the accuracy of the pro forma budgets, on-site inspections of sewer and water lines, electrical and gas supply systems, common facilities, and more will be undertaken. On February 5, 2025, the PAC Board issued a “Call to Action” to residents to raise \$13,010 to hire the reputable national engineering firm, Partner Engineering and Science, to perform the assessment, hopefully in March 2025.

The submittal of the Financing Plan to the City will be confidential. It will mark the start of negotiating a purchase price with the City. During these negotiations, no information will be shared with residents about the specifics of the talks. **HOWEVER**, remember that there will be **two votes on the purchase price agreement** — one by all residents to affirm or deny going forward with the purchase, and one by MVC members to affirm or deny going forward with taking title.

Questions About Rents Once We Become Marin Valley Cooperative (MVC)

How much more per month will it cost me when we buy the land?

This is the question on everyone’s

mind. We do not have the answer now. After we submit the confidential Financing Plan to the City by June 30, 2025, as discussed above, negotiations with the City will commence. Determining rents is a HUGE part of the outcome of negotiations. The goal of the PAC Board is to keep rents as low as possible. Currently, rents pay our operating costs and fund some of our capital improvements.

Once MVC owns the Park, MVC members will pay space fees, and non-MVC members will pay rent. Space fees and rents must be sufficient to both (1) cover operating expenses and (2) set aside funds for capital improvements. We won’t know the space fees or rents until we reach a purchase price agreement. And remember, there will be two votes on the purchase price agreement before it is finalized — one by all residents to affirm or deny going forward with the purchase, and one by MVC members to affirm or deny going forward with taking title.

Questions About MVC Membership

How does a current mobile home owner become an MVC member, and do I have to become a member?

You do not have to become a member of MVC. Becoming a member is your choice.

To become a member, complete a Joining Agreement, available at the clubhouse counter, and place it in an envelope along with a check for \$25 made out to Marin Valley Cooperative (MVC) in the large wooden box near the clubhouse counter.

At press time, 240 households, or 76 percent of all households,

have joined MVC. Because, in many cases, there are two MVC members in a household, we have a total of 322 members. See more information below on Member Households, Members, and Nonmembers.

Once we own the Park, how will space fees and rents be set for members and nonmembers of MVC, and is there a difference?

The differences are explained below:

Nonmembers: Nonmembers will be tenants of MVC and will pay rent. They will be subject to the City's rent control ordinance, which allows the MVC Board to increase rents annually by no more than 4 percent. This does not mean that rents will automatically be increased annually, but those who remain as nonmember renters should understand the potential for rent increases.

Members: Members, as shareholders in MVC, will be charged a space fee. Increases in space fees will be brought before the members for a vote.

What are the definitions of "MVC Member" and "Member Household"?

MVC Member: According to the MVC interim bylaws adopted by members a few months ago, MVC will have one class of members, consisting of the resident homeowners in the community. A member "in good standing" is one who owns and resides in a manufactured home ("Home") in the community and who has completed the Joining Agreement and paid the joining fee, as well as any spouse or partner in a civil union and any other adult member of the household who has signed the Joining Agreement.

Member Household: A household consisting of one or more members. For voting in all membership meetings and elections, each member household has only one (1) vote, regardless of the number of members residing in the household.

If my home is listed as an asset in my trust, should my trust be listed as an MVC member?

No.

When someone sells their mobile home, must the buyer become an MVC member?

Yes. All new buyers must join the cooperative once MVC owns the Park.

Once we own the Park, will annual independent audits of the financials for MVC be performed?

Yes.

What are the benefits of being a member of MVC?

The MVC was formed to take title to the Park. By taking title and owning the Park, we are all protected against unfair eviction, acquisition by a for-profit entity, or even Park closure. Our assets — our homes — are sitting on someone else's land right now. Becoming a co-op gives us much more control over our future.

Cooperatives are controlled by members who actively participate in setting policies and making decisions. The MVC will be run by an elected board of directors and member volunteers serving on various committees. A management company and on-site manager/staff will be hired to run the day-to-day operations under the guidance of the MVC Board. MVC will be free to govern itself and control its own affairs

in compliance with local, state, and federal laws. It will also benefit from the expert technical assistance and guidance to be provided by ROC USA and CCCD for at least 10 years.

MVC members will:

- Participate in the formation of committees that will help address important topics, such as finance, communications, dispute resolution, social activities, community relations, and infrastructure.
- Have the right to elect and remove, if necessary, the MVC Board members.
- Vote to ratify the annual budget and rules and regulations developed by the MVC Board and management company.
- Receive timely notices of all board meetings and changes in MVC policies, rules and regulations, and other matters affecting the co-op.
- Be able to take pride in being a co-owner rather than a tenant.

Is it okay not to become an MVC member?

Yes. As a nonmember, you will have no say in the management and operation of the Park. Nonmembers will not vote on issues such as the election of the board of directors, co-op policies and rules, rent/space fee increases, or community repairs and improvements.

How does the California Mobile Home Residency Law interface with governing MVC?

Both members and nonmembers have protections under the California Mobile Home Residency Law. The text of this law appears on the Marin Valley website at <https://marinvalley.net/park-documents/> ■



Update from the Resident Ownership Discovery (ROD) Committee

by **ALAN GUMP**, ROD Committee

The ROD Committee has several important updates on developments that began in 2024.

PRICE Grant (HUD) Update

In mid-2024, US HUD (Housing and Urban Development) announced a \$225,000 grant program via the PRICE Grant to maintain, protect, and stabilize manufactured housing and manufactured housing communities. Our sponsor, ROC USA, applied for approximately \$75,000 to support several projects they currently assist, including MVMCC. In December 2024, HUD announced the award recipients, which include ROC USA at \$38,000.

In early January 2025, HUD informed ROC USA that HUD would determine which of the ROC USA-sponsored projects would receive funding, and how much. At this date, we do not know if MVMCC will receive a portion of this funding.

ROC's Jodi Baiyat Is Moving On

At the end of January 2025, our ROC USA liaison, Jodi Baiyat, resigned from ROC USA in order to restart her manufactured housing consulting business, which she had paused during the early COVID era. We have been told that Angela Romeo will be our new ROC USA contact and will work with us on securing ROC-approved funding through ROC Capital. We greatly appreciate the tireless hours Jodi has spent with us providing expert guidance. We wish her all good fortune in her business.

Status of Development of MVC Rules & Regulations

Marin Valley Cooperative will need community Rules & Regulations, assuming the sale goes forward. The ROD Committee is currently working through two sets of Rules & Regulations:

- (1) MVMCC's 2020 version, updated by Carol-Joy Harris and Serena Fisher with input from the MVMCC community and the Novato City Attorney
- (2) a version provided by ROC USA.

We have merged these two sets and are working through them line by line with Randy Keller, our CCCD (California Center for Cooperative Development) liaison. Randy has deep knowledge of the updated California Mobile Home Residency Laws and has owned mobile home parks, so he is the ideal person to advise us.

Once we have a candidate set of Rules & Regulations that has been reviewed and approved by our attorney, Karen Tiedemann, we will convene a small working group of MVC members for input.

MVC Permanent Bylaws

We will repeat the same process we use for the Rules & Regulations to develop the Permanent Bylaws.

MVC Member Workshops and Vote

Once we have the MVC Rules & Regulations and the MVC Permanent Bylaws ready to present to the MVC membership, we will host one or more educational workshops to explain them and receive feedback, which we will incorporate as best we can while maintaining legal integrity. After the workshops, we will convene an election in which MVC members will vote on the proposed Rules & Regulations and Bylaws. A simple majority of MVC member households is needed to enact these items.

If you have not yet joined MVC, now would be a good time so that you can have a voice in how this community will be run and participate in these votes. The Joining Agreement is located on top of the wooden box near the clubhouse counter. Read more about being a member in Mary Currie's article with questions and answers.

PLEASE NOTE:

The aforementioned Rules & Regulations and Bylaws will not take effect until we own the Park. Until that time, we remain under the current PAC Rules & Regulations and PAC Bylaws.

The ROD Committee consists of PAC/MVC Board members Serena Fisher and Alan Gump and PAC Board members John Hansen and Mary Currie. ■



Hammering It Home

by **BILL DAVIS**, MVEST Chair

The climate is changing, the Diablo winds out of the northeast are coming, and more fires are coming.

That is the message we received from Bruce Goines, President of Novato Fire District, on February 3. A link to a video of his presentation is posted on our website. If you have not seen it, take a look.

If you are worried that what happened in the LA area could also happen here in Marin, well, the simple answer is yes. The Diablo winds that stoke our fire season will return to Marin around September, as they do every year. They leave just after the first rains.

Past fires leave footprints and tend to burn again in the same or similar locations. However, if we listen to the science and advice of fire prevention experts, we can prevent the loss of life or homes. The potential for a major fire is real, and it is only a matter of time and odds before it occurs. A hungry fire with an insatiable appetite can jump into our neighborhood to feast on the smorgasbord of dried-out, highly flammable fuel and destroy this community in minutes.

Mr. Goines presented impressive photos and maps showing the history of fires in Southern California, Marin County, and Novato. He made uncomfortable and significant points that we must digest and then act on to make changes. Remember Smokey the Bear, who said, "Only you can prevent forest fires"? That was years ago. Today, only you can prevent our Park from burning. You'll have to get active, take responsibility,

and properly protect your home. We are all in this beautiful retirement community together. Will we continue to thrive, or will we experience loss here in the all-too-immediate future?

Mr. Goines, a US Forester with over 40 years of experience, made a number of important points that this community must adopt to avoid having our homes end up in ashes, as happened in the recent Palisades and Eaton Fires. We live in a community that has both a fire footprint and the seasonal danger of the Diablo winds. There is a message here; as Arnold Schwarzenegger said in the movie, *The Terminator*: "I'll be back!"

So where do you start? What do you do first, and how do you prioritize the most effective and easiest actions?

First, tidy up your grab-and-go bag for evacuation.

Next, call and make an appointment through the Novato Fire District to have a Wildfire Mitigation Specialist come out and evaluate your situation. You will be surprised by some of the simple things you can do to protect your home and community. These specialists can also help you get the best return for your dollars and your energy.

The Fire District folks are not enforcers; they are educators. They do not issue citations, and they do not force you to add or remove anything. They are on your side, friendly and supportive, even if you cannot immediately implement any of their recommendations. As

vegetation experts, they can show you what will best work for you.

But, if we are to move the dial, after finding out what to do, we must work on doing it. The recent LA fires are a wake-up call, an opportunity to adapt our habits to extreme fire weather by properly managing our yards, taking care of our neighbors, and making it easier to evacuate if needed. These practices must be widely adopted. One home is only as safe as the home next door. Remember, even if you faithfully execute all of the suggested preventative measures, if your neighbor does nothing, and their house burns, it will create so much radiant heat that yours could, too. Neighbors matter, building codes and rules matter, regulators matter, and park managers matter. Each of these elements is key to protecting our homes and community.

The fire agencies in Marin County are amazingly good at putting out fires, but they were not originally set up to do prevention work. They have adapted extremely well to the times and offer invaluable advice regarding fire prevention. But let's be honest: prevention is your responsibility — not just regarding your home, but your neighbor's as well.

Finally, if you don't already have it, get the Alert Marin app for your phone. In a major fire or disaster of any kind, it will be your primary source of information in the middle of all the chaos. Knowledge reduces risk. ■



ALERT MARIN

Register for emergency alerts at AlertMarin.org

Message from MarVal

Dear Friends,

Welcome to March, with daylight saving time beginning on March 9, and then the fun-filled St. Patrick's Day celebration on March 15.

The Saint Patrick's Day custom of "drowning the shamrock" or "wetting the shamrock" is a popular way to end the celebrations, especially in Ireland. A shamrock is placed into the bottom of a cup, which is then filled with whiskey, beer, or cider. A toast is made to Saint Patrick, Ireland, or those present, and the shamrock is either swallowed with the drink or taken out and tossed over the shoulder for good luck. While Mar Val will not have shamrocks to drown, we will have corned beef and cabbage and, of course, the famous Irish Coffee Bar. So, go find your green duds and join us at the St. Patrick's Day celebration.



Everyone is Irish on this day. Erin go bragh.

Mar Val would like to cordially invite everyone to come to Pub. I've heard that some folks don't want to attend because they feel they are not part of a group, or they don't have friends to sit with, or they think the tables are all full. Let me tell you a story ... I have been sitting at the same table with the same dear friends for over 10 years. It has become something similar to the "hospitality table" offered by some restaurants

around the world — a large table where any and all are welcome. Those by themselves get the opportunity to meet others at our table, and oftentimes those folks become new friends. Our group laughingly says, "Our table is never full — we just keep adding chairs." There is ALWAYS a place for you at our table for Pub. So, if you are hesitant to attend Pub because you don't have a circle of friends yet, please join us ... we are the group in the back corner. The bartenders will be happy to direct you, and we will be waiting to welcome you.

Hope to see you soon at a Mar Val event.



Coming soon —
Springtime Salmon Fest
Saturday, April 19



Carolyn K. Corry
Carolyn Corry
MARVAL PRESIDENT
ckcorry@comcast.net
415-370-6403



Mar Val presents

ST. PATRICK'S DAY

Saturday, March 15

Drinks at 5 pm Dinner at 6 pm

Featuring Irish Coffee!!

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

Menu

Corned Beef/Cabbage or Vegetarian Shepherd's Pie

Potatoes Carrots Rolls

Dessert

\$17 per person. Make checks payable to Mar Val.

***Deadline for reservations: 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,

The Home Owners League is keeping busy.

Rollin' Root

Recently, Rollin' Root and the Civic Center Farmers Market organizers, the Agricultural Institute of Marin (AIM), requested our help with a special food delivery while they await the DMV permit for their vehicle. HOL supported them by purchasing food and distributing it at no cost in the breezeway, where Marin Valley residents quickly, somewhat chaotically and noisily, gathered it up. We understand their permit is now in hand, and their regular Thursday distribution (11 am to 12 noon) has resumed.

Men's Group

A new Men's Group started meeting in the Fireside Room on the first and third Wednesdays of each month. Twelve men attended the inaugural meeting.

Valentine's Day Craft Market

The Valentine's Day Craft Market was a huge success! A large crowd gathered, supped on pizza and soft drinks, listened to Maggie and Frank's music, kept friends up to date, and bought cakes, homemade goods, toys, and gifts, providing a great time for everyone.

Meditation Group

The Meditation group changed its schedule to meet on Thursdays at 6:30 pm in the Fireside Room instead of Sunday mornings, enabling more people to attend. It's open to all and provides a great way to unwind and relieve the stress of our daily lives. On the Thursdays when Game Night meets (usually the second Thursday of the month), Meditation will move to the Bamboo Room.

History of the Park

The Park Historian endeavor has now been transitioned to PAC as a subcommittee. Frank Simpson is conducting interviews to add to our historical record.

While researching for the possible purchase of our community, we perused old records to find the needed documentation. Since we are now firmly entrenched in the digital age, we think it's time to use these new technologies to keep track of the records and memories.

The new subcommittee has been tasked with collecting documents from past and present Park events for future residents to explore. If you're interested in helping, or have any minutes from older past meetings, photos of Park events, or written materials that would be useful to our collection, please reach out to me. We'd love to preserve these for future generations on our website or servers.

Marin Valley Gallery

Thanks to David Gray for the magnificent wildlife exhibit in his featured artist show in the clubhouse lobby. If you haven't seen it, you still have a chance until March 1.

We are delighted to have Janet Bogardus as our next featured artist from March 3 through June 15.

Last Monday Lectures

The scheduled February Last Monday Lecture with Mary Currie sharing her stories of the Golden Gate Bridge will be videoed with a link to our YouTube channel available soon on our website. Next up at the March Last Monday Lecture will be Nan Watanabe, who leads the weekly Strength Training classes every Sunday morning in the Bamboo Room. If you haven't tried the class yet, it's definitely worth checking out. She has great exercises for us "oldies" to facilitate growing older with less pain and more flexibility!

The next HOL Board meeting will take place on **Thursday, March 6 at 4:30 pm**. We'd be thrilled to see you there!

Best regards,



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



A Round of Applause

by **SUZIE LAHR**

Let's all welcome **Janet Bogardus** as our Marin Valley Gallery featured artist for the months of March through June. Janet's energy and enthusiasm for life are extraordinary. Most days, she is in her studio at MOCA on Hamilton Parkway, creating her outstanding art for galleries throughout the Bay Area. For the past two months, Janet's art has been on display at the Manna Gallery in Oakland in her latest exhibition, "Fleurish." Her work is contemporary and ranges from creative renditions of skyscrapers, homeless encampments, and florals to everything in between! Anyone who has looked at her résumé in the Marin Valley Gallery binder can see that her art education is extensive.

Janet was a supporter of Art in the Park from its inception in 2011, when it originated as tabletop setups in the ballroom, lobby, and hallway at our clubhouse. Over the years, she also taught art classes in the Park, which were always well attended by many of our resident artists as well as other residents who came to enjoy the class and camaraderie. Janet is also an avid gardener, loves walking with her longtime partner, Marilyn, and their little dogs, and is an enthusiastic DJ and dancer with the Meadow Dance Group.

The spring exhibition will be fully installed by Monday, March 3. See the April *Echo* for more about Janet's exhibit, a new Fireside Room exhibit, and reception. ■



Acrylic abstract floral paintings from Janet's exhibit.

Pool Use Reminder

With spring approaching, we anticipate the opening of the swimming pool in the coming weeks. This is a reminder to all residents to review the Pool Rules. These rules are written to enhance the safety and enjoyment of all Park residents and to retain an appropriate balance of recreation, relaxation, and quiet.

- No lifeguard is on duty. You and your guests use the pool/spa at your own risk.
- Guests must be accompanied by their hosting resident(s) at all times.
- Everyone, including children, must shower immediately before using the pool/spa.
- The pool/spa close at 10 pm nightly.
- In consideration of residents living near the pool, please keep conversations and noise levels low at all times. Please close the gate quietly!
- No food or glass is allowed inside the fence surrounding the pool/spa. Broken glass could lead to a costly and wasteful draining of the entire pool or spa. Bring drinks in unbreakable containers only.
- Children's hours are 10 am–2 pm daily. A child is anyone under 18 years of age.
- Pool noodles and toys are provided in the bin next to the entry gate. Please return these items to the bin when you are finished using them.

We ask for your understanding and cooperation in observing these rules. The pool and spa are maintained at considerable cost as a benefit to Park residents. Please report any facility issues to Park Management as soon as possible. Please report security issues to Pool Security at 415-883-2200.

Let's have a safe, fun, and relaxing summer! ■

The Pool Committee
Ed Collins
Serena Fisher
Alan Gump



New Season of Water Aerobics Commences

by **KAMALA ALLEN**

It's that time of year again! Water Aerobics classes will start as soon as the pool reopens. Check with Matt Greenberg to find out the actual opening date this year, as it depends on how warm the weather is. Classes are held 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 ■.

Bill Hartwell in Marin Valley!

SAVE THE DATE

Sunday, April 13
Ballroom • 3–4:30 pm

by **CHARLOTTE KELLS**

Bill is a singer-songwriter who currently resides in San Diego, CA. He has six CDs of original songs and has been playing and performing for over 30 years, primarily in Southern California, with coast-to-coast gigs.

HOL will sponsor the concert as a free event on Sunday, April 13 from 3 pm to 4:30 pm in the ballroom. Refreshments will be served.



Bill Hartwell ... one of the most reliable and imaginative acoustic singer/songwriters on the local scene. He is a superb guitarist, with an immediately endearing vocal persona, and his songs range from keen observations, to warm and introspective, to clever pieces of social commentary. ■

— Frank Korcher,
San Diego Troubadour



Group Strength Training with Nan Watanabe

Monday, March 31 • Fireside Room • 4:30 pm

by **NAN WATANABE**

As long as we physically move with intention, any movement is preferable to no movement.

After working as an instructional designer and training facilitator in the corporate world for 12 years, I've been working with adults as a fitness instructor and consultant, certified in Group Exercise, for the past 10 years. My goal is to help people discover how to safely move in the world, regardless of physical challenges.

I enjoy working with groups because "working out" also has a social component, as we learn from each other. I love celebrating progress and am committed to enhancing health and well-being through strength training.

Marin Valley is a unique and perfect place for us to build strength, enhance our quality of life, and strengthen community through strength training.

Come to an interactive Last Monday Lecture on **March 31 at 4:30 pm**. Bring your curiosity and willingness to play! ■



Learn:

How to stay strong as the years go by.

How everyday activities impact quality of life, including:

- **Protecting your back and knees when picking up items from the floor.**
- **Standing up from a seated position with greater ease.**

How using weights properly builds muscle and strength.

Whatever Happened to the Sabbath? Or, When Do I Get to Rest?

by **LORNA SASS**

I don't know about you, but early on, I picked up the idea that resting was equivalent to being lazy and that being lazy was a mortal sin. Expressions like "You lazy good-for-nothing" say it all ...

Since my parents had bought into this ethic, I was brought up to value myself by how much I got done. Yet I've always had challenges with feeling vitality, preferring lying on the sofa with a good book to running a marathon.

So, to fulfill my high standard of getting lots done, I was forced to come up with strategies to keep on keeping on. During grad school and my food-writing career, I got into the habit of pushing through the tiredness with strong will and large doses of sugar and caffeine.

Another strategy was to rush through whatever I was doing, feeling pressured to move quickly so I could cross out an item on my to-do list and move on to the next thing without even taking a break. It's ironic that I became known as the "Queen of Pressure Cooking," proudly promoting a way to cook food in one-third the standard time! The pressure cooker and I ran in the fast-forward lane and were delighted with our efficiency and speed.



Speaking of efficiency, another strategy I learned early on was multitasking, and I became a master at it, often juggling three or four things at once. Case in point: Every morning these days, I stand on my vibration plate with headphones on listening to alpha waves while stretching with an elastic band to sounding tones to awaken my vagus nerve. Then I'm proud of myself for accomplishing four tasks at once that are intended to relax me! (Could there be something wrong with this picture?)

Even though I've accomplished a lot in my lifetime, I now question how present I was for any of it. In fact, if you agree that you can't be in two places at once, I suspect that rushing and multitasking prevented me from ever being entirely in the moment. Something that has been hugely helpful in giving me a break over the years is a suggestion made to me by Dr. Andrew Weil when I met him at a workshop at Feathered Pipe

Ranch in Montana many decades ago. "Go on a news fast," he told me, when I explained how shaken I often got by reading the newspaper. In our fast-changing world, giving yourself a break can bring much-needed rest. How long your news fast lasts is a very individual

decision: it may be an hour, a day, a week, or indefinitely.

Lately, my 79-year-old body has been rebelling with aches and pains and won't let me push myself the way I used to. By midafternoon, I often feel a magnetic pull to the sofa, but I usually resist it. Despite living alone, there's that sense that someone might find out that I took some time off ...

This guilty feeling brings me to the question: Whatever happened to the Sabbath? Do you remember the days when everything except churches was closed on Sunday? Nowadays, with the internet and texting, there seems to be no official day off, no time of declared rest unless we declare it ourselves. In truth, I'm needing to learn how to rest as if I were a baby learning to walk.

To this end, I started googling around (admittedly, on a Saturday night!) to see if I could get some

help. I came upon a book called *Sacred Rest: Recover Your Life, Renew Your Energy, Restore Your Sanity* by Dr. Saundra Dalton-Smith. I listened to the author being interviewed (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4F9SALVTJzI>), and while her talking speed suggests that she needs a rest herself, her approach helped me expand my notion of rest.

Here are some ways we can rest intermittently throughout the day to avoid that feeling of exhaustion and overwhelm:

- Come up with a “to don’t” list, giving yourself permission to skip some nonessential tasks.
- Close your eyes and notice your breath for a few minutes. Feel gratitude for your body that does so much without your noticing.
- Turn off all sounds and listen to the richness of silence.
- Take a walk in the woods.
- Soak in a hot bath.
- Sing or hum.
- Listen to your favorite music.
- Jump on a rebounder for a few minutes.
- Rock in a hammock while eating your favorite chocolate.

Speaking of the latter, I think I’ll go do that right now. ■

Be Prepared for Stormy Weather

by **BILL DAVIS**, MVEST Chair

The City of Novato has sand and bags available to Novato residents at the City of Novato Corporation Yard **550 Davidson Street.**

Limit 10 per household. Bring your own shovel & gloves.

If you’re physically unable to fill the bags, contact Public Works at 415-899-8280 during business hours to schedule a time to pick up prefilled bags. More information: novato.org/sandbags ■



Interested in Volunteering in the Schools?

by **CHARLOTTE KELLS**

Thursday, March 6 • 4 pm • Library



Have you ever wanted an opportunity to work as a volunteer, helping kids in the Novato schools?

I did, and I discovered that the organization [10,000 Degrees](http://10000degrees.org) made it easy for me to do just that! Every week, I work for two hours helping individual second graders with their reading. I was allowed to choose my school, the grade, and the subject I wanted to tutor. It has been a perfect volunteer opportunity for me to make a difference for kids and my community! And it is such fun and satisfying work.

The 10,000 Degrees Academic Success Program provides volunteer support to the highest-need K–12 schools in Marin County. Volunteers are placed and supported based on teachers’

needs and volunteers’ interests. No previous experience is needed — just two hours a week and a desire to help students reach their potential.

To find out more, join me and Lisa Pavlovsky, Novato Academic Success Coordinator, on **Thursday, March 6 at 4 pm** in the **Marin Valley Library** for a brief informational meeting.

Please let me know if you can join us or if you have any questions: 617-306-0265, charkells@gmail.com ■



Main 415.459.4240

10000degrees.org

1401 Los Gamos, Suite 205
San Rafael, CA 94903

Lisa Pavlovsky, 415-432-2570

lisa.pavlovsky@10000degrees.org

A Taste of San Blas, Mexico

Text and Photography by **DAVID GRAY**

Our usual winter respite in Mexico took us to the mainland this February. Our primary destination was San Blas, on the shores of the Gulf of California. San Blas is known for its birdlife, particularly around La Tovara National Park. We nibbled at the edges of La Tovara wildlife refuge — except for the morning we rose at 5:30 am to take a four-hour tour up the river with a highly recommended local guide into the heart of the park. The photos from that boat tour will have to wait, as I shot over 3,300 in those four hours, and my deadline for this article is looming.

Driving into San Blas, we were on the edge of La Tovara, with some great spots to see birdlife on either side of the main road, Highway 74. The Granja San Cristóbal, a preserve next to Chiro's restaurant and grill, hosted a wide variety of birds: a flock of perhaps 50 great egrets, numerous black-necked stilts, snowy egrets, wood storks, and — wonder of wonders — a pair of roseate spoonbills.

Spoonbills are one of my favorite birds. The unusual and highly adapted shape of their bill gives them their name. This pair of roseate spoonbills (*Platalea ajaja*)

were resting and not feeding in the marsh. Their gorgeous pink plumage is quite distinctive and is a result of their diet of crustaceans.



Roseate spoonbills in the water

Something spooked them and they took off.



Flying high above us was a pair of magnificent frigate birds (*Fregata magnificens*) in their regular, nonmating plumage (this male lacks the bright-red throat sac). The female has the light-gray coloring on her head and neck. These birds land only to nest and fledge their young.



Green heron (Butorides virescens) hunting in the marsh.



Magnificent frigatebirds in front of the moon

And lastly, a photo from the tour, of an American crocodile (*Crocodylus acutus*) on the banks of the Rio Arroyo Grande.

Happy spring, everybody! ■



American Crocodile

