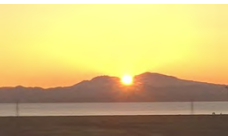


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April 2025



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MVMCC Management Update

Clubhouse Maintenance and Updates

1. Lower Card Room and Billiard Room

- o A team is working on lowering the grade behind these rooms to prevent water intrusion. Excess rainwater will be pumped out to prevent further damage to the flooring in the card room.

2. Main Electrical Switch

- o Work on the main electrical switch has been put on hold due to MVMCC's acceptance into the PG&E Utility Conversion Program.

3. Gym Changing Rooms

- o Smoking in the changing rooms is prohibited.
- o **Men's:** New flooring and base have been ordered to replace the existing damaged flooring.
- o **Women's:** New base will also be installed.


Multiple break-ins have occurred; repairs have been made to the door and jamb to ensure it closes properly.

4. Storage Sheds

- o The Tuff shed at pumphouse 1 has been reroofed and installed with shelves.
- o The maintenance shed in the breezeway has been vacated for HOL to use.

5. Saunas

- o Both saunas have been turned off due to damage caused by someone repeatedly pouring water on the electrical equipment and walls.
- o Efforts are being made to find a licensed repair company to either fix or replace the sauna elements.


Matt Greenberg
 GENERAL MANAGER
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 415-883-1971 Fax ■ 415-883-5911

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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Plocher, Erma Wheatley, Brad Witherspoon

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Letter to Residents

A Message from Your PAC and MVC Boards

by **JOHN HANSEN**

Welcome to April. April brings warmer weather, even more blooming flowers than March, and longer days. It's a time when nature comes alive after the cold winter months. April is considered a month of renewal, nature, celebration, and reflection. Enjoy!

PG&E Utility Conversion Program

On January 16, 2025, Park Manager Matt Greenberg received some much-needed good news for us! He learned that PG&E, through the CA Public Utilities Commission, has accepted Marin Valley Mobile Country Club (MVMCC) into the Mobile Home Park Utility Conversion Program. In 2025, PG&E will develop the construction plans needed to replace all gas and electrical lines as well as individual meters in MVMCC. Then, in 2026, PG&E will undertake the construction, which is expected to take just one year.

The entire project will be funded by PG&E. Getting accepted into this program took a few years. Matt remembers, "When PG&E offered the utility conversion program as a pilot program, I applied in 2017. My application was denied. The program was new and overwhelmed with applications and not enough approved contractors to accommodate." The Novato City Council approved resubmitting the application in June of 2021, and PG&E approved it this January.

PG&E will own and maintain the system moving forward. Residents will have individual accounts with PG&E for gas and electric services. Each home space will be allotted the amperage that the existing home can accommodate, but all will have access to 200-amp service.

Under the new system, energy coming into MVMCC will go directly to transformers. Therefore, the old electrical switch that is on its last leg will not need to be replaced! In case of a power failure, a temporary transfer switch will be used until the new system is in place.

According to PG&E, benefits from this upgraded system will include online access to our accounts, the ability to view individual energy usage, and access to energy-saving tools. Generally, the cost of connecting resident-owned facilities to the new utility service(s) is borne by the program. PG&E notes that residents may incur only minor costs, if any, in relation to the replacement program. These costs may include equipment such as gas flex connectors or auxiliary connections, which are essential for connecting mobile home park resident-owned facilities (e.g., air conditioners, fireplaces, BBQ units, etc.) from the master-metered system to the direct utility service.

Due Diligence Is Underway

At the February 4 PAC Board meeting, the board voted to move forward with contracting Partner Engineering and Science, Inc., to conduct due diligence, including a Property Condition Assessment and Phase 1 environmental analysis, pending raising \$13,010. The community chipped in over \$18,000 in less than a week. The funds not spent on due diligence will remain in the Legal Fund. Staff from Partner Engineering were on-site on Friday, February 28, to inspect the condition of our various systems and common buildings. They will return to the property to inspect the sewer lines. We expect this inspection work to be completed by the end of March or early April.

Emailed Resident Updates — Please be sure to sign up

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.



John Hansen

John Hansen
PAC PRESIDENT
johnhansen.emt@gmail.com
415-847-7155

A Few MORE Questions and Answers – Round 3

by **MARY CURRIE** with **STEVE PLOCHER** and **CAROL-JOY HARRIS**

Questions about the Park and resident ownership keep coming, so here is another shot at answering a few more. Please send your questions to me at ggbmedia@yahoo.com.

1. How many members does Marin Valley Cooperative have now?

Eighty percent of households have opted to join the Marin Valley Cooperative (MVC), indicating their support for resident ownership.

2. Assuming we purchase the Park, will the \$651,000 that we pay now as the monthly loan payment be available to help with MVC expenses?

Yes. The assumption is that the existing loan will be paid off at the close of the sale. These funds would then be available to help pay off a purchase loan that may be needed.

3. When we own the Park, what funds that we spend now won't need to be spent?

Some current operating costs will go away, making those funds available for operational and capital costs to maintain the Park. These include:

- City administration charges currently called “owner expense” will be eliminated.
- MVC liability and property insurance is anticipated to be lower.
- The rent-control administration fee paid to the City is anticipated to be greatly reduced.

4. Under MVC ownership, Novato's City Rent Control Ordinance will apply only to non-MVC members. What about rent (space fees) control protection for MVC members?

Rent (space fees) for members will be overseen by the MVC Board, with input from members, thereby giving members the ability to participate in setting these fees.

5. Is the Park for sale?

Under the exclusive negotiating agreement (ENA) with the City, the Park is for sale – but only to us. However, the for-profit private mobile home park owner who made an offer to the City Council in June 2023 has been making public comments focused on MVMCC at each City Council meeting. Since last September, this person has also asked to meet directly with City staff and council members. Because of the ENA, the City cannot meet with him. Based on his presence and persistence in wanting to meet with the City, it could be assumed that he is still interested in buying the Park.

6. Is the City a good landlord? Does the City provide adequate oversight and management expertise?

The chief qualities of a good landlord include clear communication, responsiveness to maintenance needs and capital improvements ensuring the property is well-maintained and safe for residents, professionalism, and **transparency with financial matters**. Regarding all of

these qualities, the City has not exhibited consistency. The City has not adequately maintained the Park, as shown in the March 2023 staff report from former Public Works Director Blunk. The report states that over a 30-year period, the Park needs \$40 to \$70 million in capital improvements. The City supports our goal of remaining an affordable senior community but has clearly allowed necessary capital improvements to be deferred, even though funds were available in reserves. The City has had a high turnover rate of employees, and as such, our projects have not been completed in a timely or cost-effective manner.

Two examples of capital improvements not completed by the City in a timely manner, resulting in higher costs for us when the projects are eventually undertaken, are: (a) The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) became law in 1990, or 35 years ago. While municipalities and public agencies across Marin and elsewhere worked vigorously to comply, the City has done little to comply at MVMCC, except for developing a needs assessment that was never implemented, leaving us out of compliance. The costs of implementing the ADA requirements have escalated significantly over time. (b) The clubhouse roof replacement was budgeted three years ago at \$250,000, and now, still not completed, it has an increased price tag of \$350,000.

7. If MVC owns the Park, who will take on the role of oversight and day-to-day management?

We will continue to have a management company. In

addition, we will receive 10 years of technical assistance and input from the nonprofit California Center for Cooperative Development (CCCD), which specializes in helping resident-owned communities succeed in their operations and financial management. We will pay an annual fee to CCCD for their services. More information on this fee will be shared once we have a better sense of it.

8. Why is this taking so long?

The simple answer is that there are a lot of moving pieces that have to be figured out, shared with residents (via workshops, resident updates, *Echo* articles), and ultimately tied together in the Financing Plan, which is due by June 30, 2025.

9. What would happen if the Park got sold and the new owner, or even the City, decided to close the Park?

According to our legal counsel: Per California law, in the event of a mobile home park closing or changing use, the owner must file a closure impact report showing how they will mitigate the impact on residents. In the event of a closure, residents must be paid either the cost of relocating their mobile home to another park, if that is possible, or the in-place appraised value of the home. As this would amount to many millions of dollars in our case, we believe it is safe to say that this scenario is highly unlikely. ■

Opinions from Park Residents

Keeping City Ownership Is the Smart Move

by **LARRY COHEN**, former PAC Board Treasurer
and **MICHAEL HOLLAND**, former PAC Board President

The Marin Valley Cooperative (MVC) and the Resident Ownership Discovery (ROD) committee are moving steadily forward toward their goal of resident purchase of MVMCC from the City of Novato. They believe this is the best course of action to secure the future of the Park. But it isn't the only way to proceed.

Maintaining and improving the status quo, i.e., City ownership, can provide significant financial and operational benefits while achieving the overarching goals of rent affordability and housing security.

There are four main reasons why keeping our current ownership arrangement is best.

The first, and most significant, is financial benefit. In December 2027, we will make the final loan payment that financed the City's initial purchase of the Park. That will free up \$651,000 per year. Those monies can be utilized in a variety of ways. We can build our financial reserves at a much faster rate than we currently do. We would also be in a better position to undertake major infrastructure projects and other necessary construction work and desired operational projects.

However, the \$651,000 would not be available if the MVC needs to take out a new loan to purchase the Park.

The second reason is rent control. Staying with City ownership keeps us within the rent control ordinance, which caps annual increases at no more than 4%. This protection would not exist with MVC ownership for MVC members.

The third reason is that the City has a goal and a mandate to create and maintain affordable housing, especially for seniors. Our current

relationship directly addresses that objective. City staff and City Council members have noted this numerous times in the past several years. It was cited as a motivating factor in creating the Park/City relationship in 1997. Because of this, we believe the risk of the City selling the Park to an outside entity is very low. The City Council rebuffed the 2023 offer made by a mobile home park ownership company, even though the City Manager was strongly in favor of it. The 2023 offer was not the first time the City had been approached by interested buyers. A previous assistant City manager told Mike Holland that there had been many inquiries over the years. Each time, the answer was: The Park is not for sale.

The fourth reason is that City ownership provides the Park with access to valuable oversight and management expertise. The City is experienced in handling major projects involving construction, utilities, and maintenance. We have benefited from that expertise for the past 28 years, and though it has not always been perfect, it has allowed us to function in an efficient and cost-effective manner.

In conclusion, the creation of the City/Park ownership structure in 1997 was a bold, innovative action to protect financial affordability and provide housing security for residents. It has worked well. It will work even better by fostering positive working relationships with the present and future City staff and Council.

City Council members are important stakeholders. They have heard from us; they need to continue to hear how our current relationship benefits everyone. ■

A Few Similarities and Differences Between PAC (Park Acquisition Corporation) and MVC (Marin Valley Cooperative)

by **MARY CURRIE** and **JOHN HANSEN**

What similarities do the two boards have?

At this time they both have missions that involve exploring resident ownership and are comprised of the same five members.

What makes them different?

The PAC represents all residents in the Park, while MVC represents only MVC members — owner-occupants who submitted their signed joining agreement along with the \$25 joining fee. When it comes to voting, there is a difference: for PAC votes, each qualified resident gets one vote, while MVC votes are one vote per household.

Who makes these key decisions?

Decision	PAC Board	MVC Board
Negotiates and agrees on purchase price	Yes	No
Seeks loans and grants for purchasing MVMCC	Yes	No
Once resident-owned, approves monthly lot fee for MVC members & lot rents for nonmembers	No	Yes, with member vote

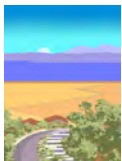
How do I distinguish which communications, such as resident updates or agendas, are coming from which board?

Look for these logos:

The PAC logo is obvious.



This logo is used for MVC Board communications. ■



Updates from PAC's Resident Ownership Discovery Committee (ROD) and MVC's Policy Committee

by **ALAN GUMP**, PAC ROD Committee, MVC Policy Committee

The Marin Valley Cooperative (MVC) Board of Directors established a Policy Committee at its February 2025 meeting. The purpose of the Policy Committee is to develop the necessary policies for operating MVC. All policies developed will be presented at workshops prior to finalization and approval by MVC members. The PAC Board's ROD Committee will continue to work on items such as grant applications.

Update from PAC's Resident Ownership Committee

HUD grant status In December 2024, HUD (Housing and Urban Development) issued a Notice of Funding Opportunity which appropriated \$235 million in competitive grant funding, known as the PRICE Grant, to preserve and revitalize manufactured housing and eligible manufactured housing communities. As reported previously, ROC USA was awarded \$38 million to support multiple projects they sponsor. Due to the freeze on the allocation of federal funds announced by the current administration, we await any news that the federal HUD PRICE Grant may become available at some point. Fingers remain crossed.

Update from MVC's Policy Committee

Development of MVC Rules & Regulations The ROD Committee is developing rules and regulations for the Marin Valley Cooperative (MVC) that will eventually be adopted by the MVC Board and ratified by a vote of MVC members. As noted previously, the ROD Committee has

carefully merged two versions of rules and regulations: (1) an update of the MVMCC Rules & Regulations worked on about nine years ago by Serena Fisher and Carol-Joy Harris together with the City, which were not ultimately adopted by the City Council; and (2) rules and regulations provided by ROC USA.

In February 2025, the ROD Committee began reviewing the two merged versions of rules and regulations with Randy Keller, our CCCD (California Center for Cooperative Development) technical adviser. Randy has deep knowledge of the current California Mobilehome Residency Laws, which will help guide the scope of the MVC rules and regulations.

By the end of March, we hope to complete a first draft of **MVC Rules & Regulations**. Once we have the first draft, the ROD Committee will convene a small group of MVC members to review and comment on it. A second draft will emerge from this process. The second draft will then be reviewed and subject to approval by our legal counsel, Karen Tiedemann. Next, the ROD Committee will convene one or more educational workshops with the community to review and provide input on the rules and regulations. Sometime in May, the MVC Board will adopt the rules and regulations, and this action will be followed by an MVC member ratification vote on the final version later in May.

We will repeat the same process for the permanent MVC Bylaws.

NOTE: Once the MVC membership ratifies the rules and regulations, **they will not take effect** until MVC owns the Park. Until that time, current PAC Rules & Regulations and PAC Bylaws will remain operative. ■

PAC ROD Committee and MVC Policy Committee: John Hansen, PAC Board and MVC Board; Mary Currie, PAC Board and MVC Board; Serena Fisher, Alan Gump



Weeds – the First Line of Defense Against Fires

by **BILL DAVIS**, MVEST Chair

Those evil weeds are ready to sprout again and grow exponentially. Then, they will dry out and become fuel that is just waiting for a spark to become wildfire ignition points. As the grasses and weeds grow, the fuel grows. And the fire season will be here all too soon. The Novato Fire Protection District is spring-loaded to pounce on that ignition. And, fortunately for us, PG&E and the Marin County Fire Department have a Blackhawk military combat helicopter loaded with 850 gallons of retardant, ready to attack, and it can be airborne in five minutes.



Additionally, mutual support is available from other fire agencies in Marin and Sonoma Counties, and that can be coordinated to back up the assault when knocking down a wildfire. The attack is all planned out. The equipment is ready to go. The firefighters have all been trained and drilled. They have multiple refined skill levels and plans to attack that fire. They stopped fires last year, and they'll do it again this year. Fire districts are prepared, Marin County is prepared, and the State is prepared as well as possible.

So how to kill the weeds?

For our yards, Roundup is illegal in Marin, but noncarcinogenic pesticides are available. Don't like chemicals? Weeds are easier to pull out now while the soil is still soft. The photogenic goats are here in early summer to munch on the surrounding hills, but the



goats can't go everywhere in the Park.

They are confined by electric fences when brought into the surrounding areas, and they can't enter our yards. We need the "old goats" already living in this Park to do their part.

We are those old goats.

And it is time to start "grazing." We have to clean up our yards, pull the weeds, cut down the brush, and prune the trees (as much as is allowed by the City).

Even if you have done what needs to be done in your yard, however, you also must make sure that your neighbor does the same. Because we are all in this together and tightly packed in this Park, we need to take care of ourselves and each other as well.

According to a US Forester here in Novato who has tramped and hiked this area many times, "We don't know when the fire is coming here again, but we do know that it will." Despite all of the preparations done by the fire suppression agencies and their incredible equipment, they might not be able to stop the fire. The destructive winds that come every fall are unpredictable and sometimes

unstoppable, as we saw recently in Southern California. The key is for us to stop the excessive grasses and weeds from growing. Bottom line: Prevention is the best solution. The absolute best way to stop a fire is to prevent it. More than ever, it has become critical for each of us to do our part in prevention.

Free evaluation

If you haven't yet had a visit from a Wildfire Mitigation Specialist from the Novato Fire Protection District, offering you a free evaluation and tips, jump on that resource. They are experts trained in pinpointing what you may need to tackle over time and helping to identify easy and inexpensive remedies.

This time of the year is stunningly beautiful in bucolic Marin County, with the birds singing, grasses and brush growing, and trees blooming. While appreciating all of this, we can become complacent by feeling overly comfortable and secure. Yet, we could lose it all by simply not managing our yards properly.



Easier to pull weed roots in spring.

So, if you don't like using pesticides to kill those weeds that are trying to break loose this spring, cut them or pull them. They are always easier to pull in the spring before the roots get deep. Get rid of them before they get rid of you and everything we love in this wonderful community. ■

Message from Mar Val

Dear Friends,

Mar Val will be celebrating this glorious spring season on April 19 with a salmon feast. Salmon will be served with a lemon caper sauce. Please sign up early, as this is always one of our most popular events.

Dig out your sombrero and serape and come join the festivities to celebrate Cinco de Mayo, the Mar Val way. First of all, the event will be on May 2, or *Dos de Mayo*, not the traditional May 5. While we North Americans often think that we are joining Mexico in celebrating their independence, we are mistaken ... this is the day that a single battle was won in the fight for independence.

However, Mar Val believes in celebrating just about anything, hence there will be a grand Mexican fiesta featuring dinner by our very own Tim Hart. We are most fortunate to have Tim as our chef for one more year before he retires his apron. Of course, Anne Glasscock, our bartender, will provide fabulous margaritas.

Prices for this grand evening are \$15 for the meal and the usual \$6 for margaritas. This is a Pub event, and while you do not need reservations to attend Pub, you do need a reservation if you wish to enjoy the dinner.

We invite you to come and enjoy Pub ... we have fresh popcorn and Smart Pop, freshly baked pizza, as well as treats provided by residents — deviled eggs by our own Pat Thurston and, when we get really lucky, the most wonderful monkey bread. Pub is a relaxing way to end the week while sharing time with some really nice folks — both old and new friends.

Hope to see you soon.



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



Mar Val presents
Dos de Mayo Pub Event
Friday, May 2
5 pm Cocktails 5:30 pm Dinner
Try our Margaritas on the Rocks!

Menu
Pork Chili Verde
Chicken or Cheese Tamales
Refried Beans, Rice, Tortillas
\$15 per person. Make checks payable to Mar Val.
Deadline for reservations: Wednesday, April 30, 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 26
5 pm Cocktails 5:30 pm Dinner

Menu
Hamburger or Hot dog **or**
Impossible Burger or Veggie Burger
Potato Salad, Baked Beans
Ice Cream Bars
\$17 per person. Make checks payable to Mar Val.
Deadline for reservations: Friday, May 23, 5 pm
(or when 120 reservations have been received).
For questions, call Susan Hoff @ 707-365-9426



Springtime Salmon Fest

Saturday, April 19

5 pm Cocktails 6 pm Dinner

Menu

**Salmon with lemon caper sauce or Quiche
Mixed Salad, New Potatoes, Rolls**

Dessert

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

*Deadline for reservations:
Wednesday, April 16, 5 pm
(or when 120 reservations
have been received).*

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

Home Owners League Message

Greetings

Paint Recycling Many of us have leftover paint cans in our homes or carports, but it's important to remember that in California, all household paints are considered hazardous waste. Please do not dispose of paint/paint cans in your regular trash. **Important:** Please do NOT leave paint cans at the Breezeway recycling center. In California, improper disposal of hazardous or toxic waste could result in up to thousands of dollars in fines.

- If a paint can is devoid of any trace of paint, it can be safely placed in your regular trash.
- If any paint remains in the can or tube (whether wet or dry, including spray paint, artist's oil, acrylic, enamel paints, and toxic varnishes and mediums), it must be recycled at the Novato Household Hazardous Waste Facility.
- Mercury-containing thermostats and thermometers are also hazardous. Place these in a sealed bag or container and inform the facility staff when dropping them off.

Location: Novato Recycling Center, 7576 Redwood Blvd. This service is provided free of charge. Appointments are required: Schedule your appointment at 415-892-7344 or <https://novatosan.com/hhw>. The facility is open on the first and third Sundays (8:30 am–1:30 pm) and Mondays (8:30 am–2 pm) of the month. Place your paint cans in the trunk of your car or rear SUV/minivan door. When you arrive, stay in your vehicle, and staff will remove the items for you. Thank you for helping keep our community safe and clean!

Reserved Parking Spaces Cones placed in parking spaces near the clubhouse are reserved for deliveries and for Rollin' Root. If the Breezeway Park Market is using the space for deliveries, they need quick access to heavy items. Please respect these reserved spaces and do not move or drive over the cones. There are plenty of additional parking spaces available. If you need assistance, volunteers are happy to move the cones for you if possible — please do not run over them or push them aside.

Volunteers Needed

1. We are looking for a person to help organize our **Marin Valley Pride Day** march and celebration. We already have one volunteer and need one more to share organizing activities. The march consists of a short walk through the Park (less than 30 minutes), followed by a celebration in the ballroom. Other volunteers will prepare food. HOL will cover the necessary expenses. We have last year's flags and other material.
2. HOL is also seeking a volunteer to assist with the **Dump Run**. Ed, who does an amazing job with this popular service, would like help organizing an additional run each year. This involves renting a truck and trailer (at HOL's expense), working with volunteers to load it, and driving it to the dump. If you're interested, please reach out to Ed. You will need experience in reversing trailers.

Men's Group The newly formed Men's Group is now full; however, if you're interested, you can add your name to the waiting list. We've already had

a few turnovers. To add your name, please contact Michael Hagerty at mrhagerty@ucdavis.edu.

Biography Night If you would like to contribute to Biography Night (which has been inactive for the past year or more), please contact me at johnmfeld@gmail.com, and we will make it happen. You can find information about past biography volunteers on our website at marinvalley.net by scrolling down the right-hand menu to "Biography Night," or our YouTube <https://bit.ly/4kBdJdY>.

Thank you for your continued involvement and support!

Best regards,


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



Out of Africa Back to Marin!

by **SUZIE LAHR**

Come and check out the lobby gallery's transformation from **David Gray's** stellar photography of his last trip to Africa to **Janet Bogardus's** diverse creations of exquisite artwork produced over many years. Having just completed an exhibit at the Manna Gallery in Oakland showcasing her latest "Fleurish" series, Janet's art now graces our gallery walls with an eclectic display. Her work will also be shown in the May Marin Open Studios.

All Park artists, you're up next! Mark your calendars for Sunday, June 15, for your full Marin Valley Gallery display in both the lobby and Fireside Room. ■

Pool Use Update

This is an update (**shown in bold type**) to the "Pool Use Reminder" published in last month's *Echo*. 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.
- **Keep the pool gate CLOSED at all times! This is a critical safety step to protect our young visitors.**
- Guests must be accompanied by their hosting resident(s) at all times.
- Everyone, including children, must shower immediately before using the pool/spa **and wait 15-20 minutes after using sunscreen before going into the water. The use of perfumes, cologne, or scented oils is strictly prohibited as they foul the water.**
- 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. **For safety reasons, alcoholic beverages are prohibited in the pool area.**
- Children's hours are **11 am**–2 pm every day. 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 pool season! ■

The Pool Committee: Ed Collins, Serena Fisher, Alan Gump

Marin Valley Gym Getting Fit

by **JANIE KLIMES CROCKER**

Our little gym has just what you need to whip that aging body into a healthier shape. Over the next few months, you may see a gym renovation to better meet our needs. Much of the equipment is old and has reached the end of its useful life. Some of it isn't even being used by anyone. Matt has agreed to look into new equipment, move out the unused items, and make overall improvements. You may have already noticed some changes. For example, the addition of a set of safe step-up platforms in the past month.



We need your input regarding what should stay, what should go, and what isn't being used. Also, let us know what you'd like to see improved. If you have opinions about this, we want to hear from you! Send me your email address and a note of interest, and I will add you to our "GYM FAITHFULS" mailing list, a platform for gym users to communicate with each other.

The Marin Valley Gym is NOT a place where you can drop off unused or unwanted equipment from your home. New additions must first be approved by Matt and the GYM FAITHFULS. If you'd like to see something specific in the gym, let us know.

Currently, there is no regular cleaning and sanitizing process in place. If you use the equipment, YOU are responsible for keeping it clean and wiping it down after use. There are plenty of sanitizing wipes available in the facility.

If you don't know how to use the machines or equipment, let me know. I'd be so happy to show you. We can set up a time for an orientation. I am very committed to exercising for both healthspan and lifespan. While I'm not a trainer, I do know a few things about exercising safely and improving mobility and balance.

Contact Janie janieklimes1948@gmail.com or Sandee Duncan at sduncanster@gmail.com. ■

Bill Hartwell in Marin Valley!



Sunday, April 13 • Ballroom • 3 pm

by **CHARLOTTE KELLS**

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

Bill Hartwell ... has established himself as 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*

For several years, former Marin Valley resident Lee Dunne and I, longtime friends of Bill, sponsored this event with HOL, and it was always a big success!

This year, the Marin Valley HOL will sponsor the concert as a free event for the community on Sunday, April 13 from 3 pm to 4:30 pm at the Marin Valley Clubhouse. Refreshments will be served. ■



Circle of Friends

**Barbara Karnes's Video,
*New Rules for End of Life Care***

by **ANEESHA DILLON**

Tuesday, April 22 • Fireside Room • 4 pm

The Circle of Friends has been meeting somewhat irregularly since the first of the year. Things seem to be moving very fast!

Our next meeting agenda will include a showing of a wonderfully informative 55-minute documentary film by Barbara Karnes called *New Rules for End of Life Care*. We showed this video three years ago at one of our first meetings, but perhaps more people are interested in the topic this time around. In any case, the information is invaluable to hear again.

Barbara Karnes has been involved with the American hospice movement since its inception decades ago, and her many years of service as a hospice nurse have informed her deep and compassionate understanding of what happens in the body and spirit when people die. The information she shares can inform us about how we, as friends, relatives, and caretakers, can offer presence and support to loved ones who are dying.

I have noticed lately that the topic of end-of-life care is becoming more acceptable in our culture. Death is beginning to be regarded as a natural phenomenon, just as birth is. Barbara reminds us that the body knows how to die, and there is a predictable sequence of events that we will all pass through as the physical body dies. When we are informed about what to expect, we can relax a bit and be less afraid of this natural letting-go process.

In the Circle of Friends, we have begun to gather a subgroup of people who are interested in volunteering to sit with people in our community who might be homebound and would like company, someone to talk to, or to be read to. We can also provide caregiver respite visits. In our next meeting, we will involve the whole group in suggesting a possible name for this volunteer group.

All are welcome to view the 55-minute video by Barbara Karnes. If you have any questions, please contact Kamala Allen at 415-306-6865.

Aneesha and Timo are unable to be at this meeting.
Back next meeting! ■



More Fun and Play with Matt Weinstein

Playfair's
Founder and
Emperor

◇
One of the most
highly requested
corporate
speakers on
Fun at Work
and
**Building a
Successful Team**



Producer of
about 400
entertainment
events for
corporate and
college groups
each year

◇
Member of the
National
Speakers
Association's
Hall of Fame

by **MARTY GELMAN**

Monday, April 28 • Fireside Room • 4:30 pm

As children, games and play are the principal ways we learn about living in the world. But as adults, laughter, fun, and play can also be a magical doorway to learning about our inner selves and can help us create a powerful sense of connection with each other. In this highly interactive and fun session, Matt will share some of his favorite stories and games designed for personal growth, self-discovery, and connection. **Come prepared for some serious fun.** ■

How to Have Difficult Conversations

Using Language that Promotes Understanding and Connection — Not Division

by **ED COLLINS** and **MICHAEL HAGERTY**

Tuesday, April 29 • 4:30–6:30 pm • Fireside Room

Want to heal a family quarrel before one of you dies?

Want to have a Thanksgiving family dinner with that argumentative relative attending?

Want to begin healing the nation's political wounds by speaking with someone from "the other side"?

Ed Collins and Michael Hagerty will be teaching a two-hour session on how to have difficult conversations. The methods we teach have been popularized by Marshall Rosenberg's *Nonviolent Communication* and by Harvard University Law School's *Getting to YES*.

Both methods involve:

- How to find the other side's deeply held values
- How to avoid either side becoming angry or defensive
- How to jointly craft solutions that respect both sides' values.

We will have a fun "hands-on" practice, where you practice talking with your difficult other (role-played by another participant).

By the end of the session, you will have some new ideas on how to connect with difficult people, how to parry their anger, and how to appeal to their own deeply held values without giving up your own.

Drop-ins are welcome, but please register at the front desk or email mrhagerty@ucdavis.edu. ■

Be Nice to Your Next of Kin (NOK)

by **JOHN FELD**

It might not be a pleasant thought to contemplate, but if you were to pass away tomorrow, what would your next of kin have to do to discover how you want them to proceed after this event? Would they know your intentions, where to find important information about your will, savings, bank accounts, passwords, email addresses, who you want to be informed, who will inherit your belongings, and what about that little bracelet or watch you would like your grandchild to have as a keepsake?

Some people have their wills in a clearly marked location that might be easy to find. But what about that collection of keys, your car's pink slip, or your credit card information?

When you get a chance, take a moment to consider what you want to happen when you pass. Do you even know where all those papers are? Maybe you do, but will your executor? Maybe you are so well-organized that you don't need to read any further. But I'm guessing that most of us could not immediately locate a lot of our important stuff, let alone anyone else knowing where to find it.

Just collecting this information and making sure it is readable, legible, and up-to-date sounds like an incredibly tedious task. And if it is a pain in the backside for you, imagine what it will be like when you are dead and buried. While we are thinking about this, what will it be like for a friend or relative to have to go through all your cupboards, drawers, boxes in the shed, and your dirty laundry trying to find this information?



Someone has thought about this and come up with a solution to make it easier for your favored person, if not for you. It's called a Nokbox, in which everything has a place and a carefully labeled slot to place the appropriate papers in, along with detailed instructions. I'm guessing that the people who created this amazing quick-start method of taking care of business probably had to collect these items for a family member or friend, spending days searching through their beloved's old love letters, bad poems they wrote in junior high school, and drawers full of things the deceased alone considered useful or important, finally finding needed documents thoughtfully placed in a manila folder between an old stamp album and a Nutcracker program from 60 years ago. In the process, they had already examined old Christmas cards, exam results, and that embarrassing photo of their friend drunkenly juggling colored balls in their pajamas.

So, both you and your survivors will be very grateful to know about how to organize your important items.

The Nokbox is a collection of color-coded, labeled hanging folders, one for every important document

in your life, along with 72 double-sided instructional check sheets. On the front of each check sheet are instructions listing what information to include in each folder, and on the back are instructions for your next of kin. These are usefully called the Noklists. The instructions inform you about what needs to be gathered, and the box gives you a place to keep it organized, well-managed, documented, and accounted for.

A zippered document-protector bag is provided for items that belong in your safe or somewhere secure, such as passports and birth certificates. You can also use this bag for other important items that need to be kept secure while managing your estate. A zippered key bag and 10 individually colored key tags are also included. The directions help you organize the many keys in your home and also guide you on how to manage them and keep valuables safe.

You will find detailed instructions and checklists on how to complete every part of your Nokbox for both you and your next of kin. The instructions alone are probably worth the cost of the package.

For you, it explains how to set up the box, which documents to put in the zippered pouch, and how to let your NOK know about the box.

For your NOK, it provides a brief "getting started after someone dies" list and explains how to use the box. You can also leave notes to be handed out to the NOK explaining why they are receiving your collection of recipes or the antique silver locket that means so much to you.



All of this comes in a useful file box with a comfortable handle (great for quickly carrying to your car in the event of an evacuation).

The Nokbox system will organize your life, even if it takes some time to amass your life's papers. They don't advise you to just fill it up and lock it away, but suggest it's a great tool to keep yourself organized and bridge the gap between what you have online and what you have on paper. Their advertising assures you that you will love this handy tool, which ranges from \$59 for a plastic file box to \$199 and beyond for the fire- and waterproof deluxe versions. It will also provide you with many hours of entertainment.

Despite its rather silly name, this product can be a real boon to those you designate to organize your effects. The hassle of gathering the relevant file folders, labeling them, and hoping you have everything you need will be eliminated by buying a premade kit. Once you have everything organized and collected, you will be able to dispose of duplicates and out-of-date or expired papers.

Digital alternatives are also available, but this is the best way of organizing your hard copies and having them easily available in times of need, which will certainly come.

Details and further information can be found at www.thenokbox.com. ■

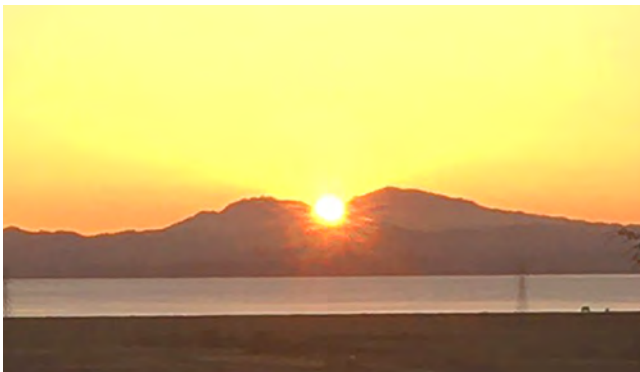


PHOTOGRAPH: JILL BOLAND

Mount Diablo Sunrise – Part 2

by **FRANK SIMPSON**

The January *Echo* article “Mount Diablo Sunrise” displayed a sequence of five photographs of the sun rising over Mt. Diablo, as viewed from View Ridge Drive on October 29, 2024. The entire sequence of five photos was shot during one minute, at 7:37 am, according to the timestamp on the iPhone camera. Thanks to Maggie’s keen observations and planning, we were able to record the moment of the autumn morning when the sun rose in the exact middle of the notch between Mt. Diablo’s north and south peaks. With Britain’s Stonehenge as our best-known predecessor, we chose to call this historically significant moment the “Mt. Diablo-henge sunrise.” Theoretically, it should occur twice per year as the sun and Earth traverse our seasons.



Mt. Diablo-henge sunrise viewed from View Ridge Drive, October 29, 2024, at 7:37 am

Toward the end of that article, we posed a thought puzzle / contest / conundrum for our *Echo* (and possibly Druid) readership: When will the Mt. Diablo-henge sunrise — centered exactly in the notch twixt its two peaks — next occur?

Before addressing this question, let me first provide data from the 2024 / 2025 calendars, to enable the calculation of the answer.

Fall equinox: September 22, 2024

Fall Mt. Diablo-henge sunrise photos: October 29, 2024

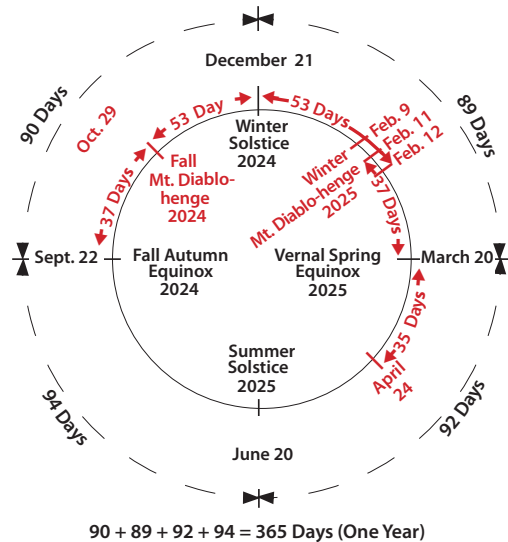
Winter solstice: December 21, 2024

Spring equinox: March 20, 2025

Summer solstice: June 20, 2025

Tool for Predicting the Diablo-henge 2024–2025

Below is a diagram of the 2024 and 2025 solstices, equinoxes, and Diablo-henges, to make the math simpler to visualize.



Four MVMCC Park residents submitted entries to the contest, and here are their thoughts, methods, and predictions:

Jack Travis, MD (from Australia)

Hi from Down Under. Great article on the sunrise — which we enjoy on our hill as well.

Method 1: My guess: Since the Fall Diablo-henge sunrise occurred 39 days after the fall equinox, the next Diablo-henge sunrise will be 39 days before the March 20 spring equinox — on Feb. 9.

Method 2: I just tried to calculate the same number of days after the winter solstice, as the Fall Diablo-henge sunrise occurred before the winter solstice. I did the calculation in my head, so it might be off slightly...

Frank Simpson

I predict that the next Diablo-henge sunrise will occur either on February 11 or even closer, on February 12, 2025. These estimates imagine the Earth traversing a circular orbit around the sun, with the sun at the exact center of the circle. But, according to Johannes Kepler (1571–1630), the Earth’s orbit is elliptical, with the sun at one focus of the ellipse. So, my estimates may differ somewhat. For instance, notice that the number of days between solstices and equinoxes varies from 89 to 94 days, as shown in the data provided above. This suggests that Earth’s path around the sun is not a circle, but perhaps an ellipse.

Method 1: Calculate the timing of the next Diablo-henge sunrise by referencing the calendar dates of the fall and spring equinoxes. The Diablo-henge sunrise occurred on October 29, 2024, which, by my calendar, is 37 days AFTER the September 22, 2024, fall equinox. Thus, the next Diablo-henge sunrise should occur 37 days BEFORE the March 20, 2025, spring equinox. By my calculation, this yields February 11, 2025.

Method 2: Calculate the timing of the next Diablo-henge sunrise using the date of the winter solstice. The October 29 Diablo-henge sunrise occurred 53 days BEFORE the December 21, 2024, winter solstice. Therefore, the next one should occur 53 days AFTER the December 21, 2024, winter solstice. Counting 53 days forward with my fingers yields February 12, 2025.

Juliette MacLam

I saw your article in the *Echo*, and I decided to throw my hat in the ring. I say that Diablo henge will happen before the vernal equinox — on February 11. Thank you for the fun thought puzzle.

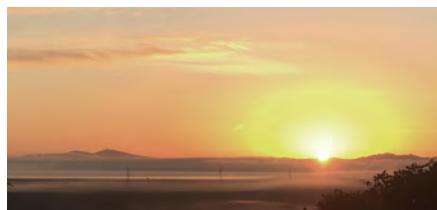
I had to retrace my steps, in order to remember my method as to how I came up with my calculation. What I did was to count backward from October 29, 2024, to the fall equinox (September 22, 2024), and that was 37 days. Then I counted back from the upcoming spring equinox (March 20, 2025) by the same number, 37 days. And that brought me to February 11, 2025.

Julie Manson

1: I wonder if the next one will be around April 24? Great photos.

2: I don't remember exactly how I went about this ... still love the pictures, and the view every morning.

The sunrise has been migrating northward since the winter solstice of December 21, 2024. Regrettably, it was a bit cloudy atop Mt. Diablo on February 11, 2025, the probable date of the Mt. Diablo-henge sunrise. Photos are not shown for February 6, 7, 13, 14, 16, or 17 due to weather obscuring the sun and/or mountain.



12/21/24 — Winter solstice — this sunrise is the furthest south of 2024.



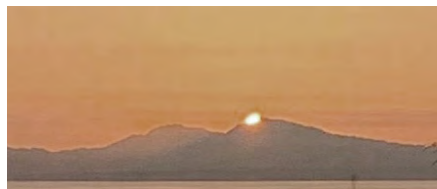
2/5/25



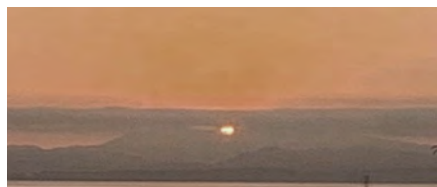
2/8/25



2/9/25



2/10/25



2/11/25 — Most likely the 2025 winter Mt. Diablo-henge sunrise.



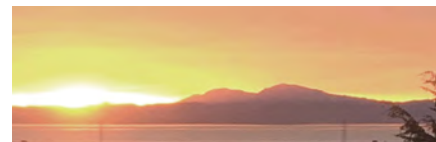
2/12/25



2/15/25



2/18/25



2/21/25

Conclusions from our examination of these photos: We believe that the winter Mt. Diablo-henge sunrise occurred on February 11, 2025. What conclusion do you reach?

In closing, I would like to thank the three brave contestants who attempted to solve the riddle of when the Mt. Diablo-henge sunrise of October 29, 2024, might next occur. As a prize, I am offering the winner, Juliette MacLam, an introductory telescope for her correct calculation of February 11, 2025. Maybe she can employ it to follow the Greek constellations! It is a 60mm Meade RB-60 refractor telescope, identical to the one that introduced me to visual astronomy a few years ago. This telescope is able to explore the nearby planets of our solar system and also the stars. With it, one can view the craters of our moon, the four Galilean moons of Jupiter, and the rings of Saturn, too. Thank you, Jack Travis and Julie Manson, for participating in this contest, and congratulations to Juliette MacLam on your correct prediction. I hope you enjoy your new telescope. ■



Birds of Puerto Vallarta and Ajijic, Mexico

Text and Photography by **DAVID GRAY**

We completed our respite in Mexico this February by exploring more of the West Coast of the Mexican mainland, including La Tovar National Park near San Blas, Puerto Vallarta, and finally inland into the mountains to Lake Chapala and the town of Ajijic.

Our first stop was La Tovar, where we took a four-hour boat tour. There were bare-throated tiger herons (*Tigrisoma mexicanum*) in abundance along the Rio Arroyo Grande.



Tiger heron



Immature sora

I also saw my first immature sora (*Porzana carolina*), a member of the rail family. This one had the striped pattern common to rails along its lower body, but its orange coloration hadn't yet molted into the usual adult dark-brown color, nor had its beak turned bright yellow.



Snail kite

We also spotted some snail kites (*Rostrhamus sociabilis*) at La Tovar, another first for me.

We then proceeded back south to Puerto Vallarta for a week of Spanish immersion classes. We stayed in an AirBnB in the Zona Romántica, south of the Cuale River, and walked to class along a route that took us through the Isla Cuale River Park and then along the PV Malecón. There was a beautiful male golden-cheeked woodpecker (*Melanerpes chrysogenys*) tending to its nest in a palm tree, doing some spring cleaning. Golden-cheeked woodpeckers are endemic to Mexico.



Golden-cheeked woodpecker

After spending a week in Puerto Vallarta, we proceeded by bus to Guadalajara, the capital of Jalisco and home to some eight million people. Tequila was invented nearby, oddly enough, in the town of ... Tequila! We spent four days in Guadalajara, taking in its historical buildings dating back to the 1600s before heading south to Lake Chapala and the town of Ajijic.

Ajijic is a birder's paradise, located by the largest inland lake in Mexico, Lake Chapala, which is over 5,000 feet above sea level. I saw a lot of first-sighting birds there, including this monk parakeet (*Myiopsitta monachus*).



Monk parakeet

Hoping everybody has gotten reoriented after the time change! ■

Monk parakeet in flight



APRIL 2025

SEE WWW.MARINVALLEY.NET FOR UPDATES AND LINKS

		TUESDAY 1	WEDNESDAY 2	THURSDAY 3	FRIDAY 4	SATURDAY 5
		7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji <i>Deck/ David m</i>	7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji <i>Deck/ David MacLam</i>	7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji Deck/ <i>David MacLam</i>	7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji <i>Deck/David MacLam</i>	
		10:30-11:30 ^{AM} Craft & Chat <i>Library</i>	4-5:30 ^{PM} Men's Group <i>Fireside Room**</i>	11 ^{AM} -12 ^{PM} Rollin' Root	12 ^{PM} Mahjong <i>Fireside Room</i>	
		5 ^{PM} PAC Board Meeting <i>Ballroom/Zoom*</i>	7-8 ^{PM} Swing Dancing <i>Bamboo Room</i>	4:30 ^{PM} HOL Board Meeting <i>Fireside Room</i>	5-7 ^{PM} Pub	5:30 ^{PM} Dancing
				6:30-7:30 ^{PM} Meditation <i>Fireside/Zoom**</i>		
SUNDAY 6	MONDAY 7	8	9	10	11	12
7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji <i>Deck/David MacLam</i>	6 ^{AM} Trash	7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji	7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji	7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji	7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji	
10-11 ^{AM} Meditation <i>Fireside Rm/Zoom**</i>	7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji <i>Deck/David MacLam</i>	10:30-11:30 ^{AM} Craft & Chat	5 ^{PM} Mar Val Board Meeting <i>Ballroom</i>	11 ^{AM} -12 ^{PM} Rollin' Root	11:30 ^{AM} Fire Safe Marin Zoom Leaders Meeting***	
12-1 ^{PM} Group Strength Training <i>Bamboo Room/ Nan Watanabe</i>		ECHO DEADLINE	7-8 ^{PM} Swing Dancing	6 ^{PM} Game Night <i>Fireside Room</i>	12 ^{PM} Mahjong	6 ^{PM} Dancing
				6:30-7:30 ^{PM} Meditation <i>Bamboo Room/ Zoom</i>	5-7 ^{PM} Pub	
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji	6 ^{AM} Trash	7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji	7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji	7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji	7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji	MAR VAL SPRING SALMON FEST
10-11 ^{AM} Meditation	7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji	10:30-11:30 ^{AM} Craft & Chat	11 ^{AM} Ladies' Bridge <i>Private, Fireside Rm</i>	11 ^{AM} -12 ^{PM} Rollin' Root	12 ^{PM} Mahjong	5^{PM} COCKTAILS
12-1 ^{PM} Group Strength Training		5 ^{PM} MVC Board Meeting <i>Ballroom/Zoom*</i>	4-5:30 ^{PM} Men's Group	 Rollin' Root	5-7 ^{PM} Pub	6^{PM} DINNER
3-4:30 ^{PM} Bill Hartwell in Marin Valley <i>Ballroom</i>			5 ^{PM} Salmon Fest reservation deadline	6:30-7:30 ^{PM} Meditation <i>Fireside Room</i>		6 ^{PM} Dancing
			7-8 ^{PM} Swing Dancing			
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji	6 ^{AM} Trash	7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji	7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji	7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji	7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji	
10-11 ^{AM} Meditation	7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji	10:30-11:30 ^{AM} Craft & Chat	4 ^{PM} Book Club <i>Carol-Joy Harris</i>	11 ^{AM} -12 ^{PM} Rollin' Root	12 ^{PM} Mahjong	
12-1 ^{PM} Group Strength Training		4 ^{PM} Circle of Friends <i>Fireside Room</i>	5 ^{PM} MVC Workshop <i>Ballroom</i>	 Rollin' Root	5-7 ^{PM} Pub	6 ^{PM} Dancing
			7-8 ^{PM} Swing Dancing	6:30-7:30 ^{PM} Meditation		
27	28	29	30			
7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji	6 ^{AM} Trash	7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji	7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji			
10-11 ^{AM} Meditation	7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji	10:30-11:30 ^{AM} Craft & Chat	7-8 ^{PM} Swing Dancing			
12-1 ^{PM} Group Strength Training	4:30 ^{PM} Last Monday Lectures More Fun and Play with Matt Weinstein <i>Fireside Room/ Marty Gelman</i>	4:30-6:30 ^{PM} Difficult Conversations <i>Fireside Room</i>	5 ^{PM} MVC Voting <i>Ballroom</i>			

*Carol-Joy Harris **Michael Hagerty ***www.marinvalley.net