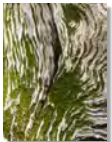


# T H E ECHO

**May 2025**



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<b>18-19</b>	<b>David Gray</b>	<i>Bird of the Month: Tricolored Heron</i>
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# Management Update

## Clubhouse

A team is digging behind the lower card room and billiard room to lower the grade and allow us to pump excess rainwater out, preventing water intrusion that has damaged the card room flooring. Now they are applying waterproofing tar on the back side of the stem wall to prevent further water intrusion.

## Men's Gym Changing Room

Management ordered new flooring and baseboards to replace the existing damaged flooring. Installation is now complete.

## Breezeway Lighting

Lighting has been upgraded with high-output LEDs for improved visibility during the Park Market.

## Saunas

Both saunas are being decommissioned due to age and improper use.

## Spa Heater

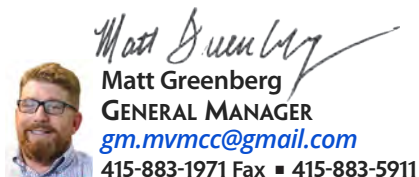
The spa heater has been replaced, and the spa is open to anyone who would enjoy 83 degrees of pleasure.

## Pest Control

GioCo Pest Control will implement a plan to eliminate termites in the lower card room.

## 25/26 Budget

The draft budget is complete and has been sent to the City of Novato and PAC for review.



## Pool & Spa

The pool and spa are now open for the summer season, 9 am until 9:30 pm. (Security lockup is from 9:30-10 pm.)

## Directory Update

**New**

**Donya Drummond**

18 Fallen Leaf Way

510-289-8220

[josefina.dandelion@gmail.com](mailto:josefina.dandelion@gmail.com)

## Echo Deadline to Submit Articles

Email articles by the 8<sup>th</sup> of the month for the next month's issue with the subject "Echo" to Anila Manning at [anilahere99@gmail.com](mailto:anilahere99@gmail.com).

## THE ECHO 2025

### MARIN VALLEY MOBILE COUNTRY CLUB

100 MARIN VALLEY DRIVE • NOVATO, CA 94949

415-883-5911 / 415-883-1971 FAX

[www.marinvalley.net](http://www.marinvalley.net)

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A MHB Group Region 8 Publication [www.mobilehomeboard.com](http://www.mobilehomeboard.com)

EDITOR **Anila Manning**

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GRAPHICS **Erma Wheatley**

PROOFREADERS **Mary Barbosa, John Feld, Carol-Joy Harris**  
**Laura Kradjan-Cronin, Tara Plocher**

DISTRIBUTION **Cecil Sherrod with Gunnel Bergstrom,**  
**KC Casey, Mark Crocker, Lucinda Daly, Brynda Foster, Anne**  
**Glasscock, Mike Holland, Julie Manson, Tom Nadolski, Ellen**  
**Jane Schulz, Pat Thurston, Richard Waibel, Janet Willett**

## ORGANIZATIONS AND COMMITTEES

### PAC BOARD

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VP/DIRECTOR PARK OPERATIONS **Jay Shelfer 415-250-0375**  
VP/DIRECTOR COMMUNICATIONS **Mary Currie 415-793-8420**  
SECRETARY **Carol-Joy Harris 415-883-2824**  
TREASURER **Stephen Plocher 415-302-9043**

AD HOC NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE **John Hansen, Jay Shelfer**

### STANDING COMMITTEES

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COMMUNICATIONS **Mary Currie, Chair;**

**Carol-Joy Harris, Charlotte Weiser**

**Stephen Plocher**

### FINANCE

#### FINANCE SUBCOMMITTEES

PRO FORMA (BUDGET MASTER-PLANNING) **David King, Chair;**  
**Stephen Plocher, Greg Smyth, Brad Witherspoon**

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE **Brad Witherspoon**

#### GRANTS AND LOW-INTEREST LOANS

**Serena Fisher, Michele Rodriguez**

EXTERNAL FINANCIAL RESOURCES **Janet Bogardus**

INTERNAL FINANCIAL RESOURCES **John Hansen,**

**Sue Meyer, Brad Witherspoon**

MVEST **Bill Davis, Chair; Pauline Clucas, John Feld,**

**David Gray, John Hansen, Pam Hyer,**

**Stephen Plocher, Erma Wheatley, Brad Witherspoon**

ROD **Serena Fisher, Alan Gump, John Hansen,**

**(Mary Currie/Jay Shelfer)**

### HOL BOARD

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AT LARGE **Michale Dancer 415-519-3395**

AT LARGE **Charlotte Kells 617-306-0265**

### STANDING COMMITTEE

PARK MARKET **Jill Boland, Chair;**

**Ginger Christie, Michale Dancer, John Feld, Jim Gronvold,**

**John Hansen, Susan Hoff, Meg Jordan, Anne Lakota, Joan**

**Leopold, Gary McClendon, Deb McNeil, Sue Meyer, Steve**

**and Tara Plocher, Song, Michael Theircof, Brad Witherspoon**

### MAR VAL BOARD

PRESIDENT **Carolyn Corry 415-370-6403**

1<sup>ST</sup> VP, BAR MANAGER **Anne Glasscock 415-601-3047**

2<sup>ND</sup> VP/RESERVATIONS **Susan Hoff 707-365-9426**

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DIRECTOR, LOGISTICS **Larry Cohen 415-883-7786**

CHAIR, LIBRARY **Sandee Duncan 415-883-3034**

CHAIR, PUB **Pat Thurston 415-884-0740**

BOARD CONSULTANT **Kathleen Dargie 415-884-2969**

# Letter to Residents

## A Message from Your PAC and MVC Boards

by **JOHN HANSEN**

Welcome to May, a month synonymous with spring, growth, and renewal! Here are a few interesting (and not all fun) facts about May: It was named after Maia, the Greek goddess of fertility and growth. On May 1 (May Day), it is customary to wear a rose in your hair. May is also one of the deadliest months for tornadoes. And, of course, we can't forget Mother's Day, which falls on Sunday, May 11, this year. Enjoy your May!

### **PAC Board Update – Due Diligence Wrapping Up**

By the time this edition of the *Echo* is published, we will have completed the due diligence for our ENA–Financing Proposal (see more on this below), which is due to the City of Novato by June 30, 2025. In March, the clubhouse and associated systems and facilities, our roads, and more were inspected. In April, we added additional inspections, including sewer line and water system inspections, and a peer review of slope stability. Based on these inspections, a final Property Condition Assessment Report will be prepared by Partner Engineering and Science (Partner), the engineering firm doing the due diligence work. The end result is to have projections of our capital improvements costs, based on current boots-on-the-ground inspections.

We also look forward to receiving the final Phase 1 Environmental Analysis prepared by Partner. This analysis is critical for identifying potential environmental contamination and focuses on identifying red flags that may warrant further investigation. This phase relies on existing records, observations, and interviews, as opposed to physical sampling.

### **PAC Board Update – FY 2025/2026 Budget**

The Helsing Group, our Park management company, under the leadership of General Manager Matt Greenberg, has developed a draft budget for fiscal year 2025/2026. The draft budget was submitted to the City of Novato (City) by the April 28 deadline. Both the PAC Board and residents will have the opportunity to review it before the City adopts it, typically in late June. Updates will be shared via emailed Resident Updates.

### **PAC Board Update: ENA–Required Financing Plan**

The next step toward negotiating with the City is submitting the ENA (Exclusive Negotiating Agreement)–required Financing Proposal. ENA Section 2.2 specifies:

*On or before June 30, 2025, the PAC shall provide the City with a detailed financial analysis for the acquisition and operation of the Property in a form and with content acceptable to the City (the "Financing Proposal"). The Financing Proposal shall establish, at a minimum, how the PAC will pay for the costs of the acquisition of the Property and the repayment of certain transaction costs associated with the sale.*

The Property Condition Assessment Report noted above will provide the necessary ten-year capital improvement projections to help complete the required financial analysis.

PAC Finance Committee members **David King, Steve Plocher, Greg Smyth, and Brad Witherspoon** are burning the midnight oil working toward an early submission.

### **MVC Board Update**

Please see the article from the MVC Board Policy Committee (p. 4) for an update on its ongoing activities in collaboration with the MVC Board.

### **Emailed Resident Updates – Please Sign Up**

To receive emailed Resident Updates, please send your email address to PAC Board Secretary **Carol-Joy Harris** at [caroljoyharris@comcast.net](mailto:caroljoyharris@comcast.net).

### **Opt In to Receive Park Robocalls**

To receive robocalls from Park Manager Matt Greenberg, you must OPT-IN. These calls provide emergency information and critical announcements. To opt in, contact Matt at 415-883-5911 or [gm.mvmcc@gmail.com](mailto:gm.mvmcc@gmail.com).



**John Hansen**  
PAC PRESIDENT

[johnhansen.emt@gmail.com](mailto:johnhansen.emt@gmail.com) • 415-847-7155

# PAC Board Election

by **JOHN FELD**

**T**he seats held by **Steve Plocher** and **Mary Currie** are up for election, and both are running for reelection.

Nominations will be open from **May 16 to May 23**. To submit nominations, please contact either:

**Carol-Joy Harris** at 415-883-2824 or [caroljoyharris@comcast.net](mailto:caroljoyharris@comcast.net)

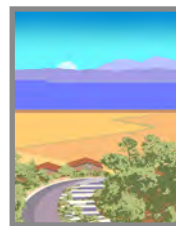
**John Feld** at 510-495-4138 or [johnmfeld@gmail.com](mailto:johnmfeld@gmail.com)

Nominees must be full-time residents as of May 2, 2025, and must be willing to serve a two-year term.

If more than two nominees are received, there will be a mail-in ballot.

If a contested election occurs:

- Ballots will be sent out on May 26.
- A "Meet the Candidates" meeting will be held on Saturday, May 31 from 11 am to noon in the Fireside Room.
- Ballots will be accepted from May 31 at 9 am until June 6 at 5 pm in the clubhouse lobby.
- Votes will be counted by the election committee at 6 pm on Friday, June 6.
- The Annual PAC meeting will take place on Saturday, June 7 at 11 am, when the new board members will be announced. ■



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

by **ALAN GUMP, MVC POLICY COMMITTEE**  
with **MARY CURRIE, MVC BOARD**

**T**he following is an update on the work being done by the two committees. The Resident Ownership Discovery (ROD) committee has focused on building our connections with the California Center for Cooperative Development (CCCD) and ROC USA, and on developing the structure for us to become resident-owned. This includes helping create the Marin Valley Cooperative (MVC), as well as its interim Board of Directors and interim Bylaws.

Currently, the ROD Committee is not working on any matters related to becoming resident-owned, as the MVC Policy Committee has taken the lead in developing MVC's permanent Bylaws and Rules & Regulations, as well as organizing the workshop and vote on two documents needed to move forward. It's a bit confusing, but here's the short version: The ROD Committee worked closely with the PAC Board to establish MVC as the entity that will take title once a purchase agreement is reached with the City of Novato. Now, the focus

has shifted to the MVC Policy Committee, which will work under the guidance of the MVC Board to develop the core policies needed for MVC to operate smoothly.

### **MVC Policy Committee**

#### **Update on Rules & Regulations and Permanent Bylaws**

The MVC Policy Committee continues to collaborate with our CCCD representative, Randy Keller, on drafting the MVC Rules & Regulations. This draft is based on the current PAC Rules & Regulations, which, though developed through community input eight to ten years ago, were never officially approved by the City. So the PAC Board and our community have been operating under outdated Rules & Regulations.

The Policy Committee is razor-focused on modernizing this set of "never-approved-by-the-City draft Rules & Regulations" to ensure they comply with the latest changes in the California Mobilehome Residency Laws and address the specific needs of MVC.



Once this update is completed, the following steps are planned to approve the Rules & Regulations:

1. The MVC Policy Committee will convene a small group of MVC members to review and provide feedback.
2. Revisions will be made based on the input received.
3. The updated Rules & Regulations will be sent to the MVC Board and our attorney for review and approval.
4. Further revisions will be made based on new input received.
5. The Policy Committee will host a workshop to review the Rules & Regulations.
6. At a regularly scheduled meeting, the MVC Board will vote to approve the final Rules & Regulations.
7. An MVC member meeting will be held to vote on ratifying the Rules & Regulations, which will become effective once we own the Park.

The same process will be followed for the MVC's permanent Bylaws. We hope to complete work on the Rules & Regulations and permanent Bylaws by the end of June.

We want to remind everyone that the PAC Rules & Regulations and the PAC Bylaws will remain in effect until we take possession of the Park. After that, Marin Valley Cooperative policies will be followed.

### **Update on Two MVC Documents**

#### **(1) Technical Assistance Agreement with CCCD**

#### **(2) Empowerment Resolution**

Since August 2023, the PAC Board has been working with CCCD under an informal agreement. Now that MVC has been

established and is progressing well under CCCD's guidance, it is time to formalize our financial arrangement with CCCD with what is called a Technical Assistance Agreement. This agreement, and the need for it, was discussed at the April workshop hosted by the Policy Committee.

Alongside the CCCD Technical Assistance Agreement, a second document called the Empowerment Resolution was included for the April workshop. The Empowerment Resolution outlines actions that may or may not need to be taken by the MVC Board on behalf of the membership. Its purpose is to allow MVC members to vote to approve (or not) specific actions by the MVC Board as they arise.

Approval by the MVC Board and a majority vote of a quorum of the MVC membership are required to ratify these documents. The Empowerment Resolution, the Technical Assistance Agreement, and the results of the member vote are available on the Marin Valley website under the "Resident Ownership" icon on the homepage.

We remind everyone that our workshops are open to ALL community members. We encourage nonmembers to attend to learn more about the process of becoming a resident-owned community. Nonmembers can join MVC at any time by submitting an application and the \$25 joining fee as a deposit toward full membership. Forms and envelopes are available by the counter in the front office of the clubhouse. ■

## CALL to ACTION –

### **We Want Your Story!**

In preparation for the Financing Proposal (see John Hansen's message) due to the City of Novato by June 30, 2025, we would like to include a section that features YOUR story. We want to showcase emails or letters from residents that reflect who we are, why we live here, why we matter, and the value of the Park for each of us.

We encourage as many of you as possible to write a brief testimonial about why you moved to MVMCC.

#### **Some examples might include:**

- MVMCC was the only affordable place that allows me to be near my kids and grandkids.
- I lived in Marin for years and wanted to stay near my friends, and MVMCC was my only affordable option to avoid having to move away.
- My kids helped me buy my place here at MVMCC so I wouldn't have to move hundreds of miles away when I retired.

There are many possible reasons. What's yours?

Please email your story to Mary Currie at [ggbmedia@yahoo.com](mailto:ggbmedia@yahoo.com) no later than **May 15**. ■



# Smoke Alarms and Car Brakes!

by **BILL DAVIS**, MVEST Chair

**W**hat's more important for your safety and security: locking your front door or having your smoke alarms working properly? If you ask a cop, they'd probably say locking the door is more important. But if you ask a firefighter, they'd likely tell you that having your smoke alarms in working order is paramount. I agree with the firefighter — in our senior community, it's more crucial to have functional smoke alarms than to worry about locking your front door.

In the past, the Novato Fire District would visit each home in Marin Valley to check smoke alarms and replace batteries if they were close to a year old. But that practice changed for several reasons. Today's smoke alarms come with ten-year batteries, unlike the older models that had one-year batteries. Those older alarms also had a low-voltage sensor that would often go off between 2 and 5 am. It always seemed like they were programmed to go off at that time! It was an awful nuisance, usually fixed by replacing the battery — if you happened to have the right one on hand. Otherwise, the only way to get the darn thing to stop so you could get some sleep was by smashing it with a hammer.

Today's smoke alarms also include carbon monoxide detectors, which are life-saving devices. They are so loud that even your neighbors will hear them if you're not home.

Are your smoke alarms and CO detectors working? Are they properly placed in your home? If you're on a tight budget and can't afford proper smoke alarms, there is help available. You can call the Novato Fire District, and they may be able to point you in the right direction. The American Red Cross can also help by placing you on a

schedule for assistance. However, as a homeowner, it's your responsibility to perform regular maintenance. Would you ever consider driving a car without brakes? Of course not. If brakes are so important for your car, shouldn't your smoke alarms be just as important for your home?

A few years ago, I worked with a local Rotary club, the Novato Fire District, and the American Red Cross installing smoke alarms in another mobile home

community. It was a lot of work, and despite multiple site visits, knocking on doors, and phone calls, about ten percent of the homes didn't get new alarms because the residents were never available. Why? I will never figure it out. In one situation, despite multiple attempts by myself and others to set up an appointment for the installation,

we were repeatedly stood up. We tried and tried, but there's a limit to everything. They never got their smoke alarms checked or new ones installed. Sadly, six months later, that home burned to the ground. The Novato Fire District arrived to find the unit engulfed in flames, and they could only save the surrounding structures. It was a heartbreaking tragedy for the homeowner, community, the city, and for me personally.

In conclusion, please check that your smoke alarms are properly placed and functioning. Test them by pressing the test button. You will sleep better knowing they're working. And if you're really concerned, consider leaving your front door unlocked. It will make it easier for firefighters to get in if needed.

*American Red Cross:* 415-721-2365

*Novato Fire District:* 415-878-2690. ■



# MAR VAL

## Message from MarVal

Dear Friends,

Two exciting Mar Val events will take place this month — **Dos de Mayo** (hope you've already reserved your spot), with Chef Tim Hart's Mexican fiesta, margaritas, and the fun of celebrating with your neighbors; and the annual **Memorial Day BBQ**, a time to honor our fallen military heroes and express appreciation for those who are still with us. We will have our usual assortment of burgers and dogs.

Normally, Memorial Day marks the start of Mar Val outdoor events on the deck and patio, but going forward, **all events will be held in the ballroom**. We have all loved the view from the deck and the fresh air; however, this decision has been made after careful consideration of the following reasons:

1. **Safety** We have witnessed too many "near misses," with folks tripping or stumbling on uneven surfaces when going from the deck to the grass or cement, folks having difficulty when using a walker or cane, or having trouble sliding a chair in/out.
2. **Wind and umbrellas** Again, some near misses. At one event, a disaster was narrowly averted when an umbrella blew down twice; fortunately, the resident nearly smacked in the face was most alert and was able to block it. For the remainder of the event, two men each planted a foot on the umbrella base to secure it, then took turns holding the pole steady while trying to eat their meal.
3. **Bugs and temperature** Outdoor events are harder on our volunteers who are cooking and serving. Certain foods need to remain chilled, always a concern during the warmer days, and everything must be moved back and forth from the kitchen. Our volunteer staff also has to navigate the uneven walking surfaces.
4. **Distance** The deck is far from the check-in, restrooms, and bar, adding to the challenges.

This is not a decision that Mar Val has taken lightly, but over the years it has been interesting to hear residents' comments as they arrive at check-in for an outside event:

*Oh, it's going to be so cold — glad I brought a coat and hat; Oh dear — it's so hot/windy/humid outside . . .* and the most-heard comment of all, when weather forces a change in venue: *Thank heavens we are going to be inside.*

You are still welcome to walk around outside during cocktail hour to enjoy the view and then head inside for dinner. We have been incredibly lucky to have avoided any injuries so far, and we daren't tempt the gods further.

Hope to see you soon at Pub, **Dos de Mayo**, and **Memorial Day**!



*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.*

# Stay Tuned for JUNE



## Mar Val Jazz Brunch

Music by Lee Waterman Trio

**Saturday, June 14**

11 am Cocktails 12 pm Brunch

### Menu

Spinach Broccoli Quiche

*or*

Cheddar Artichoke Quiche

*Entrées are first come, first served*

*No need to order in advance*

Cherrie's Cinnamon Roll Casserole

Smoked Salmon and Bagels with All the Fixings

Fresh Fruit Cup and Danish Pastries

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

*Reservation deadline*

**Wednesday, June 11, 5 pm**

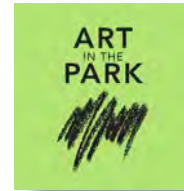
*(or when 120 reservations have been received).*

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

### HOL COMMUNITY PRESENTATIONS

## Your Time to Shine!

by **SUZIE LAHR**



**Sunday, June 15**

**J**une is fast approaching, and it's been quite a while since we have embellished the Marin Valley Gallery with a full resident-artist exhibit. What a delight it will be to fill the gallery lobby and Fireside Room with all of your latest creations.

Spring is the time for new beginnings and for Open Studios, so I hope you art lovers will enjoy traveling around Marin to see all the wonderful artists who reside in this beautiful county. We are so fortunate to have the abundance of artists that we have in our very own Park that we gratefully call home.

Resident artists will receive more details in the June *Echo* prior to the new exhibit installation on Sunday, June 15. In the meantime, don't hesitate to email me at [suzielahr@aol.com](mailto:suzielahr@aol.com) if you have any questions. For new artists who have moved into the Park, please join us in our gallery!

Enjoy these beautiful spring days — they are definitely an inspiration for new creations. ■

# HOL *Home Owners League Message*

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Greetings,

## **HOL Board**

We are delighted to welcome **Charlotte Kells** to the HOL Board. After just one meeting, we are already appreciative of her insight and suggestions and look forward to working together. Recently, some board members have had to step down from the board, and we already miss their enthusiasm and myriad contributions. We sincerely thank all past members and wish them the very best.

## **Earth Day Cleanup**

A big thank you to **Peggy Hill** and the volunteers for the annual cleanup of lower Marin Valley Drive from Bolling Drive to the lower turning circle, with the help of Gretchen Schubeck, Sustainability Coordinator from the City of Novato.

## **Gym**

Recently, **Marty Gelman**, who organizes the Last Monday Lectures, introduced Nan Watanabe, who leads the Sunday noon Group Strength Training class in the Bamboo Room. Nan's sessions are great for improving our strength, balance, and fall prevention. The class is terrific and might have started people exercising more; some may like to take it even further by working out in the gym. **Janie Klimes Crocker** is organizing gym users to ensure the space remains inviting, clean, and easy to use, and to assist anyone who is unsure about using the equipment. Janie is also gathering feedback on unused equipment and addressing any repair needs.

Please wipe down the machines when you are finished using them, keep the place tidy in general, and most importantly, return equipment to its place of storage. It would be wonderful if more residents used this wonderful facility. It's a great time to start a fitness routine, and Janie or others are available to assist you in your first steps to becoming stronger and healthier at the gym.

## **Pride Day**



It's time to start planning for the 2025 Pride Day celebration! Last year's inaugural event was a huge success, with a community "march" down a portion of Marin Valley Drive and culminating in a well-attended social gathering in the ballroom.

It would be wonderful if we could match that success this year. We are looking for a couple of volunteers to help make it happen again this year with as much fun and joy. We need to:

- Select a date and time
- Arrange a potluck or organize people to make some delicious treats
- Coordinate clubhouse setup and cleanup
- Purchase drinks
- Create information for a flyer
- Distribute flags (stored in the HOL shed)
- Have a good time.

HOL will cover all costs. Would you like to participate? No qualifications are required — just enthusiasm and a willingness to help make the Second Annual Pride Parade a reality.

## **Missing Monitor**

If you by chance removed the computer monitor from behind the stage curtain in the ballroom, please return it. We use it for PAC and MVC meetings, and it was placed there for repairs.

## **Thank You, Nancy Warren**

HOL would like to express our gratitude to **Nancy Warren** for donating a refrigerator for Park Market. It saves us from having to use the taller refrigerator in the kitchen, which is primarily reserved for Mar Val.

## **Medical Equipment**

We're grateful to Matt Greenberg for installing a door to the medical equipment storage area next to the gym. Please be mindful about keeping it organized when donating or returning items. This resource is available to us all, and can save us money when we are in need of medical equipment. Once equipment is donated, it becomes the community's property. So, please don't leave it in your home or give it away when you have finished using it. Bring it back so that someone else can have the benefit of using it, just as you did.

Have a lovely summer.

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

# Just-1-Hour

## *Strengthening Our Community Through Neighborly Support*

by **JOHN FELD**

**S**mall acts of help can make a big difference. Recently, I heard about someone who could not reach a ceiling light bulb to replace it. Their tallest ladder was not tall enough, so they hired someone and ended up receiving a bill for \$100 for the ten minutes of work. Another person was unable to reach up and fix a shower curtain rod due to limited mobility and had to settle for taking baths instead of showering and risking spraying water on the floor. Many Marin Valley residents spend money unnecessarily on small tasks or simply do not get them done. These sorts of situations needn't occur in a community like ours with assistance programs in place.

For years, Just-1-Hour has been a cornerstone of support for local residents, offering short-term help to those recovering from illness, facing mobility challenges, or needing occasional assistance with everyday tasks such as meal prep, writing, light housework, shopping, minor home repairs, and transportation. This program has the potential to build a stronger, more caring community for everyone.

To better serve our neighbors, HOL is revitalizing Just-1-Hour and seeking volunteers to share their time and talents. Lately, the service has been less utilized than previously, and we would like to change that.

In my term as President of HOL, **Marlene Montalvo** and **Lisa Jackler** have done an incredible job leading this effort. Now we are looking for a new leader to guide Just-1-Hour's future.



### **Lead the Way: Volunteer as Our New Just-1-Hour Leader**

We are looking for an organizer to connect residents in need with available volunteers, managing requests mainly through calls, texts, and emails. The time commitment is manageable, typically involving just a few requests per month. No heavy lifting required! We hope to see a rise in requests for services as Just-1-Hour revives and thrives.

### **New Volunteers Needed**

If you are interested, please reach out and we can discuss it further. Send me an email with your skills or interests, and I will add you to our volunteer database. Once we have a new leader for Just-1-Hour, they will be able to match your skills with the needs of our neighbors. Let's reenergize this service and help more folks in our wonderful community.

### **Need a Helping Hand? Become a Just-1-Hour Recipient**

We also want to connect with residents who could benefit from occasional help. If you need assistance with tasks that are no longer manageable on your own — from running errands to small home repairs to visiting a neighbor — please contact us. While larger tasks

might be handled by consulting the Contractor's Database, we are here to help with smaller interventions that can make a big difference in your quality of life, such as dog walking or fixing a shower rod.

Be creative; make a wish list. We are not going to be able to install a new shower in your bathroom, but there are many things we can do for each other to make life a little easier and more pleasant.

Here are some tasks we've helped with in the past:

<b>Baking</b>	<b>Hauling</b>
<b>Bible/spiritual reading</b>	<b>Ironing</b>
<b>Changing smoke detector batteries</b>	<b>Laundry</b>
<b>Changing light bulbs</b>	<b>Letter writing</b>
<b>Computer repair and education</b>	<b>Light yard work</b>
<b>Conversation</b>	<b>Meditation</b>
<b>Cooking</b>	<b>Organizing</b>
<b>Dog walking</b>	<b>Pet care</b>
<b>Emotional support</b>	<b>Phone education</b>
<b>Errands</b>	<b>Plant care</b>
<b>Gardening</b>	<b>Reading</b>
<b>Handyman services</b>	<b>Rides</b>
	<b>Sewing</b>
	<b>Shopping</b>
	<b>Visiting</b>
	<b>Weeding</b> ■



# A Starter Kit for Aging!

by **CECE O'CONNOR** and **GAIL PATTERSON**

**Saturday, May 3 • 2-4 pm • Bamboo Room**

**Y**ou are invited to a free workshop by Cece O'Connor, owner of Cece Chats and hosted by Gail Patterson. Cece Chats presents: A Starter Kit for Aging.

*Ever thought: "I don't want to get old like that?"*

*Maybe you don't want to think about it at all.*

*Maybe you feel somewhat prepared, but you don't know what you don't know.*

*Maybe you are facing an unexpected situation.*

*Maybe you worry about the future but don't know where to start.*

Let's change the conversation to **"This is what I want."**

It starts exactly where you are with this stage of your life.

Cece blends her personal experience and her nursing background with a healthy helping of humor to spark conversations, provide information, and generate discussion.

RSVP: Gail Patterson, 415-246-6519, [sanrafaelgail@yahoo.com](mailto:sanrafaelgail@yahoo.com)



## Mother's Day Craft Market

**Saturday, May 10 • 1-4 pm**

# Active Meditation Sampler

by **INGA GRACE**

**F**or many of us, it is a lot easier to relax and quiet our minds if we begin with movement, breathing, and releasing tension and pent-up emotions. What better time than NOW to explore this sampler series of supportive techniques to help you stay calm, grounded, and peaceful during these turbulent times!

These meditations can be practiced with lots of energy or modified to suit your personal level, allowing you to move slowly or sit when needed.

Each meditation session listed below will be accompanied by music and last about 30 minutes for the starter series. Traditionally, they run for an hour.

If there is enough interest, we will continue with more sessions; if not, this will be a one-time offering. If you are interested but unable to attend, please let me know at [ingagrace@hotmail.com](mailto:ingagrace@hotmail.com) or text with questions at 415-533-9088.

### 3 Sessions in May • Bamboo Room

#### Monday, May 5 • 9 am • Dynamic Meditation

This is a technique involving moving the body while meditating, progressing through five stages — deep breathing, cathartic release, movement, stillness, and gentle dance — to release tension and held emotions. It is an energizing morning meditation.

#### Wednesday, May 14 • 6 pm • Kundalini Meditation

Accompanied by music, this meditation unfolds in four stages — shaking, dancing, standing or sitting in stillness, and relaxing. Ideal for the afternoon.

#### Wednesday, May 21 • 6 pm • Nataraj Meditation

The energy of dance. This is dance as a total meditation in three stages — dance, relaxation, and a gentle return to dance — where all inner division disappears and a subtle, relaxed awareness remains. ■

# Musical Evening with Frank, Maggie, and Friends!

**Friday, May 9 • Fireside Room • 7 pm**



PHOTOGRAPH BY FRANCINA LECIERCQ

by **MAGGIE SIEGFRIED**

**F**rank and I will host a musical evening after Pub on Friday, May 9 in the Fireside Room. We are inviting our friends and neighbors to come listen and participate ... expect some special guests as well! Bring your songs, poems, short stories, jokes, and love. ■

# PETER ATTIA

MD



by **JANIE KLIMES CROCKER**

**Monday, May 12 • Fireside Room • 5:30–7 pm**

Come join me on Monday, May 12 at 5:30–7 pm in the Fireside Room to listen to a 40-minute podcast titled “Aging Well: Longevity Strategies for Seniors” by longevity scientist and MD Peter Attia. It takes place at a senior community where Peter’s daughter volunteered. He covers critical topics like the profound impact of exercise — particularly strength training — for maintaining mobility, preventing falls, and preserving independence later in life. He also discusses the importance of nutrition, emphasizing adequate protein intake, strategies for sleep optimization, and preservation of brain health. He underscores the importance of emotional wellness, purpose, and social connections in healthy aging and provides advice on staving off chronic

(CONTINUED on p. 15)



## The Gut–Blood Sugar Connection

*Why Digestion and Blood Sugar Matter More than We Think for Healthy Aging*

by **JOEY ANDERSON** and **MARTY GELMAN**

**Tuesday, May 27 • Fireside Room • 4:30 pm**

**W**hat do joint pain, poor sleep, low energy, weight gain, brain fog, reflux, and constipation all have in common? All of these can often be traced back to your gut and blood sugar.

Join us for an interactive and practical talk on how digestion and blood sugar balance affect nearly every system in your body — from mood and metabolism to osteoporosis, inflammation, and energy levels.

We’ll discuss how common medications (like antacids and NSAIDs) can affect digestion,

the role of inadequate protein in muscle loss and blood sugar imbalances, and what you can do to improve your health.

Whether you have type 2 diabetes, prediabetes (or just find yourself on the blood sugar roller coaster) or if you struggle with digestive issues like gas, bloating, or reflux, this talk will give you actionable tips to support your gut, balance your blood sugar, and feel more at home in your body.

Bring your questions and an open mind, and get ready to feel empowered to take better care of your body. ■



**Joey Anderson, FNTTP, CGP, RWP**

Joey Anderson is a GAPS-certified Functional Nutritional Therapy and Restorative Wellness Practitioner and a mom. She believes in a whole-foods, properly prepared diet that tastes delicious. She helps clients throughout the Bay Area and beyond who are ready to stop guessing, cut through the noise, and finally understand what works for THEIR body. Through personalized support and practical strategies that fit into day-to-day life, she addresses the root causes of weight struggles, digestive issues, and hormone challenges. Together with her clients, she helps create sustainable habits for lasting energy, better sleep, and confidence in one’s body without the endless struggle.

[www.nutrientdenselife.com/](http://www.nutrientdenselife.com/)

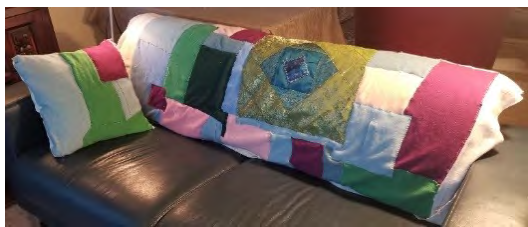
(CONTINUED from p. 14)

disease. This is not a scientific deep dive, but rather an easy-to-understand overview of main topics contributing to healthspan and thoughtful insights for all of us. At the end, he answers residents' questions. I will also take questions and answer to the best of my ability.

I have been interested in longevity and healthspan since 2019, with the publication of several books by well-known scientists, including Peter's book *Outlive*. Understanding the why's and how's of human aging has helped me stay motivated on my own aging journey.

I am sure you will find this podcast enjoyable and inspiring, and perhaps it will motivate you toward a healthier life. ■

## Cashmere Comfort Quilt



by **ELIZABETH LEV**

**P**robably most of us are pretty conscientious about recycling, but somewhere in the past year, I got hooked on the British show *Money for Nothing*. They take upcycling to a whole new level — nothing I am really aspiring to do, but fun nevertheless.

So when a delightful friend/neighbor gave me a stack of moth-eaten cashmere sweaters, I proceeded to cut them up into various-sized squares and make the pillow and quilt shown here. They're sewn onto a well-worn blanket from my childhood. (My name tag is on one edge because I took it with me to sleepover camp at age 10.)

Now I look forward to taking my "new" quilt with me on my next Amtrak trip!

I wonder if you've done something similar and would like to share it in the next *Echo*. ■

## Learn from My Mistakes

by **ANILA MANNING**

**W**hen we moved into our home in 2009, we reorganized the kitchen and came up with an extra cabinet. It was faced with Formica, so I figured it would be safe to put it under the carport where it wouldn't get rained on. It held our leftover paint, garden tools, WD-40, etc., until last month, when I opened the door and, slowly, the entire top shelf sagged off its pegs, and cans cascaded down and out.



What I didn't realize was that the Formica was laminated to particle board, which soaks up moisture from the air and swells ... and swells ... and swells. Then mold grows, and the Formica keeps on looking clean, while behind it is a spongy mess.

The best part? This was a few days before the MVMCC Dump Run, and my muscular neighbors **Ed Collins**, **Paul Weinberger**, and **Charles Watson** took the sadly sagging cabinet away!



Two lessons:

1. If you have cupboards in your carport, no matter how well organized, take a look at the backs and make sure they are weatherproof.
2. If your paint is over three years old, it's time to throw it away. Here's where: the well-organized Novato Sanitary District, 7976 Redwood Blvd., first and third Sundays (8:30 am–1:30 pm) and Mondays (8:30 am–12 noon). Visit their website to schedule an appointment. <https://novatosan.com/services/household-hazardous-waste-program/> They make it fast and easy. ■



# Mama Gaia's Abstract Art

by **LORNA SASS**

I've been fascinated by photography since my early twenties. Back in the days when we loaded Kodak film into cameras, I took a course to learn how to develop my own photographs, and as images popped up on the paper submerged in chemical bins, I felt like I was witnessing magic.

Over the decades, as I took photos to accompany my food-and-travel articles, I carried a bulky, bright orange camera bag laden with equipment over my shoulder, often feeling lopsided from the weight. I now feel a frequent burst of gratitude for the light and brilliant gift of iPhone photography.

When I started blogging around 20 years ago, at times I found myself using photos rather than words to share what I was seeing. Little by little, I developed a deeper understanding of the expression,



*A picture is worth a thousand words.*

And it came as a relief to me that I didn't have to explain everything; I could leave it to

the wisdom of the viewer to interpret and appreciate the beauty and mystery I longed to share.

What I love most about having a camera within easy reach is that it reminds me to always be on the lookout for a good photograph. As a result, I've become

a much keener observer of my surroundings — a full-time detective seeking out wonder and beauty, a mystic recognizing the spiral patterns and sacred geometry in tree bark and windblown sand, and being able to document and share the sense of awe that the natural world gifts us so freely.

Here are some recent examples of what I've come to think of as Mama Gaia's abstract art.

## Tips on Taking Artistic Photos

*Note: I use an iPhone 11. You may need to adjust the following suggestions if you have a different model.*

### Cropping while shooting

Think of cropping like a picture frame around your subject. Focus your smartphone camera on the subject and move it around until it's centered. Then cast your eyes around the periphery and move the camera closer or further to exclude what isn't relevant. Alternatively, use your fingers to enlarge or reduce the main subject, or change your position to frame the subject more attractively and remove distractions.

### Tap to focus

Once you have located your subject, tap the camera screen at that spot to bring light and focus to that specific area.

### Cropping while editing

If the frame isn't just right, use the editing function on





your phone to crop after you have taken the photo. This is a simple process that you can google for a tutorial. Editing in this way will enlarge the main subject and minimize distractions.

### **Fiddle with the subject**

I vacillate about the propriety of moving things around when I'm taking a photo in the natural world. Sometimes I get the message to leave it as nature created it; this would be a journalistic or documentary approach. Other times, I remove a weed or twig that distracts from the subject; this would be an artistic approach. Occasionally I'll take one journalistic and one artistic shot and then decide afterward which one comes closest to conveying what I saw.

### **Lighting**

I usually prefer to use natural light. While I once avoided shadows by moving around or cropping them out, lately I've begun to include shadows as part of the content and design, and I sense that they add depth and fascination. I also love the idea of "me and my shadow" having a presence in the photo.

### **Turn off "Live Photo"**

A Live Photo captures what happens just before and after you take a photo, including the audio. It's on by default in Photo mode. To avoid the slight movement when viewing a Live Photo on the phone, touch the double-circle icon in the upper-right corner to turn it off for each photo, or turn it off permanently in settings.

### **Walk slowly and look closely**

Take solitary walks in the woods or at the ocean. Think of your photo outing as a visual meditation retreat, and hold the intention of being in gratitude and welcoming surprise. Ask the rocks and trees to share their secret language with you. Get feral and stretch your imagination about what is beautiful.

I promise you will be amply rewarded! And don't forget to offer thanks and blessings to Mama Gaia for all of the majesty, magic, and mystery that she gifts us so freely! ■





# Tricolored Heron

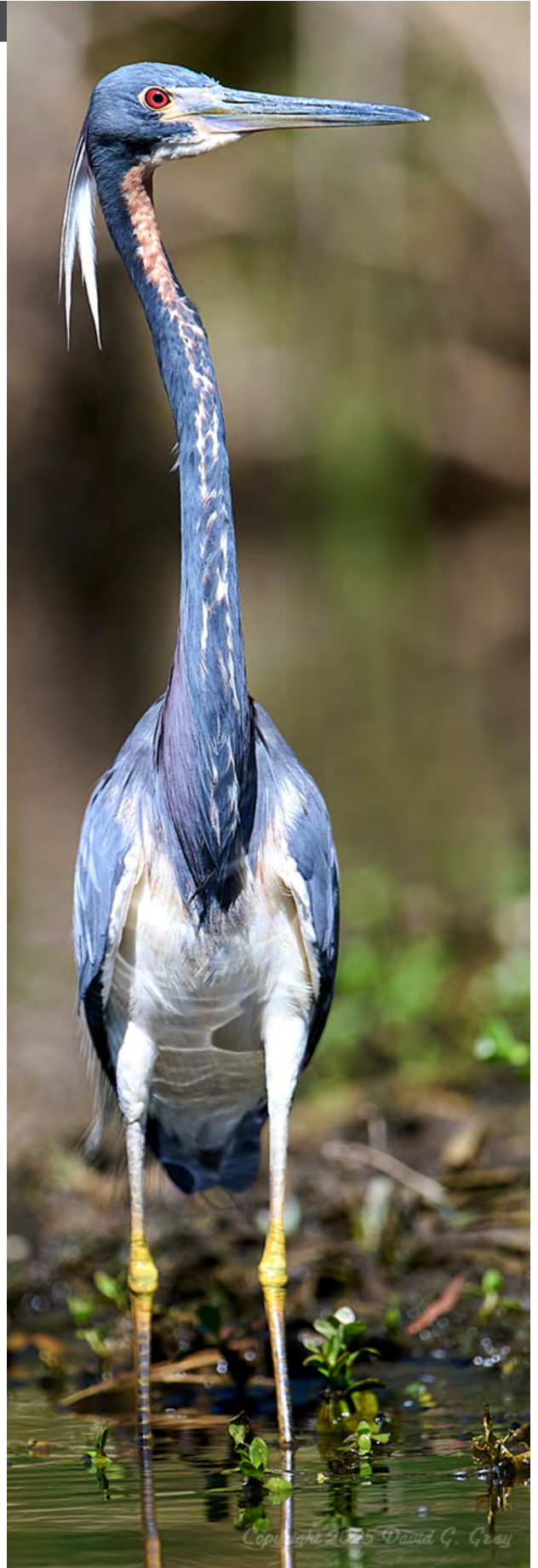
Text and Photography by

**DAVID GRAY**

**I**t's spring! And it's breeding season for many species, especially birds. Many birds are observed changing their plumage and even eye color during this time, and the tricolored heron (*Egretta tricolor*) changes both.

But first, a quick introduction. The tricolored heron is a small heron, weighing about 15 ounces as an adult, about one-ninth the weight of a great blue heron. It has the typical long legs of a wading bird, with a long, sinewy, narrow neck that comprises about half of its overall height. Its feathers are a slate blue, with longer plumes having a purple tint. Its belly is white, which distinguishes it most easily from the little blue heron. It has a lighter streak of feathers down the front of its throat, turning a rust orange near its head. During breeding season, it sports some white crown feathers, and its typically orange eyes turn red.

*Tricolored heron standing*





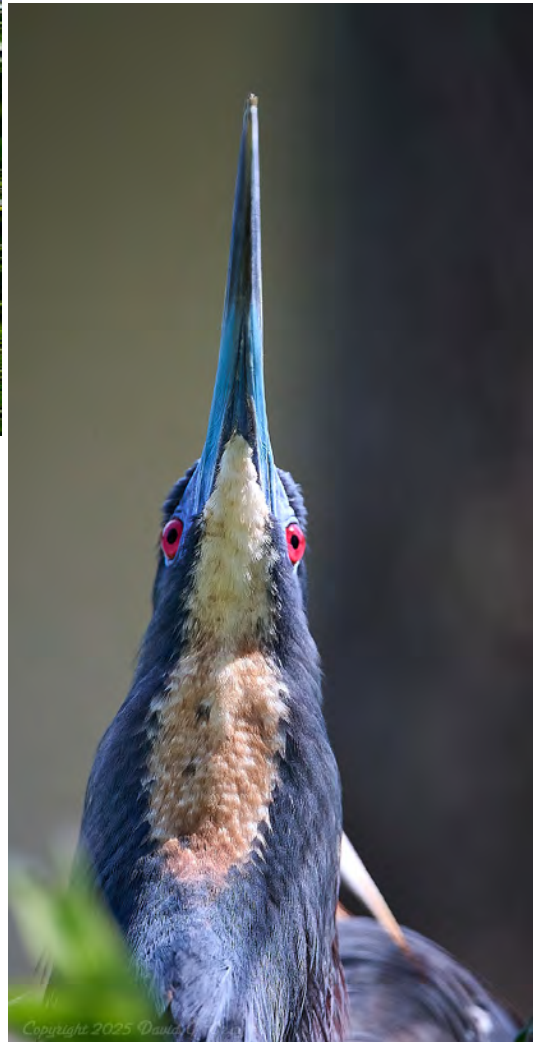
*Great egret mating dance*

Though not local, I photographed these beautiful birds while in Kissimmee and Everglades City, Florida, where they engage in a mating dance similar to our local great egrets — minus the brilliant plumage display of the great egrets. Both species go from compressing their necks into a tight S-shape and pointing their beaks skyward, to extending their necks completely straight up.

Their habitat is coastal, including the Baja Peninsula, the Mexican east coast, and the coast of the southeastern United States along the Gulf of Mexico.

It's been a really nice green season this year ... here's hoping the gold season will be uneventful! ■

*Tricolored heron mating dance face-on*





# MAY 2025

SEE [WWW.MARINVALLEY.NET](http://WWW.MARINVALLEY.NET) FOR UPDATES AND LINKS

				THURSDAY 1	FRIDAY 2	SATURDAY 3
				7:30-9AM Taiji Deck/ David MacLam	7:30-9AM Taiji Deck/David MacLam	2-4PM A Starter Kit for Aging with Cece O'Connor Bamboo Room/ Gail Patterson
				11AM-12PM Rollin' Root	10-11AM Water Aerobics Pool	6:30PM Dancing
				4:30PM HOL Board Meeting Fireside Room	12PM Mahjong Fireside Room	
					5-7PM Dos de Mayo Pub reservation deadline Wednesday, April 30, 5pm	
SUNDAY 4	MONDAY 5	TUESDAY 6	WEDNESDAY 7	8	9	10
7:30-9AM Taiji Deck/David MacLam	6AM Trash	7:30-9AM Taiji Deck/ David m	7:30-9AM Taiji Deck/ David MacLam	7:30-9AM Taiji	7:30-9AM Taiji	BALLROOM CRAFT MARKET SATURDAY 1-4 PM
10-11AM Meditation Fireside Rm/Zoom*	7:30-9AM Taiji Deck/ David MacLam	10:30-11:30AM Craft & Chat Library	10-11AM Water Aerobics Pool	11AM-12PM Rollin' Root	10-11AM Water Aerobics	1-4PM Mother's Day Craft Market Ballroom
12-1PM Group Strength Training Bamboo Room/ Nan Watanabe	9-9:30AM Dynamic Meditation Bamboo Room**	5PM PAC Board Meeting Ballroom/Zoom***	4-5:30PM Men's Group Fireside Room*	6PM Game Night Fireside Room	11:30AM Fire Safe Marin Leaders Meeting****	6:30PM Dancing
	10-11AM Water Aerobics Pool			ECHO DEADLINE	12PM Mahjong Pub	
					5-7PM Musical Evening Fireside Room	
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
7:30-9AM Taiji	6AM Trash	7:30-9AM Taiji	7:30-9AM Taiji	7:30-9AM Taiji	Nominations Open for PAC Board	
10-11AM Meditation	7:30-9AM Taiji	10:30-11:30AM Craft & Chat	10-11AM Water Aerobics	11AM-12PM Rollin' Root	7:30-9AM Taiji	
12-1PM Group Strength Training	10-11AM Water Aerobics		5PM Mar Val Board Meeting/Ballroom	11AM-12PM Rollin' Root	10-11AM Water Aerobics	
	5:30PM Aging Well — Peter Attia, MD Fireside Room		6-6:30PM Kundalini Meditation Bamboo Room**		12PM Mahjong	6:30PM Dancing
					5-7PM Pub	
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Nominations open for PAC Board						
7:30-9AM Taiji	6AM Trash	7:30-9AM Taiji	7:30-9AM Taiji	7:30-9AM Taiji	7:30-9AM Taiji	
10-11AM Meditation	7:30-9AM Taiji	10:30-11:30AM Craft & Chat	10-11AM Water Aerobics	11AM-12PM Rollin' Root	10-11AM Water Aerobics	
12-1PM Group Strength Training	10-11AM Water Aerobics	5PM MVC Board Meeting Ballroom/Zoom***	11AM Ladies' Bridge Private, Fireside Rm		12PM Mahjong	
			4-5:30PM Men's Group		5PM Memorial Day Dinner reservation deadline	
			6-6:30PM Nataraj Meditation		5PM PAC nominations close	
					5-7PM Pub	6:30PM Dancing
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
7:30-9AM Taiji	MEMORIAL DAY		7:30-9AM Taiji	7:30-9AM Taiji	7:30-9AM Taiji	PAC voting → 5PM June 6
10-11AM Meditation	6AM Trash	10:30-11:30AM Craft & Chat	10-11AM Water Aerobics	11AM-12PM Rollin' Root	10-11AM Water Aerobics	11AM-12PM Meet the Candidates
12-1PM Group Strength Training	7:30-9AM Taiji	4:30PM Last Monday Lectures — Joey Anderson Fireside Room/ Marty Gelman	4PM Book Club Carol-Joy Harris		12PM Mahjong	6:30PM Dancing
	10-11AM Water Aerobics				5-7PM Pub	
	MAR VAL MEMORIAL DAY DINNER					
	5PM COCKTAILS 6PM DINNER					

\*Michael Hagerty \*\*Inga Grace \*\*\*Carol-Joy Harris \*\*\*\*www.marinvalley.net