

T H E ECHO

June 2025



2 Matt Greenberg

3 John Hansen

3-4 Alan Gump

4 John Feld

5 Bill Davis

6 Carolyn Corry

**7-8 Carolyn Corry,
Susan Hoff**

9 John Feld

Kamala Allen

10 Janie Klimes Crocker

**Ed Collins,
Michael Hagerty**

11 Suzie Lahr

Marty Gelman

12 Vicki Waddell

13 Ro Rigney

Ed Collins

14 Janie Klimes Crocker

Jeanne Skybrook

15-17 Joan Cervisi

18-19 David Gray

20

MVMCC

Management Update

Directory Update

PAC

PAC & MVC Letter to Residents

Update from MVC's Policy Committee

PAC Board Election

MVEST

New Fire Chief of Novato Fire District

MAR VAL

Message from Mar Val

Event Flyers

HOL

HOL Message

Circle of Friends Offers Respite Volunteers

HOL Community Events

Free Chair Yoga Class

How to Have Difficult Conversations Workshop

Expressing Your Expressions

Last Monday Lectures: *Flower Essences for Seniors*

Ode to "Butterscotch," Rodent Expert

Please Keep Cats Inside and Away from Wildlife

Meadow Loop Trail

Hang, Baby, Hang

Learn to Play the Ukulele

Have You Ever Considered a Walking Vacation?

Bird of the Month: *Short-Eared Owl at Hamilton Field*

Calendar: June 2025

Management Update

Completed Projects

- Behind the lower card room and billiard room, a team is digging to lower the grade, allowing excess rainwater to be pumped out and preventing future water intrusion.
- Both saunas have been decommissioned due to age and improper use.
- The spa heater has been replaced.
- The 25/26 draft budget has been completed. We are now awaiting City adoption in June, after which implementation can begin in July.

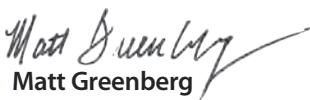
Projects in Progress

- Some older electrical conduit is being removed and replaced in the pool equipment room. Safety upgrades are also in progress to support saline system operations.
- Seasonal painting of various clubhouse areas and railings is underway.

- The architect hired by the City of Novato has submitted a design and cost estimate for the clubhouse roof replacement. The City will be putting the project out to bid.
- GioCo Pest Control will be implementing a plan to eliminate termites in the lower card room.

Planning

- Lower card room flooring and approximately four feet of drywall on the east wall are scheduled for removal to allow for termite inspection and repairs.
- A study is currently in progress to assess tree pruning and removal needs for defensible space.


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



Thank You Earth Day Volunteers

— Susan Hoff, Peggy Hill, and Carol-Joy Harris among all who helped.

Directory Update New Residents

Jane Stuart
 28 Marin Valley Drive
 415-225-3349
janehurstuart@gmail.com

Debra Stone
 177 Marin Valley Drive
 360-510-6699
debra.turningpointenergy@gmail.com

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

MARIN VALLEY MOBILE COUNTRY CLUB
 100 MARIN VALLEY DRIVE • NOVATO, CA 94949
 415-883-5911 / 415-883-1971 FAX
www.marinvalley.net

GENERAL MANAGER **Matt Greenberg** gm.mvmcc@gmail.com
 A MHB Group Region 8 Publication www.mobilehomeboard.com

EDITOR **Anila Manning**
 COPY EDITOR **Mary Barbosa**
 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

PRESIDENT **John Hansen 415-847-7155**
 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

CAPITAL PROJECTS **John Hansen, Jay Shelfer**

COMMUNICATIONS **Mary Currie, Chair;**
Carol-Joy Harris, Charlotte Weiser

FINANCE **Stephen Plocher**

FINANCE SUBCOMMITTEES

PRO FORMA (BUDGET MASTER-PLANNING) **David King, Chair;**
Stephen Plocher, Greg & Sheri 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

MVC POLICY COMMITTEE **Serena Fisher, Alan Gump,**
John Hansen, (Mary Currie/Jay Shelfer)

HOL BOARD

PRESIDENT **John Feld 510-495-4138**
 1ST VICE PRESIDENT **Ed Collins 415-377-7696**
 SECRETARY **Anne Lakota 415-713-4606**
 TREASURER **Tara Plocher 415-302-5992**
 EVENTS & ACTIVITIES **Janie Crocker 281-414-3984**
 AT LARGE **Michale Dancer 415-519-3395**
 AT LARGE **Sandy Zeichner 415-902-5143**
 AT LARGE **Charlotte Kells 617-306-0265**
 AT LARGE **Kamala Allen 415-306-6865**

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
& Tara Plocher, Song, Michael Theircof, Brad Witherspoon

MAR VAL BOARD

PRESIDENT **Carolyn Corry 415-370-6403**
 1ST VP, BAR MANAGER **Anne Glasscock 415-601-3047**
 2ND VP/RESERVATIONS **Susan Hoff 707-365-9426**
 SECRETARY **Connie Marelich 415-382-3350**
 TREASURER **Vicki Waddell 415-382-8684**
 DIRECTOR, HOSPITALITY **Larry Moore 415-883-0486**
 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 June! June marks the beginning of summer in the Northern Hemisphere, symbolizing warmth, growth, and longer days. It is also globally recognized as Pride Month. In the United States, Juneteenth (June 19) commemorates the emancipation of enslaved African Americans and is now recognized as a federal holiday.

PAC BOARD UPDATE

FY 2025/2026 Budget

The PAC Board approved the City of Novato's MVMCC budget for FY 2025/26 at its May 6 meeting. The City is expected to adopt the final budget at its council meeting at the end of June 2025.

Due Diligence Completed

Both the Property Condition Assessment Report (PCA Report) and the Phase 1 Environmental Report were completed by Partner Engineering and Science. The PCA Report provided essential projections for infrastructure improvements over the next ten years. This information was instrumental in shaping the financial details included in the Financing Proposal and offer submitted to the City of Novato. The Phase 1 Environmental Report confirmed there is no contamination or red-flag environmental concern on the property that would warrant further investigation. Both reports are available on the Marin Valley website.

Financing Proposal and Offer to City of Novato

The confidential Financing Proposal and offer have been submitted to the City of Novato. What next?

Here are the anticipated steps:

1. Financing Proposal submitted to City
2. Response from the City
3. Negotiations with the City
4. Purchase Agreement, including purchase price
5. Resident vote and separate MVC member vote on whether to proceed
6. Closing on the property
7. We own the Park

MVC BOARD UPDATE

Please see the next article from the MVC Board Policy Committee for an update on its ongoing work in collaboration with the MVC Board.

Emailed Resident Updates — Please Sign Up

To receive emailed Resident Updates, send your email address to PAC Board Secretary Carol-Joy Harris at 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 gm.mvmcc@gmail.com or 415-883-5911.


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



Update from MVC's Policy Committee

by **ALAN GUMP**, MVC Policy Committee

At the May 6 PAC Board meeting, the board agreed to retire the Resident Ownership Discovery Committee (ROD-C) at the June meeting; ROD-C was originally charged with researching and recommending viable self-ownership options to the PAC Board. After a thorough investigation, the Committee determined that working with ROC USA and California Center for Cooperative Development (CCCD) to incorporate the Park as a Limited Equity Housing Cooperative (LEHC) offered the highest likelihood of success and offered the most benefits to our residents. Over the past 18 months, we have established the Marin Valley Cooperative (MVC) as the entity to take title to the Park and have created the required structures, including Membership, Interim Bylaws, and voting procedures. MVC member households now total 252.

What lies ahead is the work of the Policy Committee, a committee of the MVC Board. The Policy Committee hosted a community wide workshop on April 23 to review two required policies, and then convened an MVC Members meeting on April 30 to approve these two policies (Empowerment Resolution and Certified Technical Assistance Agreement). Once a quorum of the Membership was confirmed, the voting took place. Results were:

Empowerment Resolution:
167 Yes, 0 No, 1 Abstain

Certified Technical Assistance Agreement:
160 Yes, 0 No, 1 Abstain

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. While the Park still operates under the 2008 PAC Rules & Regulations, the Committee is working from a more recent, unapproved draft set that was reviewed by the City but never approved. Our current work is incorporating current California Mobilehome Residency Laws.

Once we have completed this work, the following steps are planned to approve the Rules & Regulations:

1. Convening a small group of MVC members to review and offer feedback.
2. Making revisions based on that feedback.
3. Submitting the revised document to the MVC Board and legal counsel for review.
4. Making further updates as needed.
5. Hosting a workshop to review the version approved by legal

counsel with the community.

6. Making further updates as needed.
7. Voting by the MVC Board at a regularly scheduled meeting to formally approve the document.
8. Convening an MVC member meeting to ratify the new Rules & Regulations, at which point they will take effect once we own the Park.

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

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.

Workshops Are Open to ALL Residents

We remind everyone that our workshops are open to ALL community members. We encourage nonmembers to attend to learn more about becoming resident-owned. Nonmembers can become Members by submitting an application and a \$25 check as the joining fee, which is a deposit toward full Membership. ■

Correction to Update from the May Echo:

We erroneously stated that the Park was operating under a more recent, never-approved-by-the-City set of Rules & Regulations. As stated above, the Park continues to operate under the 2008 Rules & Regulations and will do so until MVC purchases the Park from the City and adopts new Rules & Regulations, or until the 2008 Rules & Regulations are updated under the PAC Board. Thank you to Larry Cohen for the correction.

PAC Board Election

by **JOHN FELD**

The seats held by **Steve Plocher** and **Mary Currie** are up for election. Steve Plocher is running for reelection and Mary Currie, who is not running, has endorsed **Brad Witherspoon** for her seat.

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

Carol-Joy Harris at 415-883-2824 or caroljoyharris@comcast.net

John Feld at 510-495-4138 or 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. ■



New Fire Chief of Novato Fire District

by **BILL DAVIS**, MVEST Chair, Novato Fire District Board of Directors

What does it take to become a fire chief — and how do you get there?

You start at the bottom, as a newbie on probation working hard to prove yourself to both your tough instructors and equally critical peers. If you're good enough after six months, you can become a firefighter-paramedic in Novato. But that's just the beginning.

From there, you have to prove yourself repeatedly — not just to meet your own standards, but to meet those of the agency and the crew you're assigned to. You'd better know how to cook and clean, or learn fast. Nobody walks in at the top, no matter how impressive their academic credentials or how polished their interviews. In this job, you are proving yourself with the rank-and-file on every single call.

Your crew is everything — they're the frontline responders to every 911 emergency. The team of first responders is the system. They're the boots on the ground, the ones stopping the bleeding, defibrillating a heart, extricating a trapped person, or running into harm's way to save someone. The job is about doing the work — and doing it right and safely — then reviewing it to find how it can be done better.

Those men and women, and the people supporting them, are what this career is all about.

If you want to move up, the next step is engineer. You must understand how that truck engine works, the equipment it carries, and the math behind making the hoses deliver the right amount of water

and pressure. That's a career in itself.

The next step is to test to be a captain, work as a captain in training, and spend years working in that position. At every step you will be vetted over and over again.

After that, the air starts to get thin as you work toward becoming a battalion chief. In Novato, there is always one battalion chief on duty, 24 hours a day. At every level, you must know your goals and demonstrate that you can do the job — with the support and respect of your peers. You must lead by example, inspire others to be the best they can be, and show leadership that you're the kind of leader who would never ask anyone to do what you wouldn't do yourself. It's a long haul.

So, what qualities must a fire chief have?

First, dedication. You put the agency above yourself. It's not about what the job gives you — it's about what you can give to the agency.

Next, competence. You must be able to do the job, and do it better than anyone. You set the standard and then meet it.

Then, credibility. You must earn the respect of those who work with and under you. If they don't trust or support you, you're already failing as a chief and your days are numbered.

You must also be a clear communicator. Again, it's not about you — it's about the performance of



the agency you are directly responsible for, and whether it succeeds.

You need compassion. You advocate for your people, both as individuals and collectively. Their well-being, safety, and

success come first. The chief makes the call — and if someone else does, the chief is still responsible.

You must also have courage. Sometimes, doing the right thing based on principle means making hard decisions — ones that deeply impact lives and futures. If you're not compassionate and courageous, you're not going to be even an average fire chief.

So, the bottom line is: Can you deliver? Can you make the agency the best it can be and uphold the tradition of excellence that makes NFD one of the finest agencies in California? That's a tall order — and an even bigger responsibility.

Novato Fire District Fire Chief Daniel J. Peters

Our new Fire Chief is someone I first met 29 years ago — just a young paramedic bringing sick patients into my emergency department in the small hours of the night. I've watched him grow, earn his stripes, and rise through the ranks. Today, I firmly believe he has the right stuff to lead the Novato Fire District.

Still, sometimes I wonder why anyone would even *want* the job? ■

Message from MarVal

Dear Friends,

For those of you who attend Mar Val events and Pub, you have heard me many times acknowledge and offer thanks to the many volunteers who work together to produce these wonderful gatherings. Today I'd like to shine a spotlight on the Mar Val Board — some very hardworking individuals who often operate completely behind the scenes. Let's go right down the line, starting with:

1st Vice President — Anne Glasscock

While Anne does preside over meetings in my absence, her more visible and vital role is as Bar Manager at Pub and every event. She takes inventory, restocks liquor, and purchases beer, soft drinks, garnishes, mixers, napkins, and glasses. Anne sets the bar up each week, takes it down, thoroughly cleans the area, and ensures that all cabinets, coolers, and refrigerators are secured — 11 locks in total!

2nd Vice President — Susan Hoff

Susan handles all reservations and check-ins, collects checks, balances the books after each event, and delivers checks and cash from each occasion to the treasurer. She prints name tags, keeps track of who wants to eat what, prepares "to go" bags, and helps serve meals. Between events, she assists at the bar, sets up and breaks down tables and chairs, creates and prints event flyers, and makes multiple trips to the clubhouse to collect funds from the reservation box.

Secretary — Connie Marelich

Connie takes minutes at our board meetings and manages all written communications. Stepping a bit

outside her official role, she also sells drink tickets at the Mar Val monthly events.

Treasurer — Vicki Waddell

Vicki ensures all bills are paid and that Mar Val remains financially sound. She handles deposits from reservations, food and drink sales, and raffle tickets. After each event, she balances the cash boxes and prepares them with the correct denominations so that change will be available for you. She also prepares cash envelopes for raffle drawings and pays our credit card bills, license fees, taxes, and our kitchen staff. Though Vicki looks at ease at events, her workload is immense and nearly all behind the scenes.

Board Member and Hospitality Director — Larry Moore

Together with the board, Larry plans themes and menus — and then makes them happen. He designs the décor for all events, works with Chef Susan on shopping lists, and then does the shopping wherever needed. Larry oversees the decorating at each event ... and then there he is, the smiling guy serving the evening's entrées. Several times a year he steps in as chef, doing the purchasing as well as the cooking and serving. Larry is usually the first one in and the last one out. He also sells food tickets at Pub and handles birthday cakes.

Board Member — Larry Cohen

Larry is in charge of logistics, working with **Mike Holland** and **Tom Teixeira** to ensure the correct number of tables and chairs for each event as well as their setup and breakdown.

Committee Chair — Sandee Duncan

Sandee has probably worn every hat and done every job at least once. She is Larry Moore's right hand for shopping and ensuring that the kitchen is left sparkling clean after each event. She is also the official table caller, volunteer coordinator for events, and library manager. In addition, Sandee takes on the lesser-known jobs — such as cleaning the fridge and refilling salt and pepper shakers — the very necessary little things that most of us never think of.

Committee Chair — Pat Thurston

Pat brings years of experience and dedication to the Mar Val Board. She helps decorate and is always ready to step up to the plate wherever needed — and of course, she brings those delicious deviled eggs and that famous monkey bread to Pub.

Congratulations to all of these officers, reelected to serve for another year.

We are also deeply grateful to you, the residents of MVMCC. **You are the very best unnamed, unsung volunteers.** It never fails to amaze me that at the end of an event, within some 20 minutes the ballroom is returned to its proper order — tables cleared, centerpieces stored, linens bagged, and tables and chairs put away.

I would like to express my deep appreciation to each volunteer — board member or resident. You are what makes Mar Val a success. In future *Echos*, I will highlight other essential groups.

We look forward to seeing you at Memorial Day and the June Brunch.

Sincerely,



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



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.



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

Home Owners League Message

Greetings,

Kamala rejoins the HOL Board

The HOL board is happy to welcome back former board member **Kamala Allen**. Kamala previously served as the board's long-time secretary — a role now filled by **Anne Lakota**. She will now contribute her time and talent as a Member at Large.



Just One Hour Leader Needed

We are still looking for a resident to lead the Just One Hour program, as mentioned in last month's *Echo*. The role involves connecting volunteers with neighbors who need assistance. The time commitment is minimal — perhaps a couple of hours per week — especially if you have a knack for outreach. If you're interested, please contact me to discuss. If you *need* one-hour assistance, please continue to contact me directly until a new program leader is found.

Chair Yoga Class Returning

Movement and stretching are vital to well-being, especially as we age. After a hiatus, we are excited to announce the return of the popular Chair Yoga class. To get things going again, we've arranged a free one-day trial class with Laura Schepps, a new instructor from outside the community. If the class goes well — for both Laura and participants — regular sessions will begin. The trial class will be paid for by HOL, with a small per-class donation suggested thereafter.

Both seasoned practitioners and beginners are encouraged to attend this trial class and offer your feedback. No special attire or experience required. Join us in the Fireside Room on **Tuesday, June 10, at 10 am**.

The Buddy Program Retires

Launched years ago by HOL and Matt Greenberg to help neighbors look out for one another, the Buddy Program will be retired as a formal initiative. That said, the spirit of the program lives on. We encourage residents to get to know your neighbors and offer or request help when needed, especially during moments of stress or emergencies.



Contractor Rating Guide Update

We've received requests to expand our Contractor Rating Guide to include new service categories such as dentists, masseuses, acupuncturists, roof painters, car washers, furniture repair specialists, CPAs, and more.

We welcome your reviews, recommendations, and warnings regarding any local service providers, including any within our community.

Yard Maintenance Assistance Available

As the rains seem to have largely ceased for the warmer summer months, many gardens could use a little extra care. For residents unable to perform yard work due to physical

limitations or financial constraints, HOL offers a fund to assist with front yard cleanup, prioritizing areas that pose a fire risk as vegetation dries out, as it does yearly. This program is coordinated by Michale Dancer. If you need help and cannot afford to hire assistance, please contact Michale at 415-519-3395.

Have a lovely summer.



Circle of Friends Offers Respite Volunteers

Circle of Friends offers a volunteer service for sitting with end-of-life residents or those who are severely ill, providing comfort and/or short-term respite for caregivers. Our volunteers are available to sit silently, meditate with, or read to those who request support. This is an ongoing service by residents. If you would like to request a volunteer, please contact coordinators Kamala Allen (415-306-6865) or Aneesha Dillon (415-827-7137).

Kamala Allen

HOL offers a FREE Chair Yoga Class

Come one, come all!

by **JANIE KLIMES-CROCKER**

Tuesday, June 10 • 10 am • Fireside Room

Join us in the Fireside Room on **Tuesday, June 10 at 10 am** when Laura Schepps offers a one-hour FREE Chair Yoga class. This event is sponsored by HOL to see if we are a good fit for each other for a regular weekly class. The classes will be low-cost and on a sliding scale if needed. Laura is an experienced Chair Yoga instructor with a BA in dance from the University of Oregon and an MA in Somatic Psychology from the California Institute of Integral Studies in San Francisco. She is a founding member of Mamalution, a dance and theater group, and has taught various movement classes including dance-centered aerobics, stretch, and relaxation-focused classes. She is also a licensed Anat Baniel Neuromovement Practitioner, which is based on the work of Moshe Feldenkrais, and has been a certified massage therapist for over 35 years. Check out her website www.easydoesit.space, which describes her business of "Home Organizing, Personal Assistance, and Dog Care ... with Earth in mind."

Come on in and check it out. It's FREE, beneficial, and lots of fun. Laura is a warm and delightful lady, and we think you will like her a lot. ■



How to Have Difficult Conversations Workshop

Tuesday, June 10 • 4:30-6 pm • Fireside Room

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

Want to ask that difficult neighbor to keep it down at night?

Hoping to make it through a family dinner without fighting with that argumentative teenager?

Join us for another practical and engaging training session with **Ed Collins** and **Michael Hagerty**. We will share strategies to help prevent others from getting defensive or angry — and show you how to appeal to their deeply held values without compromising your own.

We will introduce well-known techniques drawn from Marshall Rosenberg's Nonviolent Communication and the Harvard Negotiation Project's Getting to YES.

By the end of the session, you will walk away with fresh insights to help you "build bridges instead of walls." ■

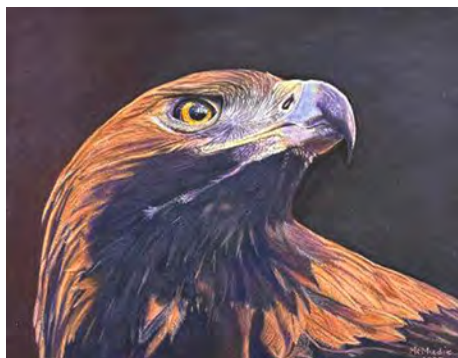


Expressing Your Expression

by **SUZIE LAHR** **Sunday, June 15 • Fireside Room • Submissions 10 am-12 pm**

How do you creatively express yourself? Is it through laughter, conversation, writing, planting, singing, dancing, cooking, or creating art? We all have the ability to express ourselves in one way or another, and at different times we express ourselves in different ways. Along with the joyful and beautiful moments, there are also times of sadness and sorrow. That is when we most need to hold each other close — with love, understanding, and expressions of kindness in all forms. This helps us carry a generous spirit of love, gratitude, and compassion in our hearts for those around us.

You will see this spirit unfold in abundance in mid-June when we install a new exhibit in our clubhouse gallery. All of the artwork is created by Marin Valley resident artists. We hope you will be pleasantly surprised and that the new display brings a smile to your face as you walk through the gallery. The lobby and Fireside Room will be filled with expressive delights. Some pieces may speak to you more than others, but each artist is offering you a gift — their creativity and their personal form of expression.



American Eagle, pastel by Susan McMudie

It seems our entire community is expressing itself more vibrantly these days. As we walk through the Park, the gardens are especially gorgeous this year — even the wildlife seems more abundant. The community itself is energetic and united — evident in the recent majority vote to purchase the Park. Let's continue to show our support and deep appreciation to our

stellar, hardworking board members and volunteers who make all of this possible for the benefit of every Park resident. In the chaos of the world right now, this shared experience can ground us and strengthen our sense of community. Life is to be treasured.

As part of that vision, if you would like to be added as a creative contributor to our Park artist list, please email me at suzielahr@aol.com with the subject "Park artist." I send out periodic updates about artist meetings, participation guidelines, and installation details for upcoming exhibits. We are always eager to welcome new resident artists and continue filling the walls of the Marin Valley Gallery — a creative space we have lovingly built together over the years. ■



Flower Essences for Seniors

by **MARTY GELMAN**

Monday, June 30 • Fireside Room • 4:30 pm

Dear Marin Valley Community, We are pleased to introduce **Catherine Abby Rich**, an herbalist with over 50 years of experience and a founding member of the Marin County Farmers Market.

As part of our Last Monday Lectures series, Catherine will share a specially selected collection of plants and flower essences designed to support senior health — an

important focus for our community. She will discuss herbs that promote relaxation, improve sleep, ease pain, boost circulation, reduce inflammation, and support memory.

Catherine teaches herbal studies and produces a range of flower essence products, which she offers to the community at large. We welcome your questions on the many benefits of herbal and flower essence remedies. ■



Catherine Abby Rich

Ode to “Butterscotch,” Rodent Expert

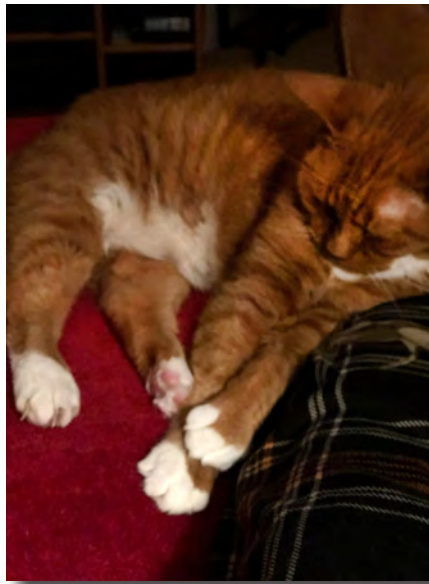
by **VICKI WADDELL**

Our cat, Butterscotch, lived with us for 20 years. He had staff to look after him (Ed and me), but he also helped us in areas where his senses far outshone ours — most notably as Chief Rodent Watcher.

One morning, I woke up and found two unusual droppings on my living room floor. Butter (for short) was chattering excitedly while scanning the walls below the curtains. Since he firmly denied any responsibility for the repugnant droppings, I called our exterminator and told him I thought we had a mouse in the house. He came over, examined the specimen I had saved, and informed me it didn't belong to a mouse but rather a rat!

“What? That’s disgusting!” I exclaimed. “I keep a clean house!”

A couple of years earlier, we had reinforced the crawl space with new skirting, so I couldn't imagine how a rat had gotten inside. The fact is, we live beside the meadow, and all sorts of varmints make their home in the grasslands along Club View Drive and Sunrise Lane. Over



the past two decades, we’ve seen our share of creatures — skunks, squirrels, moles, voles, gophers, and even bats in our belfry!

According to the exterminator, what we had neglected to do was to seal the crevices along the sides of the house and stairs, which are easy entry points for small creatures seeking warmth. The exterminator installed the necessary ¼” galvanized hardware cloth, and we have been rat-proofed ever since.

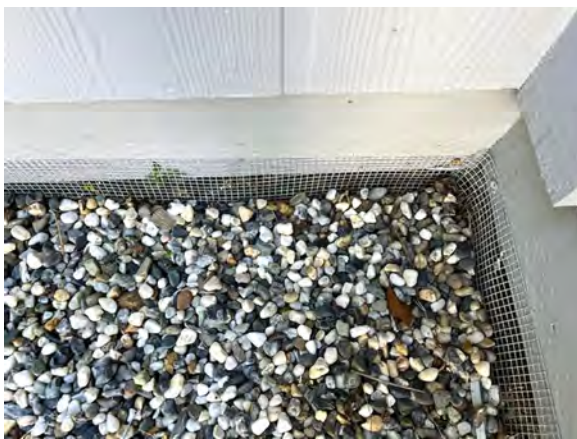
However, after hearing the sad news of the passing of Actor Gene Hackman and his wife, Betsy,

we’ve become even more vigilant. According to the Chief Medical Examiner, Betsy died of Hantavirus — a rare, rodent-borne illness that can be transmitted to humans. The virus is notoriously hard to detect, and in Betsy’s case, it was tragically too late.

Replacing skirting can be expensive, but there are other ways to minimize or postpone the expense, such as:

- Tighten all air vents (usually six on each side) along the skirting.
- Screen any crevices around your home (see photos).
- Tighten screws securing the return air vents inside your home.
- Adopt a cat and give them a job!

There are likely even more ways to prevent rodent invasions. Personally, I consult the wise oracles at Pub on Fridays for all sorts of advice. We even found our new little kitty there — thank you, Cheryl! “Taj” has now taken up dear Butterscotch’s mantle as Chief Rodent Watcher — In Training. ■



Please Keep Cats **Inside** and Away from Wildlife

by **RO RIGNEY**

I want to share some thoughts on an important issue regarding our feline friends and the wildlife around us. As we approach this time of year when many animals are nesting on the ground, heavy with young and preparing for the arrival of new life, it becomes crucial to consider the impact our domestic cats can have on local wildlife.

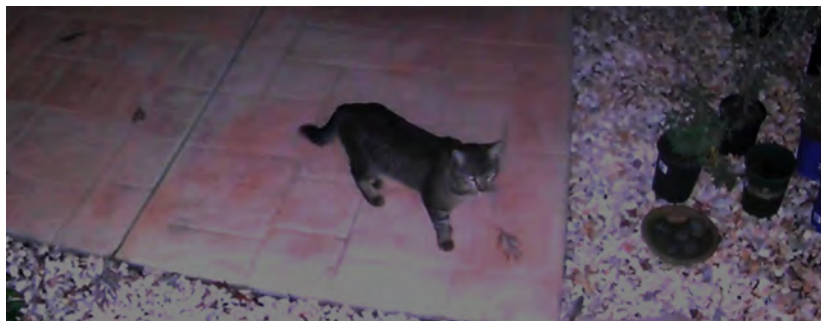
In spring, many animals — including birds, small mammals, and reptiles — are actively nesting and raising their young. For these creatures, the safety of their nests is of great importance, and they often rely on ground shelter to protect their offspring. Unfortunately, outdoor cats, with their natural hunting instincts, can pose a serious threat to these vulnerable animals.

In our neighborhood, for example, black-tailed jackrabbits are born above ground, usually in shallow depressions beneath grass or shrubs. California quail nest on the ground, too, often under brush piles or low shrubs.

While cats are beloved companions, they are also skilled hunters by nature. Even well-fed cats instinctively stalk and chase small creatures, impacting endangered species and overall biodiversity. According to Audubon, bird populations in the United States have dropped by 30% over the last 50 years, and when it comes to causes, outdoor cats top the list. Outdoor cats — pets, strays, and ferals — kill at least 1.4 billion wild birds annually. Declawing is not a solution. It is a barbaric practice that can cause lifelong pain to your pet, and it is also ineffective — cats can kill birds and other small animals without using their claws.

We live in a beautiful area that interfaces with the natural world. Let's honor the agreement that we signed when we moved here — to protect local wildlife by keeping all cats indoors year-round. Thank you for your support!

The cat shown below entered my yard on April 11 and 13. Around that time, my neighbors found two mauled birds. ■



Meadow Loop Trail

by **ED COLLINS**

Every year, I mow a loop trail through the glorious meadow below our property. The trail is now complete and open. It begins at the end of Sunrise Lane, goes straight out toward the train tracks, loops around a couple of ponds, and brings you right back to where you started. Is that life, 🤔 or what? The loop is just under half a mile. The trail can be a bit bumpy, so be prepared and hike carefully. Come and enjoy the beauty of the meadow and the many bird songs along the way. ■

Hang, Baby, Hang

Seven Unexpected Benefits of the Dead Hang

by **JANIE KLIMES CROCKER**

Dead hangs benefit you by utilizing your bodyweight to decompress, strengthen, and lengthen your spine. All you do is simply hang from an overhead bar for:

- 1. Spinal decompression** Most daily activities compress our spine. Hanging for even a few seconds replaces space that has been lost between your bones, joints, and discs.
- 2. Grip strength** Dead hangs are the most effective way to increase grip strength.
- 3. Shoulder joint range of motion** Hanging passively allows your upper body to fully relax.
- 4. Rotator cuff strengthening & shoulder injury repair** Simple hanging has helped numerous cases of shoulder injuries, aches, and pains recover.
- 5. Forearm gains** Dead hangs are an excellent way to build both size and strength in forearms.
- 6. Lengthening lats** (*Latissimus dorsi*) Dead hangs keep lats fluid and healthy.
- 7. Posture correction** Get rid of that back hump by strengthening, decompressing, loosening, and mobilizing your upper body.

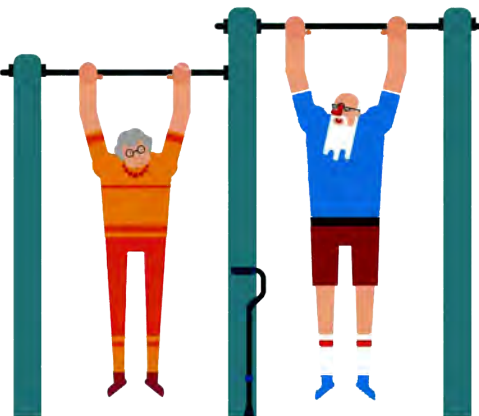
HOW TO DEAD HANG CORRECTLY

1. In our gym, go to Station 9.
2. If you can't reach the bar, get a step platform from the "Free Motion Gym".
3. Don't leap and grab, just grasp easily.
4. Grip the bar just over shoulder-width apart with palms facing away from you — overhang grip, thumbs under.
5. Move your feet off the step so you are hanging.
6. Look straight ahead.
7. Keep your arms straight and relax your body to create passive/dead weight hanging position.
8. Hold as long as you can but don't overdo it.

TIPS AND NO-NO'S

1. Your arms must be dead straight. If your elbows are bending, you're doing it **wrong**.
2. Don't keep tension in your lats. Fully relax your upper body.
3. Stay still. No fidgeting.
4. Don't hold your breath. Breathing assists and compliments the movement and allows your body to fully relax, so breathe slowly and deeply.
5. Overdoing it will do more harm than good. Do 3 or 4 sets at 50-75% of your maximum hang time and up to 3 times a week.

See: *The Workout Digest*, Brian Ward, July 28, 2023.



Learn to Play the Ukulele

New Class — Starting in June

by **JEANNE SKYBROOK**

The ukulele is a wonderfully social instrument that invites people to play together. It's especially fun if you like to sing. Ukulele groups exist all over the world — and you don't have to go far to find folks to jam with. It's especially good for older folks such as ourselves, working our brains and giving us a social outlet. We will meet at my house at a time that works for everyone. The class fee is approximately \$50/month.

Contact me at 415-302-3010.



After playing the guitar since she was 18, Jeanne switched to the ukulele in 2011 — and never looked back. A performer since the age of 8, singing in her

daddy's church, Jeanne has been a member of a folk band, country band, swing band, bluegrass band, and two acoustic duos (including blues). She currently sings with the Marin Symphony Chorus and the Hawaiian group Na Hoaloha, and has been a volunteer performer with Bread and Roses for 35 years. She holds a degree in music education. ■

Have You Ever Considered a Walking Vacation?

by **JOAN CERVISI**



Via Francigena

Imagine a journey like no other — a walking vacation. Picture yourself alone, with a partner, or alongside a group of friends, traversing the Camino de Santiago in Spain.

This famed 500-mile route typically takes about 34 days — quite the commitment! But you can always choose to walk just a portion of it — perhaps the first 100 miles over two weeks, with a few rest days along the way. Does that sound doable?

Planning Your Walking Trip

My husband, Dave, and I have undertaken several walking trips in Europe, including the Camino de Santiago, the GR65 in France, the Coast to Coast in England, the West Highlands Way in Scotland, and most of the Via Francigena from Canterbury to Rome.

Planning a trip like this takes some research, but there are many travel books and online resources to guide you. In some cases, we've

used tour companies to arrange accommodations and transport our luggage from one stop to the next. This eliminates the stress of securing lodging after a long day of walking and ensures a smoother experience overall.

The Beauty of Walking Vacations

One of the greatest joys of a walking trip is its simplicity. Each day follows a gentle rhythm: walking, resting, and enjoying the journey.



Via Francigena

A typical day might look like this:

1. Start with breakfast at your lodging.
2. Walk about five miles along a well-marked trail.
3. Pause for lunch, whether a picnic at a scenic spot with a packed lunch or at a local café.
4. Walk another five miles, reaching your destination by midafternoon or so.
5. Refresh, hand wash clothes if needed, rest, and enjoy dinner nearby.
6. The next day, repeat the process, moving at your own pace.

If you are tired or unwell or just need a break from walking, you can take a taxi or bus to the next scheduled

lodging. We usually arrange a rest day after a week or so, staying two nights in the same town.

Walking Vacations in the U.S.

While Europe offers well-marked long-distance trails with frequent accommodations, we have found fewer options like this in the US. Iconic routes like the Pacific Crest, Appalachian, and Continental Divide trails are breathtaking but require backpacking, camping, and careful food resupply planning. Sadly, 100- to 500-mile walking routes with consistent lodging are still rare in the US.

For local hiking, I recommend the AllTrails app. Some of my favorite hikes are Burdell Mountain Loop, King Mountain

Loop Trail, and Baltimore Canyon via Dawn Falls Trail.

Our Next Adventure

Next on our list is the coastal Camino route from Porto, Portugal, to Santiago, Spain — a scenic 160-mile walk. With Dave recovering from knee replacement surgery, we plan to take our time and enjoy the landscape and perhaps a glass (or two!) of Port wine along the way.

If you share our passion for walking and are considering a walking vacation, we'd be thrilled to chat. Feel free to reach out.

Joan Cervisi —
joanmcervisi@gmail.com
Dave Thorngren —
thorngrend@earthlink.net

Camino de Santiago

No single route can be called the Camino de Santiago. In reality, the “Camino” is comprised of an extensive network of recognized routes, all of which converge at the cathedral in Santiago. (See map below.)



Joan Cervisi at Grand St. Bernard, Italy



Take a Hike

For those who prefer trekking closer to home, check out **Mike Holland's** delightful series “Take a Hike” about local trails in Marin on the Marin Valley website marinvalley.net > Living Here > Echo Magazine > Echo Back Issues (<https://marinvalley.net/echo2/>). Mike wrote a bimonthly column about his walks from 2015 to 2018, complete with photos and humorous stories. Let us know if anything has changed since then! ■



Short-Eared Owl at Hamilton Field

Text and Photography by **DAVID GRAY**

Short-eared owl, in-flight

Back in early April, Nancy and I were walking along the Hamilton Field shoreline toward the San Pablo Bay. When we got to the overlook, the tide was pretty far out. I photographed a ring-billed gull (*Larus delawarensis*) out over the water. We went a bit farther on the recently opened Bay Trail, but the sun was getting low and we turned back after the trail took a sharp jog to the southwest.



Ring-billed gull



Copyright 2025 David G. Gray

Along the way back, I saw a bird with an unusual profile flying out over the water. I thought, "That doesn't look like a shore bird ..." and then it struck me: it was an owl!

I raised my camera to my eye (600mm f/4 with its internal 1.4X teleconverter and an external 1.4X TC, all totaled 1,176mm, hand held), tried to stay calm, got the bird in the viewfinder, and tracked it as I shot seven seconds of its flight at 20 frames per second.

When I got home and imported the photos into my computer, I

used Google Images to see which owl I had photographed (I didn't recognize what kind of owl it was while I was photographing it). It turned out to be a short-eared owl (*Asio flammeus*).

They are year-round residents here, and apparently are the owl that is most frequently seen in daylight. In contrast, our great-horned owls are most frequently seen (or not!) at night.

The short-eared owls eat small rodents. And indeed, during our hike back to our car we saw it hunting.



Copyright 2025 David G. Gray

Short-eared owl, head turned

It was flying low back and forth across the top of the levee, a few feet above the ground with the setting sun shining through its wings as it receded into the distance.

It was a surprising event for me, and one I hope to have again! ■

SUNDAY 1	MONDAY 2	TUESDAY 3	WEDNESDAY 4	THURSDAY 5	FRIDAY 6	SATURDAY 7
VOTING for PAC Board						
7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji Deck/ David MacLam 10-11 ^{AM} Meditation Fireside Rm/Zoom* 12-1 ^{PM} Group Strength Training Bamboo Room/ Nan Watanabe	6 ^{AM} Trash 7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji Deck/ David MacLam 9-9:30 ^{AM} Dynamic Meditation Bamboo Room** 10-11 ^{AM} Water Aerobics Pool	7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji Deck/ David MacLam 10:30-11:30 ^{AM} Craft & Chat Library 5 ^{PM} PAC Board Meeting Ballroom/Zoom***	7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji Deck/ David MacLam 10-11 ^{AM} Water Aerobics Pool 4-5:30 ^{PM} Men's Group Fireside Room*	7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji Deck/ David MacLam 11 ^{AM} -12 ^{PM} Rollin' Root 4:30 ^{PM} HOL Board Meeting Fireside Room 5 ^{PM} PAC Board Voting ends	7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji Deck/ David MacLam 10-11 ^{AM} Water Aerobics Pool 12 ^{PM} Mahjong Fireside Room 5-7 ^{PM} Pub 5 ^{PM} PAC Board Voting ends	11 ^{AM} Annual PAC Meeting Fireside Room 6:30 ^{PM} Dancing
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji 10-11 ^{AM} Meditation 12-1 ^{PM} Group Strength Training ECHO DEADLINE	6 ^{AM} Trash 7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji 10-11 ^{AM} Water Aerobics	7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji 10-11 ^{AM} Chair Yoga Fireside Room 10:30-11:30 ^{AM} Craft & Chat 4:30-6:30 ^{PM} Difficult Conversations Fireside Room	7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji 10-11 ^{AM} Water Aerobics 5 ^{PM} Jazz brunch reservation deadline 5 ^{PM} Mar Val Board Meeting /Ballroom 6-6:30 ^{PM} Kundalini Meditation **	7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji 11 ^{AM} -12 ^{PM} Rollin' Root 6 ^{PM} Game Night Fireside Room	7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji 10-11 ^{AM} Water Aerobics 11:30 ^{AM} Fire Safe Marin Leaders Meeting **** 12 ^{PM} Mahjong 5-7 ^{PM} Pub	 11 ^{AM} Jazz Brunch Ballroom 6:30 ^{PM} Dancing
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji 10 ^{AM} -12 ^{PM} New Gallery Exhibition Hanging Clubhouse  12-1 ^{PM} Group Strength Training	6 ^{AM} Trash 7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji 10-11 ^{AM} Water Aerobics	7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji 10:30-11:30 ^{AM} Craft & Chat 5 ^{PM} MVC Board Meeting Ballroom/Zoom***	7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji 10-11 ^{AM} Water Aerobics 11 ^{AM} Ladies' Bridge Private, Fireside Rm 4-5:30 ^{PM} Men's Group 6-6:30 ^{PM} Nataraj Meditation **	7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji 11 ^{AM} -12 ^{PM} Rollin' Root 	7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji 10-11 ^{AM} Water Aerobics 12 ^{PM} Mahjong 5-7 ^{PM} Pub	7 ^{PM} Dancing
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji 10-11 ^{AM} Meditation 12-1 ^{PM} Group Strength Training	6 ^{AM} Trash 7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji 10-11 ^{AM} Water Aerobics	7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji 10:30-11:30 ^{AM} Craft & Chat	7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji 10-11 ^{AM} Water Aerobics 4 ^{PM} Book Club Carol-Joy Harris	7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji 11 ^{AM} -12 ^{PM} Rollin' Root 	7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji 10-11 ^{AM} Water Aerobics 12 ^{PM} Mahjong 5-7 ^{PM} Pub	7 ^{PM} Dancing
29	30	 <h1>JUNE 2025</h1> SEE WWW.MARINVALLEY.NET FOR UPDATES AND LINKS *Michael Hagerty **Inga Grace ***Carol-Joy Harris ****www.marinvalley.net				
7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji 10-11 ^{AM} Meditation 12-1 ^{PM} Group Strength Training	6 ^{AM} Trash 7:30-9 ^{AM} Taiji 10-11 ^{AM} Water Aerobics 4:30 ^{PM} Last Monday Lectures: Catherine Abby Rich — Flower Essences Fireside Room/Marty Gelman					