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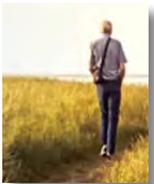
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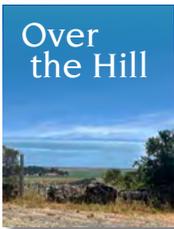
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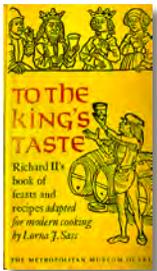
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Management Update

Fire Abatement

- Tree service is scheduled for the first week in July with several more weeks of service to follow.
- Dry grass cutting is scheduled for a start date of June 23.
- The goats should be here by the latter part of July.

Clubhouse

Exterior pressure washing and painting are in progress.

Retaining walls

Three walls have been chosen for replacement so far.

Asphalt

In early August overlay and repairs throughout the Park will begin.



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

Opt-IN for Park Emergency Information and Critical Announcements 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.

ALERT MARIN

Register for emergency alerts at AlertMarin.org.



IN MEMORIAM

Irv Katz

October 7, 1929 – April 27, 2025

Echo Deadline to Submit Articles

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

THE ECHO 2025

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Letter to Residents

PAC & MVC

A Message from Your PAC and MVC Boards

by **JOHN HANSEN**, PAC and MVC President

As of this writing, the PAC Board is down to the final editing and production phase of our long-anticipated Acquisition Proposal for the City. By the time you read this July 2025 edition of the *Echo*, our proposal will have been submitted and in some stage of consideration by the City. What's left to do?

Proposal Procedure

The City will review the proposal and prepare its response. According to the ENA, negotiations may then proceed. Depending on the City's response, questions, and concerns, the PAC Board will assemble a negotiating team to meet with the City and work through the details — and hopefully arrive at a mutually satisfactory agreement. This will be the basis for a Draft Acquisition Agreement.

Before the signing ritual and entering escrow, however, MVMCC residents will weigh in. Once the draft agreement is published, both the PAC Board and the MVC Board will host public workshops so that everyone has an opportunity to understand the ins and outs of the proposal.

Voting

Then, two votes will take place:

- (1) MVMCC residents will vote on whether to approve the draft proposal to acquire the Park from the City, and
- (2) MVC members will vote on whether to accept ownership of MVMCC — in both cases, a simple majority of members is required.

The difference between the two is subtle but profound: the PAC vote approves the change of ownership, whereas the MVC vote affirms willingness to assume ownership.

There are still a few logistical steps before entering escrow — including a new survey of the Park boundaries — then, voila, it's ours! This, of course, assumes that the City accepts the purchase, which is not a slam-dunk, but optimism reigns. I, for one, am excited to begin a new, colorful chapter in the history of our community; how about you?

Gas/Electrical Replacement

Meanwhile, the PAC Board is addressing other important issues, most notably the PG&E gas/electrical infrastructure replacement project. The multimillion-dollar project is a major windfall for us, but it comes with some significant concerns (major, for some of us), such as smart meters, EMF emissions, and the placement of pedestals and bollards in front yards. We are trying to arrange one or more workshops with the City to air these concerns.

Financially, we remain sound and are also looking forward to the annual return of the goats in July.



John Hansen
PAC PRESIDENT
415-847-7155

johnhansen.emt@gmail.com



Update from MVC's Policy Committee

by **ALAN GUMP** and
SERENA FISHER,
MVC Policy Committee

At the June 3 PAC Board meeting, the Board voted to retire the PAC Resident

Ownership Discovery Committee (ROD-C), as it had completed its researching and recommending community self-ownership options mission to both the PAC Board and the community.

Beginning in late 2023 and continuing into 2024, the Committee introduced the community to Resident Owned Communities USA (ROC USA) and the California Center for Cooperative Development (CCCD). It also hosted a number of workshops and conducted several community votes required to form a nonprofit public benefit corporation, seat a board of directors, establish interim bylaws, and conduct a membership drive.

MVC Policy Committee

This year, the Committee morphed into the MVC Policy Committee and brought two key policies to the membership for ratification: the Empowerment Resolution and the Certified Technical Assistance Agreement. Both documents can be found on marinvalley.net.

Rules & Regulations Subcommittee

To continue the work started in February to revise and update the current PAC Rules & Regulations — as well as the draft Rules & Regulations reviewed but never approved by the City — the Policy Committee has established a new Rules & Regulations Review Subcommittee consisting of nine MVC members. This work involves squaring the draft set of Rules & Regs with the 2025 California Mobilehome Residency Law (MRL) and the City of Novato Municipal Code, but anticipates establishing our own Park rules within the MRL/Municipal Code, where we have some flexibility. We continue to work with Randy Keller, our CCCD technical adviser, who keeps us from running over cliff edges.

The nine Subcommittee members bring a wide range of opinions and perspectives to the work. Once consensus is reached on a draft, we will refer it to our attorney for review. We will then host one or more community workshops to explain the proposed rules, after which we will schedule a Member vote to approve or reject them. Items on which consensus cannot be reached by the Subcommittee will be voted on directly by the Members.

We wish to thank **Janine Bradley, Sean Casey, Pat Higgins, Connie Marelich, Sue Meyer, Judy Rejebian, Tom Weeden, Charlotte Weiser, and Richard Wilkerson** for their continued hard work! Thanks also to **Joe DeAvila, Lisa Jackler, Elizabeth Lev, and Jae Tillinghast**, who contributed to our efforts before having to step off the Subcommittee due to scheduling or other commitments.

This Subcommittee is another example of how our community members step up to improve the lives of Marin Valley residents. Once we become a co-op, we will rely on this spirit of volunteer participation, as the co-op bylaws call for strong democratic involvement and member engagement.

The co-op will be only as strong as its Members, so let's get ready! ■



Strive to Thrive

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

My philosophy professor once asked what was the most valuable possession I had. Of course, as a young philosophy student, I thought carefully about some of my most cherished possessions — and so did everyone else in the class. Nobody had the right answer. He laughed at us all. Today, I could answer that question quickly and correctly, as could almost everyone in this community: clearly, our health is our most valuable possession. We come into this world naked, and we leave the same way. All that stuff we worked so hard to obtain and save turns out to be not as important as our optimal, age-adjusted health. So to get the most out of the precious time we have on this planet, we must take excellent care of our most cherished possession, our health.

We eat right. As the great Vince Lombardi once said, “You cannot get in shape on beer and cream puffs.” We sleep right — 7.5 to 9 hours a night. And we must exercise right. While eating is relatively easy, and sleeping is usually even easier, exercising can be challenging. As we age, it becomes more difficult, sometimes painful, and often hard to fit into the day's activities.

So what's the best exercise — or should I say, what are the best options? A stationary bike is a great low-impact choice. Chair yoga helps stretch muscles and tendons. Swimming and water aerobics offer full-body, low-impact workouts that also help keep you cool. All of these options are available right here in Marin Valley, mostly for free. And if you were a runner before, perhaps you can still enjoy light jogging. These are all great options, but the top recommendation for seniors — according to physical therapists and doctors — is walking.

Start with short, gentle walks and gradually increase their duration and intensity. Aim for 20 to 30 minutes on most days, eventually building up to 30 to 60 minutes a day. Take a walk, or take a hike — but move it! “Move it or lose it,” as the saying goes. This is more important than ever for us seniors. It's not about building strength, muscle mass, or endurance; it's more about keeping our tendons and ligaments flexed and stretched to prevent contraction and hardening. Just like the lenses in your eyes — which lose their ability to flex and adjust so that we end up wearing reading glasses — your ligaments and tendons lose their

elasticity. And once it's gone, it doesn't come back. If muscles are not actively maintained, contractions and stiffness will worsen quickly.

One of the most delightful places to take a walk is right here in this beautiful, bucolic setting of Marin Valley. We're not chasing golf balls in this country club — we're chasing a top-quality life in a retirement or soon-to-retire community. We don't even have a miniature golf course. We walk simply for the joy of walking, not to chase a 1.7-inch ball.

That said, walking in MVMCC is not without its risks. There are no sidewalks. Number one, you must be seen by drivers. Walk facing traffic. Don't let a car come up behind you; that driver might be looking at their cell phone, blinded by the sun, distracted by a crossing animal, or otherwise inattentive. Add to that those who exceed the speed limit, recklessly take wide turns on blind corners, roll through stop signs, or perhaps should no longer be behind the steering wheel of a 3,000-pound moving vehicle.

Yes, pedestrians have the right of way — but being right and being hurt are two different things. You can be dead right in a crosswalk! Your number one job as a walker is to make sure no oncoming car is going to hit you. That's your responsibility, not just theirs, because you're the one with the most to lose.

In the military, we used to call this "situational awareness." Always make eye contact with the driver. A wave and a return wave help confirm that they see you — after all, this is how we acknowledge our neighbors here in Marin Valley.

If you don't get that acknowledgment, get out of the way quickly. Better yet, make sure you are sporting something brightly colored and easily seen. Even ditch diggers wear bright colors these days. And always carry your cell phone — it could come in handy if you're lying in a ditch after a stroke or a heart attack

and you'd like to chat with someone about your situation.

Although the speed limit here is 15 miles per hour, that rarely seems to be how people drive. I'm a big advocate for speed bumps to slow these crazy speeders down. I've pushed for them for years as I sit in the meetings of the Novato Fire District Board of Directors. I've always been shut down by the retort that it slows down the response time of ambulances and other emergency vehicles, thus putting people's lives in danger. I've lost that argument so many times that I now smile when I bring it up. We have two incidental, ineffective, and almost laughable speed bumps in front of the clubhouse. I believe we need proper speed bumps all over the Park to keep us safe and help avoid some of those 9-1-1 calls in the first place. Speed bumps, speed humps, speed tables, speed ripples — whatever you want to call them — please support the idea for everyone's safety.

If you walk at night wearing a reflective vest and carrying a flashlight, a whistle, and your cell phone, you'll be much safer. Ironically, walking at night with proper safety gear may be safer than walking during the day. A reflective vest makes you far more visible in headlights. These steps may sound silly, but they make a whole lot of sense — especially when you consider that walking is the most recommended and beneficial exercise you can do to protect your most valuable possession while also staying in good shape.

Lastly, we are fortunate to have a well-equipped workout room for whatever joint or muscle needs a proper tune-up, conditioning, or special attention. There is a key to using it — and I don't mean the one for the door. The key is to just show up. The rest will happen easily. Twenty to thirty minutes later you'll be glad you did. You'll feel better, and your outlook will likely improve for the rest of your day and your tomorrow.

Strive to thrive! ■



You Think Nobody Notices?

by **JOHN FELD**



As we move toward greater self-governance and ownership of our Park, we'll have the opportunity to create new rules that reflect our community's values. These are presently being developed by a dedicated team and will ultimately be voted on by MVC Members.

However, some existing regulations — especially regarding vehicles — must continue to be followed for legal and safety reasons.

Overnight Street Parking

Street parking between midnight and 7 am will almost certainly remain prohibited. Keeping roads clear is essential, especially for emergency vehicles. Even a short delay caused by maneuvering around a parked car could be life-threatening in a medical or fire emergency.

Legal Parking Restrictions

Some rules are set by state and federal law and cannot be changed:

- No parking within 20 feet of a fire hydrant.
- A **complete** stop at all stop signs is mandatory.
- The 15-mph speed limit throughout the Park is a California law for mobile home communities.

Unfortunately, many of these rules are frequently ignored. As volunteers for the Free Food program, we often witness vehicles speeding or rolling through stop signs near the clubhouse while waiting for and unloading deliveries. I estimate fewer than four percent of drivers come to a full stop, and many exceed the speed limit — residents and visitors alike.

Carport Capacity

You may not park more vehicles in your carport than it was designed to hold. This helps ensure safety and keeps shared spaces accessible.

Cul-de-Sac Parking

Temporary parking in cul-de-sacs (outside of carports or driveways) is allowed **only for active loading or unloading**, and only if it doesn't block other vehicles.

Please pay attention to the posted speed limit signs at the entrance and throughout the Park. Encourage delivery drivers to slow down as well — for everyone's safety. If you see a delivery van going too fast, signal to the driver to slow down. Driving from the turnaround on Club View Drive to the top of the hill at 15 mph instead of 30 mph takes only a few extra minutes — and can make a big difference in keeping our community safe.

Let's all do our part to maintain a safe and respectful environment for everyone. ■

Message from MarVal

Dear Friends,

Today I would like to shine a spotlight on some of the other volunteers who make Mar Val the vibrant organization that it is.

The RBS Group

Let's start with the Registered Beverage Servers, the RBS group. As of fall of 2022, any person in the state of California who serves alcohol in any capacity must be licensed by the state — yes, this includes servers as well as the bartenders.

To be certified, one must take an online course and pass a test and then take a 50-question test provided by the state. Mar Val is most fortunate that a number of folks went through this process and are now those who serve your drinks. This group includes **Gayle Atkinson, Joan Cervisi, Larry Cohen, Sandee Duncan, Susan Harper, Carol-Joy Harris, Susan Hoff, Julia Mathews, Paul Weinberger, and Janet Willett**, as well as our Bar Manager, **Anne Glasscock**. Mar Val is fortunate to also have several other RBS folks who work with other organizations and have registered with us in case we need a little extra help from time to time. They include **Bill Davis, Gary McClendon, and Tom Teixeira**. Not an RBS person but an equally important beverage server is **Tom Nadolski**, our chief coffee maker.

Ticketers

We have drink ticket sellers: this group includes **Barbara Bell, Gunnel Bergstrom, Anita Flantz, Connie Marelich, and Julia Mathews**. We also have as our raffle ticket sellers **Peggy Hill and Barbara Machalk**.

Pubbers

Our newest group is the Pubbers: these wonderful folks make the fresh popcorn, put out the snacks, cook and serve the pizza, and then wash the dishes and clean the kitchen on Pub nights. Each group takes on these responsibilities

once a month. These folks are **Gunnel Bergstrom, Barbara Matas, Julia Mathews, Dick and Judi Purdom-Park, Ursula Pedersen, Ro Rigney, Edie Tanem, and Charlotte Weiser**.

Ambiance and Service

We also have our decorators who set and decorate tables prior to each event and the wonderful food servers who assist with the buffets, along with those who serve dessert. This list is miles long; some of you do this regularly, and others do it occasionally ... you are all important to the success of the event.

So next time you come to Pub or to an event, remember that it is not just a glass of wine or just a hot dog, or just a knife and fork on the table ... think about the many necessary steps that it took to provide you with that drink or food in a party setting. Mar Val volunteers enjoy what they do and have a good time while doing it.

And once again, our most important volunteers are all of you, those who just jump right in when you see a task that needs doing ... you just do it. Mar Val Board joins me in expressing our appreciation for all of you.

No Pub on July 4

Alert regarding July 4 — this event falls on a Friday, normally a Pub night. There is no Pub on July 4 ... only those folks with paid reservations will be admitted to this event. Sorry, folks, these are ABC rules, so make your reservations early and come join the celebration.

Hope to see you at the July 4 celebration and at Pasta Pub night on July 25.



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



Mar Val presents
Independence Day!!
Thursday, July 4

5 pm Cocktails 6 pm Dinner

Music by Brynda Foster!!

Menu

Pulled Pork Sandwich or Egg Salad Sandwich

Green Salad & Macaroni Salad

Apple Pie

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

Deadline for reservations: Tuesday, July 1, 5 pm

(or when 120 reservations have been received).

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

Mar Val

PASTA PUB NIGHT

Friday, July 25

Dinner will start at 5:30 pm



Enjoy a Glass of Italian Wine with Your Pasta

Larry's world-famous Pasta Sauces
(your choice of Pesto or Meat)
Salad and Garlic bread

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

Reservation deadline – Wednesday, July 22, 5 pm

or when 100 reservations have been received.

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



Prohibition Party

Saturday, August 9

5 pm Cocktails 6 pm Dinner



Flapper Costume Contest

Winner gets a free
Bathtub Gin & Tonic

Menu

Roy's Meatloaf

Myrna's Macaroni & Cheese

Coleslaw, Rolls

Chef's Surprise Dessert

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

Reservation deadline: Wednesday, August 6, 5 pm

or when 120 reservations have been received.

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

Home Owners League Message

Greetings,

Breezeway Marketplace

Recently, HOL had a thoughtful discussion about the pros and cons of offering food that isn't always the healthiest. From cakes and cookies to various processed snacks, a wide array of items pass across our tables. We sometimes worry about the nutritional value of what's available and its impact on resident health. That said, the food is always gratefully received, and we appreciate every donation from the various stores in Marin.

Ultimately, we recognize that you are all adults who understand what works for your individual diets. We trust that you choose what suits you best and hope that no one is developing food-related issues as a result of the generous deliveries.

A heartfelt thank you goes out to the incredible Park volunteers who make the Free Food program at Breezeway Market possible. These community heroes donate countless hours of their time, and their dedication deserves special recognition. Leading the charge is **Jill Boland**, who handles ordering all the supplies — containers, paper bags, and more — and even takes the time to decorate the tables and cupboards. Jill keeps us organized, encourages us with kindness, handles corrections with grace, and absorbs all the complaints and suggestions with a great sense of humor.

The rest of the team is just as vital: **Ginger Christie, Mary Coyne, Mike Gardner, Jim Gronvold,**

John Hansen, Susan Hoff, Meg Jordan, Anne Lakota, Joan Leopold, Gary McClendon, Deb McNeil, Sue Meyer, Steve and Tara Plocher, Mike Theircof, Jan Thomas, and Brad Witherspoon.

Their tasks include setting up and breaking down, collecting donated food, distributing food to those unable to attend, and keeping everything running smoothly. If more of us contributed even a fraction of these folks' time and effort, Marin Valley would be even more amazing than it already is.

Thanks also to everyone who donates to the collection box and to those who remember to use hand sanitizer before touching the food — you are appreciated!



Summertime by Suzie Lahr

Art in the Park

By the time you read this, a new collection of artwork will be on display at the Marin Valley Gallery. Thanks to Suzie Lahr, David Gray, and their assistants, we enjoy regular exhibits that showcase the amazing creativity of our Park residents. If you paint, sculpt, weave, draw — or create any kind of visual art — they would love to feature your work. You might even make a sale!

Carports

Our diligent Matt regularly reminds us to keep our carports clean and free of clutter. Still, some areas are beginning to collect debris. This not only raises concerns from neighbors but also creates potential fire hazards and attracts rodents. Please take a few minutes to tidy up — your neighbors will thank you!

Classified Ads in the *Echo*

Although we've only had a few ads in the *Echo* over the years, we'd love for more of you to use this free resource. Whether you're looking to hire help with writing your memoir, sell a vintage sideboard, or give away something too large for the Breezeway Boutique, consider placing an ad. This service is only for residents — we don't accept listings for outside services or goods. Submit your ads to Sandy at zeich@comcast.net by the 8th of the month prior to publication.

New Chair Yoga Class

Not only did residents appreciate Laura Schepps's demonstration Chair Yoga class, but they asked her to come back not once but twice a week. See p. 13.

Just 1 Hour

A big thank you to Ray Schneider for once again offering to coordinate this wonderful service. See p. 13.

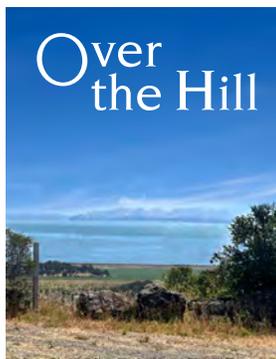
Thank you, stay safe, and stay cool.



Marin Valley Community Journal

Residents' Reflections on Living in Marin Valley

by **MICHALE DANCER**, HOL Board



Please allow me to introduce you to our new *Marin Valley Community Journal*. As we enter our Park and come over the hill, many of us feel a soothing sense of calm and nurturing beauty that defines our small, tight-knit community.

To celebrate and share this special experience, we created an open journal for all residents who wish to reflect on what it means to live here. We invite you to participate by contributing to a three-ring binder — whether through short notes, photos, drawings, poems, long stories, or other creative endeavors — available in the community library. Your heartfelt reflections will help preserve the unique spirit of our community and become a part of our ongoing history at Marin Valley.

We look forward to hearing from you and sharing in the joy of living here. ■

Michale Dancer
415-519-3395
Michale@StillLifeGifts.com



How to Deal with Anxiety, Stress, and Anger

by **MARTY GELMAN**

**Monday, July 28 • Fireside Room
4:30 pm**

For July's Last Monday Lecture, please welcome **Edward Vander Clute**, LCSW, a clinical social worker who provides psychotherapy and counseling services at Marin Health. He specializes in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and Gestalt Therapy.



CBT is one of the most versatile and effective therapy approaches. It has been used since the 1960s to help individuals change patterns of behavior and thinking to improve the way they feel. The basic approach is founded on three core principles:

1. Disordered emotions and other psychological concerns are often linked to negative thought patterns.
2. Unhelpful behavior patterns may contribute to psychological and emotional difficulties.
3. Developing healthy coping mechanisms allows individuals to change destructive patterns of thought and behavior.

Over the decades of research and practice utilizing CBT, these three simple principles have helped people by decreasing symptoms of depression and anxiety, relieving stress, and managing anger.

I hope his presentation will be helpful to you, and of course he will be happy to answer any questions you may have. ■

Just 1 Hour

A Neighborly Helping Hand

by **RAY SCHNEIDER**



JUST 1 HOUR

In the May and June issues of the *Echo*, HOL asked for a new coordinator for Just 1 Hour. I chaired the program in 2018 and 2019, enjoyed the experience, and have decided to step back into the role.

What Is Just 1 Hour (J1H)?

J1H connects resident volunteers with neighbors who need occasional, short-term help — things they'd usually do themselves if not for illness, injury, age, or temporary limitation. Rather than hiring outside help, residents can turn to J1H for friendly assistance from within the community.

If it's a task that doesn't take more than an hour and isn't frequent or permanent, it's probably something a J1H volunteer can help with.

All requests go through me to ensure tasks stay within our guidelines and to spare volunteers from having to decline requests directly.

There's no payment involved — just the satisfaction of helping a neighbor and building community.

Volunteer names will remain private and shared only within our group email list. If you'd like to volunteer or learn more, please reach out. I'd love to include you! ■

Ray Schneider
23 View Ridge Drive
415-883-4182
ray@delannaray.com

Examples of typical one-hour tasks include:

- Replacing batteries or lightbulbs
- Hanging pictures or moving light furniture
- Minor repairs or installing a doorknob
- Pulling items from high shelves
- Picking up prescriptions or giving rides
- Setting up a TV or resetting a computer password
- Reading instructions or installing a smoke alarm

Occasional but ongoing needs may also include:

- Light ironing or laundry
- Meal prep or shopping
- Pet care or dog walking
- Visiting or emotional support
- Gardening or yard work
- Taking out the trash

New Chair Yoga Class

by **JOHN FELD**

Tuesdays & Thursdays • 11 am –12 pm • Fireside Room

Discover the benefits of Chair Yoga, featuring new instructor Laura Schepps. Laura's gentle, accessible yoga style is for anyone, either new to yoga or with years of practice. Join us in the Fireside Room Tuesdays and Thursdays at 11 am, starting June 26. Classes will be on a flexible \$5–\$15 sliding scale.

With her degree in dance and experience in various movement forms, including dance, aerobics, stretch, relaxation, and the Feldenkrais Method, Laura brings a unique expertise to her classes.

We invite you to experience this wonderfully gentle yoga. ■

Choose “Free and Clear” — The Hidden Dangers of Dryer Sheets

by **JUDY LANE**, NP, MS and **SERENA FISHER**

As we age, our health becomes a top priority — and so should the health of the environment we all share. As a community of older adults living in close quarters, what we use in our homes doesn't stay confined to our walls. The air we breathe, the water we share, and even the scents wafting from a dryer can affect not only our well-being, but also our neighbors and local wildlife — especially pollinators like bees and butterflies.

For seniors with preexisting health conditions such as asthma, allergies, or compromised immune systems, exposure to these chemicals can exacerbate symptoms and lead to further health complications.

One everyday product you might not think twice about? The humble dryer sheet.

The Hidden Dangers of Dryer Sheets

We may think that dryer sheets make our laundry smell “fresh,” but the fragrance and softness come at a price. These small sheets often contain a mix of chemicals, including:

- **Quaternary ammonium compounds (quats)** – Linked to respiratory issues and reproductive toxicity.
- **Synthetic fragrances** – Known to trigger allergic reactions, migraines, skin irritation, and asthma. Some of these may contain chemicals called phthalates that can disrupt our endocrine systems.
- **Volatile organic compounds (VOCs)** – Gases released when heated, contributing to indoor and outdoor air pollution.

For those with asthma, COPD, autoimmune disorders, or chemical sensitivities, these exposures can worsen symptoms. And because these chemicals are released into shared airspaces during laundry cycles, your neighbors may be affected too — without even knowing where the symptoms are coming from. Also, the smell can be unpleasantly overwhelming for many people.

Impact on the Environment — and Our Pollinators

The effects of dryer sheets go far beyond the laundry room. When used, washed, or thrown out, they release chemicals that seep into the soil, water, and air. Pollinators like bees and butterflies are especially vulnerable:

- **Airborne VOCs** from dryer exhaust settle onto plants and flowers, masking natural floral scents. Bees rely on scent to find food — when those scents are distorted, bees may avoid the area altogether.
- **“Forever chemicals” like PFAS**, often found in laundry products, make their way into puddles and garden water sources where pollinators drink, affecting their neurological and reproductive systems.
- **Toxins in soil** disrupt plant health, reducing nectar and pollen availability, which directly harms pollinator populations and plant biodiversity.

Given the importance of pollinators to our food supply and ecosystem stability, protecting them is not just kind — it's critical.

Safer, Simpler Alternatives

The good news? You don't have to sacrifice soft clothes or fresh laundry. There are effective, affordable, and nontoxic alternatives that are better for your health, your neighbors, and the environment.

- **Wool Dryer Balls** – These reusable balls naturally soften fabrics, reduce static, and can be found at many stores, including Trader Joe's, for under \$6. They last for years and contain zero harmful chemicals. You can also make your own; see box, next page.



- **White Vinegar** – Add ½ cup to your wash cycle to soften clothes and remove detergent buildup — no scent needed. White vinegar is extremely inexpensive to buy. Do not use it frequently as it can erode the machine's seals over time.
- **Baking Soda** is generally safe to use in a washing machine and will not ruin the seals. It is a natural cleaner that can help soften water due to its alkalinity and enhance the cleaning power of detergents. Baking soda can absorb odors, helping to freshen up clothes and the washing machine itself, and it can remove stains.
- **DIY Dryer Sheets** – Soak small cloths in a mix of white vinegar and a drop of pure essential oils like lavender or lemon. Toss one in with your laundry for a safe, homemade alternative.
- **Detergent Sheets** that come in a paper envelope — no plastic to recycle!



A Small Change with Big Impact

Making this switch may seem like a small gesture — but it adds up. Fewer chemicals in your laundry mean:

- Better breathing and fewer irritants for you and your neighbors.
- Healthier pollinators, flowers, and ecosystems.
- A cleaner, safer home for future generations.

Let's take this opportunity to make a conscious shift — not just for ourselves, but for our community and this wonderful natural world we're all part of. You don't need to do it all at once — but replacing that box of dryer sheets with a bag of wool balls or a jug of vinegar is a perfect place to start.

If you're unsure where to begin or need help finding safer products, don't hesitate to reach out. In our research, Costco, Trader Joe's, Whole Foods, Nugget, and Safeway all sell products that are fragrance-free and healthier options. Look for "Free and Clear" on the label.



Together, we can clear the air — literally and figuratively — and create a healthier home and habitat for all in our wonderful community. Thank you! ■

Make Your Own Dryer Balls

by **ELIZABETH LEV**

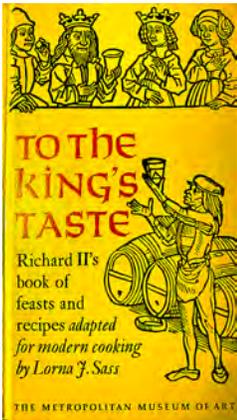


When using dryers and being savvy about chemicals, here's an easy and quick solution: dryer balls made from moth-eaten sweaters. Take your ancient cashmere sweater, cut the sleeves off and roll them up together tightly, tie with a bit of cloth tape, and stuff the resulting lump into a stray sock or a six-inch piece of nylon stocking. Cut the sweater in half and make two more balls. I have them at the ready but only use the dryer for 5 to 10 minutes. Then I take them out and put the items on a wooden rack — over the vents in the winter and near an open window in the summer. (Note: dryers can gobble up electricity, so less use is more economical.) Easy to make and use! ■

My Lunch with Julia Child

by **LORNA SASS**

When my medieval cookbook *To the King's Taste* came out in 1975, I couldn't imagine anyone not wanting to read about the recipes that survived from the court of King Richard II of England, dating back to 1392. I was so excited



about my discovery that I wrote to Elizabeth David and Jane Grigson, the two most famous cookbook authors in England, and I also sent a note to the reigning queen of cooking in America, Julia Child.

Knowing I would be in Aix-en-Provence that summer attempting to learn French, and knowing that Julia and Paul Child would be at their home in nearby Gras, I suggested that perhaps I could visit them and personally bring an autographed copy of the book. How I got the nerve to do all this, I do not know. Nor do I recall how I got Julia's address. But soon after popping the note in the mail I heard back from her. In her characteristically friendly, energetic, and generous way, Julia responded that she would be delighted to have me over to lunch and suggested a date and time.

Not having a rental car, I had no idea how I'd get myself there, but when I told two fellow students, Pietro and Rick, about my dilemma, they

offered to drop me off and pick me up, knowing that it would give them a precious chance to meet Julia as well.

The Child cottage, located on the property of Julia's colleague Simone Beck (coauthor of *Mastering the Art of French Cooking*), was sweet but quite modest. I remember a small open space, with the dining table placed near a window with some foliage swaying outside. Julia served a simple, fresh fillet of trout with fresh vegetables. Paul, ten years her senior, seemed curmudgeonly and not especially talkative, but Julia doted on his occasional comments and remained chipper and cheerful.

She thanked me profusely for the book and asked how I had come to write it. Describing how I had discovered the manuscript recipes while studying for my PhD in medieval literature, she smiled and nodded with a look of surprise. "Did you find any ancestors of French dishes in the manuscript?" she asked. I explained how recipes moved from North Africa up through southern Italy, then to France and finally England; and yes, there was a *Tart de Bry* (Brie Tart) that was a medieval version of quiche. Julia congratulated me on my discoveries and encouraged me to continue delving into food history. I nodded happily and told her that my next book would be *To the Queen's Taste*, focused on Elizabethan cookery.

Time flew by, and after about an hour and a half, Pietro and Rick arrived to fetch me. "What have you two been doing with yourselves?" asked the inquisitive and gracious Julia. "We went to Moulin de

Mougins," Pietro replied, rolling his eyes with pleasure. "Ah, good choice," commented Julia with a gentle nod and smile.

When I heard that my friends had managed last-minute reservations at the world-famous restaurant of Roger Vergé in nearby St. Paul de Vence, I became green with envy. After a few more pleasantries, I gave Julia a goodbye hug and thanked her for the lovely lunch, and we were off.

On the ride home, Pietro and Rick regaled me with details of their magnificent lunch, and I continued to feel envious that I had missed out on this great gastronomic experience ... until it suddenly dawned on me that anyone with the interest and means could have a four-star meal in a glorious French restaurant in the south of France — but how many people got the chance to enjoy a delicious, home-cooked meal prepared just for them by Julia Child?

In the years that followed, as my culinary career developed, Julia was always very kind to me. When we met at a culinary function, she would invariably ask what I was up to. When I became known for my later books on pressure cooking, she would inquire about that, too, and remind me that pressure cookers are quite common in French kitchens.

Julia was an amazing human: friendly, warm, enthusiastic, and generous of spirit. Although six feet tall and larger than life, she was very down-to-earth.

I miss you, Julia! ■

Tiny Wings, Big Responsibility

by **RO RIGNEY**

For many of us in this community, hanging a bird feeder outside a window brings daily joy. For me, watching hummingbirds stop by for a quick snack is a little reminder of the natural beauty just outside.

Recently, I came across something sad: a little hummingbird, lifeless on my porch steps. I immediately spoke with a specialist at WildCare (wildlife hospital) who explained that it likely suffered from a disease called avian conjunctivitis — the bird version of pink eye. It's more common than you might think, and unfortunately, dirty feeders tend to be a big part of the problem.

Birds gather, eat, and sometimes leave behind saliva and droppings at these public feeding tables. Feeders can become a breeding ground for harmful bacteria and viruses that spread from bird to bird. One of the most common diseases that spreads at feeders is avian conjunctivitis. It spreads quickly, can affect an entire flock, and tends to be fatal because the eyes crust over, blinding the bird.

The good news is that regular feeder cleaning makes a huge difference. This article is focused on hummingbird feeders with suggestions from WildCare, Audubon, and Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

Hummingbird feeders should be cleaned every 3–5 days in cool weather, every 1–2 days in hot weather, and daily in a heatwave.

Cornell states to not use any kind of soap, especially those with perfume, as the residue is extremely harmful to “hummers.” Rather, they suggest using a vinegar and water soak. They also suggest a diluted bleach solution, but

this requires extra time to air dry after a very thorough rinsing.

1. Take the feeder down and empty out old nectar.
2. Disassemble as much as possible — get into all the nooks and crannies with a bottle brush and/or toothbrush, using hot water to remove all buildup.
3. Soak in a solution of one part white vinegar to four parts hot water for 30–60 minutes.
4. Rinse well with clean hot water — make sure all vinegar is gone.

Regarding feeder designs, look for those with smooth, easy-to-wash materials and wide openings. Avoid feeders with small crevices, hard-to-reach tubes or attached decorations and choose models that disassemble easily. Avoid designs where a bird's head or beak would rest against a surface, to avoid spreading disease. Replace old or cracked feeders if they trap mold or debris.

A few extra tips just for hummingbirds: Never use red dye or honey in hummingbird nectar. Use a 4:1 ratio of water to plain white sugar. Make a fresh batch every few days and refrigerate what you don't use; discard after a week.

Not everyone in our community can reach their feeders easily or manage the scrubbing and rinsing process. This is a perfect opportunity to help a neighbor clean theirs. If you need help, don't be shy to ask! Many of us would be happy to lend a hand.

Taking a few minutes to clean a feeder may seem small, but it has a big impact. It's an act of care — for the birds, for our environment, and for the peace we all enjoy in our gardens and porches. This type of kindness really flies! ■

Classifieds

by **SANDY ZEICHNER**

Need some help that doesn't qualify for HOL's Just 1 Hour service? Have items too large for the Boutique or that you prefer to sell? We are pleased to announce an *Echo Classifieds* column, which will appear whenever needed and wherever it fits. The categories are as boundless as your needs. For example:

FOR SALE

Beautiful comfy couch — \$

FOR FREE

Bookcases

LOST & FOUND

Sweater found in the gym

SERVICES OFFERED

Need an in-house pet sitter?

LOOKING FOR SERVICES

Would like to learn to quilt.

My computer says there is no more storage — help.

Send your items to zeich@comcast.net. (Photos speak louder than words.)

Our first listing!



FOR FREE

Four clean pine bookshelves, all 4½" deep — the perfect size for paperbacks. Two are 37" w x 27" h, One is 27½" w x 44½" h, One is 20" w x 44½" h. Call Grant Canfield, 415-382-1792.

Hummingbird Nest

Text and Photography by **DAVID GRAY**

During the month of May, I was taking an online “backyard birds” photography course that was offered by Looking Glass Photographic Arts in Berkeley. I picked up many useful tips, including:

1. Waking up before dawn to listen to the “dawn chorus” of local birds.
2. Having a camera ready to go at a moment’s notice.
3. Being aware of calls and movement of birds around us.

I was able to put all of these into practice, especially #3: after teaching a video camera workshop to the excellent tech team who supports our PAC and MVC Board meetings, I was walking home and heard a hummingbird overhead. I stayed still and looked for movement in my peripheral vision until I spotted an Anna’s hummingbird (*calypte anna*) flitting about in a tree, and watched it land ... in a nest!!!

This was my very first sighting of a hummingbird in its nest. I was *so* excited ... but also starving. It was late afternoon, and I took the risk of

not immediately grabbing a camera to photograph the hummingbird. Instead, I went home to have dinner while waiting for the “golden hour” of the light from the setting sun to arrive. Heading back after dinner with camera and a long lens in hand, I found the nest again.

I was fascinated to clearly see the spiderweb material that the parent hummingbirds had used to secure the nest to the tree branch, the lichens used to camouflage it, and the protruding feathers that they had used to line the nest.



Hummingbird nest

On closer inspection, the bird in the nest was an immature hummingbird who had almost completely fledged. My clues were: the shortness of the beak, yellow tones at the base of the beak, and muted coloration relative to adults.



Hummingbird fledgling in its nest



Hummingbird fledgling says "FEED ME"

As I was watching the fledgling luxuriating in the nest that it had clearly overgrown, I heard a second hummingbird approach. It was the female parent, who had come to feed its teenager, the fledgling sending out the international "FEED ME" sign, possibly for the last time. The time between hatching and fledging is quite short: 18 to 25 days.

So keep your ears and eyes open and aware ... you never know what wonders you might behold! ■



Female hummingbird feeding its fledgling

JULY 2025

SEE WWW.MARINVALLEY.NET
FOR UPDATES AND LINKS

| | | TUESDAY 1 | WEDNESDAY 2 | THURSDAY 3 | FRIDAY 4 | SATURDAY 5 |
|--|---|---|--|---|---|------------------|
| | | 7:30-9 Taiji <i>Deck/ David MacLam</i> | 7:30-9 Taiji <i>Deck/David MacLam</i> | 7:30-9 Taiji <i>Deck/ David MacLam</i> | 7:30-9 Taiji <i>Deck/David MacLam</i> | |
| | | 10:30-11:30 Craft & Chat <i>Library</i> | 10-11 Water Aerobics <i>Pool</i> | 11-12 Chair Yoga <i>Fireside Room</i> | 10-11 Water Aerobics <i>Pool</i> | |
| | | 11-12 Chair Yoga <i>Fireside Room</i> | | 11-12 Rollin' Root | 12 Mahjong <i>Fireside Room</i> | |
| | | 5 July 4th reservation deadline | | 4:30 HOL Board Meeting <i>Fireside Room</i> | 5 Mar Val 4th of July Dinner <i>Ballroom</i> | 7 Dancing Meadow |
| | | 5 PAC Board Meeting | | | INDEPENDENCE DAY | |
| SUNDAY 6 | MONDAY 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| 7:30-9 Taiji <i>Deck/ David MacLam</i> | 6 Trash | 7:30-9 Taiji | 7:30-9 Taiji | 7:30-9 Taiji | 7:30-9 Taiji | |
| 12-1 Group Strength Training <i>Bamboo Room/ Nan Watanabe</i> | 7:30-9 Taiji <i>Deck/ David MacLam</i> | 10:30-11:30 Craft & Chat | 10-11 Water Aerobics | 11-12 Chair Yoga | 10-11 Water Aerobics | |
| | 10-11 Water Aerobics <i>Pool</i> | 11-12 Chair Yoga | 5 Mar Val Board Meeting <i>Ballroom</i> | 11-12 Rollin' Root  | 11:30 Fire Safe Marin Leaders Mtg** | |
| | | 4:30-6:30 Difficult Conversations <i>Fireside Room</i> | | 6-10 Board Game Night <i>Fireside Room</i> | 12 Mahjong Pub | 7 Dancing |
| | | ECHO DEADLINE | | | 5-7 Pub | |
| 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| 7:30-9 Taiji | 6 Trash | 7:30-9 Taiji | 7:30-9 Taiji | 7:30-9 Taiji | 7:30-9 Taiji | |
| 12-1 Group Strength Training | 7:30-9 Taiji | 10:30-11:30 Craft & Chat | 10-11 Water Aerobics | 11-12 Chair Yoga | 10-11 Water Aerobics | |
| | 10-11 Water Aerobics | 11-12 Chair Yoga | 11 Ladies' Bridge <i>Private, Fireside Room</i> | 11-12 Rollin' Root  | 12 Mahjong Pub | 7 Dancing |
| | | 5 MVC Board Meeting <i>Ballroom/ Zoom*</i> | 4-5:30 Men's Group <i>Fireside Room***</i> | | 5-7 Pub | |
| 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 |
| 7:30-9 Taiji | 6 Trash | 7:30-9 Taiji | 7:30-9 Taiji | 7:30-9 Taiji | 7:30-9 Taiji | |
| 12-1 Group Strength Training | 7:30-9 Taiji | 10:30-11:30 Craft & Chat | 10-11 Water Aerobics | 11-12 Chair Yoga | 10-11 Water Aerobics | |
| | 10-11 Water Aerobics | 11-12 Chair Yoga | | 11-12 Rollin' Root  | 12 Mahjong | 7 Dancing |
| | | 5 Pasta Pub deadline | | | 5-7 Pasta Pub | |
| 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | | |
| 7:30-9 Taiji | 6 Trash | 7:30-9 Taiji | 7:30-9 Taiji | 7:30-9 Taiji | | |
| 12-1 Group Strength Training | 7:30-11:30 Taiji | 10:30-11:30 Craft & Chat | 10-11 Water Aerobics | 11-12 Chair Yoga | | |
| | 10-11 Water Aerobics | 11-12 Chair Yoga | 4 Book Club <i>Carol-Joy Harris*</i> | 11-12 Rollin' Root  | | |
| | 4:30 Last Monday Lectures: Edward Vander Chute —How to Deal with Anxiety, Stress, and Anger <i>Fireside Room/ Marty Gelman</i> | | | | | |

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