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CALENDAR: May 2026



Management Update

- If you need assistance or have an after-hours emergency, please call the main number at 415-883-5911. Maintenance will be paged.
- A licensed termite company has been hired to begin work in the downstairs card room to address the termite issue.
- The 2026–27 draft budget has been submitted to PAC for review prior to its submission to the City for the final council vote.
- The quarterly sewer cleanout is in progress.
- Replacement of the clubhouse roof began in mid-April.



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

IMPORTANT Community Meeting
Park Acquisition – Next Steps!
Wednesday, April 29 • 5:30–7pm

SAVE THE DATE
VALERIE BARBOUR
 Celebration of Life
 June 6 • Afternoon • Clubhouse
All are welcome

REGISTER FOR

<https://marin.sircom.org/subscribe>

CA CRV
Bottles and Cans
 KEEP THEM COMING —
BACK OF THE BREEZEWAY

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.

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
 MHB Group Region 8 Publication www.mobilehomeboard.com

EDITOR **Anila Manning**
 COPY EDITOR **Mary Barbosa**
 GRAPHICS **ErmaWheatley**

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

TECHNICAL CONSULTANT **Rene Prado**

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

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 VP/DIRECTOR PARK OPERATIONS **Jay Shelfer 415-250-0375**
 SECRETARY **Carol-Joy Harris 415-883-2824**
 TREASURER **Stephen Plocher 415-302-9043**
 AT LARGE **Brad Witherspoon 415-218-9583**

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Ron Citroen, John Feld, Julie Manson, Erma Wheatley

WEBSITE **Anila Manning, David Tetta, Erma Wheatley**

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**
 AT LARGE **Jill Boland 415-827-3381**

STANDING COMMITTEE: PARK MARKET **Jill Boland, Chair; Lynda &**
Dave Baker, Ginger Christie, Mary Coyne, Edgar Furlong,
John Hansen, Sally Harris, Susan Hoff, Meg Jordan, Anne
Lakota, Joan Leopold, Gary McClendon, Deb McNeil, Sue
Meyer, Steve & Tara Plocher, 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**

PAC&MVC

A Message from Your PAC and MVC Boards

April 2026 PAC Board Meeting Summary Report

Overview: The April 7 PAC Board meeting focused on ongoing Park management, cost-saving measures, safety improvements, and preparations for upcoming board elections. The board also discussed community engagement activities and maintenance updates relevant to residents.

Key Highlights

1. Management and Maintenance Updates

- **Roof Repairs:** Scheduled to begin in mid-April. Matt Greenberg will coordinate with the Park Market team to ensure minimal disruption during construction.
- **Sewer Maintenance:** Ongoing sewer line cleanouts were reported.

2. Financial and Insurance Updates

- **Insurance Savings:** The board identified approximately \$78,000 in annual savings by managing insurance directly instead of through the City.
 - **Elimination of unnecessary insurance** recommended for cybersecurity (\$16,000) and workers' compensation coverage, as staff are employees of Helsing.
- **Budget Review:** The Finance Committee has requested that Helsing convert from cash-

basis to accrual accounting for improved accuracy and alignment with City standards.

- **Legal Fund:** We are current on our bills but will continue to need donations.
- **Next Steps:** Helsing will provide a formal letter to PAC and the City clarifying workers' compensation coverage.

3. Election and Board Recruitment

- **Election Committee:** Mary Currie was appointed Chair of the Election Committee.
- **Board Vacancies and Transition Planning:** Three positions will open in the upcoming election cycle. Incumbents John Hansen, Carol-Joy Harris, and Jay Shelfer will not be running but plan to assist with onboarding new board members.
- **Recruitment:** Efforts are underway to attract new members; no specific experience is required, only a willingness to serve and attend monthly meetings.

4. Safety and Infrastructure Improvements

- **Parking Lot Safety:** The board approved directing Matt to research replacing certain parking bumpers with bollards to improve pedestrian safety, especially important for residents with limited mobility.

- **Fire Safety:** Following a nearby fire incident, residents are urged to report any homeless encampments that could pose wildfire risks.
- **Waste Management:** The board approved requesting more frequent pressure washing of refuse and compost bins and adding clear labeling to assist with sorting.
- **Composting:** The board discussed adding more bins while continuing to use current professional composting services rather than on-site composting.

Action Items:

Resident Takeaways

- **Insurance Savings:** Board actions are expected to save the community approximately \$78,000–\$100,000 annually.
- **Election Opportunity:** Residents are encouraged to consider running for a board position.
- **Safety Focus:** Improvements are planned for parking lot safety and waste-area hygiene.

Prepared by
John Hansen, PAC President





Three PAC Board Seats to Be Filled in May

by **STEPHEN PLOCHER**

Current PAC Board members **John Hansen, Carol-Joy Harris, and Jay Shelfer** are not running for reelection this year. They will work with the new board members, but their seats are to be filled this year. The period for the three open seats is a two-year term.

Nominations for these seats will be accepted starting on Saturday, May 9, with nominations closing on Saturday, May 16, at 6 pm. If the sum of incumbents and nominees is not greater than three, there will be no election. New PAC Board members will be instated at the PAC annual meeting on June 6 at 11 am.

Nominees must be full-time registered Marin Valley residents on record with Park General Manager Matt Greenberg. You may nominate yourself or anyone who is designated by Matt as a registered resident. Before nominating someone, please make sure that person is willing to be a member of the PAC Board of Directors and serve the two-year term.

How to Nominate

Please contact Mary Currie, Chair of the Election Committee, at 415-793-8420 or gbmedia@yahoo.com. Give the name, address, email address, and telephone number of the nominee. The Chair will contact that person to confirm their agreement to run.

PAC Board Election Timeline

Nominations for the three open seats will be accepted

May 9–May 16. If MORE than three 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 30** from 11 am to noon in the Fireside Room.
- Ballots will be accepted in the clubhouse lobby from Saturday, **May 30** at 9 am until Friday, **June 5** at noon.
- Votes will be counted by the election committee at 6 pm on Friday, **June 5.**
- The Annual PAC meeting will take place on Saturday, **June 6** at 11 am, when the new board members will be announced. ■



You Are Invited

by **MWPA & ERMA WHEATLEY**

Join countywide residents, local fire agencies, and community partners for Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority's (MWPA) public forum on wildfire risk, preparedness, and action in Marin, and introduction of Marin's new Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP).

**Saturday, May 2, 9:30 am–Noon
Embassy Suites**

A central focus of the forum will be the new CWPP, which helps identify where wildfire risk is greatest, how fire may behave across Marin's landscapes, and where prevention and evacuation planning matters most.

Attendees will hear presentations on Marin's wildfire preparedness efforts and have the opportunity to hear directly from industry experts during a panel discussion and Q&A. Following the formal program, residents can visit information stations featuring topics such as vegetation management, evacuation planning, detection and alerting, residential risk reduction, defensible space, and fire-smart landscaping. www.marinwildfire.org (See next page.)

MAY IS NATIONAL WILDFIRE AWARENESS MONTH



WILDFIRE RISK. COMMUNITY PREPAREDNESS. SHARED ACTION.



MARIN'S Wildfire Preparedness Public Forum MAY 2

Hosted by **Marin Wildfire**, you are invited to join wildfire safety leaders, local fire agencies, and community partners for a countywide public forum on wildfire risk, preparedness, and action.

Be among the first to learn about Marin's new **Community Wildfire Protection Plan**, hear insights from a discussion panel of wildfire experts, take part in a live Q&A, and connect with local resources on evacuation planning, defensible space, fire-smart landscaping, vegetation management, Chipper Days, and more.

Preparedness starts with knowledge, and grows through community action.

When: Saturday, May 2, 2026
9:30AM – 12PM

Scan for more information

Where: Embassy Suite\$ree
101 McInnis Parkway
San Rafael, CA 94903



Free

MARIN WILDFIRE



Message from Mar Val

Dear Friends,



As we enter a glorious spring, Mar Val is delighted to continue honoring our neighbors. We celebrated St. Patrick's Day with the crews from Fire Stations 64 and 65, who joined us for dinner.



In April, we honored our Park residents who are 90 and older, while also recognizing the many volunteers who help make Mar Val events so successful.

Once again, we will celebrate Cinco de Mayo, Mar Val style — party at Pub on May 1 with margaritas and a sumptuous array of Mexican favorites prepared by our own Director of Hospitality, Señor Larry.

On Memorial Day, May 25, we will honor our Park veterans, along with veterans who live at Homeward Bound. Mar Val will provide complimentary dinners to all veterans, along with our deepest appreciation for your service. Please see page 8 for more information.

As we look forward to BBQs, Jazz Brunch, and a grand USA birthday celebration on July 4, we invite you to join us.

We hope to see you soon.

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



Mar Val presents
Uno de Mayo
Pub Event

Friday, May 1

5 pm Cocktails

5:30 pm Dinner

Try Our Margaritas on the Rocks!

Menu

Pork Chili Verde

Chicken or Cheese Tamales

Refried Beans, Rice, Tortillas

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

**Deadline for reservations: Tuesday, April 28, 5 pm
(or when 120 reservations have been received)**

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



Thank You, Veterans!!

Mar Val Memorial Day Dinner

Monday, May 25

5 pm Cocktails 6 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

Thursday, May 21, 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 13

11 am Cocktails 12 pm Brunch

Menu

Broccoli & Spinach Cheese Quiche
or
Spinach & Artichoke Quiche

Cherrie's Breakfast Casserole
Smoked Salmon with Capers
Cream Cheese and Bagels

Country Biscuits with Sausage Gravy or Plain Gravy
Assorted Bakery Treats
Fresh Fruit Salad

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

*Reservation deadline: Wednesday, June 10, 5 pm
(or when 120 reservations have been received)
For questions, call Susan Hoff @ 707-365-9426*

Home Owners League Message

Greetings,

Mark Your Calendar for the



**Marin Valley
Health & Wellness Fair**

Saturday, May 23 • Noon–4 pm

Our second fair is shaping up to be an incredible day of discovery. Whether you are looking for a new exercise routine or holistic health advice, there is something for everyone. Two new classes will be spotlighted: Silver Dragon Wellness, presented by new residents Will & Susi Banuelos, who will introduce their program of martial arts techniques to improve balance, coordination, mental sharpness, and fall prevention (classes will be held Sunday afternoons from 3 to 4 pm); and Jay Shelfer will introduce Na Gong, a practice that supports health through slow, gentle movements. He will also be following up with regular classes.

We are thrilled to also host a diverse group of exercise practitioners and instructors, including Nan Watanabe (Seated Strength Training) and Laura Schepps (Chair Yoga), both of whom currently teach here; Laura

Sheehan, a local chiropractor; as well as a Reiki practitioner, a professional dietician, and a specialist in CBD benefits.

Our own Meg Jordan will offer “Knowing Our Body,” and Jane D’Arco will be giving chair massages. Also on-site will be a Tarot reader and a clinical/somatic hypnotherapist. With so many options for fitness and care, there are fewer and fewer excuses not to stay active, healthy, and enjoy yourself.

Don’t Let Your Gutters Become Gardens!

If you take a walk outside and look up at your roof, you might notice grasses or small plants sprouting from your gutters. While “roof gardens” sound lovely, they lead to clogged drains and water damage to your home and carport.

The solution is to join our Park-wide cleaning initiative. By bundling our needs, we have secured a bulk-contracting discount with a local contractor for:

- Gutter cleaning
- Window washing
- Pressure washing your home

There is still time to sign up, make your home pretty, and save money. Please call Michale Dancer at 415-519-3398 to add your name to the list.

Coming Soon –

Drumming

The return of the drum circle! We are in the early stages of planning a large-scale workshop and hope to welcome back the renowned Barbara Borden for one of her popular sessions. These events are always a hit, so stay tuned for more details.

Wildlife

“All About Owls” will be presented live on Sunday, June 14, at 4 pm in the ballroom. Two live birds — a Great Horned Owl and an American Kestrel — will accompany the program, representing the diverse bird population that calls our Park home. There are hundreds of different owl species worldwide, and this presentation will introduce some of the owls and other raptors living around us. You’ll learn how to support local birds as they help manage our rodent population, as well as how to enjoy the bird boxes around the community

Stay active, keep those gutters clear, and we’ll see you at the Fair!



Health & Wellness Fair 2026

by **JOHN FELD**

Saturday, May 23



Clubhouse • Noon–4 pm

Our 2026 Health & Wellness Fair offers an opportunity to learn about alternative, holistic, and diverse strategies to stay healthy as we gently age. We do not promote HMOs or insurance companies, government or otherwise.

We welcome back many residents and outside vendor presenters from our last fair, which include some of the following:

Joey Anderson, a Functional Nutritional Therapy practitioner, provides customized nutritional advice to fit individual lifestyles. She works with clients throughout the Bay Area, helping to transform their health through real food, targeted supplements, and lifestyle changes. She has helped clients balance blood sugar, improve blood pressure, reduce reliance on acid reflux medications, heal eczema, lose unwanted weight, and improve digestion. Joey is also a certified GAPS practitioner and a restorative wellness specialist.

Susi and Will Banuelos, new Park residents and martial arts black belts, will present their noncontact Silver Dragon Wellness class, which employs low-impact martial art skills to improve issues we encounter as we age — including flexibility, balance, coordination, mental sharpness, and fall prevention. They also teach a class in San Rafael for children with special needs.

Jane D'Arco, a native of New Zealand, has practiced massage therapy for more than 30 years. She will offer free sample chair massages in the ballroom. Sign up early.

Ben Grandis is a skilled Tarot reader and a people-centered certified health, wellness, and career coach. As a mental health coach, he supports adolescents navigating behavioral and emotional challenges. He serves as a career counselor at California Institute of Integral Studies (CIIS), helping individuals and families achieve sustainable growth and well-being.

Meg Jordan, PhD, RN, and Chair of Integrative Health Studies at CIIS, is a clinical medical anthropologist, board-certified health and wellness coach, award-winning international health journalist, and behavioral health specialist. She was founding editor of *American Fitness Magazine* and is a board member of the National Board for Health & Wellness Coaching. She has authored numerous journal articles on education and health. She will present “Knowing Our Bodies.”

Leonard Leinow is CEO of Synergy Wellness, makers of CBD herbal tinctures. He designs herbal blends used for conditions such as cancer, epilepsy, anxiety, inflammation, and pain. His goal is to provide natural and organic options for alternative healing. Leonard will explain the nuances of using CBD to support a healthy lifestyle.

Angela Omulepu is a wellness consultant, healing practitioner, and change-maker who facilitates personal, organizational, and societal healing through modalities such as Reiki, guided imagery, nonviolent communication, and creative writing. Angela works with individuals to address trauma, addiction, abuse, and grief through creative writing.

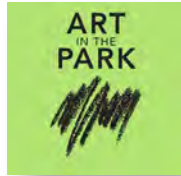
Laura Schepps has taught a variety of movement classes, including stretching and relaxation, with a focus on senior populations. She uses a gentle, supportive approach and is highly student-centered, often spending additional time with participants to address individual needs.

Laura Sheehan was an ICU nurse for 15 years, is a qualified massage therapist and has taught Reiki and studied craniosacral therapy. She is a doctor of chiropractic specializing in the brain stem and upper cervical spine, and has practiced at Atlas Orthogonal, an upper cervical chiropractic clinic, for 21 years. Additional training includes Barral Abdominal Mobilization, Bowen therapy, applied kinesiology, Touch for Health, and osteopathy.

Jay Shelfer has lived and participated in Marin Valley life for many years and has studied Na Gong, Chi Gong, and Tai Chi for decades. He brings extensive knowledge about staying fit and healthy. Jay holds weekly Tai Chi classes in Berkeley and will soon offer Na Gong classes at Marin Valley.

Nan Watanabe, a fitness instructor and consultant certified in Group Exercise, teaches Group Strength Training — a functional strength, balance, and flexibility class — at Marin Valley and the YMCA, with over 50 students twice a week. She also teaches a number of other classes at the Y and has done so for many years.

We look forward to seeing you for an afternoon of learning, connection, and shared commitment to healthy living and a complimentary lunch. ■



Marin Valley Art Gallery New Installation

by **DAVID GRAY**



Enjoy the many new creations in the April 26 art exhibit hanging of resident artwork, along with Janet Bogardus's *Last Sunset* 36"x48" acrylic on canvas, painting above.



THE ART AND SCIENCE OF LIVING WELL

Sharpening Cognitive Function

by **NAN WATANABE**

Studies suggest that resistance training may slow cognitive decline and improve memory by increasing blood flow to the brain. Think of it as a workout for both body and mind.

Tips to get started so you can ease into our strength training sessions:

- Include coordination exercises, such as marching with arm curls or stepping side-to-side with resistance.
- Train with a partner for both mental stimulation and accountability.
- Progress slowly but steadily — your brain thrives on learning new skills.

Source: Liu-Ambrose, T. et al, 2010. "Resistance Training and Executive Functions: A 12-Month Randomised Controlled Trial," *Archives of Internal Medicine*. 170 (2):170–178. ■

Build Strength, Improve Balance, Boost Confidence

by **WILL & SUSI BANUELOS**

New residents and black belt masters Will and Susi Banuelos are using their years of practicing and teaching martial arts to design a program especially for our 55+ community. This program offers a fun, energizing way to stay active while learning practical self-defense skills. They combine the ancient wisdom of martial arts with modern mobility science to help improve balance, sharpen the mind, and restore physical confidence in a safe, supportive environment. The focus is on safety, mobility, and empowerment. It can even be practiced in a chair. *Donation \$10 / class.*

Discover—

Joint-friendly, low-impact training

Improve flexibility without strain

Better balance and coordination

Reduce fall risk and support everyday movement

Functional strength building

using adaptable bodyweight techniques

Mental sharpness

through focus, memory, and pattern-based drills

Real-world self-defense skills

Boost confidence and personal safety

Fall prevention

Master the art of “safe landing” and improved spatial awareness on your feet

Cognitive sharpness

Enhance memory and focus through the moving meditation of kata (forms)

Functional strength

Develop core power and flexibility needed for daily life

Self-defense

Empower yourself with practical techniques tailored to your current physical capabilities. ■



*Silver
Dragon
Wellness*

Sundays

3–4 pm

Bamboo Room

Starts

Sunday, May 3

Open House and Onward

by **JANIE KLIMES**



The Marin Valley Gym Open House on March 21 was a hugely successful event. Around the first of the year, I came up with the idea for a Gym Open House and recruited a dynamic, energetic team — **Tenaya Asan, Mark Crocker, Michale Dancer, Sandee Duncan, Susan Hoff, and Ro Rigney** — all frequent gym users and exercise enthusiasts, to make it happen. The goal was to raise awareness of the gym facility and exercise opportunities for our age group, whether to build stability, strength, balance, and cardiovascular fitness, or simply to learn how to use the machines. We all knew someone who wanted to improve their healthspan but didn't know how to go about it, and felt intimidated or embarrassed about coming to the gym without knowing what to do.

The planning committee got together and scrubbed the walls, mirrors, windows, windowsills, and machines; got rid of old, unused equipment; and rearranged the space to make it more inviting.

We expected 15, maybe 20 people — so imagine our surprise when more than 50 showed up! The gym was packed. Attendees could sign up for raffle prizes (including one free hour with a personal trainer, an exercise tracking watch, educational books, exercise bands, and energy bars), enjoy complimentary healthy snacks, and watch live demonstrations of the machines set to upbeat workout music.

Karin Mortenson, a frequent NuStep user — especially helpful for hip and knee rehab — demonstrated its use. We also highlighted the four other bikes in the gym, including the spin bike near the

men's locker room. I demonstrated our two newest additions: the leg extension machine for quadriceps and the leg curl machine for hamstrings, and showed several people how to use the two treadmills as well as the elliptical and Arc Trainer for cardiovascular fitness.

Mark Crocker, our 87-year-old gym rat, demonstrated the Free Motion Gym and lateral pull-down machine for upper body work. We were also delighted and awestruck by a stretching demonstration by Pachara Hanley.

Tenaya Asan put together an outstanding information sheet on how to get started with regular exercise, including five key categories important for our age group, a comprehensive resource guide, and where to find resources and local classes. Contact her if you would like a copy tenayaasan1@gmail.com.

Looking ahead, we have big plans for the future, including small-group training and instructional classes. Watch for sign-up sheets at the clubhouse front desk in the coming months. I will be offering a cardiovascular class, and Tenaya will lead sessions on balance, mobility, and strength training. We encourage you to gather three friends and sign up for a one-hour, four-person class — details to be posted in the gym.

We are also developing a buddy system to help you find a workout partner at your level, building motivation and accountability to sustain your new exercise habits.

Please feel free to contact me with any thoughts, suggestions, or feedback. janieklimes1948@gmail.com (MizFit)

From open house visitors:

Meg Jordan — *Thanks for encouraging the fit life among our wonderful residents.*

Lou Judson suggested a sign-up sheet for equipment use. Instead, we've posted a reminder to limit use to 30 minutes if others are waiting.

Anne Lakota now feels confident using the machines and hadn't realized the gym offers a full body workout. She especially thanks Mark for his "farmer's carry" and Pachara for her stretching demonstration.

Barbara Machalk — *The live demonstrations of equipment were very helpful.*

Janet McGrath — *Thank you kindly for the wonderful resources and the great inspiration of the open house.*

Erma Wheatley — *Please thank the team for a successful, informative, and fun-filled day.*

Janet Willet — *A great success, and I got the first prize with Jay Elliott, the personal trainer! Maybe leave a book in the gym for people to leave specific comments and opinions. (Great idea — something we will definitely do) — MizFit ■*

African Photo Safari to Kenya and Tanzania

by **DAVID GRAY**

Saturday, May 30
Ballroom
7:30 pm

Join me for a presentation of my latest African photo safari — to Kenya and Tanzania in January and February 2026 — in the ballroom on Saturday, May 30, at 7:30 pm.

It was an amazing trip covering six national parks and private game reserves over two and a half weeks — from Nairobi National Park to Tsavo East National Park, the Greater Masai Mara, southern and western Serengeti, and Arusha National Park. Experience lions, leopards, cheetahs, servals, elephants, giraffes, wildebeest, and much more through photographs and video. ■





Sharing Our Neighborhood with Owls

by **THE OWL TEAM**



If you hear owls nearby, you're experiencing something special! It's a reminder that we share our neighborhood with these beautiful and important birds. Taking on the "night watch," owls hunt rodents such as rats, mice, voles, gophers and more. They are the ultimate alternative to poison, which is strictly prohibited in this community.

Spring is a sensitive time for owls — especially in May. They are nesting and raising their young. To help protect them, please:

- **Keep a respectful distance.** Avoid attempting to locate owl nests or following their calls.
- **Do not "hoot"** or imitate owl sounds, as they may interpret this as a territorial challenge. It can be stressful and may disrupt nesting, potentially causing nest abandonment.

*These owl species live in your neighborhood. Do you know whooo's who (or should it be whooom)?

Photos courtesy of David Gray

Fun Facts

- **Great Horned Owls** begin nesting and laying eggs as early as late January, making them one of the earliest birds to raise young in our area. Their talons can exert hundreds of pounds of pressure per square inch — strong enough to take prey larger than you might expect, such as skunks. They are often called the "tiger of the sky."
- **Western Screech Owls** do not screech; instead, they make a soft, even series of whistles or trills. Their gray, bark-like feathers help them blend perfectly into tree trunks, making them masters of camouflage.
- **Barn Owls** do screech instead of hooting. They can locate prey in complete darkness using only their hearing. Their heart-shaped face acts like a satellite dish, funneling sound to their ears, which are slightly uneven and help them pinpoint exactly where a sound is coming from.

Thank you for helping keep these owls safe and wild! Don't miss "All About Owls" Sunday, June 14, 4 pm in the ballroom.

The Owl Team

John Feld, David Gray, Alan Gump,
Anne Lakota, Ro Rigney

**If you guessed (top to bottom) Barn Owl, Screech Owl, and Great Horned Owl — you're correct! (The middle photo is actually a Tropical Screech Owl, which is essentially identical to the Western Screech Owl but differs slightly in coloration: the Western Screech Owl is typically darker, while the Tropical Screech Owl is more reddish.)*

Mt. Diablo– Henge Sunrise, 2026

by **FRANK SIMPSON**

The recurrence of the Mt. Diablo–henge sunrise was expected to occur on February 11, 2026. We photographed the sunrise on February 9, 11, 12, and 13 in an attempt to bracket the actual event. The sunrise migrates northward each morning along the horizon during February.

This was the weather each morning at sunrise:

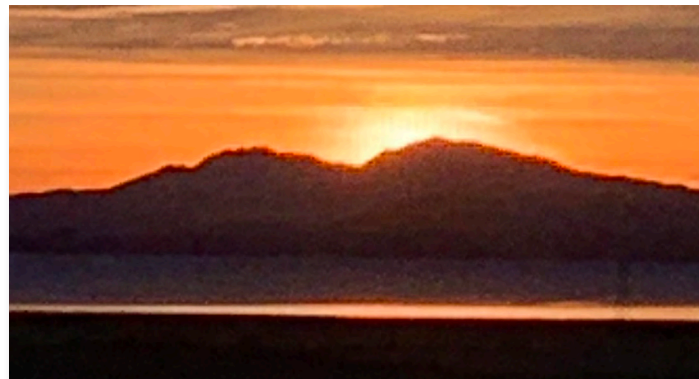
Feb. 9 — Clear view of the sunrise, so we took a photo. The sun is a bit diffuse in this photo, however, it is rising just south of the notch between Diablo’s twin peaks. February 9 is two days before Diablo–henge is predicted to occur.

Feb. 10 — Rainy — no photo taken.

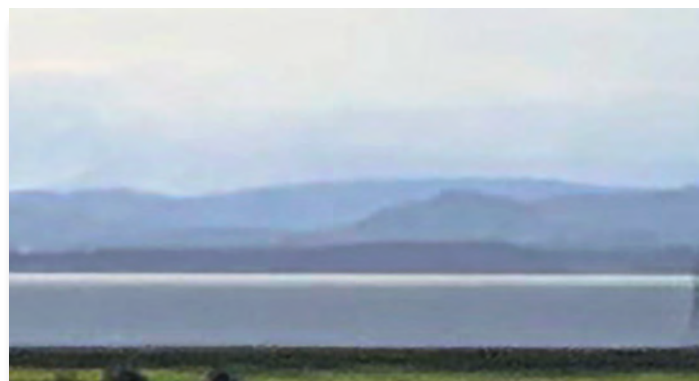
Feb. 11 — Very overcast and cloudy — a photo was taken, but the mountain and sun are obscured by thick clouds. February 11 is the day the sun is predicted to rise exactly in the notch between the two peaks of Mt. Diablo. Unfortunately, we were unable to observe the moment of sunrise due to poor visibility. It was also cloudy on this date in 2025, though we were just barely able to see the moment of sunrise peeking through the clouds.

Feb. 12 — The weather is clear, so we took a photo. The moment of sunrise is distinctly visible in the photo. The sun first appears, slightly north of the notch ‘twixt the peaks. February 12 is one day past the predicted Diablo–henge sunrise.

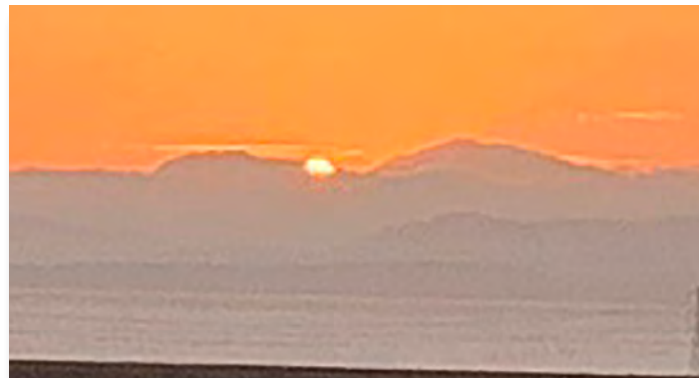
Feb. 13 — Two days after the expected Diablo–henge sunrise. The weather is again clear, so we took a photo. The sun is rising slightly farther north than on February 12, continuing its incremental migration northward toward the summer solstice in June. ■



9 February '26 7:08:51 am



11 February '26 7:09:18 am



12 February '26 7:07:03 am



13 February '26 7:07:03 am

Gray Whales and Friends

Text and Photography by **DAVID GRAY**

In March I had the chance to visit Baja California, Mexico, for two and a half weeks. The trip was planned by my wonderful spouse, Nancy — it was essentially her dream vacation/adventure. It included a week-long Slow Baja Tour in a rented four-wheel drive campervan, off-roading along various discontinuous segments of the Baja 1000 race course. Following the tour, the plan was to meet up with friends from the Park in Guerrero Negro to spend a few days with gray whales (*Eschrichtius robustus*) at a camp called “Whale Magic.”

But Nancy got sick just before the trip and insisted that I continue without her (yes, she is much better now!).

The seven-day Slow Baja Tour started in Valle del Guadalupe along the Ruta del Vino at a ranch accessible only by 4WD, then wended its way south along the Pacific coast, where I spent a morning with gray whales in Guerrero Negro and visited ancient cave paintings. I then crossed through Cataviña and “Cactus Wonderland,” following portions of the Baja Divide trail, and ended at the Sea of Cortez in Bahia de Los Angeles. A long and winding “road,” to be sure!



Campervan in Cactus Wonderland near Cataviña



Cirios near Cataviña

I spent two nights in a hotel (hot showers — what a luxury!) in Bahia de Los Angeles, then backtracked to Cataviña for another night in Cactus Wonderland on my way back to Guerrero Negro and Whale Magic. I met up with three Marin Valley friends there. Unfortunately, the streets had flooded due to an intense

Bahia de Los Angeles sunrise



storm with hurricane-force winds the night before. The storm also damaged or destroyed some of the tents at Whale Camp, so I was allowed to drive the campervan to Whale Camp.



Campervan and tents at Whale Camp



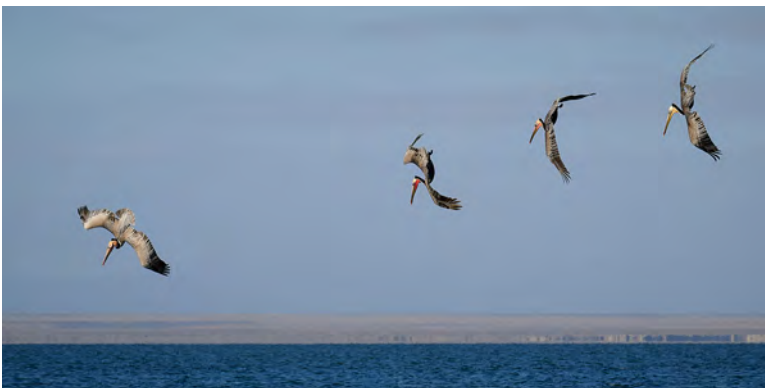
Mother and baby gray whale

The highlight of the trip was definitely Whale Magic. Guerrero Negro is primarily an industrial town whose main business stems from its salt mine — it is home to the world’s largest saltworks. Gray whales come to nearby Ojo de Liebre Lagoon to mate and give birth, drawn by the lagoon’s protection and high salinity. At birth, whale mothers must continually nudge their newborns up to the surface to breathe; in the denser high-salinity water, the calves are more buoyant and naturally rise more easily.

The owner of Whale Magic, Shari Bondy, has spent 45 years researching gray whales in the lagoon. She began by identifying individuals from photographing their flukes and tails — recognizing distinct patterns and tracking their seasonal comings and goings into and out of the lagoon. She helped regain the whales’ trust in humans after the whaling slaughter that began there in 1857. Today, that trust is palpable; mothers often bring their newborn calves right up to the small boats, as if to introduce them to us good humans!



Baby gray whale getting some love



Brown pelican flight

And yes, there were birds. Brown pelicans (*Pelecanus occidentalis*) galore, including these (mostly) males in mating plumage starting their dramatic dives toward fish they spotted.

Wishing everybody a happy May! ■

P.S. Don't be an unwitting mosquito breeder! Check around your yard for any open containers with standing water (flower pots, stagnant bird baths, etcetera), and empty them.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>MAY 2026</h1>			April 29 IMPORTANT Community Meeting Park Acquisition — Next Steps! 5:30–7 Ballroom		1 7:30-9 Taiji <i>Deck/ David MacLam</i> 10-11 Water Aerobics 12 Mahjong <i>Private, Fireside Room</i> 5-7 Uno de Mayo Pub Event	2 Wildfire Preparedness Public Forum 9:30am-12pm <i>Embassy Suites</i> <i>101 McInnis Pkwy</i> <i>San Rafael</i> 6:30 Dancing <i>Meadow</i>
3 7:30-9 Taiji 12-1 Group Strength Training <i>Bamboo Room/ Nan Watanabe</i> 3-4 Silver Dragon Wellness <i>Bamboo Room/ Will & Susi</i> <i>Banuelos</i>	4 6 Trash 7:30-9 Taiji 10-11 Water Aerobics	5 7:30-9 Taiji 11-12 Chair Yoga <i>Ballroom</i> 2-3 Craft & Chat <i>Library</i> 5 PAC Board Meeting <i>Ballroom/ Zoom</i>	6 7:30-9 Taiji 10-11 Water Aerobics	7 7:30-9 Taiji 12-1 Rollin' Root  4:30 HOL Board Meeting <i>Fireside</i> <i>Room</i>	8 7:30-9 Taiji 10-11 Water Aerobics 12 Mahjong 5-7 Pub ECHO DEADLINE	9 6:30 Dancing
10 7:30-9 Taiji 12-1 Group Strength Training 3-4 Silver Dragon Wellness	11 6 Trash 7:30-9 Taiji 10-11 Water Aerobics	12 7:30-9 Taiji 11-12 Chair Yoga 2-3 Craft & Chat	13 7:30-9 Taiji 10-11 Water Aerobics 5 Mar Val Board Meeting <i>Ballroom</i>	14 7:30-9 Taiji 12-1 Rollin' Root 6-10 Board Game Night <i>Fireside Rm.</i> <i>Ed Collins</i>	15 7:30-9 Taiji 10-11 Water Aerobics 12 Mahjong 5-7 Pub	16 Ballots accepted May 9 to 16 in case of PAC elections 6:30 Dancing
17 7:30-9 Taiji 12-1 Group Strength Training 3-4 Silver Dragon Wellness	18 6 Trash 7:30-9 Taiji 10-11 Water Aerobics	19 7:30-9 Taiji 11-12 Chair Yoga 2-3 Craft & Chat 5 MVC Board Mtg. <i>Zoom</i>	20 7:30-9 Taiji 10-11 Water Aerobics 2:30- 3:30 Ladies Bridge <i>Private,</i> <i>Fireside Rm.</i>	21 7:30-9 Taiji 12-1 Rollin' Root 5 Memorial Day Dinner reservation deadline	22 7:30-9 Taiji 10-11 Water Aerobics 12 Mahjong 5-7 Pub	 Health & Wellness Fair Noon-4 6:30 Dancing
24 7:30-9 Taiji 12-1 Group Strength Training 3-4 Silver Dragon Wellness	25 MEMORIAL DAY 6 Trash 7:30-9 Taiji 10-11 Water Aerobics 5-7 Mar Val Memorial Day Dinner	26 7:30-9 Taiji 11-12 Chair Yoga 2-3 Craft & Chat	27 7:30-9 Taiji 10-11 Water Aerobics 4 Book Club <i>Carol-Joy</i> <i>Harris</i>	28 7:30-9 Taiji 12-1 Rollin' Root 	29 7:30-9 Taiji 10-11 Water Aerobics 12 Mahjong 5-7 Pub	30 Meet the Candidates 11 am <i>(if PAC elections)</i> African Photo Safari <i>David Gray</i> 7:30 pm 6:30 Dancing
31 7:30-9 Taiji 12-1 Group Strength Training 3-4 Silver Dragon Wellness						