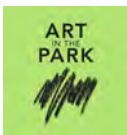


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# Management Update

- 2026–27 budget submitted
- Quarterly sewer maintenance in progress
- Multiple small pump and electrical repairs completed at both pump stations
- Several overly mature trees with breaking limbs removed
- Clubhouse roof repair nearing completion

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PHOTOGRAPH: ALAN GUMP

## Directory Update

### New

**Edward Colety**  
 15 Scenic Drive  
 cell 408-835-6253  
[edcolety@aol.com](mailto:edcolety@aol.com)

### Change

**Michale Dancer**  
 -415-234-6782-  
 cell 415-519-3395 only

**John Feld**  
 -415-884-2675-  
 cell 510-495-4138 only

REGISTER FOR

**ALERT MARIN**

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

**CACRV**

**Bottles and Cans**

**KEEP THEM COMING —  
 BACK OF THE BREEZEWAY**

### Echo Deadline to Submit Articles

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

## THE ECHO 2026

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**Harris, Susan Hoff, Janet Willett, Paul Weinberger**



# Communications Update

by **SERENA FISHER**, PAC Communication Lead

**A**pril and May were both busy and highly productive months for PAC and the Communications Committee as we continue working toward a positive resolution regarding the Park's future ownership.

We encourage all residents to read and share the compelling letter written by **retired Federal Pro Tem Judge and former two-term Novato Mayor and City Council member Bernie Meyers**, which was presented to the City Council on April 12. In his remarks, Bernie Meyers emphasized that the City has a meaningful opportunity to honor the Park's original intent by transferring ownership to a nonprofit structure, ensuring long-term stability for residents.

Bernie also shared a powerful supporting letter from **former City Manager Rod Wood** (1993–2004), who oversaw the original purchase of the Park. Wood noted that the City incurred no net cost through the original transaction, and he raised important ethical considerations about

retaining ownership in a way that could disadvantage residents.

These important documents are available on the Marin Valley website under "Park Documents," at the top of the page below "PAC 2026 Negotiation Documents." We strongly encourage everyone to review and share them: <https://marinvalley.net/park-documents/>

On April 29, residents showed tremendous engagement, filling the ballroom and joining via Zoom to hear updates on PAC's ongoing efforts to secure the Park before the end of 2027.

During the meeting, **John Hansen** and **Brad Witherspoon** (PAC), along with **Alan Gump** and **Serena Fisher** (Communications), introduced residents to You Are the Power (YATP) — a national organization that advocates for individual and community rights through strategic media campaigns. After reviewing our case materials, YATP concluded that our concerns are well-founded and that the original intent of the Park's purchase has not been honored by the City.



You can access all materials and take action here: <https://www.youarethepower.net/mvmcc/>

As part of this campaign, residents are invited to take simple but impactful actions:

- View and share the 18-minute documentary about our community with family and friends.
- Follow the easy "Call-to-Action" steps by sending emails to elected officials and City staff using the prewritten, autofill letters available on the campaign landing page on the YATP website.

This campaign is rooted in respect, fairness, and community voice. We encourage everyone to participate and to keep all communications thoughtful and respectful.

Thank you for your continued involvement and commitment — our collective effort truly makes a difference.



PHOTOGRAPH: ERMA WHEATLEY

Marin Valley residents attending public comment section of Novato City Council meeting, May 12, 2026.

# Message from MarVal

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Dear Friends,

As I write this in early May, I'm wondering what happened to our spring! It is currently cold and rainy, and while we certainly need the rain, I'm looking forward to warmer days and spring flowers.

Election time is here again: PAC Board, governor, county supervisor, Novato City Council, and Measure B for the SMART train. We all have opinions and reasons for supporting a candidate or position on a measure, and some even enjoy discussing or debating politics — that is certainly a personal choice. However, per our Board bylaws, Mar Val is completely nonpolitical. Of course, you may discuss whatever you wish with your tablemates, but Mar Val respectfully requests that you not bring candidates for office to Pub or other Mar Val events. Our gatherings are meant to be a time to relax with neighbors, not a venue for meet-and-greets with political hopefuls. Opportunities abound to hear candidates' views and political rhetoric — watch the newspaper or contact campaign offices to learn where they will be appearing. Mar Val events are simply not the right setting for political activities.

Mar Val is once again delighted to welcome the Lee Waterman Trio to our June 13 brunch. We all enjoyed their music at the Holiday Party, and many thanks to Larry for once again underwriting the trio. Along with all the usual fare, we will be serving an old Southern favorite — biscuits and gravy. For those not from the South, this classic dish features light, sky-high biscuits smothered in rich gravy made with sausage and cream, or for the vegetarian version, gravy without the sausage. It is considered a "must-have" dish for true Southerners.

Of course, Mar Val will also be celebrating July 4. Since the event occurs very early in the month, and we don't want anyone to miss this joyful birthday celebration, a signup sheet will be available by mid-June.

Hope to see you soon.





# ***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*



*Mar Val presents*

## ***Independence Day***

**Saturday, July 4**

5 pm Cocktails 6 pm Dinner

**Music by Brynda Foster**

**Try our Margaritas**

Menu

Pulled Pork Sandwich *or* Egg Salad Sandwich

Green Salad & Macaroni Salad

Chef's Surprise Dessert

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

*Deadline for reservations: Wednesday, July 1, by 5 pm*

*(or when 120 reservations have been received)*

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

# Home Owners League Message

Greetings,

## Your Voice Matters: Resident Input & Feedback

We are pleased to announce that we are reinstating the Resident Input & Maintenance Request process. While we always welcome you to reach out to management directly, we recognize that our community manager is not on-site every day and may not always be the primary contact for every specific need.

To help ensure concerns are handled efficiently, HOL will now confidentially direct requests to the appropriate group or person — whether that is HOL, Mar Val, MVEST, PAC, or Management.

- **How to participate:** New forms are available in the holders located between the manager's desk and the kitchen, and the online form has been updated.
- **Submission:** You may hand forms to me personally or place them in the appropriately labeled slot.
- **Confidentiality:** If your request is sensitive, please place it in a sealed envelope.
- **Transparency:** Our goal is to keep you informed of decisions or steps taken toward progress.

You are of course always welcome to address your concerns directly with Matt, as we have been doing over the past few years.

## Protecting Our Shared Habitat: A Poison-Free Park

Among the most treasured aspects of Marin Valley are our pets, followed closely by our local wildlife. To keep our

pets and ecosystem healthy, we have a firm rule against using poisons for rodents or weeds anywhere in the Park.

Poisons create a dangerous chain reaction. Our beloved cats, dogs, and resident predators — such as Barn and Screech owls — are put at high risk when they encounter poisoned animals. When one rodent is killed by poison, it doesn't stop there. It is often eaten by its natural predators, which then ingest the poison as well. They, and in some cases their offspring, may die as a result. We lose the ongoing ability of these important predators to continue removing hundreds of additional rodents.

Owls can consume up to a dozen rodents per night. We are currently investing significant resources into our Owl Box Project to encourage natural rodent control. Please join us in protecting our rodent predators, as well as our pets, by immediately ceasing the use of chemical poisons and exploring safer, wildlife-friendly alternatives.

## Sustainability & Recycling

A warm thank you to **Jill Boland, Janet Shouldis**, and the many residents contributing to our recycling program. Their efforts to organize **CA CRV** bottles and cans for recycling is making a real difference in our Park. Please participate! You can find a full feature on these efforts on p.11.

## Marin Valley "Trunk Sale"

It's coming to the clubhouse parking area in July. Inspired by the "Car Boot Sales" popular in England, we are hosting our very first Trunk Sale!

Traditional garage sales can often be overwhelming, especially if you have only a few items to sell, and they can create traffic and parking congestion on our narrow streets. The Trunk Sale is a fun, simplified alternative:

- **How it works:** Sign up first. Load your sale items into your car trunk (or "boot") and back into the allocated parking area near the clubhouse.
- **Large items:** If you have items too large for the car, feel free to bring photographs to display in your trunk instead.
- **The goal:** It's an easy way to sell treasures, meet your neighbors, and help keep our streets clear.

Keep an eye on your tubes for a flyer with more information! And, of course, you are always free to have your own garage sale in your driveway or cul-de-sac in front of your house.

## Bright Side Marin Contractor

The Park is looking a lot brighter thanks to all the residents who signed up for Bright Side Marin window and gutter cleaning and power washing. About half have been completed. Due to health issues with the young man organizing the project, the remainder will resume near the end of the month.

Stay active, stay connected, take care of each other, and we'll see you around the Park!





THE ART AND SCIENCE  
OF LIVING WELL

# Strength Training for Healthy Joints

by **NAN WATANABE**

**C**ontrary to common belief, strength training can improve joint health. By strengthening the muscles around the joints, exercise provides greater stability and can help reduce pain. Gentle, low-impact strength routines are safe and effective, even for those with arthritis or past injuries. Strong muscles act as shock absorbers, helping protect your joints during daily movement.

Source: Bennell, KL, & Hinman, RS. 2011. "Exercise as a Treatment for Osteoarthritis." *Current Opinion in Rheumatology*. ■

# The Sacred Art of Drumming

by **ED COLLINS**

**Saturday, June 13 • 3–4:30 pm**

**C**ommunity members are invited

to gather for an upcoming drum circle celebrating the Sacred Art of Drumming, led by Sahar Pinkham on

Saturday, June 13, from 3 to 4:30 pm in the meadow.



This shared rhythmic experience offers a chance to connect with ourselves, one another, and the living pulse that moves through all things.

As we feel, hear, and express our individual rhythms, we begin to align with the greater Rhythm of Life.

Sahar teaches, performs, and records on congas, djembe, tablas, and other hand drums.

No musical experience is necessary — only a willingness to listen, participate, and let the rhythm unfold.

Some drums will be provided, but please bring your own if you have one — or extra drums to share.

Come join the circle, add your heartbeat to the rhythm, and experience the ancient healing language of the drum.

This event is a gift from HOL. Donations are welcome. ■



**JUST 1 HOUR**

Contact Ray Schneider 415-883-4182

— an *HOL* live presentation —

ALL ABOUT  
**OWLS**



# Learn All About **OWLS**

Sunday, June 14  
Ballroom 4-5 PM

Meet Gazeau, a Great Horned Owl, and Ke-lik, an American Kestrel.

Learn why these remarkable birds are important and how they help our Marin Valley community.



[allaboutowls.org](http://allaboutowls.org)

POSTER: RO RIGNEY

# Singing in the Fireside Room

by **MAGGIE SEIGFREID**

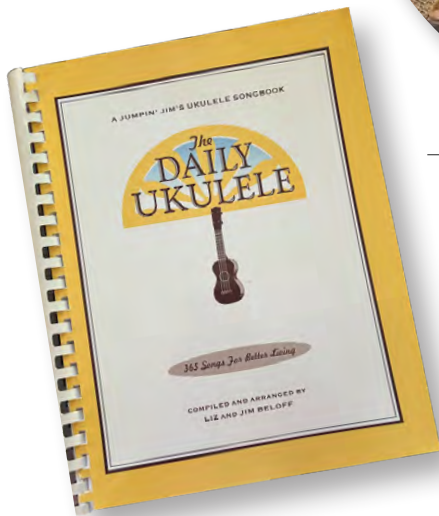
**Friday, June 19 • 7–9 pm after Pub**

I have reserved the Fireside Room for June 19 from 7 to 9 pm for a music event featuring singer-songwriter Merrily Weeber and friends, including Frank and me (The Simpsons).

We will also have some sing-alongs and possibly an open mic. If you'd like to share a song, please check with me in advance, as time will be limited. This will be an HOL event. ■



PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID GRAY



## Music Jam

by **JEANNE SKYBROOK**

**W**hen ukulele players wanted a chance to play with others here in the Park, we decided to open it up to all instruments (except bagpipes — sorry, Tom). That includes the VOICE instrument, too. Some of you might enjoy just singing with others, and here is your chance.

**FIRST Fridays**  
**7 pm after Pub**  
**Fireside Room**  
**Starting June 5**

We'll be playing from *The Daily Ukulele* ([fleamarketmusic.com](http://fleamarketmusic.com)) book by Jim and Liz Beloff. We will go around the room, and each person can choose a song and either lead it, ask someone else to lead, or play solo. To use a song that's not in the book, please bring copies to share. Let's get together, raise our voices and instruments in song, and have a great time!. Call me, Jeanne Skybrook, with any questions, 415-302-3010. ■

# Dear Neighbors

**A**s you know, fire season is upon us, and it's crucial that we take proactive steps to protect our homes and community. Recently, members of the Home Owners League (HOL) conducted a drive around the Park and identified more than 50 homes whose front yards require weeding.

We kindly ask that you take some time to weed your yard. By doing so, you will not only enhance the appearance of our neighborhood, but also contribute significantly to fire safety for everyone in our community.

Thank you for your cooperation and commitment to keeping our community safe. ■

Warmly,  
**Michale Dancer**  
 415-519-3395



PHOTOGRAPH: JILL BOLAND

# Greetings from Park Market

**S**ome of you good folks know that ExtraFood is a nonprofit organization that coordinates with stores and markets and food banks like Park Market. They make our deliveries possible. We are extremely grateful for all they provide to the residents of Marin Valley.

As you may know, we have been actively recycling with Bottle Bank each Tuesday. We have asked Marin Valley residents to recycle their **CA CRV** aluminum cans and glass and plastic bottles in the blue bins located at the end of the breezeway.

And this is where it gets really good: while ExtraFood was in the middle of a fundraiser, we raised \$200 through our recycling with Bottle Bank, which we donated to ExtraFood, and they were able to double it with their Gruber Family Foundation donation. A win-win for all.

I'm hoping we can keep the momentum going. We have great people involved in making sure this works as effectively as it does. If you want to get your neighbors involved, please leave a bucket or good-sized container out so everyone can place their CA CRV bottles, etc., in it.

**Janet Shouldis** would be more than happy to pick up the recycled containers for you. We are on a mission.

Thank you for participating; we are making a difference in every little bit we do. ■

With love and gratitude,  
**Jill Boland**  
 Park Market

**Top of aluminum cans**



**Sides of glass and plastic containers**



**CA CRV RECYCLING — BACK OF BREEZEWAY**



Sunrise Lane

# Open Space Trails

by **ED COLLINS**

**C**ome enjoy the newly finished trails in our open space at the end of Sunrise Lane. Starting at the very end of Sunrise Lane, you'll find a peaceful loop trail that heads toward the railroad tracks, circles around the field, passes by two or three ponds, and then brings you right back to where you started. The loop is about four-tenths to one-half mile long, making it a short and easy walk through a beautiful open field where you may spot birds, wildlife, and other critters going about their day.

There is also a trail that runs from the end of Sunrise Lane along the right edge of the field to the turnaround circle at the end of Club View Drive.

These trails were cleared by Ed Collins using a weed-whacker generously offered by his neighbor, Tim Hart. Thanks to this kind contribution, the paths are now wide and welcoming for walkers to enjoy.

Although the trail is fairly wide and the risk of ticks is reduced, it is still wise to take precautions. Long pants and a lightweight long-sleeve shirt are recommended. For extra protection, tuck your pants into your socks, check yourself for ticks after walking, and consider showering afterward.

Check out this beautiful gift of nature tucked right into our own backyard. ■

## Lyme Disease and Tick Bites

**M**ost of us probably know someone who has been affected by Lyme disease. It is certainly something to consider when hiking in fields and woods, and it is wise to follow procedures that limit tick bites. I do hope, however, that anxiety will not keep you from enjoying nature — especially the newly created loop trail in our verdant open space at the end of Sunrise Lane. Here is some data about the actual risk of tick bites.

One large study from the Netherlands found the overall risk of developing Lyme disease after a tick bite was about 2.6%. The study took place in a Lyme-endemic setting and included numerous real-world bites. A practical US estimate often cited for blacklegged tick bites is around 1–3%, with risk rising if the tick was engorged or attached for a longer period. So the odds chain might look something like this:

<b>Step</b>	<b>Example Odds</b>
Tick is the Lyme-carrying kind	Depends heavily on tick species
That tick is infected	Maybe 5–15% in some California areas, higher in Lyme hot spots
It stays attached long enough	Much lower if found early
It actually transmits Lyme	Still only a fraction
You develop noticeable illness	Not everyone has a dramatic reaction

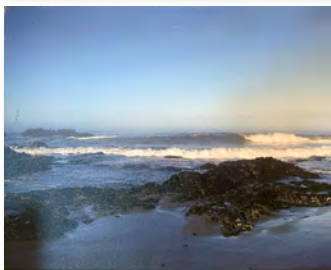
In California, assuming the tick was removed soon and was not engorged, the chance of Lyme disease from a single bite is probably minuscule — likely well under a few percent. If it was attached for 36+ hours, was engorged, or was definitely a blacklegged tick, then it moves into “call a doctor, ask about prevention” territory, especially if removed within the last 72 hours. ■

## Another Dump Run?

**I** am often approached by residents wanting to know when the next dump run is. Well, the next run is not until September or October. I am up for managing runs 2x per year. If there is anyone who would like to volunteer to do a third run, I am willing and available to help coordinate that. ■

Ed Collins,  
[mretc@hotmail.com](mailto:mretc@hotmail.com)

# Marin Valley Art Gallery New Exhibition



Top left to right: George Winters, *Zodiac Leo*; Karin Mortensen, *Time*; Jae Tillinghast, *Myra #1*; Laura Kradjan-Cronin, *Ragdoll Still Life*; Joan Leopold, *Still Life with Tomatoes*; Meg Jordan, *Take a Stand*; Janet Bogardus, *A New World*; Erma Wheatley, *Light*; Suzie Lahr, *Tranquility*; Joan Cervisi, *Lighthouse in Portugal*; David Gray, *Lioness w/Cub on Branch*; Jill Boland, *Painted Tray*

# MEMORIAL Valerie Barbour



by **MARK BARBOUR**

**T**o all of those who knew Valerie Barbour, her family invites you to join us to celebrate her life and share stories at the Marin Valley Clubhouse on Saturday, June 6, at 2 pm.

We will have a guided memorial followed by light food and refreshments. ■

# Plastic Everywhere: What to Do

by **JORY ADAMSON**

**A**s part of our community focus on creating a more sustainable way of living, the Marin Valley recycling program accepts several types of plastic. However, many types are still not accepted by the county.

Ridwell, a private company dedicated to keeping plastics out of the environment, including landfills, is a reputable nationwide service that can help fill the gap.

Ridwell accepts multilayer plastics such as cereal bags, chip bags, dog treat bags, potting soil bags, and more. These items are shredded, washed, and pelletized into products such as piping and nursery pots, and approximately 98% are recycled.

Plastic film such as bubble wrap, plastic bags, plastic mailing envelopes, and more can be recycled into Trex, a wood-alternative decking material, with approximately 97% being recycled.

The cost for this service is \$20 per month for pickup at your home every other week. A Styrofoam option for a large bag costs an additional \$10, with approximately 88% recycled.

If the cost is prohibitive, consider sharing the service with a neighbor. Ridwell does not currently offer group discounts, but I will provide updates about any changes to this policy. Ridwell is still a young company with the potential to expand its services.

In addition, Safeway locations in Novato and elsewhere offer free plastic bag recycling bins for clean, dry plastic bags, bread bags, and bubble mailers, which are often recycled into composite materials such as plastic lumber. ■

# For the Love of Hummingbirds: A Simple Reminder

by **RO RIGNEY**

**L**ast spring, I found a dead hummingbird in my yard and wrote an article about cleaning hummingbird feeders. If hummingbirds could talk, I'm certain they'd be sending us strongly worded notes about housekeeping. After finding another sick little bird at my feeder last week, I realized it was time for a refresher.

Birds gather, feed, and often leave behind saliva and droppings. Feeders can quickly become breeding grounds for harmful bacteria and viruses that pass from bird to bird. One of the most common diseases is avian conjunctivitis. It spreads quickly, can affect an entire flock, and is often fatal because the eyes crust over, blinding the bird.

When I arrived at WildCare with the little guy, the veterinarian emphasized how easily disease spreads among hummingbirds. They are highly territorial — especially the males — and often fight. In the process, they come into close contact, touching heads and bills, which allows illness to pass quickly between them.

Regular feeder cleaning makes a big difference. The following suggestions come from WildCare and the 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 during a heatwave.

Cornell advises against using soap — especially scented varieties — as residue can harm these delicate birds. Instead, use a vinegar-and-water solution. If the nectar looks cloudy, it's a sign that bacteria or mold are already growing, and the feeder should be cleaned immediately.



PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID GRAY

- 1.** Disassemble the feeder as much as possible and scrub all parts with hot water using a bottle brush or toothbrush.
- 2.** Soak in a solution of one part white vinegar to four parts hot water for 30–60 minutes. (I soak mine in a large cooking pot.)
- 3.** Rinse thoroughly with clean hot water, making sure no vinegar remains.

When choosing a feeder, look for simple designs with smooth surfaces, wide openings, and parts that come apart easily for cleaning. Avoid feeders with tight crevices, long tubes, or decorative elements that are hard to reach. Also avoid designs where a bird's head or beak rests against a surface, as this can increase the spread of disease. Replace old or cracked feeders that can trap mold or debris.

A few extra tips: never use red dye, honey, or brown sugar 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, discarding it after about a week. Even nectar stored in the refrigerator can become cloudy — usually a sign that bacteria or yeast have begun to grow — and it should be discarded and replaced with a fresh batch. Making enough for a couple of refills is a good rule of thumb.

If you're traveling, please take your feeders down — otherwise they can quickly become an invitation for bacteria and disease.

After being treated and placed in foster care, my little visitor sadly didn't make it. It's a gentle but powerful reminder of how vulnerable these tiny birds are — and how much our care matters. I'm even more motivated to keep our feeders clean and give these beautiful visitors the best chance for a healthy, happy summer. ■

# The Art of Connection and Finding Unity in Marin Valley

by **JOHN FELD**

**E**ach week, I have the pleasure of meeting many people in our community — old friends, new acquaintances, and often individuals I recognize but haven't truly connected with. These may be new residents or perhaps people whose names I've simply forgotten (a common occurrence when you reach 81!). If I know you but can't recall your name, please forgive my fading memory.

On occasion, I find myself feeling disconnected from some people in the Park. This is rarely because they are rude or unfriendly; usually, it's simply because we haven't had the chance to truly get to know one another socially. When introductions happen in busy settings — waiting in line at the Park Market, attending a Mar Val dinner, or at Pub Night — names, addresses, and details can quickly get lost.

## **Our Shared Foundation**

Yet, all of us in Marin Valley share a profound common ground. We live in a beautiful community in Marin, and we chose to live here for many reasons, including the lifestyle and the "affordable" (or once affordable) homes. We navigate similar health and financial journeys.

We use the same local resources — shopping, beaches, the SMART Train, or even a simple trip for ice cream. We worry about our health and care for those less fortunate. In truth, we share far more than we might realize, and these similarities can bring us together.

## **Overcoming Unseen Barriers**

There are a few people I find myself less drawn to. I've realized that much of this

distance — perhaps 90% — comes from my own prejudices, whether conscious or not. It may stem from differences in political views, a perceived slight from the past, or simply an energy that unsettles me, and I often worry that my own thoughtless responses are to blame.

As Maya Angelou wisely stated, *We are more alike, my friends, than we are unlike.* Even in those I find challenging, I believe there are redeeming qualities. If I took the time to sit down with almost anyone, I would likely discover shared interests, admirable traits, or common experiences.

## **A Message for the Future**

In these demanding and often divisive times, our best action is to focus on what connects us. We can actively look for common ground — recognizing shared traits and experiences that lead to meaningful connections — rather than dismissing someone based on a quick assessment or a past judgment or misunderstanding.

I know I can do better in this regard, and perhaps many of us can. It leads to a happier, healthier community. My personal commitment for the future is to seek out those positive connections and reject my own sublimated biases.

I hope you will allow me to be your friend — or at least a genuine acquaintance, rather than someone you pass by. I look forward to meeting you as you are, and discovering the best in both of us. Perhaps you will return the opportunity. How much happier we might all be if we practiced these simple intentions. ■

# A Surprise Love Encounter: Yes, Do Talk to Strangers!

Text and Photograph by **LORNA SASS**

**I**t's a very hot day in Northern California and I'm feeling very sad. My body doesn't process heat well — I feel like I'm boiling over. Get me out of here!

I drag myself into the steaming hot car with the thought of driving 20 minutes south to Sausalito, where it's always at least 10 degrees cooler. Well, when I get there, I'm in for a surprise: Sausalito is just as hot as my hometown of Novato.

I put on my trusty wet cooling towel and start ambling around, feeling very disappointed but determined to get near the healing waters. I feel beckoned to a small alley leading toward the bay, and soon I catch the eye of a handsome blonde man, about 20 years younger.

"I'm so disappointed that it's so hot here," I blurt out. He stops and replies, "Yes, I'm surprised too. Where I live in Inverness, I saw a huge cloud of fog overhead when I woke up — my last experience of coolness today. I'm Bill," he says, offering his hand in warm connection.

"I'm Lorna, and I'm feeling very old," I respond, not knowing why I am telling him this — except that my loneliness, along with his receptive listening and sweet blue eyes, invites me to share. Then I chirp, "Guess how old I am. I know that's a tricky question to ask a man since he has to guess younger than he thinks — but please be honest."

He takes a kind, leisurely look at my face and says, "62."

I shake my head and point upward with my right forefinger.

"70," he ventures. I point upward again. "75?" he guesses, surprised.

"I'm 80," I say, reeling with the truth of it.

He pauses for an instant and then, as if responding to some ancient protective instinct, opens his arms to invite me in. Feeling entirely safe, I lean into his warm embrace, close enough to feel his strong, compassionate heartbeat. In that moment, sharing this loving hug with a stranger feels like the

most delicious medicine — and the most natural thing in the world.

After a few moments, we gently end the embrace.

"You never know who you're going to meet in an alley," he comments, with a sense of awe.

Love is everywhere, I think as we part and I continue on toward the water, a smile on my face and in my heart — especially when you share how fragile and vulnerable you really feel.

And somehow, the extreme heat of the day vanishes from my consciousness. ■



# Pelagic Cormorant

Text and Photography by **DAVID GRAY**

**B**ack to local birds! After being cleared to lift heavy objects again (such as supertelephoto camera lenses) following two cataract surgeries, we took a day trip to Bodega Head. I was hoping to see burrowing owls, but had no luck. It's mating season for most birds, though, and I got a chance to observe pelagic cormorants (*Urile pelagicus*).



*Cormorant flying over the Pacific*

Cormorants are diving birds. Unlike dabbling ducks such as our local mallards, cormorants lack buoyancy — which works to their advantage when hunting fish underwater. They are strong swimmers and can stay submerged for roughly two minutes. They have been observed fishing at depths of more than 130 feet.

Pelagic cormorants are rarely seen away from the coast, making their name somewhat misleading, since it derives from the ancient Greek *pélagos*, meaning “open sea.” A look at their range map shows a thin band starting at Taiwan and extending along the coasts of China, Japan, and northeastern Russia, across the Bering Strait, down the Alaskan and British Columbian coasts, along the US Pacific Coast, and into Baja California. Pelagic cormorants are less common than Brandt’s and double-crested cormorants.

The distinguishing features of the pelagic cormorant are its red throat patch and the white feathers along its flanks. They have a subtle but beautiful iridescent coloration of greens and purples.

Pelagic cormorants nest on cliffs for protection from most predators. Their nests are quite sparse, essentially a square foot or so on a semi-level ledge, with bits of plant material cemented together by guano to keep the eggs from rolling off the cliff. The nests shown here are in their early stages.



*Pelagic cormorant sitting on its nest – 1*





*Pelagic cormorant sitting on its nest – 2*

As I watched the cormorants going about their lives, I noticed on a few occasions that mating pairs traded off guarding their nesting site. Here, the male is coming in to land, bill agape in what might be a happy greeting.



*Cormorant coming in to land on a cliff*

I am happy to see the days getting longer!

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>JUNE 2026</h1>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
	6 Trash	7:30-9 Taiji	7:30-9 Taiji	7:30-9 Taiji	7:30-9 Taiji	<b>11</b> Annual PAC Board Meeting Ballroom / Zoom
	7:30-9 Taiji <i>Deck/ David MacLam</i>	11-12 Chair Yoga <i>Ballroom</i>	10-11 Water Aerobics	12-1 Rollin' Root	10-11 Water Aerobics	<b>2</b> Valerie Barbour Celebration of Life Ballroom
	10-11 Water Aerobics	2-3 Craft & Chat <i>Library</i>		4:30 HOL Board Meeting <i>Fireside Room</i>	12 Mahjong <i>Private, Fireside Room</i>	<b>7</b> Music Jam <i>Fireside Room</i>
					<b>7</b> Music Jam <i>Fireside Room</i>	<b>6:30</b> Dancing <i>Meadow</i>
<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>
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 <i>Bamboo Room/ Nan Watanabe</i>	7:30-9 Taiji	11-12 Chair Yoga	10-11 Water Aerobics	12-1 Rollin' Root	10-11 Water Aerobics	<b>11-1</b> Mar Val Jazz Brunch <i>Ballroom</i>
3-4 Silver Dragon Wellness <i>Bamboo Room/ Will &amp; Susi Banuelos</i>	10-11 Water Aerobics	2-3 Craft & Chat	5 Mar Val Board Meeting <i>Ballroom</i>	6-10 Board Game Night <i>Fireside Room Ed Collins</i>	12 Mahjong	<b>3:30-</b> Sacred <b>4</b> Art of Drumming <i>Meadow</i>
	<b>ECHO DEADLINE</b>		<b>5</b> Jazz Brunch reservation deadline		5-7 Pub	<b>6:30</b> Dancing
<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>
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	11-12 Chair Yoga	10-11 Water Aerobics	12-1 Rollin' Root	10-11 Water Aerobics	
3-4 Silver Dragon Wellness	10-11 Water Aerobics	2-3 Craft & Chat	2:30-3:30 Ladies Bridge <i>Private, Fireside Rm.</i>		12 Mahjong	
<b>4</b>  All About Owls <i>Ballroom</i>		5 MVC Board Mtg. <i>Zoom</i>			5-7 Pub	<b>6:30</b> Dancing
					<b>7-9</b> Singing in the <b>Fireside Room</b>	
<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>
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	11-12 Chair Yoga	10-11 Water Aerobics	12-1 Rollin' Root	10-11 Water Aerobics	
3-4 Silver Dragon Wellness	10-11 Water Aerobics	2-3 Craft & Chat	4 Book Club <i>Carol-Joy Harris</i>		12 Mahjong	
					5-7 Pub	<b>6:30</b> Dancing
<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>July 1</b>			
7:30-9 Taiji	6 Trash	7:30-9 Taiji				
12-1 Group Strength Training	7:30-9 Taiji	11-12 Chair Yoga	<b>5</b> Mar Val July 4 Dinner reservation deadline			
3-4 Silver Dragon Wellness	10-11 Water Aerobics	2-3 Craft & Chat				