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September 2026



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Management Update

- **Tree Pruning:** 476 trees have been pruned, and a second round of tree service is currently in the planning stages.
- **Retaining Walls:** Two retaining walls are currently in progress, and three have been completed. We are also inspecting additional retaining walls for future repair or replacement, which will depend on the budget.
- **Defensible Space:** The perimeter defensible-space cutback is complete.
- **Common Areas:** Work on the Park interior common areas is complete, with some hedge trimming and topping currently in progress.
- **Storm Drain Repair:** The Park Manager has signed a contract with an engineering firm to repair the storm drain next to 118 Marin Valley Drive. A schedule for this work has not yet been established.



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Directory Update

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JUST 1 HOUR

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CACRV
Bottles and Cans
KEEP THEM COMING
BACK OF THE BREEZEWAY
\$1000+ collected

REGISTER FOR

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

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 2026

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Letter to Residents

A Message from Your PAC and MVC Boards

by **BRAD WITHERSPOON**, *President*

Preparing for Long-Term Success

Since being selected PAC Board President in June, I have been focused on gaining deeper insight into the PAC's infrastructure and how it operates behind the scenes, especially in terms of its service to the community. As many of you already know, PAC serves a dual purpose: to pursue long-term resident ownership goals — hence the name (Park Acquisition Corporation) — and to represent residents in business and management decisions with the Park owner (the City of Novato) and Park Management (Helsing Group). That infrastructure includes at least 12 committees, teams, and boards, all staffed by volunteers with one goal in mind: serving the community. Once our long-pursued goal of resident ownership is finally achieved, PAC and its various committees, teams, and boards must be prepared for long-term success. This month's column focuses on two of my initial priorities: consolidating PAC resources and maintaining continuity of resident services.

Consolidating PAC Resources

My first goal in preparing PAC for long-term success is to restructure the current fragmented system used by PAC members to obtain the essential resources needed to conduct business and engage with residents. For example, the PAC Zoom account used for our monthly residents meeting belongs to John Hansen. He pays for the account

and then submits a request for reimbursement. Most committee chairs are also using their personal Zoom accounts to conduct online meetings. The Constant Contact account used by PAC for resident updates is personally owned and paid for by Carol Joy Harris.

PAC's document-storage practices, along with those of its committees, raise additional concerns. At present, all documents, financial records, and spreadsheets produced by PAC and committees such as Finance, Policy, and Acquisition are stored on individual members' personal computers. During an emergency, access to these documents relies on access to each member's computer. This diaspora of information also dramatically increases our vulnerability to the permanent loss of some or all of our data.

The solution to both issues is fairly simple: consolidate these services and functions under PAC-owned accounts and move all Park data files to cloud-based storage. But then the question arises — how do we pay for it?

I discussed this matter with Andrew Hay, Helsing's CEO, to see if Helsing could help arrange and pay for a host of services needed by PAC, including Zoom, Constant Contact, Microsoft Office, Google Workspace, and Adobe Acrobat licenses, as well as Google Drive or other cloud storage. This would ensure that

PAC and its committees always have access to important resources and documents, even when staff changes occur.

It turns out that Helsing already provides these services for a number of its clients. They are willing to help PAC make these new arrangements and have agreed to bill the City for reimbursement. During a recent accounting meeting between the Finance Committee and Helsing, the City was informed of this arrangement and signaled its approval. PAC will provide an update once the details have been worked out. Qualified volunteers will be needed to help supervise the implementation of some of these programs.

Ensuring Continuity of Resident Services

Marin Valley residents have benefited greatly from a group of highly skilled resident volunteers whose unique talents are not easily replaced. Back-up training and strategic outsourcing are essential components for the continuity of resident services.

Our Tech Team offers a perfect example of the importance of having a well-trained team of volunteers. Chair **David Gray** makes sure the team's volunteers are thoroughly trained to operate the AV equipment used for PAC Zoom meetings and workshops, even when he is traveling. He has also created

detailed manuals for his eager volunteers, which he jokingly refers to as his "If I were hit by a bus" manuals. I would strongly encourage all PAC committees and boards to implement similar training and documentation procedures. Shared knowledge helps keep these vital resident services running smoothly over the long term.

Unfortunately, not all skills are easily transferable. David Gray also has extensive experience as a systems administrator — an IT professional who managed, maintained, and secured an organization's computer systems, servers, and networks. **Erma Wheatley** owned a graphic design studio for many years and now as the *Echo's* Art Director, is another example. Each month she creates the graphic design layout that elevates our stories and articles into a visually appealing community resource. Just imagine the *Echo* without images! We are also fortunate to have **Mary Barbosa**, a highly skilled professional copy editor who makes all of us better writers. As editor of the *Echo*, **Anila Manning** plays a crucial role in gathering content each month and ensuring that deadlines are met. How many residents would be able — or even willing — to take on any of these roles if the need arose?

In some cases, outsourcing these services to professionals when needed can provide continuity for these specialized skills over the long term. The cost of some proposed outsourced services fit within the existing budget. I am currently exploring the cost of graphic design services; if you have experience in graphic design or systems administration and are interested in serving our community, please reach out to PAC.

Ultimately, I have learned that a primary factor in the Park's long-term success is the continued dedication of its numerous volunteers. You can find many of their names on Page 2 of each *Echo*. Without residents volunteering their time and talents, PAC and its committees could not provide many of the essential services our community depends on. On behalf of PAC, I wish to offer a collective heartfelt THANKS to all our volunteers.

My deep dive into PAC's infrastructure and how it operates behind the scenes is just beginning. Future columns will cover additional concerns and, I hope, include solutions for addressing them. Stay tuned.



Brad Witherspoon
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Smoke and Fire

by **BILL DAVIS**, MVEST, *Chair*
Director, Novato Fire District



Fire season is upon us with full force again this year. Canada is having huge wildfire problems, and a lot of that smoke has been dumped down into the Midwest and East Coast of the United States. Many wildfires are burning in Colorado and all the way west in Oregon, Nevada, and Utah. It is going to get drier and hotter in Northern California in the next few months. This year, fire scientists and experts are predicting a dangerous year for Northern California, with many wildfires. Are you ready for the worst?

Here in Marin Valley, the weed-whackers have come and knocked down a lot of dangerous, dry, pyrophytic brush and grass around the perimeter of the Park. The goats have taken down the grass and brush on the more difficult hillsides. It is always fun for us residents when they are here. Now that they have left us, the suspense begins.

Experts at the Novato Fire District, who know the long fire history of Marin and Marin Valley itself, have studied those old fire footprints and reviewed the fire science and suppression techniques necessary. Their coordinated work has directed the critical efforts already completed this year. Matt Greenberg

has managed to get a lot of tree work done. The sum total of all this is an enormous amount of fire prevention work already completed in and around our community in preparation for the potential of a disastrous, Palisades-like fire in this community of tightly packed, mostly older mobile homes.

I believe that the Park is as prepared as it could be, given the budgetary constraints, for this year's fire season. While it is certainly not perfect, it is a lot better than it has been in recent years, and it's the best we can do.

Now let's look at the reality of day-to-day living in Marin Valley. Every year, fires burning elsewhere send smoke to land on top of us. Remember: Where there's smoke, there's fire. That smoke is toxic, damaging to your lungs, and

miserable to manage. So you must make the important adjustments now to be ready for when it comes.

The smoke comes from as far as hundreds of miles away, completely clouding the blue skies overhead, throwing ash all over everything, and choking your lungs. Even if you're inside, the atmosphere can become so toxic that your only hope may be an N95 mask and a filter on your HVAC system that screens out the particles that can become disastrous if they enter your lungs.

In France and Spain, a lot of people are suffering and even dying from the heat and smoke. Which is worse? I would argue probably the smoke because it affects more people. We seniors in this community need to make the right preparations now. Get ready for the inevitable.

The Novato Fire District did a great job working with the Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority to provide the research and science needed to do the right thing for fire prevention in this community. The tree management work overseen by Matt is nearly completed. Now it's your turn to do the right thing before it's too late.

First, get the highest-quality HVAC filter placed in your system before such time as you can't buy one because everybody else wants to buy them when the smoke comes. Second, make sure you have some N95 masks for the time when that toxic smoke comes our way. Third, buy yourself a high-quality filter system for your bedroom.

So would you rather burn to death or choke to death? How about neither? ■



PHOTOGRAPH: MARSHA PIERSON

Our thanks again to the Novato Fire Protection District for providing the goats for the difficult hillsides wildfire mitigation.

Home Owners League Message

Greetings,

The Home Owners League (HOL) has been serving Marin Valley almost since the community was formed. Unlike a traditional Home Owners Association, HOL does not collect mandatory dues, issue fines, or dictate house paint colors or parking rules. Instead, we rely entirely on resident generosity, common sense, and volunteer spirit to keep our community vibrant.

To clear up confusion with the City and our insurance providers, HOL is officially transitioning its formal title from a "board" to a "committee" (specifically, a subcommittee of PAC). As part of this transition, leadership roles will shift from "President" and "Vice President" to "Chair" and "Vice Chair." While these administrative and bookkeeping updates help protect us legally, our mission remains completely unchanged. Every resident of Marin Valley is automatically a member of HOL — no dues or sign-ups required!

Our committee continues to support a wide range of local services, activities, and resources, including:

Community Services & Resources

Contractors Rating Guide; HOL-subsidized yard maintenance; Just-1-Hour assistance; Park lectures and discussions; *Marin Valley Directory*; massage chair (library); Medical Equipment Center; Men's Group; Nature and Death & Dying library sections; pool and gym oversight; Resident Maintenance Input Form, Rollin' Root visits, and tube flyer distribution.

Environmental & Park Projects

The Breezeway Boutique, Bottle Bank recycling project, Marin Valley

Household Waste Center (recycling batteries and light bulbs), owl and bat box installation and maintenance, Park Market, and seasonal dump runs.

Classes & Wellness

Chair Yoga, Group Strength Training, Gym Longevity Lessons, Longevity Corner discussions, Nei Gung, Silver Dragon Wellness, Tai Chi, Water Aerobics, and a biannual Health & Wellness Fair.

Events & Arts

Art in the Park, Board Game Nights, Craft & Chat, Dancing in the Meadow, Fireside Room concerts.

We are always eager to help residents launch new educational, healthful, or social activities. If you have an idea for a group or event — or want to revive past favorites like Community Salons, or Biography Night — please reach out!

Feedback

It would be wonderful to receive feedback from residents and activity organizers concerning HOL events. Many people attend these myriad activities, and occasionally someone will tell an HOL committee member how much they enjoyed an event. However, we rarely receive feedback in writing, including criticisms, which we can usually learn from and even publish if appropriate. Please drop me an email or text message if you have any comments. Thanks!

Bottle Bank

Thanks to the dedicated oversight of Jill Boland and Janet Shouldis, our recycled cans and bottles have now generated \$1,000 in donations to Extra Food! Extra Food has delivered

over 21 million pounds of food to local nonprofits, shelters, and senior centers across our county. We are proud to support their vital work.

Upcoming

Rollin' Root — New time starting August 20 is 1–2 pm.

Jeanne Skybrook's — All-Instrumental Music Jam, **September 4**, followed by the Ukulele Recital on **September 25**.

Nei Gung is adding a Saturday, class from 11 am–noon in the Bamboo Room starting **September 5**.

Craft & Flea Market — Saturday, **September 12** (1–4 pm): Got creative crafts, art, or treasures to sell or trade? Table space is available! Contact Tara Plocher to participate.

Longevity Corner — a new discussion group — will meet with Janie Klimes in the Fireside Room every 4th Monday at 4 pm starting **September 21**.

Autumn Dump Run — We are planning our next dump run for **October 9–11**. Keep an eye out for final details in the next *Echo*.

Art in the Park Exhibition — Wednesday, **November 11**: Calling all local artists! Start preparing your artwork now for our upcoming autumn exhibition.

Library Massage Chair has been repaired and we will be hosting a quick orientation session on how to use it safely. (*Note: Please supervise children around the equipment.*)

 *John Feld*
John Feld
HOL CHAIR
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The Heart of Our Community: Volunteers

by **JOHN FELD**

Recently, we held our Car Trunk Sale and Ice Cream Social. It was a very hot weekend, and while the turnout for the sale was smaller than hoped, many residents stopped by the ballroom to enjoy a cold drink, an ice cream, or a root beer float.

Events like these don't just happen on their own. Someone had to organize everything: make posters, place traffic cones the day before to reserve parking spaces, purchase the ice cream and soft drinks, serve refreshments throughout the event, and then clean up afterward. At least six or seven volunteers quietly carried out these tasks. They didn't seek recognition or make a fuss about their efforts. Their reward was simply the satisfaction of serving our community.

Marin Valley is fortunate to have many residents who volunteer in countless ways. If we counted every task performed by volunteers, the list would be surprisingly long. Some jobs are highly visible, while many others happen behind the scenes, unnoticed by most of us.

If you attend Pub Nights, you probably know the people who serve the drinks and perhaps those who prepare the meals. But do you know who delivers the *Echo* to the tube outside your home each month? Or who delivers food to a homebound neighbor? You may recognize the

people who care for the plants around the clubhouse or those who arrange help for residents who need assistance clearing gutters — if you even see them. Yet many of these contributions go unnoticed.

Perhaps you've attended one of the many classes offered in the Park. Have you ever considered how much time the instructors spend preparing for each session? Most volunteers genuinely enjoy what they do and take pride in serving their fellow residents with care and enthusiasm.

Many of us have met the volunteers who welcome new residents, but few realize there is an entire team

dedicated to making newcomers feel at home. Each volunteer has their own reason for participating. Some enjoy meeting new people, while others simply find fulfillment in helping others. Whatever their motivation, they all help make Marin Valley a warmer, more welcoming place.

Think about the people who write articles for the *Echo*, manage Zoom meetings, keep the financial books for committees, provide administrative support, or tidy up the library after events. Many know that Ray Schneider does an outstanding job coordinating the Just-1-Hour program, but do you know who he calls when additional help is needed? Who sets up the

chairs before meetings or arranges the tables so beautifully for events in the ballroom or Fireside Room? Who oversees the battery, light bulb, bottle, and can recycling programs in the breezeway? Many of us also know at least one of the dedicated volunteers who keep the Park Market operating so neighbors can receive groceries at no cost. Events happening throughout the Park are all listed, described, and updated daily on our website. And writing, editing, designing, and proofreading the *Echo* each month takes the efforts of a dedicated team of volunteers.

Now consider what happens when one of



these invaluable volunteers is no longer able to continue.

Most of us eventually face health challenges or family obligations. A volunteer may need knee surgery, come down with the flu, travel to help family members, go on vacation, or simply decide it's time to step away after years of service. When that happens, someone else must step in — or the task may simply go undone.

Sometimes volunteers become physically unable to continue. Others feel it's time to pass the responsibility to someone new. Either way, replacements are needed. And where do those replacements come from? From the community itself. That could mean you.

Ideally, every volunteer would have someone learning alongside them — a person ready to step in temporarily when needed or even take over the role eventually. That's why we need to keep encouraging new volunteers and passing along knowledge before it is lost.

Have you ever considered volunteering, whether in an ongoing role or just for a single event? At the moment, we don't have anyone dedicated to coordinating volunteer opportunities. Would that be something worth creating? Imagine having a list of residents, their interests, and their skills, ready to help whenever a need arises. Perhaps you're the person who could organize such a program — or maybe it could be shared by two volunteers.

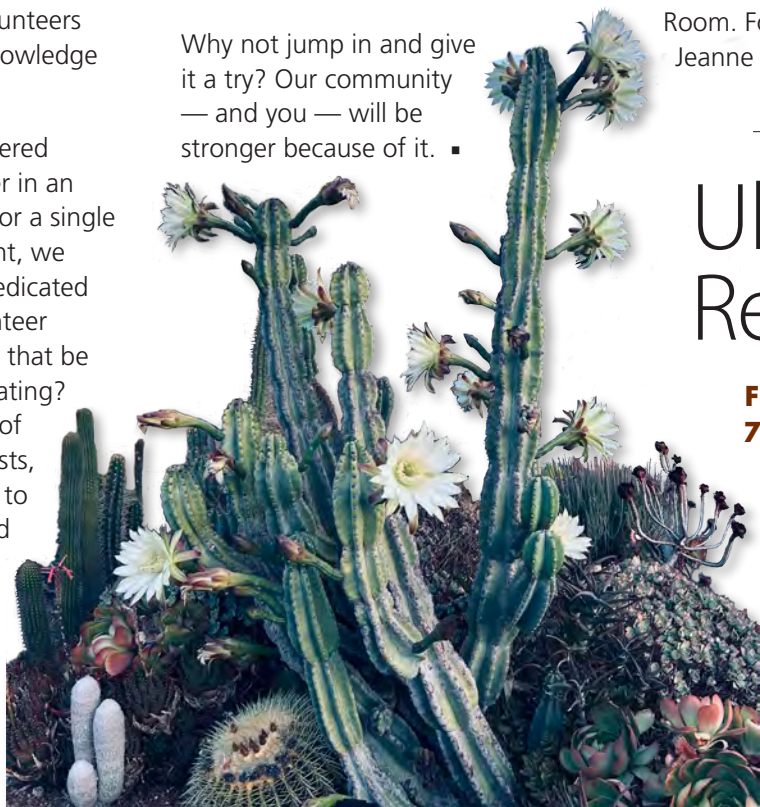
Volunteering is one of the most rewarding ways to become involved in our community. It brings satisfaction, creates friendships, and helps ensure that the many services we enjoy continue to thrive.

If you've been thinking about volunteering, talk to someone who already does it. Ask what's involved and discover where your interests and expertise might fit. There are opportunities for every personality type — not just those who enjoy being in the spotlight.

If you'd like to learn more, you'll find a partial list of volunteers on the masthead (Page 2) of each issue of the *Echo*. You can also speak with someone involved in Mar Val, PAC, MVEST, or HOL. They will be happy to point you in the right direction.

You may not find your perfect niche immediately, but there is almost certainly a volunteer opportunity waiting for you.

Why not jump in and give it a try? Our community — and you — will be stronger because of it. ■



Kathryn McMudie's photograph of her "Lady of the Night" cactus

HOL COMMUNITY PRESENTATIONS

First Friday All-Instrumental Music Jam

by **JEANNE SKYBROOK**

**Friday, September 4
7–9 pm • Fireside Room**

September's All-Instrumental Music Jam will take place on Friday, September 4, at 7 pm in the Fireside Room, right after Pub. We've been having fun playing and singing together, and we'd love to have you join us.



We're using the *Daily Ukulele* songbook, and copies of some of the songs will be available. All instruments, voices, and music appreciators are welcome. Come to

Pub, then join us afterward in the Fireside Room. For more information, contact Jeanne Skybrook at 415-302-3010.

Ukulele Recital

**Friday, September 25
7 pm • Fireside Room**

Jeanne Skybrook's ukulele students will present a recital in the Fireside Room on Friday, September 25, at 7 pm, immediately following Pub.

Everyone is welcome to attend and sing along. ■



Janie's LONGEVITY CORNER

By Janie Klimes, RN, BA Biology, BSN

SCIENCE. STRENGTH. INDEPENDENCE. *For Life.*

EVIDENCE-BASED
Information you can trust.

STRENGTH FOR LIFE
Build it today. Benefit tomorrow.

HEALTHY HABITS
Small steps. Lasting change.

SMART NUTRITION
Fuel your body. Feed your future.

HEALTHY AGING TOGETHER
Stronger together. Better together.

Practical Advice • Proven Science • Better Living After 65

Part 2 • Building Strength After 65

It's Never Too Late to Get Stronger

SARCOPENIA— Loss of Muscle Mass and Strength

Have you noticed that carrying groceries, climbing stairs, or getting out of a chair takes more time and effort than it used to? Ever wonder how you got so frail? Everyone loses about 10–15% of their muscle strength per decade until age 70. After age 70, losses accelerate to about **25–40% (!!!!!!!)** per decade—unless we do something about it.

Think Beyond Today

The real question is: **What do I want to be able to do when I'm 85 or 95?** Building strength today is an investment in your future independence.

What Is Resistance Training?

Resistance training means asking your muscles to work against resistance. That resistance can come from weights, resistance bands, machines, or your

own body weight. What you use matters far less than challenging your muscles consistently.

My 15-Minute Strength Plan

I usually spend about 15 minutes lifting weights during each workout. One day I work my back, chest, and shoulders. Another day I focus on my biceps, triceps, and deltoids. For my lower body, I alternate leg extensions and leg curls with squats and lunges, allowing one muscle group to recover while I train another.

How to Choose the Right Weight?

- Do one set of eight repetitions with a weight that challenges your muscles.
- Then do two more sets.
- If you can't complete the third set with good form, the weight is probably too heavy.
- If the third set feels easy, increase the weight next time.

What Surprised Me

Increased dietary protein combined with resistance training is the key. When I began adding significantly more protein to my diet, I could hardly believe how much stronger I became — or how quickly I noticed the difference. I was lifting less weight than I had imagined would be necessary, yet I gained more strength than I had thought possible.

That experience taught me that building strength is not simply about lifting heavier and heavier weights. Our muscles also need adequate nutrition and time to recover if they're going to respond to the work we're asking them to do.

Did You Know?

Muscle is one of the few tissues in the body that continues to respond to exercise throughout life. Adults over 65 can become significantly stronger when their muscles are challenged consistently.

Janie's Take

You already know your body isn't what it used to be. Aging is real. But here's the good news — you really can get a lot of it back. With regular movement, strength training, adequate protein, and consistency, your body can become stronger and more capable than you might think possible. You don't have to spend hours exercising. Small, consistent changes really do add up. A little goes a long way.

You may be surprised not only by what your body can still do — but by what it can do again.

Challenge of the Month

- Complete two upper-body strength-training sessions each week.
- Complete two lower-body strength-training sessions each week.
- Track how much protein you eat each day. Include protein at every meal.
- Write down your workouts and daily protein intake. Recordkeeping is not just a memory aid — it also helps keep you motivated.

Next Month

All About Protein

Until next month, remember

A little really does go a long way. ■

— Janie

Longevity Corner

Discussion Group

by **JANIE KLIMES**

**4th Monthly Monday
4 pm • Fireside Rom**

On the fourth Monday of each month at 4 pm, I will lead a group to discuss what people are doing in their lives to improve their health, diet, exercise, and goals; new science surrounding longevity; and how to be healthy. It will be a leader-led discussion group about issues discussed in my monthly *Echo* article. All are invited. Starts: **Monday, September 21, 4 pm.** ■



Craft & Flea Market

by **TARA PLOCHER**

Saturday, September 12

Come to the ballroom and shop for surprises! If you want to sell anything, including things you made, clothing, or household items, contact taraplocher@gmail.com. ■



New Nei Gung Class

by **JAY SHELFER**

**Saturdays • 11-Noon
Bamboo Room**

Starts **Saturday, September 5.** ■



**THE ART
AND
SCIENCE
OF
LIVING
WELL**

Strength Training as a Key Anti-Aging Strategy

by **NAN WATANABE**

Sundays • 12-1 pm • Bamboo Room

Experts in longevity agree — strength training can:

- **slow aspects of aging at the cellular level**
- **preserve independence**
- **make daily life easier.**

It's never too late to start.

Tips to get started:

- Combine strength training with cardio for maximum benefit.
- Keep your workouts varied to stay motivated.
- Remember: Starting small is better than not starting at all. ■

Source: Seegert, L. June 1, 2021. "4 Ways Exercise Helps Fight Aging," *Time*. <https://time.com/6053055/how-exercise-fights-aging/>

Calling All Crafters

by **NANCY WARFIELD**

Tuesdays • 2-3 pm • Library

Have you always wanted to learn a craft — or get back to one you used to love? Join Craft & Chat on Tuesdays, 2-3 pm.

- Crafting can put you in a flow state and help relieve stress and anxiety
- Chat with friends while exercising your creativity
- Make new friends while you craft
- Give and receive advice
- Share projects and exchange materials
- Repurpose found items
- Make Christmas gifts and decorations
- Participate in the MVMCC craft fairs
- Mend clothes and accessories
- Learn crafts from your fellow Park residents, such as — Crocheting — Knitting — Sewing — Basket making — Sashiko stitching
- Finish that project you started years ago! ■



Who've Visited Our Park?

by **RO RIGNEY**, Photography by **DAVID GRAY**

The nonprofit All About Owls (<https://allaboutowls.org>) came to the Marin Valley Ballroom on Sunday, June 14, and was greeted by more than 60 enthusiastic residents. Serving Marin, Sonoma, and other San Francisco Bay Area counties, All About Owls is the local expert on owl behavior, nesting, rehabilitation, and rescue.

Meeting Gazeau, a magnificent live Great Horned Owl presented by Maranna Riser, was an afternoon highlight.

Claudia Carlson gave an engaging presentation about the important role owls play in our

ecosystem. A single pair of Barn Owls and their young can consume more than 3,000 rodents each year, providing natural rodent control without the need for poisons.



She also explained the dangers of rodenticides. A poisoned rodent can become a deadly meal for owls, hawks — including our Red-shouldered and Red-tailed Hawks — American Kestrels, coyotes, foxes, bobcats, vultures, ravens, raccoons, skunks, and even family pets. Secondary poisoning harms the very wildlife that naturally helps keep rodent populations under control.

The presentation featured an interactive display where attendees could examine a mounted Barn Owl along with owl wings, skulls, talons, and owl pellets from several species.



Claudia also shared the fascinating fact that modern birds are living descendants of dinosaurs — a reminder to be thankful they aren't much bigger than they are! If you'd like to learn more, there are many excellent articles and videos online.

Kudos to HOL for sponsoring this event. The HOL Owl Committee has been working with All About Owls, Happy Bat Solutions, and Park Management to develop an annual maintenance plan for the Marin Valley owl boxes. The committee has also helped install bat boxes that provided new homes for bats that would otherwise have been displaced during work beneath the clubhouse deck.

Based on recommendations from owl experts, the Owl Committee asks residents not to install their own owl boxes. Songbird nest boxes are welcome, but please remember that all nest boxes require regular maintenance, including annual cleaning before the nesting season. The committee will continue working with owl experts to install additional owl boxes in appropriate locations in the Park.

Although the nesting season is winding down, some young owls may still be dependent on their parents. Please avoid approaching owl nest boxes or imitating owl calls, as both can

disturb adult owls and their young. Thank you for helping us protect the owls that call Marin Valley home! ■



Gazeau preparing for flight

Message from Mar Val



Dear Friends,

Labor Day is here and Mar Val begins our fall/winter schedule of events. Please add these dates to your calendar and join us:

Labor Day – September 7

Kathleen's Birthday Pub Celebration – September 18

Oktoberfest – October 9

Black Cat – October 31

Thanksgiving Dinner – November 21

Holiday Party – December 12

New Year's Eve – December 31

Of course, there will be flyers announcing the details and sign-up deadlines. Please carefully read and heed the notes on the counter at the clubhouse. Mar Val's wonderful reservationist, Susan Hoff, will be so happy if you identify your entrée and deposit your check.

Mar Val invites you to join us at Pub on September 18 to celebrate the 90th birthday of Kathleen Dargie. For our new residents, Kathleen was president of Mar Val for some 12 years, and we are so very happy to welcome her back for this important event. Hope to see you very soon.





Mar Val
LABOR DAY DINNER

Monday, September 7

5 pm Cocktails 6 pm Dinner

MENU

**Hamburgers or Hot Dogs or Impossible Burgers
or Morning Star Veggie Burgers**

Included:

Chili, Macaroni Salad, Green Salad

Frozen Dessert

\$17 per person

**Reservation deadline is Thursday, September 3, by 5 pm
or when 120 reservations have been received.**

Make checks payable to Mar Val.

Questions — call Susan Hoff @ 707-365-9426



Mar Val Pub Night

Friday, October 9

5 pm Cocktails 5:30 pm Dinner

Bratwurst with Sauerkraut

or

Vegetarian Quiche

Potato Salad

Cookies

\$12 per person

**Reservation deadline – Tuesday, October 6, 5 pm
or when 120 reservations have been received.**

Make checks payable to Mar Val.

For questions – call Susan at 707-365-9426



Black Cat Fundraiser

Black Cat Spooky Costume Party

Cash prizes for Best Costumes

&

FaBOOlus Bake Sale

Saturday, October 31

5 pm Cocktails

6 pm Dinner

Featuring our menu from Road Kill Cafe

Poodles 'n Noodles (*Meaty Macaroni*)

or

Guess This Mess (*Vegetarian Lasagna*)

Salad & Garlic Toast

Bakery Treats for Sale

\$17 per person

Reservation deadline: Wednesday, October 28 @ 5 pm
or when 110 reservations have been received.

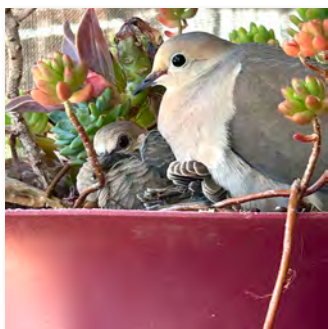
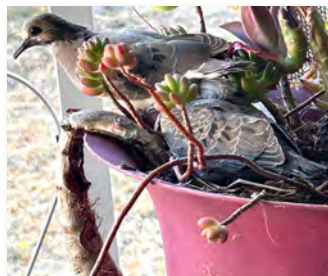
Make checks payable to Mar Val.

Questions – Call Susan @ 707-365-9426



September '26 FULL MOON

by **KATHRYN McMUDIE**



McMudies' summer guests

This September's full moon will occur on Saturday, September 26. In Novato, the full moon rises at 6:54 pm in the east and sets at 7:02 am in the west. Because it is the full moon closest to autumnal equinox (which falls on September 22), this lunar event is traditionally known as the Harvest Moon or Corn Moon. It rises shortly after sunset for several nights in a row, helping farmers extend their workdays before the advent of electricity.

Major moon phases — September 2026

- Third Quarter September 4
- New Moon September 11
- First Quarter September 18
- Full Moon September 26

During September 2026, the moon will be waxing (appearing illuminated on the right side and increasing in size) from September 12–25. It will be waning (appearing illuminated on the left side and decreasing in size) from September 1–10 and September 27–30.

Other names for September's full moon: *Autumn Moon* (Cree), *Moon When Rice Is Laid Up to Dry* (Dakota), *Falling Leaves Moon* (Ojibwe), *Leaves Turning Moon* (Anishinaabe), *Moon of Brown Leaves* (Lakota), *Yellow Leaf Moon* (Assiniboine), *Child Moon* (Tlingit), and *Mating Moon* and *Rutting Moon* (Cree terms describing the time when certain animals, such as moose, are ready to mate).

Please let me know if these monthly Full Moon articles interest you. If so, comment on what interests you and what I could leave off. If they do not interest you, please let me know that . also. Email me: theryn330@gmail.com. ■

Living Under Pressure

by **LORNA SASS**

I have felt a pressure all my life to do, do, do.

It's been mighty uncomfortable, but I have known no other way.

For as long as I can remember, I've been living under the heavy weight of a deadline.

Deadlines began early in my life, first when I was editor-in-chief of my high school newspaper, and later, with my master's thesis and doctoral dissertation.

Deadlines always seemed like natural punctuation marks in my life, and I set up my days and weeks with never-ending due dates, eventually for the many cookbooks and magazine articles I wrote. I didn't resent or hate the deadlines. Indeed, I welcomed them as taskmasters, whipping me to perform so that I could acknowledge myself in a way my parents were unable to — as a person worthy of praise for her accomplishments.

So accustomed did I become to slave-driver deadlines that when I finished one book or article, I immediately went on to another, rarely stopping to celebrate my achievement. Deadlines were my lifeline to productivity.



Fast forward to my retirement from writing cookbooks in my mid-sixties. I had shared everything I needed to about food and felt a deep urge to explore life beyond the kitchen. To that end, I started a blog called “Lorna Sass at Large” and documented my thoughts and wanderings with photographs, capturing magic moments in New York City and elsewhere.

Needing something more to fill my days, I became a docent at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden and studied to be a transformational life coach. Although I completed the arduous training and became a licensed professional, somehow I never felt a strong urge to develop this new career. While I was good at the work, I now realize that my deeply empathic self absorbed the sorrows and frustrations of others, and I never developed a system to shake them off. Sessions left me exhausted, and I slowly lost the energy to pursue this new career.

So there I was, receiving Social Security and feeling kind of lost without any external deadlines to keep me in motion. In New York City, everyone is rushing around being busy and creative, and I was so used to carrying the heavy burden of deadlines that I unconsciously developed one after another on my own — whether it was changing the kitty litter box, tidying up my apartment, doing a round of yoga, or going for a walk.

Going, going, going.

Doing, doing, doing.

Everything felt like a heavy pressure, and I have the slouched shoulders to prove it! Slowing down was a concept that never occurred to me.

When I moved to California at the age of 66, I quickly became aware that I was moving faster than everyone else. So intense was my New York fast-track energy that I noticed some people taking a few steps backward when I started to talk! But I had no idea how to slow down.

So what did I do? I set up new deadlines in my new West Coast life. Whether I was pushing myself to water my plants, do the dishes or laundry, or exercise, it always felt like there was something I was supposed to get done. And when I was doing one thing, I was always in fast-forward mode, already thinking about the next thing that needed to be checked off the to-do list.

Where does rest fit into all this? I don’t remember a time when I ever felt justified in taking a nap. Now that I’m an elder and can’t run around the way I used to, the big challenge is to let it be OK — and natural — to take a nap in the middle of the day. And while I’m forced to nap most days because I’m too tired to take another step, I still don’t really know how to be OK with doing nothing.

It makes me smile to look back and recall that I’m best known for the pressure cooker books I wrote. It will not surprise you, dear reader, that what drew me to pressure cooking was that it’s a fast-forward way to get food on the table.

But it never occurred to me until now that the title of my cookbook, *Cooking Under Pressure*, is an apt description of how I’ve lived my life. Turns out, it was a brilliant strategy, because I recently put some puzzle pieces together and discovered at the ripe old age of 80, that I have ADHD — possibly making me a contender for the *Guinness Book of World Records* as the oldest woman diagnosed.

The pressure of those deadlines was what made it possible for me to stop fidgeting and hyperfocus, something that is extremely challenging for ADHDers to do. Without living under deadline pressure, I am at loose ends, haphazard in my thinking and acting, unable to read a book, and finding it challenging to stay present in the moment.

So I owe gratitude to my unconscious for finding a way to help this neurodivergent being have a successful career. Now I pray that my brilliant unconscious will discover a way for me to spend my last chapters in peace and flow.

How I long to experience the rich, benevolent stillness of doing nothing. ■



Red-tailed Hawk

Text and Photography
by **DAVID GRAY**

Walking around our Park in the early evening in mid-July, as the sun was starting to set, a commotion in a tree caught my attention. A mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*) was pitching a fit, and it became clear that the object of its ire was a red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*) sitting quietly in an oak tree.

Hooded oriole above red-tailed hawk



Mockingbird sounding the alarm



The mockingbird was joined by a hooded oriole (*Icterus cucullatus*), and both were quite upset to find the red-tailed hawk in their midst.

The red-tailed hawk seemed inured to the abuse being heaped upon it. Perhaps it felt that the rage was earned, since red-tailed hawks do prey secondarily on smaller birds.

Finally it had had enough, gave a typical red-tailed hawk shriek, and left the tree.



Back in 2020 at the Lee Metcalf National Wildlife Refuge in Montana, I photographed an angry group of red-winged blackbirds attacking and riding on the back of a red-tailed hawk that was carrying a baby bird in its talons. So perhaps this one felt like it was getting off lightly.

*Red-winged
blackbirds
riding a red-
tailed hawk*



Our Park is a perfect habitat for red-tailed hawks and other raptors, including the red-shouldered hawk, Northern harrier, and white-tailed kite. The surrounding grasslands provide ample primary prey from small mammals weighing a few ounces (voles, mice, and rats) to medium-sized mammals weighing up to roughly three pounds (hares and jackrabbits).

Our usual view of red-tailed hawks is seeing them circling lazily in the sky, scanning for prey.

*Red-tailed
hawk
soaring*



After a fairly dry winter, please take some time now to re-check and clear Zone Zero (the first five feet around your home) of leaves, pine straw, grasses, weeds, and wood scraps. As summer progresses, detritus tends to accumulate from tree maintenance and removal, which drops dead leaves and branches. Do a little bit each day. The winter rains are likely a ways out. ■

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday		
2026		1 7:30-9 Taiji 11-12 Chair Yoga Ballroom 2-3 Craft & Chat Library 5 PAC Board Meeting Ballroom/ Zoom	2 7:30-9 Taiji 10-11 Water Aerobics 5:30-6:30 Nei Gung Ballroom/ Jay Shelfer	3 7:30-9 Taiji 1-2 Rollin’ Root 4:30 HOL Com. Mtg. Fireside Rm 5 Labor Day Dinner res. deadline	4 7:30-9 Taiji 10-11 Water Aerobics 12 Mahjong Private/ Fireside Rm. 5-7 Pub 7 Music Jam Fireside Room	5 11-12 Nei Gung Bamboo Room 6:30 Dancing Meadow		
		6 7:30-9 Taiji 12-1 Group Strength Training Bamboo Room/Nan Watanabe 3-4 Silver Dragon Wellness Bamboo Room/ Will & Susi Banuelos	7 LABOR DAY 6 Trash 7:30-9 Taiji Deck/David MacLam 10-11 Water Aerobics 5-7 Mar Val Labor Day Dinner 5:30-6:30 Nei Gung Bamboo Rm Jay Shelfer	8 7:30-9 Taiji 11-12 Chair Yoga 2-3 Craft & Chat ECHO DEADLINE	9 7:30-9 Taiji 10-11 Water Aerobics 5 Mar Val Board Meeting Fireside Rm. 5:30-6:30 Nei Gung 6-7 Silver Dragon Wellness	10 7:30-9 Taiji 1-2 Rollin’ Root 6-10 Board Game Night Fireside Room/ Ed Collins	11 7:30-9 Taiji 10-11 Water Aerobics 12 Mahjong 5-7 Pub  1-4 Ballroom Craft and Flea Market 6:30 Dancing	
		13 7:30-9 Taiji 12-1 Group Strength Training 3-4 Silver Dragon Wellness	14 6 Trash 7:30-9 Taiji 10-11 Water Aerobics 5:30-6:30 Nei Gung Ballroom	15 7:30-9 Taiji 11-12 Chair Yoga 2-3 Craft & Chat 5 MVC Board Meeting Zoom	16 7:30-9 Taiji 10-11 Water Aerobics 5:30-6:30 Nei Gung 2:30-3:30 Ladies Bridge Fireside Rm.	17 7:30-9 Taiji 1-2 Rollin’ Root	18 7:30-9 Taiji 10-11 Water Aerobics 12 Mahjong 5-7 Pub Kathleen’s Birthday Celebration	19 11-12 Nei Gung 6:30 Dancing
		20 7:30-9 Taiji 12-1 Group Strength Training 2-5 Private Event Fireside Rm. 3-4 Silver Dragon Wellness	21 6 Trash 7:30-9 Taiji 10-11 Water Aerobics 4-5 Longevity Corner Fireside Rm./ Janie Klimes 5:30-6:30 Nei Gung	22 7:30-9 Taiji 11-12 Chair Yoga 2-3 Craft & Chat	23 7:30-9 Taiji 10-11 Water Aerobics 5:30-6:30 Nei Gung 6-7 Silver Dragon Wellness	24 7:30-9 Taiji 1-2 Rollin’ Root	25 7:30-9 Taiji 10-11 Water Aerobics 12 Mahjong 7-9 Jeanne Skybrook Ukulele Concert	26 11-12 Nei Gung 6:30 Dancing
		27 7:30-9 Taiji 12-1 Group Strength Training 3-4 Silver Dragon Wellness	28 6 Trash 7:30-9 Taiji 10-11 Water Aerobics 5:30-6:30 Nei Gung	29 7:30-9 Taiji 11-12 Chair Yoga 2-3 Craft & Chat	30 7:30-9 Taiji 10-11 Water Aerobics 4 Book Club Carol-Joy Harris 5:30-6:30 Nei Gung	SEPTEMBER		