

# Staying Afloat in Muir Beach



**Gerry Pearlman  
Shanghai'd Chris  
Goves' truck to  
transport people  
and supplies**

**Maxx  
Wades in the  
Pelican Inn  
Parking Lot**





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NOTES FROM THE EDITORS

Thank you Willow for Years of Dedication!

The BEACHCOMBER is a community newsletter published by and for the residents, friends and former residents of Muir Beach. Published since 1946 (on and off). Circulation 200 (more or less). Appears bi-monthly (sooner or later).

SUBSCRIPTIONS  
\$25 per year delivered, \$30 mailed

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Contributions to the Beachcomber can be in the form of a disk or emailed or put in the Beachcomber mailbox. We prefer MSWord: Mac or PC for text; eps or tiff files for pictures. All files can be emailed to: heather@creativei4u.com. Illustrations and pictures will be scanned and returned (don't forget to put a return address). If you have specific formatting, etc. please include a printout. Please avoid handwritten text. If you only submit text in paper format it will be scanned and will not look as good. (I don't have an optical character reader in my scanner). It is highly recommended that if you have any text, that you provide a disk or send it via email.

The next Beachcomber will be issued in March. Please have your contributions in the mailbox by March 1st. For more information call Nina: 415-388-0380

Everything printed should be considered solely the opinion of the writer, and is printed in the form and condition as presented. Beachcomber exercises no editorial control over content or distribution, except for readability and general appearance. Anonymous submissions are not accepted. YOU make the news happen and we want everyone else to know about it.

Disclaimer: When no name appears as the author on any story in the Beachcomber, you can safely assume it was written by the editors unless otherwise noted. All articles have been submitted as "proofed." No additional spell checking or proofing was done for individual articles. Misspelling are the sole responsibility of the contributing author....

THIS ISSUE'S STAFF:  
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Any resident may submit a classified ad for free. Please email it to heather@creativei4u.com and we will put it into the next issue.

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Happy New Year!

Let me know if any of you would like a 2005 tide chart, and I'll put it in your box or mail it to you. I've also got some down at the Pelican, or you can come get them at my open houses on Sundays (check the I.J. or Chronicle).

I've received some neat comments from folks who used to live here. Check out the guest book on my site www.muirbeach.com

Muir Beach real estate activity was busy in 2005, with prices reaching new levels! If you need to know more, contact me at your convenience.

The septic inspectors would like to remind everyone not to flush any kind of disposable wipes (baby wipes, hand wipes, bathroom cleaning wipes, etc.). They also tell me that any type of oil (even olive oil) is not friendly to septic leach lines, so please toss those things out; don't put them down your drains.

Many thanks again to all of you who donated prizes and time to the Firemen's BBQ Raffle in May 2005. We had more Muir Beach winners than ever! Don't be shy if you think you might have something to donate for the May 2006 event (yes, I start gathering the prizes in January).

And congratulations to Sandra who lead the Tam High Mock Trial Team in May to win National Championships (she's now at Brown after a summer of backpacking through Eastern Europe). Whatever Harvey is putting in the water, keep it up!

Debra Allen, Realtor, (415) 380-6137  
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BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENT

Our newest Muir Beach community member, born to proud parents, Rina Neiman and Wally Brill of Sunset Way.

David Max Neiman-Brill

Born: October 25, 2005

Weight: 8 lbs. 1 oz.

Length: 19 3/4 inches



COMMUNITY CONSCIOUSNESS

Humpty Dumpty had a great fall!

Chairs and benches, they’re meant for sitting on definitely not for putting one on top of the other and climbing on as a ladder. Maybe if you have some circus training you can get away with it. So I found myself falling from about 4-5 feet hitting my back on the edge of the bench. Not being able to move and experiencing the worst pain I ever have, Nina called 911.

There was something comforting in looking up and seeing John John come through the door with a little wave as I lay there on the floor with water dripping down on me. Then more friendly faces; Graham, Eric, and Cuco working on me. My thanks go out to our Fire Department for their help, and my appreciation for the energy and time they put in.

I am back, lucky not to have broken my back or neck, only some chipping of a couple of vertebra and some severe muscle and tissue bruising.

I thank everybody for their well wishes and concern.

Caution is my New Year’s resolution.

Harvey Pearlman

Kudos to Cuco

For years I’ve thought about writing an article of appreciation for Harvey. I have witnessed his unending willingness to show up for anyone who calls on him for help regardless of the time or of what he’s doing. But this is not a letter about Harvey’s altruism, I’ll leave that for someone other than I.

The morning Harvey fell off his hand made ladder and hit the ground Cuco was one of the Firemen who responded to the call. (There are so many to thank for their help that day and beyond; The Fire Department, Gerry, and Harley who spent the day with Harvey in the hospital and nursed him back to standing in his home. But this letter is for Cuco Alcala.)

Cuco held Harvey’s head with such gentle care and apologized each time Harvey yelled out in pain. Harvey fell trying to fix a leak in our new mud room. Cuco assured me after they took Harvey off to the hospital that he would be back that day to see about the leak that dripped down on Harvey as he lay in the mud room floor. Not only did Cuco return that day, but he returned every day after that for weeks. Cuco cancelled a day of work and gathered all hands together to gravel the path from Sunset to our house so that when Harvey was well enough to come home he could. Cuco showed up day after day in all kinds of weather to help our family make it through a very stressful and difficult time.

Many of you know Cuco as a ‘handy man’, but I want to acknowledge him for the amazing friend that he has been to us. We have some pretty amazing teachers in this community who remind us of what community and friendship are really about.

Thank you Cuco from the bottom of our hearts!!  
Nina Vincent-pearlman

In Memory

Paul Oppenheim, a long time resident of Muir Beach before moving to a retirement home, passed on Oct. 17 at the age of 92. He was a good friend until the end from whom I learned immeasurably. It was mostly about disability and courage. Paul lost an arm in an auto accident in his twenties. Still he managed to do more with his one arm than most people do with two. Here is a poem his daughter Sarah wrote for him. ~ Gerry Pearlman

Honoring My Father’s Passing Into

The Wind, the Water and the Earth  
Humming as he skied.  
Wind.  
His gaze beyond the sails  
For the patterns on the  
Water.  
Hiking,  
Balancing with his stick,  
Feet planted on this  
Earth.  
Thankful  
For experiencing with him  
Headlands and surf and woods,  
Sandy beaches and tide pools,  
Irises and hawks and heather,  
With hand lenses and binoculars.  
Ashes to earth  
Blowing in the wind,  
West across the ocean to the sunset,  
Mixing and mingling calcium with sandstone,  
Shells indistinguishable from his Bones.

May his spirit be filled with loving-kindness  
May his spirit be safe from harm  
May his spirit be free and happy  
May his spirit live with ease

May we be filled with loving kindness  
May we be safe from harm  
May we be free and happy  
May we live with ease



# What I love about Muir Beach

Suzanne Wynn: the people and the beauty. The horses. The beach and the Bistro.

Kathy Sward: I like all the people, the community aspect of it - people really care about one another.

Charlene Modena: I like the Bistro. For further information see Kathy's response.

Mary Collier: It's a great place. I love everybody here.

Malcolm Collier: I like the fog.

Lonna Richmond: Everything. I like the fact that we are surrounded by open space. Also that people give one another the right to their privacy.

Judith Yamamoto: I like that we have lots of babies. I like the fact that we have the tradition of community pulling together. We have a reputation for this but I feel that right now Muir Beach has a lot of challenges in this area. I hope we can live up to our reputation of working on problems together. We have something to aim for.

Nancy Rose: I liked walking down the path this morning to the community center, the smell of the fireplace evoked the happy memories of my childhood.

Bob Fesler: I love coming to Bistro and coming over the hill to Muir Beach, talking to all the people from Muir Beach.

Nina Vincent: I love the fact that I can start my ritual walk down Sunset Way alone and end up walking with a parade of neighbors; children, dogs, parents, aunts, and uncles. I love that when Harvey fell and I called 911 our dearest neighbors and friends held his head and hand and spoke to him with loving kindness while also taking care of business. I love that if I forget to buy eggs or am having a craving for something yummy I can just walk up the hill to 'grandma Martha' and Lee's house and they will happily share their supplies.

Dean Turkalj: As a frequent visitor, I can say that I love Muir Beach because of the people that make these hamlets a community, and the wildlife that shares this wilderness with us.

Heather Kobrin: Muir Beach has been a magical place for me since my first visit at a young age. Moving here in Dec 2004 was a dream come true. As an artist and photographer, I quickly learned to always have my camera with me even for a quick walk on the beach. In fact, it was my photos of my dog Kazoo at Muir Beach that inspired and empowered me to create my children's book about him. This is only one of many ways that living here has inspired me. Moving here, I expected to enjoy the beautiful beach and fog, but I was blown away by the sense of community here. I think it is so rare and special in this day and age, and I am so grateful to be a part of it. I have made great friendships here and I love going to Bistro, the writer's group, volleyball, and community parties. It's amazed me to learn how many people have been out here for multiple decades. But now that Muir Beach has gotten under my skin, I never want to leave either!

# My Life at the Beach

What a wonderful and supportive community! For whatever reason, we all came to Muir Beach and whether we stayed or left, many of us experience a connectedness that is hard to replicate. The BBQ, The Quilters' Holiday Arts Fair, floods, tsunami warnings, earthquakes, water emergencies and inexhaustible beauty of the beach and nature all connect us. We have potlucks to celebrate births, deaths and everything in between. No one is forgotten, and though some participate more or less, we all participate in some ways.

I found out I have lung cancer in September of 2004. I never smoked or did anything considered a risk factor. I was stunned and so were you. My late diagnosis meant there was little hope I would be alive in a year, but I am still here. Some say it is my positive attitude. Others say it is because I was in such good health going in (obviously my lack of athleticism is overlooked!) While I find those statements to be mostly correct, I consider 2 things to be of the utmost importance in my desire to live.

#1 of course is Maxx who was 5 then and is now 7! You can't feel bad about your own circumstances with a little boy who needs your help. It shook me awake every time he cried because he had an owie, or needed some "help right now!" When I thought I was getting sick from chemo with a fever, he would be "ill" and lay beside me whether he was or not. "We'll just stay in bed together today, mom" he would say simply. In his first year of school he had 29 absences from kindergarten! His art was full of black guns and scary faces.

I did alternative medicine, chemo and radiation. I got so weak I couldn't eat and lost my hair. It didn't look good. In April, I thought I'd be gone by July. So I started doing things I had never done. Mike and I got married, we thought secretly, with only my friend, Diane, her family and a couple other friends who had been helping me. But my sister showed up as I lay in bed, waiting for the single hour I could muster enough energy to stand. Then Diane convinced us to take a drive around and well, you know where that lead! Drive by wedding receptions - for those who are afraid to really commit!

So that leads me to #2. The community. You are all there for me with meals, whenever we needed them and even if we didn't, rides when I couldn't drive, 8 AM prayers from a group who is as non-religious as

I am and a quilt that is big enough to cover us all! You are too much. I am convinced that the collective energy was the force that kept me going last spring when it seemed I would fail.

We all have idols. Mine are people who give when it seems they should be receiving. They go past their own loss, illness, trauma and dramas to help each other. Seems to be what we do here. It doesn't matter whether rich or poor, we are all rich in the way that counts the most. What we have you can't buy. You have to play to win. Years of dishing up beans, parking cars and sandbagging the creek come back to help you when you are where I am. One good emergency and we are all volunteers.

My brother and his wife came to visit me this fall from New York City. I saw someone was making us dinner that night, and knew they would cook even more if they knew I had company so I said nothing and Mike got some crab to stretch out the meal. No need! The stuffed Cornish game hens were more than enough for the 5 of us, and they were stunned. Someone made you this meal? They didn't get it. They live in New York City. They make reservations for dinner. This was a gourmet, amazing, delicious spread complete with dessert. I think they understand why I live here now. I always thought it was odd they lived in NYC, but of course they thought "where else could you have so many choices of where to dine?" We know the truth. Muir Beach has great food. Just come to the potlucks.

We have had countless wonderful meals that were so good and helped me so much when I just didn't have the energy to shop or cook. They went on and on. Even now, Charlene is still arranging meals for my chemo days, even though I tell her I am really OK. But, who could say no? The love is constant and the food amazing. And when I do crash, it is great to have something delicious to eat. Thank you all.

I have experienced a wealth of love that stretches the imagination. So many friends. By the end of Maxx's first year he was drawing flowers and birds with baby birds in beautiful colors. With each month, while I know things can change, I feel better and better. Sometimes I have ups and downs, but on the whole, I wouldn't trade this life for any other. I am humbled by the gratitude and love I feel for all of you. Thank you for supporting me and my family and for being part of what is our life at the beach.

Ellen Mettler

# New Years Resolution

Did you actually make some last year? Did you write them down and review them recently? A year can seem a long time. A plan without a sensible time table is wishful thinking. Wishful thinking that’s it. That’s what my resolutions seem to amount to. Now AA has a saying “one day at a time.” Just encompass one day, 24 little hours, with your arms of intention. And then hug the next day and the next, one at a time. AA also says that it helps a lot if you include some support by like-minded people in your plan.

Then there is “Visualize your goal” Did you see that sign on Pacific way “Visualize being Towed” In this approach you shut your eyes and try to visualize, lets say, owning a hybrid vehicle. Every day ( that’s the hard part) every day spend ten or fifteen minutes sitting quietly trying to visualize your own hybrid. Get a picture of one, put it on the refrigerator. What color? What does the dashboard look like? How many mpg? Get more and more detailed. Try to sketch one. You can do it. How much does it cost? Check KelleyBluebook.com. Become an expert. Go visit one, take a picnic lunch. Go to the bistro Wednesday mornings at the Community Center and have a croissant and try to work hybrids in to the conversation over coffee. Maybe a hybrid ‘wanabe’ support group (HWSG) could happen. You could be president and maybe meet somebody. It could be a springboard to bigger things maybe even the water board, who knows. The sky is the limit!

Now that you are getting your “ride” together and your budding political and social careers are looking up, consider the Zen Koan called:

“ORDINARY MIND IS THE WAY”  
(or, How do I choose and keep my New Year’s resolutions?)

Joshu asked Nansen, “What is the Way?  
“Ordinary mind is the Way,” Nansen replied.  
“Shall I try to seek after it?” responded Nansen.  
“If you try for it, you will become separated from it,”responded Nansen.

“How can I know the Way unless I try for it?” persisted Joshu. Nansen said, “The Way is not a matter of knowing or not knowing. Knowing is delusion; not knowing is confusion. When you have really reached the true Way beyond doubt, you will find it as vast and boundless as outer space. How can it be talked about on the level of right and wrong?” With these words, Joshu come to a sudden realization.

Wow! Is it wet in Muir Beach!! The big red Vol. Fire Department truck just showed up outside. Harvey Pearlman fell and hurt himself. Poor Nina is holding back tears. “He was really irritated about the leak in the ceiling and then he slipped off a chair and fell on his side while trying to fix it”, she said. He has a big bruise on his back; he is breathing OK but is in pain when moved. The guys in the yellow slickers put him on a stretcher and off to the hospital. Brother Gerry is with him.

Thinking healing thoughts. May Harvey mend quickly and may his family be supported by the positive spirit of our community. May Kuan Yin the bodhisattva of compassion work her gift bestowing powers to the benefit of our friends. May all beings find liberation. Gaté Gaté Paragaté Parasamgaté, Bodhisvaha!

Maybe I will forget about last year and also I will forget about next year right now. Breathing in the sweet Muir Beach air and seeing the great silvery ocean, vast and boundless as outer space.

Here is the Mumon’s poem that comments on the koan above

The spring flowers, the autumn moon;  
Summer breezes, winter snow.  
If useless things do not clutter your mind,  
You have the best days of your life.

Happy New Year  
Seido Lee de Barros

PS Harvey asked me to write something ‘Buddhist’ for the Beachcomber.

# Cherry Red Optimism and Pain in New Orleans

Cassidy Friedman, Free Lance

New Orleans, La: Calvin Stuart insists on keeping his corner mart and diner, and most of his other belongings a garish cherry red color. Before Katrina, Stuart’s neighborhood, the Upper 9<sup>th</sup> Ward was poor and predominantly black. Now mostly abandoned, it’s held together only by stragglers clinging to the last threads of federal assistance while the mayor claims his bankrupt city can offer no recourse. At the moment, Stuart’s is one of the three small businesses once on the intersection of Claiborne and Desire. He claims he will bring his back with or without aid. The others probably won’t.

“Tell ‘em Stuart’s Diner is coming back,” he said, grinning in the drizzle. “Show ‘em Stuart out here in the rain in front of his building and tell ‘em Stuart’s coming back.” One week later, he’s stooped over the railing at the diner’s entrance reassuring two local men he’ll move ahead even without the loan. “I’m gonna get that loan. If I can’t, I’ll put the building up against a loan. The only thing I got on my side.” he said wagging a thumb over his shoulder, “Before my parents died I paid for this place.” Stuart declared only a petition forcing his establishment from the corner could change his mind about coming back. While Calvin Stuart never thought about leaving after the floods, many evacuees are considering not returning. A survey conducted in September by Southern Media found 44% planned to stay away. New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin is now campaigning in cities across the South in an effort to draw these evacuees back, but he leaves crucial questions unanswered, questions about what schools will re-open, when it will be safe, what houses are rebuildable, and whether aid will be forthcoming. State Senator Arthur Morrell (D) said that people need to be given a definitive plan for redevelopment, and by the mayor not coming forth with one, the city leaves possible returnees in limbo.

Nagin has not yet taken a definitive stance on the fate of areas in the Lower 9<sup>th</sup> Ward, East New Orleans, Gentilly and Lakeview, the places where Katrina inflicted the most damage. The only guidance he offers is to rebuild above the floodplain. Yet, hundreds of residents who’ve clung to houses in low-lying areas have flocked to public hearings to plead for their right to rebuild before their FEMA services expire.

“Imagine your children being put out of one hotel that has no toilets, bad ventilation, no clean water, no keys. The [hotel] don’t want you there [,but] we can’t stay on our property. So what are our options?” a Lower 9<sup>th</sup> Ward woman screamed at the mayor at last week’s hearing on the Sheraton’s 3rd floor. “If it wasn’t for us poor, underpaid people you wouldn’t have your New Orleans.”

Fifty year old community organizer Kimberley Richards said the mayor needs to concentrate on designing means for people who can’t afford to return. “He tells you to come back but he doesn’t make provisions. If you can’t think goal-oriented, if you can’t see your way clear, the sheer devastation and monstrosity of the challenge defeats you.” Most of the lower income people, who cannot afford to come back, make up the 68% black population that was in New Orleans before Katrina. The former black majority in New Orleans also comprises the approximately 100,000 left stranded in the floods. Calvin Stuart believes that local politicians have been trying to drive black people from the Crescent City for years. “It ain’t working with me, you see,” he said throwing his shoulders back. As the New Orleans poor brace for January 7th, the date FEMA cuts off its hotel voucher program, the evacuees Nagin attempts to lure back may remain in other cities which provide incentives to hold them there. Mayor Bill White of Houston, Texas, presently hosting nearly 100,000 evacuees, has begun offering vouchers with FEMA’s aid which are good for twelve months of reasonable rent and utilities. While FEMA has signaled that it may terminate the program on March 1st, it continues to grant the 12 month leases. Speaking of his neighbors now in Houston, Calvin said forcefully, “[FEMA] makes it too sweet to leave [New Orleans]. The mayor is fighting a losing battle. The bigger politicians are against him. You never hear them saying, ‘We’ll give you \$26,000 to go home.’ Those people who think they’re better off, in a year they’ll be kicked out. If you want to stay for a year, stay for a year but come home every once in a while to fix your house.” FEMA offers trailers to residents with power and running water but applicants from the 9th ward interviewed for this article complained that they were either waiting on power or a response from FEMA. Margaret Darr, a middle class resident of the 7th ward, who said FEMA’s offered her a trailer twice, said “People are getting trailers who don’t need them. FEMA is calling people back and offering trailers but not to the people who really need it.”

Every other day Stuart breaks from gutting rotten sheet-rock to check his cherry red mailbox to see if his loan approval has arrived. “I work here by daylight. So far I’ve got two of my five employees back...you can’t break us; we’re strong people.”

The Associated Press reported on Sunday that FEMA now recommends residents waiting on trailers leave Louisiana. FEMA spokesmen James McIntyre said his agency’s message “is to relocate, not permanently, but temporarily, until housing becomes available.”



# Isaac Pearlman in Peru

Gerry Pearlman’s youngest son left for the Peace Corps in Peru. Here is the first installment of many from him:

Hola Familia,

All right I’m finally in Peru and feeling like I have finally begun my adventure. And not only begun it, but plunged in headfirst. We got into Peru Friday night at 11 pm, and then drove to a retreat hotel which was guarded by a bridge and guard with a flak jacket and a gun. Crazy. After two days of orientation, and shots (both my arms are sore from Hepatitis A, B, and Typhoid shot really hurts) we moved to our training site in Santa Eulalia, and I met my host family that I will be staying with for the next ten weeks.

They are all incredibly nice, and have hosted two peace core volunteers before, so they are patient with me when I ask them to repeat everything four times although I am not patient with myself and sometimes just have to give up and nod and say si although I have no idea what they are saying. Esperanza and Manuel are mis padres anfitronas (host parents) and are very nice. Esperanza works in the tienda that is attached to the house, and Manuel does something with radio although I’m not exactly sure what. They have two sons, who are 23 and 20 and they have become amigos muy rapido. The first day Esperanza forced me to eat even after I told her I had already eaten, I played basketball with Lucho y Pepe and their friends for 3 hours until it got dark and we could barely see. But every now and then we would have to stop when one of them shouted “carro” because apparently there is a road that goes through the basketball court and cars drive through and honk so we will get out of their way.

Santa Eulalia is basically a suburb of Lima, and while it was described as a “nice” area by our trainers, it is poor by any US standard. My house

actually has running water, although it’s not hot and fortunately I’ve taken plenty of cold showers camping so it is not too bad. There is electricity as well, but their table and chairs are those plastic type that most people have on their balconies or something.

Like in Spain, the people pronounce my name Eee-zak, but because the accent here is so different it will take me awhile to get used to it. This is only my third day in Peru but still I feel like an idiot because I so often have to ask people to repeat things.

Training is very grueling as well, since we have class and activities from 8-5 each day, and then on Saturdays as well, and of course studying and homework although it hasn’t begun yet, and on top of that they expect us to hang out and talk with our host family as much as possible. So far I haven’t even had time to do any exploring or anything, although the pueblo is situated on a hill and there is a beautiful view of another hill right across from us. The first night my host mother was telling me about how her previous house was destroyed in a rock fall and then later that night there was an earthquake! It was a thing very rare here, and she ushered me and everyone else into the doorway but it was very minor in Santa Eulalia. The epicenter was in Moyobamba I think, and there was some destrucccion there. But everything is fine here, and I’m finally feeling like I’m in Peru instead of our bubble of a guarded compound. Some volunteers are having trouble, and already at least one is thinking of quitting. The only problem I have is that there is no time for everything! I haven’t had barely any free time to myself but it’s good because the more I’m around my family the more practice I get.

All right, there is much more such as how guinea pig is a delicacy here, and other spicy tidbits like this but for another time. I miss you guys and hope you are doing well.

Love, Isaac

# Life at Cambridge

*By Rebecca Riehl*

In the front court of my college at Cambridge University, there are the most beautiful lawns you’ll ever see. They’re a lush green, perfectly manicured, and there isn’t a sprinkler in sight. As you walk in, they’re the first thing you see, and, of course, everybody is gingerly stepping around them. It’s forbidden to touch the grass. This is England after all, and we follow tradition properly.

I’ve just started my undergraduate degree over in England, and there are many more culture differences than I originally thought. We cannot touch the front court lawns, but jumping in the Cam is free game. They drive on the left side of the road, but say it’s the right side. Confusing. There’s the food (oh, the food). And, of course, the favorite pastime of the English is... making fun of Americans.

I’m the only American I’ve met so far (except for a graduate student I met at the dentist’s office, how ironic), and everybody’s having a right good time ‘taking the piss.’ They make fun of our big trucks, or big rigs, calling them instead ‘semi-articulated lorries.’ That’s much better, isn’t it. I don’t say ‘aluminum;’ it’s ‘al-u-min-i-um.’ And probably the most confusing is that when they say ‘pants,’ they’re referring to underpants. Needless to say, I spent my first couple weeks being very embarrassed.

I study engineering over there, and the curriculum is much different than most American universities. Since I am an engineer, I don’t take any classes except those that pertain to engineering - math, physics, computing, and a bit more physics. Apparently, the university isn’t too worried about our writing skills, or if we know when the Battle of Trafalgar was, but we’d better know what happens when a very large capacitor in series with an inductor is put into a transistor (I have yet to figure that out, actually).

I have heard many of my friends tout the merits of English cuisine; they’ve also said that they can smell the merits of English cuisine when cooking a proper English breakfast. I can’t figure out what those merits are. When I mentioned that I thought English cuisine was an oxymoron, they looked at me as if I’d just spit on the Queen. Apparently that subject’s off limits.

Though I may whine and complain about the food, the traditions, and the odd way of speaking, I actually really love it over in England. The people really are friendly and funny. I love what I’m studying, I love the beautiful architecture, and I really do love the culture. And if I ever feel alone in a sea of the English, I can always just go to the dentist’s office.

## MUIR BEACH QUILTERS’ HOLIDAY ART FAIR PHOTOS





## OUT OF AFRICA PEARLMAN

### Face To face with the problem of AIDS

I was not sure what to expect arriving in a country where the AIDS pandemic is such a daily aspect of society. I thought it might be like the early days in the bay area where the problem of AIDS was just being recognized and the prevalent images were those associated with Kaposi Sarcoma - not a pretty picture to say the least.

Well it wasn't at all like that. For all intents and purposes, life in Malawi seems perfectly normal for an African underdeveloped country. I guess I was expecting something resembling a leper colony, but found no outward signs of the illness that was decimating the country. So began my understanding of the disease that weakens and impoverishes families and communities in the poorest developing countries, deepening poverty and widening inequality, drastically reducing life expectancy, and severely taxing overall economic health. AIDS not only decimates farmers, it strikes many others in the prime years of life-including soldiers, teachers, health practitioners, and other professionals-and is turning an alarming number of children into orphans.

One characteristic of the disease that frustrates a more successful control is the distinction between HIV positive and AIDS itself. Being HIV positive merely opens the door for the virus to enter and do its work of building the deficiency syndrome. It may not effectuate this work for some time after the initial HIV positive status, and in fact usually remains dormant for six months even in the HIV stage, making it very difficult to detect after the point of first contact.

What this means is that you will not know you have it during the period of incubation, and it may not manifest itself in any life-threatening manner for some time even after the determination of HIV positive status. These dynamics create both ambivalence and an ambiguity to the testing procedure since the possibility of false positive testing is always present.

Another grave problem to knowing whether you are positive or not, is that it is not the proximate cause of death. For the most part people will die of TB, pneumonia, or some other illness, which they may well have survived had their immune systems not been so severely compromised by the AIDS virus. Persons and their families who believe themselves dying of some familiar illness like pneumonia, rather than the vulnerability brought on by their failing immune system, are not likely to sound the alarm about what has happened to them.

Other factors contributing to the spread of the disease are the cultural practices of polyandry and the related practice of when a husband dies, sending the surviving spouse off to live with the dead husband's family, where she may well become second wife to a brother of her late husband. If her husband died of AIDS and didn't know it, in all likelihood she will be HIV positive as well, and be the unwitting transmitter of the virus to any new sexual partner. That new partner in turn may transmit the virus to other sexual partners without anyone knowing what is going on.

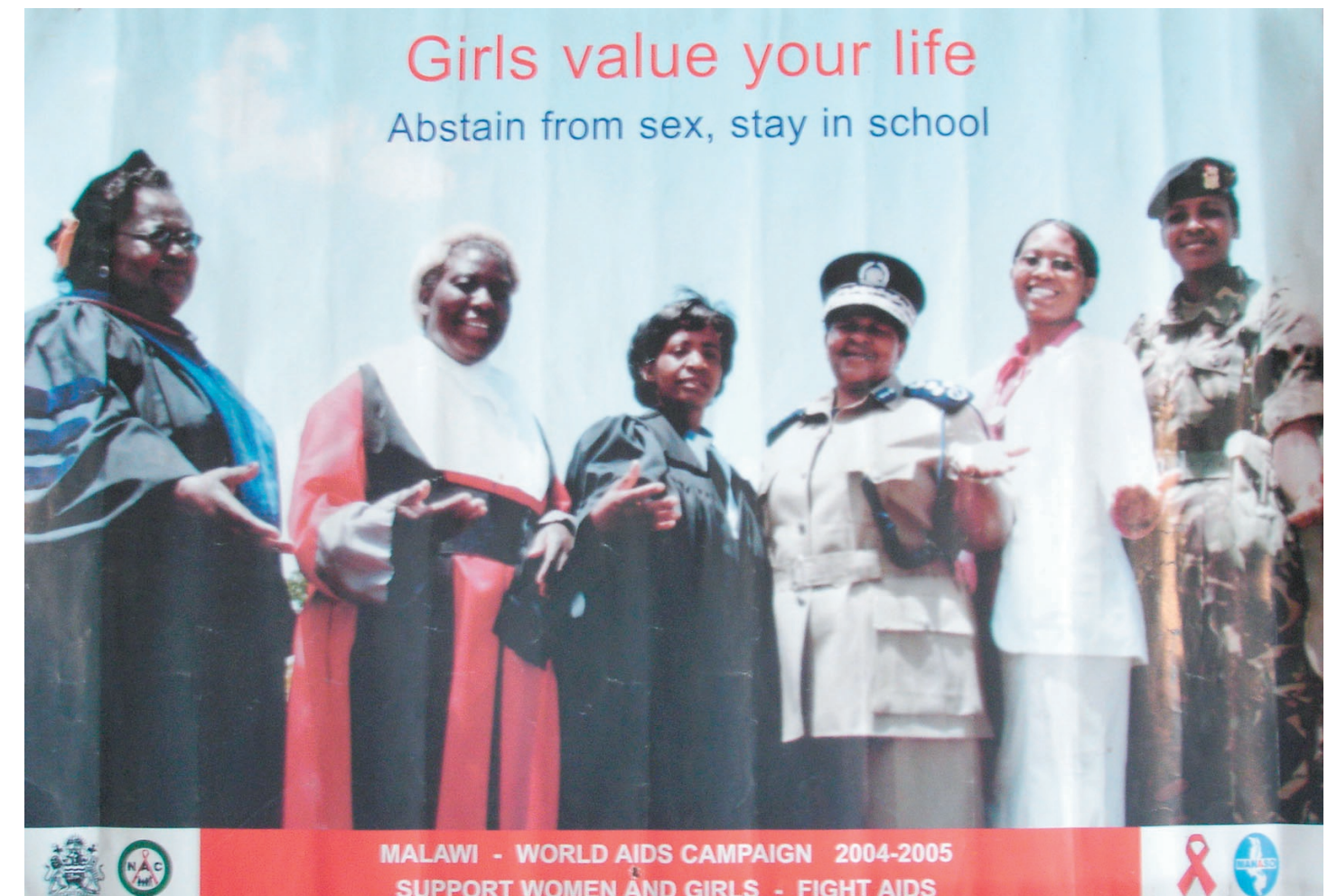
The latest estimates according to the State Of The World 2005 report indicate that between 34 million and 46 million people are now living with HIV/AIDS worldwide. And while it is not totally clear (a medicine, if available, can prevent it) it is believed that 4 million children have contracted HIV from their mothers during pregnancy, delivery, or breast feeding. No disease in human experience debilitates and kills exactly as AIDS does, laying low by the tens of millions not the young and the old, but people in the most productive years of their lives. Nearly 90% of fatalities associated with the disease occur among people of working age. While some inroads are being made in fighting the epidemic, they are clearly not equal to the seriousness of the problem. In 2004, for

the third consecutive year, the US government withheld the 34 million it owes UNFPA (the UN population fund that oversees programs in family planning, HIV/AIDS, and maternal and child care). Continued failure to live up to international commitments will hamper significantly any progress in halting the spread of HIV.

Programs to provide clean water and sewage systems would cost roughly 37 billion annually; to cut world hunger in half, 24 billion; to prevent soil erosion, another 24 billion, to provide reproductive health care for all women, 12 billion; to eradicate illiteracy, 5 billion; and to provide immunization for every child in the developing world, 3 billion.

**SPENDING JUST 10 BILLION OR SO A YEAR ON A GLOBAL HIV/AIDS PROGRAM AND 3 BILLION OR SO TO CONTROL MALARIA IN SUB SAHARAN AFRICA WOULD SAVE MILLIONS OF LIVES.**

**ALL THIS ADDS UP TO A LITTLE MORE THAN HALF OF THE 211 BILLION DOLLARS LIKELY TO BE APPROPRIATED FOR THE WAR IN IRAQ.**





# Critter Report

By Dave MacKenzie

## Muir Beach Critter Report: Late 2005

So the rains finally came. With a vengeance! The unusually large rain totals by the end of 2005 had major effects on the critters of Muir Beach.

The Coho Salmon made their move into Redwood Creek a bit later than their usual Thanksgiving date. Unfortunately, the heavy flows resulted in a thick chocolate-colored creek, making salmon watching difficult. Look for the breeding fish in Muir Woods as the creeks clear, with good viewing usually upstream a bit toward Bridge 2 and above. In the last couple years I have also found several good viewing spots along Muir Woods Road, especially just upstream from Kent Canyon (Kerri Lane).

With the flooding, the once (and future?) Big Lagoon attracted some waterfowl, including an unusual invasion of black and white (winter plumage) Red Phalaropes around Christmas: 28 birds were present for the Audubon Christmas Bird Count. This small shorebird actually spends most of its winter far at sea feeding on krill, the small crustaceans that support much of the food chain. Due to the lack of west winds in the spring and early summer, however, the krill population was almost non-existent. As a result Humpback and Blue Whales were late to arrive offshore, and thousands of Red Phalaropes have been starving. We've seen a huge influx of these little birds presumably in an attempt to find food. They showed up all over the bay area in some very unlikely ponds and water bodies. In their alternate breeding plumage (which you might see on a summer boat trip, or on an Alaskan adventure), you will see the spectacular brick red breast from which the bird gets its name.



Lots of other interesting birds were seen in Muir Beach in the fall and early winter. A flock of white and black Snow Geese flying over contained at least one smaller Ross's Goose (which looks basically the same), but was a first for the watershed. A rediscovered record of a Yellow-Headed Blackbird (looks pretty much like it sounds!) upped the watershed species total to 274 (thanks to Larry Silver). Jim White's spotting of a rare Glaucous Gull was so unusual that the California Rare Bird Record Committee may have to confirm the sighting. Short-Eared Owls and Burrowing Owls seen on the south Coastal Trail were less rare, but still very unusual. Peregrine, Merlin, and Kestrel falcons all have been spotted around Muir Beach this winter, suggesting a pretty good invasion of raptors from the north country.

On the mammal scene, Brent Smith reported a close look at a Mountain Lion on the Coast View trail in early October. Apparently this rabbit-scarfing individual was taking long jumps over the brush, separating it easily from its smaller (Airedale-sized) relative: the Bobcat. Keep those cameras handy when you are hiking and riding, you may win the wildlife photo prize of the year!

I had a special view of a pair of Bobcats above the Dairy in November. The male (larger) and female would meet every 20 minutes or so and lie down in the Coyote Bush, and then hunt around nearby open areas for rodents. Kittens can't be too far in the future. With the huge vole and gopher hatch this year, the Coyotes and Bobcats are getting fat and happy and definitely doing their best to control those tasty varmints.

Finally I should mention a couple of special insects. Monarchs did not appear in the numbers I had hoped for this fall, with only about 100 individuals roosting in the trees above the Community Center in November. However, there seems to have been a great hatch of Rain Beetles when the first rains soaked us in November and December. The Rain Beetle is a large solid flyer with purplish-green wing covers and a rusty body, reminiscent of a June Bug to those of us who have spent summers in the eastern U.S. The big males fly

after several years underground, and locate the females (who never fly) by pheromones. I have watched these big bombers zooming along at sunrise or sunset in a good wind and it is amazing to me they can find anything, let alone a grounded female! Marin's Rain Beetles may even be a unique race or subspecies, even though this critter is found around much of the coast of California.

So on to Spring, which is basically already here. Remember to try to leave brush and other nesting areas for birds undisturbed if you can until mid-summer, when the young are out and about!

If you have anything interesting to report, please call Dave MacKenzie at W: 389-1456 or H: 389-1558.

We try to keep the sightings posted on the beach kiosk bulletin board, and the list is only as good as your inputs. Thanks!





## COMMUNITY CENTER

### COMMUNITY CENTER DROP-IN USE

Daytime hours if the Center is not scheduled for other activities. Users responsible for cleanup.

### PING PONG GAME NIGHT, Free

MBCC, anyone interested call Nina 388-0380

### MUIR BEACH MONTESSORI SCHOOL

2 - 5 years old now enrolling.

Contact Lisa Eigsti at 380-0831



## WEEKLY IN MUIR BEACH

### MONDAY

- **Muir Beach Writer's Group** - 2nd and 4th Mondays, 2 pm @ MBCC, No fee.
- **Tai-chi** - 6:30 - 7:30 pm, at \$22.50 per month

### TUESDAY

- **Yoga** - On hold until further notice

### WEDNESDAY

- **Tai-chi** - 8:00 - 9:00 am
- **Bistro** - Wednesday mornings, 9:30 - 11:00. Coffee \$1, additional cups 25¢; pastries \$1.25 each. Featuring fantastic home-made scones by Nancy Knox.
- **Muir Beach Quilters** - 11 am. No fee.
- **CSD Town Hall Meetings**  
Free public meeting of Board of Directors of the Muir Beach Community Services District meets on 4th Wednesday of each month. 7:00 pm

### THURSDAY

- **Tai-chi** - 6:30 - 7:30 pm
- **Volleyball** - 6:00 pm - late  
At the courts on Franks Valley Road, No fee.

### SUNDAY

- **Zen Center** - 8:15 am Meditation Instruction  
9:15 am Meditation (zazen)  
10:15 am Lecture, 11:15 am Tea  
11:45 am Discussion with lecturer  
12:45 pm Lunch for Program Attendees (\$8 don.)  
Children's Lecture and Program  
- Second Sundays 10–11:30 a.m.

### BEACHCOMBER

Star Route  
Muir Beach, CA 94965

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

