

Muir Beach Neighborhood News

Issue 234 April, 2006



Memoirs of Muir Beach

And the Oscar goes to....
"Memoirs of a Geisha"!!!

For Cinematography, Art Direction,
and Costume Design

And we were part of it!



NOTES FROM THE EDITORS

NEXT SUBMISSIONS

DUE: May 1ST

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THIS ISSUE’S STAFF:

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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

Submission Instructions

- PLEASE EMAIL SUBMISSIONS WHENEVER POSSIBLE
- You can send your writing directly in an email or in a Word Doc. Please spell check.
- Only use returns between paragraphs, do not force line breaks. ***
- Please include photos, drawings to go with your writing whenever possible.
- You can also submit drawings or paste-up layouts, scanned or originals
- Image Formats: jpg, PDF, (Must Zip EPS/Tiff files)
- Please indicate if your submission should be typed or scanned.

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....

CHINESE NEW YEAR’S PARADE



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.

Graphic Design and Website Design

Call Heather (415) 637-9677

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In Loving Memory

Misti Norton of Sunset Way, adopted her dog, Quest, from the Sebastopol Humane Society when he was 4 months old. He had a wonderful personality and, as many know, he lived to chase a pine cone or a ball. A regular at Muir Beach socials and volleyball, he was loved by many. His gentle ways and kind spirit will be missed by all who knew him.

On January 22, Quest began acting lethargic and would not eat or drink. Misti took him to the vet the next morning and had multiple tests done to find out that his kidneys were failing without hope of recovery. She talked to 4 other vets to confirm the diagnosis and finally brought him home so he could be comfortable. For the next week and a half, he laid around getting weak and had many sad visitors. On the morning of January 31st he passed away peacefully with Misti at his side.

Quest used to cuddle and sleep with Misti’s cat, Cliff. Cliff was a beautiful 8-year-old ginger cat that Misti rescued at 6 weeks old. He lived to catch mice and rats. Only a week after Quest died, Cliff also got sick and died.

BOTH OF THESE DEATHS ARE DUE TO RAT POISON. PLEASE, IF YOU HAVE RODENT PROBLEMS, USE METHODS THAT DO NOT HARM CATS AND DOGS.



The THANKS are flooding in....

February 15, 2006

Muir Beach Volunteer Fire Department
Muir Beach, California

Gentlemen:

First, let me apologize for not writing this letter sooner!

I am finally back on my feet after the Flood that closed out the year 2005 and I very much want to thank you for all your help at the Pelican Inn.

You may recall we had a full house the night of December 30th and I found myself alone the morning of December 31st as so much of the staff was not able to get here on time. Your assistance, especially with our guests, was instrumental in preventing any harm or damage to our guests and the Inn. For this I am sincerely grateful. (The guest whose car was flooding was the one guest that did not respond to instructions the night before).

I am also grateful for the personal attention you showed me as my car was one of the cars under water. Although, in the end, the car was not able to be saved, I greatly appreciate your attempt to save it. My new car is more appropriate for West Marin!

It is undeniable that you (and all firemen, everywhere) should be considered nothing less than heroes. Thank you for being there!

Sincerely,

Laraine Miller

Laraine Miller
Innkeeper
Pelican Inn



25 Jan 2006

Dear John John,
I want to Thank our wonderful MBVFD
for Their marvelous service and devotion
to our community.
I particularly want to Thank Those who
were so helpful to me in The Flood time.
Peter + Wendy, my wonderful neighbors and
a fire fighting family, were such a help to
me during The flood and ever since.
at 6^{AM} on The 31st Wendy woke me and said
The house was surrounded by water + I had to
get out. at 6³⁰_{AM} (still pitch dark)
Mike Moore came + escorted me Through The
2 feet of water in my front room, out to
his car on The road, and up to his house
where dear Ellen gave me a warm bed - and
Then she proceeded to make pancakes for The 3
Taylor children.
Wendy and Peter continue Their wonderful
support in helping me get settled again.
In gratitude to all The MBVFD people
who helped me and in honor of Wendy, Peter,
Mike + Ellen please accept my \$300 gift
to our superb MBVFD.
Edna (Edna Lailie Rossenas)
cc: Peter + Wendy, Mike + Ellen

From the Flood Zone

The following is an interview with Wendy Johnson conducted by Cassidy Friedman. Cassidy was unable to turn his notes into an article as he was offered a job as a journalist with a bigger paper than the Beachcomber in Idaho. Rather than trying to fill in the questions and dialogue that occurred between Cassidy and Wendy, I am including here Wendy's answers which in and of themselves tell an amazing story. Nina

When Cassidy arrived for his interview with Wendy, she was on the phone with Mayumi [Mayumi co-owns the house with Peter and Wendy. She rents her side of the house to Edna while she resides in Hawaii.]

"The hardest thing, you can probably hear it in my breathing, has been the mold. But oh well, that's the reality of living down here."

Wendy continues with Cassidy:

We've been baptized with floodwater. Everybody got out, Peter, Alisa, the cat. Looking out at it on the deck, it was beautiful. It was scary because we were standing on the deck and the water was moving so fast. The whole house was like a river, it looked like a barge on the Mississippi.

Peter was outside getting people to move their cars. He couldn't get to Edna's keys in time, before the water reached the car's floorboards. Peter went over to the Taylor's house but no one came to the door.

I woke up at 4:30am. Mayumi's side of the house was thirty inches underwater. I could see the whole house was going to flood and I actually felt pretty calm. I looked around at everything, I recognized that the flood was coming and I asked myself how we were going to make this easier in the long run. I woke

Alisa up. I moved the couches first then all the books on the lower shelves. Even in the thick of it I was thinking, 'this is nothing compared to what happened in Louisiana'. But it was intense. The one thing I was worried about was the electricity. Water was flowing out of the electrical sockets.

And it was an intensely bonding experience. Jesse [Peter and Wendy's son], carried the Taylor kids out of their house. Alisa was at Ellen and Mike's. The best thing about the experience was the help of the neighborhood. Mike and Ellen brought a heater, kindling, and then finally a chicken dinner. The Green Gulch people, my dentist, the Fire Dept. , friends, neighbors like Martha and Kathy were all there to help. John John made 6 dump runs in his truck. The community put 200 sand bags in place after the floodwater's subsided.

There's an old saying: Living near a river is 90% boring and 10% terror. If we live here we have to do so knowing that the water can come in. We don't have any business being here, this is a floodplain. The force of the water is not to be trifled with. The river was just ripping through. I don't think we can do much of anything about the situation. Ideally we will divert the water around the house to the field next to our house.

The message for Steve Kinsey is: it's high time we do what we've been planning to do; Work on big lagoon and figure out the Pacific Way, Highway one Bridge issues. The waters were so high and filled with debris that they backed up and punched through knocking down the Taylor's fence and over their seawall!

I celebrated for the garden. I kept thinking how great the garden will be. Like the sediment of the Nile.

One Brutal Drawback

By Cassidy Friedman

Most of the time living next to a creek is a coveted luxury, one that helped draw the Taylor family to Muir Beach. But it has one brutal drawback. David Taylor had heard about the flood in 1982 before his family moved into their house perched in between the creek and the highway just west of bridge on Labor Day of last year. At that time, the risk of flooding seemed more like a remote concept.

"I knew it had flooded in '82. It's a hundred year flood zone," Taylor said. But when he and his wife Janet bought their property the garden was flourishing and the creek bed, hidden behind a fenced-in berm, was mainly dry gravel that could easily be walked across.

In mid-December, storming rains gave the Taylors a modest preview of what was to come two weeks later, when some water from the rushing creek crept through the berm into their backyard. The small flood was not cause for much alarm.

On Saturday, December 31st, a second storm brought a drastically changed picture. At 5 am, Taylor stepped onto his back deck in the pitch dark with a flashlight to check for signs of flooding. "I had no idea what was going on in the yard. Water was rising, rising, rising," he said. He could tell the water had knocked down a section of the fence, surged over the berm and was cascading onto his property. Within minutes his entire property would disappear underwater.

He rushed back into the house and dialed 911. Fearing the water might climb into the house, he and Janet tore through each room grabbing books from lower shelves, and propping electronic equipment on raised surfaces. Never having been in a flood before, they didn't think to move their cars. Peter Rudnick from next door had run over to get their keys, but amid the chaos they couldn't hear him knocking at the door.

Finally, the water entered the house. "I gave up on wearing my boots because the water had gone up over them, so I just put on shorts and tevas."

At around 6 am, Jesse Rudnick came over to take the three Taylor kids up to Mike Moore and Ellen Mettler's. By then, the water was up to his waist. "It was so high, Jesse couldn't get through the gate when he came to evacuate the kids. He had to climb over the fence to get in," Taylor said. "You got to imagine, the creek turned into a 100 yard wide river."

Taylor chose to stay with his house after the Fire Department evac-ed Janet and the cat. Describing his whole property left in a coat of brown mud two inches thick, he still seems a bit incredulous. "It was like a flashflood. It rose up for a couple hours and then it was back down," he said as if he were describing a ghost I couldn't see. "The water was gone by 11 am...but it's like a lingering illness."

A psychiatrist, Taylor lost some of his medical records kept in filing cabinets now covered in black mold. Some family photos were also ruined. Everything built-in along with the cars is insured.

"I just bought this place. Did I just make a huge mistake?" he said shrugging, then laughing. Taylor acknowledges there are unavoidable risks to living next to a creek. Some problems such as obstructions along the creek and a poor drainage system to re-direct over-flow from residences may be at least partially remediable. Marin County Supervisor Steve Kinsey will be attending a community center meeting on march 6th to hear feedback from the community.

"I think failure to maintain the creek is one of the issues for the community to take on," Taylor said.

When I asked Taylor if his psychiatry background helped him manage his stress during the flooding, he said "My job is not to keep myself together. I keep other people together." On March 6th all Muir Beachers who see themselves as this sort of psychiatrist are welcome to attend the meeting.

~ My Most Memorable Muir Beach Experience ~

Gary Friedman: Watching Ellen and Mike as they arrived at John John and Kathy’s on their wedding day.

Cuco Alcala: One of the things that changed our lives here in Muir Beach was when John John asked us to cook at the MBVFD BBQ picnic. The other thing that had a great and positive impact for my family was the Cinco de Mayo party at the community center.

Jesse Sward: A beautiful sunset.

Lisa Eigsti: When Brad and I first started dating, I lived in San Diego. He loved the MBVFD picnic so much and wanted me to experience it with him. He flew me up from San Diego to be there with him. I was touched with how important it was to him and how much fun we had and how in love we were. We had a great time at the Pelican Inn and spent the night on Little Beach, the moonlight on the water was so beautiful.

Brad Eigsti: Mike and Ellen’s wedding reception at John John and Kathy’s was special and touching. And all the BBQ’s were so fun, especially the year it totally poured rain and we had mud fights, it was a total riot we had so much fun.

Gail Falls: It was the winter of 72 or 73, right after I moved here. I was on the beach by the creek, it was the season when the salmon are swimming upstream. I remember there was this salmon stuck on a sandbar and my German Shepard was trying to get it, so I went over and tried to pick it up. This salmon was so big that my hands, as big as they are, could not wrap around the salmon and it slipped out of my hands and into the ocean. I’ve never seen a salmon so big.

Joey Gronemen: The reunion of the old time Muir Beachers around 2003 down at the BBQ pit. Listening to the stories of Muir Beach in the old days and talking together with the old ranchers from here. We are going to do it again but this time we’ll do it at the community center ‘cause we’re all getting too old to do it down at the pit.

(I reminded Joey that the 2003 reunion was also one at which we ate her pet goat for dinner, a memorable tid bit to me.) Nina

Jack Hadley: It was 1942, we had a cabin on the creek by the Pelican Inn. We lived in Concord at the time and came over on the ferry. When we arrived there was a big army truck in front of our cabin. The army was using it as a mess hall and bunk house for the men stationed up at the bunkers [on the overlook]. They called it the Franks Valley Mess Hall. The army was there for two, maybe three years, as until the end of the war. They even built another bathroom and a shower. But they built it on our neighbors property. My dad had to buy a piece of Cooper’s lot. When they left they cleaned up beautifully, but the had painted our stone fireplace a battleship grey. My siblings and I hauled those beach stones up for that fireplace and helped our dad build it. Beautiful beach stones painted battleship grey. Our dad gave us a penny for each stone we brought home. They also took all the furniture in the house, furniture my dad made by hand.

They invited us to a chicken dinner at Fort Mason as a thank you.

Nina Vincent: Of course I have more than one memorable experience in Muir Beach after 26 years of being here. Our wedding day is one my most treasured ones though. It seemed that everyone joined in to celebrate and witness Harvey’s and my wedding day. Even Terry Onorato was there, laughing, and dancing, and enjoying himself with Outi. It seemed that the whole room was getting married with us. My face hurt at the end of the day from smiling so much. I have never felt community as deeply as I did that day. I remember thinking, if our marriage is as strong, as joyful, as full, and as rich as our community felt that day, that we could survive just about anything. And 15 years of marriage later, plus the 7 before that, tells me that my feeling was right!!

And of course every day I have walked up and down Sunset way first with Cassidy on my back in the 80’s, and Eli in the 90’s and now Tiana, is a day to remember and to treasure.

The New York Times

SIGN OF THE TIMES

by Paul Jeschke

It’s certainly news that’s fit to print.

Trish McCall’s 29-year struggle to get the New York Times delivered to Muir Beach is finally over. The persistent Sunset Way resident and a handful of other Muir Beach newspaper fanatics eventually persevered against a Kafkaesque bureaucracy that refused to acknowledge that the newspaper could be delivered to our community – even though it was already happening.

Until a few weeks ago, calls to the New York Times subscription department ended with a courteous “sorry, we don’t deliver there.” The subscription department employees, who can only take orders for addresses already in the delivery databank, were unmoved when would-be subscribers pointed out that a tiny handful of Muir Beach households were already getting regular delivery of their august publication.

Even experts at solving the Sunday Times crossword puzzle had difficulty figuring out why Ann and Bryce Browning received delivery to their Cove Lane address while Martha and Lee de Barros on Sunset got nothing but “no” from the order takers. Nevermind that the delivery person has to go down Sunset to get to Cove.

For nearly three decades, McCall resorted to ingenious schemes to make certain she didn’t miss “Week in Review” and other Sunday Times staples. Pacific Way neighbors Coleen Curry and Paul Brunner were fortunate Times subscribers and, at McCall’s request, agreed to have two copies of the Times dropped off at their address.

Former Muir Beach resident Tim McElhaney generously picked up copies of the Times when returning from San Francisco, sparing some folks a trip over the hill. But then he moved away.

For other devotees of what may be arguably the best op-ed page in the Nation, there was no alternative to the otherwise unnecessary trek to Starbucks, Cala or 7-Eleven where, on a big news weekend, the supply might well be depleted.

The troubles with the Times began changing several months ago when Martha de Barros led an organized assault on the delivery problem, posted a brief notice in the Beachcomber and collected names of interested subscribers. One Muir Beach resident traced the problem to a Bay Area distributor who acknowledged that his company delivered the paper along Shoreline Highway from Mill Valley to Olema and said he’d be happy to deliver – if only the Times subscription department told him to do it.

To add insult to injury, a complimentary copy of the paper appeared at the doorstep of every household in Muir Beach one day in February as part of a promotion for a San Francisco performance of a play, “The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee.”

Resistance started crumbling when de Barros cultivated the help of “Stacy,” a friendly, interested supervisor at the Ft.Lauderdale company that handles Times fulfillment. Stacy promised to work on the problem, fielded numerous calls from Muir Beach residents and eventually managed to get most Muir Beach addresses into the database. Regular delivery was a fait accompli.

“I’m thrilled,” said McCall, barely containing her excitement at the site of the bright blue plastic wrapped newspaper in her driveway. “The New Yorker and New York Review of Books are great, but nothing is better than the Times Book Review.”

A problem worthy of “The Ethicist” cropped up when Sunday-only subscribers started getting daily newspapers. Must one pay for what one didn’t order? “Not to worry,” said the Times. “It’s on us.”

The newspaper sent letters to would-be subscribers offering an introductory 50% off. It’s available by calling Customer Care at 1-800-414-9333.

If that doesn’t work, Muir Beach residents who want to start delivery of the Times, daily or Sunday, should contact the ever helpful Stacy at 1-800-698-4637. Any of the operators should be able to help, but Stacy really went to bat for Muir Beach readers.

Tell her you read it in the Beachcomber.



READER’S WRITE

LETTER FROM THE GOLD COUNTRY

Muir Beach Transitioning?..

I’m sitting in a cute, sweet bungalow atop a small hill looking out over a natural pond shaped swimming pool. Here I am in Penn Valley, CA., (10 minutes west of Grass Valley). An exact 2 hour and 45 minute drive to “downtown” Muir Beach (doesn’t that have a bizarre ring to it?) Scary. (smile). The upshot is: I love my sweet place, its very small, but very new and manageable. The best part is - I have heat. Propane. For those of you who didn’t know the house I lived in on Ahab, I was in a constant state of keeping warm.

The towns of Grass Valley and Nevada City are totally charming. Everything here is condensed and somehow it all seems more accessible. There’s just the right amount of music clubs and cafes and theatres and restaurants. It has me actually getting out more than I did when I lived in the Bay Area! Also I feel like a bigger fish in a smaller pond. I’ve already begun inserting myself into the community with some volunteer performing as well as mentoring a 16 year old senior high school boy who is looking to record his own music CD for his final senior project.

The parcels of land here on this development are all about 10 to 20 acres so there is lots of land around each home. When I walk along the street I can see llamas, baby lambs and goats, horses, chickens and cows. It’s quite something. At night there are coyotes that roam around the house. I can’t let the dogs out at all off leash unless they are under strict supervision, and especially never at night. There is a high degree of animal kill from the coyotes here. There are also lots of bunnies that roam around at night and during the day.

Since the move, Rodeo is not very happy. She was brought to the beach as a pup and since we have moved has been very confused and anxious and (out of place.) She has no deck to sit on to watch and bark at the folks on the easement so



she doesn’t have her “job” anymore. She really isn’t very happy. I know she, above all, misses the beach. I’ll give it time, in the hopes she adjusts. Prairie Sue on the other hand has acclimated just fine.

What’s Missing. Oh, I so very much miss the sunrises. I will never forget the sun rising off to the East over the hills and ocean. The beautiful stunning gold and oranges. And, the sunsets. Thank you Lonna for showing me the “writer’s cottage” right before I left. I can’t believe I waited seven years to see that! Mostly, however, above all else, I miss the community. What a great community Muir Beach is. Just knowing certain people were around made me feel safe and cared for. I thank you all for your kindness and you know who you are. I miss the Bistro (though I really didn’t go that much, when I did go it was a wonderful way to connect mid-week with folks.) Not to mention Nancy’s scones!! They are totally “Buckin’ Good!” More of you should go! And I know I will miss the Community Center music get togethers (or will I? We’ll see, I may end up at them still!) Also, I miss the Peli! I loved going down there for a glass of wine and a visit with Karla or Deborah to hang with Lonna and whomever else wanted to join in. And of course I miss the beach itself.

I hope the Beachcomber is off to a great new start. I will be out to visit as my work brings me down there frequently, and I plan to be at the Barbecue.

Stay well, stay happy, stay together.
Much love, Willow

CHICKEN NEWS #11 “THE EXISTENCE”and the “REVENURE”
from the BUTTERFLY TREE

At the Axis of Existential Existence

By Karla Andersdatter

from the War Zone • CREEK CITY, CA • March, 2006

The problem is, we don’t know where the enemy is. . .or what they’re after . . . or who they are . . . or who’s side to be on. . .or who’s chopping the trees up . . . or who’s chopping them down. . .we don’t even know if the terrorists have landed on the beach at Normandy or not! In fact we don’t know whether to vote for Klaus Barbie or French Resistance because we don’t know which side THEY are on or if they are our enemies.

The BIG QUESTION is. . . what do we do individually, while deciding whether or not to believe in the EXSTENTIAL EXISTENCE . . . of . . . EVIL . or even to believe in the Existential EXISTENCE of AN AXIS!

The EXISTENCE may have infiltrated the National Park Service, the grocery stores, the mailboxes, yes! right here in CREEK CITY!(where the great eucalyptus trees were eliminated by mistake, where we used to see the spotted owl, the red legged frogs, the pond turtles, and the beloved salmon). Believe it or not, Ripley, I even wrote a poem 30 years ago called “Believing in Salmon!”

Now here at the creek in CREEK CITY, is where the Park Service now wants to make a place for a one lane trail for the following users: hikers, bikers, runners, horses, children, grannies, and fire trucks, as well as all that goes along with each of the “users”, i.e. garbage, litter, uniforms, helmets, and the poop of stallions! (However we are still unsure where they house the RIFLE RANGE.)

But back to the poop of stallions, for the poop of stallions is the most interesting item which we all must provide for, because while horses can retain enough dignity to shit in public, leaving behind them the remains of grain and hay which they have eaten, the human population cannot do that!

For one thing, humans just don’t have the dignity of stallions or mares; or a profound understanding of their own human nature. Only the lunatic population of the human species would take such advantage of the great outdoors as to poop in public. . .SO now we need bathrooms. We need bathrooms and mailboxes and buses. . . of course we need buses to get to the bathrooms, horses to get to the mailboxes, and bicycles to get to the store?the grocery store where we might be harboring terrorists!

In that case, we really need to get funds so we can hire someone to take care of the preparations for DISASTER, because wherever there are terrorists, (or existentialists) disaster will follow. . . actually wherever there are NO

terrorists (or existentialists) disaster may follow, even if we all ride only bicycles which is why we need to throw salt over our shoulder to prevent litter. (Although the best witches never do this, some priests have been known to have the proper touch for encouraging their own private preventions).

But now that we have bathrooms and bus stops for our historic sites, we also must have REVENUE . . no, silly . . NOT for keeping the bathrooms cleaned, or dead limbs from falling on people who walk under the trees, or repairing and beautifying or maintaining our public bathrooms, historic sites, parks, or trees, but we must have GIFT SHOPS for the “users” to sell pictures of all the wild animals and plants, and places that people can’t see any more, (because they are unemployed and can’t get out of the city), to pay the salaries of the park rangers, maintainence crews, and many big corporation executives who derive profit from our tour buses and publishing companies (both housed in NY) and producers of gift shop junk, all the cute little carvings of frogs, owls, turtles, toads, and stallions which are found in every National Park kiosk! (The stallions and mares, by the way, continue to poop in public with dignity and emit sublime disregard for the stupidity of the human race).

NO, we must have REVENURE, excuse me REVENUE, to support our parks, because our country is bankrupt from the money spent on the illegal Preemptive Bush-War, because the income taxes we pay to our beloved government do not pay for our parks. . . oh, no, the parks must be “self supporting” so we can bomb Iraq and support the military, and so the Parks must create gift shops, donations, tours, fees, and bathrooms and kiosks, for all of us who want to “use” the national parks, so as to create REVENURE for the corporations? (the “users”) that use the national parks (which, supposedly are owned by the the citizens of the USA), to finance their own businesses and derive their own profits. .while our current government even considers SELLING some of our National Park Lands to the biggest bidder.

I can’t remember who it was that said to me the other day, “NO! NO MORE! NO BUSES, NO BUS STOP, NO BATHROOMS, NO BIKERS, NO GIFT SHOPS NO HORSEPOOP no BULLSH___T. Let the Bush/Cheney government have a bake sale to pay for the Bush /Cheney War!

Honestly, what’s a girl to do? Time to clean out the chicken coop. The ducks are laying . . .

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Isaac Pearlman in Peru #2

Hola mi familia,

So last Friday night officially marked that I have been in Peru for a whole week, as well as the end of the first week of training. And to mark it, it actually happened to be my host mother's birthday. So it began in the morning, with her making a drink out of whipped egg whites and shaken up Coca-cola. We drank some, then I went off to school. We actually had another small earthquake that day around noon, but much much smaller than the one before.

That night about 12 of her family members came over and everyone sat around drinking beer and chatting and eating. The Peruvian way of drinking beer is to use one glass for everyone, because no one has that many so they can't afford to break any. If one breaks during the night they can get another, but if everyone has their own and a lot break then it's bad. So about 12 people drink out of one glass, and you pour some into your glass when it comes around to you, pass the bottle (which are bigger than the normal beer bottles in the US) to your right, say "salud" to the person to your right, then drink. At the end you politely empty your backwash into a small cup in the middle of the table, then pass the glass to the next person. My host mom saw a picture of sangria amongst the pictures I had brought and asked me about it, so I made a batch of it for her birthday. I found some sort of red wine, then a cherry brandy and used some of the Peruvian soda called Inca Cola that is the most popular down here. I think people liked it, also they kept saying it was very rica, or sweet.

But parties aside, the week has been filled with work. It was a looooooong week, with lots of language classes that are fun, as well as technical training, medical training, and safety training; in addition to teamwork building and leadership activities that horribly remind me of RA training. The other training is fun though; we had a whole medical lecture on the intricacies of diarrhea and how everyone will get it (by the time it was given, about 5 people had already gotten it). Still it was an awesome lecture, by the Peruvian doctor Jorge who is the head medical dude for Peace Corps Peru and a really funny guy. Apparently Immodium is even worse to take once you get diarrhea.

Que mas ... today (yes, I had to be there for training at 8 am on a Saturday) we learned how to construct un huerto organico, or organic garden. We learned how to compost as well, and how cuy (guinea pig) and rabbit excrement is best to use for making your own humus, since you don't have to add anything. Beginning Monday we're building small organic gardens are trying to grow vegetables at our host houses.

We also have language and culture assignments. Our first was entitled Mision Imposible, and again bringing back memories of RA training we had code names as well - mine was biomasa, or biomass But the actual assignment was fun, we went down in pairs to the nearest big town that is called Chosica, and went to the local municipality

office to find out about the city's waste water and sanitation system. In typical Peruvian fashion, two people we tried to find weren't there (one group even had an appointment and the person never showed up) and so me and Judith embarked on an adventure to see what we could find out. We ended up talking to these guys who run a restroom near the main park - you have to pay but it's really clean - and they told us a little about how the city only provides water during certain hours in the day, and how the pipes under the sidewalks deliver the water. Later, we were walking and there happened to be giant holes in the sidewalk and we could see the water flowing. We then tried to find another person who for some reason resided in the soccer stadium but he wasn't there, and we see a guy cleaning a swimming pool nearby and decide to talk to him. He was really excited to have people to talk to while he cleaned, and he told us a lot about swimming pools, as well as how pretty much all the waste water is dumped in the river where they are getting their water in the first place, then goes through a treatment plant before the river gets to Lima, provides Lima with water, is maybe treated again (we were only understanding about 10 percent of what he said) and dumped in the ocean. Then he took us down this hole and showed us the filter for the swimming pool; I'm not really sure why. But nice guy. He asked us to come back and swim, and bring him a soda which I still have to do.

Other assignments I have is to find a community contact person and simply talk to them for a few hours every week, to learn about the community and how it relates to the environment. Another assignment is to work within a group, do a community analysis in our neighborhood, think of a program to address problems, and implement it. We also have to create a charla, or presentation about a certain topic (mine is deforestation, with a couple other people) and give it in Spanish. In addition, we are to spend as much time with our host families as possible to keep practicing Spanish, which kind of contradicts the others but oh well.

The other trainees, or aspirantes as we're called, are all pretty awesome. Everyone is a little overwhelmed with all the work we have to do, in addition to some people are sick, some are not enjoying their living situations (so far most have had bedbugs/bug bites). One person has decided to leave already.

I am still having a good time though. Since my host mom cooks all the meals, the food is actually better than I am used to, and I haven't had any health problems. I have to dress up nicer than I'm used to, and shave everyday so I feel like I'm taking better care of myself than before. Weird. Fortunately tomorrow we have off, although I'll spend most of it working on my projects and my host brothers have mentioned something about karaoke tonight in Chosica. As for now, time to meet some others and play some soccer, hasta luego con todos and I hope you are all doing well.

Love, -Isaac

Alive and Well in LA

By Fletcher Riehl

"Wait...There's no more beer? ####," says my neighbor over the thumping noise of Ozzy Osbourne's "Crazy Train." I roll over in bed. It's four in the morning and for some reason my neighbor sounded as if the fact there was no more beer his soul was going to begin to deteriorate. Then a crash. It was the very distinct sound as if someone had just taken a baseball bat to a pain of glass. I wasn't too far off. My buddies had thrown their glass coffee table off of the balcony in a late night ritual, although varying in frequency, we like to call "balcony testing." Ironically I'm still not sure if the object passes the balcony test if it breaks or does not break. Either way, pretty much everything breaks when hurled off of a high balcony onto the concrete. I close the door and climb back into my bed, which, may I add, is lofted from the ceiling. It's not just my neighbor, it's a different person each night. Okay, sometimes it's me, but it's not like I'm writing about "somebody" when I really mean "me."

I live in Sigma Pi Fraternity at UCLA and I am currently a 2nd year. Every third day or so my mom or dad calls to check if I'm still alive. Usually I am. There's never much to say that is life changing, or that I think they want to know about, because it's not like life really changes that much. Occasionally my mom admits to leaving the house, my dad admits he's done something other than play the guitar (which I'm sure you've heard if you live within a couple hundred yards of us) and I occasionally admit I go to class. Not that life is slow in Muir Beach, but it just isn't sprinting. But that's why you're there right, a life on an idyllic beach semi-removed from society.

I would say that this is the first time I haven't seen a beach for more than a week straight; however, the beaches are so much nicer (yes dirtier, but warmer and less naked people, which is a good thing if they are gonna look like the naked people at Muir Beach) and I go surfing way more often than I did back home. It's really nice to finally be in a place where there's a lot happening. At night I go to concerts, stand-up, where I recently saw the amazing Dane Cook, night clubs and movies. During the days I go to the beach, lay out at the pool or play sports with friends.

The weirdest part about living amongst people my age is the fact girls actually come to my room. In Muir Beach, if I could convince a girl to drive over the hill just to see me, she was a keeper. However, living amongst girls isn't as cool as I thought. They have a tendency to wear sweat pants a lot and shower a lot less than I had hoped. Oh come on, we would all rather see the final product than have to see all of the steps leading up to it.

My favorite part about life in LA is living in my fraternity. While to some it may sound unappealing, it has been the greatest experience of my life. It's a great feeling to be living with forty of my best friends with another fifty of my best friends who always come by and hang out. There is always something absolutely insane

going on from cramming over 2000 people into our house for a party we spent over \$10,000 on to throwing water balloons from my balcony at pledges who are lying down on a life-size battle ship board below. "E4...Hit."

Occasionally I feel like a student. The intramural sports are amazing. There's some real talent at UCLA that couldn't quite make Division 1 sports and they've taken their anger and competitive spirit to the IM field. I think I've tried most of the sports UCLA has: softball, soccer, football, basketball, volleyball, and dodgeball. With three IM championships under my belt, and plenty of competitive rage from not being able to play a D1 sport, I hope to have yet another successful year playing for Sigma Pi.

Okay, I do do "school" too. It's not quite as much in the back of my mind as I make it appear to be, but it is not quite as "happening" as the other aspects of UCLA and LA life in general. I am currently double majoring in Business Economics and History with a minor in Accounting. Despite the rather esoteric nature of these subjects I find them quite riveting. The broad nature of UCLA's history major allows (by allows I mean forces) me to take history classes from virtually every part of the world. The more practical part of my academic career always keeps me on my toes trying to keep up with the enormous amount of material thrown at me everyday in class, which I'm sometimes there to catch. A good teacher can motivate me to engage in academic discussions after class, to do all of my reading on time and thoroughly, and attend guest lecturers, even if it means missing yet another social event. A bad teacher... well, let's say the old-test file cabinet in my house's library helps me get by. However, the incredible amount of resources at UCLA makes it easy to keep academics first, and everything else a close second.

Overall, UCLA and life in LA has given me a very full and broad view of a fast life. With little or no time to sleep and relax I am incredibly grateful to return to Muir Beach and spend an entire day reading in front of a fire (mainly because it's too foggy to go outside, oh and we have Tivo too, but no high speed internet!). Life in LA is amazing and I wouldn't want to be anywhere else right now, well maybe New York, but that's a different story; however, it truly makes me grateful to have such a unique and serene type of Brigadoon to return to (seriously though, I see new buildings going up every day and even some aspects of Marin change. I don't think Muir Beach has changed since the 20's when people realized it was a rather inconspicuous place for ships to bring in Moonshine).



A Crippled Stroke

By Sydney McCall

Sydney McCall has been working for the past month in Mar de Jade, Mexico. at the children's center adjoining the clinic where when needed she is an interpreter for doctors. Children from six to fifteen come to the center where they learn English, reading and writing Spanish, basic computer skills, hygiene, nutrition and crafts. The money for the arts & crafts she has raised from guests at Mar de Jade and it's a favorite activity of many of the kids. They also do dance and soccer. Sydney returns from Mexico in mid April and will be leaving for the peace corps soon thereafter.



The children's program has doubled within the last two weeks, this is no exaggeration. On average now there are at least 35 to 50 kids who slowly start to round up around 12pm, peak by 3pm and fade out by 5pm. Suzie arrived last weekend to assist teaching for the next three weeks, she teaches deaf students back in Seattle. She hardly speaks Spanish but she has more than enough buoyancy to compensate. My knowledge is limited on how to discipline students, especially incredibly testing boy, the kind who fold their arms across their chest and do not go home when they are sent.

I am choosing not to tell you the story about when one of the boys thought it would be funny to shit on top of the toilet seat and then spread it all over the bathroom walls, nor will I tell you about Julia, a chubby shy girl who has become the sexual target of six bullies and how I am all but her bodyguard, and I do not have time to share with you how we have recently started a flower and vegetable garden which will hopefully blossom before April. These are stories worth telling, however the following best represents what I see in these children.

Lucy, a mentally and physically challenged woman dressed in a polka dot dress joined class on Wednesday of last week. While I was setting up for a drawing project her curious eyes were glued on the materials; paper, crayons, paints

and scissors. I felt obliged to ask her if she wanted to make a picture of her own. She graciously smiled and took a seat. As she assembled her crayons I looked at her closely and for the first time I noticed an unsightly cross tattoo splattered on her forehead. I immediately pictured a drunken village gang pinning her down and forcing her in to submission as they inked her skin.

One can imagine my relief when the children scrambled in for class fifteen minutes later, all sporting the same ugly tattoos, it was Ash Wednesday.

Jenny is one of the most difficult girls in class, abandoned by her mother she is a hazel-eyed beauty who has undoubtedly been sexually abused, a fact agreed upon by the clinic's doctors. She is constantly angry, no not angry, mean. I have never felt such coldness from a child. She has burn marks on her left hand and her eyes often look empty, as if she had abandoned her corporeal body.

When class began she posted herself right next to Lucy and began to poke fun of her until I caught on to what she was saying. I had overlooked the situation because Lucy appeared to enjoy the attention, it was not until I listened to Jenny's words that I intervened. Lucy did not recognize she was the target of mockery but I did.

I took Jenny aside and told her I never wanted to see her behave so disrespectfully again. I held her hand as we spoke, it fell limp in mine and her face remained unreceptive. I asked her if she understood what I was saying, she nodded. It was at this point I recognized I had no idea what she was and was not processing but what I became aware of was her sadness.

My hopefulness blinded me in my next action. I made her my assistant teacher, a usually effective technique. I announced to the class if anyone had questions they would ask Jenny before they came to me. Jenny flinched away from me as I spoke to the class, after the announcement she quickly recoiled back to her seat.

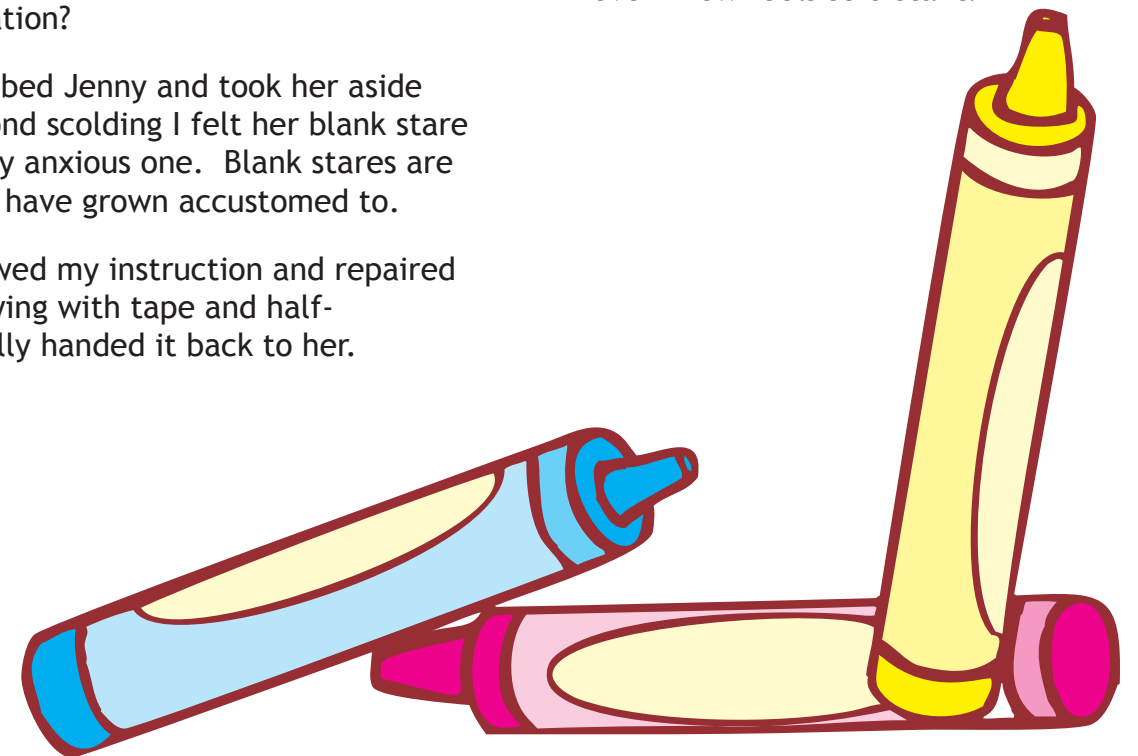
Within minutes I saw Jenny had taken the woman's drawing from her and had begun to copy her crippled strokes. I did not get involved. I tried to concentrate on teaching the rest of the class but my eyes kept drifting. It was not until I watched Jenny tear Lucy's drawing in half when I interfered. I understood, in this moment, the blunder I had committed; I should have never invited Lucy to class. How could I have put Lucy in such an unsafe situation?

When I grabbed Jenny and took her aside for the second scolding I felt her blank stare returning my anxious one. Blank stares are something I have grown accustomed to.

Jenny followed my instruction and repaired Lucy's drawing with tape and half-apologetically handed it back to her.

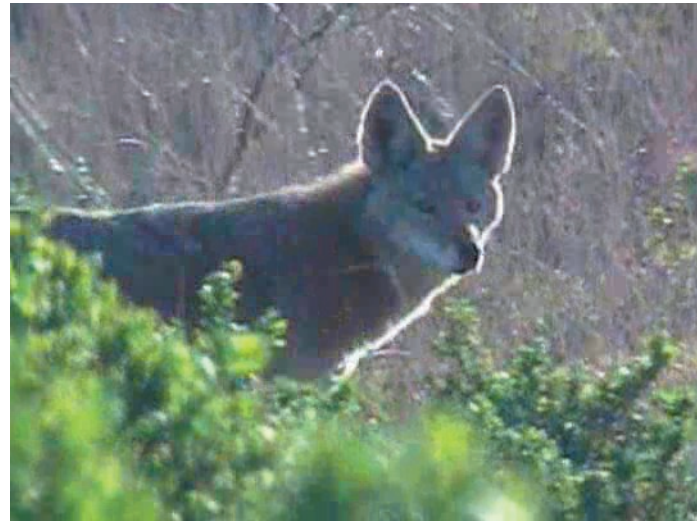
Lucy smiled obliviously and continued drawing with her yellow and red crayons. Jenny found some way or another to continue to indirectly make fun of Lucy over the next three hours. My mind remains restless when I think of the vindictive remarks she may have spoken. With over thirty-five demanding students I am pretty sure I miss over fifty percent of the harassment taken place.

Cruelty is something I experience less of as an adult than I did as a child. Now when I experience it, I try to understand it, knowing it is more about the other person than it is a statement about what a loser I am. As a child this was not so clear. Jenny sparked a level of hopelessness in me. What could ever be done to repair her broken spirit? I want to reintroduce the dignity and love she may once have known back into her life. I am reminded of my limited time here. It's possible I will just be another person who abandons her when the time comes to move on. Her attitude is representative of the majority of the students. I have been informed most my students have been abused. In their cruelty they yearn for affection. Angry because a quality life they never knew feels so distant.



By Dave MacKenzie

Soon we can expect the first of the migrant birds. Watch for coppery-colored hummingbirds. These would be the migrating Rufous (mainly on ridges such as the Miwok Trail) and the breeding Allen's hummers (mainly along Redwood Creek); both show copper body tones (with red-orange throats,



Then on to the early warblers (is that a Wilson's with its black cap? Or maybe a Yellow?), or a Black-Headed Grosbeak (usually detected first by its robin-like call), or maybe even that first Warbling Vireo (or WAVIs, as the bird-banders call them). The WAVIs are tough, tiny little birds, fairly plain gray-green but with a feisty personality). Studies of Warbling Vireos in the Redwood Creek Watershed by PRBO have correlated with the quality of streamside habitat. This oft-banded indicator bird has shown how restoration of riparian willows and other plants, replacing the cleared agricultural land or planted Eucalyptus trees really brings the health of the stream back to life.

And finally, let me as usual make a pitch for everyone to remember the Gray Whale migration the last week of April (plus or minus a week). About 2-4 pairs of whales steam by Muir per hour every spring and it is a sight not to be missed. They can come very close to shore and to the cliffs. If you still haven't seen them you just haven't spent enough time trying. Watch for spouts every 40 seconds or so. Some days are better than others. My favorite viewing spot is the Muir Beach Overlook, at the end, looking almost straight down. But any high spot on the coast is good. Mother/calf pairs, occasionally in

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!



Please cut this out or use any piece of paper and put it in the Beachcomber box at the far end of mailbox row or email: heather@creativei4u.com

[illegible]

picture by David T. Woeller



MUIR BEACH TWENTY YEARS AGO

Janet Stump

If Larry had had more than 24 hours to find an apartment in Marin County when we suddenly transferred here from Fresno, we might never have discovered Muir Beach. As it was, we landed in a dank basement in San Rafael and the moment we moved in I was wild to move out. Just by luck there was an ad for a place in Muir Beach and having been an ocean person all my life, this was obviously it. We and four-month-old Larry Jr. moved into the cottage on the blind curve on Sunset - a very different place before it was remodeled by Bruce Harlow some years later.

At that time, if memory serves, there were 11 houses on Sunset Way, 2 on Cove Lane, 7 on Pacific Way, 4 on Muir Beach Road, 2 on Lagoon Drive. There was, of course, no Seacape development. Sunset Way was unpaved, which led to interesting adventures during winter storms. Mr. Sousa had a cow and sold raw milk. The old tavern, a marvelously rustic relic, was being operated as a bar. The only remnant of the infamous day when the State bull-

dozed it down, is the ruin of the huge fireplace just west of the snack bar. The parking lot was minimal; most of the present lot was occupied by about 6 shacks, commonly referred to as "fishermen's cabins."

Muir Beach water, at that time, was not only undrinkable, it was incredible. It turned diapers bright orange, and when particularly bad, (after having been turned off for several weeks) left me, after a bath, looking like a light skinned Indian. There was no Community Services District then, the system supposedly being operated by the old Muir Beach Company. I don't know who was in charge of the water. Probably nobody. Everyone hauled in their drinking and cooking water in gallon wine jugs and our children were totally confused for years afterwards when they saw people in Mill Valley or elsewhere drinking water out of the tap. One of my early fantasies was bottling the horrid stuff and peddling it as a cure-all mineral potion. Might have made a fortune.

A Look Back...

This article from the March 22, 1975 issue of the Beachcomber is the first in what we hope will be a regular feature- articles from past Beachcombers that give us a sense of Muir Beach history and honor the voices and views of people who have either lived here for many years or left their mark and moved on. When this article was written 31 years ago, money and usage ideas were being solicited for the Community Center which was yet to be built, the Volunteer Fire Department, with John John Sward as Chief, was in its 4th year, and seven people came together to do the typing, reading, laying-out, taking to the printer, picking up, collating, stapling, delivering and collecting of money to get the Beachcomber out every month. We salute them and thank them (Gail Falls, Kathy Sward and Judith Yamamoto were on that list) along with Janet Stump and the many other contributors for brightening our lives, then and now.

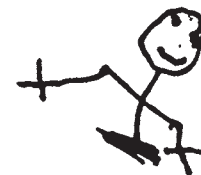
Ann Browning

Speaking of wine reminds me of our first encounter with "Portuguese Pink." Now I don't know what the proof was but I suspect it approached brandy. However, it looked and tasted like an innocuous rosé. At that time, the big party of the year was the "August Birthday Party", so named because of a number of resident Leo's. Everyone gathered with food and drink on Little Beach. Totally innocent of the lethal qualities of Portuguese Pink we downed glass after glass of this nice light wine and when I say that we crawled home, I mean it.

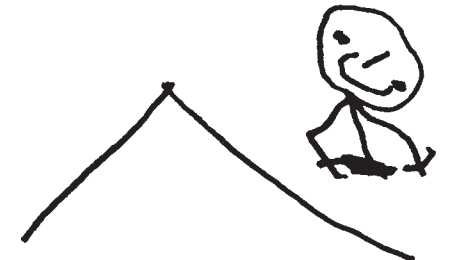
When I hear some of the present complaints about water, roads, telephone service, etc., my mind reverts to the big storm of the winter of 1955. Now that was a storm. I can't remember how many days it lasted but I know that the power was off for at least three days and the telephone and water for many more. The highway had not been raised and for a while it was impossible to get in or out. I remember sitting in front of a dwindling fire holding a

small baby and realizing that I was out of firewood and couldn't make any more formula. It was dangerous to go outside because power lines were loose and arcing wildly. I finally braved the storm and ran down the road under the arcing wires to steal wood from a neighbor's woodpile. At the same time I found someone who boarded up our southern windows which were in imminent danger of breaking from the force of the wind. Real pioneer stuff, you softies!

Because of the few people living here, neighborliness was a way of life. One of the things Larry and I will never forget is the day, about a year after we came to Muir Beach, when we moved to the yellow house down the road. While we were trying to figure out whether to just carry our stuff or try to use the car, we glanced out the window. There was Joe Rodriguez in his pickup truck, cigar in one hand, jug of P. Pink in the other, waiting to help us move.



Christophe Gros-Balthazard did these skiing pictures





WEEKLY IN MUIR BEACH

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



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** - 6:00 pm, Community Center \$5.00

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

