

Highway Reopening Date Uncertain

By Paul Jeschke

Get used to the Highway 1 detour through Muir Woods. The road repair project on the usual "over the hill" route to Tam Valley may take longer than flashing Caltrans signs indicate.

"It's like bolting the roadway to the mountain."



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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 by-monthly (sooner or later).

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IN APPRECIATION

Many thanks to Nina and Harvey Vincent-Pearlman for their fine work as editors of the Beachcomber in 2006. They join a long line of editors dating back to the news-letter's inception in 1946. We appreciate their contribu-tion in keeping the tradition going and publishing a lively, energetic, and eagerly-awaited newsletter.

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Email: lcgibbs@aol.com
Drop: Beachcomber mailbox, south end of Mailbox Row
Mail: Beachcomber, Star Route, Muir Beach, CA 94965

Submissions Guidelines

Text

- Please email submissions whenever possible.
- Send text pasted in an email or in a Word document.
- Please spell check your material.
- Use returns between paragraphs only; do not force line breaks.
- Please indicate if your submission should be typed or scanned.
- Include photo file name with photo caption and photographer credit.

Artwork and Photos

- Please include photos or drawings to accompany your text whenever possible. Include photo captions in the Word document.
- Image Formats: jpg, PDF (must Zip EPS/Tiff files)
- You may also submit drawings or paste-up layouts, scanned or originals.

Disclaimer: When no name appears as the author on any story in the Beachcomber, you can assume the story was written by the editor unless otherwise noted. All articles have been submitted as "proofed." No additional spell checking or proofing was done for individual articles. Misspellings are the sole responsibility of the contribut-ing author. Everything printed should be considered solely the opinion of the writer. Contributions are printed in the form and condition as presented. Beachcomber exercises no editorial control over content or distribution except for readability and general appearance. Anonymous sub-missions are not accepted. YOU make the news happen and we want everyone else to know about it.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Services Offered / Classified

WANTED

- **Graphic Designer** for the Beachcomber. Four issues per year volunteer commitment.
- **Cartoonist** for the Beachcomber.
- **Reporter** for the Beachcomber to cover Disaster Preparedness and Training news.

Contact the editor:
415.381.2515 or lcgibbs@aol.com

Licensed Physical Therapist

Holistic Approach to Health and Vitality with Pilates, Feldenkrais, Bodywork, Botanical Medicine & Nutrition. Sausalito Healing Arts Oshana Biondi (415) 332-6061

Sublet Wanted: Former Muir Beach residents Joe, Adele, & Mirabel Connor (75 Sunset) looking for 3-bedroom home Sept-Oct-Nov. Will pay up to \$5000 a month. Call 510.652.1887 or joe@suncakes.com

Residents are invited to submit a free classified ad. Please email your copy to lcgibbs@aol.com.

Muir Beach Area Emergency Preparedness Committee announces: (CERT) Community Emergency Response Training

March 3 and March 4, 9:00 am - 2:00 pm
Muir Beach Volunteer Fire Department Barn
\$25 (\$35 for two people from same household)
Learn basic training from emergency response professionals and work in the initial aftermath of a disaster to augment official emergency services. To learn more, visit www.muirbeachfire.com.

Class closed at press time. To indicate your interest in a future CERT class, drop a note in Michael Kaufman's mailbox, 240 Sunset Way, across from the Pelican Inn. Include name(s), address, phone number, email address, and number of persons from your household requesting to be placed on the waiting list.

Mary Daniel Hobson

REMNANTS

March 3-April 29, 2007
Reception: March 3, 3-5pm
Artist Talk: April 29, 3pm

BOLINAS MUSEUM

48 Wharf Road, Bolinas, CA
www.bolinasmuseum.org
415-868-0330

www.marydanielhobson.com



Mary Daniel Hobson, Sanctuary #1, ©2006, archival pigment print, 16.5 x 11" (The photo inside the bottle was taken at Rocky Point between Muir Beach and Stinson.)

The New Muir Beach Directory

More Than Just a Telephone Book

By Suzanne Bender

One storm-drenched morning as you stroll along the pathway on your way to the Overlook, you glance at one of your neighbor's houses and notice that a large tree branch has fallen and cracked one of their windows on its way down. Hmm...it doesn't look like they are home. What to do? Grab the Muir Beach Directory of course and see if you can give them a call or send them an email. Oh, but what a bummer that the Directory is now almost three years old and these neighbors moved in two years ago. You know they have a vacation home in Tahoe (or was that Reno?), but you have no idea how to get a hold of them. Well, let's just hope that the window holds until they return.

The Muir Beach Directory is a valuable resource for our close-knit community. It helps you to get to know your neighbors and, more importantly, provides you with contact information should an emergency arise on your property or that of your neighbors. Unfortunately, much of the Directory information is outdated soon after it is printed. And, since the process to create, update, and print the Directory is run entirely by volunteers within the Muir Beach Community, it doesn't get updated as often as we'd all like or need.

Most likely you've been contacted in recent weeks to update your listing in the Muir Beach Directory. This year, the Muir Beach Volunteer Fire Department has received a very generous donation of software from Incuity (www.incuity.com) thanks to the work of Dan Fitzpatrick. Incuity's software allows cities to integrate data from different sources. How does this apply to Muir Beach? This software was donated to allow our Fire Department to create and maintain an emergency response database that would facilitate rapid response to any crisis. It would also allow Muir Beach to create an online Directory that is updated by each neighbor individually, on an ongoing basis, to provide the community with current, accurate contact information.

Implementation plans for the Incuity software are still being developed. For the Directory, we are in the process of merging several different databases within the community (previous Directory, Muir Beach LAN, and CSD water), and soliciting input from neighbors on the accuracy of their data. With this software, we plan to offer neighbors features such as: personal password creation, a printable version of the Directory for day-to-day reference, designation of which contact data they would like to have appear online vs. in the printable directory, and the ability to update contact data or change preferences at any time. Initially, all households will receive an updated, printed version of the Directory with instructions on how to access the online version. Anyone who does not have online access may request that their data be updated by a designated contact person. We hope to have this Directory available by the end of April, 2007.

Our privacy is, as always, a primary concern. As with previous Directories, this information is for the exclusive use of Muir Beach residents and is not authorized for commercial use. As such, this Directory will only be available to Muir Beach residents through a secure, password-protected, encrypted environment. We are assuming that all residents who consented to be in the previously published Directory are also consenting to the new, online Directory. However, any resident may opt-out of this Directory at any time, including after the Directory becomes available online. If you wish to update your current contact information, request a new listing, or indicate your opt-out preferences, please contact Suzanne Bender at svanspyk@yahoo.com or 389-8398.

Some Tid-bits & Potpourri from Debra Allen:

Families with young children often ask me during Sunday open houses, what the benefits are to living at Muir Beach. I have my own biased answers, as I think Muir Beach is a great place to raise kids; but I'd love to hear back from those neighbors who currently have young children. I'll share what I've learned in the next Beachcomber!

In the Fall, I compiled a list of Events to go on the www.muirbeach.com Locals page. I find this to be helpful to give to those folks who are considering moving here, and enjoy becoming more familiar with what's going on. Please send anything that you'd like added to the Events pages to me at deballen@deballen.com

Remember to have a look once in awhile at the Guest Book on www.muirbeach.com, as I've seen some emails from people who are searching for some former locals.

If you didn't get a 2007 Tide Chart and want one (or more), just let me know.

That's all for now, Debra Allen, Realtor
Pacific Union Mill Valley (415) 380-6137

FYI Beach Neighbors...

In the last year I have had an excessive amount of strangers walking through my yard on the easement. Most of them come up from the beach (next to Sigward's) or walk up our private road. I have posted a Private Property sign at the bottom of the stairs (next to the garage) in hopes that it will keep most of the lookie-loos away. I even had a couple of items disappear. Anyway, the reason for this notice is to let all the neighbors know that the sign is for strangers only. I look forward to all that walk through and say hi.

Thanks...

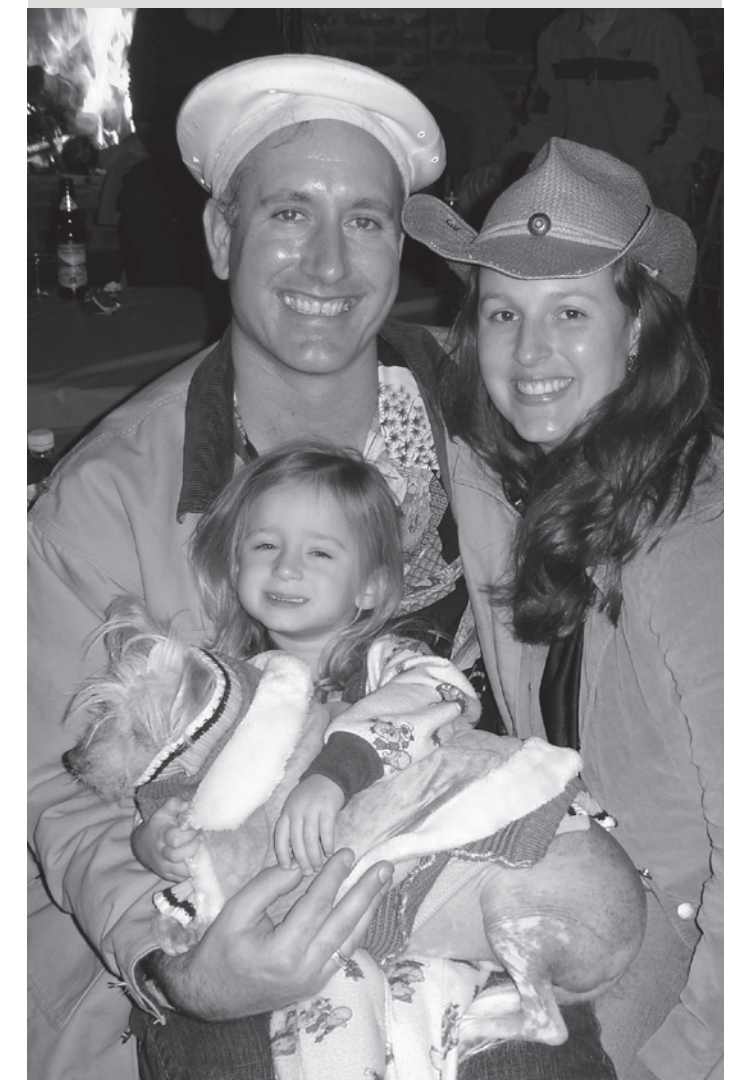
Shirley Nygren
308 Pacific Way

Remembering Kazoo...

Kazoo, beloved companion of Phil and Heather, died of cancer on January 16th, a week before his sixth birthday.



He loved living at Muir Beach, playing with all the other dogs and attending community events.



Phil Moore, Heather Kobrin, and Hannah Jane Eigsti with Kazoo.

BBQ Is Not Built in a Day

By Anne Jeschke

The Muir Beach Barbecue is fun, a lot of work, a great source of funds for the Fire Department, and done all by volunteers! This is a true community event with a huge percentage of Muir Beach residents taking part-either by buying raffle tickets, planning the event, working at the event, or cleaning up afterwards. And a not insignificant number do all four! There is a place and a job for everyone. The barbecue provides a major source of revenue to keep our Muir Beach Volunteer Fire Department running, and they are a very important group to all of us.

Lots and lots of volunteers are needed. In addition, we’d like to always have new assistants joining committees, and learning the job. If one of the old timers is unable to lead the next year, this person could step in. Or they could just take some of the responsibilities off the shoulders of the committee head. There is a place for everyone.

Some committees are one-person affairs; others are staffed by a club. Those that generally are seeking volunteers are starred. We are seeking Chairs for Trash and Post-Barbecue Cleanup. Please call me if you are interested.

Watch the bulletin boards and your mailbox for more announcements, but in the meantime, volunteer early and get a prime assignment. This is a great way to get to know your neighbors and your community, and to help our Volunteer Fire Department who does so much for us.

What really works for this gigantic affair is individuals take responsibility for a small piece; no one has to think about or worry about any piece but their own.



2007 BBQ volunteers socialize before the BBQ kickoff meeting begins. Standing from left: Kathy Sward, Dee Hayden, Paul Jeschke, and Bob Hayden. Seated from left: Brad Eigsti and John John Sward.

BBQ Work Parties in May

Plan ahead, mark your calendars, and stay in town for the BBQ Work Parties to prepare the picnic grounds for the Barbecue. All skill levels welcome...from basic cleanup, mowing, and raking, to skilled carpentry. Volunteers welcome throughout the day.

The work parties will begin around 10 am and last until about 4 pm. Park at the volleyball court on Muir Beach Road and cross the creek to the picnic grounds. Stop by whenever you can and give us a hand. Lunches and beverages will be provided. Dogs and kids are always welcome. The more the merrier.

2007 Work Party Schedule

- May 5** - General Cleanup Day
Tasks: Mow grass, pull weeds, weed eating, and general cleanup
Equipment: Bring gloves, sponges, rakes, brooms, and weed-eaters.
- May 12** - Carpentry projects
- May 19** - Carpentry projects
- May 26** - Final tune-up & last minute chores
- May 26** - BBQ Volunteers dinner - 6 pm
Picnic grounds near the volleyball court
Muir Woods Road (formerly Franks Valley Road)
- May 27- 36th Annual Muir Beach Volunteer Fire Department Barbecue**
Time: Noon to 5 pm
Picnic grounds, Muir Woods Road



BBQ Chairs kick off barbecue fundraising season with their February meeting and potluck. Photographs by Julie Smith

2007 MBVFD Barbecue Committees & Chairs	
<p><i>* Starred committees are seeking volunteers</i></p> <p>Volunteer coordinator: Anne Jeschke, 388.2278 Call Anne to learn where you are needed most.</p> <p>Decorations: Joey Groneman, 383.2898 The Muir Beach Garden Club</p> <p>*Desserts: Ann Browning, 383.2359 Bake the desserts before the barbecue; staff the dessert serving at the barbecue.</p> <p>Non-alcoholic beverages: Arlene Robertson, 383.4725 Purchases and organizes non-alcoholic drinks.</p> <p>Printed Material: Bryce Browning, 383.1148 Designs and prints flyers and announcements.</p> <p>*Raffle tickets and prizes: Deb Allen, 383.1854 Solicit prizes, pre-sell tickets, advertise to enhance sales, staff raffle booth, and deliver prizes.</p> <p>Web Site: Bryce Browning, 383.1148 Puts info about barbecue on website.</p> <p>Field Work: Jon Rauh, 388.7526 Mows field, charges water line, installs hydrant.</p> <p>Road Sign Placement: Harvey Pearlman, 388.0380</p> <p>Sign Production: Brad Eigsti, 380.0831 Makes signs for the event.</p> <p>Supplies: Rob Allen, 383.1854 Purchases and delivers supplies.</p> <p>Toilets: Jon Rauh, 388.7526 Arranges delivery and retrieval of port-a-potties.</p> <p>****Work Parties: Dave Elliot, 383.6468 Sets up, advertises, supervises weekly work parties to prepare the grounds and structures before the barbecue.</p> <p>BBQ Sauce: John Sward, 383.4961 Makes fantastic sauce for chicken.</p> <p>*Beer/Wine: Misti Norton, 383.7707 Sets up and sells beer and wine.</p> <p>Charcoal: Ted Marshall, 318.1776</p> <p>Chicken Order and pickup: Steve Schaffer, 389.1722</p> <p>Cooking: Amadeo Banducci, 383.0113 Cooks all that gorgeous chicken.</p>	<p>Music: John Sward, 383.4961 Books the band; takes care of their needs.</p> <p>*Parking: Chris Gove, 388.5116 Organizes the parking lot, directs cars as they enter.</p> <p>*Shirts: Kathy Sward, 383.6762 Orders shirts and other sale items. Sorts and arranges each year. Staffs booth. Packs up leftovers for next year.</p> <p>***Trash: Committee head needed. Orders dumpsters, sets up trash cans, volunteer staff empties cans during barbecue and conducts final grounds survey after barbecue.</p> <p>**Food Prep: Erin Pinto, 383.4152 Prepare food the day before the barbecue and the morning of the barbecue.</p> <p>**Food Servers: Erin Pinto, 383.4152 Serve food the day of the barbecue.</p> <p>Permits/Security: Michael Kaufman, 388.5018</p> <p>Veggie Meals: Maury Ostroff, 381.9765 Purchases, cooks, serves, and cleans up veggie meals.</p> <p>**Work Party Food: Nina Vincent, 388.0380 Provides lunches for each of the weekly work parties before the event. Purchase, cook, serve, and cleanup.</p> <p>Cashier: Sharon Mullin, 389.1776 Handles all money.</p> <p>First Aid: Ted Marshall, 318.1776 Provides medical staff.</p> <p>Beans: Ted Marshall, 318.1776 Makes the bean salad.</p> <p>Ice: Paul Jeschke, 388.2278 Arranges for ice and makes trips over the hill if necessary to get it.</p> <p>*Ticket Sales: Trish McCall, 388.4512 Staffs ticket booths the day of the barbecue.</p> <p>*Entry ID booth: Al Kile/Dan Quall, 380.5068 Staffs entry booth, checks ID, attaches ID bracelets.</p> <p>***Post-Barbecue Clean up: Committee head needed. Solicits and supervises staff to clean and pack up for next year, especially the kitchen area, washing pots and pans, etc. Takes 3-4 hours the day after the barbecue.</p>

Knowledge of CPR May Save a Life

By David Leivick

If holding the nose of a plastic dummy and pressing your lips against hers as you fill her lungs with oxygen is your idea of good time, then four hours of CPR training is about as good as it gets. For the rest of us, it was a chance to learn a lifesaving technique that we hope we never have to use, but will always remember.

Contrary to popular belief, the thumping of the chest during CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) is not performed to revive the heart. The rhythmic thumping is done to keep oxygen flowing to the brain during cardiac arrest. When done properly, there is a palpable pulse as the blood courses through the arteries to the brain cells, buying valuable minutes while waiting for the paramedics to arrive.

This and much more was learned on January 27th at the CPR Training class in the community center, sponsored by the Muir Beach Volunteer Fire Department. Four volunteer firefighters and one National Park Service ranger instructed the group.

"Training for emergencies is an essential component of being prepared," explained Michael Kaufman, President of the Board of Directors of the Muir Beach Volunteer Firemen's Association, who organized the event. "Knowing what to do should a loved one be injured or affected by a medical emergency can make a difference as extreme as life or death."

Because there were 28 of us and only a dozen or so mannequins, we had to take turns keeping them alive until help arrived. It was a bit surreal changing the pliable plastic faces on the mannequins to prevent the spread of germs from student to student. Others just swabbed down their plastic lips with copious amounts of rubbing alcohol. Someone commented that "It would be a shame to catch the flu while learning to save lives."



Sigward Moser shares a light moment with Bob Hayden during CPR training. Behind Moser, Sharry Mullin practices compressions while Debra Farkas waits her turn. Photographs by Julie Smith unless otherwise noted.

Fortunately, all of the dummies survived.

The instructors observed to make sure we were executing the steps correctly and we watched an instructional video that accompanied the hands-on instruction. Each person received a workbook, CD, and a wallet-size reminder illustrating the steps of CPR.

Fire Chief John John Sward was pleased with the CPR turnout. "County Fire (Throckmorton Fire Station) is always impressed with our community participation," said Chief Sward. "Yesterday 28 residents showed up for the CPR training. We are a small community but we get a good response over and over again. Other cities don't get the kind of response that we do."

More CPR classes are in the works. Write to Michael Kaufman, and give your name, address, phone number, email address, and the number in your household who would like to attend a class. Drop your note in Kaufman's mailbox, 240 Sunset Way, across from the Pelican Inn, requesting to be placed on the waiting list. 🐾



CPR instructors from left to right: Graham Groneman (E.M.T.), Alex Naar E.M.T.) and Eric Groneman (E.M.T.), all Asst. Fire Chiefs with MBVFD; and Chad Marin (E.M.T.), ranger for the National Park Service. Photograph by David Leivick



Fire Chief John John Sward (2nd from left) discusses CPR techniques with David Leivick while Linda Gibbs practices compressions on the mannequin. Far right: Joey Groneman reviews compression hand positions with Al Kile.

Beachcomber Spotlight: Fire Chief John John Sward

By Linda Gibbs

This is the first in a series of interviews with the members of the Muir Beach Volunteer Fire Department. These 16 First Responders and Emergency Medical Technicians (soon to be 18) give of their time and energy without benefit of compensation to protect us, our homes, and our community. We begin with the Fire Chief's story:

I met with Fire Chief John John Eric Sward III on a sunny Sunday afternoon after he had spent a full weekend overseeing the Saturday CPR class at the community center, sponsoring the fire extinguisher maintenance program at the firehouse, and attending advanced firefighter training Sunday morning at the community center, which meets the one-weekend-a-month training requirement. He also drills with the firefighters two Wednesday evenings a month. That Sunday evening he planned to meet with his four assistant fire chiefs to plan the training schedule for the year. He attends the monthly meetings of the Muir Beach Volunteer Firemen's Association and the Muir Beach Community Services District. Each quarter he represents Muir Beach at the West Marin Fire Chiefs meeting.

If John John Sward is not working full-time as a stone, brick, and tile mason, following in the footsteps of his dad, grandfather, and great grandfather, he is giving of his volunteer time to the fire department, having done so for the last 36 years. He moved to Muir Beach in 1964, met and married Kathy, and raised two children. Their son Jes is a member of the fire department.

In 1970 two cottages burned down that weren't under the protection of the Bello Beach Fire Department, a private group of homeowners that had banded together the year before and formed their own volunteer group to protect their homes. They refused to respond to the fires because none of their homes were involved. Sward was so irate that he spearheaded an effort to create a community-wide volunteer fire department and was voted its first chief. In those early days, he and two others joined the Southern Marin Volunteer Fire Department to drill with them once a week and then came back over the hill to Muir Beach to teach the other volunteers what they had learned that week. He did this for three years until the department was able to sustain itself with its own training.



Fire Chief John John Sward III.

Photographs by Julie Smith

Sward served as fire chief for twenty years, followed by Bill Farkas and Michael Moore in the 90s. In 2001, Sward consented to become the fire chief once again. You will rarely see John John walking around Muir Beach unless it's for a holiday walk on the beach with his family. He takes his truck everywhere he goes and parks facing out so he is ready to go if his pager beeps, calling him to a fire or medical emergency.

Where does the name John John come from?

There were five people out here named John at the time. The women wanted to separate me out so they nicknamed me John John. I could not say no. The name was a boost to my ego. And it stuck.

I see that your radio is on and it's close by during this interview. Is it on 24/7?

Yes, if I want it to be. I'm crazy enough to have it on a lot. I turn it off at night. Right now I'm listening to Marin County Control 4, everything on our frequency, so I have an idea of what's happening in the county. If something happens here, I'll know what manpower I'll need.



Fire Chief Sward dons turnouts needed for a structural attack.

What motivates you to work full-time as a mason and volunteer your personal time as a fireman?

When I was growing up in San Anselmo, my mother was always involved in community things, marching in almost every march there was against the Vietnam war. My father went to Mississippi and rebuilt churches during the Civil Rights Movement. A feeling of community was instilled in me. That's what I had out here. I feel that we are lucky to be this small group and the more we interact and take care of ourselves the better place it will be. I hope some of my ideas of community have rubbed off on all these people who have moved here.

How has the fire department evolved since its inception in 1970? It seems very sophisticated now.

When we first started, we just needed spirit and enthusiasm. All we had to have was a desire. Now there are training requirements. And we need paperwork to back up everything that we do. Everything is documented; it's serious. And it's hard to keep that free spirit going with all the paperwork.

How do you do it?

We have a wonderful group of people in the fire department now. They volunteer. They are there over and over again. What is amazing is that in addition to their duties as firemen, most of them are involved in the community in other ways.

When I was first in the fire department I would handle everything. I was a lot younger then. And now in this last stint I've learned to delegate. That's why there are four assistant chiefs; I rely on them a lot.

Describe what it's like to get a call, especially at night. What happens first?

The pager goes off, indicating what kind of call it is, so I have an idea of what we're going to --medical, fire, or vehicle accident. As I'm dressing, Kathy looks up the address and calls out which house it is as I go out the door. On the way I'm thinking how to organize the attack: who should be where and do what. At the firehouse, I put on the appropriate turnouts (boots, pants, coat, hat, gloves, flashlight, and other equipment), give instructions to the fire crew, and head to the scene.

Does everyone go?

We operate on the basis that everyone goes, but you don't have to go.

What if everyone decides they don't want to go and nobody shows up?

There's a few times a year when there's no one at the beach. And there may be a few circumstances where no one can respond. But we are a volunteer fire department and the county is responsible for the fire protection in this area. We're not. We augment the county by being here and getting to the scene first, sizing up the situation, and relaying the information to them. We also provide a lot of manpower. And we are very well trained. We don't have anyone on staff. No one's getting paid. We are one of the few all-volunteer fire departments around.

So Muir Beach Volunteer backs up the county?

Yes, Marin County Fire stationed up on Throckmorton near Mountain Home Inn.

If someone's going away, do they let you know or does it just all shake out the way it shakes out?

It's a combination of things, but in general, it shakes out. I mean I go to work everyday; I'm not here. I have the radio and I listen to it. If there's a call out here, I just listen to it. I know that the county is going to respond. I listen to see who from Muir Beach is responding; I can hear the call coming from our truck. First Responder Cuco Alcala always responds because he works in Muir Beach. Asst. Fire Chief Mike Moore and First Responder Amadeo Banducci are around a lot. Ted Marshall and First Responder Matt Silva are often here during the day.

How long do you wait at the firehouse before you depart for the scene?

It depends upon the call, what the seriousness is, and what manpower we think we might need. The bottom rule in the fire department is a fireman can only do what he's trained to do based on what his skill level is. And being a volunteer fire department we're getting people who don't know much and we're training them. So the more years they have in, the more skills they have, and the more helpful they will be on any call. The newer members may have the basic skills but they aren't up to the level of the more experienced firefighter. So basically firefighters are not supposed to go beyond their level of training. A newer member will wait a little longer with the truck than the more skilled person.

At some point, if no one else has arrived at the firehouse, a newer member will take off in the radio-equipped vehicle. One of our primaries is communicating because we're first on the scene. We

can communicate the conditions into the system to all the responding groups. And a newer member doesn't have to be proficient in a lot of areas just to operate the radio. We work on basics harder than anything else. We are the first on scene of any incident so we can get in there, communicate the situation, and handle the situation. The deeper the situation gets, we train on it, but it's further and further into our proficiency. We want to be very proficient in the initial attack because that's where our role is in general.

So you're saying there are other fire districts that will be answering the call as well who have the deeper training?

Well, they're the professionals. They're paid. When the alarm goes off, Throckmorton Fire is coming with two trucks automatically.

Always?

Yes. Also, if it's medical, there's an ambulance with paramedics coming from Southern Marin. There's a helicopter that's being ordered.

Routinely?

Out here, yes, for medicals. In the summer time, if there's a wildland fire down in Franks Valley, they send everything. There's a whole fleet coming in this direction. When they get a call like that, they have to think the worst and start sending. When the first person gets there and reports on conditions, then County Fire either accelerates everything, keep it where it is, or scales back when they hear from us that for example we don't need air tankers. The sooner we can get on the scene and give a rundown to County and start responding, the better. All the department members are First Responders so they can administer oxygen, take the pulse, apply bandages, stop the bleeding, do CPR, and operate the atrial fib (automated external defibrillator or AED).

Are you looking for volunteers?

Not really because we can only support so many. It costs a lot of money for each volunteer. They have to have the turnouts--the structural and wildland protective gear. We're actually at a good number now, up to 18 soon. If a new member coming in isn't a First Responder or EMT, there's a major commitment of training time.

How many hours are you talking about?

First Responder training is a 40-60 hour commitment; 150-160 hours for an EMT. And that's above and beyond the other training they're doing. In a short period

of time--one-to-three months--they are taking night classes somewhere and still participating in their fire department training. Classes and drills three nights a week. If they have a family and a normal life, it's a major commitment that these guys have made.

Since you've been in operation so long, do other volunteer fire departments come to you for advice on how to start a fire department or improve their department in their community?

No, but County Fire was so impressed with our fire extinguisher maintenance program that they've asked their association to sponsor a fire safety day up on the mountain.

And what about compensation?

About two nights a month, after the crew has worked hard on a project or a long drill, we treat ourselves to a pint at the Pelican Inn and ten of us share three dinners. We try to provide one new product to each firefighter every year, such as a shirt, hat, or a jacket with the firefighter's name on the front. We don't have to pay to go to the BBQ but we willingly volunteer that day and put in many hours preparing for it.

My compensation is living in a wonderful community. I don't want to be obligated to the dollar, which isn't right for me. I'm obligated to my commitment and to all our firefighters. I appreciate every one of them because they are there. It's worked. In our time we've only lost one cabin and that was at Spindrift Point. It was Thanksgiving Day and I was in Kansas when it happened.



Visit www.muirbeachfire.com to learn more about the Muir Beach Volunteer Fire Department.



Chief Sward reviews the Incident Log at the Muir Beach Volunteer Firehouse, the barn located across the road from the Pelican Inn, behind the horse stalls.

Fire Safety Day at the Firehouse

By Linda Gibbs

The Muir Beach Volunteer Fire Department held its annual Fire Safety Day on January 27, 2007, in conjunction with FireMaster Extinguisher Service. T.J. from FireMaster reports that more than 70 extinguishers were serviced or sold during the day. The department thanks the community members for their support. -- Rob Allen

Fire Safety Day has been an annual event at the Muir Beach Volunteer Fire Department since the department's inception in 1970. In those early days, according to Fire Chief John John Sward, his department serviced the fire extinguishers for free in the first five years to encourage participation. T. J.'s parents, Robert Wallermann and Carol Victorino Wallermann, who own FireMaster, provided service. Carol grew up in Muir Beach.

Today, for a recharge fee of \$8, residents can recharge their fire extinguishers on an annual basis, a fee lower than retail rates because FireMaster gives the fire department a special group rate.

If you missed Fire Safety Day and want to have your fire extinguisher serviced, call T. J. Wallermann at 415.259.8622 to arrange to meet him in a Mill Valley central location, such as the Miller Safeway parking lot. He will honor the group rate as well as the prices for fire extinguishers through March 30, 2007. The prices are as follows:

2.5 lb. ABC - Dry Chemical Extinguisher	\$34
5 lb. ABC - Dry Chemical Extinguisher	\$44
- Reconditioned	\$25
Dry Chemical Recharge, any size	\$8

Every six years FireMaster breaks down the fire extinguishers whether they need it or not and replaces the pressure seals. During the annual maintenance, they lubricate the extinguishers, inspect them to make sure they are working properly, and add pressure, if needed. FireMaster re-certifies with a tag that guarantees that the fire extinguisher will work for a year as long as the extinguisher hasn't been used or tampered with.

Mark your calendars for the next Fire Safety Day, January 2008, here in Muir Beach.



18-year volunteer fire department veteran Rob Allen conducts Fire Safety Day at the firehouse.

Photograph by David Leivick

MBVFD Incident Log

Compiled by Paul Jeschke

December 17, 11:30 am

GGNRA Coastal Fire Road

Mountain bike accident. Victim transported to hospital by CHP helicopter.

December (Date and time missing)

Muir Beach

Bedding ignited by lightbulb at Shoreline Highway residence. Fire extinguished and home ventilated. No injuries.

January 1, 12:10am

Muir Beach

Resident passed out after using hot tub. Regained consciousness. Call cancelled.

January 3, 1:30 am

Muir Beach

Medical response.

January 18, 1:30am

Panoramic Highway

Vehicle accident. Response cancelled. Marin County and Southern Marin units closer.

January 19, 2:50pm

Muir Beach

Woman fell from horse. No injury.

January 19, 9:50pm

Muir Beach

Resident unconscious and unresponsive. Transported by ambulance to Marin General Hospital.

January 21, 11:30am

Shoreline Highway

Front-end loader over embankment at Highway 1 slide repair south of Stinson Beach. Injured driver transported by CHP helicopter to John Muir Medical Center.

January 25, 2:55pm

Muir Beach

CPR administered on resident. Unsuccessful.

January 30, 1:00pm

Muir Woods

Child had difficulty breathing. Helicopter landing zone established in Santos Meadow.

Janary 30, 11:45pm

Muir Beach

Cat trapped in 40-foot tree. Rescued with extension ladder.



MBVFD Logo by Bryce Browning

Firefighters Heroics Rescue Cat

By Paul Jeschke

Oliver the cat has nine lives and a couple of good friends in the Muir Beach Volunteer Fire Department.

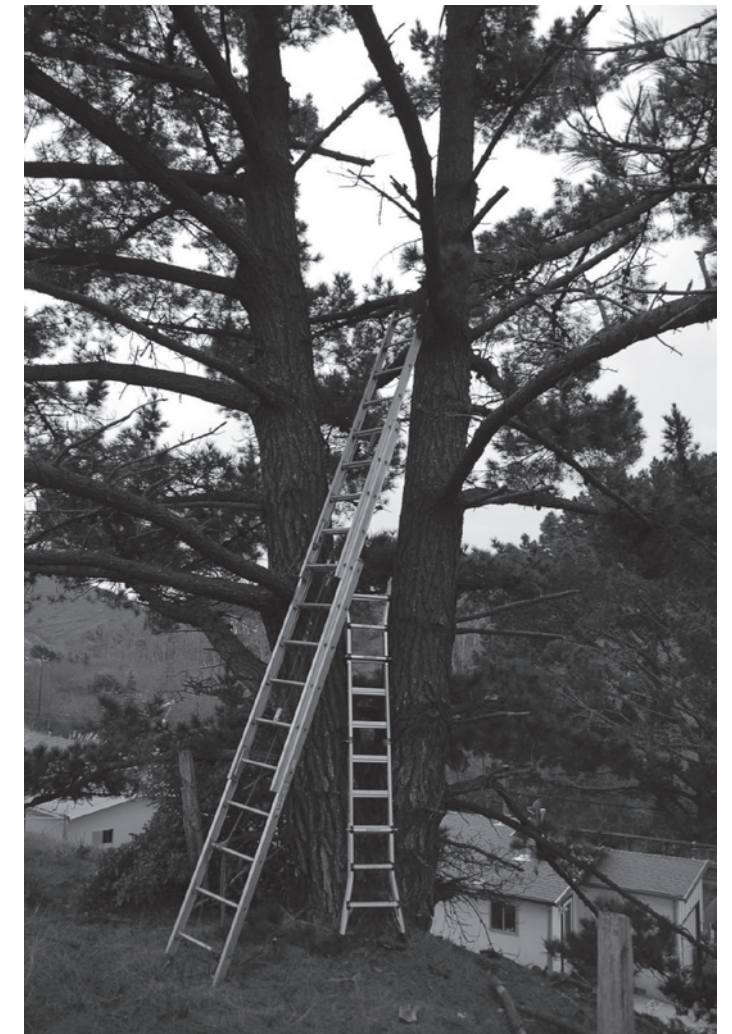
The Shoreline Highway cat was stuck out on a limb in a tall tree beside Alex Naar's residence just before midnight, Tuesday, January 30. When encouragement and coaxing failed to get Oliver down to the ground, Naar, a volunteer fireman, called his neighbor and fellow firefighter, Jonathan Rauh, for mutual aid.

"He was way up there, 35-40 feet, and very scared," Rauh explained. "There was no way we could climb the tree, so we borrowed a truck and triple extension ladder from the firehouse."

Even with the ladder fully extended, Oliver was beyond reach. The frightened animal retreated further out on a thin limb. For 90 minutes, Naar and Rauh tossed pinecones at the cat hoping to scare him to within rescue range.

"Finally Alex was able to get him close enough to grab," Rauh said. "Isn't that what fire departments are all about?"

Oliver was uninjured. Naar had a few scratches on his nose from the frightened animal. 🐾



The scene of Oliver's rescue.

Photographs by Alex Naar



Firefighter Alex Naar's cat, Oliver, happy to be home safe and sound after his dramatic rescue in the middle of the night.



Hello From the Quilters

By Judith Yamamoto, Kathy Sward, and Pam Barlow

This Year's Fair Was Over the Top! We are so happy that, once again, the proceeds from this year's Muir Beach Quilters' Holiday Arts Fair have exceeded last year's. With artists' commissions, individual donations, and income from the bar and gourmet food concessions, we earned \$6676. Thank you all so much!



Plein-air painter Tom Soltesz

It was wonderful to have all our gifted artists back, and this year we were pleased to introduce new local talent. Tom Soltesz's (www.solteszsart.com) luminous plein-air oil paintings of local landscapes were an instant success. Marilyn Stiles, celebrated ceramist, entranced us with her whimsical garden sculpture, including lizard-like creatures reclining in teacups. Leah Joy Numair rejoined us this year, showing matted watercolors in addition to her fanciful cards.



Three other first-time artists were Lorna Newlin, whose ceramic work was highlighted by charming penguins; Hideo Yoshida, with wood-fired clay vessels, and Alan Plutchok, whose tables and sushi trays, etc. were made from wine-patinaed barrel staves. Not only was Alan a new artist to our Fair, but also this was his very first show.

In the Quilters' booth, there was an array of new work. Outi Onorato sold felted pin cushions in addition to her fine art collages, which combine found objects from nature, her own handmade papers, and her inspired handstitching. Pam Barlow reached into our spirits with "Flights of Sophia," original fetish creations floating with feathers, ribbons, shells, totems, and exquisite threads. Ellen Mettler displayed her popular tea cozies and created an exciting line of cards, featuring two of her stunning quilts.



Tayeko Kaufman: one of the Garden Club goddesses.

Tayeko Kaufman contributed retro button-on, crochet-handled hand towels. Coleen Curry introduced her one-of-a-kind, handbound albums and journals in the Muir Beach Authors & Music booth. This year's new authors were Joe Connor, with a just-published book of love poems, and Leba Wine, with her hot-off-the-press "Stitches in Time," a scintillating family saga. Pam Barlow sold her CD of original songs, "A Girl and Her Horse."



Larry Yamamoto: one nice man...

We said good-bye to one of our very first artists, the venerable Larry Yamamoto, who has been trying to retire from the Fair for the last three years. He says, "I'm tired." (Of being admired....) Still painting, though; you can check his web site (larryyamamoto.net) to look at his work. We'll miss him, but we know we can still look forward to talking and joking with him at Wednesday Bistro. A local treasure. Thank you for all those years!

The food bar was provided by Patrick Numair and his sister Megan and featured an Indian curry plate, two delicious soups and the back-by-popular-demand grilled cheese sandwiches. The Barlows played music on the deck while hot mulled cider flowed at the bar. Folks gathered upstairs in Cafe Q for a free cup of coffee, tea, or hot chocolate and a chance to chat with old friends and make new ones. Big thanks to Brenda Kohn for creating such an inviting ambience!

A Look Back . . . Who are the Quilters?

Today's Holiday Arts Fairs are the big annual fund-raisers that had their beginnings over thirty-five years ago, when a small group of neighborhood women, originally called the Quilting Bee, met in each other's homes to talk about ways to raise money to build a community center. It was an exciting time of neighbors working together to create our first grass roots Muir Beach organizations, the Muir Beach Volunteer Fire Department and the Muir Beach Quilters.

Our mission statement defines us as, "women coming together to share fellowship and visual creative ideas through the tradition of quilting... Just as traditional quilting involves the coming together of modest materials, creative ideas, and loving hearts, so do the activities of this group." Our goals include providing

a "safe, confidential environment for the fellowship of women, furthering our own artistic projects, fund-raising for the improvement of the Muir Beach Community Center, providing a marketplace for community artists, and putting on a holiday party for the community."

Community, artistic, and women-oriented goals.

We started fundraising in 1971 with a spaghetti dinner, rummage sales and poker parties.

In 1972 we set up a table in front of the Corte Madera Co-op (where Any Mountain now stands), held a silent auction and sold our first group quilt for \$60.

We provided the seed money, \$2500, for the construction of the community center, which was begun in 1974 with Quilters' and CSD funding, and completed in 1978 with grants from the Community Development Block Grant, the Economic Development Act Public Works Program, the California Park & Recreation Department, and the San Francisco Foundation.

In 1975, in addition to putting on the annual Holiday Crafts Fair at Muir Beach, we formed the Muir Beach Arts and Crafts Co-op. We held several three-day shows throughout the year at the Corte Madera Co-op meeting room. In January of 1977, quilters and other Muir Beach artists looked for a permanent gallery, and renovated the old Mill Valley Record newspaper building on East Blithedale.

Muir Beach Artisans, Ltd., a co-op art gallery, had its grand opening on Sunday, September 11, 1977, with about a dozen artists showing their work. It continued to reach out to the larger community with monthly invitational exhibits that showcased other artists. Finally, it morphed into Artisans, now located in San Rafael.

We've continued raising money for our community center by making and raffling quilts, as well as writing grants and hosting fund-raisers, most notably the annual Muir Beach Quilters Holiday Arts Fair. We take special pride in our 2003 Marin Community Foundation award, in which we were given \$5000 "in recognition of special accomplishments that have enhanced the quality of life of the community." Our latest capital improvement projects, completed in 2004 were the construction of the community center deck and glass roof.

The Purple Lady, Barbara Meislin. Proceeds from her book are donated to an Arab Israeli Organization that benefits children.



Heather Kobrin's, "Why Does Everyone Stare At Me?" -- a lasting tribute to her much beloved pup, Kazoo.

What we did last year: Last year we allocated \$1000 for scholarships at Lisa Eigsti's Muir Beach Montessori School. Children's programs have always been close to our hearts, so we were sorry to see this great project come to an end.

Outi Onorato taught two workshops on tote bag construction (the first one filled up and overflowed into a second one).

Day of the Dead: Our most exciting program commitment was working on this year's fourth annual Day of the Dead celebration. Harvey Pearlman, who during his year in Mexico, was moved by the local tradition for honoring the dead, brought this event into the community. Instead of melancholy, there was celebration. A good friend of his had recently passed away and Harvey experienced an ancient and more meaningful way to remember the death of a loved one. He couldn't wait to share these joyful rituals that he knew would resonate within our community.

Friends and neighbors jumped right in to make it happen. As we have for the last two years, the Quilters hosted a Day of the Dead workshop a week before the big community event. Here we make

the artifacts to honor the departed, which everyone brings to the celebration the following week. Kids and grown-ups spend the afternoon making sugar skulls, paper flowers, ojos de Dios, little ghosts, family scrolls, and memory boxes: huge amounts of crepe paper, fake flowers, yarn, thread, twigs, glue, marking pens and bright sequins - tables mounded with the raw materials of art!

We all bring copies of family photographs, personal mementos, and special treasures to create our own shrines for the pets and people we love and miss.

At the Day of the Dead Celebration we come together to holler and stomp and bring in the spirits of our dearly departed loved ones. How beautiful it is, with music and food and poetry: the writing of names and affirmations on scrolls: the serious moments of reflection: the glowing of candles around the memory boxes on altars big and small, and the magic of our own Muir Beach Dia de los Muertos Celebration growing and deepening our souls with each passing year.



Nina and Tiana Vincent-Pearlman; sweet dreams.

Special thanks to: Bruce Barlow, music co-ordinator; Marilyn Laatsch, vision; Charlene Modena, Larry Yamamoto, Mark Felix, and Jim Needles, artists who painted the skeleton panels; Coleen Curry, Lisa Eigsti, Nina Vincent, Judith Yamamoto, and Kathy Sward, creative direction; Adele Connor and Nadia Georgiadis, tending & befriending; Joe Connor and Judith Yamamoto, poetry; and all the musicians: David Jenkins, Willow Wray, Steve Shaffer and his jazz band, Ann and Bryce Browning, Augie Rath, Joy Perrin, Pauchi, Dennis McGee, Pam and Bruce Barlow, David Leivick, Leah Joy and Patrick Numair, Mike Moore, Chas Kingsbury, Maxx Moore, Benjamin Pinto Souza, and the great Jim Purcell, who we expect to see back at the keyboard next year.

Capital Improvements: In January, the Quilters decided to fund plans for a storage shed at the community center. The Muir Beach Emergency Preparedness Committee is renewing the community center's designated emergency shelter status, so we will be working with them on this design project. The storage shed will accommodate emergency supplies, community center tables and chairs, etc., CSD storage needs, Garden Club supplies, and more.

Today: This year, our long-time money people, Janice and Maury Kubota, retired from the job they did so well. We are indebted to them for their financial and organizational skills, and for their amazing generosity of time and spirit. Thank you so much, Janice and Maury.

This is the time of year when we wrap up all the details of the latest Fair while it's still fresh in our minds. We discuss how to make it flow more smoothly and, if possible, produce more revenue. True to our mission, we revisit our long-term goals: capital improvements, and programs and activities at the community center.

We are brainstorming on our next raffle quilt - one of the most exciting times in the birth of a new quilt!

This October, the quilters' ages will span eight decades. In our diversity of life experience, we find comfort and inspiration.

Vision Project: As our world and community continue to change, so do we. How do we make a difference? What are we truly concerned about?

We are talking and thinking and reaching out for new ideas.

We are talking about global warming, and the need to get cars off the planet, or at least Highway One: the necessity for local and recreational access to Muir Beach, and the current total lack of public transit on our coastal route.

We are talking about renewable energy sources, the realities of homeless people right here in Marin County, teens at risk, the ramifications of immigrant rights and the walls coming up on our border, and the plight of an increasingly elderly population.

We are talking about war and peace, and the need for women like us to get involved with the life and death issues facing our families and our country.

We are talking about our quilters' roots in womanhood, in artistic encouragement, and in community. We've come a long way... now we invite your input.

So, what's keeping you up at night?

Let us hear your deep-down concerns and your stubborn dreams.

Muir Beach Quilters: Pam Barlow, Coleen Curry, Claire Johnston, Tayeko Kaufman, Nancy Knox, Ellen Mettler, Outi Onorato, Kathy Sward, Nancy Sequeira, Anna Tom, Judith Yamamoto

Visit www.muirbeach.com to learn more about the Quilters. Click on 2006 Quilters Fair to view last year's fair and go to Locals/Interviews to read the Muir Beach Quilters Interview in the *Point Reyes Light* December 2003.

Photographs by Claire Johnston



Linda Lotriet, Lonna Richmond, Diane Monteil, Dave Elliot, and Arlene Robertson, "Groovin'..."

Notes from Greater Muir Beach Neighbors

Greater Muir Beach Neighbors, a group of concerned residents of the greater Muir Beach watershed (Muir Beach, Green Gulch Farm, Camino del Canyon and Slide Ranch) has, since we organized ourselves three years ago, been focused on both County transportation planning and the GGNRA's Big Lagoon Restoration Project at Muir Beach. The Big Lagoon project is entering its final planning stages; we are, in February, writing letters and attending meetings. We're also firing off letters to the County (latest one reprinted on page 21), since its latest move, as of *Beachcomber* press time, has been to re-route the Marin Stagecoach off Highway One and onto Panoramic, thereby losing the entire coastal route. This began as a response to Highway One closures, and then was recommended for a permanent change by the Marin County Transit District in January, 2007. In the next *Beachcomber* we will report on what happened at a public meeting at the end of February re: both the County transportation planning and final input into the Big Lagoon project before it drops into the EIS/EIR process.

Judith Yamamoto, Chair
Greater Muir Beach Neighbors



Jan. 18, 2007

Amy Van Doren, Manager
Marin County Transit District
3501 Civic Center Drive
San Rafael, CA 94903

Dear Board of Directors:

We are very troubled that, under the guise of service "improvements," the Marin County Transit District (MCTD) is considering discontinuing the Stagecoach run to Muir Beach. Many Muir Beach residents attended a Stagecoach Community Meeting at Muir Woods Park on Wednesday, January 10th, and were greatly disappointed by the flawed rationale for making such a change:

1. *The driver of the stage prefers the route over Panoramic Highway to the route along Highway 1.*

This is not a valid reason to discontinue service to Muir Beach and it was surprising to see it presented as such.

2. *The ridership in Muir Beach is low.*

We were told by MCTD staff that data has been collected only since a new contract provider recently took over operation of the Stage; that it records only Muir Beach boardings, which do not reflect the majority of riders who get on at over-the-hill stops and ride to Muir Beach; and that the driver wishing to discontinue service is the same person collecting the data. More importantly, we have long asked for service improvements that are needed to maximize rural service. These include runs beginning earlier in the morning to accommodate commuters, and the closing of service gaps during the day. Lastly, the lack of weekend service has resulted in zero recreational access to our public beaches and parklands via public transit.

3. *The ridership in rural areas is expected to be low, due to low population densities.*

We agree. The question is, are ridership numbers being used to determine service routes?

4. *The ridership over Panoramic is perceived to be higher.*

Again, it is unclear whether or not ridership numbers are in fact being used as a basis for determining service routes. Also, we were given no data on what the ridership is for Muir Beach vs Panoramic. A perception is not a valid basis for making a program change that would have such a drastic effect on our community. Lastly, it is deplorable that MCTD service proposals put Marin County communities into a position where they are fighting each other for limited transit opportunities.

5. *MCTD is considering adding Stagecoach service to some areas while taking it away from Muir Beach.*

Service additions and restorations on one route must be made without eliminating service on another route. Progress can only be defined as expanding and improving service. A service "change" which cuts off service is not an improvement; it is failure.

Though our community is small, many people (most of whom have never been counted as Muir Beach riders) use the Stagecoach regularly and rely on its continuation. Many more would ride it, or ride it more regularly, if the service were improved. The addition of weekend service would immensely benefit local usage to Green Gulch Farm, Muir Beach and Slide Ranch, and would finally accommodate parklands visitors.

We urge you to please restore and improve this important service to Muir Beach.

Judith Yamamoto, Chairperson
Greater Muir Beach Neighbors

cc: Marin County Supervisor Steve Kinsey

The Critter Report: Odd Couples

By Dave MacKenzie

Let's face it. Relationships can be tricky. Sometimes you have to wonder just how those two get along; or do they? Actually, I'm not talking just about people -- what if the couple consists of two different species?

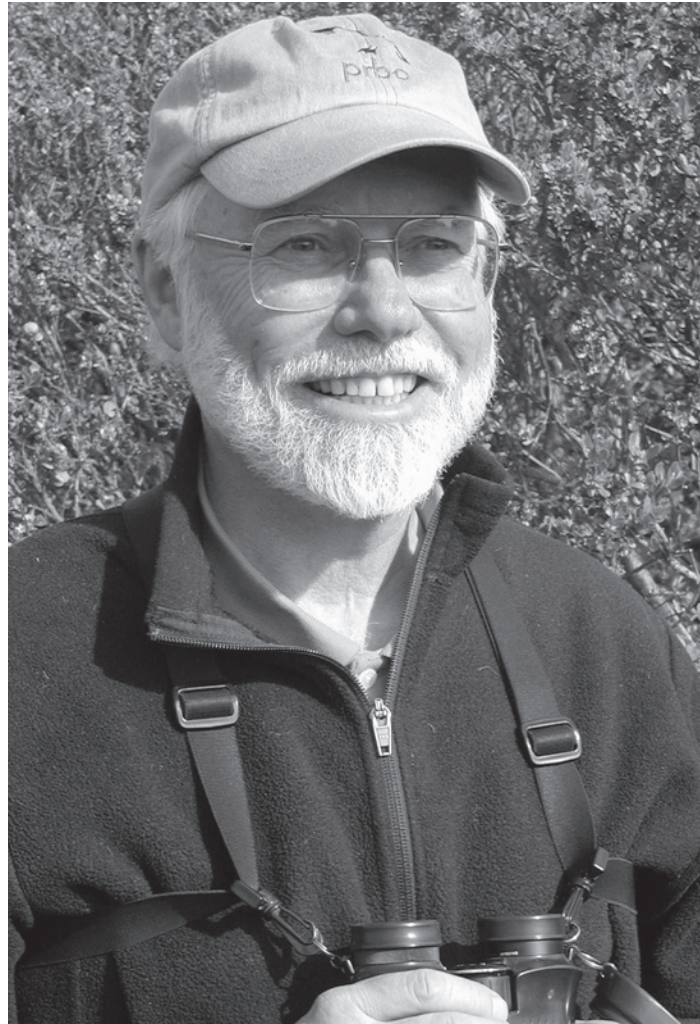
O.K., I know we live in one of the great liberal bastions, but maybe this is going too far! In fact, inter-specific relationships are really quite common, and no species can exist in isolation -- at least there have to be a few other species to eat (animals or plants)!

Last fall Julie Smith reported an odd couple in her driveway: a Bobcat and a Gray Fox walking together like old buddies. What the heck is going on? Shouldn't these two predators be mortal rivals, or at least suspicious observers from afar?

I once saw a Gray Fox walking closely behind a Mule Deer in Kent Canyon. At the time I did think it very odd -- almost like watching a pet dog and cat who have become accustomed to each other and perhaps even sleep and eat together. A bit more study of the fox and deer suggested to me that the fox was actually hunting for anything that was kicked up by the deer. Perhaps it sought a rain beetle, a grub, or a scurrying vole. The deer, of course, was just looking for fresh grass. So there was no direct competition for food.

Whenever you are trying to figure out what is going on in nature, try to answer the question: what is the evolutionary advantage of the behavior you are seeing? (By the way, this works for humans, too!). In biology, driven by evolution, this always boils down to reproduction success, and this occurs if critters are well fed and live long enough to reproduce and care for their young.

For the Gray Fox and the Bobcat, I suspect the relationship was about food. Perhaps the fox had helped finish off the remains of a Bobcat kill (maybe a large rabbit or gopher, since small voles tend to be eaten very fast).



Dave MacKenzie. Photograph by Bonnie MacKenzie

Food is often a drive in interspecies relationships. In the summer and fall, take a look at the Brown Pelicans diving for fish off the beach. You will probably notice a brownish "seagull" following each of the pelicans. This is the Heerman's Gull, a visitor from Mexico where it breeds alongside the Pelicans. This gull makes its living by trying to steal the jumping fish when the Pelican plunges or before it can tip up its bill for the big swallow. The coupling dynamic is obvious for this pair.

Safety can also create evolutionary "odd couples." In the winter, you may discover a small flock of Chestnut-Backed Chickadees in Muir Beach foraging for insects and their larva ("worms") in the trees. Often these Chickadees are accompanied by other species: a group of

twittering Pygmy Nuthatches, a tree climbing Brown Creeper, a splashy yellow/black/white Townsend's Warbler, and perhaps a squeaking Downy Woodpecker. The whole group moves on through the forest, en masse, hunting for similar food. If a Sharp-Shinned Hawk should dive at one of these travelers for a quick meal, the alarm notes of the birds ring out and they all dive for cover. From an evolutionary perspective, this enables more birds of diverse species to live long enough to reproduce and raise the next generations!

So we may never exactly know why the Bobcat and the Gray Fox traveled together, but there is probably a good reason.

Or maybe they are just good buddies!

Some observations from late 2006 in Muir Beach:

Three new bird species were discovered in the Redwood Creek Watershed. In September, a Prairie Falcon (like a pale Peregrine) was soaring over the Coast View Trail. In December, Jim White spotted a huge immature Bald Eagle over the beach, and I was lucky enough to see it from my back yard due to that hot tip! Also a Yellow-Breasted Sapsucker (yes, there really is such a woodpecker!) was found near the Tourist Club during the Audubon Christmas Count on December 28. By the way, you don't want to miss the unique local experience of sipping a beer at the Tourist Club. Go to <http://www.nps.gov/goga/planyourvisit/upload/map-muwo-2.pdf> for a map. Hike down the steep switchbacks from Ridge Drive, off Panoramic Highway or come across on the spectacular Sun Trail (reached from Panoramic or Muir Woods Road). They are only open on weekends.



Photograph by Heather Kobrin

Natural Curiosities

By Dave MacKenzie

Author's Note: I have been asked to write a regular column for the Beachcomber in which I will try to respond to nature questions from Muir Beach residents and friends. I will do my best to give accurate answers, even if it takes a bit of research, or at least I will try to give a good story. So if you have anything you are curious about and want to give me a go, call me at W: 415-389-1456 or H: 415-389-1558, or e-mail davem@microsafe-systems.com or send good old snail mail to 28 Starbuck Drive.

Q: Earlier in the summer we were hiking the Middle Green Gulch trail, climbing up above the gardens, when we saw a crow flying on the wind and performing forward rolls in the sky. We had never seen a crow frolicking like that--if it was frolicking. Have you ever seen a crow flip out in the sky? And if so, is it some sort of mating behavior or was the crow just having fun? -- David Leivick

A: My guess is you were actually seeing a Common Raven and not a crow, although both are common in Muir Beach. The Raven, *Corvus corax*, is closely related to the American Crow, *Corvus brachyrhynchos*, and both are in the same family as the jays. The Raven is the better flier, although a crow can also do inverted flight. But the Raven is truly the king of the skies. To tell them apart, look for the large diamond- or wedge-shaped tail of the Raven, or the more square tail of the Crow. Ravens are commonly seen in mated pairs, and call to each other with a very low hoarse "croak." Ravens also can give some strange clicking notes. Crows are more often in large groups and give a higher-pitched "caw." However, these grouping rules don't always apply and an individual bird can look a lot like either species. Ravens often do various aerobatic feats such as inverted flight, rolls and fantastic dives and ascents. The rolls have been observed in pair-bonding flights with the birds interlocking feet and flying in huge loops so that the two Ravens take turns flying upside down. My Google search discovered a record of a Raven flying up to 1 km (0.6 miles) upside-down! Ravens are one of the most widespread of all bird species, found on many continents from the arctic to the desert. They are also quite intelligent. One famous experiment showed that perched Ravens could quickly and independently learn to retrieve food hanging from their perch by lifting up the string with one foot, and then pinning each segment with the other foot until it could grab the morsel with its bill. Finally, I have recently been noticing how flying

Ravens will tuck in their wings, then take a small dive while letting out a loud "croak" to call to their mate. Sort of like squeezing their chest to get more volume! I have also seen the crow-sized Pileated Woodpecker do the same trick when flying across Mt. Tam.

Q: I read in the IJ recently that there are a number of snakes in Marin. I have not seen one in Muir Beach. Granted I have been here just about three years. I was wondering if you see snakes on a regular basis and if so, what kind have you observed and where do you see them? -- Linda Gibbs

A: I do see snakes in Muir Beach, but not too often, perhaps only a few per year. The most common is the California Red-sided Garter Snake, *Thamnophis sirtalis*, which may be anywhere in a brushy area on a sunny summer day. I have seen them on the Green Gulch trail and in my yard. These garter snakes have red and yellow "racing stripes" and are very pretty. Once I saw a large (3 foot plus) Gopher Snake, *Pituophis melanoleucus*, crossing upper Seacape Drive. It is an impressive snake, but easily distinguished from a Rattlesnake by the lack of rattles and a smaller head. I personally have never seen a Rattlesnake in this area, but have talked to locals who have seen them up on Mt. Tam. Another snake I saw several years ago was the Rubber Boa, *Charina bottae*. It was on the now closed Mines Fire Road. Despite its fearsome name, this snake was only about 12 inches long. Another local specialty I caught sight of once was the California Ring-Neck Snake, *Diadophis punctatus*, also small but a real beauty with a green-above and red-below body and a bright pink-red ring around the back of the head. They are occasionally seen in Muir Woods. Sadly, my one encounter with a green Racer, *Coluber constrictor*, was a roadkill on Muir Woods road. It was very thin, green, and perhaps two feet long. It was quickly identified by my biologist friend Jim Zimmer. I'd sure love to see one someday alive and well slithering in the brush as I hike nearby!



Photographs by Heather Kobrin

For the SlugFiles

By Pam Barlow

When I read "The Slug and I" by Linda Gibbs in the July 2006 Beachcomber, it was wonderful to learn that there are others who share my husband's and my affinity for those little buggers to whom we refer affectionately as George and Martha. We never kill them, despite the fact that they eat all our flowers.

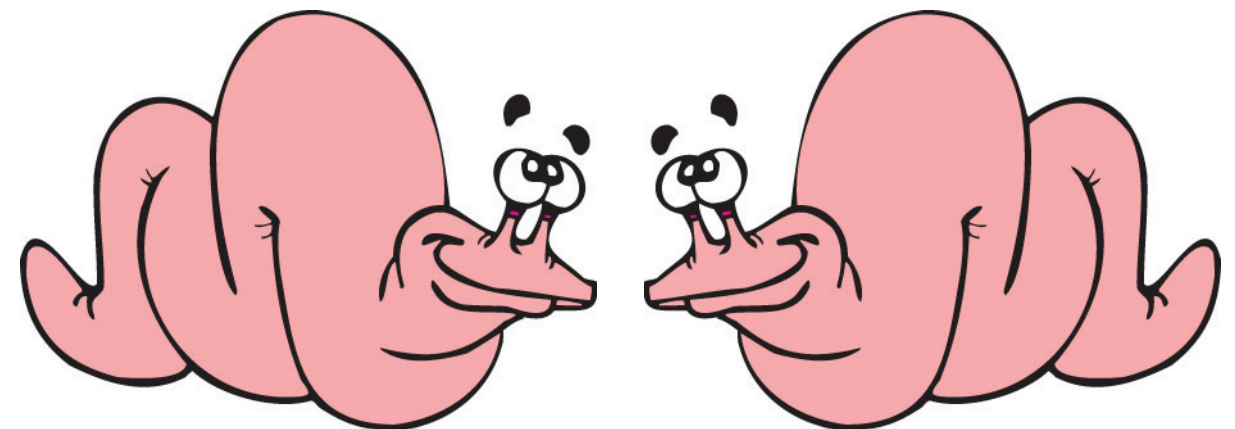
I confess that we considered it, but when Bruce brought home a gallon of Sluggo, we read the label and were horrified. Do you know that it takes them seven days after they ingest it to die? An entire week of agony. The label even details how they'll crawl off somewhere to expire so one needn't worry about having to dispose of their shriveled carcasses. (How accommodating of them!) Sheer ghouliness...So now we've instituted an SRP - Slug Relocation Program.

Every time we see one of those virescent invertebrates munching voraciously on some delicate petal in the upper beds, we sail it ever-so-lightly onto the gargantuan nasturtium leaves that hover just below deck-level from their jungle on the back slope. (Why can't G&M devour this ubiquitous vine instead of our delicate flower buds?!) Yet they come right back up -- the slugs, alas, not the buds. We even invested in that copper stripping that creates a "barrier" around

flower beds because slugs supposedly are loathe to crawl across it.

After I'd spent at least an hour wrangling a single strip into position, Bruce selected a beautiful nine-inch specimen of prime slug-flesh for our experiment; soon we'd know whether what remained of our flower garden had any hope of a future. He deposited her, (Our Miss Martha), mere millimeters from her favorite buffet with only that copper "barrier" to keep her from all she could eat. She made a beeline (slugline?) across that stuff and was chowing down again in less than thirty seconds. Oh well...Now they eat what they eat, whatever eats them eats them and what doesn't survive -- I guess that's just the cycle of life.

I love that Linda's article takes a stand against killing and in favor of the little 'aqueous sloths,' as quoted from Klinkenborg. Sure, we miss the now long-gone flowers that were so pleasing to the palates of our gourmet slug population. But we still enjoy the flora that remain. And from the look of them, so do George and Martha, more robust than ever and just as cute. All is right with the world -- at least the world of our tiny garden habitat. Slugophiles unite!



Dia de los Muertos

The 4th Annual Day of the Dead photo album is courtesy of Daniel Dolgin and Allison Pinto. To read about the celebration, turn to "Hello from the Quilters," page 18 and "Ob-La-Di, Ob-La-Da, Life Goes On," page 29.

Photographs by Daniel Dolgin unless otherwise noted.



Photographer Daniel Dolgin with his Day of the Dead friend.
Photograph by Allison Pinto



Harvey Pearlman, founder of the Muir Beach Day of the Dead celebration, exhorts the spirits.



El Brujo, the Shaman, Bruce Barlow



Allison Pinto and Tiana Vincent-Pearlman show their appreciation for the music provided by Bryce Browning of Muir Beach on hammered dulcimer and Augie Rath of San Rafael on guitar.



From left: Kathy Sward shows off her costume (orange-juice-carton-pull-tab necklace/belt and apple-juice-plastic-carrier eyeglasses made by John John) to Shana Bomfim-Finkelstein, Selma Bomfim, and John John Sward.



Muir Beach Poet Laureate Judith Yamamoto



Coleen Curry and Chas Kingsbury



Lonna Richmond and Avram Pearlman



Psychedelic Sea Hag, Pam Barlow, models her "Flights of Sophia" original fetish creations.



Ann Browning plays hammered dulcimer to the delight of Shana Bomfim-Finkelstein.



Tony Martinez and Missy Brooks

♪ Ob-La-Di, Ob-La-Da, Life Goes One ♪

Stories and photographs by Allison Pinto

As 2007 gets underway, it is a good time to recap some events that took place while the Beachcomber was on sabbatical.



New Year's Eve revelers a few minutes into 2007. From left: Linda Lotriet, Peter Lambert, John John Sward, Kathy Sward, and Janice Kubota.



After midnight, Tiana keeps her family awake. From left: Nina, Tiana, Eli, and Harvey Vincent-Pearlman.

Tiana Vincent-Pearlman's Birthday

The best day of the year to go to Bistro? Clearly when scones are on the house (or on Nina and Harvey). Tiana's Birthday is just that day...Happy Birthday, Tiana, and thanks for the scones (I had two).

Photo(right):The best day of the year at Bistro: Tiana's birthday (free scones).Hannah Eigsti and Tiana Vincent-Pearlman

Where were you New Year's Eve, 2006?

I went to the Community Center reluctantly with my family on the 31st at about bedtime, 9 pm. If you recall, it was approximately 30 below zero (wind-chill factor -100). My teeth chattered the whole walk up there. Luckily, there was a blazing fire going, but other than that, arriving there felt more like walking into Bingo night at the Redwoods. Scrabble and the Sound track from the Big Chill were contributing to that feeling... Everyone looked relaxed, hardly what one would expect with 2007 about to begin.

Things started to liven up with Mexican and Brazilian drinks being mixed behind the bar (or being used to remove nail polish), and samba, no, Loud Samba, being put on the sound system. (Have you ever played ping-pong to the beat of samba music? I think it should be a new Olympic sport. If it were, Benjamin Pinto Souza and Eli Vincent-Pearlman would make the team!)

People moved the card tables aside and danced, even the babies. Several Muir Beachers came up just before midnight and made a small rager a Big Rager. Everyone had a glass of champagne at the appointed minute, and then came the count down. After kissing and more dancing, we all packed it up. With the heat of the big fireplace's fire in our bones, we slowly walked home with family and neighbors in the serene moonlight, marveling at the beach sounds. We Muir Beachers know how to bring in the New Year.



Day of the Dead

Harvey remembered his friend Delano, and we received a lesson on writing eulogies, the art of capturing the essence of a loved one. Music was made throughout the night to appease the spirits with the cover band of Maxx and Benjamin coming on at about 11pm. Art Memorial Projects abounded in the days leading up to the party, and continued throughout the night of the party on the art table.



Everyone else was a cover for the final act of the Day of the Dead concert: Benjamin Pinto Souza and Maxx Moore.

Alan Stein Retires

Alan Stein turned 66 and retired —Congratulations, Alan.



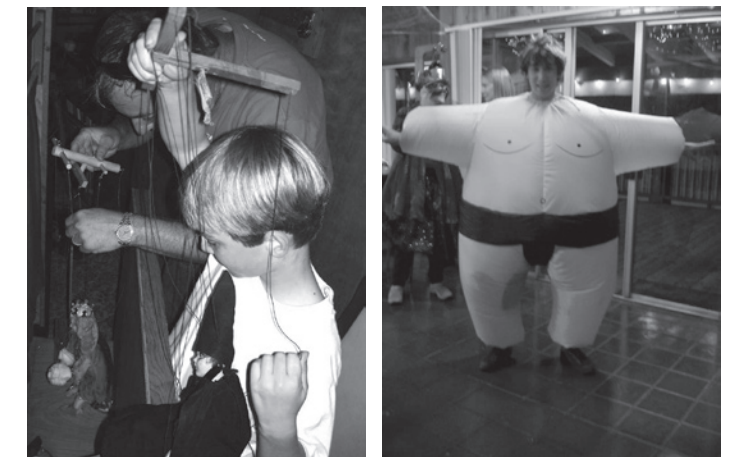
Alan Stein sports a crown at his 66th birthday party.

Halloween 2006; Muir Beach kids work hard for their candy!

This year, the Halloween Party was a smashing pumpkins success. The children had a pizza party, a costume pageant, storytelling, and ended the party with a puppet show courtesy of Mike and Maxx Moore. After that, the trick or treating began. Did you know according to the 2005 census, Muir Beach kids walk 7.5 times farther than their Mill Valley friends per piece of candy? [2007 calendars are still on sale, proceeds go to paying for the pizza and drinks that fortify our trick or treaters at the Halloween party; buy yours while it is still 2007 at Wednesday's Bistro].



Queen of Halloween: Ellen Mettler



Pre-trick or treating puppet show by Mike and Maxx Moore (behind the scenes).

Muir Beach's first sumo wrestler: Daniel Dolgin

In Loving Memory of Sunka

By Oshana Biondi

May 1993

Oshana and Sunka met along the Missouri River, Standing Rock Indian Reservation. His name, Sunka (Shun-ka), means "Dog" in Dakota.

We lived an adventurous Life on the Road, exploring many places together. Always ready for a ride!



His later years, we settled here in Muir Beach.
You know how the Story goes-
Ahhhhh..... A Dog's Life at the Beach



My Bright Regal Brave Warrior

January 28, 2007 -

Sunka made his Journey Home to Spirit. How grateful I am, my dear Friend, to have you by my side for 14 years. You gave your Life so fully to mine bearing witness to all the joys and pains Life brings. Always emanating Light, Sunka, you touched many people's hearts, and taught a fine lesson of canine "is-ness". Our love is immense and will never be forgotten. You taught me what really matters in this Life here on Earth.

Into the One, You are Now
My Beloved Friend.
Sweet Sunka Boy,
Ohmmm....
Sweet Sunka Love,
May Peace Surround You.



Thoughts on India

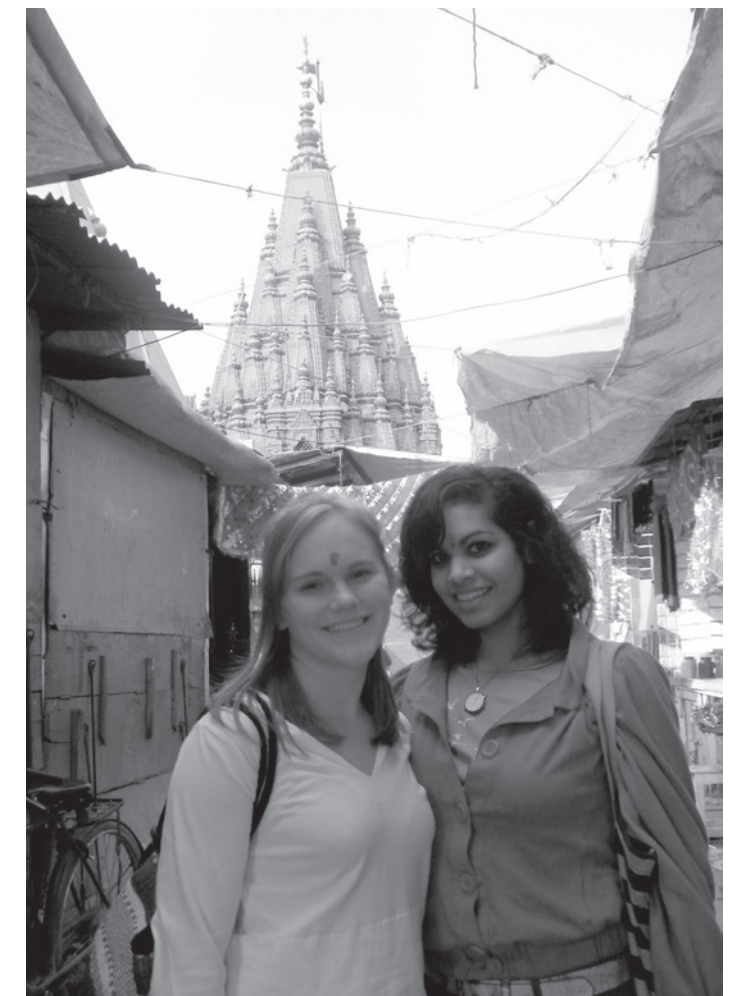
By Sandra Allen

Sonia's aunt Lata had seen the baby girl in a shopping mall, long-tongued and happy but unable to sit up or speak at two years old. Accustomed to wading through the gulf between children with disabilities and parents uneager or unable to recognize them, Lata approached the girl's parents and explained that their daughter had Down's Syndrome. Now the girl's mother carried her daily to Lata's school to be given an ounce of the special attention that a child with Down's Syndrome might need. When we arrived at the Sanskardham Vidyalaya for the Hearing Impaired the baby was seated atop a large exercise ball, and a teacher was bouncing her up and down, slowly building her muscles. When Lata picked her up, she waved to us, and made babbling noises, improvements that Lata said were truly outstanding.

Lata's school wasn't geared towards children with Down's Syndrome, but she recognized that in her country, help for this child would not come without someone putting in time and effort. It is this mentality that had allowed her school, the first for deaf children in Mumbai, to survive for the past twenty years. She rose every morning at five, did a few yoga exercises, dressed in an elegant salwar kameez and walked from her two-room apartment fifteen minutes to her small office. The children would rise and join their hands, forming the words "Namaste" when she entered the one of the six classrooms that had been partitioned out on the small verandah that housed all eighty students. When Lata noticed that children whose parents spoke Marathi rather than Hindi or English couldn't communicate with their children at home, she began a multi-age class only in Marathi, and ASL. When Lata noticed the children were having trouble with balance due to inner ear problems, she instituted daily marching, balancing, yoga, and karate. Many of her students competed at local gymnastic or martial arts competitions, and took top prizes over children with perfect hearing. When Lata noticed that the students didn't understand the concept of rhythm, she taught them how to dance by memorizing sixteen-count movement patterns, mimicking the expressions of the stars in Bollywood films. I watched, in awe, as three teenage couples, the boys waving marigold scarves, wound around to a Hindi love song that they could not hear.

In the afternoon, the group of children whom we had been watching through their daily exercises performed a play for us in exaggerated comedic silence, while their teacher fiddled around on an electric keyboard, giving the show the feel of an old time nickelodeon. The play was about a fat, lazy man whose wife and boss were frustrated with him because he was so fat and lazy. One day, however, he happened to catch some Muslim terrorists (played by actors wearing fake beards instead of fake Hindi-style mustaches) who were planting a bomb next to Gateway of India, a tourist site in downtown Bombay. Now his wife and boss treated him like a hero. Lata said the play taught the children that anyone, regardless of how different they are, can make a difference. I couldn't really comment on how such a play would have been received in the states.

Leaving Lata's school, and walking back onto the dusty streets, avoiding diesel rickshaws and hand-painted trucks, stray cattle and goats, groups of six or twelve men spitting bright red betel onto stucco walls, women shrouded in bright colors, bone-thin puppies and barefoot children, it was difficult to imagine



Sonia and I, in front of a temple, Varanasi



Lata and her students, Mumbai

what sort of vision and dedication she had to have to preserve this school. She had fought through red tape for the past five years to begin construction for the first deaf college (the equivalent of American high school) across the street. From this little haven a few lucky students had made it all the way to Gallaudet, the deaf university in Washington, D.C. At this point in my life and education, spending a day with Lata lit a momentary spark of belief that dedicated people really can do good with their lives.

Having traveled a good bit for someone my age, I knew that I couldn't go to India and resist any of the overwhelming cultural change taking place around me. My standards of what healthy, moral, late, contemporary, offensive, crowded, private, safe, or even Indian were, were completely obliterated. Small hoses and buckets replaced toilet paper, a cusped right hand replaced silverware. As I was traveling with my first generation American friend, Sonia, and her Bombay-born parents, we were staying in relatives' homes in neighborhoods hours away from where a tourist would be likely to venture. Every pair of eyes in every crowded street or field or market was pinned to me, even the sliver of eyes of Muslim women, whose remaining figures were shrouded beneath black burkhas.

In some arenas I was more culturally apt than was expected of a blonde American girl. Sonia's extended family marveled that I could handle spicy food, and stopped their initial habit of removing green chilies from my plate of upmaa in the morning. I tried to explain about how in the Bay Area our native cuisine is a blend of Mexican, Thai, Japanese, even

Indian. It was in instances when India seemed very Western that I would be startled by the Indian-ness of things. In a strip mall movie theatre, we rose to watch an image of the tricolor flag waving for three minutes as the national anthem was played, and took a fifteen minute intermission in the middle of the film, while waiters served pressed sandwiches. One of Sonia's older cousins, who worked in computers and whose years in New York were reflected by his perfect English, had already been rejected by three of the girls he'd met on the ebay of Indian arranged marriage sites, saadi.com. Another cousin, Pooja, who was twenty, attended university and wore jeans, asked me some of the most interesting questions: Are Americans purely sexual and unemotional, like we are portrayed in film? What kind of oil do I use in my hair? Was my parents' marriage an arranged marriage or a love marriage?

Sonia's parents left Bombay after they had married and received their medical degrees, leaving a culture where family is the pillar of life. Becoming close with Sonia in college, I had never understood how keenly her life had been shaped by bi-annual returns to the extended family that would never really understand how different a world she came from. During these visits, her parents suddenly retreated into the style of life they may have lived had they never left India, setting up dates with lists of people on a borrowed local cell phone, wearing native clothes lent from their siblings, and chatting about cricket but never about their lives in New York. Sonia affectionately caught up with aunts, uncles, and cousins, who laughed at her American slang and broken Hindi, and skeptically asked her what career she would pursue once she received her Literary Arts BA from Brown. Having another American accompany her to the multitude of elaborate lunches and dinners at various relatives and friends' houses was soothing to the overwhelming isolation she had always experienced when visiting India, being the only foreign born member of her entire extended family.

It took me a while to realize that in India people my age are either dependent children, or independent married adults. Sonia's cousins in their early twenties expected that if they went out at night, which was rare, they would receive a midnight curfew, because they had not yet achieved the independence awarded when one starts a family of one's own. Unable to leave the house at night, Sonia and I would stay up having lengthy discussions about religion, politics, race, gender, family, inspired by the day's events.

She reflected upon how being American was at once a point of pride and shame for her. Whereas in the US she would forwardly correct people who would assume she was Latina, black or even Italian, in India she purposefully wore Western clothing and hoped that the Indians around her would know she was different than them. She said, with difficulty, that she sometimes didn't want to be associated with some of the more disheartening aspects of Indian society.

These were grotesquely beautiful and difficult things that books or movies had warned me about, but were things I couldn't have understood until I went there. The moment our plane landed in Bombay International Airport our noses were crowded with the smell of the country - dust, cars, bodies, spices and open flames. The sun set with a ravishing red through the drapery of smog every evening and all open bodies of water were suspended with sewage. Sonia's parents reflected upon how each time they returned to the city, more and more slums had been replaced with new construction projects, which made me wonder where the people who lived in the slums had gone. I became accustomed to ignoring the pitiful glances and tapping hands on the windows whenever our car or taxi was stalled in gridlock. If I glanced sideways at the heart-wrenching displays of poverty, Sonia's family would scold me, explaining that looking at the beggars only encouraged them to stare in our windows longer. With my pithy knowledge of Indian

social history, I inquired as to whether the beggar children who roamed the streets had any opportunity to go to school. Though the answers I received were often dismissive, for the most part Sonia's relatives believed that these children could attend school, but their parents would not send them because sending a beggar child to school would break the family's way of life, and in the short-run diminish the family's income. This fascinated me, but sensing how uncomfortable it became when I probed so outwardly, I left the topic alone.

Sonia's father, Devdutt, a fairly renowned psychologist, spoke with me over a cup of masala chai on my last morning in Bombay. He asked about my general impressions of the country, in his intellectual yet clinically respectful manner. I spoke about how my three weeks in India felt like six weeks of life anywhere else. Every day was so packed with overwhelming cultural difference that time moved thickly around me. Devdutt agreed, and remarked that every time he returns to India he feels as if he has traveled back in time. Even though he has held a US passport for thirty years, he has not found that India has changed much since he left. Every time he returns to his Park Slope brownstone he feels as if his weeks in India have been a dream. "I walk around the apartment for days," he explained, "thinking out loud, where have I been? Have I really been in India, or was I perhaps just sleeping?"



Sonia's family on the Ganges, with a boatman.

Photographs courtesy of Sandra Allen

Friends Gather to Toast Wine

By Lonna Richmond and Brenda Kohn

On Nov. 18, 2006, about 60 of Leba Wine's friends celebrated the publication of her book, *Stitches in Time*, at a booksigning party at the Muir Beach Community Center.

The happening was put on by Brenda Kohn and Lonna Richmond, long-time friends and supporters of Leba.

An abundance of food and wine was enjoyed by all. After an introduction by another long-time friend, Gerry Pearlman, Leba read an excerpt from her fabulous book, which is essentially a biography of a quilt that had been in her family

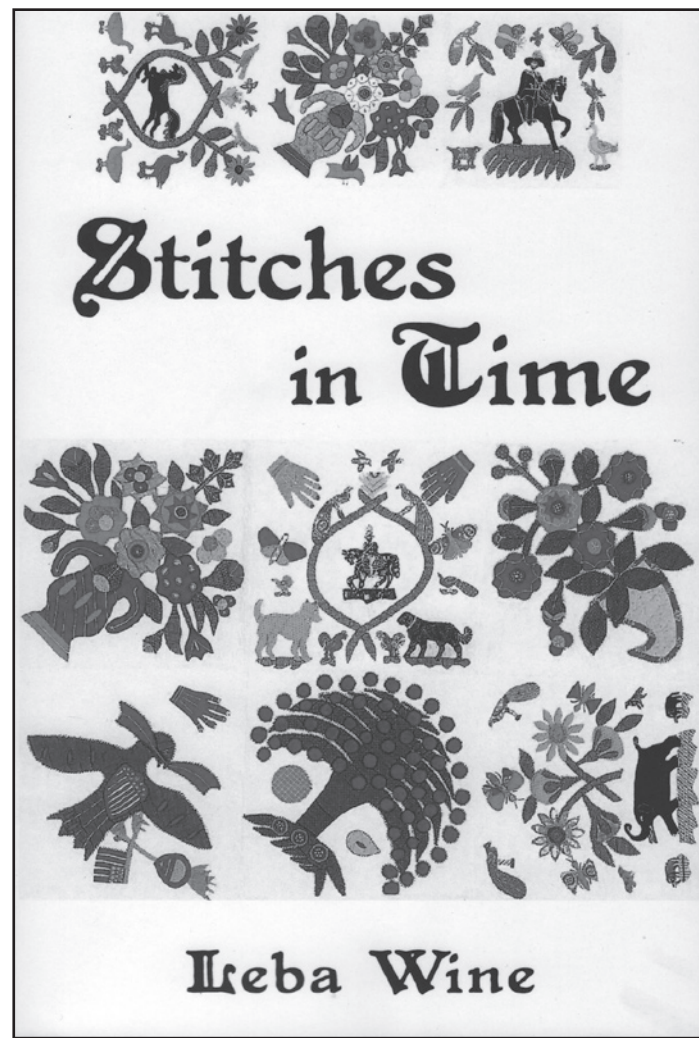
for many generations. The quilt, now in the collection of the American Folk Art Museum in New York City, has an amazing history as does Leba's family.

Publication of the book coincided with Leba's move to her new home in Santa Cruz. After living in Muir Beach for over 20 years, Leba is now enjoying the opportunity to spend more time with her daughter, Deborah, who lives near by.

Copies of *Stitches in Time* can be obtained from Brenda Kohn for \$16.50 or ordered online at www.manynamespress.com.

The next morning, the pain was still there, but so was the magic. The room was full of refracting color, moving and shifting in the sunlight. I slowly gathered the rainbow shards by squinting through my eyelashes and awoke like a princess under the glorious quilt my grandmother had made a half-century earlier. My grandmother's quilt--ah, what a garden of earthly delights. There, of course, were the apple tree and the peacocks, hands with rings on the fingers, dogs and hippos and elephants, pineapples and snakes, all trapuntoed and appliquéd in pulsating color onto an expanse of white. And in its center, unnoticed by me the night before--and what dreams it might have evoked--was a black chevalier on a black horse. Such darkness in the midst of all that opulence. I shivered and tried to look away, but he was too fascinating to ignore.

-----From *Stitches in Time*, page 2



Highway Reopening Date Uncertain

Continued from page 1

"Officially, we're saying work will be completed by March 28, but don't hold us to it," advised Bob Haus, spokesman for the highway department's District Four. Repairs to the road between Panoramic and Muir Beach are extensive. Although the weather has cooperated so far, winter storms could set the project back.

Caltrans contractors are working on five areas above Green Gulch where the road is collapsing following last winter's heavy storms. Slope failures and pavement settlement have been obvious for months. "If we didn't close the road, Mother Nature would do it for us," Haus said.

Construction crews are installing "soldier piles" at vulnerable sites. Essentially high-tech retaining walls, the fix consists of I-beams that are drilled and anchored into the hillside. Heavy wood timbers span between the beams and the area is backfilled.

"It's like bolting the roadway to the mountain," Haus explained. Contractors are also working on drainage improvements. Once the repairs are completed, large sections of Highway 1 will be repaved.

Emergency vehicles must also use the Muir Woods road during the repair period. "We're keeping the fire department advised," Haus said. Bicyclists and pedestrians are also being detoured.

The work was scheduled for the winter to avoid the busy summer tourist season, Caltrans said. The project necessitated the temporarily closing of the ten camping cabins at Steep Ravine. The state cancelled reservations and refunded deposits to disappointed campers who booked the cabins far in advance. "It's the only business forced to close by the project," Haus said.

Highway 1 remains closed to Stinson Beach beyond Slide Ranch. The entire Panoramic to Stinson Beach repairs will cost about \$25 million, the department estimates. Work on the Highway 1 segment between Muir Beach and Panoramic had been scheduled to start earlier. The project was delayed, Haus said, while the county completed repairs to Panoramic Highway and Muir Woods Road.



Photograph by John Huseby Courtesy Caltrans



COMMUNITY CENTER DROP-IN USE

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

COMMUNITY WEBSITES

Muir Beach Community Services District (CSD):
www.muirbeachCSD.com

Muir Beach Volunteer Fire Department (MBVFD):
www.muirbeachfire.com

Muir Beach Volunteer Firemen's Association:
www.muirbeachfire.com

Debra Allen's website for and about the community:
www.muirbeach.com

WEEKLY IN MUIR BEACH

MONDAY

- Tai-chi - 6:30 - 7:30 pm, at \$22.50 per month

TUESDAY

- The Bookmobile - 4:30 - 5:30 pm - 1st and 3rd Tuesdays, Mailboxes, Highway One across from Pelican Inn.

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 homemade 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
- 2nd Sundays 10-11:30 a.m.

BEACHCOMBER

Star Route
Muir Beach, CA 94965

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

