

BEACHCOMBER

Muir Beach Neighborhood News

Issue 240 March 2008



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FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Reader:

It is with sadness that the *Beachcomber* says goodbye to a great friend of the *Beachcomber*, Ann Browning, who passed away in October 2007. Ann was the Business Manager for the newsletter for twenty years, stalwart in her dedication to her “beloved *Beachcomber*” as the editorship changed over the years.

I am deeply appreciative of the assistance Ann gave me when I took over as editor last January. Her long-time experience on the newsletter was invaluable to me in those early days. I miss this caring and committed member of Muir Beach.

Next issue: May 2008

Submissions Deadline: March 31, 2008

See page 66 for Submission Guidelines.

Email: linda.c.gibbs@gmail.com

Drop: *Beachcomber* mailbox, south end of Pelican Mailbox Row

Mail: Editor, *Beachcomber*, 19 Seacape,
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Other 2008 Submissions Deadlines:

July issue: June 9, 2008

October issue: September 15, 2008

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MILL VALLEY

MARKET

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Muir Beach Quilters

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Masthead

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Cover paintings by Larry Yamamoto

Front cover: Great Highway One Peace Demonstration, 15" x 22"
in the collection of Dr. Edward Hyman and Dr. Deborah McDonald.

Back cover: Great Highway One Peace Demonstration II, 15" x 22"
in the collection of Robert Kaufman. Photographs by Larry Yamamoto

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Anne Jeschke

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Anne Jeschke

IN MEMORIAM

Ann Browning

an essential member of this community for over 30 years, left us on October 12 after a long standoff with ovarian cancer.

She was a true link in the chain: Business Manager for the *Beachcomber*, Rental Coordinator for the Community Center, dessert overseer for the Firemen's Barbecue.


But it wasn't the things she did, but how she did everything in her life—with fairness, generosity and grace. She took life for what it was, and became an honest friend to practically everyone she met. We may never know another like her.

During her final weeks she was in the constant company of family, friends and particularly our own wonderful neighbors. The well-wishes, the meals, the musicians, the Garden Club high tea, the hands and hope came from everywhere.

She formed a community of her own in those last days, but all she talked about was how lucky she felt.

From all the cards, flowers, letters and gifts, a line from one card lingers:
"No one who loved the earth so much ever truly leaves it."

We miss her already.



2

3



Anne Jeschke

Anne Jeschke Heads Circulation Services

By Linda Gibbs

I am pleased to announce that seven-year resident Anne Jeschke has agreed to handle Subscription and Circulation Services for the *Beachcomber*.

Many of you know of Anne's wonderful energy, enthusiasm, and expertise through her work on the Board of the Muir Beach Volunteer Fire Association. This

year will be her third year as Volunteer Coordinator for the annual Firemen's BBQ.

Anne is also the neighborhood liaison for Disaster Preparedness and a reporter for the *Beachcomber*. She's

one of those residents that people think of when something needs getting done!

Anne wanted us to know she is "an enthusiastic grandmother of four pre-schoolers as well as an avid traveler, RV'er, and home exchanger." She is a CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) volunteer, representing the court by assisting children under the supervision of the court due to neglect or abuse by their parents/guardians. She gathers information that assists judges in the important decision of permanent custody for the children. Please contact her if you are interested in more information about CASA and their need for volunteers.

Please welcome Anne to the *Beachcomber* and direct any subscription or circulation questions to her.

New *Beachcomber* Mailbox Arrives in Time for Spring Renewals

By Linda Gibbs

Effective immediately, mail for the *Beachcomber* can be dropped in the new *Beachcomber* mailbox located at the southern end of Pelican Mailbox Row next to the CSD Water mailbox. This new box replaces the mailbox that had come unhinged and couldn't be repaired. Larry Yamamoto decorated the original *Beachcomber* mailbox and I will be sure to hold this historic piece for the Muir Beach History House, which is a dream now, but hey, who knows, maybe someone will step forward with the land and we'll raise the money to build it. George Lindholdt, our local historian, has agreed to act as curator of the History House when we have bricks and mortar. But that's a story for another day.

The new mailbox is a locked box so please drop off your subscription renewal envelopes and other *Beachcomber* mail to that box from now on. To get mail delivered to the box, our mail carrier, Veronica, conveyed the post office's policy of only delivering to a box associated with a physical property and suggested we use 19 Seacape as the Fire Department and

Quilters do. Maury Ostroff of the CSD consented to our use of 19 Seacape which is the community center address. So for mailing, send to *Beachcomber*, 19 Seacape, Muir Beach, CA 94965. Thank you, Veronica and Maury.

Please do not drop off mail at the 19 Seacape mailbox at the community center. Use the box designated *Beachcomber* on Highway One across from the Pelican. Many thanks.



Photograph by Julie Smith

The new *Beachcomber* mailbox marked with the masthead created by Larry Yamamoto 25 years ago and still going strong.

Library Call for *Beachcomber* Back Issues

By Linda Gibbs

Laurie Thompson, librarian for the Anne T. Kent California Room at the Civic Center branch of the Marin County Library, requested to be placed on the mailing list for the *Beachcomber*, which we were happy to do. What is extraordinary is the California Room has issues of the *Beachcomber* from 1974 to 1986. They stopped receiving copies in 1986 and would like to fill in back issues from the last twenty years.

"This newsletter has important historical and local information and will be highly valued by researchers now, and for generations to come," wrote Laurie in a thank you note for our donation of the 2007 issues.

This is a call for any extra back issues that you would like to donate to the Marin County Library. Please contact myself or Anne Jeschke and we will arrange to pick them up from you or receive them. We will see that they get to Laurie Thompson for inclusion in the California Room collection.

As Paul Jeschke said—who made this contact while researching a future story for the *Beachcomber*—"I certainly like to think that our Muir Beach heirs will have access to our ramblings."



The *Beachcomber* is part of the collection in the Anne T. Kent California Room of the Civic Center branch of the Marin County Library.

Local Resident Author Wins Pen Award for 2007

In Oakland, on Dec. 8, 2007, local West Coast author Karla Andersdatter received a PEN award for her recent book, *DIARY OF A POET; AN IMAGINARY LIFE New and Selected Work*, in the category of Creative Non Fiction. At the event (held at the Rockridge Library) award winners read from their collections providing an afternoon of absorbing listening for the large audience. More than 100 astute listeners arrived as witness to the literary achievements.

The Josephine Miles Award from the Oakland chapter of PEN (an International Association of Poets, Essayists, and Novelists) is offered every year to authors who achieve excellence without the support of large corporate publishing establishments or universities. Ms. Andersdatter, a San Francisco born, West Coast writer, who has authored 21 books, received the award in Oakland, along with others who were honored by PEN for their achievements. The Josephine Miles Award has been given for the last 17 years to honor the poet Josephine Miles, who was a beloved teacher of poetry at UC Berkeley until her death. She supported a new genre of poets, including Allan Ginsberg, whose works surpassed the existing cultural norms and broke the boundaries of language in a new way, but were unsupported by the University or commercial, corporate, publishing houses.

In 2006, Bill Moyers won the award for Censorship and A.D. Winans, creator of Second Coming Press in San Francisco, won a Lifetime Achievement Award from PEN, Oakland. Ms. Andersdatter's second book of poetry was published by Second Coming Press in 1976, a year after she built her house in Muir Beach.

DIARY OF A POET: AN IMAGINARY LIFE can be purchased directly from inbetweenbooks.com, or from Depot Café and Bookstore in Mill Valley, Marcus Books in San Francisco or Oakland, A Healing Place in Stinson Beach, or other independent bookstores across the country. It can be accessed via Amazon.com or Borders Books, or you can write In Between Books, P.O. Box 790, Sausalito, CA 94966. Phone orders received at 415 383-8447.

In the introduction, David Shaddock says, "it is 'life lived'. . . the author has turned a life of lyric poetry into narrative, and ends by turning narrative back into fable and folktale... Her muse is Coyote!"

Hugh Fox, University of Michigan (retired), a well

DIARY OF A POET: *An Imaginary Life*



New and Selected Works Karla Andersdatter

known reviewer of Small Press since the '60s claims her work is "deeply philosophical-psychological, a sense of everything vanishing give her work great power and evocativeness..."...forever viewing man in terms of Time and Eternity, ...if St. Thomas Aquinas, Aristotle, and Jung had started writing poetry, these are the kind of poems we would have seen. She really brings you into her world."

Steve Sanfield, from San Juan Ridge, said about the New Collection, "This may well be her best collection, just as her fourth novel *OF LOVE AND PROMISES* was the best tale telling I'd heard from her over all these years. How many now? 35? She's just getting better and better!"

Pen to Paper

By Nina Vincent

I received a card in the mail yesterday. My oldest, dearest friend had died and the card simply said: Alan Brown, From June 27, 1925 To January 8, 2008. “No Runs, No Hits, No Errors-No Grievous Errors.”

Had I not been so deeply saddened by the loss I know I would have laughed. Instead I went upstairs to bring down a ratty old plastic case I’ve carried with me over the years with letters from my closest friends. I found Alan “Sam” Brown’s letters saved from as far back as 1974. I was 13 when we started exchanging letters. Within those envelopes with all the different addresses on the front were words and advice about love, music, literature, sadness, travel, and most of all true friendship. Alan had been there over the years through my first relationship, high school, college, my years overseas, my marriage, graduate school, the birth of my son, the adoption of our daughter, and most recently the death of my mother. His concern, love, and dedication there for me to hold; how deeply the sight of his handwritten letters touch me still.

Over the last few years we communicated mostly via email - something Alan at first resisted, and later fully embraced. The letters I held in my hands last night as I read, wept, laughed, and wept some more were like holding Alan in my arms.

Months ago in an attempt to speed up my Internet service I ‘threw away’ all the emails I had received over the years. With them went the letters from my mother, Ellen Mettler, and others dear to me. I emptied the ‘trash.’ How did letters from my beloved friends suddenly become nothing more than ‘trash’ - a nuisance getting in the way of those precious few extra seconds or minutes I would rather not spend on the computer? In searching hopefully for letters from Alan I discovered that I had not thrown away the letters I had written and sent over the years (purely an oversight). To my delight I discovered that attached to many of those were letters received. I found letters from my mother. I had only one letter from Alan written last year on Jan. 6, almost exactly a year before he died, and only the day after my mother died. His words were still a comfort, and it means the world to me. But those letters I held in my hands last night, written in his own unique handwriting, with my name on the front of the envelope marking the different phases, and adventures of my lifetime; Darien, New Hampshire, Europe, the Middle East, California, -

those are something I will cherish forever.

I miss the rush of excitement as I open the mailbox down on ‘mailbox row’ where papa Joe, Tony Leal, and June White and I used to linger and kibbitz waiting for Dan the mailman. To see the red and blue airmail bars along the edges of the envelope; the warmth in recognizing, before even reading the return address, the identity of the sender by their handwriting made fetching the mail something to look forward to, something special. When I hold a letter in my hand I sense that its writer has done so as well. The little coffee stains, food smudges, and drawings all bring me closer to my friend on the other end of the pen. I don’t feel that with emails. I waded through the ‘spam’ trying to locate a familiar name or email address sometimes so abstract and devoid of anything personal about the writer that I overlook and delete before I’ve even read their words. How sad.

My mother would give each of us a box of new stationary at Christmas. All our thank you letters were written on this. I recall the feeling of opening that box and bringing out the crisp clean paper. It felt like a special art project putting pen to that new page. I chose my colors, my writing style -some days endeavoring to write in cursive, others an easy print. I would draw little red hearts at the bottom of the page for those I especially loved. It was personal. Each letter unique. Each letter solely for the person whose name I printed so carefully on the front of the matching envelope.

When Tim and I were co-editors of the *Beachcomber* we truly “cut and pasted,” hand wrote and drew much of our material. What a funky newsletter it was compared to the streamlined *Beachcomber* of today, and yet, I find myself missing even that.

I am going back; back to the days of pen and paper. Back to the days of eagerly opening my mailbox to sift and shuffle through the bills in hopes of finding something written by a hand that I recognize. I can’t wait to go out and buy a box of stationary and perhaps a wax seal and stamp so that I might reconnect with the archaic art of letter writing, - and I hope receiving.

Nina Vincent
Jan. 15, 2008



Hey Watch That Dog!

By Elisa Brooks

Neighbors may remember that darling little Chihuahua born March 15th in the bathroom of Elisa Brooks, Natalie, and Daniel at 19 Starbuck on a rainy day at the beach. Pico de Guyo was the one and only pup birthed by Juanita that little tri-colored Chihuahua and was fathered by Chico Campbell of Mill Valley. He is survived by both parents and there are no siblings. Pico can be remembered under his original website on www.myspace.com under Pico de Guy-O, which was a highly visited site for many months when he was alive. He had an active life and loved the beach. He always got emails, cards, and visitors and was adored when he went to work with Elisa daily. He was only 9 months old.

Pico de Guyo was an adorable but feisty little guy. He grew up at Muir Beach and recently went back to the Brooks residence in Tucson, which is very similar to Muir Beach in that there is abundant wildlife and predators. The family was running one morning when a coyote, mountain lion, or bobcat jumped quickly from a brush area and snatched Pico instantly. The other dogs and family members could not even jump, move, or shout fast enough. Pico was gone to prey.



Pico de Guyo at two weeks



Pico’s dad, Chico of Mill Valley



Pico at three weeks
Photographs by Elisa Brooks

Please remember Pico fondly and Watch your Pets! When you are watching and right there--the small pets can easily be snatched and eaten. We are deeply saddened and wanted to share this story so folks can be aware.

Yoga in Muir Beach

TUESDAY YOGA

What: Anusara Yoga, beginners welcome
Taught by Judy Turkalj 415.384.0386

When: 6:15-7:30 pm Tuesdays

Where: The class has moved to Taylor’s zendo,
1821 Shoreline Hwy.

It is heated there and David Taylor has generously sponsored it at his expense, open to the community. Also, it is fully stocked with yoga props, including yoga mats for beginners who don’t have one! Please park along Hwy 1 and walk down the driveway to the Taylor residence. Please close the gate securely to keep animals out and pets in.

Cost: Donation!

Anusara means “Open to Grace.” This class uses the yoga poses to move to the still center.

THURSDAY YOGA

What: Iyengar Yoga Mixed levels taught by Susy Stewart

When: 6:30-8:00 pm Thursdays. A new two-month series will begin March 6, the next will begin May 1.

Where: Taylor’s zendo, 1821 Shoreline Hwy.
(Please park along the highway and always close all gates as you enter.)

Cost: The 8-week series is \$40. Drop-ins are \$10

Call or email Susy Stewart (415.388.1549 or susyoga@earthlink.net) with questions and to register. Enrollment is limited. Priority is given to Muir Beach residents and series students.

Iyengar Yoga is based on the teachings of BKS Iyengar. It emphasizes correct postural alignment, teaches concentration, balance, strength, flexibility, meditation and stability.

Remembering Jim Canepa

By Linda Gibbs

Last fall, a month before Jim Canepa of the Mill Valley Market died suddenly of a heart attack at the age of 75, I was in the market shopping for the *Beachcomber* Wine Tasting fundraiser. I found Jim in the aisles stocking the shelves as he often did in those post-ownership days of the market (he passed the business on to his sons, Doug and David, who run the market with their uncle). Always a ready smile and a twinkle in his eye, Jim Canepa was Mr. Mill Valley Market to me. This two-time recipient of the Mill Valley Citizen of the Year award and founder and producer of the annual Mill Valley Wine and Food tasting went after stocking the shelves and checking out customers with gusto. He offered “Farmer Jim’s” organic tomatoes and spring garlic to the community right from his garden. He enjoyed talking to customers and answering their questions.

My question concerned the wine tasting. Not only had I never been to a wine tasting but here I was hosting one under the guidance of Ted Elliott who was presenting his Queste Pinto Noir from the Russian River Valley. I was in the market to buy cheese and crackers and knew Jim would have knowledge about the foods needed to cleanse the palette between tastings.

I was right about that. Jim got up from what he was doing, and in his usual spry and energetic way led me to the cracker section and talked to me about what the experts served at their tastings. He wasn’t pretentious in the least, but down to earth and knowledgeable about the business he had been in for 50 years, inheriting the market from his father along with his brother.

While we were talking, I got up the nerve to ask him if the *Beachcomber* could participate in the Shop & Give program. I didn’t know how it worked. Would my application have to go before a board? Would

it take weeks for processing? Was there a lot of paperwork? No was the answer to all my questions. Right then and there Jim said we could be part of the program that gives 3% of total receipts back to our organization. I asked him if I could announce the Shop & Give program at the fundraiser. He said go ahead, you are in. It was one of the kindest things I’ve ever experienced. No red tape, no hassles, just a big yes to the *Beachcomber*.

After the October issue came out, I was excited to show Jim the wine tasting and Shop & Give coverage in the *Beachcomber*, and to thank him once again. When I got to the market with my *Beachcomber* in hand, I saw a cluster of people at the bulletin board near the front door. Flowers lined the sidewalk. “What happened?” I asked the closest woman who had tears in her eyes. “Jim Canepa died,” she said.

It was like a kick in the gut. Shock and sadness over such a loss to the community. And so suddenly, just like that with no warning.

The Mill Valley Market will never be the same again. I still look for Jim every time I walk in the market. I have never felt such fondness for someone in public life as much as I felt for Jim. And I miss this beloved and great man.



Jim Canepa

Photograph courtesy of Lisa Canepa

Carbon Offset Anyone?

By Lonna Richmond

As an earthling on this wonderful and beautiful spinning planet we call home, I take the role of stewardship seriously. I also feel rather helpless when confronting the problem of global warming.

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, a group established by the World Meteorological Organization, and recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize (with Al Gore, Jr., in 2007), the average surface temperature of the earth has increased by 5 degrees C. “With an overwhelming consensus in the scientific community confirming the trend, global warming must be considered the preeminent threat to the global environment.”* Climate researchers agree that it is warmer today around the world than at any other time during the past 1000 years, and the warmest years of the previous century have occurred within the past decade. This warming is due, in part, to “greenhouse gases” emitted into the atmosphere by human activities. Every time we drive our car, take an airplane, or turn on our “juice,” we are burning fossil fuels (coal, oil, gas). Industry, transportation, food production, you name it -- almost everything we buy and consume daily adds to the burden of greenhouse gases in our atmosphere.

San Francisco group who are well into their second year of not buying anything new), bike, walk, BE AWARE...the list goes on. But, since it is impossible to have a zero carbon footprint, going carbon neutral by purchasing carbon offsets is a practical and affordable way to do something significant. Here's how it works: Since climate change is global, an emission reduction made elsewhere has the same positive effect as one made locally; so, if you add polluting emissions to the atmosphere, you can effectively subtract them by purchasing carbon offsets, which are simply credits for emission reductions achieved by projects such as wind farms, solar installations, energy efficiency projects, and reforestation. The wind farms may be in Canada, but the net effect is a reduction of CO2 into the atmosphere. There was never any truer example of One World - One Atmosphere - One People. We are in this together. By purchasing these credits you can apply them to your own emissions and reduce your net climate impact - or carbon footprint.**

Purchasing high quality carbon offsets also helps support the transition to a sustainable energy economy by providing an additional source of revenue to developers of renewable energy. While voluntary offset programs should not be seen as a substitute for comprehensive regulations (i.e., Kyoto Protocol), they are certainly a step in the right direction and something we can all do right now.

Our modern way of life results in the emissions of four principal greenhouse gases:

- **CO2 - carbon dioxide**
Transportation, building, heating and cooling, manufacturing of cement and other goods, deforestation
- **CH4 - methane**
Agriculture, natural gas distribution and landfills
- **N2O - nitrous oxide**
Fertilizer use and fossil fuel burning
- **Halocarbons - a group of gases containing fluorine, chlorine and bromine**
Chlorofluorocarbons (CFC-11 and CFC-12) were used extensively as refrigeration agents and in other industrial processes before their presence in the atmosphere was found to cause stratospheric ozone depletion. Their abundance is decreasing due to international regulations designed to protect the ozone layer.

Significant increases in all these gases have occurred in the Industrial era and all increases are attributable to human activities. So whether or not you accept the idea of global warming as a man-made situation, you cannot dispute the fact that our “carbon footprint” has gone off the charts...and will continue to do so, unless we take account of our personal carbon emissions and make continual efforts to reduce them whenever possible.

There are many things we can do as individuals: reduce, reuse, recycle, do without (check out “The Compact,” a

Resources

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
TerraPass
Carbonfund
David Suzuki Foundation

*Representative Lynn Woolsey

** To find your carbon footprint just go to terrapass.com where you can calculate your emissions or just google “carbon offsets” and choose from there.



Green Till the Very End

By Elisa Brooks

Hi neighbors! Have you ever driven by Fernwood on Tennessee Valley Road just above the Dipsea Café and wondered “what is Fernwood?” Have you heard about green burial and pondered what that really means?

I am a community outreach counselor at Fernwood which is located just across from the Tennessee Valley Community Center. I actually lost my six-year-old son, Nathaniel, some years back to leukemia, so death and dying are not strangers to me and my family. I am very comfortable with passing over and helping others.

Fernwood Forever is a “green cemetery” and mortuary. The owner Tyler Cassidy acquired Fernwood in 1998, and in his typical style of doing something extraordinary and different, he began changing the way that people think about burial, environmentalism and customs.

Of course, there is the old part of Fernwood, which has always been and always will be the oldest cemetery in the area. It

loved one buried below. You will find all realms of heritage, from Chinese scriptures to Hebrew Scriptures. There are all sorts of markers from very fancy marble headstones to handmade markers. The old part of Fernwood Cemetery is fascinating and filled with history; however, there is very little property left to be used in the Sausalito section.

Green burial is abundantly available and offers a totally new look on burial. In order to be buried in the “green cemetery” families understand and agree there will be no headstone or markers ever. The loved ones buried in the green areas have an unmarked grave or a stone which has their name, birthdate, or something like a poem as a memorial marker. The grave may also be marked with an indigenous tree that Fernwood will provide for a fee. No outside plants that may not be indigenous are allowed in the cemetery. This preserves the natural heritage of this land.

The body is interned into the earth in a shroud or pine box. There are no caskets used for green burial. The shroud is fabric such as silk or a Sari, some have even used Navajo blankets. The pine box can be purchased from a man that Fernwood works directly with and he does them mainly for Jewish burials. There are no nails used in these pine caskets and they are all natural, organic, no chemicals used. What this means is that the fabric, the pine box, along with the body will all decompose into the earth naturally. The termites will love the wood, the earthworms will feast, and the body will go back into the earth to benefit Mother Nature. I find this very rewarding to think we go back to the earth and make it better for others.

Some people think that cremation is better for the environment



Buddah at Fernwood.



Ancestral Forest, one of the many sections at Fernwood.

was known as the Sausalito Cemetery, and if you want to hike around and find some interesting history, you will find small, old, white wooden crosses scattered around. These were the grave sites of indigents that had no place to be buried so the county placed them in these modest gravesites.

The aspect of the old cemetery I like the best is the “kitschy” diversity. Back in the old days, folks could do what they wished at each gravesite. Some families erected huge stone markers as memorials, others put up palm trees, pine trees, decorated trees, and all sorts of personal mementos to remember the

but really if you think about the carbon footprint of cremation as opposed to green burial, there is no question—cremation puts exhaust into the environment along with mercury that might be found in the bodies of those cremated. Green burial actually feeds the environment. I am thinking green burial is more helpful to the environment.

Now comes the real benefit of green burial: It keeps open space open. When you hike, jog, or walk along Tennessee Valley Road or Fernwood, look around. The green burial is all open meadows. How many places can you look in Marin and find open space unless it is Golden Gate National Recreation Area, which Fernwood abuts? So in other words Fernwood is adding more open space. This is a piece of land that will be preserved and never have million dollar plus spec homes built. Wow! Open space, what an advantage.

At the time of a funeral Fernwood offers the families an assortment of natural wildflower seeds that have been harvested from wildflowers grown at the cemetery. Months later when folks return to the grave, indigenous wildflowers are there to bring new life to the gravesite. It keeps the nature of these meadows and burial sites preserved in their natural state.

This seems like a totally new concept and Fernwood is the only Green Cemetery in California. Can you believe that? The only cemetery of this sort. Honestly, this is nothing new. This is very old wisdom and tradition. Green burial is just now getting noticed but it was the only way that people were buried in this country until the civil war.

At the time of the civil war many were killed far away from their homes. They needed to be transported and then prepared for their funerals. Surgeons got together with funeral directors and came up with a way to embalm or preserve the bodies so they could be laid out for open casket types of funerals and viewings. The funeral business became big business. No more pine boxes, now there were caskets made



Fernwood is home to many animals including the bobcat and deer.



All graves are dug by hand.

of steel, then we needed casket liners in the earth so that the ground was stabilized and made nice so lawns could be made and manicured. All of the sudden, old wisdom and ways were old hat and hello big business. Things really changed. At Fernwood we are going back to the old ways and it is totally hip and happening in many new ways.

The next time you think about taking a hike or a walk, try going to Fernwood. You will be amazed at the animal habitat there. All this open space has made a very nice environment for the mountain lion, bobcat, hawks, and flocks of turkey, deer and coyote. Fernwood has even built little piles of wood habitat for the wood rat, another Marin animal that has been endangered. The animals flock to Fernwood because there are no builders building up the area. It is extremely peaceful. We would like to think that we are preserving the habitat for the animals now and in the future.

West Marin folks have always been known to be on the cutting edge of things and a bit more politically correct than most. Fernwood is for sure a great part of Marin history that we all have the opportunity to be a part of by choosing green burial. Ten years from now everyone will know about green burial, but the big question is will there be space available? People will be dying to get in! Those of us that are wise will get in now while there is still a space to get in!



Photographs courtesy of Fernwood

give a guess as to who these cute tots are



<-5



Turn to page 66 to find out if you guessed right!
Compiled and designed by Angie Banducci who is collecting more baby photos for future issues.
Send her your baby picture for the next *Beachcomber*!

Dear Harvey,

I thank you for all of the hard work you do as the water guy for Muir Beach. I am curious about something though. I am wondering if you have been adding things to the water to--how should I put this--increase the quantity of uh...well, babies. Yes, I will just come right out and say it: I think that you have spiked the water to help populate Muir Beach. Perhaps, and this may be more accurate, you have done this intentionally so that you can have one more reason to throw a party. Don't think for a second that this is lost on anyone who knows you. Or maybe it is because the Stagecoach may be more likely to stop here if we become more of a blip on the map instead of just a blip...Or could it be that you have done this to increase the value of houses? Supply and demand -- I am sure that you understand how that works. Perhaps you are planning on going into business with a diaper service. That would be helpful. Anyways, whatever elixirs you are adding to the supply have (literally) born results on all the major thoroughfares in the community making me deduce that your concoction has been added to all the tanks, or perhaps at the pump house itself. Please see the attached photos for your review of my findings.

And Harvey, WHAT IS IN THE WATER?!

Yours,

Alligoo

First Annual What Is In the Water Party?

Story and Photographs by Allison Pinto

Organized by Harvey Pearlman at the end of the summer in '07, the first annual What Is In the Water Party? was a lot of fun. There were babies and toddlers and big kids, and adults looking for any excuse to paint their faces. No detail was overlooked. Harvey brought in horses for rides around Santos Meadow, put up painting stations, a woodworking post, imported Naima, the enchanting storyteller from over the hill, had the fire truck come out,

and invited Avram Pearlman to do a solar energy display. There were all sorts of games and prizes like ball tosses, and hoola hoops, and kid/adult races. The sodas for kids of all ages and snacks were delicious. Aaah, to be a kid (or an immature adult) in Muir Beach. If you like this sort of thing, you are encouraged to drink the water in Muir Beach!



David Neiman takes a ride on Honey with Suzanne Wynn.



Bejamin Pinto Souza and his dad, Everaldo Cardoso de Souza, are #1 in the piggyback race.



Allison Pinto and Benjamin Pinto Souza (left), Cindy Cione and son Dylan Freebairn Smith, (center), and Lisa Eigsti and Eli Vincent-Pearlman compete in the three-legged race.



Naima, magic storyteller, captivates listeners.



Smiling Jade Latimore with painted face.



Fairgoers Angie Banducci, Jes Sward with Jackson, and Brad Eigsti.



Judy and Gigi Turkalj enjoying the party.



Stephen and Sasha Gillespie check out the fire truck.



Harvey will find any excuse to have his face painted! Face painter is Elisa Brooks.

Day of the Dead, November 2007

Story and Photographs by Allison Pinto

Muir Beachers and their guests convened for the annual Day of the Dead Gathering last November at the Muir Beach Community Center. This most intimate community gathering was presided over by Harvey Pearlman who attended to each detail of the evening with the help of several volunteers. Smells from the heart of our own kitchens filled the deck and the room as the party got underway with the potluck.

Fotos of loved ones, colorful memory boxes, altars with candles, trinkets and artwork displayed around the room with great care, ushered each of us into our own meditation. Old and young, and locals and visitors turned out to honor and remember our dear departed friends and loved ones and acknowledge certain commonalities we face together in life. This year for many Muir Beachers was an especially poignant one with the recent passing of Ellen Mettler, Ann Browning and other loved ones close to our hearts. Nina Vincent Pearlman as she does each year started the evening off with some simple words to set the tone. Over dinner and drinks, Elisa Brooks of Starbuck Drive, delivered a humorous and factual orientation about a more environmentally sustainable approach to interment--green burials. Judith Yamamoto, Marilyn Laatsch, Edna Rossenas and Harvey Pearlman sang "I Dreamed I Saw Joe Hill Last Night" in keeping with the Oaxacan tradition of the Day of the Dead which focuses more on the celebration of life and less on the mourning of its loss. Then, Joe Connor recited two poems, "Perhaps" about death and "Wanting" about romance, which carried us further in our contemplations that evening. Particularly moving was a song played by Steve Shaffer on saxophone in memory and in slow



In introducing the song "I dreamed I saw Joe Hill Last Night," Judith Yamamoto said, "It fits the occasion more than my too-somber poems since my experience of Day of the Dead in an Oaxaca graveyard was more about remembering with gusto and song and food and booze."



The 5th Annual Dia de los Muertos (Day of the Dead)

tribute to those gone before. "Danny Boy," arranged by him.

As always, Harvey or somebody scored a great band and we were played to by the versatile and unique musical group called "Space Debris." The dance floor filled up with children and adults moving to the beat of the music, at times singing along to old songs. This somehow seemed to make the ritual come full circle.

At the end of the evening, notes that we had written to the departed were sent skyward on the flames of the fire. One child asked another if they thought the person got the message already.

Perhaps it was the popping fire and dancing flames that were there to answer.



Charles Ridley and Yeshi Neumann imitating the smiles in the background.

2007 Halloween Party

Story and Photographs by Allison Pinto

The 2007 Halloween party was a great event as always. The kids were plied with scary stories, pizza, and juice and then sent trick or treating throughout the community. The party was well attended and enjoyed until Matt Silva, dressed as a computer programmer walked in and scared all the kids and adults out of the room....



Vincent-Pearlman cats and dawgs: Nina, Tiana, Eli, and Harvey



The scary Matt Silva



Queen Stella Eigsti and Prince Brad Eigsti

Muir Beachers Really Had Fun Last Year!

Story and Photographs by Elisa Brooks

The September Children's Fair

The Children's Fair was hosted by Harvey Pearlman and all the little children we know of attended. As Harvey said, "There are so many children now living at the beach!" The party took place on a beautiful late fall day at the BBQ grounds. We could not have asked for a nicer day.

The music was provided by Joy Perrin and Dennis McGee. Anyone that was fun got up and did the Hoakie Poakie. Hannah Eigsti was in fine form on the dance floor.



Natalie Brooks and Daniella Silva

There was great food provided by Harvey, Nina Vincent, and Eli Pearlman, who did all the work and made the party possible. Nina Vincent said, "Harvey did this party out of the kindness of his own heart and others pitched in!"



Musicians Dennis McGee and Joy Perrin entertain at the Children's Fair.

New Year's Eve

The New Year's Eve Party was hosted by Jim Repath of the Pelican Inn. If you missed this party, you really missed a good one. Jim brought in a great DJ with extreme lights and fog. Lisa Eigsti really put on the dog with the hoola-hoop like no other rave has seen before. Lots of dancing fun and a wonderful New Year's Eve toast like only Muir Beachers can do!

This was truly a warm and wonderful evening that lasted till dawn.

New Year's Day

Then on New Year's Day, Laurie and David Piel hosted the party. Over 200 people attended from all over the Bay Area with about 50 Muir Beachers. "It's all about the food," Laurie said. At the door a sign was posted: "All Yee Who Enter Here Abandon All Diets."

The party was really terrific. People were asked to come and bring a "signature dish." The food was out of this world and there was plenty of great food and laughs. (No one brought a camera to this party! Only great food.)



Host of the New Year's Eve Party, Bartender Jim Repath



John John Sward and Aran Collier



Paul Brunner



Skye Collier



Kathy Sward, Coleen Curry, and John Koene



Elisa Brooks and Jeff Ellis

Barbecue Planning Requires Big Community Involvement

By Anne Jeschke

Neighbors gathered together on Saturday, February 2, for the kickoff meeting for the 36th annual Muir Beach Memorial Day Barbecue to be held Sunday, May 25th, at the picnic grounds. The barbecue has been a big success in past years and earns substantial funds for the volunteer fire department. But each year it is necessary to review and improve operations in order to optimize the profits earned. And each year there are volunteers retiring from the barbecue and new volunteers who move in to replace them. The Kickoff Meeting deals with both these areas.

Michael Kaufman, as chair of the Fire Department Board, led the critique of last year's event and solicited ideas for improvement this year. This year Michael and Fire Chief John Sward paid tribute to Alex Naar. Alex is moving to Maryland soon, after years of working with the Muir Beach Fire Department, and providing very special expertise for our community. Alex has been committed to volunteer fire departments since his youth, and our community has been the recipient of his expertise.

An energetic discussion of ways to improve the barbecue took up much of the evening. Volunteers want to speed up cooking the chicken so the line doesn't get too long. This year on the Saturday workdays, the barbecue grill will be enlarged in order to turn out chicken faster.

Leftovers are a major problem. But attendance numbers are dependent on the weather. If it is warm and sunny you'll need lots more food than if it is cold and drizzly. There is no way to predict attendance at the barbecue, so ordering can be a big problem with no easy resolution.

The general community can assist with a number of needs for the coming fundraiser. Kathy Sward needs help now with taking inventory of shirts and other clothing. If you have a sense of style, you could help her not only with the inventory but also deciding what colors and styles to order for the coming year.

Chris Gove not only is supervising parking this year but has taken over the four Saturday work parties in preparation for the big day. His big need is for volunteers who can donate a few hours. If you like to pound nails, bring your hammer. If you like to rake debris, bring your rake. But Chris



Eric Groneman, Amadeo Banducci, and Graham Groneman confer before the BBQ Kickoff meeting.



Chatting before the meeting started, from left to right: Paul Jeschke, Dee Hayden, Anne Jeschke, Janice Kubota, Maury Ostroff, Kathy Sward (behind Maury), Gary Friedman, and Brent Smith.

says to come - meet your neighbors, enjoy some outside work, eat a great lunch.

Do you have contacts in the wine business? Jes Sward is looking for help soliciting wine donations to sell at the barbecue. Give him a call if you have ideas. This results in high profits for the fire department - but much less if the wine has to be purchased.

Each year the National Park Service imposes new requirements for the barbecue. In the past couple of years ID procedures and age checks for alcohol consumption have been tightened. It will be imperative this year that alcohol purchased at the barbecue remain in the picnic area, so that alcohol cannot be shared with minors in the parking lot.



Michael Kaufman, chair of the Muir Beach Volunteer Firemen's Association, serves himself at the potluck dinner following the meeting.



Alex Naar, who is taking a job as Director of Emergency Services for Charles Co. MD, talks to the group about his work with GGNRA and MBVFD. Clockwise: Graham Groneman, Jes Sward, Jackson Sward, Alex Naar, Amadeo Banducci, Eric Groneman, Joey Groneman, Dave Elliott, Bryce Browning (standing), Chris Gove, John John Sward, and Tayeko Kaufman.

Committee chairs stressed the need for new volunteers for this community fundraiser - both for work in preparation for the barbecue beginning now, and for work at the barbecue itself on Sunday, May 25th. This is a chance to meet neighbors, contribute to the community, and support our volunteer firefighters. Join in. Call any chair to volunteer or call me to learn where your help is most needed.

Help Needed to Transform Barbecue Site

By Anne Jeschke

Mark your calendar now! May 3rd, 10th, 17th, and 24th are the four big workdays down at the picnic grounds in preparation for the 36th annual Muir Beach Barbecue. Come for an hour, 2 hours, 4 hours, or whatever time you can give. The grounds are overgrown, the tables and benches in need of repair, and an extension to the grill must be built.

The first two Saturdays will deal with grounds clean up and construction. The last two will be focused on cleaning and fixing the ticket booths, sales sheds, and kitchen area. The transformation of the entire area over the course of four weekends is amazing. Come the first and last Saturday and you won't believe the changes.

Saturday workdays are not limited to those skilled in construction. There is something for literally everyone to do. Whether the work gets done will depend entirely on the

community volunteers that invest their time in these work parties.

Chris Gove has volunteered to organize Saturdays this year. He says that not only will you receive a wonderful lunch each workday but anyone who volunteers any time at a Saturday work party will be invited to the "night before the barbecue dinner and party." There are those who say this Saturday night get together is even better than the barbecue itself.

Have fun, help your community, make new friends, and eat well, all at the four Saturday work parties in preparation for the barbecue.

You don't have to sign up in advance. Just show up on the appropriate day.



Organization

Key to Successful Barbecue

By Anne Jeschke

The Muir Beach Barbecue is such a success because of the massive amounts of work that volunteers donate freely and enthusiastically. It is a fundraiser for our volunteer fire department, but along with that, it is a coming together of the community with a common cause. If you ever wanted to meet and get to know more of your neighbors, you want to be part of this event. Your help will be accepted with great pleasure.

After many years of barbeque success, the setup routine is pretty predictable. Some jobs require only one person, and other committees need 20 people or more. You can get a sense of the organization with the following chart. The starred committees are those that require more volunteers. Committee chairs are responsible for the set up and clean up of their area, as well as recruiting and scheduling volunteers to help them. Therefore, they are very grateful when you call ahead and volunteer to help. As an added incentive, each volunteer receives a ticket for a free meal and dessert or drink.

COMMITTEE	CHAIR
*WORK PARTIES	Chris Gove • 388-5116 cgove@yahoo.com
For the four Saturdays preceding the barbecue, booths, tables, and other structures are cleaned and repaired. Sometimes new items are built on the spot. There's always a need for more volunteers. The work is fueled by coffee in the morning and a lovely lunch midway through the day.	
*CLEAN-UP	Peter Wood • 388-0467
Assists with clean up from 10 AM until noon the day after the barbecue (Memorial Day itself). Peter needs 4-6 volunteers.	
*TICKET SALES	Greg Ketchum • 383-3524 drgreg@talentplanet.com
Sets up and staffs sales booths with morning and afternoon shifts. Greg may need an additional 2-6 volunteers this year.	
*WORK PARTY FOOD	Nina Vincent • 388-0380 ninavp@earthlink.net
Nina organizes the food for each of the four work parties. If you work one of the four Saturdays, you'll get morning coffee, and a complete lunch as well. Nina needs volunteers to prepare and deliver each of the four delicious lunches.	
*SHIRTS	Kathy Sward • 383-6762
Kathy works on the shirts and sells them all year. She and her helpers select styles for the coming year making sure the shirts are ordered and organized for the big day. The shirt booth needs lots of salespeople working in shifts, as well as a prep and cleanup crew for before and after the barbecue. This year Kathy needs help right now for inventory and ordering.	

MUIR BEACH VOLUNTEER FIREMEN'S ASSOCIATION	
COMMITTEE	CHAIR
*PARKING	Chris Gove • 388-5116 cgove@yahoo.com
Several shifts of volunteers work throughout the day collecting entrance fees and directing vehicle parking.	
*FOOD PREP	Erin Pinto • 383-4152
*FOOD SERVICE	rarearthca@earthlink.com
Food is the core of the barbecue, but it takes a lot of people to feed a lot of people. The day before the barbecue Erin needs a number of helpers to butter and wrap bread, prepare napkins and utensils, and set up the prep area. On the day of the barbecue Erin schedules several shifts of servers. Having sufficient volunteers is what keeps the food line moving, so this is a great place to volunteer.	
*BEER/WINE	Jes Sward • 381-8465
Jes gets the beer and wine, and will encourage anyone who can get some donated. He sets up the booth, schedules shifts of workers, and makes sure no one underage can buy alcohol. It's a busy booth and takes a lot of volunteers.	
*SECURITY GATE	Al Kile • alkile1@sbcglobal.net
Al schedules and supervises the volunteers who are at the entrance gates checking entry tickets and ID for drinking bracelets. There are several shifts throughout the day. This year volunteers must make sure no alcohol leaves the picnic area going into the parking lot.	
*TRASH/RECYCLING	Fleche Phoenix • 389-1303 velofleche@hotmail.com
Sets up and supervises the mountains of trash and recycling generated by the barbecue. Volunteers take shifts to remove full bags of trash, and replace them with clean bags.	
*RAFFLE TICKETS & PRIZES	Deb Allen • 383-1854 dallen@pacunion.com
Deb does a massive job. She collects huge numbers of prizes, organizes the tickets and disperses them to each mailbox. She collects the proceeds, conducts the drawing, and delivers the prizes. She even puts flyers in the windows of various MV businesses. Deb is very well organized, but needs help with details. Call her to see what help she needs.	
DECORATIONS	Muir Beach Garden Club • Joey Groneman 383-2898 • groneman@sbcglobal.net
The decorative banners and flowers are the work of the Garden Club.	
DESSERTS	Tayeko Kaufman • 388-5018
Green Gulch provides the facilities for the cooks' massive production of delicious desserts. The Muir Beach Garden Club provides the volunteers for desserts.	
NON-ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES	Arlene Robertson • 383-4725
Supervision and set up of non-alcoholic drinks.	
PRINTED MATERIAL	Bryce Browning • 383-1148 browning@usfca.edu
With his original Muir Beach dog design, Bryce has generated all the notices to the community, for the bulletin boards, design of tickets and more for the barbecue.	
WEB SITE	Julie Smith • 381-1532 • julie@polarisinteractive.com
Julie makes sure the web site has all the current barbecue information, and of course she takes event photos for the <i>Beachcomber</i> !	
COMMITTEE	CHAIR
FIELD WORK TOILETS	Jon Rauh • 388-7526 • jonrauh@aol.com
The overgrown fields must be mowed and civilized for the hordes of barbecue attendees. Jon does that. He also orders the porta-potties, making sure they are well-supplied throughout the barbecue, and seeing that they are picked up promptly afterward. Ask him if he needs help keeping them tidy and supplied throughout the day.	
ROAD SIGNS: PLACEMENT	Harvey Pearlman • 388-0380
Harvey puts out the plastic tape signs along the road leading to the barbecue and ropes off prohibited parking areas.	
SIGN PRODUCTION	Brad Eigsti • 380-0381
Brad makes and hangs all the signs along the road and at the picnic grounds.	
MUSIC	John John Sward • 383-4961
BARBECUE SAUCE	johnjohnmastermason@yahoo.com
John John books the band, makes sure they have what they need, and generally takes care of them. Almost equally important is the barbecue sauce that John John provides for the chicken.	
CHARCOAL BEANS	Ted Marshall • 381-1776 tedmarshall@sbcglobal.net
FIRST AID	
Ted assumes responsibility for all three of these, either doing the work himself, or recruiting and supervising qualified volunteers.	
CHICKEN ORDER AND PICK UP	Steve Shaffer • 389-1722
COOKING	Amadeo Banducci • 383-0113
These cooks love their jobs. Talk to Amadeo if you want in.	
PERMITS/SECURITY	Michael Kaufman • 388-5018
Michael assumes all responsibility for making sure we meet the legal requirements for the various governmental entities.	
PROPANE	Maury Ostroff • 381-9765
VEGGIE MEALS	maury.ostroff@earthlink.net
Maury handles the veggie meals, and propane for them, with no extra help.	
CASHIER	Sharon Mullin • 389-1776
Sharry receives the money, counts it, and gets it to the bank.	
VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR	Anne Jeschke • 388-2278 ajeschke@aol.com
Helps match volunteers with committees needing help. Anne supports committee chairs in various ways, and makes sure they have tickets for meals for their volunteers. Call her to find where you are most needed.	
ICE	Paul Jeschke • 388-2278
Picks up and delivers ice on the day of the barbecue.	
SUPPLIES	Rob Allen • 383-1854 rbtallen@flash.net
Rob gets lists of needed supplies from the various chairs. With help from Bob Hayden he purchases the supplies and delivers them to the barbecue site, then picks up and stores the leftovers after the event.	

MUIR BEACH VOLUNTEER FIREMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Are You Ready?

By Brent Smith

Get Ready Marin conducted a two-hour Household Disaster Preparedness seminar at the Community Center on the evening of January 15. Nearly thirty members of the community attended a presentation led by Alex Naar, GGNRA Fire Management Officer and member of both the MBVFD and one of the Directors of the Muir Beach Emergency Preparedness Committee.

The presentation was designed to help Muir Beach neighbors learn how to protect themselves and their families against all types of disasters — primarily fire, earthquake, tsunami and flood. The focus of Alex's presentation dealt with the ways each household can develop, practice and maintain the emergency plans/preparation that must be in place before, during and after a disaster. As Alex noted, "waiting until after a disaster strikes to develop a plan is too late...by then you're just another helpless victim out of options."

It is the goal of the Muir Beach Emergency Preparedness program to train at least one member from each household to cope with a variety of disasters that could impact our small community. To that end, a second Disaster Preparedness training seminar was scheduled for February 3 at Green Gulch's Wheelwright Center.

Community members unable to attend either of the two seminars but interested in attending a future Get Ready Marin Disaster Preparedness seminar should contact Michael Kaufman at michaelekaufman@yahoo.com for information.

Note: the seminars are free to the public.

Materials distributed — information that could save your life in an emergency




Twenty-eight members of the community attended the presentation

The two-hour seminar also presented remarkably pragmatic information on exactly how to assemble a disaster supplies kit that contains food, water, medical and a variety of other supplies in sufficient quantities for Muir Beach families to survive on their own resources until the roads are cleared, water and electricity are restored, communication systems are rebuilt and even food and drug retail operations are restocked.

As Michael Kaufman—a member of the Emergency Preparedness Committee—pointed out, Muir Beach is a very small and easily isolated community and inevitably it will be assigned a very low priority for outside help. For that reason alone Muir Beach community members must be prepared to "go it alone" for a much longer period of time than individuals living in East Marin. The idea was seconded by someone from the audience who noted it took FEMA 10 days to respond to small outlying communities in the Katrina disaster.



Alex Naar leading the Get Ready Marin Seminar at the Community Center



Michael Kaufman addressing questions at the January 15th presentation

Photographs by Julie Smith

Beachcomber Spotlight: Firefighter Graham Groneman

Fifth in a series of interviews with members of the MBVFD

By Linda Gibbs

I spoke with Graham Groneman after the early January harsh winter storms with hurricane-force winds and subsequent widespread power outages. As a professional firefighter with Marin County Fire Department, Graham had been busy answering many tree-down calls in Pt. Reyes. He explained that the primary mission of the county dept. when a tree goes down is to open up the road. “If we’re not able to get to you and you have a medical emergency or your house catches on fire, then we’re not doing our job. So our biggest priority is to open up the road both as a service to the public and also so we can get in.”

Were you one of those kids who wanted to be a fireman when they grew up?

I definitely was one of those kids.

Do you remember at what age?

I can’t put an actual age onto it, but I do remember when I was real young I had a fascination of fire engines and the fire dept. And when I was about fifteen or sixteen years old, some of the older volunteers out here actually got me kind of pumped up on when I turned eighteen joining the fire dept.

Who were they?

It was Mike Moore and Sutton Freebairn Smith. Sutton lives up in Gualala now. He and Mike Moore were a couple of the people that said, “When you’re—and Aran Collier—when you’re eighteen, you gotta sign up, we’ll get your gear and get you going.” And so from then on, it was assumed that when I turned eighteen I would be a volunteer and then it just went from there. Now I work for the county.

More about Marin County Fire in a minute. What was it about the Muir Beach Volunteer Fire Dept. that attracted you at such a young age?

The ideas of helping the community. A lot of stuff like that, but you can’t discount the fact it’s a big red fire truck and you get to go to fires. As any young person that’s probably the most attractive thing to the fire service, you know, the excitement, never knowing what you’re going to expect, always something different. But also helping the community, helping the people who come out here. It’s a challenge, every call you go on even if it’s routine medical aid, there’s always something that challenges you and you always learn something new, and you’re always doing something different. That’s one of the best things about the fire service.

You joined when you were eighteen, two years before your dad [Asst. Fire Chief Eric Groneman] joined?

Yes, that was in 1998.



Firefighter Graham Groneman

How does that process work in terms of being invited? How do you get to know the fire dept. members? Is there an internship? Are you a junior firefighter or is it just what you were saying, that they gave you the nod?

In the past there wasn’t a lot of accountability with positions and where you’re at. The main rule in the Muir Beach Volunteer Fire Dept. is the most senior person is the one who’s in charge, the person who’s been there the longest. They have the most experience and so on day-to-day calls or during training, it’s always the senior people who are running it or taking charge. That’s how the structure used to be. Now we tried to transition to have it okay for guys who have their Class B driver’s licenses and some extra training are the ones who will be responsible for pumping a fire when we have one. And then the other guys are going to be responsible for actually going with the hose and putting the fire out. Instead of grouping all the volunteers together, we’ve tried to separate it, but in the same time, trying to get everybody the best training possible so everyone can get to the highest—I don’t want to say level—but get the most training out of it and do everything. But some guys aren’t comfortable running the fire engine, operating it, pumping with it. That’s fine. There are others things that need to get done on an emergency scene. So we’ve separated it a little bit, maybe have people in different roles.

Has that just been recently?

In the last five years we’ve tried to really step up in our training, fire-wise, medical-wise, and rescue-wise.

A Class B license permits you to drive a fire truck?

The DMV requires you to have a commercial Class B or firefighter Class B license. It’s a step above the normal

passenger car license. It requires additional testing. You have to retake the entire DMV test but you have to do it in a fire engine, in the piece of equipment that you are going to be operating. You have to have more knowledge, it’s one of those training things. It takes more time. You need to understand the mechanical workings of that truck. It’s something that needs to be updated. If you have a commercial license, you have to get a physical every two years. It’s a commitment that these guys make to the department by getting that kind of stuff done. But there was a first part to that question.

I was asking how does the process work in terms of being invited to join the fire dept. In that two-year period when you were fifteen or sixteen, before you could become a member, what happened? Did you hang out at the firehouse? Or did you just wait until you were eighteen and then show up.

Before I actually was an official member, I went with the volunteers to Throckmorton Ridge Fire Station up on the mountain and participated in a First Responder course that the county put on for the guys out here. So I got some medical training.

How old were you?

I think I was seventeen. From there it was just support from the guys that I would see around here and that I knew and fished with.

Who were your fishing buddies?

Aaron Collier was one, Mike Moore, Sutton Freebairn Smith. Most of the volunteers out here also interact on a daily basis. A lot of these guys work together and there’s an interaction that goes on in this community that’s kind of unique. But to get involved there’s a whole bunch of different ways that people can get involved in the Muir Beach Fire Dept. You don’t have to be invited. There’s no formal process to get into the dept. It’s basically if you’re a fit. I believe that we have it written down somewhere in the rules that the volunteers vote on bringing the person in. But I don’t think there’s been a case where they’ve actually voted not to bring someone who had an interest in the dept. into the organization. So anyone who’s interested in it we encourage them to come down, come to one of our drills and take a look. And even if you’re not someone who really feels like you want to be part of an emergency call, responding in the middle of the night to medical aid and stuff like that, there’s still a lot of stuff that goes into the fire dept. that we need help with on a day-to-day basis. So there’s tons of ways to give back to the community through the volunteer firemen’s association or the fire department, which doesn’t directly include going to fires and driving the fire engines. But if that’s something that people are interested in, we are more than happy to help them get involved with us. We’ll give them opportunities to get training, medical training, fire training, whatever they want to do, we’re here to support the community.

That’s a wonderful attitude. So you don’t have to be a First

Responder or an EMT to be part of the fire department?

No, not at all. If you want to be one of the people who goes on calls and goes to medical aids, goes to fires, we require you to be minimum a First Responder. But if you want to be involved with the fire department, you don’t have to have any kind of training to help us with projects, help us with grant funding, help us with maintenance. There’s a lot of stuff that goes on behind the scenes that makes us effective when the call does come in, that needs to get done, and we’re always looking for help doing that. From there, hopefully it spurs peoples’ interest to go get that medical training, to be an actual on-call person that goes on calls. The training that goes into a First Responder course is pretty minor. Having this kind of basic medical knowledge, basic survival knowledge is something that is good for anybody, even if they don’t want to use it on medical calls.

Did you take the same route as Jesse Rudnick in first becoming a seasonal firefighter and then working your way into full time professional service with Marin County Fire?

Yes, I started as a seasonal, did four and a half or five years as a seasonal firefighter for them, eventually got hired as an entry level firefighter full time with the county. I just recently was promoted to fire engineer, which is like the fire apparatus engineer. We drive the fire engines, pump the fire engines. I’m currently assigned with the Tam Fire Crew as the fire crew foreman. We do vegetation management projects on the mountain as well as control burns. During summertime, during wildland fires, we’ll go out and



Graham Groneman is the fire crew foreman of the Tam Fire Crew of the Marin County Fire Dept.

actually put in hand line with hand tools. We have a crew of thirteen guys.

What is hand line?

If you have a wildfire that burns in the grass through the brush, before that fire can be called out and contained, what we like to do is put a line around the fire where we remove all the vegetation, any kind of grass or anything, and bring it down to mineral soil that won't burn. You're basically digging a trench or digging a line around this fire so as the perimeter of the fire is burning, it hits this line, it has nothing to burn so it can't spread any more.

Did you request that assignment?

Yes, actually I was involved in the creation of the crew when I was a seasonal, and so I got hired full time, worked as a firefighter driving an ambulance, working on an engine. I was promoted to engineer and I transitioned over to work on the crew. Because I kind of started it and came back to working with it.

You were one of those who created the crew?

Yes, actually Jesse Rudnick and myself. When we were both seasonals, we worked a lot with one of the county captains, Tim Walsh. And we've always enjoyed working, so we came up with this concept of doing project work around the county that needs to get done—to preplan for a big wildland fire. Fire Chief Ken Massucco gave us a blessing. And so we did it for the first year and it was very successful. We got some funding and did it the following year. And it was equally successful. That's about the time I got hired full time so I got taken out of that program, but Capt. Walsh kept going with it, got permanent funding from the County of Marin to go with this pilot program and it's been very successful. It's a group of eleven seasonal firefighters, myself, and Tim Walsh, the fire crew superintendent who runs the program.

That's quite enterprising to come up with the idea. What's an example of the hand crew going out on a project? Is this a winter activity or does it take place throughout the year?

It's basically a year-round activity. We start in June with our normal seasonal firefighter hiring. They go through all the basic seasonal firefighter training and then we start our project work. We go along these ridge lines where these fire roads run and we'll create fuel breaks on both sides of it in water district land, open space land, and even on some private land if it's a strategic place for a fuel break. And what this does as the fire burns up the hill, it will hit this area that we've cut or treated and it will slow down, or it will give us a chance to get in there, and with less intensity of the fire, put it out or stop it, or the aircraft will be more effective. So it gives us a place to make a stand if the fire starts in these areas where we are working. We go in and we'll cut the brush, the vegetation, the trees we'll limb them up and we'll make piles out of them. We'll do this all summer. But in between the project work, if a fire breaks in

Marin, we'll break away from the project work and respond to the fire. We've also gone out of Marin a few times. This year we went up to the Klamath National Forest up by the California-Oregon border, spent two weeks on some fires up there, went to Santa Clara where they had a large fire called the Lick fire, and then we actually were down in Southern California during the fire storm down there. So we're a resource that gets used not only in Marin but throughout the state.

Are you the only crew that goes on what John John calls mutual aid where you go up and down the state?

There's probably three different organizations that each fire agency will fall into. There's the federal firefighters, that will be the National Park Service or the National Forest Service, they manage all federal lands. There's the State, which is the California Dept. of Forestry and Fire Protection, which is Cal Fire. I'm sure you've heard of them, CDF [California Dept. of Forestry]. They manage all state lands. Then there's local government and that would be the City of Mill Valley, the Southern Marin Fire Protection District, San Francisco Fire Dept. Well, Marin County Fire Dept. is what's called a local government in the sense that we are a county fire agency, but we also are contracted by CDF to provide the fire protection within Marin County. So we're what's called a CDF contract county and so all state area—and actually much of the federal area in Marin—is our jurisdiction.

So you're saying Marin County Fire has a contract with CDF. Is that typical?

No. There's six contract counties in the state. There's five in Southern California and Marin County is the only one in Northern California. We're kind of a unique entity because the state relies on us to help them out more so than they do from local government fire depts. So Marin County's fire engines usually get used throughout the state much more frequently than a normal city fire dept.

Do you think you are part of CDF because of the vast amount of open space in Marin County?

No, because there's a lot of counties that have that same vast open space but they have CDF fire stations in those counties that protect it. One of the reasons that I think Marin County has stayed a contract county is because we provide—we're a small county—a really good service probably cheaper than if CDF came in here and did it themselves. We also do a good job of protecting the SRA (State Responsibility Area)—SRA is what CDF protects, it's what the Marin County Fire Dept. protects, it's unincorporated areas of the county. Marin County Fire Dept. is really unique and it's really good working with them.

That uniqueness is what drew you to Marin County Fire?

The reason I've always been interested in the county is when I started working here in Muir Beach as a volunteer my biggest interaction was with the county. And so for me that's what a fire dept. is—it's Marin County Fire Dept. And

so it was only natural for me to want to work for them. They have a really good entry-level program with their seasonal firefighter program, and I went straight into that and really liked it. And the fact that a seasonal firefighter, me and another guy and a captain could come up with a program and have the department support that and let us go with it is just basically set in my mind that this is where I want to work, I want to work for an organization like that. Every day I go to work I kind of have to tap myself. Am I really getting paid to do this? This is awesome.

Like your dad you grew up in Muir Beach. What was it like growing up here?

I don't think you could grow up anywhere better. It's the best of all worlds. You're out in the rural country setting but you have San Francisco that's thirty-five minutes away, one of the best cities in the world. I went to Tam High, I got the beach, I got the ocean, I got the mountains. You can't really say much more. I never left!

What did you do after high school?

Well, after I graduated from high school, I was working at the surf shop in Tam Junction with some of my friends that actually now own it. I worked there for a little while. And I actually got hired working for the National Park Service as a lifeguard at Ocean Beach in San Francisco. I spent two summers doing that before I got hired with the county as a seasonal. That's also part of emergency responder work—we do medical calls, we do ocean rescues. I started veering into that range of job opportunities. I didn't know at that point that I wanted to be a fireman. I loved being a volunteer out here in Muir, but I didn't know exactly if the fire department was where I wanted to go, until one day they had a fire over in Marin. I remember sitting on Ocean Beach watching this fire burn over in the Marin headlands and I was like “yep, I'm done. That's what I want to do.” That was one of the days I made the decision that, you know what, I want to be in the fire dept. And then the next summer I got hired with the county as a seasonal and worked my way up through there, and loved it ever since.

They are lucky to have you. John John considers you an Asst. Fire Chief. Do you agree with that?

No, I don't. I think of myself there to help these guys out as much as possible, to give them as much of the lessons that I learned working as a professional firefighter, to try to pass them on to the guys out here so they can do the best job they can do. If there's a call, I try and take the experiences that I've gained with the county and apply them out here. So whatever role that I fit into during calls that I think that I'll best help out the incident, I'll fill that in. And that might be the guy doing the medical assessment, or that might be the person just standing with the clipboard, or it might be the guy talking on the radio running the call. I don't just try to place myself in one role. I'll do whatever it takes. A lot of times, especially out in Muir Beach, we don't have that many calls for guys to get experience running stuff and leading

stuff. And so what I try and do is go into the emergency scene and kind of take a step back and say, “Okay, you feel comfortable doing the patient assessment? You go ahead and do it. I'll just stand by and if you miss something I'll throw it out there.” And that way, even though it's a real call, the guys are learning stuff. Or if someone needs some training on talking on the radio to our dispatch or kind of organizing the call, I'll kinda take a step back and just kinda prompt them in their ear. “Hey, you've got a helicopter coming in, we're probably not going to need it, think about canceling it.” I like to get the guys the experience of during this stuff because I'm not always here, Jesse's not always here, John John's not always here, and so we try to get as many people the most amount of training with different situations as we possibly can. So as an Asst. Fire Chief, I wouldn't consider myself that. I'm just there to do whatever is best for the call.

Your dad, Asst. Fire Chief Eric Groneman, told me the County Fire Chief said that the Muir Beach Fire Dept. has almost come up to the level of the professionals in terms of expertise and readiness. As a professional, you are in a unique position to assess the two groups—volunteer and professional. Would you agree with the chief's statement?

Sure. I think it's hard to say that guys as the volunteers who do this two Wednesdays a month and one Sunday a month and whatever calls fall in between are at the level of the guys who do it day in and day out, all year long, however many days a week. But I definitely think that the volunteers have come up to a level that is far above anything that has been out here before. I think it's only gotten better, our training, our level of equipment. Everything has gone up in the recent years. And partly because in the eyes of OSHA—which is the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, the people who basically administer what kind of training, what we can do—in the eyes of them there is no difference between



At the January 2007 CPR class sponsored by the MBVFD, instructor Graham Groneman discusses the life-saving technique with class participant Sigward Moser.


MUIR BEACH VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

volunteer and professional firemen. The fire is going to kill a person be it a professional fireman or a volunteer just as quickly. And so the training we need and the equipment that we need and the skills that we need, there is no difference in that. You need to be able to handle the emergency call in the same way and I think that our effectiveness has definitely come up quite a bit. I think we're as good as any volunteer organization can get.

Well, that's a comfort to us all.

Well, I hope so. There's a lot of people who put in a lot of time and a lot of effort keeping up that training and going and spending their Wednesdays and their Sunday down at the fire house training to make sure that when the call does come that they are prepared and they know how to use the equipment and they're ready to go. It's a vast amount of information. You have to know stuff about fires, car fires, structure fires, wildland fires, medical on babies, adults, older people; searches, rescues on the mountains, on the cliffs; water rescue; hazardous materials. The list goes on

and on, the different fields of knowledge that these guys need to have, at least know enough about to be able to respond and say, "All right, let's not make this problem any worse. Let's try and stop this problem from getting any worse." It's a whole vast range of topics and information that we cover.

What motivates you to work all day and night as a paid professional firefighter, and then during your time off, volunteer for the Muir Beach Volunteer Fire Department?
Well, I think part of it is the volunteers out here kind of got me my start, got me where I am. So I feel like I need to give something back to them and I enjoy it. I've never not enjoyed going to a drill. I've never not enjoyed helping the guys learn something new, or helping them be the most effective that they can be. So one, I enjoy it. But two, I really like giving back to an agency that helped me get my start, to get me where I am now. 

Photographs by Julie Smith



MBVFD Incident Log
Compiled by Paul Jeschke

- October 4, 4 pm**
Muir Woods
Female hiker injured ankle while hiking on Hillside Trail.
- October 22, 3:50 pm**
Muir Beach
Individual walked into Pelican Inn complaining of pain. Transported by private vehicle to hospital.
- October 25, 11:20 am**
Slide Ranch
Seven-year-old boy with severe spine injury transported to Marin General Hospital.
- October 30, 7:00 pm**
Muir Beach
Large unattended bonfire reported smoldering at south end of beach. Extinguished.
- December 17, 2:30 pm**
Muir Beach
Starbuck Drive resident complained of chest pain. Transported to Marin General Hospital.
- December 19, 11:45 pm**
Muir Beach
High voltage power lines down in front of fire station. Two burning lines in trees. Line on ground arcing.

- December 23, 5:20 pm**
Muir Beach
Vehicle accident Highway One at Pacific Way. Response cancelled.
- December 29, 9:15 pm**
Muir Beach
Sunset Way resident required medical assistance.
- January 2, 6:00 pm**
Muir Woods
Search for missing hiker. Found near Alice Eastwood Campground.
- January 4, 4:45 am**
Muir Beach
Cleared downed telephone wires off road on Pacific Way.
- January 4, 4:45 am**
Muir Woods
Moved tree off Franks Valley Road.
- January 4, 7:30 am**
Muir Beach
Tree down on hill near Zen Center.
- January 6, 2:50 pm**
Muir Woods
Two-year-old child hit head on display and suffered 1.5-inch laceration. Transported to Marin General Hospital.
- January 7, 7:00 pm**
Muir Beach
Sandbagged doorway on Shoreline due to flooding threat.

MBVFD logo by Bryce Browning

MUIR BEACH QUILTERS

The 35th Annual Quilters Holiday Arts Fair
By Pam Barlow



The '07 Arts Fair was a love fest of volunteerism, community collaboration and nonprofit donations that netted us more funding than in any prior year. We earned an all-time high of \$7202, and have so many people to thank for this success.

Kathy Sward was a tireless and efficient Fair Coordinator, a new title for the job she's always performed. Though it would seem impossible, her quilts were more beautiful than ever this year and sold like those proverbial hotcakes. Thank you Kathy!

For the first time ever, we shook up our protocol and extended more responsibility to QIC's (Quilters in Charge) and other volunteers, who managed their projects with more autonomy than in the past. This really streamlined the process, and contributed to the higher net and lower stress. In other words, it was more fun!

Senior Access, one of the recipients of our Vision Project donations, addressed and mailed five-hundred postcards to the friends of their organization, which no doubt increased our attendance.

It was a boisterous, cheerful crowd cruising through the Community Center the weekend of the 1st and 2nd of December. The place was transformed by the dozens of quilts hanging from the rafters and by the wealth of beautiful art emerging from every nook and cranny of the building. Scented candles, the gourmet buffet and Julie Smith's homemade goodies, not to mention the spiced cider, perfumed the room, adding a special magic to the revelries.

Ms. Katherine Broomhead of West Marin Green Cuisine was a huge boon to us, operating the food booth at her nonprofit rates, as well as securing donations of some of the ingredients. Her buffet was exceptionally delicious and it seemed everyone was talking about the great food. Thank you kt (Katherine), Peter, and Selene for your dozens of hours of labor and good cheer.

And thank you to the volunteers behind the buffet, a brand new job this year: (Laurie Piel, - two shifts! - Lonna Richmond, Lisa Eigsti, Tim Murray, Deborah Farkas, Chris Chater of Senior Access, Omi Yamamoto, Marilyn Laatsch, Elizabeth Benedict, Pam Barlow, and Judith Yamamoto. Special thanks to Bruce Barlow for two long days of bussing and dishwashing par excellence).

Ted Elliot generously donated six magnums of his premium TR Elliott 2005 Queste Russian River Valley Pinot Noir, which sold out almost immediately, and certainly before we'd had a chance to photograph it! Thank you Ted and Peggy! We always look forward to Steve Shaffer behind the bar, as well as his partner-in-pouring, Peter Lambert. With their infectious conviviality, these fellows send shoppers on their way in a rosy-cheeked, gift-purchasing mood.

Many thanks to Outi Onorato for being QIC of the Quilters Booth, and much gratitude to the dear folk who volunteered to work it. Outi deserves 'mad props' for her work on the posters and postcards, as well as for her creations: extraordinary handmade paper collages, felted bags and other treasures.

A very special high-five to Brenda Kohn for making the Café Q an especially inviting place this year. Thanks to Claire Johnston for her work on the publicity, the Junior Artisans, and Children's Ornaments. Her daughter, Lainie Johnston took wonderful photographs, many of which are included in the following pages, as are photos by Julie Smith and Pam Barlow. Many thanks to all our shutter bugs.

Kudos to Coleen Curry for her contributions to the t-shirt booth.

Judith Yamamoto, as always, was a strong presence and director from day one; thank you for your shifts in the food booth and Quilters booth and for your abiding calm in the midst of what often felt like rather charming chaos. And thank you for your amazing quilts and Prairie Dolls!

Thanks to Anna Tom for her cashiering "in-put," and to Linda Lotriet, Kathy Sward and others who helped the Quilters take on this aspect of the fair.

Erin Pinto - we'd have had no shoppers without your planning and execution of the Shuttle service, so many thanks to you and all your dedicated drivers! Angie and Sam Banducci took expert care of the little ones in a happy, well-attended Gingerbread Attic, and Allison Pinto and Linda Silva gave us another cute Children's Calendar. Thank you, ladies!

Our appreciation goes out to Tayeko Kauffman, who kept us well-fed with delicious Volunteer Work Party

MUIR BEACH QUILTERS

Luncheons, and to Will Koza of the Pelican Inn who delivered a huge pot of Guinness Beef Stew for the after-the-fair potluck.

We owe a special note of gratitude to Linda Gibbs, who, in her capacity as editor for the *Beachcomber*, encourages and allows us to talk about and publicize our projects. "La la la la la la lovely Linda..." (Anyone remember Wings?)

Finally, we couldn't have set it up without all the Quilters and the energy of supporters, John John Sward, Bruce Barlow, Larry Yamamoto, Terry Onorato, and an ever-present, always helpful and delightful Laurie Piel. We

couldn't possibly have included here all of the generous people who contributed, so please know we appreciate every single second of the time each one of you took to help us have another successful event.

We extend our deep gratitude to all the wonderful, talented artists whose work inspires the Holiday Arts Fair. Your energies and those of our volunteers and the people who attend every year, will contribute to many good causes through the Vision Project, and will result in our donations to capital improvements and events in the community as always.

Wishing you all love and a peaceful 2008.

Photographs by Lainie Johnston, Pam Barlow and Julie Smith



Ben Farnham, wading through the watercolors



Outi Onorato of the dreamy paper collages and felted wonders



Linda Gibbs stands out in a crowd of Beachcombers



Pati Hays; a beauty amidst her beautiful prints and ceramics



An always-charming Steve Shaffer peddles the hooch



Sharry Mullin & David Leivick 'handling' the cash



Mona Bourella; jewelry like crocheted light

MUIR BEACH QUILTERS



Catherine Damele & her crown jewels



Allison Pinto, Linda Lotriet & Peter Lambert on the quest for 'veritas'



Garden Club blooms, Joey Groneman, Arlene Robertson, Shirley Nygren & Tayeko Kaufman



Deb Allen, Linda Gibbs, Kathy Sward & Mike Moore, in a huddle



Lainie Johnston, following in the footsteps of Annie Leibovitz?



Extraordinary sculptress, Crystal Lockwood



Leslie Segedy can really light up a room



Artist and Ocean Rider Tom Soltesz with a gilt-y look



An all-time high in attendance!



Grande dame of the Café Q: Brenda Kohn

MUIR BEACH QUILTERS



Marie Porti; the jeweler's a gem



Sharon Virtue versus the goddess: it takes one to make one



California girls, Nina Vincent & Anna Tom



Multi-media artist, Pam Eichenbaum, tends the Quilters booth



The whacky, wonderful, work of MB artist, Craig Eichenbaum



Knot your average Junior Artisan, Thomas Allen



Marilyn Stiles' irresistible reptiles



Judith Yamamoto – The Butterfly quilt is SOLD!



Kathy Sward, (who had a record year) – "Times Two: Old Pieces, New Life" is SOLD!



Red delicious, Julie Smith

MUIR BEACH QUILTERS



A volunteer & a gentleman, Peter Lambert, mans the bar. Behind him hangs Ellen Mettler's quilt, made & given to her by the Quilters and other members of the community.



Matt & Daniella Silva, with anonymous teddy bear looking on



Linda Gibbs on Beachcomber duty, with Laurie Piel, taking a brief rest from her multi-shifts at the food booth, (note dish-towel shawl).



Buffet brigade: Peter Asmus, Lisa Eigsti holding daughter Stella, Selene Broomhead, Katherine Broomhead & Laurie Piel



Judith Yamamoto & Chris Chater of Senior Access, Vision Project Angels



Nina Vincent & daughter Tiana Vincent-Pearlman, Judy Turkalj & daughter Gigi Turkalj, Hannah Eigsti and Lucius Turkalj, have things all under control at the Quilters booth.



Maury Ostroff, Steve Shaffer, Eric Groneman, and Chris Chater of Senior Access (holding the dirty-dishes tub, bussing for the food booth), join forces at the round table, while Hannah Eigsti, in the foreground, contemplates the situation.



The "We Did It Again" potluck: on the left are Judith Yamamoto, Marilyn Laatsch, Joey & Eric Groneman, Michael Kaufman and Selene Broomhead. Right side: Linda Silva, Tiana Vincent-Pearlman & Nina Vincent, Harvey Pearlman, Peter Lambert, Ed Stiles and Tayeko Kaufman.



It's a ringer! Harvey Pearlman wreathed in good cheer.



The crimson crusaders, Bruce Barlow & John John Sward



THE VISION PROJECT

~ Adventures in the Land of Counterpane~

Part One

By Pam Barlow



The Muir Beach Quilters.

It seemed like I'd heard about them from the time we'd come over the winding road in the middle of a bone-rattling squall back in 2001, to settle into our newly rented house on Seacape. "Who were these mysterious Quilting people?" I'd wondered. Surely they couldn't be "quilters" in the sense of the old-timey quilting bees I'd heard about from my mother when I was a child. Her memories had conjured for me images of kindly crones; sedate, pale ladies in flowered silk dresses with their wisps of white hair drawn up primly in buns. I'd pictured them sitting in a circle, needle and thread in hand, working in intense silence on a voluminous cloth stretched between them.

Having survived the storm and the torturous cacophony of six felines, caterwauling for the fourteen hours it had taken us to tow our loaded horse-trailer here from Southern California, we'd been too exhausted and busy unpacking to make the Fair that first year. But I'd seen the signs and heard the revelries and my curiosity had been further piqued. Bruce and I had nervously ventured into the New Year's Eve festivities at the Community Center with some friends up from L.A., but didn't know anyone, and no one knew us. We'd timidly danced to a few songs, then had trod off up the cliff to our house next door. How strange and out of place we must have seemed, and we had felt like the strangers we were. But I remember thinking that there had probably been a Quilter or two there that night...

From those tentative beginnings here, I began to get out and about a little more and soon discovered that the Muir Beach Quilters could not have been more different than I'd naively imagined them. Long after I'd become a member of the group, showing up on Wednesday

afternoons with my random contributions to the communal meal and various experimental art projects, when I'd learned the members' names and had begun to get to know them personally, I still hadn't quite understood the nature of this beast as an organization. So much was always getting done, decisions made as if by magic, yet there never seemed to be a leader, or person "in charge," or a board of directors or anything of the kind. Just an assortment of women friends with a wide range of interests who met once a week to sew and break bread, drink wine and occasionally put our heads together to try to solve the problems of the world. How I looked forward to my Wednesdays with the ladies. I was in awe of the generosity and equanimity they showed to all by giving so much of their time, talent and energy to the weaving of community. But I still had questions...

I'd been surprised when Coleen Curry had first invited me to come to a Quilters meeting, as I'd told her then that I could no more sew than fly and that hasn't changed, despite some fine quilters' best efforts. But she'd assured me that the ability to sew a quilt was not the primary focus of The Quilters. For, while the women who comprised the group were all artists of some variety - quilter, painter, poet, author, sculptor, weaver, knitter, collage artist, found-article-artist, musician, bookbinder, felter - the group's closeness had more to do with compatible philosophies of life and art, and, perhaps most importantly, a shared joy in the fellowship of women.

I cherished these rituals of art and friendship that had begun decades before I stumbled upon their Land of Counterpane. The Quilters had made a promise to one another, elucidated in the original mission statement, to provide a safe space for each other, a protected environment to create and engage, to tend and befriend.

To me, this was the most impressive aspect of the group. We pledged to care for everyone, equally, and, in the context of our meetings, to protect one another, and this, as far as I could tell, was the only thing one could even remotely consider a rule.

As you may know, counterpane is an antiquated word for quilt. When I was a little girl, my grandmother gave me Robert Louis Stevenson's "A Child's Garden of Verses," and I fell in love with his sweet poems that related so eloquently the feelings of wonder and blissful safety of childhood. "The Land of Counterpane" is a verse describing times in the author's childhood that he'd spent abed, under his quilt. Entranced by its rich colors and hypnotic patterns, it'd seemed to him to be a place of magical powers he could use to manifest what ever he'd imagined: rolling, tree-covered hills, seas peppered with fleets of boats and cities filled with tiny people. Most of all, it was a place of complete innocence and impenetrable safety.

Not only were there no actual rules in my newly discovered adult Land of Counterpane, the Quilters seemed to make no demands of anyone. But again, tasks were carried out faithfully, communicated as if by telepathy. Weekly meetings, donations to the luncheons, participation in field trips, creation of art, working the Holiday Arts Fair - nothing was mandatory. But volunteers would inevitably appear to take up the slack when a project was too much for the group to accomplish alone. By and large, things ran smoothly. And despite, (or because of), the lack of rules and regulations, this group had, by force of good will, been able to contribute to capital improvements, community activities, and the annual production of a large fundraiser, The Holiday Arts Fair.

Then along came Two-Thousand-Seven, and, well, it was one heck of a year. The community lost dear friends like Ann Browning and our Quilter and philanthropist extraordinaire, dear Ellen Mettler. Both were inspirational people who seemed to live always in a spirit of giving. In hindsight now, I think the tragedy of Ellen's approaching passing had gotten us all ruminating, deep on some subconscious level, about the state of the world, and about just what The Quilters could do to become agents of giving too.

A series of conversations began after the '06 fair, and they heated up very quickly. The fact that there are so many people in need in the world was a subject that, having been raised, was like a genie that was not about to go back in its bottle. Yet the idea to donate some of our funds to causes outside the immediate neighborhood - well, it was revolutionary. And it was rattling a lot of peoples' cages. Everyone seemed to have questions

then, and there were no easy answers.

While The Quilters had been enjoying its Wednesday lunches and camaraderie, and sewing many beautiful quilts and producing successful Arts Fairs, as well as raising families, and performing all the other tasks life puts to us, the world had been changing, radically and rapidly.

For so many reasons, not the least of which was the Internet, the borders that we had been used to observing had melted away, and we now found ourselves citizens of a global society. The population had been exploding. Our country and others had been waging wars. Generations of people had been aging and there was no infrastructure to care for the eldest and the weakest. There were countries that hadn't existed a decade ago, and more coming into industrialized nationhood all the time. AIDS had been an epidemic for over twenty-five years. The issue of immigration had been enflamed to tragedy for many families. There were women and children and men here in Marin County who were homeless and hungry. Our planet was in danger due to global warming from car emissions and air travel. Women and children in Africa and other so-called third-world countries were being raped, mutilated and murdered, victims of barbaric cultural systems, civil wars, or a system of enslavement to the still pervasive international sex trade industry. Every day seemed to bring news of another genocide. Closer to home, our own standards of education were in decline, and our healthcare and insurance costs were through the ceiling.

What could we do about any of it?!

This was the question we'd been asking when one day last February, our poet laureate, Judith Yamamoto casually mentioned the idea of a Vision Project. That name had charms that soothed the savage breast. Although we debated for months longer, the fact that we had a name now - a name that from its first mention resonated with all present - well, it made it real. It became like a container that held all of our ideas on the subject, pro and con, everything we had been passionately debating for months. Sometimes it seemed like it overflowed and sometimes it felt like it would implode from the pressure of so many conflicting ideas. But it held fast. It held our confusion and our excitement and our frustration and our love. Our heart-child wouldn't actually be born for another nine months, but it had been conceived. We wanted to be contributors to the global society, we wanted to make a difference in our world, and this is how we were going to do it, through the Vision Project.

MUIR BEACH QUILTERS

The going was rough, but here and there the road straightened out and we picked up a tail wind and before too long, we were really rolling along with our little ‘Vision Project that could.’ Once we had answered the big questions, the details seemed simple. We agreed immediately on the areas in which it seemed most vital to contribute: Women & Children, Elder Care, and The Environment.

Before long, we established a sub-committee to really get down to details. Judith, Kathy and I volunteered for duty, and we were off and - well, I was going to say running, but that would just be a lie. So I’ll just say we were off at our usual pace. But by Jove, we were off!

I was asked to do the research on the nonprofits in the county, of which there are close to two thousand. The fact that the Marin Community Foundation had made major changes in its funding priorities actually helped us get started. They were redistributing their funds, tightening up on some of the older nonprofits that depended on them, and offering funds to seed projects, in an effort to cut down on what they described as the problem of redundancy of services amongst the existing organizations. They were interested to hear about groups like ours who had fundraisers in place.

Officials there recommended I contact Angela Boyle, Executive Assistant for the Center for Volunteer and Nonprofit Leadership, which I did. She listened patiently as I described our organization, the funds we intended to donate, and the kinds of causes we hoped to endow, and very quickly responded with a list of established nonprofits that I could investigate further. This really streamlined the labor, and the rest was surfing the net and making phone calls. That was an adventure and a pleasure. It doesn’t take long to find out who is passionate about their work, and there are many passionate people in the nonprofit field. Really dedicated, socially conscious folk. And these were the ones we wanted to give our money to, because we knew they’d really get something done with it.

In the area of Women and Children, we agreed to make our donation in Ellen’s memory. The book for her Celebration of Life listed an organization called “Drawbridge, An Arts Program for Homeless Children.” The minute we saw that, we knew that would be our first endowment. We were still benefiting from Ellen’s generosity and guidance.

By September, I was ready to present my recommendations to my fellow committee members. It was a hectic time. We were jurying for the fair, there was a *Beachcomber*

deadline rapidly approaching and Judith and Kathy were both exhibiting their work at the Fall Arts Festival in Mill Valley. Nevertheless, on September 12, 2007, we unanimously agreed to the final line-up of nonprofits that would be the first beneficiaries of our Vision Project.

For the year 2007, The Muir Beach Quilters Vision Project would be donating \$1,000 each to Senior Access, Marin Organic, and in Memory of Ellen Mettler, to Drawbridge.

We were ecstatic! It had taken the full nine months, but this baby was finally in the world, healthy, with all its fingers and toes.

All that was left was to give the actual donations. On October 17th, we went up to Pt. Reyes for our meeting with Sheila Foster and the other great people at Marin Organic. They were gracious and appreciative and escorted us on a tour of one of their members’ organic farms. On Halloween, we met with Gloria Simoneaux of Drawbridge and Chris Chater at Senior Access, which we did, of course, in costume. (What had I once imagined about frail and serious women with buns, huddled silently over their quilt?!) Our three donations in place at last, The Muir Beach Quilters Vision Project was a full-fledged philanthropic entity. After months of debate and research, it was a wonderful feeling to know those funds were in the hands of people who would put them to good use.

The story of our experiences with these three great organizations, the exceptional people involved and the good work they do, not to mention our trip to the organic farm, is too lengthy to include in this issue. A full run down complete with photos will appear in the next *Beachcomber*. But I have to mention that the tall, blond and beautiful Ms. Chris Chater of Senior Access, not only did some seasonal shopping at our Holiday Arts Fair, but she worked a full shift in the food booth! Now that’s dedication. (See Fair Wrap Up for photos.)

Incidentally, soon after we gave our donation to Chris Chater, she called to tell us that when the Mt. Tam Quilt Guild heard of our gift, they sat down and stitched up twenty lap quilts for the elderly people who spend their days at Senior Access. Chris just wanted to point out to us what she’s seen, working in the nonprofit field, that often a sort of chain reaction occurs. One act of giving frequently engenders another. This story inspired us to begin confirming our donations for 2008.

I’d found the answer to my long-ago question, “Who are these mysterious quilting people?” And because of

MUIR BEACH QUILTERS

the Vision Project, the answer is a little different today than it would have been then. But we remain true to our original Mission Statement; every Wednesday afternoon there is a safe space for women to talk and sew and tell stories about our lives, the good and the bad. We are still involved in capital improvements and hope to see our shed project realized in the near future. We will be sponsoring activities and taking field trips, sewing raffle quilts and making art.

And through the Vision Project, we follow the example of Ellen Mettler and others who saw themselves as connected to the great global society we’re living in, where there is a vast unknown of need to be tended.

Through the work of the exceptional people of Drawbridge, Senior Access and Marin Organic, and everyone who supports the Quilters, the community of Muir Beach has made that connection too. Thank you all for your energy and support. We couldn’t have done it without you. Please do join us of a Wednesday, in the “...dale and plain, The pleasant land of counterpane.” (Robert Louis Stevenson)



Chris Chater, our volunteer from Senior Access, Pam Barlow, Judith Yamamoto and Kathy Sward proclaim: Muir Beach Quilters Vision Project donates to Senior Access!

Photograph by Bruce Barlow

Notes From Greater Muir Beach Neighbors:
Progress on Muir Beach Transit
& the Big Lagoon Project

By Erin Pinto

Muir Beach Transit

After losing our West Marin Stagecoach bus service last spring it appears that we are about to get a new dial-a-ride service for Muir Beach, Green Gulch and Slide Ranch with stops over the hill at Tam High, Tam Junction, Manzanita Parking Lot, and Marin City.

We are grateful to Steve Kinsey and the folks at Marin Transit for their efforts to restore public transit to our community.

The results of the ridership survey indicated that most are in favor of transit, but probably won't use it. Those who are interested in riding have hours that vary widely and are far beyond the limited availability of this service. A proposed schedule was established with a couple of primary goals in mind - 1) at least partially restore student and commuter service, and 2) provide weekend service for residents and visitors (which has potential for high ridership).

The proposed schedule is:

Wed - Fri	6:00 am - 8:00 am / 4:00 pm - 6:00 pm
Saturdays	8:00 am - 5:00 pm
Sundays	8:00 am - 5:00 pm

This proposal was circulated with a request for feedback. We received little response, but comments included a request for 5 day a week (morning and afternoon) student service and a request for mid-day service during the week.

It was difficult to identify a significant ridership block at mid-day during the week and it would have come at the expense of something else. Student ridership is an important need, but the number of students is low and it seems fair to spread the service to other times (e.g., weekends) so others may also benefit. If we can continue this service beyond the initial contract period (July 2008), hopefully we can establish mid-day service during the week for summertime.

A public hearing is set for February 25th to consider adopting the contract for service. The service could begin as soon as March 1st, 2008. The contractor (Whistlestop Wheels) will provide a Prius for trips of four people or less

and a van for larger groups or those in wheelchairs. The cost to ride the service will be the same as the Stage - \$2 for adults, \$1 for students and seniors.

We are a very small community to be supporting such a service. It would be easier if we had the Stage service back so we could pool our demand with other larger communities. Maybe the Stage will come back some day, but in the mean time, we need to try to make this service viable. We will be sending out more information before the service starts, but please think about how you can use this service and encourage others (visitors, employees, etc.) to use it. If you hike or bike, you can use the Muir Beach service one way and use the Stage to or from Three Corners or Four Corners the other way.

Big Lagoon Restoration Project

The National Park Service held a meeting on January 22, 2008, to review the Final Environmental Document (FEIS/EIR). The "improved creek" alternative is still preferred over the lagoon alternatives - good ecological and flood benefits with less impact to existing vegetation and less soil removal (all of which is to be disposed at Amadeo's and on the Diaz Ridge trail restoration).

The parking lot will shift orientation to be parallel to Pacific Way in order to increase the floodplain between the parking lot and the creek. The entrance will move to the east. It will continue to hold the same number of vehicles (approximately 175) and will include some landscaping.

The new causeway (bridge) was lengthened to 250 ft in order to accommodate up to a 100-year storm. This is an improvement for the creek in the long-term and for those living in the flood plain upstream of the bridge. The salmon need all the help they can get, not one has been spotted in Muir Woods yet and spawning season is nearly over.

The Park Service and the County continue to include a wide pedestrian access on the causeway, resulting in a much wider roadway than currently exists. The maximum width of the new causeway has been reduced to 2.7 freeway lanes (32 feet). This may be reduced further during design, but the County has expressed a desire to provide for two-way wheel chair access on the pedestrian path from Shoreline Highway to the beach.

This follows the Park Service's plan that is currently in the works to create two large (approximately 50 foot long) bus stops at Muir Beach on Shoreline Highway for the Muir Woods tourist shuttle to stop on each side of the road every 20 minutes. This intensification of use of this intersection is out of scale with the rural character of the area and should be stopped. Instead, they should reinstate and enhance the rural Stage bus service.

District Manager's Report

By Maury Ostroff



Maury Ostroff, the new CSD District Manager

First order of business is to announce that I have agreed to serve as District Manager for the Muir Beach Community Services District. Accordingly, I had to resign my position on the Board of Directors. Leighton Hills has agreed to stay on as an employee of the District in a technical advisory capacity on our water system. Harvey Pearlman continues as the Water Operations manager.

Since I have taken over as district manager I have come to appreciate what Leighton Hills and Donovan MacFarlane have done for Muir Beach during their tenure in this position. It can be a thankless job with lots of paperwork and forms to file, but it can be rewarding as well.

The current board consists of Steve Shaffer, Peter Rudnick, Mary Daniel Hobson, and Sheré Stoddard. It is anticipated that the slot vacated by my resignation will be filled by an appointee by the time this article appears. Steve Shaffer is now President of the Board. Bear in mind that the "presidency" of the CSD Board is established by a rotation schedule, with terms lasting one year. Board members have the option of giving up their turn as President. Note that the only responsibility of the President is to run the monthly meetings, and take the lead in coordinating the Agenda items with the rest of the Board and the District Manager. The President of the Board has no other powers or authority different from any other board member.

In the wake of the big storm in January 2008, when Muir Beach was without electric power for nearly 4 days, some questions have arisen as to backup generators for our water supply. First, let me clarify that the combined storage capacity of our tanks is 250,000 gallons, which is at least a week's worth of consumption, and with prudent use would probably last much longer. In fact, our consumption during the power outage was about 12,000 gallons per day. (Remember, in the middle of a winter storm nobody is washing their car or irrigating their garden!)

The reason we don't have a backup generator is that it would be cost-prohibitive relative to its real need. Since we pump more than 400 vertical feet to the upper tank, we use 240 volt, three phase power, and a generator capable of providing that kind of electric power is exceedingly expensive, and would require routine maintenance and upkeep. (The small units sold for home use at Home Depot or Sears would not do the job.) Our contingency plan is that we have an arrangement with a water tender to haul water from the Muir Woods fire hydrant to the upper tank, a method we have used before when we had a pipe failure on the main line.

In the event of an earthquake, it's likely the tanks would fail

(big water tanks don't like to move much) so we would use a smaller pump and generator at the well to fill a portable tank of water right at the well site, and residents could come down with water cans, but this would only be implemented in an extreme case.

Later this year, we plan on reconfiguring the pumps so that we pump from the well site to the Lower Tank, and then use a smaller pump at the Lower Tank to fill the Upper Tank. In this plan, each pump would only have to push water to an elevation of an additional 200 feet. The reduced electrical demand may make a smaller generator feasible, and we will consider backup contingencies at that time.

Everyone should have received a copy of the new Muir Beach Community Directory. As the Directory is maintained and issued by the CSD, continue to send all changes and updates to me at directory@muirbeachcsd.com, as the online version will continue to be maintained. Having updated information is also helpful when it comes time to have a new version printed.

The best way to reach me regarding CSD business is via email at districtmanager@muirbeachcsd.com, or leave a phone message at (415) 388-7804. I'm going to try and keep my personal life separate from CSD business, but as you are all my neighbors I know the lines are inevitably going to get blurred.

As District Manager, I plan to contribute an article on CSD activities in each issue of the *Beachcomber* going forward. Between that and your active attendance at CSD meetings (hint hint) you should all be as informed as possible. Next meeting is March 26th, and hopefully by that time we shall have survived the rain, as I'm writing this article in the wake of our record 3"+ of rainfall on January 25th. The good side is that all this rain is replenishing our underground water supply, so there is no need to drink the kool-aid; our water is just fine.



Maury Ostroff points to the source of the Muir Beach water supply—down a 62-foot well near the BBQ site in Santos Meadows.

Photographs by Julie Smith

Community Center Update

By Laurie Piel

My husband David and I are ex-New Yorkers who spent the last 20 years living in Sausalito. We are now in the process of being re-programmed to the Muir Beach way of life, having moved here in August. Moving from New York (8 million people) to Sausalito (about 7,500) was quite a culture shock and now that we've landed in Muir Beach, Sausalito feels like a big city! We are constantly amazed and delighted by the community spirit here...and we dove right into it. Within two days of closing on our home, we were volunteers at the BBQ. And within six weeks of actually living here, I was asked to take over the booking of the Community Center. Since we knew that in Muir Beach we had found a "home" and not just a new house to live in...I said YES!

The community lost some beloved members last year. One of them was Ann Browning who had been booking the center for many years. She knew she would have to choose a successor and fortunately for me, my name came up. I had the pleasure of meeting with Ann and getting the benefit of her experience. As a new resident I am honored to have the baton passed to me. I hope to build on the work she has done and continue to move forward.

David and I are working together to make sure that our jewel of a center is well cared for. We have some ideas to buff it up and make it shine without losing the special "funky" feel of the community it serves.

The Community Center is the heart of our community. (We are so lucky to have one considering the size of our little town.) When the recent power failure lasted past the normal useful time of a freezer, an impromptu "freezer feast" was held by fire and candle light in the center. Many emptied their refrigerators and freezers and toiled over a hot BBQ grill to make fabulous chicken and carne asadas. And the phrase "pot luck" really took on special meaning. To see everyone gathered around one large makeshift table bathed in the heat and light of the big fireplace, was to witness what makes this town so special.

Being the new rental coordinator has allowed me the opportunity to meet many of you in a short time and has reinforced our first impression of how great this community is. It's why we moved here and we are grateful to be part of it.

We hope to keep everyone up on what is going on at the center with updates in the *Beachcomber*, and we are now posting a Community Center calendar on the bulletin board at the top of the steps as well as one inside.

Here are some of the things we have implemented since taking over in September:

We have created an AOL email account (booktheMBCC@aol.com) for the purpose of having one place where all requests

can be made for information, forms and current availability. That process allows us to have an "email trail" of all of the correspondence to make sure all of the requests of potential renters are met. We are attempting to do as much of the work online as possible. This saves paper and postage.

We have also reinstated the calendar on the CSD website (www.muirbeachcsd.com). As a rental goes from a tentative request through the application process, it is added to the calendar. The website is updated regularly courtesy of Maury Ostroff.

There have been changes in the rules and regulations over the years and we now have a separate rate sheet spelling out those rates as well as the facilities that exist in the center.

The biggest change in the last few years is the change in our insurance status with the county. As of 2004 the center is no longer covered by the CSD's liability insurance for anything other than a Muir Beach Community sanctioned function to which all Muir Beachers are invited. Examples of a Muir Beach community function would be The Day of the Dead Party or the Quilter's Fair. Therefore, we now require all renters to purchase a one million dollar Event Insurance policy naming the community center as "the 2nd insured" as well as filling out a form holding the MBCC harmless for any accidents or problems. These requirements are standard at The Stinson Beach, Tam Valley, and Point Reyes Station Community Centers as well as all others that we contacted. The insurance is inexpensive (about \$75 to \$125) and can be purchased from any insurance agent. Depending on your insurance provider, some renters can add a codicil to their existing homeowners policy at no charge. This is what David & I did when we had our own party at the center.

That's the update for now. More news in the next edition.



A warm and welcoming fire in the Community Center fireplace

Photograph by Julie Smith

Real Estate News

By Debra Allen, Realtor, Pacific Union



A Tahoe door, from Debra Allen's Doors and Houses collection. Photograph by Debra Allen

"Where are the lot lines? What's the square footage of the home? Can the home be made bigger? What direction is the home facing, and where exactly is the sun at different times of the day/year? Are the neighbors nice? Whose trees are those, and can the view be improved? What will happen here during a tsunami? What will happen when the ocean level rises? What's the crime rate? How many homes are owner occupied?" These are some of the questions that I get asked during my open houses at Muir Beach!

It's rare that a home in Marin sells with a recorded survey, but it would be one of the most helpful documents that a seller could provide before marketing the property (these can cost up to \$5,000.). Sellers shouldn't point out lot lines, shouldn't explain square footage or expansion rules and shouldn't say much of anything without an agent present (an agent who's taking notes). An agent needs to cite sources and disclaim. An agent is not allowed to visit any city or county offices and look in any files without the seller or buyer present. An agent isn't even supposed to use the following words when marketing: "All, award-winning, Jacuzzi, bachelor pad, child-proof, completely, couples, custom, empty nesters, exclusive, expert, family, fully, handicapped, high-end, ideal, move-in condition, nice, new, panoramic views, perfectly, private, quiet, safe, secure, student, thoroughly, totally, traditional setting, walking distance..." Agents are trained to know what the ever-changing selling limitations are. Sellers who try to "help" by marketing their own properties can actually make things worse for their agents and themselves.

But sellers do have important jobs which can help their agents greatly: Besides getting a survey if you're able, have the home PROFESSIONALLY cleaned (including windows, fireplaces and carpets, decks power-washed and stained, etc.). Have ALL debris removed (tree branches in the yard, anything under the home including all lumber that you thought you might use someday for an unknown project), firewood and ANYTHING that a tenant or prior owner has left in the yard or in storage areas. Ask neighbors to help by tidying up their yards, removing dog waste and controlling barking. Thin out and top your view trees, BY LICENSED ARBORISTS. Remove any plants and dirt touching the home, and remove all ivy from trees. Keep guest parking areas free for potential buyers' cars. Have tenants move out before marketing the homes for sale. Complete the disclosure package at the time of the listing, so your agent can give them to buyers before they make offers, along with the necessary pre-sale inspections (ask your agent). Allow the home to be shown at any time. Listen carefully to your agent's feedback after every showing; make any adjustments.

For a printable pamphlet on defensible space around our homes, go to www.FireSafeMarin.org. For information on rats, you can call the Marin/Sonoma Mosquito and Vector Control Dist. (800) 231-3236, for the pamphlet called "What You Can Do to Prevent and Control Rats."

Some buyers are still nervous right now due to the foreclosure/economy news that they are being bombarded with. Preparing your homes will not only keep the buyers a bit calmer but should attract higher prices in a shorter period!

Enjoy Muir Beach, Debra Allen
(415) 380-6137 dallen@pacunion.com www.deballen.com

(Have a look at the events page on www.muirbeach.com and remember to check the guest book page at www.muirbeach.com for your old friends who want to keep in touch.)



Redwood Log
*Musings from Mia Monroe, Site Supervisor
Muir Woods National Monument*

Muir Woods Centennial Celebration...winter began this year not only clear and cold but also as the symbolic kickoff for a year of Centennial celebrations. The Winter Solstice brought 600 people together on the shortest day among the tallest trees to honor the cycle of life, walk the luminaria-lit trails and celebrate in the tradition of the season through song and story, Morris dancers and wreath making. But we also paused in silence, thought about the hard work and inspiration of those who sought protection for Redwood Canyon when threatened by a dam and logging 100 years earlier.

Storms closed the monument for days in early January but still we woke to clear skies on the park’s birthday, January 9, to welcome hundreds of well-wishers here to celebrate 100 years as a national monument...one of our nation’s earliest, the first donated by an individual and the first near an urban area. The significance of Muir Woods as a seminal moment in conservation history and as a place where you can walk in the same setting as the legendary figures of William Kent, John Muir, and Gifford Pinchot was recognized that day by designation as a site on the Historic Register.

The celebrations will continue all year with the re-establishment of rhododendrons on the forest floor, an effort to learn just how tall the park’s redwoods are, the QUEST (a poetic treasure hunt for youth), a book of photographs, hybrid vehicles for this year’s summer shuttle, designation of Cathedral Grove as a Quiet Place and much more...check the park’s website regularly! Those from the place, Muir Beach, that shares the honor of our namesake, Muir, are especially welcome!



Cathedral Grove has been designated as a Quiet Place in Muir Woods.

Other events to look forward to are a Celebration of Trees on April 21, International Migratory Bird Day, May 10 and Summer Solstice at the beach on June 21.

Classes will be offered this spring on weed identification. The native plant nursery welcomes volunteers on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Volunteers are needed to give talks, welcome school groups, and rove the trails. Call Tim at 388-2596 for info.

We hope you’ll keep in touch with Big Lagoon planning and the park’s General Management Planning...public input and involvement crucial (check out the planning links on the park’s website...www.nps.gov/goga).

Spring is a time of green, green, and more green in the redwood forest...look for unfurling ferns, maple and alder leafing out, moss bright and soft as well as the delicate color of wildflowers on the forest floor. Also, a good time to visit when there’s a chance to have the woods to yourself, hear the birdsong and rush of the creek.

Hope to see you on the trails!

Mia Monroe has been a ranger at Muir Woods for over 25 years, currently as the Site Supervisor and liaison to the Redwood Creek Watershed. She is also part of the park’s spotted owl monitoring team, supervises visitor services in the Marin Headlands, and as volunteer works to protect monarch butterflies in the west.

Tips for Locals

- ☀ Visit early or late and get in free (fees collected 9 am - 4:30 pm).
- ☀ OR buy a very reasonable annual pass - \$20 admits you and your group.
- ☀ PLUS the funds support projects at Muir Beach and Muir Woods!
- ☀ AND you'll have the wonder of the forest all to yourself!

Photograph courtesy of National Park Service

Natural Curiosities
By Dave MacKenzie

Q: I have repeatedly seen a group of birds on Redwood Creek Trail/Frank Valley Road across from Banducci about the first sharp turn after the intersection with Hwy. 1. They are very shy, have a rapid dipping flight, about the same size as a robin or jay - and have white bellies and rufous-colored wings (underside) but appear gray and nondescript with a dove-like profile when they are rarely not flying away. I am usually running, not carrying binocs, so I have absolutely no idea what I am seeing, and can’t figure it out with Sibley. Any idea what these birds are? (from David Taylor - late November)

A: This took me a while to figure out, but the description is very good. Thanks for that! I visited the area and found a few Hermit Thrushes foraging in the brush for Catoneaster and Poison Oak berries. Thrushes love berries! Usually you will hear only a “chuck” or “chuck-chuck” call from deep in the shadows. These thrushes are a warm brown overall, but with strong rufous tones in the tail and the wings. Hermit Thrushes are lightly spotted underneath, but this is not always obvious at a distance. They are more likely to fly around in very low light; such as at sunrise or sunset. They are somewhat smaller than a Robin (also a thrush), with a similar shape, but almost never perch

on top of trees like Robins do. In the spring the Hermit Thrushes migrate to breed in the northern conifer forests, and they are replaced locally by a similar bird, the Swainson’s Thrush, which winters in Mexico. The Swainson’s is grayer, with some pale area in front of the eye. Swainson’s, as they begin the breeding season along Redwood Creek, give a wonderful flute-like song at sunrise which is a great sound to hear to start the day!

Q: Are the large birds flying past the Muir Beach Overlook eagles? (From several visitors to the Muir Beach Overlook).

A: Golden Eagles are seen occasionally in Muir Beach, but only about one per year, as they migrate down the coast, typically in October. We have only one recent record of a Bald Eagle in Muir Beach, so they are also rare here. Sometimes Ospreys are confused with Bald Eagles, bur their black and white patterning is quite different. In fact, the big dark bird commonly flying around Muir Beach is the Turkey Vulture, which has both a resident and migrant population. Turkey Vultures, with a close look, have a naked red head, so look quite different from any eagle. Also, the wings are two-toned (dark in front as seen from below), and they usually fly with a “dihedral” to the wings; i.e., slightly folded up, and fly with a rocking motion. Turkey Vultures are said to have a great sense of smell, and occasionally I have spooked one out of heavy brush where it found a dead animal - unlikely that it saw it from the air. Just think how “aromatic” the watershed might be if it weren’t for Turkey Vultures!



Turkey Vulture
Photograph by David MacKenzie

If you have a nature question, please e-mail me at davem@microsafe-systems.com or call me at work (415.389.1456) or at home (415.389.1558).



The Critter Report: Moving into Spring

By Dave MacKenzie

Every year seems different, yet the themes stay the same. This fall, the Cosco Busan oil spill in the bay provided special challenges for wintering birds such as Surf Scoters and Western (type) Grebes. However, as bad as the damage was, let's hope that the total number of Surf Scoters and Western Grebes harmed was only a relatively small number of the total wintering population in the bay. Time will tell. We have to keep in mind that the attrition of wildlife can be quite high even in natural disasters and still they may bounce back. Let's just hope the next spill won't be for a long time. Nevertheless, I won't forget an image of an oiled Scoter which obviously wasn't going to make it floating around Little Beach.

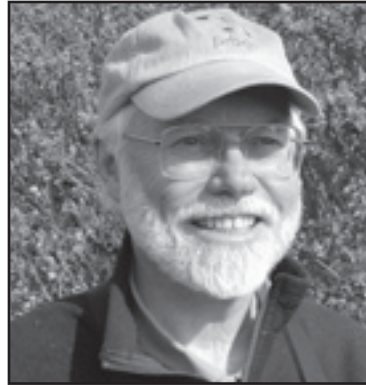
By the way, to show how tough some birds can be, PRBO reports a record bird flight documented by a satellite tracking collar: a Bar-Tailed Godwit (a large shorebird similar to our local Marbled Godwit) was recorded as traveling over 7,000 miles from Alaska to New Zealand non-stop. Wow! Anyone ever fly to Sydney? That's a long time in the air (without refreshments)!

Late rains also presented a challenge. As of late January, no Coho Salmon have been detected in Redwood Creek, which may indicate a real disaster for the fish this year. Possible causes may include flooding

problems three years ago (washing out eggs and fry), or perhaps the poor ocean feeding conditions (the krill have crashed for a couple of years now), or possibly even some effects of the oil spill. More data are needed.

There were several sightings of interest on the bird and mammal fronts. Jim White and I biked up to Coyote Ridge in late November and spotted a flying Short-Eared Owl right next to us as we had hoped. This moth-like owl shows up on Coyote Ridge or on the Sun Trail (above Muir Woods Road) most winters, but not consistently, so it is always exciting to find one.

Alex Johnston reported that a small Saw-Whet Owl slammed into his sliding glass door in mid-December, but survived and flew off. Alex and Charlotte got great looks at this beautiful little predator. Was it chasing prey (maybe a Rain Beetle?) or was it being chased (perhaps by a Great-Horned Owl?). Saw-Whets are in Muir Beach every winter, but rarely seen, usually only their incessant "toot-toot-toot-toot..." is heard. Just before Christmas I had a thrill after bike riding down the Coast View Trail when a Long-Eared Owl flew up off the ground and perched near Hwy 1 long enough for me to get a brief video. This was only the third recorded sighting in the Redwood Creek Watershed. Notice in the photo how the "ears" (actually just feathers) are very close together compared with those on the larger Great Horned Owl, which sometimes even bend out sideways. The Great Horned is the common owl we all hear almost every night around Muir Beach.



Dave MacKenzie has been contributing nature articles to the Beachcomber for 12 years, which is when he and his wife Bonnie moved to Muir Beach. Dave does engineering consulting from his home office, but also spends a lot of time searching the Redwood Creek Watershed for interesting critters. His unfulfilled desire is to see and photograph a mountain lion in the wild. At this point he has only seen tracks, kills, pets and photos. Help him out with timely reports and primed cell phone cameras!

Photograph by Bonnie MacKenzie



Saw-Whet Owl

In other owl news, the Audubon Christmas Bird Count group, including myself and Jim White, could not locate any Northern Spotted Owls around Muir Woods this year. They are obviously in the area, but are hard to find in the winter. Also quiet were the Barred Owls, which, having fledged two young in Muir Woods in 2007, are also undoubtedly still around. We did find Spotted Owls in Mill Valley, however, at a reliable site. We also had an exciting fly-by and then later good looks at a Screech Owl on Panoramic Drive about 6:30 AM. The small Screech Owl is bigger than the Saw-Whet, but not by much (8 ½ versus 8 inches long, and the Screech has ear tufts similar to the much larger Great-Horned). The Marin IJ reporter who wanted to cover the count declined to meet us at 4 AM at four corners in order to find owls, but did take some phone notes for his article.

There were various mammal reports also, the most exciting of which are always news of Mountain Lions. Coleen Curry spotted a large fast-moving cat on the lower Coast View trail last summer, a sighting which definitely changed the direction of her run. Then in early November Edna Rossenas reported a Mountain Lion in the same area. It was apparently spooked off of a kill which had attracted a number of Turkey Vultures. To round out these sightings, a Muir Woods visitor reported a Mountain Lion along the lower Deer Park fire road in early December. The only thing fishy about that sighting to me was that the cat supposedly stayed visible near the trail for about 20 minutes, which sounds more like a hunting Bobcat. But then unfortunately there was no detailed description or photos; although the cat allegedly had a "long tail," but apparently was seen without binoculars. A sadder report was from Bonnie of a car-killed Gray Fox near the intersection of Hwy 1 and Seacape. It was probably



Long-Eared Owl near Hwy 1

part of the family group that denned along Starbuck Drive last spring. Coyotes seemed to be regularly calling (singing?) around Muir Beach as usual, and I saw a few Bobcats, although I have not seen the one-eyed cat around my house in some time.

One critter which has been virtually absent this winter in Muir Beach is the Monarch Butterfly. Although cutting of trees above the Community Center may be part of the problem, it appears that there are few of the butterflies state-wide this year, perhaps due to temperature changes during their breeding season, loss of milkweed in the west, and/or destruction of over-wintering sites on the coast. More data are needed here also.

This year the NPS has set up a "Big Year" for all of the endangered species in the Golden Gate Recreation Area. The idea is not just to see the species, but also to do some activity which helps each of the species. The person who does best wins a prize! In our Redwood Creek Watershed and adjacent waters, the key endangered (or threatened) species are the Red-Legged Frog, the Central California Coast Coho Salmon, the Central California Coast Steelhead, the Marbled Murrelet, the Brown Pelican, the Humpback Whale (two sightings), the Southern Sea Otter (three sightings), and the Northern Spotted Owl. If you want more information on how to participate go to www.ggnrbigyear.org.

Now spring is basically here. So there is lots of migrating stuff (birds, whales, butterflies) to watch for. Remember that the best time to look for migrating Gray Whales and calves next to shore in Muir Beach is usually the last week in April, plus and minus a week or two. Also International Migratory Bird Day will be May 10 this year, with displays and events at Muir Woods and the Muir Beach parking lot including free shade-grown coffee and chocolate tasting, bird walks and bird-banding demonstrations. Mark your calendars!

Photographs by David Mackenzie



Can I Mention Something?

By Christian Riehl

Four and a half miles from Muir Beach, just over the hill in Tam Valley, is an oasis of love and compassion: SaveABunny. This organization is not—as one confused visitor thought—dedicated to protecting an endangered species. SaveABunny saves individual rabbits. SaveABunny is one of those places where the Scales of life measuring our humanity are tipped away from indifference, cruelty and sadness in favor of caring, kindness, and happiness.

SaveABunny rescues individual bunnies who would otherwise be put to death by one of the overcrowded animal control “pounds” around the Bay Area and Northern California. Rabbits rank third on the list of most often put to death by animal control facilities, right after dogs and cats. This is not just because rabbits breed like...well, rabbits, but almost always it's because of human causes: pet stores that sell unspayed/unneutered rabbits; people who buy rabbits for Easter or for a child or thinking it will be like a cute little stuffed animal and behave like ‘Thumper’; people who tire of the cleaning and care or who move away or whose lives change and so they simply decide their family member can be discarded. There are “strays” picked up off the street, having either been purposely dumped, or just a victim of ignorance and neglect when they were let outside where a rabbit can get disoriented and lost. Then there are the ones—way too many—who have been rescued from cruelty by Animal Cops. Sad things all, each by itself a heavy weight to balance

in those Scales. But enough of the sad part of the story, the end of the story stays the same. The work of SaveABunny tips the Scales far down on the side of good outcomes. Because of SaveABunny, we have six survivors—one from each of the aforementioned sad conditions—now living happily in our Muir Beach home right now. And man do we have fun.

We've had rabbits since 1992 when Mike and Connie Fletcher, who used to live down on Lagoon, gave us their pet black rabbit when their daughter went away to school. We had Blackie for a couple of years until he met an untimely death by way of a dog from Sunset who broke through the fence and into the outdoor hutch where Blackie would spend his days. Hearing Leslie's screams, John John and Harvey came to help, but it was too late. With our forever thanks, they did what I couldn't do and buried his torn remains in our yard. The grief passed, and we soon got another bunny, this time from a Mill Valley pet store. That rabbit was with us for over five years before dying quietly one morning. Again the grief passed, and we went to the pet store and this time got a bonded pair of rabbits, a brother and sister. One day the boy got sick and died within a day—something we could have prevented had we known better—and his mate was heartbroken. Even months later she was listless, lonely. She was lonely. So I did an Internet search to see if it was possible to bond her with a new mate, and by Yahoo luck found SaveABunny.



SaveABunny headquarters is at Rob and Marcy Schaaf's place in Tam Valley. Marcy is the Executive Director, assisted by a team of volunteers comprising about twenty regulars and many others who contribute time and resources as they can. The downstairs part of Rob & Marcy's place has been completely converted to serve as the main shelter for rescued rabbits. There are quite a few rabbits at the shelter—it's always full—and there we also depend upon “guesting” with foster volunteers around the Bay Area to handle the overflow.

SaveABunny does four things: 1) rescue rabbits from Bay Area animal control facilities (“ACCs”), especially those that are running out of time and would otherwise be killed when the general purpose ACCs get overcrowded; 2) give shelter, meaning to heal physical and emotional wounds, and to socialize rabbits with loving and caring humans so that they can begin to trust and accept love; 3) adopt rabbits into loving homes; and 4) educate people about these wonderful creatures, about how to care for them,



and to raise awareness and advocate for rabbits the same protections from cruelty that we give to our other pets such as dogs, cats, and horses.

About Rescue: Most of the rescued rabbits come from Marin Humane Society or San Francisco Animal Care & Control, but we regularly take in rabbits from as far away as Salinas and Sacramento. MHS and SFACC are excellent facilities, and it really isn't their fault when they get overwhelmed with more rabbits than they can house. No one working in an animal control or shelter facility likes killing animals, and all of them are underfunded, so we try hard to coordinate logistics with them and find creative ways to save as many bunnies as possible.

One notable thing is that SaveABunny willingly rescues “problem” rabbits—those that are sick, injured, aggressive or for some reason are thought to be unadoptable. Most of the time, these rabbits just need a safe place, a little care, some love and attention. Sometimes they need extensive veterinary care and a lot of time. It's risky taking in these bunnies because there's no assurance they will heal. Failures happen, but so do the miracles. One was Phoenix, whose story would be unbearable to know without also knowing he's now living happily at SaveABunny, right next to his girlfriend Melody [If you want, go to www.SaveABunny.org, and click on the box labeled “Phoenix” Story.]

About Shelter: The rabbits at the SaveABunny shelter—the downstairs of Rob & Marcy's—live in clean comfortable quarters. Keeping it that way is a massive job, performed every day, largely by volunteers. Every day the litter boxes are changed, towels and bedding changed & cleaned, cages and pens swept and vacuumed, water bottles filled, hay racks filled, rabbits swapped to the limited number of large xpens (an xpen is a portable wire enclosure that can be set up so a bunnies can get a chance periodically to stretch out those bunny legs), do the laundry, and get ready for the next day. It takes about 9 - 10 manhours to get it all done. It isn't glamorous and it's physically demanding. Reliable volunteers are crucial. Some of the local junior and senior high school students volunteer, which is great, however, more adult volunteers are needed. It isn't all heavy lifting. It's important to take time with the bunnies, pet them, sit with them in an xpen and let them hop in and out of your lap.

Rabbits are also given medical care. For most, this is just a matter of good grooming, making sure the fur is brushed—especially important for the longhairs—

and their nail are trimmed so they don't break and bleed. For others with more serious matters, there are medicines to administer and sometimes, trips



to and from the vet. We are fortunate to have a volunteer, Joann Binder, who is great with medical care, and we work with a few excellent vets—there aren't too many vets who specialize in rabbit care. Coordinating transport is a challenge. So is money, especially when surgery is involved. Most of the time surgery is for something relatively simple—like removal of maloccluded teeth, or polyps in an ear canal—that will give a rabbit a long life if the surgery is done, but if it is not done the bunny will die.

About Adoption: Last year about 150 rabbits were adopted into loving homes. The adoption process starts when a person fills out an adoption application, which can be done online. Then Marcy or a volunteer calls the person, reviews the application with them, and sets up an appointment for them to come meet the bunnies. Typically, a person sits for a few hours in an xpen (with a chair or pillow or whatever is comfortable) to get to know a rabbit to see how each gets along with each other. Usually, the person gets to meet and spend time with several rabbits. Kind of like speed dating. More often than not, a person shows up with a great interest in a rabbit they've seen online, but in the end, they go home with a different bunny, one that had a special quality and personality and soul that connected with the person's. The rabbit does the choosing as much as the person does. Beauty is in the eye of the beholder, love is between hearts.

Many people come looking for a single rabbit and end up with a pair. Bonded rabbits are happier because they have each other 24/7 and the amount of work to

care for the pair is the same as for a single bunny.

A rabbit is adopted by an adult. Always an adult, no exceptions. The practicality is that a) young kids rarely fulfill the responsibility of caring for a pet every day, and b) since rabbits can live more than ten years if well cared for, there's a good chance the child will grow up and move away and not be willing or able to take the rabbit with him/her. Then the bunny ends up either at the pound or neglected. If a person is not willing and able to commit ten to fifteen years to keep and care for their bunny, then we will not let them adopt.

SaveABunny charges an adoption fee, which is currently \$90. While this may seem like a lot, if you were to purchase a bunny at a pet store (oh, please don't) you would be charged about \$40, but then you would have to get the bunny neutered/spayed (please do), which would cost another \$150. And with SaveABunny, you've got a whole network of people to answer questions about bunny behavior and health, which is something you're not likely to get from a pet store.

About Outreach for Education and Advocacy: SaveABunny tries to educate the public about care of pet rabbits, promote the adoption of rabbits, raise awareness of the root cause of unwanted rabbits, and generally advocate the humane treatment of these wonderful creatures who experience many of the same feelings we do. We usually have booths at the Marin County Fair, the Marin Human Race, the Union Street and Castro Street Fairs in San Francisco, and at PetSmart and other pet stores that DO NOT sell rabbits. We also try to raise awareness about the following:

About Pet Stores: They are the single biggest source of the problem of unwanted rabbits that are either surrendered to pounds or simply dumped. Pet stores that sell rabbits never sell them when they're spayed/neutered and do no real screening of buyers to insure they will keep the bunny. Pet stores source their rabbits from a "breeders" that are nothing more than backyard bunny mills. These rabbits are very inbred, which makes them prone to health and behavior problems, which makes them more likely to be dumped. It's a vicious cycle that can only be stopped if pet stores stop selling rabbits and, instead, refer people to adoptions shelters. Some pet stores get it, but too many refuse to stop selling rabbits. Stores like Critterland in Mill Valley and Serramonte Pet Store are notoriously stubborn and so continue to sell rabbits.

About rabbit on the menu: I won't moralize here about the virtue or sin of humans eating rabbit. However, all should know that rabbits raised "for food" have no protections from cruel treatment, either in life or in death. Unlike all other mammals—cattle, sheep, pigs, etc.—only rabbits are categorized by the government as poultry. This means they can be—and often are—skinned and gutted while they're alive. That's legal, but it shouldn't be. Oh, and the next time you see "organic Sonoma rabbit" on the menu, keep in mind that there are a total of three USDA inspectors of licensed rabbit processors. That's three for the entire U.S., and they only do it part time, and only for the licensed processors.

About faux rabbit fur: It isn't faux. Especially if

it's from China. Import regulations say that if there is less than 15% real fur in the fabric, then it can be labeled "faux." Analysis of "faux fur" on major clothing brands found it contained hair from dog, raccoon, and rabbit.

As you can see, these are BIG problems, and we need everyone's help to make a dent.

Although this is a long article, it's only a short introduction to SaveABunny. Thank you for reading. If you would like more information about SaveABunny, please visit our website at www.SaveABunny.org. Better yet, give me a call (381-6349) and I'll arrange a visit. Bring a little love and give it to a bunny. It will be accepted.

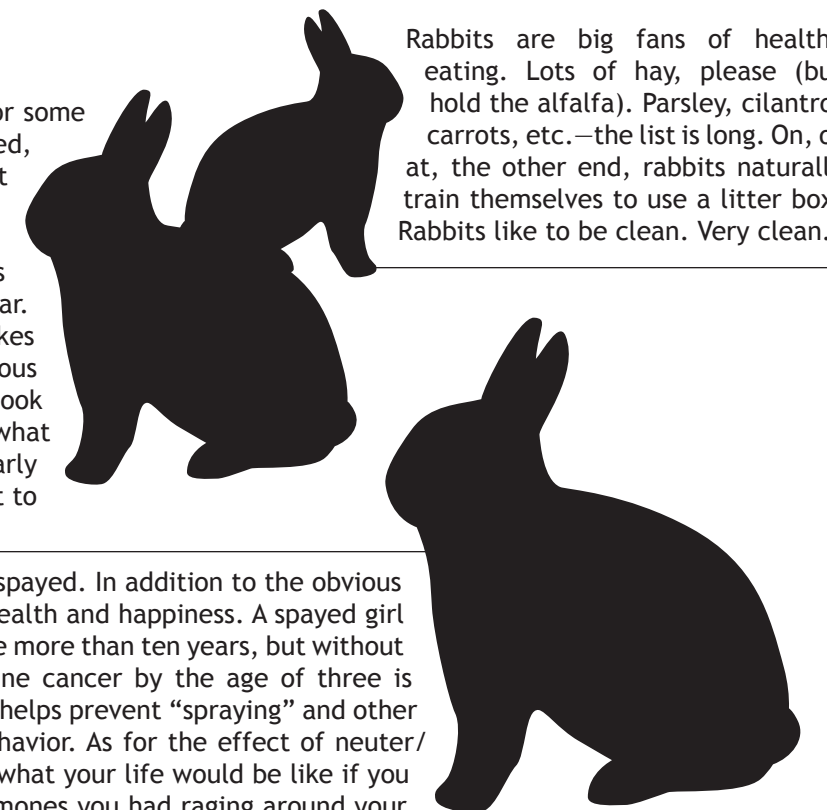
Fun Facts About Rabbits



Rabbits have been bred and domesticated for centuries, on almost every inhabited continent. As a result, a modern-day domestic rabbit relates to a modern wild rabbit in about the same way as an American teenager relates to an aboriginal tribesman. [Hence, a domestic rabbit "set free" in the outdoors has about the same chance of survival and happiness as a 10th grader "set free" without a cellphone in the Borneo mountain jungle.] For centuries, domesticated rabbits have been cared for as pets, and in some cultures, they were cared for as sacred creatures. Medieval European monks had special rooms inside monasteries just for their pet rabbits. What the monks knew then is true today: rabbits should be kept indoor, warm and safe from dogs and other attackers.

Rabbits are smart—about as much so as a cat or some dogs. They well know when they're being called, praised, scolded, and loved. They are different from dogs and cats in their evolutionary makeup. Rabbits evolved as objects of prey—the hunted, instead of the hunter. As such, most rabbits hate to be picked up, which triggers a primal fear. Petting is great, but it's an unusual bunny who likes being picked up. Rabbits are naturally very curious and love to explore, getting into every little nook and cranny they can fit. They are crepuscular—what a word!—which means they are most active early and late in the day. Lucky for us, we usually get to see a great bunny dance show every morning.

All rabbits should be neutered or spayed. In addition to the obvious reason, it's imperative for their health and happiness. A spayed girl bunny that's well cared for can live more than ten years, but without getting "fixed" the odds of uterine cancer by the age of three is very high. Neutering/spaying also helps prevent "spraying" and other forms of territorial protective behavior. As for the effect of neuter/spay on happiness, well, imagine what your life would be like if you had to live with 50 times the hormones you had raging around your body when you went through puberty. For a rabbit, it's even worse.



Rabbits are big fans of healthy eating. Lots of hay, please (but hold the alfalfa). Parsley, cilantro, carrots, etc.—the list is long. On, or at, the other end, rabbits naturally train themselves to use a litter box. Rabbits like to be clean. Very clean.

Photographs courtesy of SaveABunny

“Why Do You Paint?”

*A Story About Larry Yamamoto
By Judith Yamamoto*

“Every subject brings a new emotion,
A clean sheet of paper, a new adventure.”
-- Larry’s artist bio

In Larry’s Words:

When I was a kid, eighteen, nineteen, a friend’s mother asked me, “Why do you paint?”

I had to think about it. I didn’t know.

I’m still searching. I still don’t know.

Personally, it’s something I enjoy, but I don’t why.

I used to paint with this girlfriend I was going with, and we’d go plein air painting around town, mostly to run-down neighborhoods, and I’d look around and say, “This is beautiful.”

And she’d say, “Why is it beautiful? It’s old and falling apart. It’s ugly.”

That got me to thinking, why do I think it’s beautiful? Modern clean well-behaved things were not so beautiful to me.

Nature is beautiful but I always liked the urban scenes more. They seem closer to what I’m trying to feel. You have to understand, I’m coming from the bottom rung. I didn’t understand this, but I felt it and knew it.



*Joe Rodrigues, 18” x 24”
Photograph by Larry Yamamoto*

But I always liked nature scenes too. When I was a kid living in West L.A., our Japanese language school took us to the mountains a couple of times, once up to Lake Arrowhead and once to Mount Wilson, where the deer were wild and the air was clear.

We never got to see squirrels and blue jays in the city.

In Judith’s Words:

You can see those squirrels and birds, lots of birds, in Larry’s paintings.

Why does he paint?

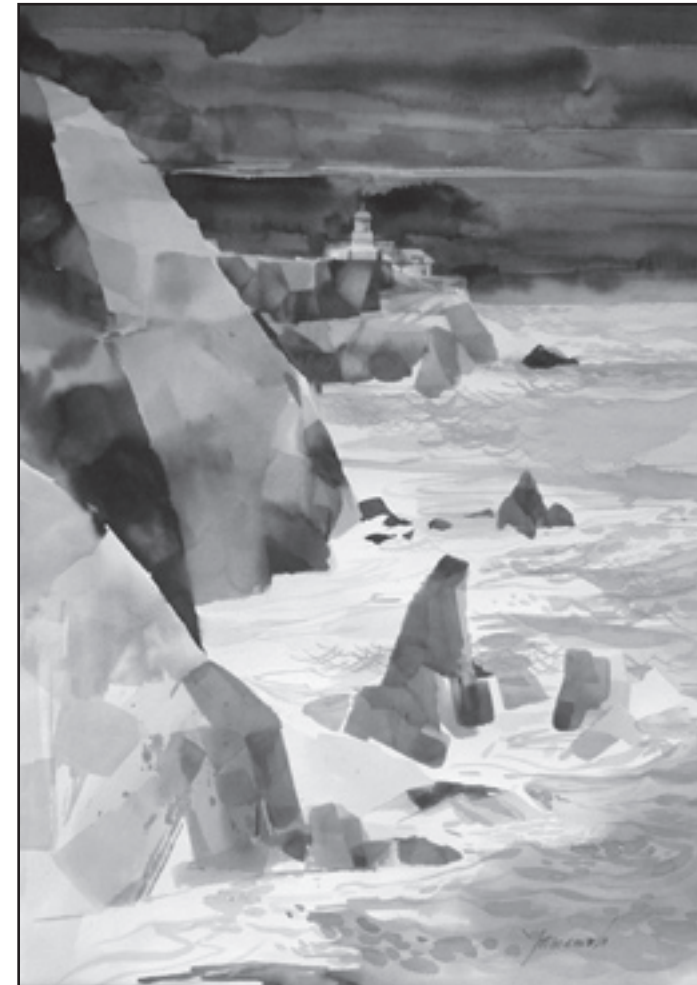
Larry was born in Hawaii in 1929 and lived on the North Shore of Oahu with his grandparents for the first five years of his life. His grandfather worked on the railway tracks, and after work took Larry down to the ocean to catch fish for dinner.

His parents had left Larry and his older sister with their grandparents because the Great Depression hit early and hard in Hawaii. His parents went to Los Angeles to find work.

His grandmother brought him and his sister to Los Angeles when he was five. Larry remembers the big ship and the long ocean voyage, and meeting two people who were his parents. He remembers that after a couple of weeks, his grandmother went back to Hawaii without him.

In 1941, when Larry was twelve, World War II started and he, his family, and all people of Japanese ancestry on the west coast were interned in concentration camps. Larry was at the Gila River camp in Arizona for three years, leaving when he was fifteen years old. He tells me he had a good time with his friends in camp, being kids and being somewhat liberated from the family structure.

It’s not easy to imagine how these families lived in one room in a barracks, eating in a mess hall, cleaning up



*Point Bonita, 30” x 22”
Photograph by Larry Yamamoto*

in communal showers, being surrounded by barbed wire, guard towers, and armed soldiers. They tell many different stories.

Larry, who had been drawing all his life, met two art teachers at camp who inspired him with their own art and opened his eyes to the life of art. And it was also there that he fell in love with the beauty of the high desert.

He was fifteen when he left the concentration camp. Back in L.A., he worked his way through his last couple of years of high school as a houseboy, earning room and board, and was on his own on his day off.

He took art classes in high school. Worked during summer vacation, painting roses and orchids on ladies’ girdles, put a portfolio together and got himself into the Otis School of Fine Arts in Los Angeles.

At Otis, he took classes, painted and drew, met older guys going to art school on the GI Bill, cut classes

and drank wine and talked with them for hours on the lawn, and was amazed at the way other people expressed their feelings about life!

He dropped out of Otis to head out to be an artist in New York City, stopping first in San Francisco. He was a poverty-stricken linotype operator at a small Japanese language newspaper; lived close by in Japantown; met some friends who stayed friends forever and forever questioned the social system; fell in love with a radical Jewish girl, got married, had three kids, and had a long working life on the San Francisco waterfront, Local 10 Longshore and Local 34 Shipsclerks, ILWU (International Longshore & Warehouse Union).

Moved to Muir Beach and, with a little help from his family and a lot from Gordon Mosteller, built his own house in the early sixties.

We don’t know why Larry paints, but that’s what he does. Has done it since he was a little kid; always does it. Riding with him in the car is nerve-wracking, and I have pretty much worn out the imaginary brake pedal on the passenger side, because his head isn’t facing where he’s driving.

His head is turned sideways, where the paintings are.



*Larry Yamamoto relaxing at the 2007 Mill Valley Fall Arts Festival
Photograph by Judith Yamamoto*

Update on Gunvor Nelson

By Gail Falls

Gunvor Nelson, avant-garde filmmaker and former long-time resident of Muir Beach, has been accruing many honors for her films since her return to her native Sweden in 1993.

A major retrospective of her work just ended February 12th at the Moderna Museet (Modern Art Museum) in Stockholm. This was quite an event with much media attention, including TV interviews, when it opened in September 2007. A succinct and interesting account of her filmmaking and this exhibit can be found at www.modernamuseet.se (Exhibitions/Previous Exhibitions/Gunvor Nelson/7 Questions of Gunvor). It's well worth checking out.

In 2006 Gunvor received the Swedish award for the 'artist of the year' (which includes a sizeable grant) and, in the same year, the King's Medal, also granted to only one artist each year. Sweden, it seems, is pleased to have Gunvor back home.

Gunvor divides her time between Kristinehamn, a small town near the biggest lake in Sweden where she grew up, and an apartment in Stockholm. Her place in Kristinehamn is part of a compound of several very old wood structures formerly used by fishermen, now altered to accommodate artists who were invited by the Swedish authorities to live and work there.

Outside her door in Kristinehamn is a small garden enclosed by a high fence. This is where the video **True to Life** was photographed in 2006. Imagine an extremely close up lens, such that it moves the flower's petals as it's focusing on a stamen and you hear the sound of that petal moving as if it's coming from a loud radio. You don't get to see this small fenced in garden at all, only very close up views of parts of bugs and plants and dew, but there is an occasional shot of the blue sky with white clouds and the sound of school children someplace near, laughing and shouting. When I was there visiting Gunvor in May 2006, spring had not come fully to Kristinehamn and the branches were still bare of leaves and flowers, but the sun was warm while Gunvor and I sat in the garden talking. I am fond of this memory as well as of **True to Life**.

From the early '60s until she left for Sweden in 1993, Gunvor lived here on Sunset Way in a house she and Bob Nelson, her former husband, built. While at the Beach making films, she also taught film making at the San Francisco Art Institute from 1970 to 1992.

One of her earliest films, **Kirsa Nicholina** (1969), was of a home birth, filmed at a neighbor's house on Sunset Way. More straightforward than most of her later films, it simply showed the wonder of giving birth, empathetically while not avoiding the less picturesque aspects.

Her first film, made with Dorothy Wiley in 1966 was **Schmeerguntz** (1966). (Dorothy and Bob Wiley and Gunvor



Gunvor in Stockholm

and Bob Nelson, all artists, were neighbors here at the Beach for a while.) Images in **Schmeerguntz** bounce back and forth between scenes such as TV shots of a Miss America contest and a mother rinsing out a dirty diaper in a toilet bowl. Remember, this was more than 40 years ago, a time when a close look at women's lives and roles in this country was just beginning. Another film from this period, **Take Off** (1972), was shown by invitation at the Venice Biennale last year, 35 years later.

Oona, Gunvor's daughter, grew up at Muir Beach. **My Name is Oona** (1969), a film where a strange world is rediscovered through a child's eyes, is frequently shown at film festivals in this country and in Europe. Oona and her husband Josh live in San Francisco.

Gunvor has returned to the Bay Area several times since she left, showing her films and videos at Pacific Film Archive in Berkeley, where copies of her films are archived, and at the SF Cinematheque. In November 2006, she showed recent videos and old films at each of these places as well as in Chicago and New York

Unfortunately, she has no plans for showing her work in the Bay Area soon. When this does come about, I will let the *Beachcomber* know.



Garden in Kristinehamn

Photographs by Gail Falls

One Last Wade In The Old Sweetwater

By Pam Barlow

Photographs by Bruce Barlow



Marin County in the seventies was a roomier place. Fewer people, cars and housing meant less artificial light. The nights were inky dark and there was magic afoot. Night ramblings were navigated by moon and stars. The Sleeping Lady was a numinous silhouette against the clean slate of sky, arms extended in welcome and protection.

Orpheus ruled the land. On one block in Fairfax, there was Nave's Saloon, which had a juke box in the back corner, playing a constant rotation of Steely Dan, Fleetwood Mac, Peter Dinklage, Boz Scaggs, Dan Hicks, Elvin Bishop, Mickey Thomas, etc. You could count on running into somebody's favorite musical star any day of the week. Two doors down was River City, where you could see The Jerry Garcia Band, or Garcia with Merl Saunders, or a group featuring John Allair and Phil Lesh, called "Too Loose To Truck" which truly lived up to its name.

The Sleeping Lady Café served organic vegetarian food and hosted popular groups of the day such as The Goodman Brothers and the Tasmanian Devils. The Fairfax Street Choir performed there frequently. With twenty-something of us singing gospel-rock in sections and backed by a full band, joined at various times by Bill Champlain (Sons of Champlain, Chicago) and Peter Tork (The Monkees), our joyful noise spilled into the streets. The group was founded by Marla Hunt, a member of the famous Ace of Cups, the first and only all-girl psychedelic band of the sixties. In a 1967 interview with Melody Maker, Jimi Hendrix gave them a rave and proclaimed himself a fan.

San Anselmo had the Lion's Share, where you could see Commander Cody and His Lost Planet Airmen and Van Morrison in one night. At the hub, there was a biker dive called Ned's, where I first saw Clover. San Rafael had George's, now New Georges, and Cody played there often too.

Uncle Charlies was out on Paradise Drive. I'd joined a back-up trio called Sweettooth, with Jeannette Sartain and Janet (Planet) Morrison, and we sang harmonies for many of the groups that came through there, including Huey Lewis and the Clover boys.

There were clubs in Lagunitas, clubs in Woodacre, and if you really wanted to navigate by the stars, you could go out to the old roadhouses in Nicasio and Marshall and Cotati. In Sausalito, there was the Family Light Music School. They had night classes, where for a few bucks, you could go and hear a variety of musicians, and talk with them afterwards, ask them about the music, etc. I spent

many a night there listening to Nick Gravenitas and Mark Naftlan, among others.

If you went to Mill Valley, there were two clubs to choose from. The Old Mill Tavern, where Vasco's is now, had a big stage in the back right corner across from a long bar on the left wall. Sweettooth worked there a lot, backing up a popular band of the time called Barry Flast and Trouble. Kingfish came through there and dozens of others I can no longer recall. But I remember the freedom and the feeling that we had all the time in the world.

The jewel in the crown of all these clubs has always been the Sweetwater Saloon. Everybody played the Sweetwater. One need only go to their website and click on History to be amazed at the roster of talent that's graced that stage. When I first moved here, it was managed by a lovely, long-haired, motherly woman by the name of Jeanie, who was always nice to us young and eager musicians. She'd give you a shot, opening for a band or headlining. Sweettooth worked there a lot in the seventies, and I'm happy to say Bruce and I were given several opportunities to open for friends there just in the last few years. Of course Bruce had spent his share of time on that stage even before we met. And it was always great to drop in on Audie's open mics, to get the cobwebs out and occasionally sit in on a soulful jam. The Sweetwater had a special place in my heart, and performing on that stage was always about great collaboration and inspiring music. The club just had solid, musical bones and good juju. And so many of my young memories of making music in Marin are of times spent on stage or in the audience at the Sweetwater Saloon.

So it came as a terrible shock when I heard the club was closing. Bruce and I wanted to go back for one sentimental journey, but time flew and we were down to the last night. Impossible to get in, right? Well, it would have been, but the fates and Audie de Lone took pity on us, and miraculously, we slipped in and up to the premium seats—the only seats—the bar stools beside the stage. From this perch, we could see the stage and talk to people and take some close-up shots of the star parade. And all we had to sacrifice was our hearing—but hey, that's been gone for some time. Audie even invited us up to jam.

It's heartbreaking that the town lost that amazing musical space. Ramblin' Jack got it just right when he said, "We're all just as sad that it's closing as we are happy to be here one more time." It was sad but it was bliss, taking one last wade in the old Sweetwater.



Ramblin' Jack Elliott stopped by on his way to the stage, "I think I met you two, one or three times." Tells us he did an impromptu opening for Billy Joe Shaver at Rancho Nicasio, and "did about one and a half songs so as not to put the crowd to sleep."



Jack again, in his classic ramblin' drawl, keeping the non sequiturs coming: "I met my last and very best wife here...I call this place Murin County, cause it's good for your eyes..."



Jack's first song, Dylan's "Don't Think Twice, It's Alright" was heartfelt but not safe from interruption for more tales of the road: "I ran into old Bill Burroughs in Paris one time and told him I was on my way to Sweden. 'Ah Sweden,' says Bill, 'the homogenous population. The policeman looks exactly like the man he's arresting.'"



Sweetwater's own Austin de Lone, with, from left, his beautiful wife Lesley & daughter Caroline. They performed a soulful, a cappella version of a song from "Oh Brother Where Art Thou," rewritten to reflect the occasion, "Oh sisters, let's go down... down to the Sweetwater and play."



Austin and Caroline put their heads together for some beautiful "sibling-esque" harmonies.



House Band for this important occasion led by – who else? – Austin de Lone on keys & vox, with Ernest Boom Carter on drums, Mighty Mike Schermer, guitar, Eric McCann, bass, Charles McNeil, tenor sax, Mike Rinta, trombone, and Pete Semblor on trumpet. They kicked off the night with a rockin' rendition of "Ain't Love A Funny Thing" a song from Audie's fantastic new CD, "Soul Blues." (Note the tiny photo on the right wall, of the iconic mandala, stolen a few months back.) An elegantly dressed brunette with clouds of raven hair came bopping toward us through the crowd– ah, Maria Muldaur! She told us she wouldn't be singing, but never stopped dancing, as she waved a coy goodbye and boogie-oogi-oogied back to stand by Audie, where she maintained a theatrical, though undoubtedly sincere, flirt, all the while grooving and swirling and being her beautiful rock-star-self.



Santa Cruz guitar whiz, Mighty Mike Schermer, belts out the all-time catchiest, danceable, sing-a-long, Carolina Beach Music self-penned hit from two years back, "My Big Sister's Transistor Radio." By the second chorus, the whole room knew the words and went crazy dancing and singing their hearts out.



Chicago blues singer, Lisa Kindred, keeps the room in the sing-a-long frenzy Mighty Mike left it, with her rendition of "Let The Good Times Roll," growling out the lyric so we knew it was more than a suggestion when she sang it loud and proud: "Let it roll!"



Lisa Kindred introduces her next song, 'If The River Was Whiskey and I Was A Diving Duck': "This is the first song I ever sang on this stage, back when Peter Walsh ran the band." The raw feeling she mines with her husky, been-there-and-lived-to-tell-about-it voice, is palpable despite - or because of - some obstacle she seems to be overcoming with every passion-drenched word. Every lick she delivers is at home where she lays it down. All meat but close to the bone, it's purely powerful blues.



Heather Combs, out of Gainesville, Florida, steps up to the mic: "I heard this club is closing because some folk in Mill Valley don't want culture anymore." This gets a round of cheers and applause, and she adds, "This is like Fresno on a Wednesday. I want Bakersfield on a Sunday!" After another burst of hooting and hollering, she sings "Been Away So Long," and "Independence Day." It's clear she's got fans in the audience, and clear why.



Current owners Tom & Becky Steere with daughter McKenna on left, take the stage to tell the tale: "We'd intended for McKenna to take over the club and run it when we retired, but now that's probably not going to happen."



Sammy Hagar, enjoying the show from his VIP table.

ART



Long time Marin County favorites, The Rowan Brothers, backed by, among others, Jimmy Dillon from the Edge on guitar, Pete Sears on accordion, and producer/songwriter Narada Michael Walden on drums, rock a Band song: "The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down," followed by Sting's "Message in a Bottle," and a reggae version of the Righteous Brothers' hit, "You've Lost That Lovin' Feelin'."



The intrepid Dan Hicks, parodies, "By the Time I Get to Phoenix," with "By the time I get to Mill Valley, I'll be loaded..." Next, a brilliant version of "Bye Bye Blackbird with an amazing scat vocal break. Dan's definitely still got it!



The famous Narada Michael Walden; when I'd run into him earlier, he was a vision in a white suit, white fedora, and white shoes. He had on a red plaid vest, and a native American choker and chest plate, with a large lei of purple orchids over it. I noticed, because when I was making my way through the crowd to the only facilities – porta-potties on the sidewalk – he'd stopped me, stared into my eyes, kissed me on the lips and expressed a sort of cosmic love and good will. He's a good drummer, too...



Sammy Hagar; "The first time I played this song was with Elvis Costello and Jerry, a million years ago." The crowd rushed the stage for stormin' versions of "I'm Goin' Down," followed by "Rock Me All Night Long," with Lisa Kindred on harmonies and exchanging verses with Sammy. My friend Cricket says, "It's so loud, I can't listen." People are stuffing their ears with napkins and I wish I had one. Sammy closes with an obvious shout-along, Dylan's "Everybody Must Get Stoned."

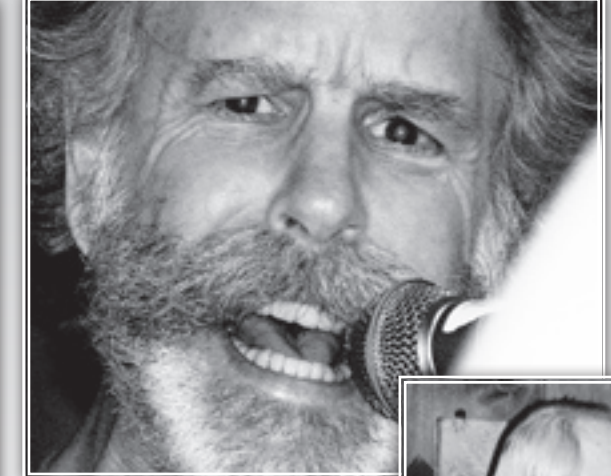


When Bob Weir took the stage, backed by Austin de Lone on keys, Mike White on bass, Adam Berkowitz on drums, Mark Karan, guitar, and Barry Schless on pedal steel, the crowd went crazy. People were riding on other people's shoulders, and the front of the stage was sardine-city.

ART



Weir delivers a swampy Wang Dang Doodle.



When Bob Weir tells you to "Shake It, Sugaree" he means it!



Jerry Harrison of the Talking Heads & Modern Lovers: "She's Sad."



Austin de Lone back in the driver's seat; Ernest Boom Carter, original drummer for Springsteen's E Street Band (that's him on "Born to Run"), does an original, "Riding With The Wind." Audie rocks Ray Charles with "What'd I Say," inviting people up to jam.



Sitting in on guitar with Jerry Harrison for "Life During Wartime," is Jeff Watson from Night Ranger, recently voted Marin County's #1 guitarist.



One Last Wade on the Sweetwater stage, Austin de Lone, Barry Schless, Pam Barlow, Narada Michael Walden, Lorin Rowan & Ernest Boom Carter, blend harmonies on the final song, Bob Dylan's, "I Shall Be Released."

The Boat Story

By Brad Eigsti

Introduction

I have told this story many times at various Community Events. This is for all Muir Beachers who have not heard this.

In the summer of 1996, Lisa and I took a two-month trip to Indonesia. We had many wild adventures to some very remote places, but nothing compared to what happened six weeks into our vacation.

The following is a true story. . .

It was the evening of July 20th, 1996. Lisa and I had traveled to a small Muslim town named Gorontolo on the central coast of the Island of Sulawesi. Gorontolo is also located directly on the equator. That night, we had planned to take an overnight ferry to the Togian Islands for scuba diving and some serious beach time.

We were advised to get to the dock early in an effort to purchase a cabin from a crew member, instead of sleeping on the wooden decks of the boat. We arrived @ dusk and found our ferry, a tri-level, 120 foot long wooden passenger ship in dilapidated condition, not unlike the many ferries we had traveled on earlier in our trip. To get on board, we had to balance on a 2 x 12 plank that stretched about 15 feet from the dock to the deck over the open water below. Once on board, the Captain took our ticket and we quickly found a crew member willing to give up his cabin for a few dollars. The cabin was more like a large closet with a small bunk bed, and we were so happy.

The ferry was scheduled to depart @ 10:00 that evening, so we hung out on the deck of the ship watching the other passengers navigate the plank and having some laughs and beers with our new shipmates.

The majority of the passengers were local Indonesians, mostly Muslim families (infants, young children and elderly people) with all kinds of packages and belongings, including chickens, furniture, bags of rice, gasoline, etc. The women were covered head to toe in the customary clothing. As the ship filled, we determined that there were about 20 tourists and about 200 Indonesians on board.



We departed from Gorontalo on our way to the Togian Islands. We had spent the previous three weeks on the island of Sulewesi, Indonesia.

10 o'clock came and went. We waited, drank more beer and had more laughs. Nothing ever happened on time in Indonesia, so no big deal. At midnight, we finally pushed away from the docks and slowly motored out of the harbor into the darkness of the open ocean. It was a calm, balmy night, pleasant in the breeze of the moving ship, but stifling hot in the cabin. In an effort to have a slight breeze, we left the door to our cabin open and tried to get some sleep.

About three hours into the trip, I heard some commotion coming from the rear deck. It had proven too hot to sleep, so I went to check out what was going on. Indonesian men were running around and speaking amongst themselves, like they were formulating some kind of plan. It did not seem like a big deal, so I went back to bed. Ten minutes later, with the commotion becoming louder and more frantic, I returned to the rear deck. Again, the Indonesian men were running around, this time pulling out life vests and laying them in a pile in the middle of the space. Everyone looked worried. I still did not think all that much about it, and I thought that there was a baby being born or that someone was sick. We had seen so much crazy Indonesian behavior up to this point in our trip, that I still did not think much about it, and went back to bed. Lisa, who was sleeping, woke up and I told her something was going on, but she just laid her head back down and closed her eyes with a sigh. This all changed a few minutes later when an Indonesian teenager ran past our room with a life ring around his neck!

After seeing this, I jumped out of bed and hurried off

to see the Captain. I found the Captain drenched in sweat, obviously freaking out. He was spinning the steering wheel and yelling into the radio...he would release the mike, and there was no response, just the sound of static. I asked him, "Are we sinking?" and he just looked at me like "no shit."

I ran back to the room and woke up Lisa, who had a hard time comprehending the situation. At this point, people were scrambling all around, running past our door in droves. Outside our door, an elderly man leaned over the rail, eerily wailing prayer into the darkness at the top of his lungs. We quickly scrambled a few belongings together and hurried out of the cabin. Not sure if the boat was going to sink at any minute, we did not want to be trapped in our room. We teamed up with our neighbor, a girl from Connecticut who had been living in the area doing research for an university on the East Coast. Our cabin was on the middle level, and everyone was climbing the ladder to the roof. We joined in the line and climbed the rusting ladder.

As I climbed the last rung of the ladder, I realized that the life rafts and more life jackets were located on the roof. The scene was utter madness...the Indonesians were tearing apart the life rafts for their own piece of styrofoam. People were fighting over the decayed life jackets, which would fall into pieces when yanked on. I pushed my way into the middle of the crowd, and grabbed as many life jackets pieces as I could. I returned to our group, handed out the life preservers and paused...it was like a dream...unbelievable. The boat still chugged along. The



The Agape 2
Photograph by Brad Eigsti

night was absolutely beautiful, calm, thousands upon thousands of brilliant stars.

Then, without warning, the power went out and all lights dark. However, the boats engines continued to chug along. Everyone was instantly silent.

I snapped out of this stunned state of mind, tried to assure Lisa that everything would be all right, and decided to go back down to our cabin for some important items. We had left our passports, money, film, sketchbooks, plane tickets, along with almost everything else we owned down below. I quickly climbed back down the ladder and found our room. Our neighbors, a group of Germans, were swinging their flashlights around (while they put on their scuba diving gear) just enough that I would get glimpses of our belongings in our room. Efficiently, I found our most important items, packed them in a small backpack, and rushed back to the roof.

It was a big relief to be back together with Lisa. The scene on the roof was much calmer now. Most of the people were praying or crying softly. We were on the edge of the rail, behind us densely packed Indonesians, with children on the shoulders of their parents. The water, about 30 feet below us continued to rush by, the engines continued to chug along... Was this boat really sinking, or just another crazy Indonesian adventure? Very surreal. All of the sudden there was a loud “WHOOSH” of water, the engines stopped and the boat dropped out from below us.

There were passengers covering the roof, as well as the middle level bow of the boat. When the water reached the large open windows of the lower floor and rushed in, the boat sunk quickly. All of the passengers on the bow, except two men on the tip, were immediately washed into the ocean. Miraculously, the boat stopped with the water at our ankles.

The roof returned to mayhem and panic. Adults were praying in earnest, children were wailing. We were simply stunned. The level of the water slowly got deeper and deeper, with waves washing up to our waist. The water was filled with debris and a slick of diesel fuel. The waves got bigger and bigger, washing broken timbers into us as the people behind us became more frantic and unpredictable. After a half hour

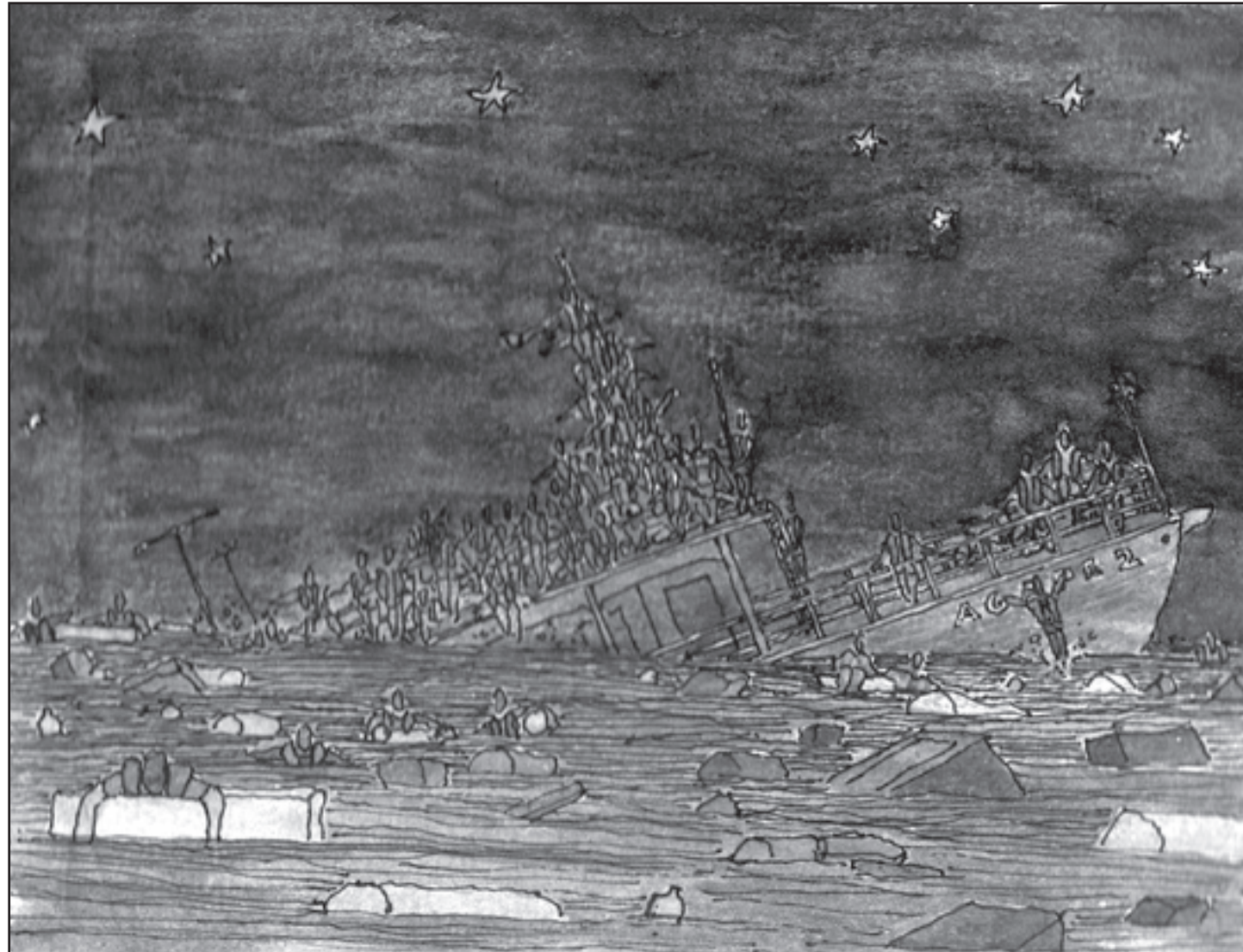
or so since the sinking, we decided to swim away from the boat rather than have the boat sink all of the sudden and be sucked under. We were also very concerned that few of the Indonesians could swim and there would be mass panic.

We swam away from the boat into the open and dark ocean. All around us was debris...broken timbers with nails and chicken wire, luggage, furniture, cushions, bottles, chickens, cockroaches, all floating in a sea of diesel oil. We swam 50 feet away from the boat and looked back. The scene was absolutely stunning (see painting), the boat was floating diagonally, almost completely submerged, with many passengers still clinging to the roof. We floated there for a moment in silence.

Again, I snapped out of this and began to swim around

searching through bags and backpacks for bottled water, any wrapped food or good floatation debris. I luckily found a few bottles of water and a bag of cookies and some large cushions. Back together, we split the water and food among the three of us. We continued to float and tried to relax. Slowly we found other passengers, and by sunrise, we had a group of 10 or 12 of us.

The sun rose hot. Our group consisted of an Indonesian Dad with two young daughters, another couple of Indonesians, a guy from San Diego, a few people from Europe, the girl from Connecticut, Lisa and I. The Indonesian girls each had large pieces of styrofoam, and we tried to no avail to take these from them to build a raft. We wanted to get out of the water for fear of sharks. Earlier, we were warned not to splash around too much in an effort to not attract the sharks



View of boat from memory – painted the day after the rescue
Painting by Brad Eigsti



Lisa and Brad on earlier ferry
Photograph by Brad Eigsti

known to be plentiful in this area. We tried to build a raft out of other debris (with no luck), and in the process, Lisa kicked her foot into a nail and the blood made us nervous to say the least.

We continued to float. The diesel oil burned our skin in the hot sun. The girl from Connecticut deteriorated rapidly, drinking and vomiting all of her water and becoming comatose. The swells increased dramatically...at the top of a 15-foot swell, we could see the roof of the boat, now 1/4 mile away, with people still on the roof and on the tip of the mast waving flags. All around the boat were small groups of people interspersed with debris. At the bottom of the swell, we could see virtually nothing.

Up...down...up...down...up...down...up...down...
up...down...up...down...up...

Suddenly, at the crest of a swell, one of the Indonesian girls yells “kappal, kappal, kappal,” which means boat in Indonesian language. At the next “up” we all see a boat in the far distance. As we go up and down, the boat gets closer and closer. We all begin yelling and waving our arms. I attach my life jacket to a piece of splintered wood and wave it frantically at the top of the swell. The boat gets closer. The boat gets so close that we can see the people on board and are certain that they also see us, when suddenly the boat turns away from us and we see them throw their fishing nets into the water. They had not seen us!

At this point, one of the European girls and Lisa begin swimming towards the boat, as I hurriedly try to repack my backpack and join the race towards the

boat. Minutes later, the crew of the fishing boat spot the two girls and the rescue is on! It is 8:30 in the morning...

Our group is the first to be picked up. What a relief and such happiness. We continue to pick up people, who mostly collapse, cry, and vomit. The crew of the boat are angels, saviors, so kind. The crew immediately radios to other boats, and within a half hour another boat arrives, and then another and another. Our boat gets so full of people that I fear we will capsize. Finally, we head back to Gorontalo, the place we started the night before.

Three hours later, we pull into the harbor. Many small boats are in the water to greet us. The banks and docks crowded with thousands of people. Our boat is the first to arrive at the dock and we are helped ashore. Mobs of Indonesians hug us, with others searching for their loved ones who are feared dead. This was the most emotional moment for me, I am so thankful and happy to be alive.

The tourists are treated very well, with the Indonesians passengers sent away. After a few days of dealing with bureaucracy, we are given a hand-typed letter in Indonesian text, that gives us priority on airfare and travel plans.

In the meantime, we learn that the boat had a leak before we left the dock. The Captain had bribed the harbormaster to allow us to depart. The two hour late departure was spent trying to fix the hole and install a new bilge pump. Thirty miles from shore, the leak broke open and the pump could not keep up.

We learned from the newspaper that five or six people died, mostly children. This could be inaccurate as the news also said that the ship sunk due to bad weather. If we had not been rescued, I am quite certain that many more people would have drowned. As an example, the girl from Connecticut was in very bad condition when we were rescued.

We were very happy (and a bit nervous) when we boarded the prop plane to begin our journey back to Bali.

Most of all, we were happy to be alive, very in love, and knew that we had a great story to tell for the rest of our lives.

Waiting for the Silverfish

By Sandra Allen



My lips were more scared than my brain so they couldn't even scream. Paralyzed, surfing wide-stanced on my mattress, pointing at the horrible thing on the floor, I shrieked, "What the hell is that? GET IT! GET IT!" Ghost-like it danced its many legs across the hardwood, until Bobby stepped in, Kleenex in hand, and defended me. "It's just a silverfish," he said, and thrust the white wad, one lifeless cloudy antennae protruding from its folds, towards me. Though logically the insect was killed, and thus the threat of death avoided, I practically jumped onto the ceiling to avoid further confrontation with its carcass. "Get that thing out of my room!" I screamed. He realized that I wasn't putting on a show, that I was literally quaking with fear. Returning, and shutting the door behind him, he remarked, "I don't know what the big deal is. It's just a silverfish. They don't bite or anything and they always live in the walls of old houses like this."

The Californian inside me bubbled and boiled over, unleashing a reservoir of the assertion that unlike him I was not from Rhode Island and therefore did not know, or want to know, what a silverfish was, let alone that they lived in my walls. As far as I'm concerned, old homes have Formica countertops, or lack post-1989 earthquake retrofitting; these colonial dinosaurs are of some ancient history I do not identify with nor care to understand. The age of homes, the age of everything in New England, continuously reminds me how far I am from home. And whereas the oddity, in my mind, of encountering cobblestone sidewalks or two-pronged outlets may remind me that I'm not in California anymore, to encounter the silverfish presents a much larger problem.

Prior to the arrival of the silverfish in my bedroom, no such thing existed in my world. I had never seen a photo of, nor heard reference made to such a thing,

in all of my life. Our native identities are not merely constructions of accent, dress, taste, and driving style, or knowledges of local retail chains, plants and Indian tribes - they are boundaries of comfort and expectation. The entrance of some frightful insect I knew about, a cockroach or a centipede or even a tarantula, would have been less disturbing. Hell, I would have been more comfortable with a wookie or one of those scary fairies from "Pan's Labyrinth" waltzing through my bedroom. Armed with nothing but a shell of my Californian identity, I had no way of expecting, and therefore understanding, the silverfish. (Upon further research, I learned that silverfish can and do exist in California, but I ensure you that I spoke to no one who ever saw one an inch and half long, as this one was).

Before coming east I would have hardly considered myself to be very Californian. I was an odd-one-out in that baked, bikini'd, dread-locked world. After all, I didn't go to UCS-something, I deflected and enrolled in some conservative stuffy private school on what is unanimously understood to be the inferior coast. I have acquaintances who reside permanently in eucalyptus-constructed tree houses, who raise money for awareness of the Mayan-predicted apocalypse (coming in 2012, FYI), or who subsist entirely on diets of raw, vegan food (friends I seldom eat-out with).

In Rhode Island, though, people recognize my difference nearly every day. My refusal to even try Mexican food in Providence let alone agree that Chipotle is wicked good, my complaint about the unavailability of real orange juice, my scoffing at California rolls constructed with 'crab stick' (whatever that may be) and most importantly, my use of the word 'hella,' constantly remind others that I am somehow alien.

It is perhaps out of self-defense, out of a desire for others to understand, in some way, who I am, that I wear bits of Californian-ness on my sleeve. The fact that I had never seen, or even heard of a silverfish was almost a joyous piece of information to divulge to the Rhode Islander who saved me from it. Yet in some instances, I have a desire to assert that I am more Californian than was ever true, and this is not a phenomenon unique to myself.

My friend from Wyoming, Greer McGee, used this catch phrase when she would explain to people where she was from: "In Cody, we hunt to eat." It was a phrase she had constructed to counteract the reactions of shock, disgust, and discomfort she would receive when she told people that she drove cattle and scooped manure in the summertime or that her boyfriend hunted on weekends. It was a phrase I'd heard her repeat verbatim on numerous occasions when the inevitable topic of her being from Cody, Wyoming, would arise in conversation.

In a new world, stereotypical conceptions that others may have about ones' home can begin to infest the displaced native. Whenever Greer would say this phrase, I always got the specific feeling that it was a statement that was not entirely true, exaggerated at least. Knowing Greer, her liberal stance, I knew fairly well that she hardly ever hunted to eat. In trying to justify my existence, I have often heard some slightly untrue, exaggerated or essentialized picture of California slip from my mouth ("we hardly ever wore shoes at my high school"). And yet if I, or Greer, were to never return home, these stereotypical statements that we have delivered to our new audiences would likely become our homes in our minds. Displaced natives become tourist swag shops: we play off the stereotypes of our region to sell ourselves, and in so doing, lose the reality of our identities. Locals don't shop there anymore.

This mirrors Salman Rushdie's idea of the 'imaginary homeland' - the post-colonial assertion that when a person is permanently exiled from their home, their home becomes a primarily fictitious utopia, a perfect foil to the dystopia of the new country. I am well aware that post-colonial theory does not want me to find refuge within its thought: I am an English speaking, American (therefore defacto-third-world-exploiting) blonde who has migrated for purposes of higher education at an Ivy League institution. Yet merely along the lines of Rushdie's ideas, my identity is continuously falling into the rift between my old and new homes. The kind of California I remember,

the California I sell myself as, doesn't actually exist anywhere.

And unlike post-colonial theory's voiceless subalterns (the tired, poor, etc.) California is not physically inaccessible to me. San Francisco has not capitulated into un-returnable political tumult (yet when it does, it will have something to do with Bush or Bonds) and I can buy a \$200 fare on Southwest.com at any moment. Unlike an immigrant grandmother lamenting about the lack of proper this or that available at the American grocery store and fantasizing about the sumptuous markets of her childhood, I have the opportunity, every Thanksgiving and Christmas, to return to California. There, I am confronted with how imaginary my conception of homeland is, and how un-Californian I have become. I have always wondered how, after feeling the jewels of Technicolor pour into her eyes, Dorothy was able to contentedly return to the sepia tones of Kansas.

"There's no place like home" is actually a double entendre. Though usually understood to mean that she has realized how much she loves the home she had tried to leave, it could also be read to mean "Home does not exist." Now that Dorothy has lived in another world, she will not be able to simply live within Kansas' limited picture. And though she was lauded and commended by the wizard in the Emerald City, she has no way of recreating the fantastic blow to the head that sent her there, either. The next time I see a silverfish, my schismed identity will produce a schismed reaction - the Californian I was will probably tell someone in the room that I didn't grow up around those scary bugs and the Rhode Islander I'm becoming will grab a Kleenex.

I will never be as terrified of the silverfish as I was again. Now that the streets are clouded with pavement-flavored slushies, I do not spin in circles beneath snow-dustings the way I did when I was still impressed with snow. When Greer sees the new deer head her boyfriend has mounted, the part of her that is no longer from Wyoming will react with some slight measure of shock, disgust, and discomfort. It is only a matter of time before I say the word 'wicked' and my childhood friends begin to leave me for dead. In the meantime, I will reside in this old house, and the Californian I am everyday ceasing to be will sleeplessly fear the imminent return of the silverfish.

Days of Wine and Cruises

By Paul Jeschke

Long-time Muir Beach residents Marcia and Hathaway Watson spend weeks at a time cruising in luxury and sipping fine wines while comparing notes with fellow enology enthusiasts. And they even get paid for it.

Fine Wine Voyages organizes and hosts wine-themed cruises on luxury ships that visit ports of call in the Mediterranean, Adriatic, Caribbean and South Pacific. The peripatetic couple estimates they spend two months a year traveling abroad, and the rest of the year planning their trips.

“Travel is our shared passion,” Hathaway enthused during a recent break from working out details of this year’s schedule. He and Marcia leave in May on a journey from Rome to Athens on the Wind Spirit, a four-masted sailing ship that will feature the wines of Sonoma County’s Raymond Burr Vineyards. They’ll accompany some 40 wine enthusiasts who will enjoy a welcome aboard wine tasting party and gourmet dinners.

After a month back in their Starbuck Drive home of 25 years, the Watsons will leave again for a seven-day cruise from Venice to Dubrovnik. The sailing will feature the wines of Dry Creek Vineyard. Also scheduled are trips to Barcelona and Lisbon on the Crystal Serenity and to New Zealand and Australia where guests will visit Southern Hemisphere wineries.

“I’m fascinated by different styles of wine in various parts of the world,” Hathaway said. “A New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc is completely different from ours.”

Hathaway developed his interest in wine while a student at Stanford Law School. He spent weekends making Napa Valley forays so he could educate his taste palette. After graduation, he worked as an attorney for AT&T and was transferred to New Jersey. The East Coast move motivated Marcia to train as a travel agent. The foundation for Fine Wine Voyages was in place when the couple returned to the Bay Area and moved to Muir Beach in 1983.

Traveling to exotic ports on luxury ships, enjoying gourmet food and partaking of fine wine with like-minded connoisseurs may seem idyllic, but like most good things in life, a great deal of work and preparation are necessary.

The husband-wife team organizes the wine cruises “from soup to nuts,” Hathaway said. They’re on the telephone and answering e-mails first thing in the morning in Muir Beach and then they drive to San Rafael where they work in conjunction with Frosch International Travel on the complicated details of group travel.

The Watsons are the impresarios of the wine cruises. They contract with the cruise line, plan itineraries, make agreements with California wineries to supply wine for tastings and dinners and arrange air, hotels, transfers and private tours. “We’re working six and seven days a week, literally until we

get on the plane and go.” And the work doesn’t stop once the cruise begins. When they’re not watching out for the interests of upscale guests, the Watsons often find themselves in the shipboard computer room working on details of the next trip.

The onboard wine program is completely complimentary, Hathaway said. The cost of the wine, seminars and food-pairings is absorbed by participating wineries like Joseph Phelps, Duckhorn, Grgich Hills and Silver Oak. The winery owner and his family are invited along to “mix, mingle and educate the guests.” It’s also a great opportunity for cruise ship sommeliers to expand their knowledge of Northern California wines. On large vessels, multiple wineries are represented and a master sommelier from the Napa Valley conducts seminars.

“We’re always talking to new wineries for inclusion in the program,” Hathaway said. “Each year we have some variety in the program, wineries, ships and itineraries.”

Because of their interest in viticulture, the Watsons purchased five acres of land in Dry Creek Valley. Half of the property is planted in Zinfandel and the grapes are pressed and processed by Amphora, a small winery that is considering production of a single vineyard release.

The Watsons also host at least one cruise a year for the Crystal Serenity where they arrange cocktail parties, shore excursions and act as advocates for cruise passengers.

Fine Wine Voyages can also arrange independent travel. Marcia recently arranged a trip to Bhutan, “the last place on the ‘Roof of the World,’” for neighbors Melissa and Larry Lasky.

The Watsons can be reached at 888-WINE-TVL.



Hathaway and Marcia Watson cruising in the Mediterranean

Photograph courtesy of Fine Wine Voyages

Globalization, Development, and Poverty

By Isaac Pearlman

Coming to the end of two years as a Peace Corps volunteer in Peru, I write in response to the ever-present questions—“How have you changed?” and “What have you learned?”—that are now being directed toward me. Instead of trying to describe how this amazing experience has matured me, or taught me patience and perspective, I would rather talk about how living in a small Peruvian port town has changed my view of the world, which originally reflected the largely naïve way most Americans view the world.

We live in a world that is increasingly global. “Globalization” is often touted as economic progress. Because of globalization, US citizens are able to buy cheap imported products—bananas from Ecuador, sugar from Brazil, avocados from Chile, small technology products from China. These imports are cheaper than US-produced products, and cheaper is better, right? Living in Peru has made that price tag less appealing.

In my small community of Puerto Chicama, a fishing village (population 8,000) on the north coast of Peru, products are produced en masse for First-World consumption. Ten factories process anchovies to produce fishmeal, a main ingredient in pet food. On the agricultural farms nearby, artichokes and asparagus are produced by the ton and bottled for European and American markets. In theory, this seems fairly straightforward: These large-scale production factories offer jobs in a country that has over 50% unemployment. Yet the fishing factories in Puerto Chicama catch so many tons of fish that the local fishermen, who fish for subsistence, have seen a large decrease in their catches.

On top of this, the factories pollute the air and dump all of their waste products into the ocean, breaking several laws that local authorities can’t enforce. The result is the gradual depletion of this town’s natural resources and a gradual shift from subsistence fishing to importing food from more productive farmland in the nearby valley. All this is done so people from Europe to China to the US can have cheap pet food.

The same is true for the agricultural exports. A large agricultural production center turns vast amounts of land into single crop farms that produce food, mostly artichokes and asparagus, that Peruvians don’t even eat. I was flabbergasted when my host family,

including my host brother who works in one of these plants, produced a jar of preserved asparagus and proceeded to ask me how to prepare and eat it.

Again, the tradeoff for jobs is no great deal for locals. Due to nonexistent enforcement of already weak labor laws, employees usually work 12- to 16-hour shifts and get paid less than \$20 a week. When the fish factories are in production (only 4 to 6 weeks a year do they actually offer full-time employment), these Peruvians commonly work up to 18-hour shifts. And the worst part is that in spite of all the work put in by locals and all the Peruvian resources being used, the majority of the profit goes to factory owners who are European or North American or Asian. In the end, in an area where the population of this fishing village could once produce enough food for everyone, now people starve because fishing has declined and prices have risen, and the majority of the land is used to produce a product Peruvians don’t eat. And for sacrificing their resources, these Peruvians don’t receive enough money to eat in a land where a two-course lunch costs less than \$2.

This sad reality, which I have seen with my own eyes, is only part of the picture. Almost all the large enterprises in Peru are owned by foreigners—mines, telecommunications, agriculture and, of course, oil and gas. The exploited workers often strike to ask for higher wages and better working conditions, and sometimes their demands are met, but too often they are tear-gassed. Whole communities near mines protest when they discover mercury in the rivers that serve as their water supply. Foreign-owned mines—all sporting English names such as Goldfinch and Andean Copper—promise schools, plazas and jobs to communities in exchange for 20 to 40 years of rights to millions of dollars worth of gold, silver and copper. Large sums of money are invested in roads and mining structures, their investment is recuperated several times over and then the Peruvians are left with a depleted zone at the end of their leasing period.

Telecommunications industries in Peru are almost all foreign, and cell phone companies are so aggressive there are actually more cell phones than landlines. Many Peruvians already have the latest phones that double as music or video players, but they don’t come cheap. The Internet, as far as I can tell, only has one service provider, the same Spanish company that has a monopoly on landlines.

At this point I’m sure most are thinking “how terrible, but we didn’t ask for any of this.” When the US spends over \$1 billion dollars a year on pet food,

pet owners don't ask to deplete food resources of Third World countries. When Europeans buy tons of bottled asparagus, they don't ask to kick small subsistence farmers off their land. When Americans use cables containing copper mined in the Peruvian Andes, they aren't asking the companies to ravage the land and pollute the resources of the surrounding communities.

These First-World consumers didn't ask this, but our

government and elected leaders sure did. Bilateral trade agreements and free trade agreements are fancy documents that essentially specify economic conditions for other countries if they want to trade with the US. Peru has negotiated a "free trade" agreement with the US, an agreement that would allow certain Peruvian products (asparagus, artichokes) to have access to the US consumer; import tariffs are lowered or dropped altogether, while in return certain subsidized US agricultural products (corn and soybean, for example) will be awarded the same green light in Peruvian markets, producing the inevitable effect of out-competing small Peruvian farmers. These trade agreements require the approval of Congress. The new Democratic-majority Congress sent the original deal, as negotiated by the Bush administration, back until language was included to protect Peruvian workers. I'm sure the labor protections are still minimal. Congress approved the Peru pact and is considering similar free trade agreements with Panama, Colombia and South Korea.

So, aside from the fact that cheap products on the shelves of our supermarkets come at the price of hurting small farmers in other countries, there is the question of how these foreign-owned large-scale industries that seek US and European markets came to exist in Peru in the first place.

During the 20th century, especially the second half, countries like Peru were eager to develop. Institutions such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund offered these "developing" countries access to loans as large as billions of dollars so they could contract American or European engineering companies to build airports, highway systems, hydroelectric dams, and other large infrastructure projects.



Dead fish and dead crab regularly wash up on the beach in Puerto Chicama. The continuing mismanagement of natural resources causes a decrease in both industrial catch and local subsistence catch. A fishmeal factory is shown in the background.

Photograph by Isaac Pearlman

However, a condition of these loans (which either purposefully or accidentally almost always resulted in the developing countries defaulting on their loan payments and being forced to grant trade concessions or other deals to the US) was that the country's economy must be "open to private investment." This basically means that large telecommunications, energy, mining, and agricultural companies could enter these countries and profit from their resources while selling them to the US and developed countries for prices lower than the more-regulated American products.

Needless to say, these slick, technologically advanced industries outperform or push out any locally owned industry. I often wonder what Peru would be like if Peruvians had been allowed to develop their own industries—their own fish production, their own mining, their own television. Would they be better off? The industries would certainly be smaller, less advanced, and produce on a smaller scale. But that would mean more local production, i.e., more food for Peruvians and probably more sustainable productions as well. Agricultural production would be smaller, but products Peruvians actually eat would be grown. Would they have cable TV? Widespread Internet access? Cell phones? Probably not, but they would have the chance to develop these industries on their own, instead of 20 million Peruvians paying their phone bills to a Spanish company.

So what have I learned? How have I changed? Over the past two years I have learned to live a normal life using only several liters of water a day. The average American uses over 30. I learned to survive on a diet of a third of the calories an average American eats. The food I eat is almost entirely locally produced—fish and seafood from the ocean, and vegetables and beef and chicken from farms a few miles outside of town. This means I eat strawberries and mangos in the summer and miss them in the winter until they appear again one day in the market, and those first few bites convince me that it was well worth the wait. In the US, on the other hand, year-round we eat beans from Mexico, bananas from Ecuador, sugar from Brazil, and asparagus from Peru.

This costly (both environmentally and financially) practice of importing food and food products from other countries wouldn't bother me so much if only the American consumers were bearing the extra cost. However, the sad reality—the reality I see every day in Puerto Chicama—is that the real cost of mass food production for the American market is borne by the people and communities of poverty-stricken countries

like Peru.

And the worst news of all about the unsustainable, "globalistic" economy driven by the American lifestyle and rampant consumerism—aside from the negative impact it has had on the people I have lived and worked with these last two years, and aside from the havoc being wrecked on the local environment by large-scale production factories—is the fact that globalism's disastrous effect is growing. First-World levels of consumerism are very quickly spreading to many other countries around the world, including Peru.

In the end, it is incredibly frustrating to know that a few simple changes in American economic policy—eliminating subsidies and placing real values on products, replacing "free" trade with "fair" trade, giving incentives to businesses whose "social justice" policies really do what they ought to—would literally have a million times more impact and effectiveness than all Peace Corps work combined. Many times I have wondered to myself "what am I doing?" as I teach recycling in a community that produces a lot less waste and recycles a lot more than any community in the US. Or when I try to promote *biohuertos* (community gardens) to people who not only produce most of their own food, but also tons of food for First-World countries. Or when I teach water conservation to people who have running water only two hours a day.

What can I, one Peace Corps volunteer, do? Now I know what a 99-cent bottle of marinated artichoke hearts means in terms of pesticides used and cheap labor exploited. I know what a 20-cent can of pet food means in terms of environmental pollution and unsustainability. In California I can buy locally grown food that somehow costs more than imported food due to the wonders of "globalism." I can teach recycling, gardening, and resource conservation skills to the people who are the most wasteful. And last but not least, I can vote for politicians who are willing to quit pandering to the interests of big business. And while I'll know, deep down, my actions alone will make very little difference, I'll act any way I can because I've seen firsthand the destructive side of globalization, and I'll act with the hope that I can influence my friends and family to do the same.

Two Poems by David Leivick

Once When I thought I Was Different

I walked among them
Counting their guns and eyeing their women
Searching the soft spot
That would accept my sword
Or the crackling line of cleavage
That would split beneath the hammer of my truth

I ripped off small victories of sight
While biding my time
Catching the patterns in the water
As the truth in beauty reaching out
When all along I knew
It was just the sun's reflection

And it wasn't until much later
When I saw my insights
Leaning like pennies against the wall
Waiting for the earth to tremble
That I saw that truth was one of their words
And all that belonged to me were my eyes

Tomorrow a Full Day of Plowing for Sure

It was only because no one saw him
That no one thought he was mad
Building a pier in the heart of the country
Driving piles deep into the fertile earth
A thousand miles inland from the sea

No one saw him working day and night
Those seven days until his eyes were glazed
And his hands were red with soreness
Even calling himself mad as he worked feverishly
Hammering the last planks in place

And then after setting two concrete statues
Twin grey sisters with eyes of blue marble
At the head of the dock ready to greet strangers
And wave farewell to those about to leave
He dangled his feet in mid-air and downed a beer

Women Live In These Rooms

By Judith Yamamoto

Mother has gotten so thin now. Her robe, the color of antelopes, hangs on her delicate bones; her face is watching and shy.

"Remember when I was nine, and you took me back to North Dakota for the whole summer?" I ask her. She's sitting in her chair while I change the sheets on the bed.

"You threw up on the train every morning after breakfast," she says.

I don't ask why Father didn't come with us. Better not to trouble her with too many questions. When Father died seven years ago, she stopped talking about him.

The pain is dark in her eyes, the prescription narcotics not reaching, not holding. She's been sick for over a year.

Even when I was little, I tried not to make her sad. There were grain elevators at every prairie town. The train stopped beside them, under cloud-filled skies. When we got to Burlington, the porter got our suitcases out of the overhead rack.

People looked at Mother when we stepped onto the platform. She wore her hair cut short, and over it a hat with a long, curved feather.

Aunt Nell was there to meet us. "Evelyn," she cried, hugging Mother in front of everybody. Then she hugged me. "My, my, so this is Clare -- look how tall she's grown!"

"Skin and bones," Mother said.

Aunt Nell's kitchen was full of women that summer. Mother and Aunt Nell, and Grandmother in a flowered cotton dress, were busy cutting up green beans and sweet corn and packing them into jars. Hot as it was outside, it was hotter still in that kitchen.

They were always talking, their fingers busy with knives and glass jars. Soft voices drifted out the back door. I played house in the old mail buggy that Uncle Charles used to drive. It was parked under a crab apple tree, not going anywhere, weeds growing up into the high wheels.

Aunt Nell said that in the winter Uncle Charles drove a sled when he went on his route. Out over the prairie. Sometimes every track was covered with snow. "He knew that country like the back of his hand," she said.

"Remember that buggy in Aunt Nell's yard?" I ask Mother, stretching the bottom sheet tightly over the bed.

"I think you spent the whole summer out there," she says.

I watch her watching me as she talks. As

though nothing, not even the long pain, the losses that come steady as heartbeats; nothing will ever stop her from looking at me.

"You only met Charlie once, when you were five, do you remember him?"

"Not really. I know what he looks like from the snapshots in the album. He had white hair."

"He was twenty years older than Aunt Nell. He was her second husband, she run the first one off because he wouldn't work." She winces. Stops for a moment, goes on. "Aunt Nell, she was always the happy one. You should have seen her dancing. She could dance the whole night away."

So many things I didn't know; how many more I'll never know. What were the two sisters talking about, that long ago summer? When I came into the kitchen, it got very quiet. "Little pitchers...." Mother sometimes said. Then, to me, "Go on outside, get some sunshine. Precious little of it in the city."

I'd climb into the buggy. The crab apple tree over my head in all its leaves and reddish-greenish apples. Every one I ate was sour.

Down by the grain elevator, the train whistled. It was going home, that far, cold place. I couldn't imagine San Francisco any more. Was Father teaching summer session that year? Lying on the living room couch in the late afternoons, with his stacks of papers to correct and the radio turned on to the war news?

Time didn't seem to move in those heat-stopped days. Maybe we would stay in North Dakota forever. Maybe Mother was running away, and she hadn't told me yet.

When we came back, Father was happy to see us. On the foggy coast, the sky was chopped small, held tight between the roofs. The house looked as if he had hardly been in it himself, a stranger there without us.

"Women live in these rooms," Mother says to me, looking at the quilt that I'm flipping over the bed. "Men come and go."

Way back then I knew I had to take care of her. I can still see that field of hay across the road from Aunt Nell's house. Brightest at mid-day.

Mother stands up, and I watch her for a minute to be sure she doesn't fall. Her face is so pale. The heat in the old furnace thrums up.

This time, she's steady.

I remember when I was little, blindfolded and turned around. How we gamble and lose, wanting the whole sky, all that light.

COMMUNITY INFO



Photograph by Julie Smith

WEEKLY IN MUIR BEACH

These activities take place at the Community Center unless otherwise noted.

MONDAY

- **Tai-chi** - 6:30 - 7:30 pm, \$22.50 per month
- **The Bookmobile** - 4:30 - 5:30 pm - 1st and 3rd Mondays, Mailboxes, Highway One across from Pelican Inn.

TUESDAY

- **Anusara Yoga** - 6:15 - 7:30 pm. Taylor's zendo, 1821 Shoreline Hwy. Instructor: Judy Turkalj 415.384.0386

WEDNESDAY

- **Tai-chi** - 8:00 - 9:00 am
- **Bistro** - Wednesday mornings, 9:30 - 11:30 am Organic fair trade coffee, \$1.50 per cup; additional cups 25¢ each. Featuring fantastic fresh-baked organic scones by Nancy Knox, \$1.50 each.
- **Muir Beach Quilters** - 11 am. No fee.
- **CSD Board of Directors Meeting** Meetings of the Board of Directors of the Muir Beach Community Services District are open to the public and are generally held on the 4th Wednesday of the month, every other month, at 7:00 pm. Notice of Board Meetings are posted 72 hours in advance, as exact dates may vary.

THURSDAY

- **Tai-chi** - 6:30 - 7:30 pm
- **Volleyball** - 6:00 pm - late At the courts on Muir Woods Road. No fee.
- **Iyengar Yoga** - 6:30 - 8:00 pm. Taylor's zendo 1821 Shoreline Hwy. Instructor: Susy Stewart 415.388.1549

SUNDAY

- **Green Gulch 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 - 1st Sundays 10 - 11:30 am

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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

For and about Muir Beach by Debra Allen:
www.muirbeach.com

The "Cute Tots" on page 12 are:

- 1) Lynda Silva 2) Charlene Modena 3) Amadeo Banducci 4) Matt Silva 5) John John Sward 6) Daniella Silva

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