



**"Mt. Tam to Diablo"**  
Painting and photograph by Larry Yamamoto

# BEACHCOMBER

A Muir Beach Journal of News and Opinion Since 1946

Issue 254 October 2011

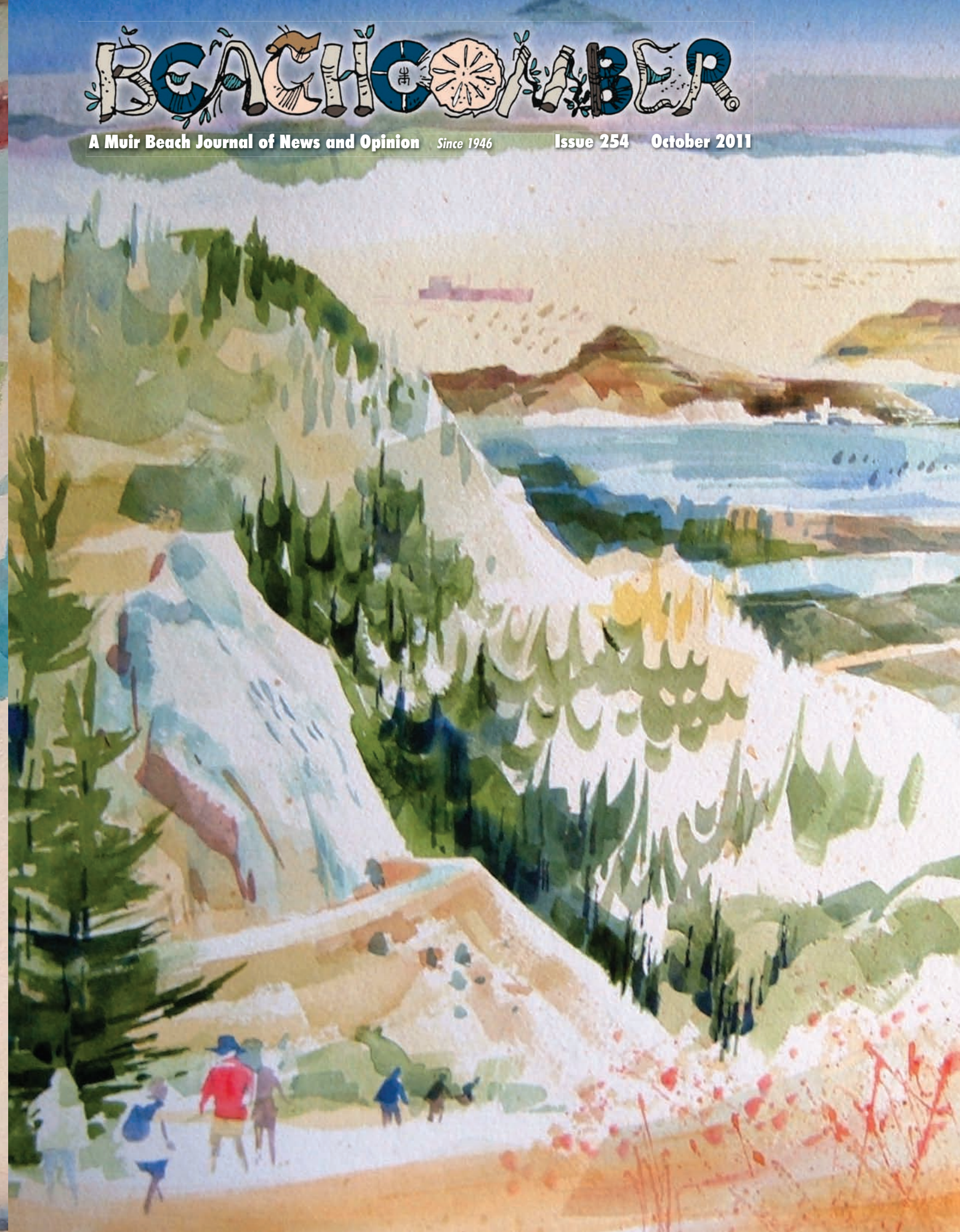




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FROM THE EDITOR

*Everyone is entitled to their own opinion  
but not everyone is entitled to their own facts*

Feedback on first two issues has been generally gratifying. We've upgraded to full color and off course that means additional production expenses. We're approaching 170 subscribers (locals and mailers) but annual subscription income will not be enough to cover the additional expenses since we also plan on upgrading our web page so readers can post comments. There will be a shortfall in meeting the costs of future productions and I'll continue to explore additional funding possibilities, but do let me know if you have any suggestions.

This job is a lot of work and even though I'm beginning to enjoy it more, I don't think one editor for a long time is a good idea. Any magazine over time leans toward the editor's personal preferences. So it is always better to have a variety of preferences expressed with new editors. All this by way of saying I would like to find someone willing to succeed me by the end of next year. Let me know if this challenge is of interest to you, and I'll be happy to meet with you and discuss it all.

Meanwhile take cheer from some recent accolades:  
“A number of factors make an outstanding community publication, they are easy to list, but challenging to create. It must have news and information about residents, events, and policies that are valued by the readers. It also needs engaging writing and graphics that tell a compelling story.

As I read your July 2011 issue of the *Beachcomber*, I was struck that it is one of the best community publications I've seen. It has all the needed elements and more.

Congratulations and thanks to you and the staff.”  
John Lavine, Dean and Professor, Medill school of Journalism, Media, Integrated Marketing Communications, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois

and from our Mill Valley printer Dave Semling:  
“For a community of this size, one of the best publications in the country!”  
—Gerry Pearlman

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Please email your text as a Word attachment to [gnpearl@hotmail.com](mailto:gnpearl@hotmail.com). Include a headline and your byline (name). 1/4 page: 200 hundred words plus photo; 1/2 page: 400 words no photo; full page: 850 words no photo, 750 words with photo; two page spread: 1600-1700 no photo, 1500 words 1 photo.

Please spell check your material and single space within paragraphs with no hard returns. Double line space between paragraphs and one letter space between sentences within paragraph.

Photos in JPEG format, save in highest JPEG setting (100%). Email as a separate attachment from story document. Captions should include file name of image first, where caption goes and, credit to Photographer.

If you have any questions contact the editor, 415-380-5056

The Muir Beach Quilters .....Forever

By Gerry Pearlman

They have been around since time immemorial-maybe even older than the volunteer fire department. So far back there seems to be some confusion about who the founding members were. They were all meeting and quilting in one another's houses before the community center was even built. However if memory serves correctly, most of the original group of nearly 40 years ago (and still looking quite good if I may say so) were: Gail Falls, Outi Onarato, Judith Yamamoto, Kathy Sward, Nancy Knox, Sharon Pickens and Julie Cahoon. They are still here and still quilting away on Wednesday afternoons at the community center with the exception of Cahoon and Pickens, and Judith who is working on a short story and has temporarily drifted off a bit..

They have come a long way since those early days when they had an annual quilt raffle as their main source of raising money for community projects. The raffling of the quilt has not quite ended, it has just stopped being a yearly raffle. Now the busy, newly energized quilting band, manages to get one together only every few years. After the millennium quilt there were a few others quilts, and a couple of years ago with the infusion of new (and old) quilters, they sewed and raffled off “Yakuta Memories”. Right now there's a quilt that's all pieced and ready to go on the quilting frame, but it will probably have to wait until after the annual Holiday Faire.

The funds raised through the raffle were the primary source of paying for the capital improvements in the community center for quite a while. As it was primarily a community raffle, many of the quilts raffled can still be found in houses

throughout the community. There was always a sense of excitement at the time of the raffle drawing, since it was common knowledge the magnificent quilts, always prominently displayed in the community center, would not be leaving the community.

The Quilters then began to devote themselves more to the development of Holiday Art Faire. It began by featuring mostly local artists who lived in the community. Over the years it has developed and expanded to become a juried selection process for local and other Bay Area artists to show and sell their work. The Faire has become one of the high points of the holiday season. It has generated substantial funds with each artist participating returning a percentage of their sales to the Quilters (lower for kids and our other non profits-the Garden Club and the MBVFD).

Proceeds from the Faire continued to support community center programs and capital improvements, but the Vision Project, brainchild of Judith Yamamoto with the help of Pam Barlow, was added. All the money from the Faire, raffles, and other events was put in one pot and used for the immediate community, but also for the world-wide community. \$1000 in emergency grants went to Haiti and Japan and other local groups It has been used to fund many capital improvements for the Community Center, including the fireplace wall, kitchen remodel (two times), fully enlarged deck and glass roof, the kids' room, the mezzanine and the pending reconstruction of the big window that will enable a view of the fountain donated by the Garden Club.

The internal dynamics of the Quilters remains a mystery. They have no Board of Directors and no by-laws governing the organization. Leslie Riehl is the financial lady



Some of the Quilters who worked on the raffle quilt Yakuta Memories  
Photograph by Peggy Chiang



Outi Onorato and Tayeko Kaufman checking their work on the MBQ raffle quilt Yakuta Memories  
Photograph by Julie Smith

in charge of the money. She has been doing so for the last three years and claims it is not a very complex business. Theoretically anyone can join, but it is probably true that they would favor a type of person, who in addition to quilting, is willing to contribute and participate in the full range of activities sponsored by the organization. It probably includes the potluck lunches that precede every afternoon of quilting. I did have occasion to witness some of the dishes being offered and it certainly looked like some gourmet

dining was happening. Sometimes wine accompanies lunch, and rumor has it, in their earlier days it sometimes flowed all afternoon long. It never interfered with the production of some lovely quilts.

What is truly remarkable is that an organization without any rules or regulations, without even official non-profit status, could have survived so long and accomplished so much.



# MEMORIES

## The Quilter’s Holiday Arts Fair

By Outi Onorato

Before the community center was built, the original Arts Fair was launched by the Quilting Bee. We held it in willing neighbor’s houses and all the arts and crafts were local. It was more like a Faire and Christmas party combined—with a slight emphasis on “party”. Once the community center was built the tradition continued. For several years I made a Tropical Tea Punch for our “adult refreshment”. It was strong on caffeine (tea), alcohol (4 kinds!) and sugar (juice) and went down very smooooothly. Everyone’s spirits loosened up along with their pocket books, sales went up dramatically after a few cups. Some locals were known to park themselves next to the punch bowl until we ran out.

I was urged to make additional batches every year until “donations” for the “free” punch no longer covered the expenses. The fair switched gears as more and more of the artists and the customers came from over the hill. It was time to shelve the punch making but it was fun while it lasted.

Here is the recipe so you can enjoy it at your own Holiday parties (Warning: can be habit forming, let your guests spend the night).

### TROPICAL TEA PUNCH

(adapted from The New York Times Cookbook 1961 edition!!!!)

- 1 qt. strong brewed tea
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 cups cognac
- 1/2 cup dark rum
- 1/2 cup light rum
- 3 cups pineapple juice
- 2 bottles dry champagne

For brewing tea use 16 tea bags of Earl Grey Tea. Bring to boil 1 qt. water and pour over bags and brew 12 hours. Remove tea bags. Add sugar and stir until dissolved. Stir in rest of the ingredients. Serve in a bowl with a ring or star mold of ice.

Those early fairs, while they didn’t make much money, solidified two other Quilters’ group *raison d’etre*: to encourage emerging artists, both in our quilting group and in a fair to showcase their work, and to throw a community party.

In many ways, our young enthusiasm for community building was very much a product of the times, that particular intersection of the sixties’ cultural renaissance, civil rights, women’s lib and free speech movements and what seemed, at the time, semi-rural living. There were, after all, lots of horses in Muir Beach, and chickens, a few goats, a sheep, even, still, memories of Souza’s cow. Many of us grew our own vegetable gardens, fished in the ocean, baked bread and canned produce and jam, sewed and knitted and wove our own clothes. So it was very natural to harness all this talent to make quilts, and to build a place where the community could come together.

We met in each other’s houses, always brought food, brewed lots of coffee (which reminds me of Sharon Pickens, who didn’t do a stitch of sewing but kept the coffee cups filled—sewing not being a prerequisite for membership, of which were none). We taught ourselves how to make quilts by looking at books and gleaning as much as we could from our foremothers in Kansas and North Dakota and, I believe, Ohio (Julie Cahoon’s roots)—over the years women brought their own family quilting histories. Our quilt blocks started off complicated, working toward more simple, and our stitches went from wild to more consistent—but always a combination of the two because new members learned on the job—the quilting frame. Also, we grew to understand that any kind of stitching is just fine! ..... Judith Yamamoto

# HITCHED TO EVERYTHING

## Transforming Education

By Scott D. Sampson



Education reform is an oft-heard phrase in this country. Any outsider would assume—correctly, I’m afraid—that we never get education right. To give a sample of recent metrics, a 2009 poll sponsored by the California Academy of Sciences found that only 53% of adults know how long it takes Earth to go around the Sun, and only 59% of adults know that humans and (non-bird) dinosaurs did not live at the same time. A 2010 study found investigating the education level of 15 year-olds in 70 countries found that the USA ranked 14<sup>th</sup> in reading skills, 17<sup>th</sup> in science, and 25<sup>th</sup> in mathematics.

“Sustainability depends on raising future generations of citizens with a different perspective on the human-nature connection.”

While in New York City last year, I had the opportunity to listen to US Secretary of Education Arne Duncan present his reform vision to an audience of well over a thousand teachers. Duncan is a thoughtful, intelligent man, as well as a polished presenter, and I enjoyed hearing him speak about replacing the Bush Administration’s “No Child Left Behind” with a new alternative, “Race to the Top.” “The Race,” as its nicknamed, is a \$4.3 billion incentive program (read “competition”) designed by the US Department of Education to overhaul the education system. Key elements include performance pay for teachers (together with a system for firing teachers deemed “inadequate”) and a major boost in the number of public charter schools. States compete for large sums of money by demonstrating that they are aligning their education system with the new criteria.

I applaud the renewed emphasis on teaching performance. To my mind, we should go much further, transforming teaching into a high-status, well paid profession akin to medicine. With greatly increased salaries paired to much higher standards, we could recruit the very best teachers and offer them appropriate kinds of training both before and after receipt of their education certificates.

Why is teaching so important? Not merely so that American kids can keep up with youth in other countries, enabling the US can maintain its position in the global economy. No,

teaching is critical because education reform—or, more accurately, transformation—may just be the key to ecological sustainability. Contrary to popular belief, techno-fixes alone simply won’t cut it. Sustainability depends on raising future generations of citizens with a different perspective on the human-nature connection. Specifically, we must counter the erroneous notion of viewing ourselves as external conquerors of nature, and begin to understand that we are fully embedded within nature.

What most disturbs me about the ongoing debate over education reform, including the Race, is the virtual lack of conversation, let alone debate, about curriculum content. The unspoken assumption is that a shift in the delivery mechanism is all that is needed to “fix” education. Yet in addition to how we are teaching our children, we should be equally concerned with what we are teaching them.

Today, as for most of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, education is about careerism, preparing students to successfully enter consumer society—that is, to be “upwardly mobile.” The result, in the words of Wendell Berry, is a surfeit of “itinerant professional vandals... pillaging the country and laying it waste.” Although we are well aware of the environmental calamity facing us today, and the fundamental role of that “consumers” play in accelerating our pace toward disaster, education (K-16) is still organized as if no such specter is sitting out there on the horizon.



Education for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century should be education for sustainability, a system of teaching and learning that helps our youth understand how to live well in the world. At its root, sustainability depends on two factors: 1) justice for all humans; and 2) a harmonious relationship between the human and nonhuman world (i.e., justice for nonhuman nature). One of the

greatest problems with our present day education system is that it fragments the world into artificial chunks (biology, history, geography, math, etc.) and prevents us from seeing larger patterns and unified wholes. A partial remedy to this curricular myopia, and certainly a fundamental element that deserves residence at the curriculum core, is ecological literacy, or “ecoliteracy”: the interweaving of



Earth’s natural systems, and the human role is those systems. Some remarkable progress is being made is the ecoliteracy arena, but we urgently need to find ways to scale up these successes so that they are applied more broadly.

A second key content element is what I have termed “evolutionaryliteracy,” or “evoliteracy.” Whereas ecoliteracy focuses on connections and energy flow within the temporal snapshots of ecological systems, evoliteracy inserts the vertical dimension of deep time. The Epic of Evolution, from the beginnings of the universe to the present day, is our amazing origin story delivered by science. This grand, unifying saga, also called the “Universe Story,” is capable of offering a critical dose of meaning and purpose to our lives. Must more than a vast expanse of dead space, our universe is a stunningly creative place that birthed us through a long series of transformations, beginning with simple hydrogen atoms. Seeing ourselves as players in this 14 billion year old drama, and recognizing that our decisions will impact that outcome of this story, may just be an essential element in achieving anything worthy of the title “sustainable.” Yet, at present, the Universe Story is virtually absent from all levels of education, communicated, if at all, only as a series of fragments rather than a unified whole.

“If you’re an educator, think about the underlying messages of your teaching, and how you might alter these in the direction of sustainability.”

A third ingredient is place-based education. Central to this rapidly growing approach is experiential learning, in which students engage in hands-on, inquiry-based, often outdoor activities. Local knowledge is used not only to communicate general ideas but to deepen the meaning of education, connecting children to place and offering practical applications. In contrast to the traditional, discipline-centric approach (e.g., history, English, math, art, social studies), place-based educators and their students focus learning around local projects, transforming communities into classrooms. Key topics frequently include: 1) the cultural history of the region; 2) the names and ecological interactions of local plants and animals; and 3) regional sources of energy, food and drinking water. Also integral to this approach is community service, with students engaging in such activities as growing gardens and reclaiming streams, planting trees and launching recycling programs. Place-based education is founded on values such as community, sustainability, and beauty—promoting exactly the kind of radical shift required if we are renew the human-nature bond. Far from being

parochial, place-based education uses direct experiences in local landscapes to inform larger-scale explorations. Much better to understand and experience our local redwood forest before tackling the Amazon rainforest.

Rapid education transformation (as opposed to mere “reform”) is critical to the future of humans and millions of other species on this planet. We need a major mindshift, one that may only come through empowering future generations. So get informed. If you’re an educator, think about the underlying messages of your teaching, and how you might alter these in the direction of sustainability. If you’re a parent, find out what your children are learning in school, and make efforts to shift the content (as well as the delivery) in ways that will enable our youth to live well in the world. Earth’s future depends on the mobilization efforts, beginning in communities like Muir Beach.



“Muir Beach resident Scott Sampson is a dinosaur paleontologist and science communicator. He is the host and science advisor of the hit PBS KIDS television series “Dinosaur Train.” He recently completed a general audience book—“Dinosaur Odyssey: Fossil Threads in the Web of Life”—and is presently working on another book about connecting children with nature. For more information, check out his website ([www.scottsampson.net](http://www.scottsampson.net)) and blog, “The Whirlpool of Life” ([scottsampson@blogspot.com](mailto:scottsampson@blogspot.com)). Scott can be reached at: [ssampson@umnh.utah.edu](mailto:ssampson@umnh.utah.edu)

# The Critter Report

By Dave MacKenzie

## OUTFOXED!

In 1995 a strain of canine distemper swept through the fox and raccoon populations of Northern California. Marin County was especially hard hit. Although some domestic dogs were affected, the brunt of the epidemic was felt by the Gray Foxes. Many of the Gray Foxes in Marin were wiped out by the disease. The fox population had been booming due to two very wet winters in a row. Those of us who remember seeing these poor disoriented animals wandering on wobbly legs across busy streets will never forget the sight. If you own a dog, make sure it gets its shots, for its sake and the wildlife’s.



One Stunning Muir Beach Critter  
Photograph by Brad Eigsti

Now, in 2011, the Gray Fox has more than bounced back. At our home in upper Muir Beach we see foxes almost daily. They breed regularly under Muir Beacher’s porches and other secret locales. I have had so many reports of sightings and of families with kits (pups), that I hardly even write them down anymore on the sightings board at the beach.

The Gray Fox, *Urocyon Cinereoargenteus*, is a gorgeous animal. It has a beautiful overall silver/gray coat (*cinerascens* means ash gray in Latin, and *argenteus* means silvery), and also sports a rusty/orange back to its neck, ears, and legs. The face is unique: the black smudge which runs up from

the lower jaw to the middle of the muzzle gives the fox the appearance of just having indulged in a rather drippy hot-fudge sundae. One night in near darkness I saw a 10 inch long black critter floating back and forth in the back yard. It turned out to be the black “mane” of a foxes big bushy tail. The rest of the Gray Fox was invisible to me except for the that tail! I also once saw a totally black Gray Fox in Muir Beach.

A close relative, the Red Fox, is more common in the Eastern United States. Aside from the Sierra Nevada race of the Red Fox, the ones you might see close to the Bay Area are introduced and always have black at the back of the ears, and white tail tips. I have not personally seen any in Marin. Many Red Foxes are actually gray-colored, not reddish. Kit foxes, in the California desert, are another species which can be seen in our state.

I have heard the Gray Foxes barking now many times. The sound is a fairly high pitched, single bark, a bit like I imagine some small annoyed dog would exclaim if it were stepped on. The adults and young are barking at each other now, in September, in minor food fights. I have heard the bark often in the spring as well, in mating season. Always at night.

The gray is the only fox which climbs trees. I recently tried to blame a raccoon for breaking down a nice Wax-Myrtle branch while trying to get to a bird feeder. However, I then saw an adult Gray Fox perched on our platform bird feeder, which is a clear 54 inches off the ground. It was the fox was the real culprit at the Wax-Myrtle. I was able to sneak up



The Critter Cam Catches a Night Prowler  
Photograph by Dave MacKenzie





**Feeders are not Just for the Birds!**  
**Photograph by Dave MacKenzie**

within about 10 feet of the hungry fox in the early morning light. It swung its head in wide circles for a better view when it finally figured out there was something moving behind that sliding glass door. Gray Foxes love birdseed, so many of us in Muir Beach are unintentionally feeding them!



An interesting, though messy, habit of the Gray Fox is “signing” with its scat on top of elevated areas. This could be a railing, trash can, or even a gravestone. Up is good in their world, a testament to their climbing skills.

The Gray Fox is a great mouser. I watched one stalk slowly and patiently, then crouch and leap high into the air, coming straight down to snag a tasty California Vole (our most common rodent, a bit like a short-tailed mouse). The pounce is identical to what I have observed several times performed by Coyotes and Bobcats. Usually they all miss, but that is the life of the predator.

In the late summer and fall, the young foxes leave their families and head out on their own. At that time the males search out females for the next litter. There are typically 4 kits, born in April or May. Some Muir Beachers have been lucky enough to watch these family groups frolicking in the spring sunshine.

So keep your eyes sharp as you hike around Muir Beach and bring your binoculars! Gray Foxes are often active around here on the trails during the day, and a close-up view of this beautiful animal is something you will never forget.



## Remembering Doris Clark

*By Leba Wine*

Doris Clark was a truly GOOD person. Every morning, we walked to—as we said—Muir Woods.

We really walked only half way to Muir Woods, and Doris chuckled every time we said we went all the way. I think it was the first time she had ever stretched the truth, and she enjoyed it. Just that one fib, though. She didn't tell any others.

Doris was born in a very small town in Iowa—about three hundred Lutherans and one Jewish family. The whole town was strictly religious, and the good townswomen refused to make her wedding dress—as they had always done for the betrothed girls—because she was marrying a non-Lutheran. She married Ed Clark anyway.

Doris and Ed had five children—three boys and two girls, Ed Jr., Catherine, Gordon, Susan and Jim. In time, Ed became a physician at the Mayo Clinic, and Doris became a liberal Democrat in Minnesota. Hubert Humphrey and Walter Mondale had dinner often at her house. Her ideas about God, and fairness, and empathy, and independence, and her place in the world were changing from dogmatic religious doctrine.

Doris and Ed moved to Muir Beach and built themselves a house at the top of Starbuck Drive. They had parties there, wild ones, according to her. She told me that the drink of choice was combining all the liquor the guests had brought with them in one big punch bowl and slogging it down. Nobody had to drive home, she said, so they decided to get as drunk as possible.

Doris' husband and her son, Gordon, died in the same year. When I asked her how she had lived through that terrible time, she said it was because of her friends and her garden. Her garden was an acre of flowers and vegetables in orderly profusion. When she moved to the Redwoods in 2000, that is what she missed most. She started a vegetable

garden there that became a community effort. She put fresh veggies on many tables.

I think it was not only friends and gardens that kept her going, but the desire for challenges that were equal to the changes in her life after she left her small hometown. After she graduated from St. Olaf's University, Doris won a scholarship to Chase Western Reserve in Ohio where she earned a masters degree in nursing and graduated first in her class. After the deaths of her husband and son, she saw an ad in the San Francisco newspaper for a nurse to accompany a crew of four on a sail boat to Hawaii. She applied, was accepted, and spent five weeks at sea with four twenty-something novices on their first sailing expedition. She was in her sixties. It was more of an adventure than she had imagined.

But she was ready for more and volunteered for the Peace Corps, imagining exotic foreign travel and soothing ministrations using her nursing skills. She was sent to Haiti! This was in the mid 1980s, and I had just moved to Muir Beach. Doris was sending her friends letters about her experiences and gave permission to print them in The Beachcomber. What she saw in Haiti was harrowing, tragic, horrifying, deeply terrible. And every letter ended: Where is God? At the end of her two year tour, Doris, as was her aim in life, had found a way to make things a little better for the people of that country. She was one of the founders of Pazapa, a hospital enclave in southwestern Haiti that was devoted to repairing congenital deformities in children and to improving their general health.

I saw her last at Marin General Hospital, just a week before she died in August. All her children and grandchildren had flown in to be with her. Doris looked almost her old self, white hair gleaming, eyes blue and bright. As we reminisced about old times, she acknowledged that she had had



an interesting life. Not easy, but at least interesting. She had weathered unspeakable tragedies, but she had taken charge of her life and had lived it the way she wanted to. Her friends, from all over the country, went to her for strength and solace, and she was always available. She enthusiastically supported causes that were dear to her heart and that made the world better.



The daughter of pioneers, she was a pioneer in making her life meaningful to her husband, her children and grandchildren, and her friends. We will miss her SO much.

—Leba Wine

THE FLOWERS

The flowers come and go  
Filled with light  
Breath and color  
Reminders  
That some things  
Can be counted on  
To bud and bloom  
Linger awhile  
Then die

The meaning of their life is known  
By the hands that held them  
The bowl that contained them  
The eyes that saw them  
The hearts that loved them  
The air that was filled  
With their fragrance  
And  
The breath-taking change  
They made in the Universe  
Wherever they were

© Betty McAfee ‘11

The Blue Pearl Laguna  
WORTH \$650 A NIGHT

By Gerry Pearlman

I really didn’t know what to expect when I signed up for a week at the Blue Pearl Laguna. I was looking for someplace to get away to work on my yoga. My internet search came up with the Blue Pearl in Laguna. Since I have a 90 year old Aunt and Uncle and some cousins living in Laguna, I thought I could double up on the experience by visiting them afterward.



Balance  
Photograph by Derek Loftin

You arrive on Sunday at 3pm and finish on Saturday at noon. When I saw the price tag for the week I almost gave up the idea. \$3900 for the week, or \$650 a night, will give most of us pause for reflection. I was curious as to what can be worth that kind of money. There were lots of testimonials about guests traveling from around the world to enjoy yoga, meditation, hiking, massages and healthy cleansing vegetarian cuisine. One person saw his brother-in-law completely transformed, when he returned home after a three week stay at the Blue Pearl. He signed up for a month hoping to achieve the same results. And he did! He became more flexible, and able to bend all the way down without any pain in his body. He was able to stop taking his blood pressure medicine, and is sure his cholesterol level was lowered as well. He slept like a baby every night, and was actually down 33 pounds when he departed after a month’s stay. I saw pictures of him before and after, and it was really quite a remarkable transformation. I wanted to see for myself what this program was all about. We worked out a deal where I would do some writing for the Blue Pearl and off I went.

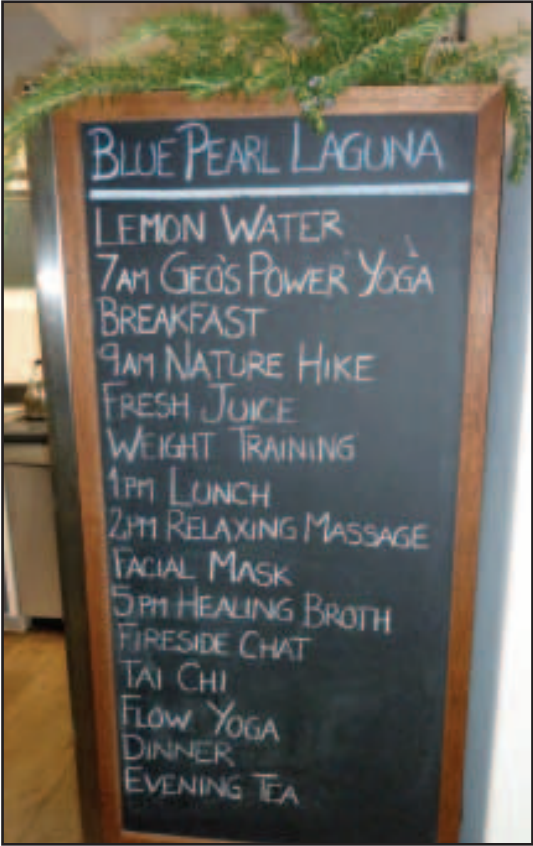
The credentials of the owners and operators, Geo and Katrisha Moskios, were impeccable. They enjoyed wide acclaim from having practiced and taught yoga for 30 years in the US and around the world. Geo has written several yoga books including “Yoga for Dummies”, and had appeared on CNN and the Oprah show. He was the innovator of “power yoga”and even more

remarkable had served a tour of duty as a marine in Viet Nam before all these things took over his life.

Katresha born in Australia, began her career as a model. She then went on to study health and nutrition which led to her creation of Katresha’s Oils and Creams, an all organic skin care line sold in spas and boutiques world wide. Her discerning taste is everywhere in evidence in the decor, furnishings, art and even the amazing indoor fountain of river stones. But especially in the preparation of the food, you could feel her presence!

It was their dream to open a yoga and hiking retreat center and, after their experience the world over, the Canyon of Laguna was the perfect setting.

After pick up at the airport by Derek, I was whisked away to the Blue Pearl where I met Geo and Katresha. Their humor and grace was infectious and the ambiance of Blue Pearl was warm, welcoming, the décor, tasteful and elegant. Quite an amazing feat in itself since the building, before Geo and Katresha transformed it, housed the Hells Angels and a drug rehabilitation



The Daily Schedule  
Photograph by Derek Loftin

program. There were rugs collected from around the world and flowers everywhere with lovely furnishings to accompany them. I really liked my own room. It had no phone or television and a distinct personality which suited me as opposed to the look alike and feel alike conventional hotel room. Next was the weighing in ceremony where Geo not only establishes your weight, but measures every inch of you with the precision of a tailor about to make you a suit.

Then, almost before I realized what was happening, I found myself hiking along with Derek and the rest of the group from the bottom to the top of Laguna Canyon. 3 hours later we were all back at the Blue Pearl having our first meal. The three hour hike was an event that would repeat itself every day for the rest of my week long stay. It was combined with two hours of yoga in the morning and in the early evening amounting to 5 hours altogether of physical exercise each and every day. That daily exercise regime may sound daunting to most people, but it was clear to me and the others in the group that it got easier as time progressed. Some individuals actually began to run up the hills (not all the way) toward the end of the week. I was the oldest person in the group and considerably slower than the rest of them, so while I usually didn't make the full hike, I did make the full three hours by simply turning around whenever the guide accompanying me ascertained the rest of the group was on the way back. Hiking and yoga are off course two different types of activity, but before actually doing them at this level myself, I couldn't imagine being able to do 5 hours of them every day for a week.



**Hiking**  
**Photograph by Derek Loftin**

A word about our guides, teachers, drivers, and kitchen staff I got to know. Anna, Derek, Conrad, Maudi, Sarah, Barbara, Lucila and Deborah did everything. They guided us in hiking, taught us in yoga, lectured us on meditation and Tai Chi, cooked and cleaned up after us and became our friends. One of the most endearing aspects of the Blue Pearl was the disappearance of the line between guest and staff that is characteristic of most places. It made the stay so much more comfortable. They claimed their

proficiency was the result of the rigorous training provided by Geo and Katresha and I'm sure it's true. But just as true is the fact of their wonderfully unique capabilities. The Blue Pearl has only been open for two years but Barbara, who gave us our healing broths, and decorated our dining table in different designs every day, has been associated with Geo and Katresha for much longer.

As much as the 5 hours daily of hiking and yoga were a unique experience, so were the three meals we experienced each day. I say "experienced" rather than "ate" because it was truly an experience to be confronted first with beauty of the meal presentation, and then by the delicate quality of the meal itself.

It's hard to imagine 12 to 14 leaves of romaine lettuce with a feta cheese dressing constituting a meal in itself especially after 5 hours of exercise, but it did seem appropriate when after a few days, the shock of the small servings wore off. Everything is organic, fresh, and vegetarian. It is a proven cleansing diet. A single day's meal plan starts the day with warm lemon water. Then a breakfast of a half piece of grilled fruit with fresh fruit compote, goat's milk yogurt, sprinkles of crushed, roasted almonds and flax seed. Lunch may consist of chopped, vegetable salad & beet boats. And dinner could be stuffed orange pepper with quinoa, mushrooms with cherry tomatoes on top and baked, served with fresh green beans or snap peas and sprinkled with fresh Herbs de Blue Pearl Laguna. Herbs de Blue Pearl are: Oregano, Basil, Sage, Thyme, Rosemary. Katresha says: "People are surprised that even though the servings are smaller, they don't get hungry". And what is more surprising is the increased amount of energy I felt. In all my time at the Blue Pearl I never felt tired!

Upon our return from the afternoon hike each day we were scheduled for our full body massage. I've been getting massages for a long time and I can say that this group of masseuses were about as good as I've found anywhere. A lovely swimming pool, jacuzzi, and infra ray sauna were available before or after your massage, and if you felt like hanging upside down, a fully equipped gym. Facial cremes and healing broths were a regular afternoon feature as well. With evening lectures on meditation, Tai Chi, and nutrition, each day was a full and rewarding experience from Geo's 6:30am awakening call to the beautifully presented last meal of the day.

I began this journey with a great deal of curiosity about the value of this type of experience and the expense involved. But if you consider the full package of a very nice room, three meals a day, hiking and yoga lead by very competent guides and teachers, daily full body massages, daily facial cremes and healing broths, lectures, gym and jacuzzi, the cost seems quite reasonable. And besides there is the good company, healthy life style, and for everyone real weight loss (10.5 lbs. for me). Most things in life, more often than not, fail to live up to your expectations. The Blue Pearl actually managed to exceed mine!

## Seniors Organize as "Elderberries"

*By Paul Jeschke*

A formerly nameless organization of Muir Beach residents of a certain age is now officially operating as the Elderberries and is undertaking a number of projects to improve life in our relatively isolated community.

Among the first Elderberry proposals, purchasing emergency alert devices. The devices are installed in homes of individuals who feel vulnerable and in an emergency are activated by pushing a button on a pendant or bracelet. The system dials preprogrammed numbers of friends or neighbors until it gets a response. If the first four calls are not answered, the unit dials 9-1-1.

The call-for-help units are relatively inexpensive (about \$70) and unlike some versions, do not require monthly monitoring fees. Elderberries are working to determine how many are needed in Muir Beach. Presumably, they could be distributed to individuals as needs arise. The group plans to ask the CSD to fund the purchase.

Elderberry member Marilyn Laatsch researched the "Vial for Life," a small plastic container that contains an individual's emergency information. The vial is kept in the refrigerator and a note is placed on the refrigerator door alerting emergency responders that it is inside. Fire Chief John Sward distributed the vials to Elderberry members and plans to make them available to the entire community.

At the suggestion of Martha de Barros, the group will be distributing an "Everyday Caring" survey to Muir Beach residents in September. The brief questionnaire is designed to find out how members of our community can help individuals in need with tasks like making a meal, driving to a medical appointment or walking a dog. Small and occasional donations of time and effort can make a big difference.

An outgrowth of the Elderberries is the formation of a book club that meets monthly. Gerry Pearlman has been getting titles from the Marin County Library. For September, the group read "Angle of Repose" by Wallace Stegner.

Elderberries gather at the Community Center on the third Tuesday of the month and alternate noon and evening meetings. New members are always welcome.

### MINUTES FOR THE ELDERBERRIES, SEPT 20, 2011 LUNCHTIME MEETING AT THE CC

Present were Martha de Barros, Gerald Pearlman, Gail Falls and Barbara Schoenfeld. Beth Carusillo from West Marin Senior Services was also there.

- More discussion about the Muir Beach Caring Survey that took place at this meeting decided we probably need to go over the wording one more time before it gets distributed in all the mail boxes.
- Gail wondered if there might be some interest by a few elders in activities such as hiking regularly...or meeting some mornings at the Beach to pick up trash.
- Discussion deferred until next meeting regarding the article: "Novato's Bay Area Independent Elder Program". Questions were raised about how it might apply to Muir Beach, especially the food programs, since we may need to know how many of us are of actually elders in this community.
- Gerry Pearlman is interested in extending this group's activities to include involvement in community issues that are not necessarily elder-related. How we might get signs on Hwy 1 suggesting where slow drivers can pull over is one issue, another is perhaps getting involved in a Design Review Committee.

### MINUTES FOR THE ELDERBERRIES, SEPT 20, 2011 LUNCHTIME MEETING AT THE CC

Present were Martha de Barros, Gerald Pearlman, Gail Falls and Barbara Schoenfeld. Beth Carusillo from West Marin Senior Services was also there.

- The amended version of the Muir Beach Caring Survey that a number of people have worked on. More discussion took place at this meeting; we probably need to go over the wording one more time before it gets distributed in all the mail boxes.



## WATERCOLORS BY LARRY YAMAMOTO

Every subject brings a new emotion.  
A clean sheet of paper, a new adventure.

Born in Honolulu, Hawaii, in 1929. Spent his childhood in Los Angeles except for three years in an American concentration camp at Gila River, Arizona, during World War II.

Married and the father of three children, he worked in the Bay Area as a longshoreman and ship clerk, I.L.W.U. locals #10 and #34. Retired in 1989 after heart surgery.

Art education: Studied at Otis Art Institute in Los Angeles with James C. Wright, and in the Bay Area with watercolorist Ken Potter. Member of Marin County Watercolor Association and Marin Society of Artists.

Exhibitions: Group and one-man shows at the Marin County Watercolor Society, Muir Beach Artisans, Marin Society of Artists, East Bay Watercolor Society, Palo Alto Annual, San Francisco Art Festival, Marin Art Festival, Buckelew Marinscapes, Marin County Fair, Watercolor West/Riverside, Marin County Museum of Art at the Marin County Civic Center and many local groups.



**"A Thousand Cranes"**  
Photograph by Larry Yamamoto

His paintings are included in corporate and private collections in the western states, including Hawaii, and in Japan.

For more information on the sale of the paintings on display in this issue of the Beachcomber contact lawerenceyamamoto@yahoo.com

Larry Yamamoto currently  
has a one-man show at

Jolt'n Bolt  
in San Francisco, 2325 3<sup>rd</sup> St.,  
(corner of 20<sup>th</sup> St.), Ste#100

Open from 11:30 to 4:30, Monday-Friday.



**Back Cover Painting: Mt. Tam to Diablo**  
Photograph by Larry Yamamoto



**Front Cover Painting: Lime Point III**  
Photograph by Larry Yamamoto

## Greywater Systems AN IDEA WHOSE TIME HAS COME

By Sam Seeger and Luke Brummer

*Greywater systems are definitely an idea whose time has come. California once again leads the way by being one of the few states that allow grey water systems by code. There are programs out there to aid homeowners with the cost of installation. More information is necessary-anyone out there want to take this one on! Meanwhile here's a reprint of an article that appeared in the magazine "Metropolis" written by students, .Sam Seeger and Luke Brummer, in Simram Sethi's University of Kansas journalism class. For local information contact Laura Allen, laura@greywateraction.org- they are giving a workshop on composting toilets Sept. 18th in Berkeley.*

### TAKING ACTION

By Sam Seeger and Luke Brummer

A consensus is emerging that water conservation is about to become one of the preeminent issues facing humanity. A recent survey suggests that 36 states anticipate water shortages as early as 2013. Parts of Africa are already experiencing deadly tribal conflicts over water rights as climate change alters access, and these conflicts are sure to spread and increase in intensity as population demand grows and pollution pressures increase.

As these obstacles play out close to home and across the globe, many in first world countries (Americans being among the worst) blindly waste precious resources. Of the world's total water supply, 2.5 percent is fresh, but less than 1 percent is readily accessible for human consumption. The average American uses nearly 152 gallons of this water per day—60 percent of which is used for outdoor applications. To put this into perspective, this consumption rate is more than double that of the average European (who only uses 66 gallons per day) and more than 30 times higher than the five gallons per day used by the 1.1 billion people who lack sufficient water resources. Upon learning of these alarming statistics, you might ask yourself, what can be done to curb this disparaging trend of excessive water consumption?

As part of an interdisciplinary journalism, architecture and environmental studies course at the University of Kansas, we have been asking ourselves just that question. Throughout the semester, we have delved deeper and deeper into these issues, challenging our perceptions and misconceptions about water conservancy. Starting with techniques like adopting the mantra, "If it's yellow, let it mellow," we began to whittle away at our water usage, but nothing has hit home quite as hard as a trip halfway across the country. Over spring break, with our academic sensibilities in tow, we hit the road for Oakland, California and a residential greywater installation.

Once in Oakland, we set out to install a residential greywater system under the guidance of Greywater Action, a collective of hands-on instructors and builders devoted to educating the public on the virtues of greywater and water conservation. The purpose of a greywater system is to redirect water that would otherwise be wasted as sewage after washing machine, shower or sink use and diverting it for reuse elsewhere. In our case, we were charged with the task of rerouting water from a washing machine to a backyard garden.

**"A recent survey suggests that 36 states anticipate water shortages as early as 2013."**

As California continues to struggle with water distribution, the need for greywater systems of all shapes and sizes seems particularly apt. What's more, California is one of the few states to allow greywater systems by code.

The antiquated permitting policies of many states have actually made it illegal to construct even the most basic of greywater systems. Some estimates put the number of legally installed greywater systems at less than 2% of the total. Fears of improperly installed systems have kept many jurisdictions from adopting laws that allow the application of greywater, but as states like Arizona and California feel the effects of an impending water crisis, they are leading the way in greywater legislation. Yet, even with the implementation of forward thinking legislation, California code continues to impose excessive limits on greywater systems. Those at Greywater Action view Arizona's permitting process as model policy to expand towards.





**All hands on deck. The greywater install team**  
*Photograph by Simran Sethi*

It was California's water struggles and its embrace, although limited, of greywater that led our class to Oakland. The install began with an introduction to greywater by Laura Allen, of Greywater Action, highlighting the need for greywater systems. Greywater Action regularly directs similar courses for those interested in greywater installations. Next, we launched into the pipes and fittings required for the install, and came to the realization just how inexpensive—\$100 to \$250—a Do-It-Yourself system can be (especially when compared to the savings in water expenses over the life of the system). After learning the basics, we took our newly found knowhow and set to work on the system just as rain began to fall.

**“California is one of the few states to allow greywater systems by code.”**

The next portion of the install was a muddy lesson in trench digging. As the rain poured down around us, we persistently dug the shallow trenches and mulch basins required to lay out the network of progressively smaller hoses and outlets that strategically feed the desired plants. While excavation was underway outside, inside a team was assembling the plumbing components needed to divert the greywater from the washing machine. Another group braved the crawlspace to lay long runs of PVC to the awaiting network of distribution hoses.

As the clouds cleared, the install neared completion. With team members anxiously monitoring outlets, the system was put to the test. After tensely waiting, excitement erupted around the mulch basins as greywater began to flow. In all, it took roughly 6 hours for a team of ten to integrate a standard washing machine into a greywater system capable of distributing water to several planting beds. With some plumbing supplies and a little effort this system now diverts as much as 50 gallons of water per washing machine load.

It's becoming ever clearer that simple solutions like these are necessary to create a sustainable future for our modern lives. We came to this conclusion prior to our California adventure by merely observing the shocking circumstances surrounding our dwindling water resources, but what wasn't entirely clear when our class set out on this excursion was just how easy and tangible environmental change can be. To our astonishment, we took home a very palpable understanding of how small projects like this are not only achievable for the common person, but also where the real hope for sustainability lies.

We are now all active in ongoing efforts to reduce our consumption by shortening showers, “letting it mellow,” and even planning greywater installs of our own. Getting a little dirt under our nails opened our eyes to the sources of waste around us, and equipped us to make the changes we need to manifest.

*Sam Seeger and Luke Brummer, students in Simran Sethi's journalism class at the University of Kansas.*

## The Whimsical Sculptures of Marilyn Stiles

*By Tayeko Kaufman*

Once you have seen the magical and whimsical clay sculptures or ‘critters’ by Marilyn, you want to know the artist. Her lizards, toads, frogs, slugs, ravens, foxes and pigs speak volumes for the sense of humor and dignity she imparts to her clay friends. A reclining lizard reading a book on a path on a warm sunny day; a pig adorned with carpenter belt filled with tools ready for work; a pair of ravens in deep conversation on a tree limb, or a crafty fox with tilted cap who may have just raided the chicken coop, all anatomically fashioned so their true nature cannot be denied, yet so human in their pose and expression that the viewer can't help but smile and be amused.

So it was with great anticipation that the Muir Beach Garden Club commissioned Marilyn to create a fountain to sit at the foot of the 3 lovely Japanese maples that we planted in the early Spring of 2008. When she saw the location, she simply smiled and said, “I already have the fountain that is a perfect complement for the site.”



**Artist Marilyn Stiles in studio**  
*Photograph by Wyeth Stiles*

Collaborating with Master Mason, John John Sward, who created the perfect basin and beautifully stacked, slate background for the installation, the site has become a visual and auditory focal point on the North facing side of the Community Center.

After graduating in Art Education from SUNY Buffalo in 1961, Marilyn taught elementary school art in Liverpool, New York, then spent 2 years in Peru in the Peace Corps with the purpose of developing craft cooperatives among the artisans she worked with. Upon her return, she married Ed Stiles, master craftsman, and they moved to Druid Heights, California. That was 46 years ago. She worked for several years in the Open Studio at U.C. Berkeley and later taught ceramics at St. Domenico High School. The Stiles have two sons: Seth who lives in London with his wife Cat, and Wyeth and his wife Trina, who have two beautiful girls, Sienna 6 and Raya 3, currently residing in Bellingham, Washington.

Marilyn's interest in clay peaked while working in the Peace Corps in Peru where she made her first sculpture, a small hawk. She can't say why she found the process so exciting, but said like all artists, she loves the material she uses, “...clay is very plastic, everyone that works with it does something different, unique, it's like a signature.” When asked what inspires her creations she simply replied, “Life, whatever is happening, a sighting, something said, something read, a word play by Ed....” As a child, Marilyn played in a creek behind her uncle's house. She found a private, magical, secret world full of creatures and insects



**John John Sward installing the fountain**  
*Photograph by Laurie Piel*



and became enamored with frogs, a favorite subject in her work. Upon moving to Druid Heights, foxes that graced her deck and ravens that visited every morning, not to mention the lowly slugs that oozed up the glass all became part of her repertoire. "Inspirations come from 'doing'.



*Fountain under the maples*  
*Photograph by Michael Kaufman*

You may start with an idea or concept, but it inevitably transforms along the way."

Marilyn's signature turquoise-blue glaze is one she has used for many years.

"It's a white stoneware that I fire to cone 6, mid-range. I mix the glaze then add different colorants: copper, cobalt and iron. The amazing thing is that the process of creation is never boring and opening the kiln is either a surprise or a disappointment. There's always something new to learn or attempt... I consider myself to be very fortunate." And we feel fortunate to have Marilyn as a neighbor and local artist.

The Muir Beach Garden Club hopes that the fountain will add to the ambiance of what makes our community so special, and to thank Marilyn Stiles and John John Sward for their beautiful work. Please take some time to visit the installation and enjoy the view as you have your coffee and scone at Bistro. And please remind our younger residents that this is an art installation to be viewed and not a play structure or a wading pool. For more information on Marilyn Stiles please visit: <http://marilynstiles.com/>. Marilyn's work can also be seen and purchased at the annual Quilters Xmas Fair.



## MBVFD Report

*By Steve Wynn*

In our ongoing efforts to provide the best emergency service we can to our community and to the visitors of Muir Beach, we have recently implemented the following:

### JOINT TRAINING WITH THROCKMORTON FIRE DEPT.

Muir Beach Volunteer Fire Department (MBVFD) recently started working closely with the new senior captain of the Throckmorton Fire Dept., Capt. Jeremy Pierce. Our plan is to incorporate his team of highly skilled firefighters in our training efforts. I believe this will benefit our department greatly, increasing our skill level in firefighting, equipment handling and emergency medical services.

### GPS TECHNOLOGY

We have recently adopted a new GPS system that will allow us to communicate exactly where we are in longitude and latitude to incoming rescue helicopters, other responding

*Photography by Ann Sutcliffe*

fire departments and between our own team members. This can be especially useful in search and rescue situations on the trails of Mt. Tam, along the coast, or anywhere the location of an incident may be nebulous.



*Capt. Jeremy Pierce*  
*Photography by Ann Sutcliffe*



*Photography by Ann Sutcliffe*



*Photography by Ann Sutcliffe*

### OUR NEW FIREHOUSE

Thanks to the efforts of the Community Service District (CSD), and the Volunteer Fire Association (VFA), we are moving forward with the new firehouse project. The land has been purchased, and the design phase is complete. Our hope is to have the new firehouse in operation within the following year. Special thanks to an anonymous community donor who has provided critical funding for this project.

### FUEL ABATEMENT PROJECT

The second and final stage of the fuel abatement project will be completed by October 15.

Approximately 220 dead or dying trees have been tagged by Marin County Fire Department for removal. This is a tremendous safeguard against fire danger to our community.

We owe thanks to Michael Kaufman of the VFA for all his hard work in spear heading this entire project.

### COMMUNITY EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Working closely with the MBVFD and the CSD, Scott Sampson of the VFA is heading efforts to update the Community Emergency Preparedness program. There will be a community meeting Saturday, November 19th, 4:30 PM at the MBCC.

- Hear the latest on the MBVFD efforts to prepare our community for an emergency
- Find out how you can volunteer
- Sign up for CPR, AED training

The meeting to be immediately followed by a community potluck, so please bring your favorite dish to share.

### BBQ RESULTS

Thank you all for coming together and putting your tremendous efforts into such an important event for our community. The total amount of money we raised, after calculating our expenses, came to \$24,852.00 which is very consistent with previous years.

For those of you who weren't in attendance that day, we also unveiled our new fire truck, acquired from FFIC and FEMA grant monies.

GREAT JOB EVERYONE!

### A REMINDER

As we approach our dry season, I'd like to remind everyone to be mindful of the fuels that may have accumulated around your home throughout the summer. Please take time to weed whack dry grasses, remove dead or low hanging tree branches and clean up pine needles from your gutters and roof.



Also this is a good time to look through your garage and dispose of combustible and toxic materials like old paint, paint thinner and other solvents, old motor oil, batteries, etc. Marin Sanitary in San Rafael will take 15 gallons or 125 pounds at a time for no charge to residents of Marin. Here's the information:

Marin Sanitary  
www.marinsanitary.com  
565 Jacoby Street San Rafael, CA.  
Hours: Tuesday - Saturday, 8:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.  
Closed Sunday and Monday.  
Phone: 415-485-6806

(Look for the signs by the indoor dump entrance.) Please bring proof of residency such as a driver's license, tax documents or utility bill.)

**NEW CONTACT INFORMATION**

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to email me at: [steve@muirbeachfire.com](mailto:steve@muirbeachfire.com)

**FINAL WORD**

I'd like to acknowledge the ongoing efforts of the CSD, MBVFD and VFA. It is through our close working relationship that all of these projects and future projects are being developed to help keep our wonderful community safe.

**Raven's Offer a Reminder**

*By Nicole Zahm (Green Gulch Farm Apprentice 2011)*

This week brought the farmers at Green Gulch new trouble shooting opportunities along with the joyful reminder that we live within an ecosystem. Last Wednesday seven eager farm apprentices and the farm staff walked swiftly down the farm road prepared to put thousands of small plants... brassicas, lettuces, spinach, scallions, dandelion, frisee, chard... into the soil to grow into the food that will find its way into the kitchens of many Muir Beach residents six weeks or so from now. This is a serious work day on the farm, and if you saw the team headed down to the area that was ready for planting... you might have wondered at the determined expressions on our faces and the efficiency with which we took to the fields.

We enter the rows in pairs, one person moving ahead of the other, carrying a seedling flat, pulling each young plant out of its cell and dropping them along the bed at the necessary spacing; 4" for scallions, 10" inches for chard. The other member of the pair moves quickly behind. Squatting down or bending from the waist, with one hand they push each plant into the ground. Planting days require intense concentration and many of us leave our day dreaming behind, losing track of time and allowing the task at hand to hold our complete attention. No fantasizing of the fresh bread from the bakery we will eat at lunch. No getting lost in thought about some friend that is coming to visit. Just us... planting... the squawking of the ravens... the tractor's motor...the swaying and creaking of the trees. Some days we are blessed by the sounding of waves hitting the shore at Muir Beach...their life travels up the Gulch to greet us

in the fields if the wind is just right. There is an occasional holler across the field offering or asking directions, an occasional glancing up at a red tailed hawk or a blue heron or the horses out to pasture on the near hillside.

It's always a rewarding and tiring day... and an important day as it marks the beginning of these plants' lives in the ground, vulnerable to the elements. In the past couple of years the ravens have become an issue in the field. On various occasions, in the 24 hours following a planting, they swoop down and wreak havoc among the rows, pulling out thousands of seedlings, tossing them around and leaving their roots bare and exposed to the sun and wind. If we don't notice the uprooted plants they will die and our hard work...and that of the plants'... will be for naught. Knowing of this risk, we took shifts on Wednesday night... watching



**The Green Gulch Veggie Box and CSA 2011**  
*Photograph by Green Gulch Farm Staff*

the field and walking out into the rows to shoo these black, large birds away whenever they landed. Thursday morning we congratulated ourselves and spoke about our relief that the ravens seemed disinterested and willing to give us a rest. But, later that day the sad news arrived that the ravens did indeed pull up about half of the lettuces we had planted. We hurried down to the field to rescue the plants. As we replanted we looked up at the ravens in the trees shaking our fists wondering... are they asserting their power in our local ecosystem? Are they feeding on the insects they can easily access in the holes that the plants come out of? Are they entertained as we run around the fields desperately trying to get the plants back in the ground in hopes that they will recover? Did they not hear us when, after a similar occasion earlier in the season, we tried to reason with them. Various members of our crew looked the ravens straight in the eyes and asked them to respectfully refrain. We had said prayers and let it be known that these little plants are important to many people. And alas... the birds came again.



**Green Gulch Farm Table at Ferry Plaza**  
*Photograph by Green Gulch Farm Staff*

We don't know exactly why the ravens pull up our little seedlings. And though there was a certain sense of defeat as we replanted and covered them with row cover delaying the other work that needed doing, there was also a sweet and deep reminder. We don't own this land... nor these plants. We don't control the systems we live in and with. We put plants in the ground and hope for their future. We work hard, daily, to create an environment that will support their growth and survival. At the end of the day the systems we live in will let us know...with a gentle smack upside the back of the head...that we are only part of something.

**BLURB ABOUT GREEN GULCH FARM**

*This piece is from an email sent weekly to members of the Green Gulch Farm Veggie Box Program. This is an annual program offered to people who live and/or work in Muir Beach. To learn more about having local vegetables delivered to your neighborhood contact Green Gulch Farm at [greengulchveggies@gmail.com](mailto:greengulchveggies@gmail.com) or call 354-0420. Also feel free to take a walk through the farm any day of the week!*



**Planting day at Green Gulch Farm 2011**  
*Photograph by Green Gulch Farm Staff*



## Leaf Stops Thief in Highway Mishap

By Paul Jeschke

The two Marin County Sheriff's Department cars parked alongside Highway 1 should have been the first clue that something was up. "Must be traffic enforcement," I thought, automatically glancing at my speedometer as I drove the busy stretch of roadway through Tam Valley just across from the now closed Delano's Market. I glanced at the speedometer and verified that I was five miles-per-hour inside the posted limit. "Guess I should warn Anne to be extra vigilant."

One block later, just as that thought cleared my mind and KCBS slithered back in, an eastbound car turned directly in front of me. It happened so quickly there was no avoiding a collision. I vaguely remember hitting the brakes and in what now seems like less than a second, the two cars smashed into each other in a bone jarring mash-up of crumpled metal.

The safety features built into my still new 2011 Nissan Leaf probably saved my life. The shoulder and lap belt pinned me to the seat and the steering wheel airbag deployed almost instantly, hitting me in the chest with enough force to protect my upper body. The passenger compartment filled with what looked like smoke, but turned out to be dry lubricant from the air bag.

As I got out of the car, shaking my head and trying to understand what had happened and why, four sheriff's deputies ran past and surrounded the vehicle that had hit me. "You okay?" one of them called to me.

"Fine," I answered. The Leaf, however, was far from okay. It looked more like a battered accordion than the sleek, polished, all-electric, zero-emission vehicle that I'd taken delivery of just two months ago. Turns out the two guys from the car that hit me had even bigger problems to deal with: they were suspects in a series of vehicle break-ins at Slide Ranch and were apparently trying to ditch the cops when they smashed into me.

"Thanks for helping us stop the bad guys," a deputy joked. More deputies arrived along with Mill Valley police and the California Highway Patrol. Officers stopped traffic on Highway 1 for nearly an hour while they arrested, inventoried, measured, managed traffic and sorted things out.

Deputies handcuffed the suspected Slide Ranch thieves and put them into the caged back of a patrol car. Numerous wallets, billfolds, iPads and iPods, allegedly rifled from parked cars at Slide Ranch, were removed from the

suspects' vehicle and put into plastic evidence bags.

The CHP officer who kindly offered to drive me back to Muir Beach said that deputies, responding to a call about the vehicle break-ins at Slide Ranch, spotted the suspect vehicle traveling eastbound at Three Corners. They called for backup and planned to stop the vehicle at Flamingo Road and Highway 1 where I had seen two other teams of deputies waiting by the side of the road.

"I was about to 'light them up' when they all of a sudden turned in front of you," a deputy explained. While it appeared that the suspects might have tried to ditch police with a high-speed turn onto Dolan Ave., the driver claimed his steering mechanism failed and propelled the car into my path.

My crushed Leaf was towed to Blake's Auto Body in San Rafael. With the help of Geico Insurance, repairs were coordinated between the body shop and Northbay Nissan which handled the replacement of damaged electrical components. Since this was one of the first of the newly introduced Leaf's to be in a major accident, Nissan flew in a specialist to supervise the job.

The driver of the car that hit me claimed at first that he had no insurance. Geico, however, was able to find that although the suspect had ordered a cancellation, he still had a policy in effect.

Estimated repair cost for my car: \$19,500, with the suspect's insurance picking up the tab. The body shop is finishing up as this is written and I expect to drive the Leaf back to Muir Beach within a couple of days.

I hope the bad guys turn over a new leaf—theirs, not mine.

## Muir Beach Quilters Holiday Arts Fair

Story and Photography Laurie Piel



It's that time of year again in Muir beach to get ready for the Muir Beach Quilters Holiday Arts Fair. As usual the artists and crafts folks have been hard at work preparing their offerings that will delight the eye and the palate. This year the first weekend in December, our traditional Fair dates, is December 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup>. For the first time the Fair will open at 10:00AM both days. This year we have 4 new artists joining the 19 returning ones.



The proceeds from Fair benefit the Quilters. They not only fund capital improvements to the Community Center but through their Vision Project they donate funds to many organizations that provide help for those in need. Over the years those organizations have included Marin Organic, Senior Access, Drawbridge, an arts program for homeless children, Marin Food Bank, Doctors Without Borders for victims of the earthquake in Haiti and to the Japan Cultural Center for those in Japan.

Quilters meet at the community center following Wednesday's Bistro to work on a multitude of individual projects, from small quilts and gorgeous sweaters, to a full-size group raffle quilt-in-progress. At the Fair, Kathy Sward and Judith Yamamoto and Outi Onorato, three of the founding members of the group, show their latest award winning quilts, as well as potholders and hand knitted, felted, and sewn repurposed accessories. Leslie Riehl, no slouch herself, has added her beautiful Hawaiian quilts to the fabulous offerings—and potholders! Joanne Salz offers her brilliant three-dimensional woven art. Pam McCosker is back with potholders and Fabs, her popular fabric necklaces for showing off a treasured vintage pin. Claire Johnston is another of the many quilters making the much-coveted potholders,

while Tayeko Kaufman, spurred by the arrival of her new grandson provides stuffed bunnies and crib quilts. Woven pouches, purses and scarves by Bonnie Mackenzie and hand knit neck warmers by Peggy Chiang should keep everyone cozy this winter. Colleen Curry, Pam Barlow, Judy Brooks, Pam Eichenbaum, Laura Van Amburg and Laurie Piel will all be there contributing to what promises to be a very exciting year for the fair.

Traditionally two of Muir Beach's volunteer groups are represented at the Fair.

The Muir Beach Garden Club is spicing up their usual selection of evergreen, herbal and succulent wreaths, the Garden Club has added succulent hanging gardens! Also back by popular demand are paper whites, delightful small succulent gardens, hurricane candle lamps and wooden wheelbarrow planter boxes. All of the revenue generated from the sale of these Christmas items, as well as the proceeds from the Garden Club's rummage sale, is earmarked for the beautification of the Community Center gardens. This year, the Garden Club commissioned Marilyn Stiles to create a stunning ceramic fountain, situated between three maple trees. John John Sward has just finished the installation, a beautiful sight as you walk down the path to the Fair. Enjoy!

Muir Beach Volunteer Fire Association are front and center these two days, so pick up your favorite item printed with the popular Muir Beach Dog logo...T-shirts, hoodies, yoga wear, ball caps, aprons, mugs, and vests. Tees for tots and other children's clothing are also on sale...start 'em young! And don't forget the doggies... the MBVFA now has leashes and collars for the four-legged members of your family.

Booths featuring Junior Artisans, and the seasonal creations of the Holiday Ornament Extravaganza, will be back. The always-popular Quilters' Gingerbread Attic is a place where kids can try out their own creative impulses while their parents gather at the Quilters' Class Bar on the covered deck or shop the many booths of the fair. There's a new chef in the kitchen this year. Chef John Sabbatini and his wife Lia are Barbary Coast Bistro. Promoting local farmers as well as using natural & organic products, while keeping business green, are top priorities for them. Their goals include making mouths water, stomachs full and customers happy. And, of course, coffee and tea can be found at Cafe Q, the upstairs room with a view of all the wonder of the Quilters' Fair.

So, c'mon down, bring your friends and neighbors and fill your gift lists or find something just for you. See you there!



EXCERPT FROM  
“The War on Terror. Who Is the Enemy?”

Mill Valley Seniors for Peace – 9/12/11

By Richard O. Moore

On the anniversary of 9/11, the 9/11 Commission released its report on the status of the recommendations made by the Commission ten years ago. They found that although progress has been made on the first and most important recommendation which called for the full exchange of information between the FBI, CIA, the Defense Department, and the Department of Homeland Security, the nine other recommendations, ranging from airline security, including passenger screening methods to screening of cargo coming into the US, and a single radio frequency for all first responders meaning police, fire, and state and national agencies, has lagged behind the Commission’s recommendations. Predictably, the Commission called for greater authority for the Department of Homeland Security, elevating its status to that of Defense, FBI, and the CIA while at the same time noting with approval that the Department included 22 formerly independent agencies; that it had a work force of 230,000 people and an annual budget of more than 50 billion dollars. It would be difficult to find a clearer example of the power of the military, industrial, presidential, and congressional, and media cartel than the growth of the Department of National Security. Here’s one way of looking at it: in response to the problem of sharing intelligence among competing agencies we created a new agency to coordinate intelligence. We now spend more than twice as much on intelligence than we did prior to 9/11.

For me the most interesting and chilling aspect of the 9/11 Commission Anniversary Report was its assumptions about terrorism. The following is from Chapter three, the concluding chapter of the Report: “The terrorist threat will be with us far into the future, demanding that we be ever vigilant. Changing circumstances require that we regularly reassess our practices and expenditures to determine what is needed to defend our country and people... Our task is difficult. We must constantly assess our vulnerabilities and anticipate new lines of attack. We have done much, but there is much more to do.” It strikes me that this is a good description of a self-perpetuating enterprise that will never end. And indeed terrorist acts will not vanish from society and they will undoubtedly become more technologically sophisticated along with society. But what I find chilling is the assumption that terrorism is some kind of growth industry with a built-in evolving demand that must be met by the United States through its own ever evolving and costly expenditures and practices ending in a situation whereby the state is required to monitor all citizens as potential terrorists. The following is from Chapter One of the Report: “Although Osama bin Laden is dead, al Qaeda is not; it is a network not a hierarchy. Over a period of years, al Qaeda has been very adaptive and resilient. al Qaeda and its affiliates will almost certainly attempt to avenge his death, however, they will

not necessarily attack soon.....Our terrorist adversaries and the tactics and techniques they employ are evolving rapidly. We will see new attempts, and likely successful attacks.” Or to put it in other words: a terrorist attack is inevitable and therefore we have no recourse except to double our efforts to prevent such attacks. My late wife used to call that “a self-propelled philosophy.” Since 9/11 we have launched two wars in the name of national security. Based on the lowest credible estimate as of August of last year at least 920,000 people military and civilian on both sides have been killed. And in Afghanistan several weeks ago we saw the highest US causality figure for one week since the beginning of the war over ten years ago. Progress? You be the judge. Again, it makes no sense to say that our military operations have made us safer. The truth may lie in the very opposite. So why are we pursuing a “war on terror” with renewed vigor? There must be, as I have suggested, other reasons.

Beginning with the Cold War and the largely symbolic threat of “Communism” which led to a nuclear arms race and continuing into the 21st Century with the even more ominous threat of “Terrorism,” the United States as the world’s superpower has developed an interdependent set of institutions that profit from war. I have described this as the military-industrial-presidential-congressional-media cartel. The mutual self-interest of the military and the corporations that supply the military with the weapons and services it needs is obvious. Less obvious, but no less important, is the role played by the President and Congress in sometimes initiating and by approving, directly or indirectly, the use of military force against nations we perceive as a potential threat to our security. The media provides twenty-four hour reinforcement of an elusive and therefore always dangerous threat from a gallery of “masterminds of terror” who, if one is assassinated, will be replaced by another equally dangerous. The policy of preemptive war and the gradual loss of civil liberties, as every citizen must be regarded as a potential terrorist (i.e. the Patriot Act and intrusive operations of the FBI, CIA and, now, the Department of Homeland Security), are logical developments of a policy which insists it must protect the nation from an elusive, clandestine, adaptive enemy dubbed “terrorism.” In turn, an institutional structure has evolved which exploits an abstraction as a reason for highly profitable, never ending, war: a cartel which plays an ever more important role in our national economy. And therein lies the challenge of the future. With every year, largely unnoticed, the cartel extends its hold on both foreign and domestic policy. That the actions of the cartel are both self-perpetuating and, eventually, self-destructive merely emphasizes the danger it presents.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALLING ALL LADIES

By Joanie Wynn

The value of a college education, the challenge of being an artist (or being married to one), coping with headstrong children or difficult mothers, the best propane companies, farmer’s markets, tax consultants, Manhattan itineraries. These are just a few of the discussions you may overhear on a ladies night at the Pelican on the third Monday of every month. Eclectic? Yes. Boring? Never.

Ladies drop by around 7pm to dine, drink or just share a laugh. The company is terrific and the conversation always lively. We hope to see you there sometime soon.

MUIR BEACH GARDEN CLUB’S THANK YOU

Thank you, Thank you all for your wonderful help with the 4th Annual Garden Club Rummage Sale. Laurie & David Piel (Shoes, Purses & Jewelry) and for hauling away to Goodwill all the leftovers. Matt Silva for also taking away a load to Goodwill, Daniella Silva for making the poster sign, Great Job! Judy Yamamoto’s great cookies, Thank you! Kyle Nygren (Shirley’s grandson) sold yummie cupcakes to the customers. Arlene with her Christmas Rum Cake and Janice Kabota’s cheese & Crackers to share with us worker bee’s. Outi & Terry Onorato for selling books (great cook books too!). Kathy Sward & her quilter buddies for helping and Kathy for storing and collecting Rummage. John John Sward again providing our space for the Rummage Sale and providing, Sausages, Hot dogs, waters & sodas to sell to the hungry beach goers with the help of Eric Groneman. And Nicole Catalan for selling her herbal salves and lip balm (Chocolate/Orange flavor with all organic ingredients).

It was definitely a FUN-RAISER, Rain or Shine we did it—even the racoons showed up Saturday night for a little rummaging around. Also Thank You Neighbors and Community for your support and bring your TREASURES to sell—It was fun.

All the money the Garden Club makes in fundraisers goes to the Community Center’s landscaping project... little by little we make money to pay for the plants, soils and trees we have planted.... take a look at the community center!

Thanks Again,  
Joey Groneman/Muir Beach Garden Club

I am considering buying a kayak to use in Muir Beach but I am aware that there are many kayaks already at Muir Beach that aren’t being used very often. I grew up in Muir Beach and I live in Mill Valley. I would like to paddle a couple times a week. I am willing to contribute some money to help with the upkeep and maintenance. If there is any interest in sharing a kayak, please let me know. —Thanks, Scott Billings (415) 608-3556



SOME RECIPES

Braised Beet Greens (serves 4)

1 bunch beet greens  
1/2 yellow onion (or 1/2 cup shallots or leeks) diced finely  
1 Tbps olive oil or butter  
Salt and pepper to taste  
Apple cider vinegar to taste (or other vinegar of your choosing)

Wash greens and thicker parts of ribs (center stem) from the leaves. Chop the ribs finely and cut the leaf into strips. Heat oil or butter in large skillet. Add chopped onions and ribs and cook until onions are browned and soft, about 5 minutes. Add greens to onions, stir to coat with oil, and lightly salt and pepper. When greens wilt down, add 1/4 cup water or broth. Cover and cook until tender—the time will depend on the age of the greens: generally not more than 1 or 2 minutes. Uncover and cook for a minute or two to evaporate moisture. Serve them up with your favorite vinegar!

Massaged Kale Salad (serves 4)

By Colleen Curry  
This recipe was generously offered by Collen, a member of the Green Gulch Farm Veggie Box Program. Thanks Colleen!

1 bunch kale (discard stems and thinly slice leaves)  
1/4 cup olive oil  
1 Tbsp honey  
1 mango, diced (or use the elephant plums in your box as a local alternative!)  
toasted pepitas (pumpkin seeds)  
1-2 lemon  
Salt and pepper to taste

Place kale in large bowl. Squeeze juice from 1/2 to 1 whole lemon over kale. Drizzle olive oil and a pinch salt. Massage until the kale begins to soften and wilt. usually 2 - 4 minutes. In a separate small bowl whisk juice from additional lemon with honey and pepper. Add remaining olive oil and whisk. Adjust to your taste. Pour dressing over kale and top with pumpkin seeds before serving.

Add avocado before serving for a nutty addition!



ANNOUNCEMENTS

MUIR BEACH QUILTERS

Holiday Arts Fair

SATURDAY AND SUNDAY  
December 3th, 10 am – 5 pm & December 4th, 10 am – 4 pm

It's the time of year to get ready for the Muir Beach Quilters Holiday Arts Fair. As usual the artists and crafts folks have been hard at work preparing their offerings that will delight the eye and the palate.

The proceeds benefit the Quilters, who not only fund programs and activities and capital improvements to the Community Center, but through their Vision Project donate funds to many organizations that provide help for those in need. Over the last several years those organizations have included Marin Organic, Senior Access, Drawbridge (an arts program for homeless children), Marin Food Bank, Doctors Without Borders, —The Quilters

CALENDAR

WEEKLY IN MUIR BEACH

MONDAY

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

The Bookmobile  
Noon–1:00 pm  
1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Mondays,  
Mailboxes, Highway One  
across from Pelican Inn.  
For more information,  
415.499.7544.

TUESDAY

Tao Flow Yoga: 6:30–8:00 pm  
Taylor's zendo, 1821 Shoreline Hwy.  
Contact David Taylor: 383.2240.

Book Club: 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesdays at 7pm.  
Contact Paul Jeschke: 388-2278.

Elderberries seniors: 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesdays  
at 6pm. Potluck at MBCC.  
Contact Gerry Pearlman: 380-5056.

WEDNESDAY

Tai-chi: 8:00–9:00 am

Bistro: 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

SATURDAY

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 donation)  
Children's Lecture and Program  
1<sup>st</sup> Sundays 10:00–11:30 am

MUIR BEACH  
COMMUNITY CENTER

Community Center Drop-in Use  
Daytime hours if the Center is not scheduled for other activities. Users responsible for cleanup.

Community Center Rental Policies  
For any rental inquiries, please email Laurie Piel at muirbeachcc@aol.com.



Photograph by Julie Smith

Friends of the Beachcomber

Doug and David Canepa, Mill Valley Market  
Theodore R. and Peggy Elliott, TR Elliott Winery  
Hopper Creek Vineyard and Winery  
Will Koza, Pelican Inn  
Mendocino Brewing Company  
Dave Semling, Mill Valley Services  
Steve Shaffer, Freddie and the Freeloaders  
Mick Sopko, Green Gulch Bakery  
Dee Turman, DTurman Illustration

The Allen Family  
Anonymous (1)  
Bruce and Pam Barlow \*  
Scott and Suzanne Bender  
Elizabeth Benedict  
Robert Bowyer and Renee Boeche  
Doris Chatham  
Brad and Lisa Eigsti  
Debra and Dave Hendsch \*  
Joseph and Nikola Ferraro \*  
Ralph Frey and Candice Piper  
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Leighton Hills  
Danny Hobson and Jon Rauh  
Anne and Paul Jeschke \*  
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Brenda and Richard Kohn \*  
Marilyn Laatsch \*  
Peter Lambert \*  
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Sarah Leivick and Chris Szczerban \*  
Richard Levin  
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Joani Marinoff  
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Michael Moore  
Maury Ostroff and Janice Kubota \*  
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Peter Rosselli and Karen Roeper  
Edna Rossenas \*  
Levon Sagatelyan and Kathleen Call Sagatelyan  
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