

BEACHCOMBER

SINCE 1946



ON THE COVER

Walking the Dog, 1980's, SF
Watercolor on paper
By Leah Schwartz

Leah Schwartz was born in Rock Island, Illinois, on July 28, 1920. Her life experiences, travels, her dream of going to art school, brought her to New York City where she attended The National Academy, and American Artists School.

Leah and family moved to California in 1954 settling into a cabin on Old Mill Creek in Mill Valley. She had her first one-person show in San Francisco during the sixties, and many more over the years.

"My 'Ideal' is to paint to my heart's content and drop the finished work down a hole in the floor and let someone else deal with it. But that's not the way the world works. I have always had difficulty learning from formal 'teachers.' I seem to retain things much better when I figure them out for myself, but this also means that I am always disconnected from the 'mainstream,'" Leah commented.

For many years Leah worked exclusively in watercolor, and enjoyed teaching her self-taught methods to others. Leah Schwartz and her family are long-time Muir Beach residents, now living in Mill Valley.

Leah's book is available for sale.
A percentage of each sale will be
donated to the Muir Beach Garden Club.

www.leahschwartzart.com



Leah Schwartz

the life of a woman who managed to keep painting

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Beachcomber through the Years

The Beachcomber has been produced by Muir Beachers since 1946, when children would gather at a local house to draw artwork and write stories.

Not only has the newsletter production process changed through the years, but the masthead has also evolved from hand-drawn with color pencils to the illustration used today.

We hope you'll enjoy this edition, and look forward to your next submission.
-Beachcomber Staff



Muir Beach History

Luke Kimpe (age 9, Strawberry Point School), did a school project about the history of Muir Beach. He researched and even interviewed John John Sward about it.

Luke highlighted the now/then differences: Name (Bello Beach vs. Muir Beach), cabins vs. houses and The Tavern vs. The Pelican Inn.



Around Town

2014 BBQ KICK-OFF POTLUCK

Saturday, February 8, 5:30 pm, MBCC

The Muir Beach Volunteer Fireman's Association will host a BBQ Potluck meeting. They will provide the main course and drinks. Please bring an appetizer, salad, side dish, dessert or a vegetarian dish to share. You and more than 30 of your neighbors took the lead to make last year's BBQ a great success and we hope that we can count on you to do it again.

ELDERBERRY BOOK EXCHANGE

Sunday, Feb. 9, 1-4 pm, MBCC

NEXT CSD MEETING

Wednesday, Feb. 26, 7 pm, MBCC

ELDERBERRY GOURMET DINNER

Friday, March 28, 6:30 pm, MBCC

FISHING REPORT

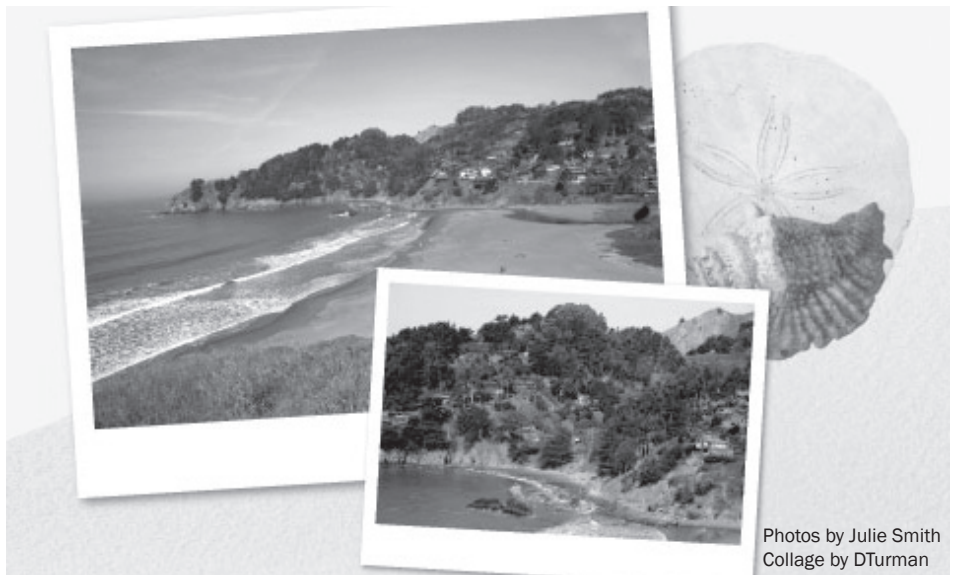
Fishing is pretty much in a holding pattern. Both the salmon and rock fishing seasons are closed as of now. There are plenty of crabs if you want to go out and get them :) -Jon Rauh

WELCOME JAXSON



Jay Hurd and family

Debra and David Hendsch welcomed a grandson, little Jaxson Leigh Hurd, into the world on June 27th 2013, in Maui, Hawaii. Father Jay Hurd grew up at Muir Beach and is joining a long-time childhood friend and fellow Muir Beacher, Michael Plann Miller who is also living in the Hawaiian islands with his wife Molly and son Dylan. Mother Tamilyn White of Maui, and Jay are enjoying the trials and tribulations of new parenthood!



muirbeach.com

I just wanted to pass along that over the years, I've noticed some interesting, fun, nice, and sometimes ? comments have been posted to the "Guest Book" page of my site, I thought that some neighbors may want to know about them, as these have been posted from people all over the world and also include some memories of past Muir Beachers. -Deb Allen

OCEAN RIDERS

<http://oceanridersofmarin.org/donate/>

Help the Ocean Riders expand efforts to preserve the magic of the Golden Gate Dairy.

All donations will be recorded so they may be returned if they're not awarded the 10-year lease. Thank you for supporting the future of Ocean Riders of Marin at the Golden Gate Dairy!

BEACHCOMBER

The Beachcomber is a community newsletter published by and for residents, friends, family and former residents of Muir Beach.

Published since 1946 (on and off), circulation 200 (more or less), appears four times a year.

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CONTRIBUTE TO THE BEACHCOMBER

The Beachcomber seeks essays, articles, photographs, artwork, group announcements or upcoming events, kids stuff - anything that celebrates Muir Beach and our community.

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Meet Your Neighbor *By David Piel*

When the new editors of the Beachcomber decided to revive the popular "Meet Your Neighbor" column, they asked me to take it on and I said OK. I was given free rein to choose the subjects and I thought it would be fun if the first piece were about the Muir Beacher that everyone knows... and nobody knows...our mail carrier, **Veronica March-Lee**.

OK, technically she's not a Muir Beacher, but she's here 6 days a week, 4 hours a day so in my book that qualifies! Veronica, who celebrated her 50th birthday in November, lives in the East Bay with Stevie, her husband of 24 years, and their 5 children (4 girls & one boy) ranging in age from 13 to 23, all in school. Her husband is a teacher at Marin Horizons, a Montessori school in Mill Valley that Veronica and all her children attended and to which she devotes two days a week helping out, mostly in day care. Born and raised in San Rafael, she is a graduate of Tam High.

Veronica is not a postal employee, but rather an employee of a private contractor to the Post Office called Omega Transport. Since, unlike postal workers she is without civil service standing, I was concerned if she was fairly paid and well treated. I asked her and she said: "I better be. I work for my mother!" Omega Transport was founded by her mother Versell, some years ago and holds the PO contract for mail delivery in much of west Marin including Bolinas, Marshall and Nicasio. When Veronica began, she delivered to Bolinas as well as Muir Beach but that ended when a Bolinas based employee was added. It's interesting to note that the other private contractor in Marin is FBT Transport owned by her brother!

Newcomers to Muir Beach may not be aware that at one time Muir Beach was considered a "rural route" called The Star Route. Then, all mail was delivered to box numbers instead of street addresses. Although no longer



in use (and in fact no longer legal), some of the "old timers" here still get mail addressed to a box number. Veronica may be the last to understand this system so the mail still goes in the right place but she warns: "When I win the Lotto, I'm outta here and those folks are gonna be in trouble!" She understands Muir Beach so well that, as we were chatting and I mentioned the name of any "local," she would instantly shout: "12! or 51! or 9!" corresponding to your address. What would we do without her?

Before coming to the beach, she worked in customer service at the Marin Municipal Water District, then spent 10 years as a meter reader for PG&E. "I once opened a meter box that had a wasps nest in it! They chased me and I ran off screaming as I tore off all my clothes because they'd gotten inside. I was buck naked but that was in San Geronimo and there was no one around to see me - thank goodness!"

Veronica also has her own business as an independent representative for a company called Miche, that makes ladies handbags and jewelry. It's a "direct selling" company (think Mary Kay) and she organizes small house parties to show off her inventory (think Tupperware). If you'd like to hold one in

your home go to: <http://veronica4ever.miche.com> or just ask her about it the next time you see her.

I asked: If you could make one request of Muir Beachers, what would it be? Her reply: "Pick up your mail...or get a bigger box. Some folks get lots of mail (you know who you are) but let it accumulate so I don't have any room for more and I'm stuffing it in as best I can...then I get complaints that the mail was damaged".

And what's the number one request that Muir Beachers make of her? "Why can't my box be in front of my house like in most places?" She has no answer for that but knows that we may be ahead of our time as the Postal Service downsizes.** She can deliver the mail in about 3-4 hours now but if we all had individual boxes it would take twice that long.

She adds: "I love coming out here every day. I love chatting with folks as I make my rounds. It's not the best paying job I've ever had but it's the best job I've ever had. I'm blessed." So are we.

**The Canadian Postal Service recently announced that all home delivery will cease within 3 years. Recipients will need to go to the PO or a "group mailbox" location to pick up their mail...so our mailbox clusters here in MB may be the wave of the future.

MBCC Grounds Improvement Proposal *By Scott Bender*

INITIAL CONCEPTS:

Expanded Playground area.

- New retaining wall and fencing
- Retain and refurbish existing play structure
- Add additional play structures for smaller children on west end of expanded area
- Replace gravel with new padding surface materials

Terrace and landscape area above Playground.

- Remove existing (decayed) structures
- New access stairs on east side
- Increase functionality for rentals and weddings

Meandering path and landscaping in area below Playground.

- Currently unimproved area, so leveling and landscaping required

New retaining wall and parking areas on Seacape Drive.

- Move trash containers across the street (near power pole) – also CSD property
- Create more off street parking and greater access

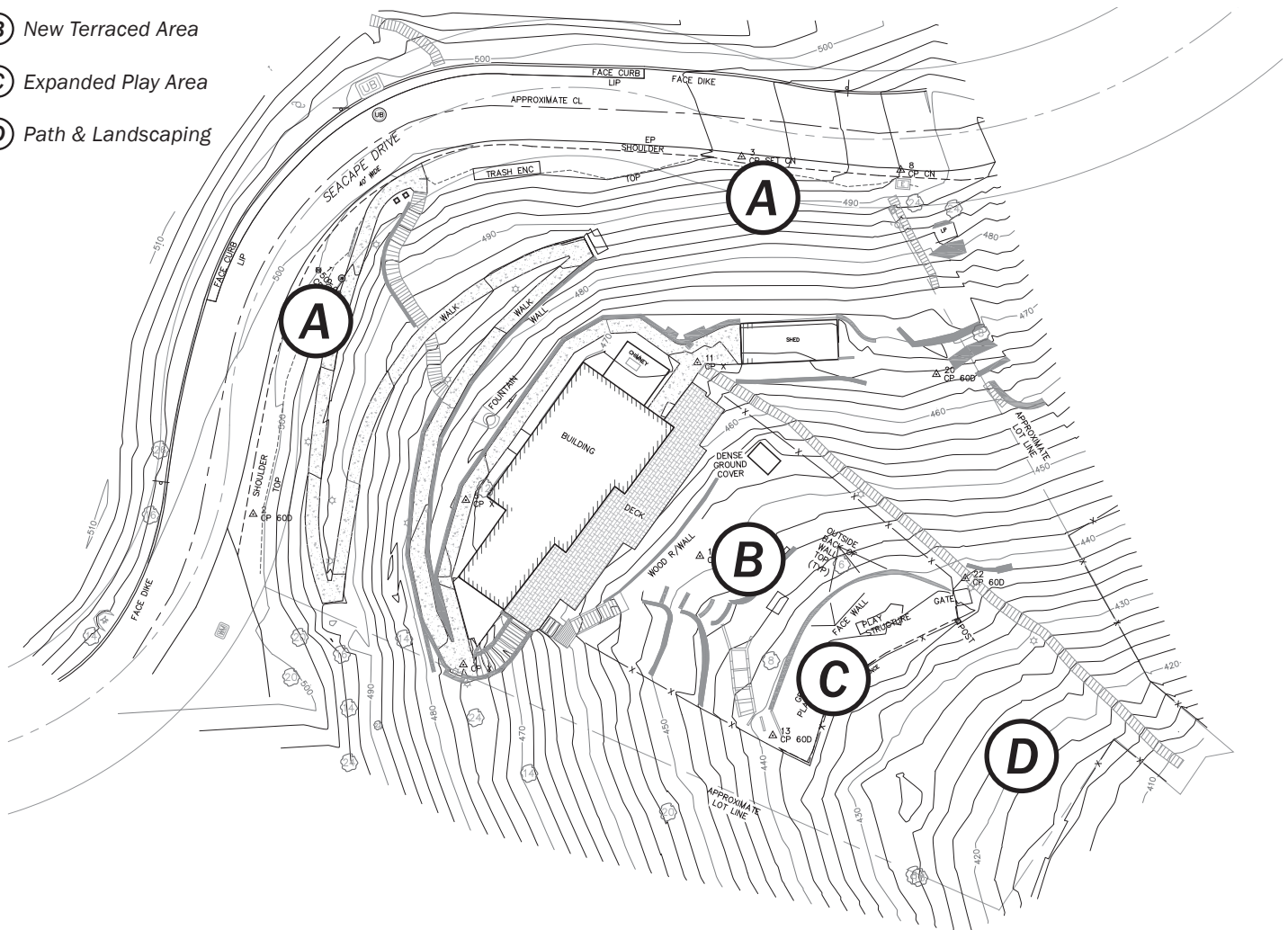
Of necessity this would be a multiple phase project.

Still in the planning phase, all comments welcome.

Email to Scott Bender:
scott@muirbeachcsd.com

Original plans are posted inside the Muir Beach Community Center.

- (A)** New Retaining Wall and off street Parking
- (B)** New Terraced Area
- (C)** Expanded Play Area
- (D)** Path & Landscaping



Unfettered Capitalism on Starbuck Drive *By Maury Ostroff*

A new concept in Retailing had its debut on Sunday, January 5th, 2014 on Starbuck Drive, when an emporium of miscellaneous merchandise was offered to the public in a neighborhood previously zoned for residential only. The new venture, (as yet unnamed) consists of three local business leaders: Hannah Eigsti, with 10 years of experience will act as CEO and directly oversee Finance and Administration; Stella Eigsti, with 6 years of experience will head up Merchandising and Supply Chain Logistics; and Zora Paul, with 5 years of experience will assume responsibility for Sales and Marketing.

The company's strategy is based on appeal to local sentiment, and company officials hope to tap into the segment of the market that cannot be served by the big box stores and other chains. Opening day was met with enthusiasm and smiles from a slow but steady stream of patrons.

Just like Amazon, the initial products for sale were books, specifically children's books, although there were also some poinsettia plants for sale. The company does emphasize that their business model is not limited to books, and can handle a wide range of products, (depending on availability through a close-held secret product acquisition strategy.)

Later in the day, there were some unconfirmed reports of aggressive sales tactics. Company officials were unavailable for comment, but Industry insiders attributed the phenomenon to a marketing strategy of trying to be adorably cute, noting that while the strategy is sound there are implementation details that need to be worked out.

Future hours of business have not yet been announced, although it is anticipated that they will be constrained by school, homework, and bedtime.



Budding entrepreneurs, Stella, Zora, and Hannah

The company has not yet formulated their plans for an online presence, but will continue to focus on the core competency of direct sales to passersby. Several studies are underway to determine foot traffic on Starbuck Drive (mostly due to dog walkers) and others in cars who are heading over the hill. There is no word on expansion to other locations, although franchise opportunities are under longer-term consideration, which may also offer more standard goods such as lemonade and cookies.

Local economists expressed hope that these entrepreneurs will help revitalize the economy and bring more jobs to the private sector in Muir Beach.

The latest forecast for Muir Beach GDP (previously consisting of sales of scones at Bistro and the occasional babysitting) is expected to nearly double once these sales are factored in. Since the new company is privately held no financial data on the company's operations were made available, and some analysts expressed skepticism that the company even had a balance sheet. However, it is never too early to start planning an IPO, and it is understood that when shares are offered to the public that Muir Beach residents will get insider pricing.

Dollars and Sense *By Paul Jeschke*

With this first issue of the newly reconstituted Beachcomber, we inaugurate Dollars and Sense, a column dedicated to finding alternatives to conventional, pricey goods and services commonly used by Muir Beach residents.

One of the most useful, trouble-free devices we've encountered in recent years is Ooma Telo.

This high tech gadget saves you money by letting you cut the cord on traditional telephone service and make free calls through the Internet while still talking on a conventional telephone. The process is called Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP).

Sound complicated? Not at all; no microphones or headphones and your computer doesn't even need to be on. Connect Ooma in to the Muir Beach LAN cable where it connects to your router, plug in any telephone (wired or wireless) and you're in business, saving at least \$20 a month you've been forking over to AT&T.

Now you can call any number in the U.S. or Canada for free – or about as close as you can get; communication taxes and fees run about \$3.73 a month. Low cost international calls require setting up a prepaid account, but then calls to France, for example, cost just two cents per minute. You can also sign up for 1000 minutes of international calling anywhere for just ten bucks a month.

Ooma makes money by selling you their Ooma Telo device, \$114 at Amazon.com as of this writing. The initial purchase price is recouped in less than six months compared to conventional landline payments. Customers can also opt for Ooma Premier which, at \$10 for a month, provides a second line, three way conferencing and privacy features like anonymous call blocking. You can even bring your existing telephone number to Ooma for a portage fee.



Telephone and Ooma Telo

How reliable is Ooma? I've had very few problems in the nearly three years that I've been a subscriber. If the LAN is inoperative, calls are automatically forwarded to Ooma's answering device. A message notification appears when the LAN is back. Ooma goes even further for Premier customers and automatically sends the calls to the customer's cell phone. As for outgoing calls when there is no Internet service, a mobile phone provides a fine backup.

Voice quality is quite good. If you want to check it out, try the phone at the Community Center. The only thing you should notice is a slightly modified dial tone.

Since it operates over the Internet, calls to 9-1-1 are not recommended. But here in Muir Beach, we're urged to call 472-0911 in emergencies, a call Ooma can handle.

For the record, I have no connection with Ooma other than as a customer. I just think it's a great deal.

In the next Beachcomber, we'll take a look at a local bank that eliminates monthly checking account fees and even lets customers use any bank's ATM anywhere in the world for no cost.

If you have suggestions for a money-saving item or a subject you'd like researched, please let us know at muirbeachcomber@earthlink.net.

My favorite thing about Muir Beach is...

"...playing on the rocks in my front yard and talking to the neighbors who walk by."

*– Luke Kimpe, age 9
2 years living in MB*

✱

"...having friends that I can walk to their house and community parties."

– Hannah Eigsti, age 10

✱

"...playing at the beach."

– Stella Eigsti, age 6

✱

"...the mountain bike trails and the wildlife."

– Ryan Wynn, age 10

✱

"...the breathtaking natural beauty; the mountains, the ocean, the beach, the painterly skies that greet me each morning and evening. I feel grateful every single day to have made this place our home."

*– Joanie Wynn, age 49
8 years living in MB*

✱

"...the pretty sights, and seeing lots of wildlife."

*– Adrianna Bender, age 11
11 year community member*

✱

"...how I have to take pictures of all the sunsets because they are so beautiful."

*– Christian Bender, age 13
12 year community member*

The Critter Report: *Backyard Webs*

By Dave MacKenzie

One of the hot topics today in biology is evolutionary webs. A simple example is the food web; e.g. krill eat plankton, anchovies eat krill, salmon eat anchovies, and we apex predators eat salmon!

But evolutionary webs also include many other types of species interactions such as predator/prey, hosts/antagonists, environmental pressures, and symbiosis. With today's genetic analysis methods, these webs can actually be analyzed experimentally to see how the evolution of genes and traits play off of each other, sometimes amazingly fast. Experiments in bacterial evolution, for example, take about a week. Other studies, such as recent changes in beak sizes in Darwin's Finches, show how fast genetic changes can actually occur. The strains of flu evolve enough every year that we keep having to update the vaccines for our protection. And we now know that over 90% of the cells in the human body are actually not human, they are these fast evolving bacteria, archaea and fungi, without which we cannot exist. Now that makes this web thing personal!

So I wondered how all this might be playing out in my backyard. At the birdfeeder, this winter's flock of White-Crowned Sparrows happily emerges from the brush as I put out the seed. Then the pecking order action begins! I suspect the older birds, the ones which actually have black and white striped crowns, are the best foragers. The juveniles, which still have rust and brown striped crowns, probably don't do as well. Not all of them will make it through until breeding season. Do more survive because I am putting



The Predator: Juvenile Cooper's Hawk

out the seed? Are some of these birds showing some genetic traits, such as better ability to fight for feeder seed, due to my influence on 20 or so generations of sparrows?

These webs are even more complex. Golden-Crowned Sparrows, winter visitors from Canada, also join the White-Crowns in the feeding flock. They are a bit larger and often more aggressive. How does this affect the White-Crowned survival overall? What could be the advantage of all these sparrows arguing over the seed when they might be better off individually feeding in the bush?

One answer comes quickly as a fierce juvenile Cooper's Hawk accelerates over the flock. Although one of the sparrows will be first to dive into the brush, the entire flock (maybe 30 birds!) disappears within one second, about the time it takes for the hawk to shoot past. Obviously there is safety in numbers, as the alert signals (motion and wing flutter noise, I believe) travel very fast! And, perhaps both due to the confusion of the cluster of escaping sparrows, and perhaps also due to the weak hunting skills of the juvenile predator, a bird is rarely captured. But if it is, it would be the slow one!

*“Everything is
connected,
and in ways we
may still discover.”*



White-Crowned Sparrow



Golden-Crowned Sparrow

Given that this attack occurs on this sparrow flock several times per day, the selection for faster and more alert genes in the sparrows must be very strong. But the birds can't be too jumpy, or they won't spend enough time eating the seeds! It is a predator/prey evolutionary dance that goes back millions of years.

There are many more facets to this seemingly simple web. For example, even though the two types of sparrow are very closely related, interbreeding is probably not a big deal since all of the Golden-Crowns will migrate back north in April, just in time for our

resident White-Crowns to move off into the brush and raise their own families here. The young White-Crowns will have lots of foraging experience when the Golden-Crowns return in October. So they have evolved a mutualistic system which works well on several levels.

Obviously I find all of this immensely interesting: studying the webs of life. But there are other key reasons for biologists to understand this evolutionary activity. First is the effect of invasive species on natives, a theme which is very big in California. Second is the pressure of environmental changes such as loss of habitat. And the big

one, the effects of the accelerating climate change. Knowing how species may or may not successfully react to these challenges is one of our biggest issues. Now we have genetic tools for these studies and experiments, if only we can do them fast enough to react.

So next time you are checking on that bird, bobcat, or invasive weed, consider what the main elements of their particular evolutionary webs might be. Everything is connected, and in ways we may still discover.

Viewpoint

Muir Beach Faces NPS Challenges

By Joanie Wynn

We have the “dog people” and the “horse people.” We have frustrated Pacific Way residents and wary firefighters. We attend community meetings as we try to get straight answers from NPS and County representatives. As diverse as the individuals and issues, they all share a common thread, a growing concern that the character of Muir Beach is under siege.

As a relatively new (eight year) resident, I’m told that many of these issues with NPS have come up once (or twice or three times) before. I’ve heard the current situation compared to a David vs. Goliath dynamic and, as one of the smallest constituencies in Marin County, Muir Beach admittedly draws the short end of the power stick. Granted, NPS can resemble a “Philistine giant measuring over nine feet tall and wearing full armor,”* but unlike that biblical battle, our giant won’t be dispatched with a well-placed stone. Like it or not, NPS is our neighbor and is here to stay. How can we peacefully live alongside this powerful neighbor, mutually respecting each other’s right to exist and thrive?

On December 4, Marin County Supervisor Steve Kinsey visited Muir Beach during a CSD meeting to hear our concerns. A follow up meeting in Tam Valley on December 9, delved deeper into the issues and the result was a draft letter from Marin County Board of Supervisors to NPS which outlined Marin County residents’ overwhelming concerns about current NPS proposals. This was a positive first step and it is helpful to have our county representative listening and responding. But there are still many issues “up in the air” that need attention and thoughtful response.

Mt. Tam Task Force (under leadership from our own Kristin Shannon) has done an excellent job of getting the word out and facilitating a dialogue with NPS and County representatives. Muir Beach will feel a greater impact than other surrounding communities since Muir Woods, Muir Beach, the coastal trails and Dairy are all, quite literally, right outside our doorstep. The way these NPS properties are managed directly affects our quality of life so it is vitally important that, as residents, we actively participate in shaping the conversation around these issues.

As passionate as we all are, “no” is not a strategy and protests and PR will only get us so far. Now is the time for a well-considered plan of action for the challenges we face today and the ones we will inevitably meet down the road. Now is the time for each of us to ask: How can I be a part of the solution? We may never all be able to agree “what is best” for Muir Beach, but I think it’s important to act as a unified community and try to represent all of our concerns fairly.



Recently, in a Pacific Sun article, “Deconstructing NIMBY” (NIMBY = Not In My Backyard), Wendy Sarkissian, a so-called “NIMBY expert” with a doctorate in social planning believes that the term “can be ‘problematic’ and is often used to dismiss legitimate concerns.” In addressing the need for communities to participate in the process when change is proposed, Ms. Sarkissian offers the acronym LOVE, which stands for “listening, openness, validation and community education.”** I thought this was a helpful reminder not only to encourage and facilitate conversation, but to approach these conversations with compassion and mutual respect for all views presented.

As frightening as some of the proposals sound, these NPS initiatives are still in the proposal stage, meaning we have time to participate in the process to affect the outcome. As a community, I see strength in our collective. We need both brain and fiscal power to forge a reasonable and defensible strategy. I believe we would greatly benefit from consultation with strategists and/or advocates who can guide us through the labyrinth of governmental, environmental and legal concerns. Armed with this knowledge, we will gain the ability to craft a clear and concise vision for working with NPS, now and into the future.

Muir Beach is a community of great resources, both financial and intellectual. Now is the time for these resources to be mined. The very character of our treasured community hangs in the balance.

*about.com

**Pacific Sun, issue date: Jan. 10, 2014

Planners Foresaw Muir Woods Controversy

By Paul Jeschke

“Déjà vu all over again,” Yogi Berra memorably declared. Yogi’s reaction is shared by many Muir Beach old-timers watching the current rhubarb over visitors to Muir Woods. For them, the issues of an acceptable number of tourists, lumbering busses that ignore turnouts and maneuver tight curves by drifting into oncoming traffic and cars that block Frank Valley Road like plaque clogged arteries are almost as ancient as the redwoods.

The Golden Gate National Recreation Area was just a whippersnapper when a dedicated group of Muir Beachers got together in 1971, pondered their place in a fragile, threatened ecosystem and pounded out a solidly researched manifesto that presciently pointed to traffic, pollution, and commercial exploitation that must be avoided if their piece of coastal paradise was to be preserved.

“Large numbers of cars, not to mention commercial establishments designed to serve them, ranging from gas stations to motels and restaurants, can spell an end not only to the unique geography of this area, but also to the unique recreational potential which a large undeveloped area can offer to an urban area,” wrote the authors of the Muir Beach Community Plan, a document put together by the Muir Beach Improvement Association and ultimately approved by the CSD.

That Community Plan remains Muir Beach’s official picture of itself and its interface with county, state and federal agencies. Muir Beach may have been small (314 residents in 129 homes when the plan was written), but community activists had big ideas. “We found we had no power at the county level,” said Nancy Knox, a founder of the Muir Beach Improvement Association and one of the authors of the plan. “Now all of a sudden GGNRA was a fact and it was looming over us. We had to do something.”

Among community concerns was a proposed hotel and resort development on land between the Muir Beach Overlook and Slide Ranch.

The Community Center building was still a dream, so a meeting to discuss a preliminary version of the plan was held at the Mill Valley Library. An overflow crowd discussed Muir Beach’s future, followed by well-attended gatherings in living rooms and around kitchen tables throughout the community. The record shows that the July, 1978 “minutes of the Muir Beach Community Services District contained an announcement that the plan was available for reading at the homes of four residents.” The final planning document was submitted to the Marin County Board of Supervisors and filed with the Community Development Agency.

Former Muir Beach resident Larry Yamamoto finds it ironic that although he was president of the Improvement Association, “I didn’t want Muir Beach improved.”

Yamamoto, a 45-year resident, remembers when “there were only dirt paths at Muir Woods and the neighbor kids would go down there at night and ride bikes” – quite a change from today’s boardwalk and fenced pedestrian ramble through the redwoods and ranger enforced prohibitions against bikes.

The Community Plan demanded that “parking facilities be provided at the outer boundaries of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area with facilities for purchasing food and gas located there; that existing roads within the park lands remain slow-speed, scenic roads, narrow and winding and be so posted.”

“Everyone had a big stake in the outcome,” remembered Judith Yamamoto, one of the plan’s authors. Their horizons extended far beyond the cluster of houses by the beach.

“Surrounded as we are by land that is a part of the Golden Gate National Recreation area, we find ourselves vitally concerned with its use,” the plan declared. “We are intimately aware of its beauties, and we welcome its sharing by many people from our neighboring urban centers. At the same time, we must stress that careful planning be undertaken so that the preservation of our natural surroundings insures their enjoyment of all.

The final document contained recommendations on roads and highways that appear to be at odds with present Marin County and CalTrans policies. About Highway One, the report concluded that to preserve the “beauty and limit traffic, sharp curves, narrow roadways, steep grades and existing terrain restrictions should be kept.”

Additionally, “Frank Valley Road is not and must not be constructed to carry a large volume of traffic, particularly trailers and busses.”

Nancy Knox argued for one traffic solution that did not make it into the Community Plan. “I had the idea that they should run a railroad or a funicular all the way from Tam Valley to Muir Woods. Think of what fun that would have been.”

Beach Reopens to Mixed Feelings from Residents

By Joanie Wynn

On December 28, Muir Beach reopened to the public after undergoing a six-month, \$4 million construction project that, in the view of some local residents, still needs considerable refinement. In addition to the new parking lot, an elongated 440-foot bridge now sits over the wetlands and Redwood Creek.

"Pacific Way residents are glad the construction noise and vibration is over but are really disappointed with many of the results," declared Christian Riehl after a group of Pacific Way and Sunset residents met with NPS officials January 8th to discuss pending concerns that include issues of traffic, safety and fencing/screening of the new parking lot.



Riehl pointed out that "the NPS assured the community several times in public meetings that they would plant substantial trees and build a fence to screen the parking lot from the neighborhood. But the trees are non-existent and the fence is a see-through arbor. We've met with the NPS people on several occasions to urge them to do what they committed to do in the first place, but so far results have been slim."

NPS spokesperson Carolyn Shoulders acknowledged that "there are still some refinements to be taken, and we are cognizant of community concerns about traffic and still expect to conduct some additional measures." She said the visual impact of the parking lot would be "somewhat reduced over time as tall willows grow in at the center

of the parking lot, and vegetation along the edge of the road also grows in. Our vegetation stewardship team will be planting native plants and the parking lot buffer zone over the coming months."

"The project," Shoulders said, "has been conducted in four phases, starting in 2009 ... The intent was to restore natural creek and wetland processes that would still allow visitation, reduce flooding, and enhance habitat for the endangered Coho salmon, and threatened California red-legged frog and steelhead trout."

In addition to the new pedestrian bridge and parking lot, improved bathroom facilities were also added. For more information, www.nps.gov/goga/planyourvisit/muirbeach.htm.



NPS Dog Management Plan has Muir Beach Residents Barking Mad

By Joanie Wynn

A group of Muir Beach residents has been mobilizing on behalf of their four-legged friends. Laura Lovitt Pandapas worked with w.i.g.t. printing in Mill Valley to create an informative series of posters and flyers about the NPS' Dog Management Plan preferred alternative F which bans off leash dog walking on Muir Beach and removes all access to dogs on the surrounding trails.

MBCSD came out in support of keeping Muir Beach dog-friendly, approving a resolution opposing the proposed NPS ban. A similar resolution is likely to be approved by the Marin Board of Supervisors in the coming weeks.

Of specific concern to Muir Beach residents is this passage in NPS's preferred alternative:

"off leash dog walking can occur at a small beach area on county property adjacent to the NPS beach" (commonly known as "Little Beach").

As we are all aware, Little Beach is not accessible without crossing the main beach (when tides allow) or driving along neighborhood private roads. There is no public parking on Sunset Way, Pacific Way or Cove Lane. These single lane local roads are fire lanes. Extra and illegally parked cars would create a hazard by blocking access to emergency vehicles. For those who would arrive on foot, there are no amenities or services for Little Beach, no trash cans, no toilets. Formally stating and implementing such a plan would require appropriate impact

studies and input from the surrounding community/residents of Muir Beach, the Muir Beach Community Services District and Muir Beach Volunteer Fire Department.

The community of Muir Beach was established as a residential community well before stewardship of the NPS and has historically and safely allowed responsible off leash dog use on its beach and surrounding trails. The current proposal eliminates this access, negatively impacting over 50 Muir Beach resident dog owners.

The comment period closes on February 18, so if you'd like to keep Muir Beach dog-friendly, please take a few moments to log on to marincountydog.org for links to submit your comments. As the posters say, "Speak now...or forever hold your leash".

A Letter to Tim *By Nina Vincent*

(This is an edited version of a piece from the forever in progress travel memoir Nina is writing based on her year in Oaxaca Mexico with Harvey, and Eli in 2002.) In the year we spent in Oaxaca Mexico, I often found opportunities to compare certain aspects of life here in the States to those in Mexico. Below a letter to our dear friend Tim McElhaney now living his Muni free life in New Mexico.

Dear Tim,

I think of you often when riding, or dodging a bus here in Oaxaca. I thought you might be interested in what the public transit system here looks like. I wonder if the SF Muni system might adapt some of the finer characteristics of those here in Mexico.

1. Buses cost 30 cents no matter where you go.
2. Transfers do not exist so choose your buses well.
3. Some buses are privately owned; all buses are personally decorated and adorned.
4. Jesus does ride the dashboard alongside the Virgin Guadalupe on most every bus.
5. Choose the bus with the most religious chachkas because you will need the help of every god and goddess that exists.
6. Each bus driver has an assistant who sits on an upturned bucket doing nothing in particular aside from occasionally yelling out the bus destination, which is of course plastered clearly on the front windshield.
7. Choose your seat well – some of them shift, travel, tip, and walk away with you in them.
8. There are designated bus stops; no one uses them. People stand literally 10-15 feet away from one another along the road hence the driver is stopping and going a whole hell of a lot slower. Moral of this story; leave lots of time to get where you are going.
9. Buses do not stop for pedestrians. And after the driver kills one he abandons his bus, gathers his family up and moves to a new town. This happened just last week. We were appalled. Our friend Francisco asked somewhat bewildered what a driver in the States would do? Clearly running is the sensible thing to do, no?
10. If the bus you are on happens to be following one that just came along your route, expect that the driver of your bus will park his bus and wait five or ten

minutes until more people appear along the side of the street. Or expect that the driver will keep his foot on the brake the entire twenty minute drive down the hill from San Felipe to let the bus ahead of him gain distance and passengers. Know that those god damned brakes will squeal like a dying pig or a chorus of fingernails on a chalkboard the ENTIRE way down the hill. Or worse, brace yourself for a harrowing ride down the hill as your driver blasts past the offending competition at dangerous speeds passing on narrow roads without regard for oncoming traffic or pedestrians.

11. Buses all are equipped with doors

that do not close, mufflers that either do not exist or have been rigged for 'surround sound', stereo amplified to the nth degree, and record breaking emissions of the blackest, thickest smelliest exhaust clouds ever known to the world of transportation.

12. If you are truly blessed you may be on a bus which picks up one of the many blind men who have taken up the guitar and singing regardless of whether they are musically inclined. They all went to the same voice teacher who must have drilled them with the importance of 'projecting' their voices no matter how off key and terrible.

IN MEMORY OF



NANCY SEQUEIRA
1941- 2013

(Editor's Note: Long-time Muir Beach Quilter Nancy Sequeira died recently at her home in Mill Valley. Her husband, Robert Fesler wrote this touching tribute.)

Nancy Rose Sequeira left us on December 23, 2013 after a long ordeal with cancer. She was born May 28, 1941 in San Francisco, the first child of Elsie and Able Sequeira. She is survived by her husband, Robert Fesler, her partner and deeply in love companion for over 30 years. Nancy is also survived by her loving brother, Peter Sequeira, sister June Bosch, stepsons Eric, Jason and Christopher Fesler, nieces Dr. Sarabnet Sequeira, Dr. Catherine Lamm, Elizabeth Sequeira and cousin Michael Sequeira, notable among many.

Upon graduation from San Francisco State University in 1963, Nancy began a distinguished thirty-six year career teaching the children of San Francisco.

She taught at John McLaren, E. R. Taylor and the last twelve particularly challenging and rewarding years at Claire Lilienthal Alternative School. She was a superbly successful teacher, warm and compassionate, a mentor and a teacher leader, active in her union, the United Educators of San Francisco.

Nancy was a trained artist, a skilled watercolorist specializing in botanical drawing. She was a quilter, for years a member of Muir Beach Quilters, a fine cook, a dedicated gardener, especially a cultivator of roses. And to all of these avocations and to travel and reading and music, Nancy brought an energy and joy and love of life and beauty that so enriched the lives of friends and those who loved her.

One of Nancy's many loving friends has written: "For friends she offered kindness, generosity, thoughtfulness and fun. Knowing her was a blessing." She is and will be deeply mourned.

There will be no funeral service. A celebration of her life will be announced at a future date. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be sent to:

*Hospice by the Bay, The Center for Integrative Health and Wellness, 1350 S. Eliseo, Greenbrae CA, 94904, or
Gerry Meister Scholarship Fund, UESF Retired Division, 170 Topeka, San Francisco, CA 94124.*

In the Center of Things *By Laurie Piel*

I'm happy to be asked to bring back my column, "In the Center of Things" for the new Beachcomber team. Now that Muir Beach Nextdoor has become the place to find upcoming events and community information, this column will serve as a snapshot of what happened at the Center and hopefully share a happy memory and bring a smile. So, to start 2014 here's a quick look back at 2013.

January started off the new year with a bang...literally. The New Year's Eve potluck was larger than in the past with good food and good company. At midnight we were surprised with a small fireworks show. It was great fun. January also saw the Elderberries' first Book Exchange. There were books of all sizes, shapes and subjects that had me rummaging for more. I came home with more than I had brought.

February started with the traditional BBQ Kick-Off Meeting. Led by Michael Kaufman, the meeting spearheaded the drive for volunteers as it does every year. It's a great way to get involved in the community and meet your neighbors. Goodness knows it worked for me. David & I worked the first weekend we had closed on our house and the warmth of this community was so abundant that now you are all stuck with my newsletter. Also in February, the Elderberries hosted their second Community Dinner. It is the place to be to see the friends and neighbors that you haven't seen in a while and therefore has become very successful. Here's a heads up... the next Community Dinner is currently scheduled for March 28th.

In **March** many of the long time residents came to Bistro and shared a scone & coffee and bid goodbye to Mary Collier before she moved to New Mexico.

April saw Women2Women holding their fourth annual fundraiser...raising money and awareness of violence toward women around the globe. In the spirit of peace within, a spiritual

mini retreat was held at the Center as well. Off campus, Wendy Johnson held her biannual plant sale.

May is always a busy month around the Beach and it's no different at the Center. For the first time, Green Gulch held a meet the folks and sign up for veggies box square dance... including a caller. The folks who attended all had a lot of fun so hopefully it won't be the last one. A drumming circle master class rounded out the varied events that month. Although not at the Center, work parties for the BBQ got underway every Saturday culminating with the BBQ itself on Memorial Day Sunday.

In **June** there was a community blood drive on Father's Day. As in May, although not at the Center itself, there was a Little Beach BBQ farewell to Scott and Toni Sampson (Scott took a job with the Denver Museum of Nature & Science), and a Muir Beach Kids water training safety day at Big Beach.

July being the height of holiday travel, there were no community events at the Center but, the Rummage Sale was held at the now "old entrance" to Big Beach to catch the beachgoers on the last weekend before the beach was closed.

August brought the deadline for applications for the Quilter's Fair, and at the Center a concert by SingersMarin serenaded an enthusiastic crowd with many well-loved favorites. The concert,

sponsored by the Quilter's Programs Fund, featured Motown memories sung by over 40 singers of all ages.

With the end of summer vacation time, **September** ushered in Pearl Salon, Muir Beach's first one-day nail only salon run by Annabelle Conti & Camila Pares with the able assistance of Tessa Pares. We also saw the Elderberries' Community Dinner back in swing as well as the off campus resumption of yoga classes down at Taylor's Zendo led by Susy Stewart. The Center also hosted a one day Charya Nriya dance meditation workshop.

Ah, the beauty of **October**. To start the month, we had a workshop on creative parenting, and sponsored by the MBVFA the annual fire extinguisher sale & recharge down at the Dairy. Then for fun, the Quilters held their Champagne Brunch and Quilt Raffle. To round off the month, Women2Women held a benefit for the Everest Learning Academy. And, of course, Halloween was celebrated by the MB kids and parents at the Center before heading down to lower beach for trick or treating. Off campus Wendy Johnson held her biannual plant sale coupled with Danny Hobson's Open Studios, and then Slide Ranch held their annual Harvest Celebration.

You would think things would slow down in **November** but that was hardly the case. November started with the



Community Dinner hosted by the Elderberries

continued from previous page

10th anniversary of our incredible Day of the Dead celebration. I swear, each year it gets better. Off campus we celebrated Guy Fawkes Day at the Peli & the Beach including the bonfire. Our CSD held one of their periodic meetings in the middle of the month. Lynda Silva held a craft-making workshop for kids who wanted to sell things at the Quilter's Fair. The Ocean Riders held a horse appreciation and riding class at the Dairy for kids & parents and then followed with a hoedown later in the day at the Center. In the middle of all of that the MBVFA sponsored a class in CPR/AED training.

December is a time of social gatherings but we got down to important business with Steve Kinsey's special visit to us as Franks Valley Road, Muir Woods parking and many other issues of importance to us were discussed. The Quilters started setting up for the fair as soon as December showed up and the Center was ready and filled with beautiful things by the first weekend. Many gorgeous things were made and sold... and many gifts were bought for others as well as ourselves. Off campus, the Zen Center held a zen and yoga weekend at Green Gulch. We had our very first Winter Solstice celebration compliments of the Piazza's and Lopez's. It was spectacular! It was chock full of people and everyone said how wonderful it was. Here's to many more. I'm campaigning for a Summer Solstice celebration as well.... What do you think? Tom Soltesz held a studio clearance sale at the Center and we hope he did well enough to do it again. The year was capped off by our New Year's Eve potluck gathering. It was small, intimate and delicious. We sat around the fire, ate & sipped champagne and shared stories of the beach... a perfect way to end the old year and start the new. It was a sign my husband, David, saw seven years ago on one of the bulletin boards that said "No host NYEve party. Bring something to share and join the best neighbors in the world to ring in the new year!" That sign made us want to live here in the first place. That still holds true in 2014! *Happy New Year everybody!*



Concert by SingersMarin



Dave Elliott at the Quilter's Fair



Kathy Sward at the Quilter's Fair

Muir Beach Community Center

Drop-in use

The Community Center is available during daytime hours if the Center is not scheduled for other activities. Users are responsible for cleanup.

Rental

For rental inquiries, please email Laurie Piel at muirbeachcc@aol.com.



19 Seacape Drive, Muir Beach CA 94965

LOCAL ACTIVITIES

Bistro - Wednesday, 10 - 11:45 am, Community Center

Quilters - Wednesday, 11:45 am, Community Center

Tai Chi, Monday 6:30 pm, Wednesday 8:30 am, Thursday 6:30 pm, Community Center

Volleyball - Monday and Thursday, 6:30 pm at the pump house

Quilter's Fair 2013

The 2013 Quilter's Holiday Arts Fair, held December 7-8, was a great success. The weather held out and we all enjoyed a fun weekend with friends, great food, great art and shopping.

Thanks to all that helped contribute to the Muir Beach Quilters best year ever!

The Quilters meet on Wednesdays for a lunch potluck after Bistro. You don't have to be a quilter to join, everyone is welcome even if you don't quilt!

Photos by Joanie Wynn



Gingerbread Attic artists Jessica and Anna (left) and Camila and Annabelle (below)



Kathy shopping at the Garden Club booth



MBVFD booth with firemen Maurice, Matt, and Brad

2013 Raffle Quilt

The Quilters proudly congratulate Michael Moore, winner of the 2013 Raffle Quilt "Willy Nilly Bento Box."

Photos by Julie Smith



Camila and Hannah pose with Mike after drawing his winning ticket.



Muir Beach Quilters in front of their creation "Willy Nilly Bento Box".