

BEACHCOMBER

SINCE 1946



ON THE COVER

Surf Muir Beach
Photograph © 2014
Carol Stevenson

Carol Stevenson is a fine art nature and travel photographer. Her love of travel has allowed her to photograph some of the more remote areas of the world while she lived and worked in the Asia Pacific region.

Her latest work features portraiture of the Asian elephant, a conservation project in conjunction with the Golden Triangle Asian Elephant Foundation, Thailand, with a goal to raise awareness of the species through her photography.

Carol lives at Muir Beach, and serves on the board of ASMP Northern California. She shoots with Nikon equipment.

Awards

Best of 2008, American Society of Media Photographers (ASMP)

Lowepro Featured Photographer, 2011

PDN Faces 2011

Gallery

Molinar Galleries, Tiburon, California

Features

- Nikon, Learn & Explore Mentor Series
- ABC News Travel
- Equestrio Magazine, Arabia & China
- NZZ Folio, Switzerland
- J G Black Book of Travel

Exhibitions

Asia & Beyond, 2009

Elephants & Mahouts 2010, 2011

Books

Luminous, Whitsunday Islands, AUS



Carol Stevenson

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From Muir Beach to The White House

By David Brandt



Kate Brandt

Muir Beach's own Kate Brandt, born and raised on Sunset Way, has been appointed by President Obama as the Federal Environment Executive. The youngest person to hold this pivotal position, she is responsible for promoting environmental and energy sustainability across all Federal Government operations including 500,000 buildings, 600,000 vehicles, and \$500 billion annually in purchased goods and services. The Office of the Environmental Executive works collaboratively with the Executive Office of the President and each of the Federal agencies to implement the President's Executive Order on Federal Sustainability (EO 13514) and the GreenGov initiative.

Kate credits her interest in the environment to her formative years at the Beach. "Growing up surrounded by so much natural beauty sensitized me to the importance of preserving our planet for the generations that follow," she says.

Prior to her appointment, Kate served as a Senior Advisor at the U.S.

Department of Energy in the Office of the Under Secretary for Science and Energy where she played a key role in establishing the office and executing the President's Climate Action Plan. Before that, she was a Director for Energy and Environment in the Office of Presidential Personnel at the White House, recruiting, interviewing, and managing the presidential appointment of Senate confirmed and senior candidates for energy and environment federal agencies.

Prior to her work in the Office of Presidential Personnel, Kate served as the Special Advisor for Energy to the Secretary of the Navy. She advised the Secretary on Navy energy policy and strategy and was the policy director for the report to the President entitled *America's Gulf Coast: A Long Term Recovery Plan* after the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill. Before her work at the U.S. Department of Defense, Kate was a Policy Analyst in the White House Office of Energy and Climate Change. She also worked on the Presidential Transition Team for Dr. Susan Rice and the National Security Agency Review Team.

Kate received a Masters degree in International Relations from the University of Cambridge where she was a Gates Cambridge Scholar. She graduated with honors from Brown University. In 2013, Kate was awarded the Harry S. Truman Extraordinary Impact Award. She is a New Leaders Council Fellow and a member of the Women's Council on Energy and Environment.

Around Town

FIREMEN'S BBQ 2014

Thanks to everyone who volunteered and participated in the Firemen's BBQ this year. Your help and contributions made it another successful fundraiser, with perfect weather, rockin' music, good food, and lots of fun. It's always a great party and a great way to kick-off the summer. (See back page.)

—Michael Moore, MBVFA President

BBQ RAFFLE UPDATE

I wanted to thank all of the prize donors and raffle ticket purchasers who participated in this May's volunteer firemen's fundraiser. My grand prize this year were airline tickets compliments of Jet Blue, worth \$900. I had a record year for sold raffle tickets and out of the 100 prizes, over 70 were won by Muir Beachers! And 43 prizes were picked up the day of the event, extra thank you for that!

While almost 40 neighbors didn't return their raffle books or send checks, almost 40 other neighbors bought \$50. to \$150. worth of tickets! You can see the prizes and the winners' names plus ticket numbers on the firemen's site or on my site, muirbeach.com. And a huge thank you to my all-day booth helpers the day of: Robert Allen, Victoria Hamilton Rivers, my additional last min-emergency helpers Debra and Dave Hendsch and Barbara Herwitz, Victoria's brother who picked out the winners, David Piel who announced the winners and my winning ticket runners from the Silva household!

—Debra Allen



PHOTO BY MICHAEL MOORE

WILLOW WRAY

Oct. 5, 1950 – May 31, 2014

Willow Wray died in her home in Sebastopol on May 31st 2014, surrounded by the people she loved, and in spirit by a vast number of us who had been with her as she so gracefully moved through the stages of her illness. Willow, our songbird and friend taught us all so much about living, and about dying with such incredible grace and courage!

Willow lived and performed here in Muir Beach for a number of years. She wrote a song dedicated to Muir Beach, and performed here at the "Cowgirl Café", as well as for numerous events at the MBCC. Willow was a part of the renowned trio: Nicholas, Glover, and Wray. Willow will be remembered by those of us who knew her as a loving, generous, beyond funny, inspiration.

In the last weeks of her life, and with the help of her incredible community

of musicians, Willow realized a lifetime dream and recorded a most amazing CD, *Seeds of Love* with songs written during her illness and inspired by her appreciation for life. You can purchase this CD online.

A public memorial for Willow will be held on Oct. 5th (her birthday), most probably at the Throckmorton Theatre. Many friends and musicians will be there to celebrate her life. She was one of a kind our Willow. Her music keeps her here with us.

JACK HADLEY

Jack Hadley passed away earlier this year. He was a Muir Beach owner who built 285 Sunset in the 1960's, called "Hadley's Crow's Nest". He had also donated his inventions to be raffle prizes for the firemen's BBQ. <http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/pressdemocrat/obituary.aspx?pid=168965815>

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).

CONTRIBUTE: The Beachcomber seeks essays, poems, articles, photographs, artwork, group announcements, events, kids stuff – anything that celebrates Muir Beach and our community.

Everything printed should be considered solely the opinion of the writer, and is printed in the form and condition as submitted. Beachcomber exercises no editorial control over content or distribution, except for readability and general appearance. Anonymous submissions are not accepted.

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Meet Your Neighbor *By David Piel*

Tayeko Nishimura was born near Lone Pine, California in the Manzanar Internment camp for Japanese-Americans during WW II. After the war, as the camps were emptied parents were encouraged to anglicize their names "in order to fit in better and be accepted," Tayeko became Shirley Nishimura. She was raised in Santa Monica, graduated from UCLA and arrived in San Francisco in time for the Summer of Love.

Michael hails from Cleveland, Ohio, and as he puts it, "I couldn't wait to get out of there." Michael had fond memories of San Francisco from a driving trip in the family station wagon when he was a boy. "In 1963, when I got old enough, I threw down my snow shovel and headed west!"

For the next few years, Michael bounced from flipping burgers in Berkeley during the Free Speech Movement, to working for an all black company in LA during the Watts Riots, to a stint in law school where he joined with some classmates to produce "Travel '67" at the Cow Palace.

The travel show offices were at the Ferry Building and "Shirley" was working two piers over for Landor Associates, the pioneer branding firm that had offices on the Klamath, the last steam ferryboat on the bay. Michael saw her on his lunch hour. "We used to drink our lunches in those days, but I was completely sober when I saw her. I was totally smitten and approached her."

It was the last Wednesday in 1966 and she remembers being wary of such a brash and forward young man and was on her guard. Michael & Tayeko (she had reverted to her birth name) were married exactly one year later on the last Wednesday of 1967...and moved into the Castro. The Castro back then was the place to be for the young and edgy...not the one we know today.

'67 was the summer of love and San Francisco was ground zero. The hippies, the anti-war riots and the free speech movement all were a part of their daily lives and they reveled in



Tayeko and Michael Kaufman

all of it. They would sit on their stoop and chat with their neighbors as they passed by. They got to know Carol Doda and became acquainted with Sly Stone. One young woman who would stop and chat was Janis Joplin. Tayeko remembers babysitting for Alan Brodsky, the lead defense lawyer for Angela Davis during her famous trial. Before they married, Tayeko had two roommates who were dating brothers... Jim and Artie. They turned out to be the famous (infamous?) Mitchell Brothers whom they both got to know well. They even approached Michael to go into the porno business with them... he declined. It was interesting times.

Though the Haight-Ashbury and Berkeley got all the attention, Muir Beach and Druid Heights* were the West Marin outposts of the Bohemian and Hippy culture and they spent lots of time here. The Tavern on the beach (long gone) was going strong with performers like Janis Joplin, Jerry Garcia, Creedence Clearwater Revival, and Big Brother and the Holding Company. Like many of us, they loved Muir Beach and knew they would live here someday.

By the seventies, Tayeko wanted a family and became a teacher, while Michael managed the Coffee Cantata and The Deli on Union St. In time, he

too earned a teaching credential and became a Kindergarten teacher. They moved to Marin where their son Eli was born. When school funding was cut statewide they decided to travel and teach abroad. Their first position was at the American School in Tokyo Japan, from where they explored Southeast Asia. Though they bought their current home on Sunset Way in 1976, they didn't move in until 1981. They leased it as they had more traveling to do first.

Next, they headed off to Iran where Tayeko taught and Michael worked in administration at the American School of Isfahan. From there they discovered the Middle East...Then the revolution came, and Tayeko and Eli were safely evacuated...but Michael had to stay behind. He got out in '79, just before the US Embassy takeover.

It was time to move into their Muir Beach home...but they couldn't. They had a tenant who refused to leave. So? Off to Belgium to teach at the Antwerp International School! They returned in '81 and finally became full time Muir Beachers.

Michael worked for KQED, PBS, and the Clinton White House on the Netday project, while Tayeko became an award-winning science teacher at Kent

Continued on next page

County Fair Ribbon Winners *By Kathy Sward*

Continued from page 4

Middle School and the Exploratorium. Michael says, "I took a 'Men-O-Pause', and went to harvest caviar in China, just in time for the Tiananmen uprising." Tayeko who had remained behind with Eli, worked with Barbara Boxer and State Dept. officials to help get Michael home safely.

Both of them became active in the community and Michael joined the Muir Beach Volunteer Firemen's Association (the fund raising group for the fire department) becoming its president one year later. He helped secure the tax base for the fire department, wrote grants for tree removal, fire truck and chipping programs, and resurrected the Disaster Preparedness Program. He spear headed the annual BBQ fundraiser for 13 years with Tayeko by his side. (She continues to lead the baking brigade). When the 2013 BBQ broke all records for income, they knew it was time for new adventures. Michael resigned his position on the association...though both are still involved in the event. Tayeko remains a Quilter and Garden Club member.

Now it's time to travel more (67 countries and counting), dine with friends, enjoy good books and theatre (both are Shakespeare aficionados and longtime subscribers to the Oregon Shakespeare Festival) and make frequent trips to Los Angeles to see their son Eli, their daughter-in-law Cheryl, and their grandson Asa.

Back when I asked Michael if he would agree to be my next "victim" for this column he said, "Sure, but it has to include Tayeko. We're a team. It's always been like that." Clearly, with that sentiment in mind, there's also time for them to ruminate on that wonderful and fateful last Wednesday in 1966.

*Druid Heights is now called Camino Del Canyon, a part of the Muir Beach Nextdoor.com neighborhood along with Green Gulch and Slide Ranch.

This year Muir Beachers took home several ribbons from the Marin County Fair. In the Fine Art/Fine Craft building, Leslie Riehl won a second place ribbon in the Textiles category, and Judith Yamamoto and Kathy Sward both received Honorable Mentions in the same category. Larry Yamamoto won two Honorable Mentions (Judith is holding his ribbons), one for his watercolor and one for his line drawing, which sold at the Fair.



Kathy Sward, Joey Groneman, Tayeko Kaufman, Janice Kubota, and Judith Yamamoto.



Pam Eichenbaum, Shirley Nygren, and Leslie Riehl.

In the Craft building, Kathy Sward was honored with First and Best of Show in the category for machine-pieced, hand-appliquéd and hand-quilted large quilts. Judith Yamamoto won Fourth for her machine-pieced, hand-quilted large quilt, and Tayeko Kaufman won Second for her whole cloth, hand-quilted, hand-embroidered quilt, and Third for her machine-pieced, hand-appliquéd and hand-quilted quilt. Tayeko also won Best of Show for her ceramic piece.

Pam Eichenbaum, Shirley Nygren, Joey Groneman, and Janice Kubota took home ribbons in the Floracultural category.

All these ribbons made for a great Muir Beach showing, and maybe next year we'll even have more.

The Critter Report: *Muir Beach Critters in Action* By Dave MacKenzie

There have certainly been a lot of critter happenings in Muir Beach lately, and I am happy to see so many Muir Beachers observing and discussing all the action!

For example, this was a great year for spotting Gray whales from the Muir Beach Overlook, and many locals shared the amazing experience of watching mother/calf pairs steaming by right below, next to the rocky shore. This was probably the best viewing in my 20 years or so at Muir Beach; I counted a total of 20 individuals over a period of a couple of weeks, centering on the first week of May as usual. One of the most fascinating sightings was of a mother/calf pair which was so close to shore they actually swam in and out of the rocks heading north. As they approached Slide Ranch, two

animals have been expanding their range on the shore of California in recent years, and the Muir Beach sightings this year have been very important scientifically. Researchers have been tracking individual Dolphins by their dorsal fin shapes. The tall, curved fin is the key to identifying this species, from say the Harbor Porpoise, which is darker, with a small dorsal, and rolls very fast. In fact, the Harbor Porpoises are so fast that most Muir Beachers seem not to have spotted them, even though they are right offshore in pairs or small groups everyday.

For more information on the Bottlenose Dolphins, go to this nice article in Bay Nature:

<http://baynature.org/articles/bottlenose-dolphins-move-north-bay/>



Gray whale mother and calf as seen from the Overlook.

(or more?) Bottlenose Dolphins came right next to the whales and appeared to herd or even play with the baby whale for a couple of minutes. I want to think they were trying to protect it, as the mother does by keeping the calf on the shore side, but who knows? Protection is certainly a real issue as the Grays pass the big sea canyons like Monterey and Bodega, where White Sharks and Orcas hunt.

The Bottlenose Dolphins have also been seen by many from both the Overlook and Big Beach, sometimes literally playing right in the surf. These

If you can get a snapshot of any of these dolphins (even a cell phone shot might be OK), you can send it to Bill Keener at bill.keener@comcast.net. He is trying to develop an inventory of which Bottlenose Dolphin is which. Maybe we can learn to identify our locals by their fins! He is also interested in any details of sightings around Muir Beach, so please send him your reports.

Some other critters have been enjoying the restored areas of Lower Redwood Creek, from the Banducci fields all the way to the beach. For example, I

monitored about six Red-Legged Frogs (the most I have ever seen in decades of searching!) for several weeks in one small pond next to the creek. After they seemed to be gone, I was certainly suspicious of the numerous Raccoon tracks at that site. Everyone likes frog legs!

We are continuing to monitor the River Otter family in Redwood Creek with trail cameras, but at this date I cannot report on the status of pups this year. It seems they don't really get out to be noticed until late in summer, but probably the female and two pups will show up again near the beach soon. Let me know if you see them.

The restored area from the footbridge to the beach has also been very good to wildlife this year, despite so many people and pets nearby. A female Killdeer (the shorebird with the two black collars and the loud "killdeer call"), nested almost right below the bridge in the replanted area and successfully fledged two chicks. A very young Bobcat was caught on camera in the front tangle of trees and water and is probably the most colorful of its species I have ever seen. Take a look at the video of it jumping up into the branches at my dropbox site at: <http://tinyurl.com/bobcatjump>

A Black-Tailed Deer fawn also put on quite a show for the camera in the same location. It seemed to enjoy rapid spurts of running on its newly developing little legs. Check it out at: <http://tinyurl.com/fawndrink>

There has also been a flotilla of Velella velella (those funky little jellyfish-like things which look like cellophane potato chips!) washing up on the beaches. They are common offshore in summer, but every 10 years or so the winds are just right to blow them to the coast. Pretty weird if you have never seen them before, but they are basically harmless, unless you are a plankton! So keep enjoying our critters and keep the reports coming! We live in a very special place and it is great to see so many years of restoration paying off.

Beat the ATM Withdrawal Fee

We've all been there: you're off to check out that new bargain bites restaurant but there's a "No Credit Cards" sign posted inside. After checking your wallet, you realize you're out of cash. No problem. Just run down the street and slip a plastic bankcard into the nearest ATM. Suddenly you've got cash for the meal and some extra walking around money.

That inexpensive meal, however, may end up costing as much as \$5 extra if the money was extracted from an out-of-network ATM with high fees. That amounts to a five percent surcharge on a \$100 withdrawal or a whopping 25 percent penalty if you were foolish enough to withdraw a mere \$20.

ATM charges, both those levied by your bank for using a competitor's machine and the fee paid to the owner of the ATM, are a \$7 billion dollar annual bonanza to banks and cash machine operators. Fees nationwide average \$3.85. Many families are forking over \$250-\$300 annually for the privilege of accessing their own money. Fortunately, there's a money-saving way out of this electronic pickpocketing by carefully choosing your bank or credit union.

First Republic, a local bank with branches in Mill Valley's Strawberry Village and Fourth Street in San Rafael, offers particularly attractive ATM services. Customers get free use of any bank's ATM, more than 800,000 worldwide, and unlimited ATM access. So if a First Republic customer uses an ATM card at a Bank of America, Wells Fargo or any other bank's terminal anywhere in the world, all fees are credited and rebated on the next statement. A few other banks and credit unions have similar policies, so it pays to check around.

When the first ATM's popped up 25 years ago, banks embraced them enthusiastically and happily laid off thousands of tellers. Transactions at early cash machines were free, but in 1988, the Valley Bank of Nevada

implemented the first ATM fees and discovered that casino customers could care less about what it cost to get back to the slot machines and gambling table action.

On a personal note, I've been banking at First Republic for 15 years after divorcing myself from one of the country's biggest banks because of poor service and rapidly rising fees. In all that time, I have paid no fees whatsoever – not for checking

accounts, money transfers or foreign transactions. They have free notary service and supply postage paid envelopes for deposits. High tech bells and whistles include smart phone and tablet apps that make deposits by taking a photo of a check.

There's little reason to visit a bank in person these days, but I'll continue to go in occasionally. The free chocolate chip cookies at First Republic are irresistible.

Beachcomber Membership Drive Update

By Maury Ostroff, Beachcomber Circulation Manager

Our call for financial support for 2014 was a resounding success, with participation from over 75 households. We hereby thank each and every one of you, and note that many people contributed more than the suggested \$25. It really shows how much people appreciate being part of the Muir Beach community.

We would also like to thank the Muir Beach CSD for their initial grant earlier this year that allowed us to publish the first two issues. The Beachcomber is now on solid financial footing for the rest of 2014; neighborhood news supported by the neighborhood. Well done and thanks!

Life is a Journey

By Alvin Fine

Birth is a beginning and death a destination;
But life is a journey.
A going, a growing from stage to stage:
From childhood to maturity and youth to old age.
From innocence to awareness and ignorance to knowing;
From foolishness to discretion and then perhaps, to wisdom.
From weakness to strength or strength to weakness and often back again.
From health to sickness and back we pray, to health again.
From offense to forgiveness, from loneliness to love,
From joy to gratitude, from pain to compassion.
From grief to understanding, from fear to faith;
From defeat to defeat to defeat, until, looking backward or ahead:
We see that victory lies not at some high place along the way,
But in having made the journey, stage by stage, a sacred pilgrimage.
Birth is a beginning and death a destination;
But life is a journey, a sacred pilgrimage,
Made stage by stage...To life everlasting.

I heard this poem when Rabbi Fine first made it public as an ending to a Saturday morning sermon. It was so moving and real that it has stayed with me and provided perspective as I make the "Journey". For Muir Beachers who are unfamiliar with it, I hope you will find comfort and inspiration in reading it.

—Bob Jacobs

What's new in the floodplain?

Marin Park Stewardship has been busy this summer! Perhaps you've seen us guiding a group along Kaasi trail or knee-deep in the plants of the floodplain. We've hosted many programs, begun our fifth year of vegetation monitoring, and are making big plans for the fall.

We've welcomed back many summer camps and programs to Muir Beach. Aim High, Greenplay summer camp, Gulf of the Farallones National Marin Sanctuary summer camp, and the Conservancy's Linking Individuals to Natural Communities (LINC) program are some of the returning groups we've worked and played with this summer. For each program we welcome the students with an introduction to the project and site history, work on a habitat restoration project, and usually play a game relating to the concepts we have shared that day. These students have helped us pull tons of weeds as well as make Muir Beach a fun place to be. We're looking forward to having them back next summer.

You may also have spotted a small group of people off trail pulling long measuring tapes out across the fields or staring at one spot on the ground intently. While this may look perplexing, we are surveying the plants to understand how the habitat is coming back after the five phases of construction are complete. The vegetation ecologist, Tanya Baxter, will be analyzing the data collected to understand how the plant community has changed over time, the percent cover of specific native and invasive plants, and whether we have achieved certain goals regarding invasive plant control. The report she will generate will help inform habitat management decisions going forward. This is our last year of monitoring until 2019, so come by and ask us questions while we're around.

Looking ahead to fall at Muir Beach, we are planning a few projects you all may notice. First, this September we

will be taking down the black deer-exclusion fencing in the floodplain around the parking lot. This fencing was meant to exclude deer from the area to take browsing pressure off the small willows and allow the tiny trees to grow.

We will also be pulling out the temporary shade structures - or "Coho cabanas," as we lovingly call them - from the creek ahead of the anticipated rains. The shade structures will be reinstalled next spring as temporary cover for juvenile Coho salmon and steelhead trout while the trees growing on the creek banks grow up.

Lastly, we will be seeking out invasive pampas and jubata grasses for removal. Also called sawgrass, these huge ornamental grasses generate large, showy plumes in late summer/early fall that spruce tens of thousands of seeds. These seeds blow from the bluffs above Little Beach, Pirates Cove, and other invaded areas into the newly restored and wild lands of the Redwood Creek watershed. This grass is a bully that keeps other plants from thriving. If you have this grass growing in your yard or nearby open space, please help us keep wild lands healthy by removing the flowering plumes if removal of the entire plant is not possible. For more information on pampas and jubata grass visit: Don't Plant a Pest! at www.cal-ips.org/landscaping/dpp/.

We will be working on these projects during our twice weekly drop-in programs. If you'd like to join in we meet in the Muir Beach parking lot on Wednesday at 1 pm and on Saturday at 10 am. We work for three hours with a snack break in the middle. We bring tools, gloves, training, and snack. All ages are welcome, though children under 16 need to be accompanied by an adult.

For more information on Park Stewardship activities in Marin County, contact Naomi LeBeau at nlebeau@parksconservancy.org or at (415) 321-9668.



Muir Beach circa 1983

*Here is an old photo of Muir Beach (yes, old parking lot was flooded in 1983, too).
—Lorna Cunkle*

Muir Beach Overlook

By Mia Monroe

Muir Beach Overlook is open... recent improvements has made the site fully accessible so all can enjoy the spectacular scenery, enjoy the remote wild feel and have a picnic! Just in time for the nice fall weather's opportunity to view Farallon Islands and up the coast "forever"!

Plan a walk on the Owl Trail among the fragrant coastal plants north to Slide Ranch.

There's something new, a tactile model of the area to show the landscape from mountain top to ocean! Bring some water and watch it flow through Redwood Creek into the ocean!

PHOTOS BY MAXX AND MICHAEL MOORE



Viewpoint

Announcing Formation of and Invitation to Join the Muir Beach Association

By Christian Riehl

On Wednesday, July 23, a dozen Muir Beachers and friends got together to share information about issues and concerns with the National Park Service development plans (generally) and their impending plans to build great big concrete bus stops on Highway 1 at Pacific Way. As Jonathan Winters said in the movie *The Russians are Coming! The Russians are Coming!* (1966): "People, we've got to get organized!" So, we agreed to form the Muir Beach Association. If you wish to join, please email me at christianriehl@mindspring.com.

"The Muir Beach Association is formed for the purpose of pursuing the implementation of the Muir Beach Community Plan, the Local Coastal Program and Marin County Zoning, and to provide information about, and an open forum for, all issues affecting the community.

The purpose of the Association is also to act as a liaison for Muir Beach with

County, State, and Federal agencies or any other organization affecting the Muir Beach community."

Details, details are still being formulated. If you join, you can help define them. Here's some more background, and a few straw-man proposals on how to move forward.

Why an Association:

Simply put, a community Association gets attention: from County Supervisors, our State and Federal representatives –and maybe even the NPS. A high-ranking county official told me that an Association is the best way for Muir Beach to be heard.

It's worked for residents up on Panoramic who formed the Muir Woods Park Community Association and it's worked for Stinson Beach people with their Stinson Beach Village Association. Perhaps the best articulation of the need for an Association is by Dick Spotswood in his May 18 column in the Marin IJ: http://www.marinij.com/marinnews/ci_25779968/dick-spotswood-unorganized-homeowners-have-little-political-clout.

Who can join:

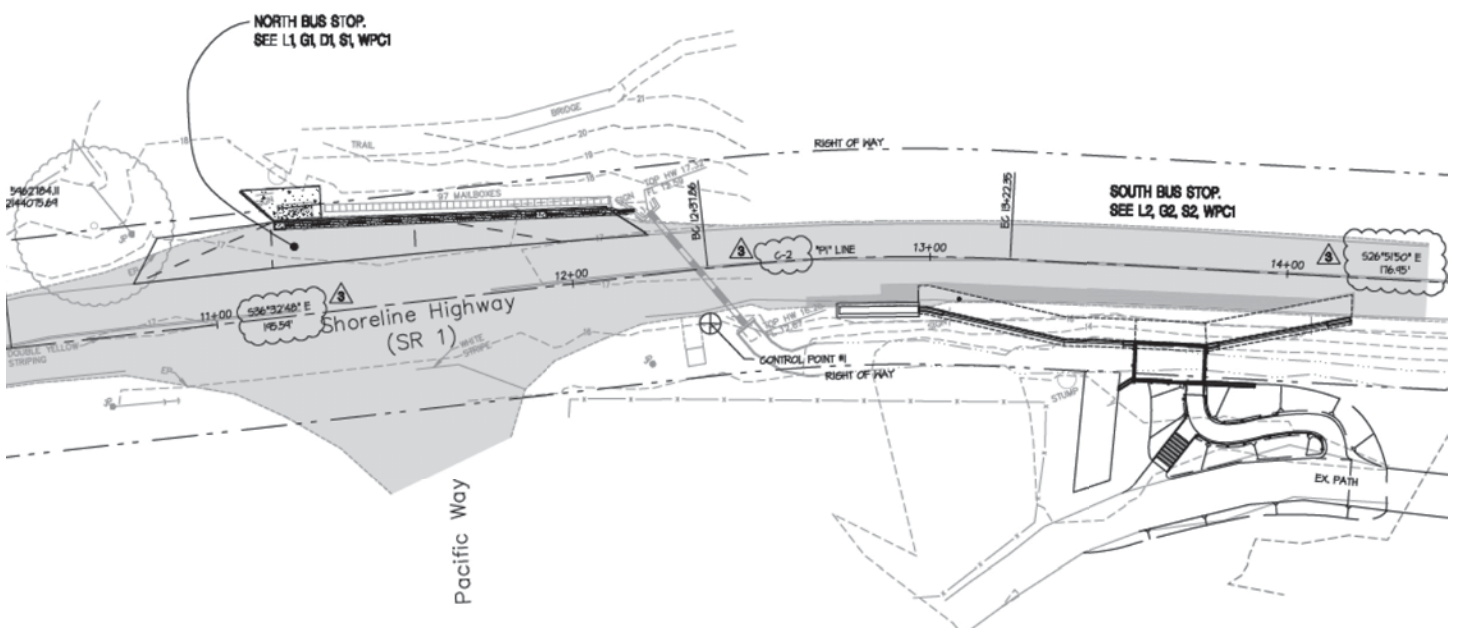
Our initial thinking is that membership be open to anyone who lives, works, or owns property in Muir Beach.

What it is and what it isn't:

The Muir Beach Association, as stated above, is meant to provide information and a forum for ideas and concerns of its members and the Muir Beach community, and to act as a liaison with government and other organizations affecting us.

The Association is not a replacement for the CSD, the Volunteer Fire Department, the Quilters, the Elderberries, or anyone or thing else. Each of those has their own purpose, powers, and limitations affecting their ability and willingness to represent Muir Beach broadly. An Association adds to these groups, will try to facilitate communication and coordination, and hopefully include people in the community –and there are lots– who aren't members of the other groups. As Paul Jeschke pointed out in the January 2014 Beachcomber, there's a historical precedent for an Association

Continued on page 11



Proposed bus stop map provided by NPS

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right here in Muir Beach, when the Muir Beach Improvement Association got together –43 years ago!– to draft the Muir Beach Community plan.

First steps and next steps:

Originally, we got together on Wednesday because we were alarmed by the NPS plans to build massive concrete bus stops on Highway 1. The NPS claims they're only for the weekend shuttles in the summertime. But that doesn't appear to be true. And they have no plans to prevent the commercial hop-on, hop-off buses from using the stops.

The NPS says they presented the detailed plans to the Muir Beach community three times, and that no one objected. We just got copies of the detailed plans –attached– this week. And I remember people objecting. So the first thing the newly formed Association did was to ally with the Mount Tam Task Force so that we can work together.

The next thing we need to do is to complete the structure of the Association: some simple bylaws, a governing or coordinating committee (maybe 3 or 5 people?). We may, or may not, wish to file for non-profit status. Most importantly, we need to let people know of our existence and invite them to join. As of August 1, over 60 residents have asked to join!

What it costs:

Not determined yet, but if we keep things modest, it shouldn't cost much. I'm told it costs \$800 to file for non-profit status. Personally, I'm hoping membership could be less than \$50 per person.

Help and thanks:

We –especially me– could use some help. If you are willing to give a little time and energy to this, please let me know at christianriehl@mindspring.com. And to all who have and will help out: *Thank you!*

"There is no reason why good cannot triumph as often as evil. The triumph of anything is a matter of organization. If there are such things as angels, I hope that they are organized along the lines of the Mafia." –Kurt Vonnegut, The Sirens of Titan

Looking Back . . . Way Back



Muir Beach Tavern and Cabins, the early days

Harry Angus has been compiling the stories of Muir Beach, going back to The Tavern and Cabins. If you have photos or stories to share, please email him at slipnut01@gmail.com.



From left to right, Valerie White, Persis Norton, John Norton, John White, and Norton goats at the end of Sunset Way.

Persis Norton shared this photo of her old neighborhood.

A Silver Lining in Gold *By Joanie Wynn*

Though politically correct to say “it’s an honor just to be nominated”, it’s way better to actually win.

Our program “Journeys for Good: Cambodia” had received nominations in three categories (editing, shooting and producing) for the 2013/14 regional Emmy Awards, so we put on our fancy duds and attended the award ceremony at the SF Hilton on June 14.

The regional Emmys are a local version of the national event you see televised, only this time the celebrities and presenters are local newscasters instead of sitcom stars. Actually, our ceremony is more like the Golden Globes, where the nominees sit at round tables in a banquet hall having dinner and drinking wine. And like the “real deal”, it’s a long evening so you have to pace yourself in case you win and need to be coherent for an acceptance speech.

We were excited that our show had a chance to win but kept our expectations in check. A few years ago, we received four nominations for our documentary “A Journey for Good: Tanzania” but came home empty-handed. Steve had lugged his camera up Mt. Kilimanjaro, sleeping with his batteries to keep them warm and protect their charge, so we thought he’d be a shoe-in for the camera category. We lost to a golf show. Go figure.

Steve won first in the editing category. I had witnessed his win many years ago for a Discovery Channel show, but this time was decidedly different. I had seen firsthand all of the long hours and incredible effort he had put into it and I knew how much he deserved to win. They whisked him backstage for photos and interviews and I sat at the table with a bunch of other producers from KQED, positively bursting with pride.

Next came the producing category for the best historical/cultural program. I really didn’t think our chances were good since we were up against a bunch of other great shows but, sure enough,



Joanie and Steve Wynn

we heard our names called again. It’s cool because they run a short clip of your show as you go up and it plays on a huge screen alongside the stage and on all of the dozen or so big screens around the room. I was glad that I’d thought of a few things to say on the ride over in the car because this time it was my turn to speak. It was definitely one of those golden career moments, standing up there and holding that statue, thanking my husband and son and the kind folks at KQED for airing our show. And to be able to win for this show in particular, which is a passion project for Steve and me, was especially rewarding.

When this all started back in 2009, the economy had tanked and our production business was floundering. An opportunity came up to document a volunteer trip in Africa and that experience ignited our passion for “Journeys for Good.” The development of the program has delivered rewards on so many levels, both personally and professionally, though never monetarily. At times, we struggled to keep our house and meet expenses even as we continued, against all logic and good sense, to put way too much of our own money into the show.

Backstage, the crew handed us the winning envelope and we swapped the generic trophies for the official engraved versions. Then, we did an interview for the Emmy SF webcast and had photos taken. All of this is great PR fodder and we appreciated the opportunity to plug the development of a “Journeys for Good” series, but we had to get up early to travel to a shoot on the East Coast the next morning, so we ducked out early.

Back home, we unpacked our statues from the fancy boxes and set them up on the dining room table. We sat on the couch and gazed at them lovingly, feeling giddy and fully satisfied.

You see, these “golden ladies” represent so much more to us than just a career win. They represent the many years of hanging in there, propping each other up and pushing forward against odds and better judgment. They provide validation that our faith wasn’t blind and that perhaps, if we are very lucky, our dream project will find a way to pay the mortgage in a beautiful blend of passion and practicality. And if our journeys for good can continue, that will be the greatest reward of all.

Sunset Way *By Nina Vincent*

I find myself after a long hiatus once again strolling the length of Sunset Way, sometimes twice a day. I came to Muir Beach in 1980, to care for six-month-old Cassidy Friedman. For one blissful year Cassidy could be found riding along on my back as I made my way up and down Sunset with Reg and June White, and Tim McElhaney. Years later it was Eli on my back walking with Tim. Then it was Kate Carolan and I, she cracking the whip telling me to stop talking to everyone and get moving because flapping my jaw was not going to keep us in shape! In those days rarely a lap would be walked without me stopping to talk to a neighbor coming home from work, shopping, or on their way to somewhere 'over the hill'. Often my Sunset companion and I would stop and chat with a resident gardener pulling weeds and planting. Lovely was the day when I would come upon a fellow stroller taking in the various views of the beach from different places along the road.

After Eli graduated from my back, came the grueling years of graduate school when I would pace back and forth with our dog Woodstock, note cards in hand memorizing Chinese herbs and point locations. Then along came Tiana, she was my stroller baby. Rina and I would stroll she and David Max up and down the road doing 'laps' and comparing notes on motherhood in our forties. Once Tiana found her legs, and Woodstock moved to the great beyond I seemed to fill my time with things other than Sunset strolls with kids, dogs or friends. I didn't notice missing it really until just recently when our humble little home of three people, one fish, a cat, and a guinea pig –added to it's bursting frame two dogs. Nala and Skipper.

Now I am back to walking Sunset Way twice a day. I've even scheduled my patients in such a way that I have time in the morning to hit little beach with Nala. In all the years I have walked Sunset Way I have felt such an overwhelming sense of gratitude for our small little community. I loved looking from house to house knowing

who I might meet at any given time pulling out of a driveway, in a garden, or coming out the door. But now what I find myself struggling with often as I make my way down the road is the vast increase in the number of cars coming in and out of our road. And rarely, so rarely are the people in those cars ones I have ever met. And even harder for me to bare is the fact that having seen them once, I never see them again because the very next day there are 5, 6, 7 more cars that come down the road as I herd the dogs off to the side AGAIN, and all with new faces.

At first I couldn't understand where all these people were going. There were no new houses on Sunset. It had only been 5 or 6 years in between strolling Tiana and the arrival of Nala and Skipper. What on earth could have brought this onslaught of cars and strangers onto my little pathway to heaven? A neighbor shed light on the situation for me one day when I grumbled unpleasantly about having to stand off to the side for the fifth time between the Brandts, and Jim Purcell's for a car full of people I'd never seen before. VERBOs they offered. Verbos I wondered? What the hell is a Verbo, and what does it have to do with all these bloody people in their SUVs driving up and down our once quiet little road. VERBO, they reiterated – V R B O – Vacation Rental by Owner. Ohhhhhh. I got it. VRBOs were bringing in cars full of tourists, travelers, happy families and friends coming to spend a night or two in the paradise which is our home.

So I have watched the VRBO folks driving in and out of our community day in and day out for the last few months. I have tried to keep a positive attitude – I am sure they are truly kind and thoughtful people. But what has made me sad, and very concerned for our community is the sheer number of VRBO's that I have discovered exist in Muir Beach. It isn't one or two – it's more – many more all over the beach. Of course I don't begrudge my neighbors, the owners of these in-law units, studios and homes the vast amounts of money they are collecting

on these short-term vacation rentals. Who wouldn't like to make a huge sum of money to help pay the bills? But what I notice, where I am concerned is in the fact that we are losing a sense of community with all these strangers coming in and out every day. There are folks longing to live in Muir Beach, folks who would like to become a part of the community, to contribute positively to our lives, to the fire dept., the quilters, or the Bistro who are unable to do so because there are no longer places to rent long-term. Everything available has become a VRBO. And so I ask you all, my dear community, neighbors and friends – what is to become of this place if we all turn our homes into short term vacation rentals where strangers, kind as they may be, come and go without any attachment, concern or connection to community. What, I wonder, will become of my walks along Sunset Way as the years roll forward, and the dogs and I grow older. Will there be room for us on our road? Will there be anyone we know in the garden, stepping out of their cars or driving home from a day over the hill, or will we, Nala, Skippy, and I be destined to stand off to the side of the road while yet another stranger drives by to claim their over night visit to our beloved Muir Beach? I think we all need to ponder this a bit. I know I surely do each and every day, morning and afternoon.

Ocean Riders of Marin has learned that the National Park Service wants to offer us a ten year lease to operate a horse stable at the Golden Gate Dairy. A draft lease will be sent to us during the week of August 4, and we will meet with representatives of the Park Service the next week to discuss the lease terms. We are excited about the prospects this represents for our future as an organization and as a member of the Muir Beach community. We would not be in this position if it were not for the support of so many residents of Muir Beach. We thank you and will keep you posted on our progress with the lease negotiations. –Leida Schoggen

Forty Shades of Fog

By E.H. Benedict

I don't know about you but I definitely have a love/hate relationship with our summer fog. On one hand, it's wonderful for the plants and provides, one hopes, a tiny bit of protection from wild fires. It's a very good time for hunkering in and reading the last fifty pages of that book – or, for some of us, trying to actually write some pages. I am no longer a novelist, thank God, but even a measly seventy-page play can seem daunting. However, good old, grey, cold, foggy summer is a swell time to put yourself down in front of your computer – or pad and paper (first draft) and actually get some work done. A virtuous time of hard work and cool mornings and grey walks by a grey ocean. A good time to go on that diet, clean out that closet; in short, a time to get down to business.

On the other hand – as I write this there are people in San Rafael sitting out in the evening, sipping margaritas, bare shouldered and sandal clad, watching the luscious California light change color as day sweetly fades to soft, velvet night. Such things rarely happen in my world. We do not dine al fresco. We have been in this house for seven years – I can remember two, okay maybe three, dinners on our deck. These have become major points of nostalgia for us; we will remind ourselves “Remember that night in 2009 when we sat out on the deck until 8:30?”

I try to persuade myself that there is something way too obvious and, well, vulgar, about all that sunshine. Who needs all those photogenic sunsets? Where's the subtlety in that, I ask you? What black clothing is to the New York woman, grey is to the loyal Muir Beacher. In Ireland they talk about forty shades of green. They do not go into amounts of rainfall, “mists” you'll hear someone say. Or “soft” – “It's a very soft day” – as a response to drizzle. Maybe we could try that. We all know there are different kinds of fog – from the thick, clotted cream kind of blanket, to fluffy, to wispy, to mashed potatoes thick, to to?? Perhaps we might begin to greet the day as creamy, or fluffy, or soft. While it won't change the weather, it might change our mood.

In the Center of Things *By Laurie Piel*

Happenings at the Community Center

It's been busy so far as we head into third quarter of the year.

Nothing like the MBVFA BBQ Fundraiser says **May** to me. Although it takes place at the BBQ grounds I feel the necessity to at least mention it here. Once again it was a great success and couldn't have been done without a ton of volunteer work from the community. Other than that it was a very quiet month for the Center. However, it kept me busy as a lot of folks came around to see it and make plans for their weddings, celebrations, and events later in the year.

June started out with a bang with Election Day that first Tuesday. Little did I know before volunteering to help out that the “day” started at 6:15am and didn't end until 9:30pm! Kathy Sward, Joey Groneman, Janice Kubota and I held down the fort as we did our civil service for the year. It was fascinating to learn all of the rules and regulations in place to protect the voting rights and privacy of our residents.

The Quilters held a craft and quilting “Stash Sale” in the hopes of divesting themselves (and anyone else) of some of the accumulated stuff that was gathering dust.

Next up in June was a fantastic concert. Sponsored by the Quilters, Paul Smith brought in a baby grand piano for himself and the Tamalpais String Quartet for an incredible evening of classical music. The crowd rose to its feet after one spectacular selection after another. It was a very special evening. The Quilters started and finished it off with champagne, strawberries and chocolate. Paul will be back with a short Halloween themed opera suitable for children on November 8th.

The CSD held a meeting on the third Thursday. The community celebrated the Summer Solstice for the first time in classic Muir Beach style. Leah Lopez and Alexis Chase did the decorations. Our own Freddie & the Freeloaders provided the dance music while Cuco & Consuela Alcalá cooked their famous tacos. Massimo Conti DJ'ed to kick off the event and Daniella Silva, with a little help from Catalina Lane, provided the beautiful picture of the sun to top it all off. Next

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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

Hatha Yoga - Tuesday, 10:30 - 11:30 am

Tai Chi, Monday 5 pm, Wednesday 8:30 am, Thursday 5 pm, Community Center

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

year we'd love more suns from anyone who would like to contribute. Everybody ate well, drank well and danced the night away. I even saw my husband, David out on the dance floor! A couple of weddings rounded out the month and poof... it's July.

In **July** we began a Hatha Yoga class on Tuesday mornings from 10:30-11:30. We are lucky to have Dan Kuja teaching the class because he has a sunny disposition and is content to work a group that encompasses novices and experts. He will be away for the month of August taking a class and will be back to resume classes on the 2nd of September. To round out the month, Green Gulch threw a Meet Your Neighbor Dance. The theme was "Flora & Fauna of the Valley." To that end the Center was dressed in tree branches and other evocative decorations and there were many elaborate costumes. The dance floor was crowded and the DJ played an eclectic mix of styles. The psychedelic photo booth was well attended and both kids and adults had the opportunity to get their faces painted ... and everybody had a great time. It was all I could do to stay away from the fabulous desserts that tempted me to the land of chocolate and blackberries . . .yum!

So, that's the last quarter at the Center. Coming up in **August** is the Garden Club's planting party so I look forward to seeing all of the new succulents. And don't forget the SingersMarin Broadway Concert on August 23rd ... I look forward to seeing everybody there. Check the EventsLetter for upcoming fun things for all.



Gail Falls and Kathy Sward at the Green Gulch Meet Your Neighbor Dance



Jane McAlevey and Marilyn Laatsch at the Summer Solstice Celebration



Psychedelic photo booth



Tiana Pearlman incognito

42nd Annual Firemen's BBQ

