

BEACHCOMBER

SINCE 1946

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!



ON THE COVER

View from West Point Inn

Watercolor on canvas, 2013
Ben Farnham

Born in Woodland, California in 1926, Ben Farnham has lived in Sausalito, California since obtaining an MBA from Stanford in 1950. He retired from a retailing career at The Emporium in San Francisco and took up watercoloring with Jerry Still in Sausalito.

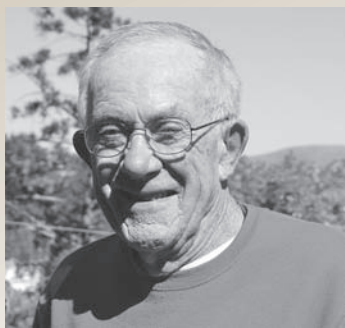
Ben has enjoyed workshops with Charles Reid, Frank Webb and Skip Lawrence, and watercolor trips to Italy, France, and the Greek Isles.

Since 1989 he has been honored to be accepted in Marin/Scapes, a fundraiser for the mentally ill, and for the past ten years Ben has been a member of the Baywood Artists whose annual shows benefit environmental causes.

He is a signature member of the California Watercolor Association and the Marin Society of Artists.

Ben participated in the Muir Beach Quilter's Fair, selling his paintings and cards, and enjoying the artists camaraderie.

To view more of Ben's art, visit:
baywoodartists.org/artists/ben-farnham/



Ben Farnham

Inside

- *Around Town*, 3
- *Loving Life on the Road: Abu Dhabi*, 4-5
- *Welcome New Neighbors*, 6
- *Dollars and Sense*, 6
- *The Critter Report*, 7
- *In Memory of Drakes Bay Oyster Company*, 7
- *The Muir Beach Directory "Who's Who,"* 8-9
- *Mosquitos*, 9
- *A Trip Down Memory Lane (via Sunset)*, 10
- *Garden Club & Rummage Sale*, 11
- *Pumpkin Banana Bread*, 12
- *Mike's Ride*, 13
- *We Dodged the First Bullet*, 13
- *Viewpoint*, 14-15
- *Marylee Goes to Paris*, 16-17
- *Muirly Notes*, 18
- *In the Center of Things*, 18-19
- *Dia de los Muertos*, 20

Muir Beach Renovated Playground Reopens

By Scott Bender



PHOTO JOANIE WYNN

After several months of effort our new playground is finally open.

The Community Center playground has many exciting new features, including a new large play structure, a spinner, and a 2-seat rocking plane. The old play structure was extensively refurbished. It is all underpinned by a state-of-the-art padded synthetic turf. We are very pleased with the progress so far. Please thank our lead contractors, David Schwartz, Michael Moore, and Tony Moore when you get a chance.

There is more to be done. There will be a few additional features on the playground, including a climbing wall that will land on the next terrace level up. We will now turn our attention to the terrace level between the playground and the Community Center. Our revised plans for this level will be discussed in the next CSD meeting.

An important note: The level between the Community Center and the playground is a construction zone. For safety reasons, please stay off this level and keep children off of it. Do not use the stairs from the deck of the community center, close to the main door, and please respect the caution tape that is in place and stay on the playground level itself. You can still access the playground from the east side, meaning the gate along the stairs between Sunset and the Community Center.

More details to follow, and please enjoy!

Around Town

THERMAL IMAGING CAMERA

Are you thinking about an end of the year donation (and tax write off)? Then think about your own local fire department and disaster preparedness!

We are looking currently for donations to purchase a Thermal Imaging Camera that can be used to quickly find victims in a fire or disaster. This technology can save people and pets from serious consequences.



The cost of Thermal Imaging Cameras is around \$4000. We have a long way to go before we can purchase one, but with your help, we might be able to have a big Christmas present for our community!

You can donate by simply going to www.muirbeachfire.com and clicking on the donate button. You can also donate through the United Way, which may help you to meet the charitable donation expectations of your employer. If you decide to donate through United Way, be sure to direct your donation to the Muir Beach Volunteer Fire Association (MBVFA). Thanks in advance for your support of our MBVFD!

—Barbara Piotter



The Great Muir Beach Bus Stop Protest of 2014.

BUS STOP BUZZ

Conflict around the bus stop issue did not only emerge against the NPS plan to construct them. Within the community differences emerged around organizing strategies to prevent the bus stops from happening.

Carr, the lawyer from Morrison/Foerster stated at an open meeting at the Community Center that he thought public community protest would, or could be counter productive. He feared such activity would give rise to the NIMBY argument painting a picture of the selfish residents of Muir Beach not wanting to share their lovely space with anyone else.

I was already in the midst of organizing protest times with the media, and so was immediately subjected to the pleas of most of the top organizers of the Muir Beach Association to heed the advice of Carr, and not to go through with the announced protest plans. I actually did cave in, and called the Chronicle to cancel the scheduled protest photo shoot. But I thought we could go ahead with our protest anyway as long as there was to be no

press coverage that would raise the specter of NIMBY argument.

We actually turned out a fairly decent crowd of regular community activists. I began to think it might be better to confront the NIMBY argument sooner rather than later since it was so easily refutable by virtue of the visitor impacts already in place affecting the community, namely the millions of tourists driving thru the community to get to Muir Woods.

So I rescheduled the media coverage much to the chagrin of the MBA. In the end I think it was wise to stage the protests and get the media coverage we received. While the lawsuit was invaluable in galvanizing community opposition to the idea of a bus stop at Muir Beach, I did not believe the legal arguments of the lack of an environmental impact report and lack of sufficient notice would be enough to secure a permanent injunction.

It's hard to know exactly what caused NPS to withdraw from the project, but I do believe marshaling public opinion against it had to have played a role.

—Gerry Pearlman

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).

SUPPORT:

Beachcomber local delivery \$25, out-of-town delivery \$35, extra copies \$5. Appears four times a year.

Everything printed is 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. © Beachcomber. All rights reserved.

CONTACT:

editor@muirbeachcomber.com
www.muirbeachcomber.com

MAIL TO:

Beachcomber, 19 Seacape Dr.
Muir Beach, CA 94965
(or drop in the box at mailbox row).

STAFF:

Editor/Design/Production: Janet Tumpich
Acquisitions/Content: Joanie Wynn
Circulation/Bookkeeper/Website: Maury Ostroff

Printed by: w.i.g.t. printing

Loving Life on the Road: *Abu Dhabi* By Kerry Wynn

The driver delivered us to a strange futuristic hotel on the gulf of Oman at ten p.m. It was late April and a balmy 90 plus degrees. Streaming forth from the Mercedes behind us was a group of women. They wore the requisite black abayas, each embellished with crystals, lace or appliqué. Beneath the abayas were expensive designer clothes and shoes bought at the local mall, where Chanel, Versace, and Jimmy Choo and a thousand other top retailers have stores, or in London at Harrod's or Paris from a designers' atelier. They all wore the hijab, the headscarf required by faithful Muslim women; some also wore the more full face covering preferred by Saudis. The headscarves accentuated their eyebrows, which were meticulously drawn in, two sculpted brown/black arcs with blunt ends that nearly met above heavily made up eyes. These women were not the shrouded mothers and wives of the war torn Middle East; these women were the 1% of the 1%, dressed to the nines and off to have fun with their girlfriends at a swanky hotel, without a man in sight, except for their chaperones who waited for them in the lobby.

This was our unexpected entrance into the world of Abu Dhabi. We moved into a room on the 21st floor of the Hyatt Capital Gate, a hollow, glass-skinned marvel that leans an exciting 18 degrees, like the tower of Pisa after one too many glasses of wine. The next day I opened the curtains to discover five young men outside the exterior windows, hanging by ropes tied around the waist and thighs, with buckets of water tied to the belts, washing the windows in an astonishing windless 115'. Like ninety percent of the city's residents, they were from someplace else and are responsible for running most of the day-to-day operations in this vibrant melting pot of seven million.

The view from the room showed an almost post apocalyptic city center four miles away that grew out of the desert a mere 40 years ago. Recurring



Robert and Kerry Wynn in Abu Dhabi.

sand storms color the sky a matte taupe and created a haze that erased the horizon in all directions. Without a distinguishing feature, the trailing edge of the world was just a smudge; the sun doesn't set as much as blurs into darkness. On the rare day when it's clear, the sky was a flat, off white, as though the sky had been painted with only a drop of blue from a large bucket of antique white.

When my eyes recalibrated to the muted colors, I began to see the subtle variations in the washed out hues of the desert city. Sand below the hotel was brown beige, like dish blond hair. Across the narrow strip of water where new villas were being built, the sand was lighter, a bitter white. In the distance on the nearly flat, man made island, the colors were layered like the chocolate pudding I made as a kid; browns, taupe, beige and several shades between. The shallow finger bays between the islands reflected the wan sky above.

Along with adjusting to the light, there was necessity to adapt to the overwhelming heat that increased daily and inspired a new appreciation for air conditioning. I took to wearing long loose clothes and a loose headscarf. I finally understand the value of wearing my own tent. What makes perfect

sense on the ground can seem, from a distance, a strange custom. The black abaya is not exclusively a way for Arab men to control their women's sexuality; I imagine it was a practical choice for women in nomadic times to wear their own tent, while water was scarce and white was hard to keep clean. The custom today seems rather archaic in London, but makes perfect sense in extreme conditions of Abu Dhabi.

After I mastered the clothing/heat conundrum, explored the local bookstore, ate a proper Lebanese breakfast and made several key purchases including a decent pillow, a cheap set of Japanese scissors and discovered that I could not shop at Versace for any number of reasons, not the least of which was the exorbitant cost, I went in search of something larger than mini-bar shots of gin. Honestly, I felt like a teenager asking a friend of my brother's to buy me a six-pack. The taxi driver was at first reluctant to take me to the store, which was in an odd location on the bottom floor of an half constructed & abandoned apartment tower near a large empty parking lot. He was suspicious about delivering a woman to the liquor emporium and alarmed when I asked him to wait. The entrance

Continued on next page

was narrow and then opened to a large, cement floored room with lightly stocked shelves of foreign spirits under a low roof. The customers were all men, and surprisingly there was an Arab. The locals were required to fill out a form and present I.D.—except there was some sleight of hand for that fellow, who appeared to be a repeat customer and left quickly with his loot disguised in a common plastic grocery store bag. I bought a stash to last, tucked the two bottles in my common, oversized purse and raced back to the cab driver, who looked equally relieved and utterly contemptuous.

Unlike Dubai, which is Las Vegas of the Middle East, Abu Dhabi, in spite of their conservative customs aspires to become its cultural Mecca. The Guggenheim, Louvre, and NY University are under construction. The convention center hosts an international book faire and there's a film festival. We saw the "100 Things" exhibit before it came to London. There are luxury villas and seven star hotels. There is enviable shopping in monster malls. Ferrari World! It all comes together in a strange mash up of other worldly skyscrapers. There is building on the edge of town that looks like a huge glass disc: a mirrored dime stuck in the sand. In the heart of the city there are bronze glass buildings that are reminiscent of the 80's. There are buildings with holes in the middle and unusual rooflines that look as though the architect said, "Why the hell not?"

With the furious pace of construction, the constant encroachment of sand, the population extremes, living in the city feels like being a part of the Wild West, where anything can be had, for the right amount of money, if Sheik Mo approves.

After several days of prowling the halls of the hotel, working out in the gym and surreptitiously observing the other guests (it was delightful to see how demonstrative the Arab fathers were to their children), I went in search

of someone to talk to. After a bit of trolling I found an invitation to join a meeting of expat women for coffee and conversation. The meeting takes place twice a month at one of the large hotels downtown. After going thru airport screening (*a curious experience—was it because the hotel was full of Americans or was there one certain foreigner that necessitated the security protocol or had I watched one too many movies?*). I followed the robust chatter of women to a small ballroom where 300 plus woman converged over tea and treats.

The American Expat Women's Club of Abu Dhabi welcomed women of all nationalities, with one caveat: "you must like Americans." (*Great, I thought, security screening and a warning to not bother if you don't like us*). My phantom fears vanished as I was introduced to the friendly crowd and welcomed with genuine interest.

*What do you do all day?
I asked one veteran
expat. She rolled her eyes
dramatically, "shop and
spa." That's unfortunate
because I'm not much of
a fan. "You'll never survive
Abu Dhabi if you don't learn
how to shop and spa."*

She went on to explain that most Emirati & American women alike were trapped in luxurious lives of extraordinary privilege at the cost of pursuing their professional lives. Unable to work either inside or outside the home, with a lot of dangerous empty time on their hands, the American expat women rallied together to organize charity/cultural events and created a support

structure for the 'newbies', like me, who otherwise might be wasting away in a high rise apartment in the middle of the desert with nothing to do but shop and spa.

When pressed about my own circumstances, I was vague about our reasons for our temporary relocation to Abu Dhabi. My inquisitor pressed further and when I admitted my husband was here working on a movie. I was met with rapt attention from a dozen women, "He must be doing Star Wars!" I colored with embarrassment and fumbled a lame excuse about trying to be discreet. "It's okay, most of us don't talk about what our husbands do," said Corky, a red haired tree farmer from Oregon and unofficial friend to everyone. "It goes without saying that they're either in oil and gas or work for the embassy. It's not a big deal; we know everything that goes on in this town anyway."

Even in a city of seven million, if you hang out with the right people, it's just like living in a small town.

I walked away from Abu Dhabi more interested in the Arab culture and more aware of my own biases. I recognized the resilient enthusiasm in the expat women that my former mother-in-law, a career diplomat's wife demonstrated whenever she met someone from somewhere else. I discovered that I could get bored with room service and that getting fresh sheets everyday is one of life's greatest pleasures.

There is of course much more to life than shopping and spa-ing or the equally life quashing obsessive preoccupation with bad news, so today, I'll just be grateful for all the familiar comforts of home: the blue sky, the crash of the ocean as it hits the shore, the fog horns at night with the windows open and when I next meet a stranger on the trail, I'll be a friendlier host and hope they leave Muir Beach happier for the time they spent on our sand.

Welcome New Neighbors

By Joanie Wynn

I'm very happy to welcome our new neighbors Michael and Katherine (Kat) Cash. They moved into 51 Starbuck in September, just in time for back to school.

Michael is originally from Australia and is a VP of Tutor Perini, and is involved in large civil construction of underground structures. His current projects include the new Bart stations in San Francisco, and the Alaskan Viaduct is Seattle. Kathleen is a stay at home mom and loves music, cooking, and hiking. They have three children.



Emily is 7 and plays the drums, love dancing, horses, and boogy boarding. Kieran is 5 and just started Kindergarten at Strawberry Point. He loves Legos, octonauts, and rabbits. Joseph is 10 and loves violin, soccer, and science.

Commenting on their new home, Kat said "We are very happy to be a part of this community. We love Muir Beach! People have been so welcoming and we really appreciate the opportunities for hiking, canoeing, biking and backpacking right from our doorstep."

Welcome to the Cash family.

Are you new to Muir Beach? If so, we'd love to introduce you to your new neighbors here in the Beachcomber. Please tell us where you moved from and why you chose Muir Beach. And please send along a photo or two to editor@muirbeachcomber.com.

Dollars and Sense *By Paul Jeschke*

ORGANIC GROCER COMING TO TAM VALLEY

Eating healthy natural food is going to be a lot easier for Muir Beach residents when Good Earth opens its new store in the Tam Valley space, formerly occupied by Delano's Market until it abruptly shut down two years ago.

It will be close to another year, however, before customers can sample Good Earth's dazzling assortment of certified organic food. October 1, 2015 is the target date for opening the completely remodeled store, just under 27,000 square feet of organic fruit, vegetables, meat, dairy products, bread, prepared food and groceries that are, the owners boast, "as pure as we can provide."

"We're committed to getting this store right," said Al Baylacq, one of Good Earth's two partners. Rather than slapping a coat of paint on the building and filling some holes in the parking lot, Good Earth is spending more than a million dollars on remodeling and the landlord, the Parrish Trust, is also making a "major investment," Baylacq said.

A dry cleaners and a laundromat which leased space in one corner of the sprawling building, have already moved out. The north side of the building facing Shoreline Highway will become the main grocery store entrance. The old entrance on Flamingo Road will lead to a café with an outdoor seating area. The huge south-facing wall will be opened up to create space for one or two still undetermined retailers, perhaps a postal annex or a bank.

Plans include punching holes in the roof for skylights and installing solar tanks to supply hot water. "We don't use chemicals in food preparation areas, so we use an incredible amount of hot water," Baylacq said.

The inside of the facility will resemble the mother store in Fairfax, a bright, spotless business where displays rival the world's most attractive grocery stores. Certified organic produce are the stars of the show, much of it sourced locally. More than 100 bins of organic bulk grains, nuts and flours take up an entire aisle, the seafood is sustainable and the meat is pasture-raised or free range, hormone and antibiotic free. Cooking oils, including olive and sunflower, are dispensed in bulk, as are raw coconut and almond butters.

Busy Muir Beachers will appreciate prepared take home offerings from the 100 per cent organic kitchen that includes a taqueria, hand-tossed pizza, natural stews and seafoods and a vegetarian salad bar. Food service is 25 per cent of sales, the store said.

With two Whole Foods Markets nearby, why did Good Earth decide to make a major investment in Tam Valley? "We sell a lot of the same products," Baylacq admitted, "but we believe we're committed to a higher standard. We're more committed to certified organic food because we know it's better for you."

How do the two stores compare pricewise? A recent check of half a dozen items at Good Earth in Fairfax and Whole Foods on East Blithdale revealed a few differences. While organic red bell peppers were cheaper at Whole Foods, Good Earth won the price comparison for zucchini, red onions and Fuji apples. Both stores featured organic boneless chicken breast for \$7.99 a pound. Grass fed, organic New York steak was \$2.00 a pound cheaper at Good Earth.

"Natural foods cost more," Baylacq said, admitting that Good Earth and Whole Foods both struggle to overcome the "whole paycheck" stereotype.

The Critter Report: *In Praise of Skunks* By Dave MacKenzie

OK, not everyone will be with me on this one. Or at least at first. Sure, Skunks smell bad – either as roadkill or when they spray your dog. Even worse if you get skunked yourself. But aside from this bad rap, skunks are actually pretty cool.

The Striped Skunk, *Mephitis mephitis* (bad odor in Latin!), is our local species; one of a total of six species of skunk found in the United States. With a territory about the size of Muir Beach, chances are the skunks you see are the same ones I do. There might be 4-5 in Muir Beach on the average, and even more in early summer as the litter size is about 5. However, the mortality rate of the juveniles is roughly 75%, and adults only live about 2-3 years in the wild, so the numbers can change pretty fast. Although roadkills are pretty common, it is probably various skunk diseases and predation (coyotes, owls, and dogs) which get most of them.

I have often emerged from the hot tub at night to find a skunk, or even two, nearby. Fallen birdseed from a feeder, and still ripe compost are the two main courses in our yard. But the little conical digs, about 3 inches in diameter and depth, testify to the more natural skunk diet as well. The main foods of skunks are invertebrates such as grubs, worms, and insects. Three of the five front toes on the Striped Skunk are fused and have long claws, which creates perfect digging tools to capture an escaping prey item. Since other critters usually don't want to mess with skunks, they sometimes even feed on a carcass (e.g. a roadkill) right alongside a Gray Fox, a Raccoon, or even a Bobcat. Of course I am always concerned about being sprayed, but a noisy PISH_PISH or a loud clicking sound always chases them away. Skunks don't see too well, but they have excellent hearing and sense of smell.

With their boldness, skunks often lope along quickly at night in a direct path through the open, trying to reach a good feeding spot. When they are foraging, it is slow going, with



nose held down and that beautiful bushy black and white striped tail held high as a warning to predators (including us!).

In the late spring, after the juveniles are weaned, these small ones travel closely together with mom until the fall. Last summer we watched a female with five little ones circling so close it almost looked like one fuzzy critter with 6 black and white tails!

If you don't like skunks, presumable because you fear being sprayed (or more likely your dog being sprayed),

there is a lot you can do. First, don't leave any food outside such as birdseed, compost, or pet food. Second, don't let your pet out after dusk (although I have often seen bold Muir Beach skunks foraging in daylight, especially near bird feeders). If you hear a loud thump under your house or deck at night, a skunk may have moved in. To evict it, keep a bright light on in the area with a radio playing. That should do it, unless the skunk becomes habituated to the harassment. If that's the case, put it all on timers set at random times of the night. Be sure not to plug up any exit holes before the skunks are gone!

The best recommended spray treatment seems to be using a quart of Hydrogen Peroxide, or white vinegar, mixed with a half cup of baking soda and a tablespoon of liquid dish soap. Soak the dog for about five minutes and rinse. Keep it out of your eyes, and it should do the job.

So next time you spot a skunk, enjoy watching the antics of this interesting character! Of course you may want to use binoculars just to be safe.

In Memory of Drakes Bay Oyster Company



Drakes Bay Oyster Company will halt harvesting at the end of 2014, after almost 100 years.

The Muir Beach Directory:

Who's Who in Muir Beach, and Who Gets to Know By Maury Ostroff

This article will try to explain how the various Muir Beach community directories work, and discuss some of the issues involved.

The hard-copy, printed booklet comes out about every 3 to 4 years. It is put together by volunteers, and recently the cost of printing has been underwritten entirely by the Muir Beach CSD. In previous years we also sold advertising spots to locals to help cover the printing costs. The two primary reasons the Directory is not printed more frequently are cost, and the effort involved.

One thing to remember about the Directory is that inclusion is voluntary, meaning that all new residents have to state explicitly that they want to be included, and they control what information appears. Not all residents want to be in the Directory, and others only want to include limited information. Once you've appeared in the Directory, you are "grandfathered" in until you explicitly say you want to be removed or you want your information changed. I do make some attempt to contact new residents to ask them if they want to be included, but the process is rather informal. When a new printed booklet comes out, an effort is made to contact everyone to ask them to submit any changes, but if someone never responds, then they are not included.

The online version is maintained as a password-protected PDF document accessible via the Muir Beach CSD website at www.muirbeachcsd.com/links.html and the reason it is stored in this format with a password is (1) to prevent people outside our community from gaining access, and (2) to explicitly prevent web-crawlers and other programs from getting our email-addresses (which are then used to spam us). Updates are made on an ad hoc basis, as I hear about changes. There is no formal release schedule or mechanism to proactively update the

Directory at this time. It just happens when I get around to it.

An obvious challenge with the Directory is how to keep track of every single person living or owning here. It's fairly straightforward when you have the typical situation where the people owning the house also live there. It gets more complicated when you have part-time residents, long-term renters versus short-term renters, non-resident owners, and a whole host of other unique situations, (and forget about Airbnb and the VRBOs!)

There are other Directories around, each maintained for their own purpose. For example, Leah Vermulen Lopez maintains a directory for the Muir Beach kids, with detailed information about school and what grade they are in, and other information pertinent to parents of school-age children. Other lists are compiled for Disaster Preparedness, for example Starbuck Drive maintains a more detailed directory with all kinds of emergency contact information and details about individual houses and special situations. The underlying issue is data security. A basic directory is harmless enough, but more details (especially about children) need more attention as to who gets access to that information.

There are other repositories of information being maintained, such as water customers and their meter number by the MBCSD, and LAN information by the Muir Beach LAN. But for obvious reasons this data must also be kept secured. I would also mention that who owns a particular house is a matter of public record and is available to the public by law. Marin County has several websites where you can download parcel maps, and then determine the current owner by parcel number. As one high-tech executive once said, "You have no privacy. Get over it."

Another issue related to the Directory is email mailing lists. It has long been the policy of the Muir Beach Directory (which I uphold) to NOT release the email addresses in list form that can be used to send out a broadcast email distribution. The Muir Beach CSD maintains a list of all residents that is used for notifications of importance (and there is no "opting-out" of this list) but it is not shared and the individual email addresses are not displayed. Laurie Piel also maintains an email list for the Events Newsletter, but again that list is not publicly shared. My personal opinion is that the Nextdoor website fills this need for the community. People who want to receive community notices can do so by signing up, and those that don't want to be bothered can choose not to participate. Or, you can just stuff the mailboxes or post on the bulletin boards with a flyer or your choice.

There have also been some requests to get access to the Directory in MS-Word format so that it can be manipulated on your own computer. For the same security reasons, I do not allow anyone that access. A few points to consider: (1) as soon as I release the unsecured version, (i.e. no password and in a format so that it can be further manipulated and copied into other programs) I have no control over what happens to it, and despite assurances from residents ("I'll only use it this one time and I promise I won't share it with anyone") we all know what can happen in the real world of cyberspace; (2) I don't want to be in a position of deciding what is a valid use or not, so if I give it to one person I'd have to give it to everyone; and (3) If we did change the policy and allowed access to the unsecured, non-PDF version I would have to offer everyone currently in the Directory the opportunity to opt-out before I did that. Remember, there are still some long-time residents of Muir Beach who

Continued on next page

Continued from page 8

have explicitly chosen not to be in the Directory, and others who agreed to be included only under the condition that it not be released in general format.

If there was community-wide consensus to make the Directory more accessible and in a different format, than we would have to allow everyone the opportunity to “opt-out” before doing so.

At one point, I had a vision of creating a single, unified database for Muir Beach that would integrate all of these data points, and provide a web-based front-end application for residents to update and maintain their own information. The database would have a sophisticated data security mechanism, allowing access to different types of information only on a need to know basis. For

example, only certain people on the Fire Department or the Disaster Preparedness committee could see the detailed emergency information about a particular house. Kind of like Facebook where the user could (supposedly) control who gets access to what (i.e. only “Friends” can see profile data, etc.).

But two things happened: First I realized that in a real emergency no one is going to be logging onto the internet and downloading information; it has to be available in easy to access hard-copy format, just like I’ve heard umpteen times how the printed Directory booklet is so much easier to use than any online document. The second thing was all that fuss uncovered by Edward Snowden. Granted, we do not have

the equivalent of the NSA here in Muir Beach, but the point is that there are real trade-offs between having all of this data gathered and consolidated, (good in the case of a disaster and for convenience, a bit more risky for personal privacy.)

So I decided to leave well enough alone, and continue to maintain the Directory as is, relatively informal and secured, and every once in a while when the time is right a new printed booklet will come out.

Because whether there is a Directory or not, you can still walk over anytime and introduce yourselves to any new immediate neighbors who just moved in that are in close proximity to where you live.

Mosquitos *By Nizza Sequeria, MSMVCD*

You are cozy and warm in your bed, just about to fall asleep, when you hear the familiar buzzing of a mosquito in your ear. You jump out of bed and turn on the lights, only to find that mosquitoes have invaded your bedroom. Does this sound familiar to you? If it doesn’t, then you should thank your lucky stars, because many residents in Muir Beach have experienced numerous restless nights dealing with mosquitoes.

In the Muir Beach area the primary sources of mosquito production are septic tanks (i.e. onsite wastewater management systems). Septic tanks provide an ideal habitat for *Culex pipiens*, (the house mosquito because of high organic content in the water, as well as the elevated temperature inside the tank. There are various types of septic tank designs ranging from engineered to traditional, all of which have the ability to produce mosquitoes. Mosquitoes can enter septic tanks through vent pipes, or through cracked or improperly sealed lids.

Placing plywood, boards, or any other material not designed specifically for covering a septic tank or riser or access point will not provide an adequate seal. It is important to note that one septic tank could produce thousands of mosquitoes per week. These mosquitoes, once dispersed, could potentially enter other septic systems in your neighborhood, lay eggs and start new populations. This can and often does result in neighborhood-wide mosquito biting issues. This mosquito is also known to transmit mosquito-borne viruses such as West Nile virus, a potentially life threatening illness.

A few ways to prevent mosquitoes from reproducing in your septic tank:

- Cover exposed septic tank lids with plastic & several inches of dirt, or sand.
- Check for cracks in septic tank lids and seal or replace to ensure a tight fit.
- Be certain that lids are fastened and properly secured.

- Screen vent pipes with a mosquito-proof screen (fine mesh that is 1/16th of an inch).
- Some septic tank lids have screws and gaskets which allow for a tight seal. These need to be inspected and replaced, as necessary, in order to maintain a proper seal.

Residents experiencing a mosquito problem can call the Marin/Sonoma Mosquito & Vector Control District (MSMVCD) at 1.800.231.3236. All programs and services are supported by property taxes and are provided at no additional charge to all residents in Marin and Sonoma counties.

Services include:

- Mosquito Control & Mosquitofish
- Ground-Nesting Yellowjacket Control
- Rodent Control Advice

To learn more about mosquito and vector control visit:

www.msamosquito.com
or call us at 1.800.231.3236.

A Trip Down Memory Lane (via Sunset) *By Joanie Wynn*

Laurie Piel and I met her at the Pelican Inn for brunch and a handoff of original Beachcomber issues from the 1950's. Back in those days, the Beachcomber was typed up and mimeographed, with artwork and coloring done by the local kids. They were tri-folded with the recipients name written on the front in crayon.

Over French toast, eggs, and coffee, Dee Brown (formerly Adrienne) now 71, recounted her early days growing up in Muir Beach. She was eight years old when her parents bought a house sitting on half an acre in 1951. A year later they purchased another half acre from Joe Santos and settled into



Dee in front of her former residence.

most of the families came to visit with food and small gifts. That accident introduced our family to all of the neighbors," she remembered fondly.

She'd held onto those old Beachcombers for over 50 years and was glad they'd made it home. Before she headed back to Cotati, we asked Dee if she'd like to drive down Sunset to see her old stomping grounds.

We first stopped at the end of Pacific Way. As she marveled at the new pedestrian bridge and parking lot, memories flooded back from the days when cabins circled Big Beach and Dr. O'Brien, a dentist, owned the tavern. Dee had a black dog named Cinder and she would hold onto his tail to swim in from Little Beach.

Next stop – her old house at 75 Sunset. The door was open, so I poked my head inside to ask the current occupant, Ricardo Lopez, if maybe Dee could take a quick look around. Always a great sport, he eagerly welcomed her inside and even snapped a photo on the front porch with his daughter Amelie. (This was a fantasy I hope to fulfill for myself one day at the childhood home my father built in Florida, so it gave me a vicarious thrill to facilitate it for someone else.)

From there we drove down Sunset, stopping to chat with various neighbors along the way. Joey Groneman was out walking Tilda. Dee remembered Eric, his sister Julie and mother Eileen Groneman and they exchanged stories from the "old days".

Next, we ran into Harvey Pearlman. Coincidentally, Dee's dad had been the director of the water district back then, when they'd brought their drinking water from Muir Woods in buckets. Her dad had also headed up the Muir Beach Improvement Association when, in 1953, they'd raised \$600 from property owners to improve the roads on Sunset and Pacific Way "where slides had made these roads practically impassible".



Dee with Ricardo and Amelie.

Dee's memory for the old days sharpened with each exchange and I was fascinated to catch a glimpse into our community's past as we traveled down Sunset. What struck me most however, were not the differences from that time but the similarities. Muir Beach is still a small community whose residents revel in the bucolic coastal setting, the roads on Pacific Way and Sunset are still a challenge, and the best conversations still happen when you run into neighbors walking down the street.



Beachcomber from November, 1963.

their home overlooking Big Beach. The total cost? \$7,500.00. The only downside, she recalled, was that the previous owners had shot a skunk in the basement, so the odor was really awful when it got damp.

Her dad worked for Western Electric Telephone and there were eight party phone lines in the community. "I believe we were a community of about twenty-five families back then," Dee remembered. "One time, I hit my head and broke my arm when I fell off the rocks at the end of Big Beach. Even though we'd just moved here,

Garden Club and Rummage Sale *By Tayeko Kaufman*

The Muir Beach Garden Club formed in 1997, out of the Muir Beach Investment Club, a group of women who pulled their resources to begin investing in the Tech Market. We had so much fun and success that we decided to establish a garden club to help each other in our gardens, go on field trips and eventually to take on the challenge of improving the gardens around the Community Center. The remaining members of the original Garden Club are Kathy Johnston, Arlene Robertson and Tayeko Kaufman. The group now has grown to 11 active members: Joey Groneman, Shirley Nygren, Bethany Villere, Janice Kubota, Melissa Lasky, Janet Tumpich, Michael Moore, Victoria Hamilton-Rivers, Kathy, Arlene and Tayeko + our wonderful partners and spouses who provide the man power for our plantings.

Our original name was the Muir Beach Garden Club, dedicated to the eradication of gophers and deer. We delved for awhile in animal husbandry. We owned 2 goats that we leased out to neighbors who did not want to pull weeds. The goats, however, preferred our plants to the weeds. We had been told that the scent of goats would reduce visits from the deer and several of our members were interested in milking the goats to make goat cheese. A failed venture, the goats went North with Cindy Cione and Sutton Freebairn-Smith. While unsuccessful in achieving the eradication of the gophers and

deer, we have been able to beautify the area around the Community Center. In 2008, we completed the planting of our shade garden on the north side of the Community Center. In 2011, we enhanced the garden with a water fountain created by Marilyn Stiles and installed by John John Sward.

As we entered the second decade of the new century, it became more evident that we were entering a prolonged draught. In 2012, with the Federal Grant secured by the MBVFA for the removal of Monterey Pine and Eucalyptus trees at the beach, we lost the shade for our shade garden. Fortunately for us and the community, many of the members had already begun to 'play' with succulents which were generously donated to us by Herman and David Schwartz from the Bolinas Gardens. So when we lost the shade after the removal of the seven pines at the Community Center, we began to plant succulents and grasses. We continue with this endeavor and would like to invite anyone who is willing to "play in the dirt" to come and join this enthusiastic band of gardeners.

The garlands, wreaths and succulent gardens sold at the Quilter's Fair and the annual Garden Club Rummage Sale (and the infamous Garden Club Calendar of 2007) have been the only source of our revenue. We use all the funds to purchase the trees, plants, soil and drip irrigation system, and garden sculptures like the water feature.

We had another successful rummage sale at the Pearl, Jes and Angie Sward's lovely beach cabin on Pacific Way. We want to thank Angie and Jes and all of you who donated items for the sale and also gave up a few hours to help during the day. We also want to thank Lisa Eigsti for organizing the wonderful 'cookie monsters' who sold lemonade and cookies and attracted enough attention to bring clients from the parking area to make for a successful weekend.



Ricardo and Tayeko showing their wares.



Suzanne setup in front of the Pearl.



Cookie Monsters Amelie, Dani, and Jessica.



Annabelle and Camila shoe shopping.

Pumpkin Banana Bread

By Destin Layne Block

"EVERYTHING WE DO PLANTS A SEED."

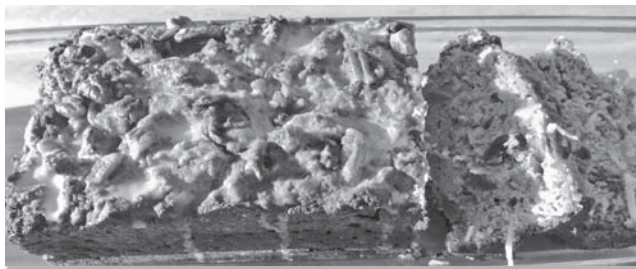
Welcome to autumn's harvest season, where we reap what's been sowed. Our transition into deeper stillness begins with the arrival of earlier nights and stoked fireplaces. As we shift into cooler temperatures and away from the raw foods of summer, I love to incorporate the sweetness of fall's fruits and root vegetables into my kitchen, along with healing soups, bone broths, stews, and steamed greens. Traditional fermented foods, including raw kraut and kimchi, remain a staple as well.

As a newcomer to Muir Beach, having recently relocated with my husband Jonathan from New York City, I quickly embraced the opportunity to cook in a full-sized kitchen, with pure joy.

This new recipe for pumpkin bread was born from the conundrum of having roasted an extra-large pumpkin; a desire to thank my dear neighbor/friend Marilyn Laatsch with a treat for helping me overcome a cold; and the need to use aforementioned pumpkin before heading away on a retreat. As you can imagine, I was delighted when my friend Andrea Russell sent me a unique way of approaching banana bread – without traditional flour – and thus my new kitchen creativity in Muir Beach was born.

Andrea is a world renowned yoga teacher, and one of my favorite sources of inspiration in seasonal cooking. Join me and follow along her recipes at www.andrearussell.com.

*Wishing you a joyful season, with gratitude,
Destin*



Pumpkin Banana Bread

- 2 cups mashed roasted pumpkin (or substitute any winter squash or use a can of pumpkin)
- 1 ripe banana
- 5 eggs
- 1/2 cup tahini (or substitute any type of nut butter, including almond, coconut, sunflower seed, macadamia nut, etc.)
- 4 tablespoons grass-fed butter, melted (can substitute coconut oil) + extra butter for serving
- 1/2 cup coconut flour (or almond flour, macadamia nut meal, etc.)
- 1/4 cup ground flax seed
- 1 tablespoon cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon baking powder (gluten free or homemade)
- 1/4 cup maple syrup (or more) + a few drops of stevia, or substitute any sweetener of your choice. Adjust amount to taste.
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- Pinch of sea salt
- 1/4 cup pecans, chopped
- Coconut butter, optional for frosting

Instructions

1. Preheat your oven to 350 degrees.
2. Combine your pumpkin or squash, bananas, eggs, nut butter, and grass-fed butter in a blender, food processor, or mixing bowl and mix well (if using a mixing bowl you need a good hand-mixer).
3. Once all of your ingredients are blended, add in your coconut flour, chopped nuts, flax, cinnamon, baking soda, baking powder, vanilla, and sea salt and mix well.
4. Grease a 9x5 glass loaf or metal pan with a fat of your choice (I used coconut oil).
5. Pour in your batter and spread it evenly throughout.
6. Place in your preheated oven and bake for 55-60 minutes or until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean. If you use a metal pan it will probably bake in 40-45 minutes so start checking at 35 to ensure the middle stays moist.
7. Remove from oven and flip your bread out onto a cooling rack. Drizzle coconut butter on for a more decadent treat.
8. Slice and serve, preferably with grass-fed butter.

Variations

1. Cranberry Orange - Only use 3 tablespoons of butter. Add zest of one whole orange diced, juice of one whole orange, and 1 cup dried cranberries or fresh if you want.
2. Banana Pecan - Reduce the pumpkin or squash to 1/4 cup and add 4 mashed bananas and 1 cup of roughly chopped pecan pieces.
3. To make muffins, use the same recipe and for mini muffins bake approximately 25 minutes, for normal size muffins 30-35 minutes.

Mike's Ride

By Lisa (Moore) Nardini

The story unfolds on a warm June weekend afternoon in the 60's. Mike, together with other beach boys, was hanging out in the parking lot in front of the Tavern riding his pride and joy: a grape purple Schwinn Sting Ray, complete with chrome plated high rise handle bars and a banana seat with a sissy bar and truss rods. It was indeed, as the ad said, the bike that "set the style." Riding a Sting Ray was "sheer fun": it was billed as "*the fun bike with the sports car look!*" An action bike for extra fun, perfect for stunts and tricks, jumping over ramps, pulling wheelies, and just cruising country roads.

The boys patiently waiting to ride, sat on the stone steps leading up to the porch that fronted the simple wood building. The smell of hamburgers and fries mingled with the dust raised as they took turns spinning wheelies in the dirt parking lot, cutting figure eights, jumping over carefully set up logs, and landing on the "sea grass" that carpeted the front lawn of the Tavern.

Against this backdrop of fun and sun, another gang of bike riding "boys" roared into the parking lot that afternoon, parked their rides, and sauntered over to the Tavern in search of a different kind of fun. As you may remember, the Gypsy Jokers, whose patch boasted a grinning skull, were a notorious motorcycle gang whose reputation was even worse than the Hell's Angels (who eventually forced the Jokers out of California in a turf war).

During those mythical "drugs, sex, rock and roll" summers at the beach in the mid to late 60s, the Gypsy Jokers were wont to come roaring into town to check out the beach scene. Not just a bunch of cool cats clad in black sleeveless vests with long hair and beards on cool low slung bikes, these dudes were dressed bad because they were bad. They acted like outlaws who clearly felt above the law until, that is, they met the law in person - my mother, Ruth Moore - and the law won!

So it happened, that while my brother and his pals were otherwise occupied after parking the souped up ride in front of the Tavern, just as the Gypsy

Jokers had theirs, Mike's grape - purple - banana - seat - fun -bike - with - the - sports - car - look - promise - of - sheer - fun - Sting Ray caught the Joker's attention.

Now, what actually happened next depends on whom you talk to; some say they set fire to the banana seat and rode it into the ocean; some say they ran over the bike mangling it completely. In any event, Mike defeated and in tears made his way back home. No sooner did he recount what had happened, than our mother Ruth set off in high dudgeon down to the beach to get her son's Sting Ray back. My God, would we ever see our mother again? Nobody, ever, ever, messed with the Gypsy Jokers! We were terrified, but couldn't leave her to face them alone, so we all piled in the car with her.

And there they were, leather jackets complete with grinning skull patch and all, lolling around, with their choppers gleaming in the sun. Hell hath no fury like our mother Ruth, especially when her son's bike had just been destroyed! Out of the VW bus she leapt and strode spitting like a cat, into the group of bemused Jokers. "Take me to your leader!," she barked, to which she received only puzzled silence. Not missing a beat, she collared the biggest and baddest looking of the bikers and said, "You! You look like a leader!" Now, of course, she was playing to his manly vanity, and the Joker in question was evidently quite pleased to have been anointed as the leader, albeit by a crazy LOL (Little Old Lady, back in those days). So, as he stepped up to bat as the Jokers' leader, did she ever light into him! You could just see his crest, which had been high and mighty a second ago, drooping ever further, until he was like a schoolboy with his tail between his legs, dutifully chastened - even the grin on the skull seemed more of a grimace. "You, of all people, with such a devotion to wheels, have violated all the very principles and everything that you stand for and believe in by what you've done! You surely know what a young man's first set of wheels means to him - how dare you stoop so low!"

she growled at him, while we were all cowering behind her skirt.

Holy cow! Ruth Moore, our mother, had actually stood up to the Gypsy Jokers. Of course, no one expected to see anything come of it; just the satisfaction of having told off a bunch of hoodlum bikers, and going down in Beach folklore was reward enough.

Well, about a week later, on another lazy afternoon, one of Mike's friends was hanging out inside the tavern by the huge stone fireplace when in those Jokers came again, this time with another mission. "Anyone know Mike Moore?" they demanded. "Never heard of the guy!" was the response, but somehow they found their way to our house and deposited Mike's repaired grape-purple-banana-seated-fun -bike - with - the - sports - car - look - Sting Ray, all tricked out like a Harley complete with a huge kickstand that made it look just like one of their choppers, on our wooden car deck!

That is how our mother stood up to the Gypsy Jokers and Mike got his ride back.

We Dodged the First Bullet . . .

By Kristin Shannon

While we won the lawsuit to prevent the salmon spawning grounds from being over-run by 2000 people a day dropped at the million dollar bus depot, it cost some \$250,000 in legal time via Mount Tam Task Force pro bono efforts. The salmon, Muir Beach, and Green Gulch restoration got a reprieve: GGNRA agreed to follow the law and do an environmental study if they revive the bus depot plan. But now the GGNRA still wants an "exception" to the laws that would prevent parking along Redwood Creek (Endangered Species, Clean Water Act). GGNRA wants 110 PERMANENT paid valet parking spaces on top of the coho.

November 7th, wildlife scientists held an urgent meeting: it is official, the August 13th salmon rescue attempt failed & one year's class of salmonids is extinguished. Experts believe that "no parking should be allowed" next to the Coho, as the auto pollutants roll directly into the creek. We dodged the first bullet because the community came together.

Viewpoint

Questions Posed by Muir Beach Residents answered by Howard Levitt on behalf of Supervisor Frank Dean

In early October, we invited Muir Beach residents to submit their questions to NPS Superintendent Frank Dean. Here are the first few questions and responses. Please follow up with more questions or comments by emailing us at: editor@muirbeachcomber.com so we can keep the dialogue going in future issues.

Q: Is the National Park Service going to acknowledge its contribution to traffic congestion at Tam Junction and along the Highway 1 corridor, and eliminate reservations to Muir Woods as well as bus access during commute hours on all week days, other than holidays? Our community considers this one of the necessary steps for NPS to demonstrate its sense of responsibility, good faith, and consideration of its neighboring communities. —Sincerely, Robert L. Jacobs

A: *Visitation to the NPS sites at Muir Beach, Muir Woods, and Stinson Beach contributes to traffic congestion at Tam Junction and along the Highway 1 corridor. The traffic congestion in these areas is one of the many factors that compelled the park to begin preparing plans for a reservation system that would actively manage demand to Muir Woods. The system would provide the ability to reduce vehicle trips during commute and other periods of high demand. Although a preferred alternative has not yet been identified for the reservations system, all alternatives that have been considered to date would reduce vehicle trips substantially.*

Q: With regard to cutting down so called non indigenous trees – I understand that in Washington, D.C. area there was a huge issue when Park service removed trees along the Potomac that had been blocking views of the river from residence of owner of Washington Redskins? When others complained loudly, it was declared that the removed trees had been non indigenous. Does Park Service ever allow such trees to remain standing and thriving? —Stuart Kaplan

A: *I have no information about the specifics of the Washington, D.C./Potomac situation you describe. In the case of Golden Gate, there are areas of non-native trees that are part of a designated 'cultural landscape,' and are managed as such, through preservation and, when needed, replacement through reforestation. Good examples in Marin County are the locally non-native Eucalyptus and pine trees planted as wind breaks at the Golden Gate Dairy. An even more dramatic example is found in the historic forest areas at the Presidio, where almost all of the trees are non-native species that were planted according to an Army forestry plan in the 1880's. NPS also manages non-native trees in landscaped areas, outside of natural or historic areas - for example, at Fort Mason's Great Meadow area.*

Q: What has been NPS experience in other areas of the country with regard to such issues as increasing "visitor experience" and the attendant head count load increase? —Stuart Kaplan

A: *Assuring a quality visitor experience is something we strive for in all of our sites. This is consistent with the fundamental purpose of all parks, which includes providing for visitor enjoyment while conserving unimpaired each park's natural and cultural resources and values for future generations. Visitor experience is not something a park agency 'increases,' but it is something we try to enhance. Decreasing visitation at key times in key locations is often part of enhancing visitor experience. That's why we hope to eliminate the unsustainably high peaks of visitation, providing a less crowded visitor experience at Muir Woods, by managing parking and visitor flow through a reservation system - that's a primary goal of the reservations system. All of the alternatives for such a system would reduce vehicle trips and visitation on a daily, annual, and peak-period basis.*

Q's: Why does your staff and the Conservancy continue to refer to the GGNRA as some fictitious "Golden Gate National Park"? None of the units that supposedly fall under this fake moniker is actually a National Park. None of them. They are all part of the Golden Gate National RECREATION Area. There's the recreation area, a national monument.... and a historical site. But not ONE of them is a "National Park". They are units within the national park system, but are distinct. And there is no name recognized by congress that is "Golden Gate National Park". The attempt in 2008 to change the name of the GGNRA was failed, for good reason. Yet the GGNRA and the Conservancy continue to use the incorrect moniker anyway. Isn't this meant to change the notion of what the GGNRA is, to justify managing it as if it were a national park like Yosemite or Yellowstone? Or perhaps it's to enhance the stature of the GGNRA, so that more philanthropic donations will pour in?

If the GMP has not yet been signed, why does the GGNRA's website have a changed park purpose on its management page? And why is the GGNRA trying to rewrite history by trying to say that the GGNRA was formed in 1972 to "provide a national park experience". The enabling legislation says otherwise.

How can the new GMP be considered legitimate when only 541 comments were considered, in a park unit that boasts 17 million visitors a year? Don't you think that figure represents a total failure on the part of the NPS to adequately engage citizens about THEIR recreation area?

Continued on next page

Do you recognize that the “park friends” model of funding, such as the GGNRA has with the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy, is leading to actual park budgets shrinking? Isn’t it true that as the GGNPC contributions have gone up, actual congressional appropriations for the parks have declined steadily? What do you think about Jared Huffman writing special legislation (The Park Partners Enhancement Act) just for Greg Moore and the GGNPC, and meanwhile telling recreational advocates (to our faces in his office) that we need to “lawyer up”? Are you aware that the “park friends” funding model was hatched by Reagan and James Watt as a way to shrink government?

—Laura Lovitt

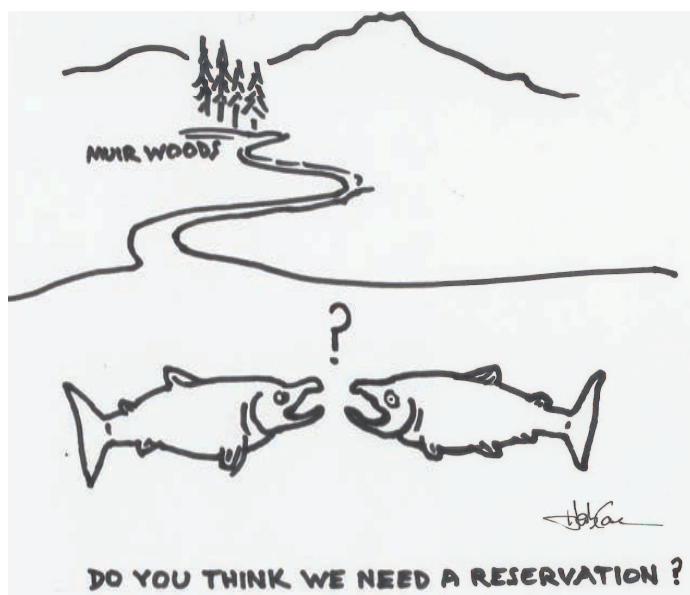
A: I’ll try to break down this multipart question. Regarding the park’s name, we are the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, and we also manage two other units of the National Park System - Muir Woods National Monument and Fort Point National Historic Site. Sometimes we refer collectively to the three units as the Golden Gate National Parks. This is for simplicity’s sake, and does not imply a difference in management approach for the park. Many people are surprised to learn that there are several dozen names applied to units of the National Park System - National Park, National Seashore, National Battlefield, National Scenic and Recreational River, National Historical Site, and many more, including the three designations here at Golden Gate. But whatever a unit of the National Park System is called, all units are governed by an identical set of management policies [visit <http://www.nps.gov/policy/MP2006.pdf>]. The policies state, “Regardless of the many names and official designations of the park units that make up the national park system, all represent some nationally significant aspect of our natural or cultural heritage.”

Regarding the park’s purpose, Golden Gate National Recreation Area was established in 1972 to protect and enhance the natural, cultural, scenic and recreation resources of the lands comprising the park. It was intended by its earliest advocates to be a “national park for the people, where the people are.” Most of the people who live near and use the park on a frequent - often, daily - basis, as well as the millions of people who come from all over the world to visit the park, appreciate the opportunity to experience world class resources, historic features, scenic beauty, and an abundance of recreational opportunities. Regarding the number of comments on the General Management Plan, the plan was presented to the public numerous times and in numerous ways from 2006 to the 2014. We had numerous presentations about the GMP in a variety of places and forums. We published five newsletters that solicited input and reported on content of the GMP in its various stages of development. We had a 90-day

comment period that produced over 500 comment letters from individuals, agencies, and organizations. From these letters, we identified over 1600 substantive comments, and have carefully reviewed and addressed all of them in the final plan. Because the new GMP is fundamentally an affirmation of the direction in the park’s original GMP, it is likely that many readers of the Draft GMP felt no reason to provide comments.

Finally, regarding the role of park friends, we believe that the park’s nonprofit supporters, particularly the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy, have been crucial to the creation of a park that is enjoyed by over 17 million visitors each year. Since the establishment of the GGNRA, partnerships have been key to our success in preserving historic buildings (for example Fort Mason Center and Headlands Center for the Arts), and providing meaningful educational and nature experiences (such as Slide Ranch, Marin Mammal Center and NatureBridge). The park’s visitor centers, its marvelous system of trails, the major improvements at Crissy Field, Fort Baker, and Muir Beach, its youth programs, as well as the many of the programs that open the park to all (particularly those who don’t traditionally visit national park areas, and the extraordinary volunteerism program at the park - all of these were made possible through partnership. In our experience, partnership does not result in reduced funding; in fact, in many cases the presence of partnership serves to protect federal support which is used to leverage philanthropic support.

Herb’s Corner



Marylee Goes to Paris

By Dan Fitzpatrick

Inspired by the locally produced, Emmy Award Winning Series, "Journeys for Good", I decided to take one of my own last spring.

Almost a year after my Father's passing, I presented my mother, Marylee, with a very special 85th birthday gift: an offer to escort her to Paris to fulfill her lifelong dream of seeing it – just her and I. Having toured France by bicycle on previous adventures, often following stages of the Tour De France, I amused myself with mental images of pushing Mom's wheelchair around the country instead.

Our lacy hotel off the mighty Champs Elysees, the most renowned shopping street in the world, had Marylee perfectly positioned for battle with French retailers. She'd trained all her life for this moment; this was her moment of truth. Draped in classic Parisian charm, The Hotel Raphael sports an intricately carved mahogany elevator with a soft velvet bench. Our ornate pastel-yellow room was exquisitely appointed with antiques – and had a basket fresh fruit and Champagne on ice awaiting our arrival.

After a quick toast to our good fortune, we wheeled down the notorious boulevard to the iconic Notre Dame Cathedral on the Ile de la Cite before breezing back across town to L'Etolie Venitiennie Brasserie, where we grabbed a petit entrecote for dinner.

The next day, after an early morning roll down Avenue Kleber to the Palias de Chailiot and Trocadero, we were rewarded with a mesmerizing silhouette of the Eiffel Tower at sunrise – just across the Seine River. We slipped into the charming neighborhoods of the left bank, ducking into a sidewalk café on local favorite Rue Cler for hot chocolate while dodging the deluge of a sudden downpour.

At Bon Marche, the world's first department store, Marylee repeatedly confused the high-end retailers by asking where the "bargain basement"

was. Later, after picnicking in sprawling Luxembourg Gardens, we wheeled up St. Germain to the Love Lock Bridge – where sweethearts leave a padlock to symbolize their unbreakable love.

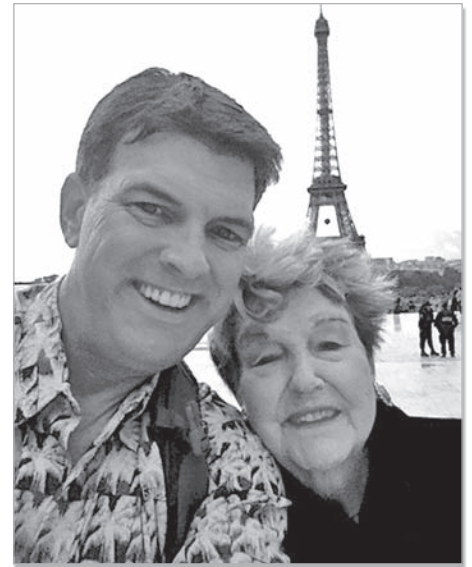
That evening we caught a delightfully Vegas-cheesy dinner show at Moulin Rouge. It was extravagantly awesome. We both appreciated the broad range of acts: from topless ladies dancing the Can-Can to topless ladies swimming in an aquarium full of anacondas.

We spent the following morning at Galleries Lafayette, the most palatial shopping mall on the planet. Marylee was in her own personal Valhalla, stalking the merchandise, sans wheelchair, like a hungry lioness on the prowl. After devouring lunch at Le Colibri Brasserie, where Mom had the best French Onion Soup of the trip, we rolled up the Seine River to the Louvre.

Early the following day, we jumped into a black rental car and set off for Burgundy on Autoroute A6. We passed through Dijon, with the mustard in full bloom, before stopping for lunch in a picturesque town-square in Beaune. There, Marylee ordered a lemon gelato with chocolate sauce at Le Concorde Brasserie. Although the waiter cringed at the citrus-choco combo... as Aunt Ginny always said, "Hey, whatever floats your boat."

Meandering through the enchanting foothill villages of Burgundy, we eventually found refuge in a castle-hotel in Tournus. Down the terraced medieval streets from it, we dined on the bank of the Saone River at Le Parissienne Brasserie. Our single-seating prix fixe meal consisted of rotisserie chicken and an assortment of wickedly creamy cheeses.

Motoring through the Beaujolais and Cote Du Rhone terwahs, we loitered in Lyon on our way to Provence. Exiting Autoroute A7 at Carpentras, we stumbled onto a captivating antique flea market that took hours to peruse. From there, we negotiated the windy roads through the



Eiffel Tower from Trocadero at Sunrise.

mountaintop villages around Gordes, where Marylee found her favorite boutique of the trip. After reluctantly being "persuaded" to stop shopping, we rambled into the red rock village of Roussillon – to a Tuscan style resort in the pines. Our room at Les Sables Hotel, overlooking the pool, had great orange banks rising up in the distance – reminiscent of Sedona Arizona.

Our dinner at La Grappe de Raisin, high on a hill, was remarkable. My Ahi steak on a bed of ratatouille with a side of marinara was hands-down my favorite meal of the trip. And the steady rainfall on the clear-plastic corrugated roof of the outdoor terrace gave a pitter-patter effect to an already sensational dining experience.

We roamed through the breathtaking Luberon region the following day. After a quick breakfast in the village of Lacoste, we stumbled upon a lavender distillery on a far-away hillside with an "all-things-lavender" gift shop. Sadly, the plant doesn't bloom until July – so the valley floors weren't as purple as the postcards promised. Continuing through the rocky gorges to Grambois, we grazed on melted raclette, luncheon meats, and an assortment of stinky fromage on the sunny terrace at Le Bistro.

Continued on next page



Red Rock Hilltop Village of Roussillon.

On a brief visit to L'Isle Le Sourge the next morning, Marylee's favorite village in France, we went window-shopping by car through the narrow market streets. The cobblestone alleys are so endearingly tight that our mid-sized sedan barely squeezed through them. Flanked by flower-lined canals with numerous bridges – it has the distinctive feel of a dolled-up Dutch town.

Straddling the Mediterranean near the Spanish border we made a lengthy stop in Carcassonne, one of the best-preserved walled-cities in Europe. Behind the moated ramparts we grabbed lunch at touristy La Taverne du Chateau. Marylee predictably ordered the French onion soup but was disappointed that they made theirs with freeze-dried onions.

Skirting the Midi Pyrenees we reached the Dordogne River Valley just before nightfall. Our gourmet dinner in Sarlat-de-Caneda featured a fowl menu. Famous for duck and geese, every restaurant in this fanatically foodie region offered the exact same entrees: Foie Gras, Duck breast, fried duck gizzards...repeat. Monotony aside, my duck breast in a cream-truffle sauce at the Auberge de Mirandol was good enough to give me goose bumps.

At breakfast on the banks of the castle-strewn Dordogne River, Marylee was pleasantly surprised that her omelet came with a heaping load of French fries at Le Pauly Restaurant in Domme. Pushing north into the Loire River Valley by mid-afternoon, we passed the Granddaddy Chateau in Chambord before finding a cozy, well-rated hotel in Saint-Jean-le-Blanc – just across the river from Orleans. Although our intensely maroon-colored room at Hotel Villa Marjane was small, its doily country-French decor was decidedly Mom's favorite "chambre" of the trip.

We charged into Normandy – anxious to see the acclaimed Monet's Garden in Giverny, home of the beloved painter for over 30 years.



Monet's Garden in Full Bloom.



Dan and Marylee outside walled city of Carcassonne.

Although overcrowded with tourists, the gardens were Marylee's favorite diversion of the trip. Timing is everything in this floral arrangement; we were fortunate enough to find the gardens in full bloom. After purchasing some souvenirs from the "Monets"R"Us" gift shop (really, a Monet Rubik's cube?) we headed off to find our airport hotel.

After an uneventful flight over the icebergs off Greenland, we literally wheelchair-raced 565 souls aboard our Airbus A380, the largest passenger plane in the sky, through immigrations and customs at SFO. The journey was over, but as I said to Marylee as we parted ways,

"We'll always have Paris, Mom, we'll always have Paris."



Muirly Notes

from your local national park

The seasons have changed! Early arriving monarch butterflies signal fall, recent rains have freshened the stream corridor and this also tells us the planting season will soon get underway! Hopefully it will be a wet, rainy winter to welcome back salmon. These quiet days are a great time to visit park sites. Check our website for nature notes, special programs (Winter Solstice is now a daytime event to celebrate the tallest trees on the shortest day on December 21), trail conditions and ways for you to participate in upcoming decisions such as the proposed fee increase.

We have a new stewardship coordinator: Price Sheppy. Here's a bit about him and we hope you'll "drop-in" at one of his work days to learn how restoration work is progressing: Price Sheppy started out as a Biological Technician and Public Information Coordinator at Mori Point in 2007. He has participated in the construction of the frog ponds, trails, and planting efforts at Mori Point. He has also worked at other sites around the Golden Gate National Parks, and became the San Mateo Community Program Manager in 2009. He recently transitioned to the Marin Park Stewardship position where you will see him running community programs at Oakwood Valley helping to save the endangered Mission blue butterfly and Muir Beach working to increase Coho salmon habitat. PSheppy@parksconservancy.org.

—Mia Monroe, Park Ranger in the Redwood Creek Watershed

In the Center of Things *By Laurie Piel*

Happenings at the Community Center

These past few months have been another busy time at the Center. August was the calm before the storm of weddings in September and October. There were meetings of the Muir Beach Association and a jewelry party thrown by Joey Groneman & Shirley Nygren, which was fun for all. SingersMarin offered their fall concert performing: "Broadway – Yesterday And Today." It was hard not to sing along when they sang everyone's favorites. They are always a hit. Our new vinyasa yoga class teacher, Dan Kuja, took a hiatus in August to attend some classes, and the brides and grooms-to-be spent a lot of time at the Center planning their upcoming nuptials.

September brought the return of yoga to Tuesday mornings as well as meetings of the Muir Beach Association and the MBCSD. The CSD meeting, held at the height of the bus stop issue, featured Steve Kinsey answering questions. It was also the start of the wedding "season" at the Center as half of the weekend's events were weddings.



The beautiful days of October brought another influx of weddings and parties... mostly Muir Beachers celebrating the most important passages of their lives. The Garden Club held their fall planting work party and much beautiful work was done again! The Center owes so much to them for the beautiful landscaping that we enjoy every day and makes visitors drop their jaws when they arrive. We finished off the month with our traditional Halloween Party spearheaded by Lisa Eigsti... what fun it is to be a child in Muir Beach!

Continued on next page



First time trick or treaters.



Alexis with newborn Vincent, and friends.

PHOTOS BY BRAD EIGSTI, APRIL AND JOHN RANDLE, JOANIE WYNN, AND MICHAEL MOORE.

Continued from page 18

And speaking of growing up in Muir Beach ... if you haven't been down to the Center in the past 6 months or so, you've missed the work on the biggest change to the Center since it was built. The beautiful new playground was finished and nothing was more fun than watching the kids enjoying playing there. It is "kid centric" and safe for all but I understand there are some "adult centric" things coming. Spearheaded by Scott Bender, it has changed the Center for the better. Just wait...there are more changes to come!

The beginning of November heralded the end of weddings and the return of the Center for community events. It began with our annual Day of the Dead celebration. This year marked the last year that Harvey Pearlman will chair it as he turns the reins over to Lisa Eigsti. Lisa has been working with Harvey for quite a few years so a smooth transition is assured. Harvey says that we can't get rid of him that easily and we'll still see a lot of him there. As always, it was a spectacular evening. The altar of pictures of those who had passed, the kids' craft table and the incredible decorations set the stage for this year's celebration. The potluck food was a feast as always, the kids (and adults with a kidlike attitude) had their faces painted and there were plenty of costumes to please the eye. The evening started with Harvey's moving description of its history and why he felt the need to bring this event to Muir Beach. Other speakers included Nina Vincent and Lisa Eigsti. Maria Freebairn-Smith's one woman performance enthralled all who heard it. Afterwards a fire dancer thrilled everybody with her feats of fire derring-do. The ceremony ended with the traditional procession of the celebrants sending notes to their loved ones by tossing them into the fire. Steve Shaffer and his band, Freddie & the Freeloaders, capped the evening with their fabulous music and everybody danced until the evening came to a glorious end.

There are lots of wonderful community events yet to come this year such as our traditional fall opera offering from Paul Smith & College of Marin, a Muir Beach Open Studios, the Quilters Cocktail/Dinner Party and our Winter Solstice Celebration. The start of the new year brings a quiet New Year's Eve celebration and an Elderberries' community dinner... all of which will be highlighted in the next Beachcomber edition.

So, come on down to your Community Center, meet your neighbors and be part of the events rather than just reading about them.

See you at the Center and Happy Holidays to all,
Laurie



All the kids!



Harvey and Lisa at Day of the Dead.



Improv with Maria Freebairn-Smith.



Shark, Derek Jeter, Dracula, and Harry Potter.



Stella, Zora, and Emily ready to trick or treat.

Dia de los Muertos *By Beth Nelson*

Such a beautiful Day of the Dead ceremony took place at our beloved Community Center on 1 November. Watching it evolve from one year to the next...decorations added from travels and love, our costumed - pot - luck - dance - fest - celebration of the living and the dead.

Year after year, all the old traditions kept, as new people arrive in the community and delight in this special Muir Beach night. Harvey, you have really been the motivator that kept us all going. Year after year, tireless in your efforts, always with a good spirit and a bag of bagels and whitefish on clean up day.

Maria Freebairn-Smith, (Martha de Barros's daughter) delighted us with a heart-wrenchingly, beautiful and evocative movement and dialogue performance; authentic and singular as only possible from one who grew up here. The very essence of her performance seemed to evolve from an aesthetic and love for community, where children run free, where nature is big, and where community knows how to comfort. Maria wove life and death and memory and nuance together in a way that left many of us in tears that night.

And of course who could not love our incredible dancing fire eater- now a "regular." (although I hear Harvey is going to take that up next year in his retirement)! Thank you Steve, who brings us the music and all our Muir Beach artists, responsible for so much of the beauty at this festival. I have always said this is my favorite ceremony of the year here at Muir, and that night reminded me once again why.

It seems poignant that this celebration, which has always been my favorite here, was started not long after Harvey and his family returned from living in Mexico and shortly before I took refuge on their property, recently divorced and fragile, with an eight year old in tow. Their property represented the

roots and spirit of something very unique to Muir Beach. Their traditions gave form to a wild and lonely stretch of Pacific coast, and the Community Center gave a center to all who lived here. It was Harvey's generation that built that Center. It was through those traditions, and especially the Day of the Dead, that I came to cherish the fragile nature of this unique place. For that I have so much gratitude.

This year when I brought out my box of alters, there were nine as I lovingly unfolded and assembled them. Tennessee said, "Wow mom, that's a lot of dead!" Yes, it was indeed... Grandmother, Father, best friend, boyfriend, cousin, dog, even I was sobered by the sheer number of those I loved who were gone. Our Muir Beach Day of the Dead had given shape to my memory and form to my loss. It was the first time I had really acknowledged that.

Thank you Lisa for taking it up for our community's future, and thank you Harvey, for having the brilliance to bring it to us. Maria said it perfectly that night ...we are the collective memory of the living and the dead of Muir, the history, the friendships, the glue that binds this very special community.

PHOTOS BY BRAD EIGSTI AND LAURIE PIEL.

