

# BEACHCOMBER

SINCE 1946





## The latest news from the Muir Beach Volunteer Fire Association

I am really excited to report that plans are underway for the Annual Muir Beach Volunteer Firemen's Barbecue on Memorial Weekend 2022. Please save the date: **Sunday, May 29, 2022.**

In the coming months we will be reaching out to the committee heads to see who is back on board to help bring this much beloved and important fundraiser to life. There will be a kick-off planning event this winter as we are looking to fill a big variety of volunteer slots leading up to and on the big day.

This is a wonderful community-building event, and it truly takes a village to help raise much needed funds for our Muir Beach Volunteer Fire Department. The absence of the barbecue fundraiser these past two years, combined with the fact

that we are moving forward with the brand new fire house, make the 2022 Volunteer Firemen's Barbecue more important than ever. Thank you for helping make this the best community event and party in Marin!

Look for additional ways to support the MBVFA, including a pop-up MBVFD dog logo merchandise booth in front of Proof Lab on Friday, November 19th and Saturday, November 20th and a merchandise booth at the MB Holiday Arts Fair on December 4th. Stay tuned for details on all of these events as they unfold.

— Denise Lamott



*Muir Beachers tending to the delicious barbecue chicken.*



*Muir Beach ladies help out in the merchandise booth.  
Photo by Eliot Karlan*

## Monarchs in Marin?

*By Mia Monroe*



*Photos by Alice Cason*



The arrival of monarchs in Muir Beach and other coastal sites signaled the start of Fall and their fluttering into our yards provided "something infinitely healing in the repeated refrains of nature...the assurance that dawn comes after night..." that Rachel Carson wrote

so eloquently about in *The Sense of Wonder*. First one floating onto a flower, then a stream through Butterfly Gap on Banducci's upper slopes. Soon a cold snap would send them clustering into the "butterfly trees" above Pacific Way or maybe over to the one in Karla A's yard. More would arrive and on warm days an orange cloud would take wing as the sun hit the branches and off some would go seeking nectar.

Many remember this beautiful site of "winged stained glass" when visiting the beach and often I am told of an early impressionable visit with Mrs. T. to see the monarchs. In fact, Mrs. Terwilliger not only

*Continued on next page*

# Monarchs

*Continued from previous page*

introduced many a child (and accompanying parent!) to Marin's natural wonders she also instilled a strong conservation ethic from picking up trash to advocating to save "something special" and that's just what she did for the Muir Beach Butterfly Trees. A campaign led to this grove becoming an Audubon Canyon Ranch reserve. It is now fondly called the "Terwilliger Grove."

Monarch butterflies have an amazing life story. The ones who arrive here are the "super generation" having started their life out east, maybe in a Sierra meadow. As they felt the cues of autumn (shortening days and chilly nights, helpful Diablo winds) they journeyed to the relatively mild coast (one of the few insects to make a long distance migration).

Along the way they stored up body fat by nectaring on fall blooming plants. Upon arrival they found the right microclimate (very special requirements of protection from wind, just the right amount of sunlight and trees in the right configuration to hang on through the ravages of stormy weather) to spend the winter (actually mid-fall to late winter) only venturing out of their cluster on sunny days to restock their body fat and sip dew to rehydrate. Then, in mid-February (often Valentine's Day) they mate. The female leaves to move inland seeking the only plant she can lay her eggs on: milkweed! Now comes another amazing thing: she lays eggs which go through complete and beautiful metamorphosis... **egg, caterpillar (the eating stage), chrysalis, butterfly.**

## Community Center Restricted Use

Although Covid-19 conditions continue to improve, the Muir Beach Community Center will remain essentially closed until the Community Services District feels it is safe to reopen for public and private events given current Marin County HHS requirements.

Monthly CSD meetings are currently held via Zoom. The Quilters and the Men's Group have been allowed to use the facility on a limited basis as pre-existing community member "cohorts" (prior to Covid-19) that are able to self-monitor for vaccine tracing, according to District Manager Mary Halley.

A Holiday Arts Fair will most likely be the first major event to use the Community Center since it closed in March, 2020, over pandemic concerns. This year the fair will showcase Muir Beach artists exclusively and will be open one day only, Saturday, December 4.

Exhibitors and guests will be required to show proof of vaccinations and wear masks, according to organizer Laurie Piel.

Meanwhile, the CSD is trying to find someone to coordinate Community Center rentals and will need facilitators when it fully opens again. A maintenance strategy is also under discussion.

– Paul Jeschke

## Inside

MBVFA News .....	2
Monarchs .....	2-3
Community Center Restricted Use .....	3
Momentary Creatures .....	4-5
Update from Ocean Riders of Marin .....	5
Muir Beach Holiday Arts Fair .....	6-7
Fortune Magazine 2021 - 40 under 40 .....	7
Parklets .....	8
The Ocean and Me .....	8-9
Critter Report .....	9-10
Run to Play, Play to Run:	
The Pelican Inn Track Club .....	11, 28
Psychiatric Firefighting .....	12
MBVFD 50th Anniversary .....	13-16
Never Say Never .....	17
Review: Drug Use for Grown-Ups .....	18-19
The MAINE Reason .....	20-21
Water Element .....	22-23
What is left on the sand? .....	23
Remembering Edna Rossenas .....	24-27
Eloise and Graham .....	28
Mending Bar .....	28
ON THE COVER .....	28

*Beachcomber* is a community newsletter published quarterly by and for residents, friends, family and former residents of Muir Beach. Published since 1946 (on and off), circulation 160 (more or less).

Submissions may be sent to:

**Beachcomber mailbox** on mailbox row, or to [editor@muirbeachcomber.com](mailto:editor@muirbeachcomber.com).

Contribute your essays, poems, stories, photographs, artwork, announcements, reviews – anything that celebrates Muir Beach and our community. To subscribe, email [editor@muirbeachcomber.com](mailto:editor@muirbeachcomber.com).

Everything printed should be considered solely the opinion of the writer and printed in the form and condition as submitted. Beachcomber exercises no editorial control over content or distribution, except for readability and general appearance.

Acquisitions: Anne Jeschke

Circulation/Website: Maury Ostroff

Design: Janet Tumpich

Editorial Support: Kate Somers



# Momentary Creatures

*By Suzanne Bender-Van Spyk*

She stared up at the ceiling light fixture, a lone square tacked uncertainly to the ceiling by the window, its greying plastic speckled with age. Flipping the switch, the room appeared to grow dimmer as the light slowly flickered on. As she scanned the room, she noted the dark corner in the adjoining closets and the shadows gathered around the desk opposite the window. She turned to her little one, nodding as she agreed that the plan for LED lights along the walls bordering the ceiling was brilliant and would chase the darkness back outside, where it belonged. Thirty-three years ago, she had been the little one, also gazing into a rather dusty and dingy room on the corner of a building. She couldn't recall what kind of light fixture had been tacked to that ceiling, but she did remember the large windows overlooking densely packed houses and tree-formed hills. That building had been ancient, and its windows, trimmed in mottled aluminum, allowed a steady stream of air and noise to creep into the space regardless of whether or not they were open.

Closing her eyes, she could still hear the sound of the bus pulling up eight floors below, the shrill bing-bong of its turn signal bellowing out its arrival every 10 minutes, from 5 a.m. to midnight. She opened her eyes again as a police siren wailed up the street outside, into the room, and away again, just a few dozen feet from where they stood in the corner room on the first floor.

This felt slightly different from the last time. She put her hand in

her pocket, vainly feeling for the smooth egg of rose quartz that lay deep inside. It wasn't there, of course. That was two years ago.

Even so, she felt the stone in her fingers once more, squeezing it gently and rolling the smooth shape up into her palm. She had held it tightly then, pressing it into the crook of her hand until an ache formed, countering the swell in her heart. Not quite trusting herself, she had gazed at him standing near the entrance to airport security, taller than his father and so very slender, one could almost mistake him for frail. Physically, he was no longer a little one, yet he was almost dwarfed by the baggy pink hoodie and looked very much his 18 years. The hood perched on top of his head, threatening to slide off at any moment, yet somehow managing to stay rooted to the same spot amongst his curls despite the hugs and jostling.

He had glanced up and caught her staring. She had smiled back broadly, more broadly than she should, and walked over to him holding out her arms. She couldn't envelop him the way she used to when he was her little one. Couldn't lean down to pick him up and press him against her, kissing his neck as she tickled his belly on the slide back to the floor. She could still kiss his neck nowadays, but only by standing on tiptoe. And, instead of tugging out giggles, such tenderness drew out a cocked eyebrow and quizzical tilt to his head. As she had neared him, everything felt reversed, off-kilter almost. Bending

down, he had gently folded his arms around her back while she circled his waist and pressed her cheek to his chest, blinking rapidly. She had tried in that moment to hold on to the memory of that hug in her head, wanting to remember it forever, yet yearning to forget the searing tightness in her chest.

She had pressed the stone into his hand and recited the lines she had been practicing for days. For a moment, he looked confused. Then his hand closed over the stone. He didn't smile at her, but rather looked a little sad as the memory from kindergarten flashed in his eyes. He was no longer that boy.

Two years later it was not a stone, and it was not him. It was his younger sister, still her little one, but only for a few more minutes. The stone was now a tiny photo captured on prom night. On that evening, her little one had worn her old beaded dress, gifted from the back of the closet and now vintage after 25 years. In the photo, they gazed into each other's eyes as their foreheads touched, fleeting smiles stroking their mouths. She had printed some words of encouragement on the back of the photograph and laminated it for safekeeping. Quite deliberately the size of a passport photo, it slipped easily into a pocket, or purse, or the folds deep in a wallet. A part of her desperately hoped that the photo would never feel slender fingers tug it out, that the words would go unread as confidence and delight in the commotion of city life rendered them needless. Yet at the

*Continued on next page*

# Updates from Ocean Riders of Marin

*Continued from previous page*

same time she wanted to believe that occasionally the photo would indeed come to light, to be stumbled upon at an odd moment and prompt a small smile before being tucked away again.

Yes, this time felt somewhat different, the hug more parental, words unsaid shimmering at the surface. She looked down at her second, and final, little one, watching the slight pink flush stain cheeks and redden eyes from temple to temple. Genetic vagaries had produced a petite child, yet the stunning little soul in her arms belied an unshakeable force of will. Memories flooded the moment -- of diapers on heads rather than bottoms, joyous shrieks reverberating off bathtub tiles, the soft scent of hair brushing eyelashes while snuggled in close on the couch. Her hand crept up, stroking back down the thick, long, wavy hair while her eyes blinked rapidly. Again.

Once home, it took her some time to walk downstairs and step into the quiet bedroom to face the storm. She knew what she had to do; she had done it before. Yet this time, as she sat on the perfectly made bed in the perfectly tidy room, she wrinkled her forehead and searched her thoughts, gently teasing out her memories. How could something that took so long, go by so fast?

These beautiful, momentary creatures were no longer her little ones. It turns out she had but borrowed them for a brief time.

The promise of and gleeful arrival of rain has kept many busy around the Golden Gate Dairy Stables. This is a time of year where we are bringing gravel in to fortify footing and drainage in paddocks, hauling accumulated debris to the dump, and filling in plantings around the stables to await the quenching rain. We've also said good bye to our dry season boarders as our pony paddocks predictably flood with water run-off from Dias Ridge. At the same time, we are looking forward to welcoming a couple new permanent members who are enthusiastic trail riders.

Marin Ranch School is halfway through its Fall semester – sessions run on Monday and Wednesday afternoons – for 9-12 year-olds. The kids spend their time doing chores and learning on-the-ground horsemanship which not only enhances their regular riding but also translates skills into life situations beyond the corral.

Many riding programs around the County focus on, well, riding! In contrast, Ranch School does everything, but riding: kids learn all about the care of horses (from grooming to feeding to basic vet care), how to tie knots, green horse-keeping and stewardship (composting partnership with Green Gulch Farm), equine enrichment (keeping horses happy), and the many different ways there are to lead a horse safely and competently – believe it or not, it is not as simple as it looks.

The emphasis in all of our programs is about relationship between human and horse. One of the best ways we've found to do this is through on-the-ground interaction and taking riding out of the equation. Don't get us wrong: we do love to ride – however, we believe that there is just as much gratification (if not more) being with our horses on the ground as there is in the saddle.

## ***Our next Ranch School session starts in March 2022.***

Fun fact: Horses grow their coats according to the amount of daylight in their environment. With our shorter days, you may notice the horses' coats changing color and getting thicker. As daylight begins to wane, the coat grows thicker. Between the tremendous amount of effort it takes for this to happen and the typically warmer temperatures we experience in the Fall, the horses will spend more time resting to compensate for this energy burn. Their coats will continue to grow until the winter solstice, and then, as the days lengthen again, their coats will gradually start to shed out to their spring and summer coats. The summer coat is at its peak on June 21st and the cycle starts again.

Wishing you all a cozy Fall season!

P.S. Thank you for allowing us to change the bread pick up from Thursday's to Saturday's. It has helped with traffic into our barnyard during our outreach to the public.

*Submitted by Stephanie Holdenried, Ocean Rider Board Member and Equine Facilitator.*

# Muir Beach Holiday Arts Fair

Saturday, December 4, 2021 – 10am-5pm at the Muir Beach Community Center

*By Laurie Piel*

The 2021 Muir Beach Holiday Arts Fair is going to happen! We have all gone through a rough time. But we were fortunate to have this beautiful corner of the world in which to shelter in place. We have hiking trails, the overlook at sunset and we are not crammed into apartment buildings sandwiched next to each other. To top it all off we have an incredible community reaching out to care for and shop for those who cannot or should not. This community loves to get together and is feeling the loss of the Elderberries Community Dinners, the Summer & Winter Solstices, Paul Smith concerts and, of course, the BBQ. I'm so happy that the Day of the Dead celebration will happen this year down at the BBQ grounds. Marin County has shown its colors when it comes to being vaccinated and we are the only county at this point moving into the yellow tier. This makes having the Fair even more inviting. I know I'm looking to the Fair in December to be an event we can all share. I'm aware that the fair is right around the corner but I'm hoping our stalwart artists and volunteers will all come out to be part of this event. I thought the many newcomers to the Beach might like a little history of the Fair.

The original Muir Beach Quilters Fair ran for 41 years from 1972-2013. The first fair was very informal. It did not have its full name yet, but it had a big community party theme! It was held in a resident's house in lower beach. Somewhere along the way the group coalesced, became the Muir Beach Quilters and they wrote a mission statement.

The fair started as an outgrowth of one of the three aims of the Quilters' original mission. Those aims were to throw a big community Christmas party, to raise money to fund a community center and to support and promote the art of local artisans by providing a showplace for them once a year. This turned into the Muir Beach Quilters Holiday Arts Fair. When the Center was finally built circa 1978, the Quilters started the support of programs at the community center.

When the Quilters decided not to continue the fair after the 2013 event, a small group of residents held a mini fair to keep the tradition alive. The following year three residents officially took over the fair to bring it back to its full glory. With the passing of Suzanne Miller last year, the Fair has become my responsibility, joy and passion. The fair serves two purposes. First, the profits from the kitchen and the beverage bar all go directly to the CSD as a line item specifically for community events. This money helps fund events like the Summer and Winter Solstice Celebrations, Day of the Dead, the kids Halloween Party, concerts and other events all year long. Second, it's an opportunity for our creative artisans to sell their wares and make some extra spending money for the holidays. We also have the Junior Artisans/Kids table which offers our younger generation the opportunity to make and sell their own creations.

To ease back in, the Fair will only be one day, held on the first Saturday in December ... December 4th. Based on the current restrictions, the plans are: all artists will be residents

and they and the attendees will all have to show proof of vaccination and masks are currently required indoors. We will have someone at the entrance to check vaccination status. Since the little ones don't have vaccinations (as of this moment), we are fortunate that the Junior Artisans will be on the deck which is considered outside and will not have to meet that requirement. Also, because it's only one day the fee for the space will go from \$65 to \$25. I would be happy to waive the fee altogether but the fair does need some income to pay for fees that are incurred even if the fair doesn't happen, such as the web hosting fee.

In deference to the current covid situation, we are also limiting all publicity to minimize outside attendance. However, it would be great if you told all of your friends that you are comfortable with to come and spend their money. If, when it gets close to the actual day, the county has moved into the lower tier and life is opening up, we may put the dates of the fair on our website without any other fanfare. If you'd like to see some photos of past fairs and artists please visit our website: <http://www.muirbeachartsfair.com>

We will also need volunteers to help. Already offering their services are: Brenda Kohn to helm the vaccination checkpoint and Alexis Chase to coordinate the Junior Artisans. Unfortunately, Steve Shaffer is not able to be here to run the beverage bar this year, but Harvey and David Piel will shoulder the responsibilities.

*Continued on next page*



*Continued from previous page*

Although what the kitchen will consist of will depend on covid restrictions in December, we will still need someone to coordinate it. There are many other open jobs to be done and the [www.signupgenius.com](http://www.signupgenius.com) site should be up by the time this is published. That information will be in the EventsLetter as soon as it is up and running. Donations will be greatly appreciated, as well, be it food, libations or financial.

I'm excited to say that we might have some of our residents providing music this year. If you are interested in being part of that, please email me at [muirbeachartsfair@gmail.com](mailto:muirbeachartsfair@gmail.com). This is your opportunity to support your neighbors, meet some members of the community that you haven't met before and find that treasure that you want to give to someone or just want to keep for yourself.

**DATES:** Set Up: Fri Dec. 3rd  
Fair: Sat., Dec. 4th (10-5)  
(And Then Break Down)

**ENTRANTS:** Open to all Muir Beachers. Family members will be considered residents.

**ENTRANCE RULES:** The work must be your creation. You do not have to manufacture it yourself. For example, if you make a piece of pottery you do not have to fire it yourself. You can use found objects in your art and can design the sweater but do not have to knit it yourself. This is not a juried event.

**COST:** \$25/TABLE. Two people can share a table if they don't think they have enough items to sell on their own.

**SALES:** Each artist is responsible for their own means of getting paid.

**REGISTRATION:** By email only to [muirbeachartsfair@gmail.com](mailto:muirbeachartsfair@gmail.com) by the end of the day, Friday, Oct. 29th. Please include your name, contact information (including phone number, MB address & email address), your medium and a picture of your work in as native a file as you can give us. Assuming this date has passed by the time this is published, if you would like to participate, please don't hesitate to check with me... you never know, there might still be space.

**ACCEPTANCE:** Hopefully, there is room for everyone, but the sooner you register the more likely you are to get the better space.

**MB ORGANIZATIONS:**

The organizations that support MB such as the MBVFA, The Quilters and the Garden Club have their fee waived although they are asked to please register.

**NON-RESIDENTS ARTISTS:**

As of now we are not opening it up to non-resident artists. Family members are considered residents. If we have a lot of room and we enter a less restrictive tier, it is possible that we might consider some long-term artists from the past.

So, please consider giving of your time to make this a success, but if that is not something you are comfortable doing, please come down to shop and support your friends and neighbors.

See you all at the Fair!

*Fortune Magazine announced its  
2021 - 40 Under 40  
and included Kate!*

*By Laurie and David Brandt*

A Gates Cambridge Scholar has been named one of Fortune Magazine's 40 Under 40 for the year 2021.

Kate Brandt, Chief Sustainability Officer at Google and the first Federal Chief Sustainability Officer in the Obama administration, was listed in Fortune magazine's prestigious annual list of people to watch out for.

Brandt [2007], who did an MPhil in International Relations, told Fortune: "I was raised in Northern California amongst the tide pools and redwood trees. From a young age, I've felt a reverence for nature and have dedicated my life to making sure we do everything we can to protect it for future generations."

Brandt's mission has led her to several federal government climate-focused and environmental leadership roles in the Department of Energy, Department of Defence, and the White House. As President Obama's first federal chief sustainability officer in 2015, she was tasked with overseeing the actions of "the single largest user of energy in the world," she says.

Her current role at Google involves her directing and coordinating sustainability efforts across the tech giant's data centres, real estate, supply chain and product teams.

The company, which first achieved carbon neutrality in 2007, has set a goal to be carbon-free in all of its operations by 2030. Brandt states: "As a new mother, my commitment to this work has only grown."

## Parklets

Life goes on and the pandemic hasn't given up. Some things haven't changed, we're still wearing masks, but some have. For restaurateurs al fresco dining has, thankfully, helped them to stay in business while slowly being able to serve inside again. Outdoor dining may be here to stay. It's wonderful to be able eat in public with friends again but I'm afraid al fresco dining is, at least in my opinion, like New Year's Eve, reading in the bath tub, and Texas, greatly overrated. Though I have had some lovely and even romantic outdoor dining experiences, it's usually either too hot or too cold. Seldom is the outdoor temperature just right. The sun is either beating down on me unmercifully or the breeze is cooling off my food before I can eat it. And how many glasses of wine am I going to knock over trying to shoo away a fly that seems to think I'm willing to share my lunch. I know, I know, they don't eat much. But their perseverance is annoying. As much as I would like to pretend European-style sidewalk café society has come to Marin, it really hasn't. Dining in a rickety parklet built in the gutter of the street in front of a restaurant just doesn't have the same panache as Les Deux Margots on the Saint-Germain or Caffè Florian in the piazza San Marco.

— Mike Miller

## The Ocean and Me

By Nina Vincent

It's raining outside. Finally, after the cold dry days of November and the warm dry days of December and most of January, the rains have arrived. Our iPhones – the new gods in the world – always make it seem that we will be getting buckets of rain for days on end. What actually happens is a few bowls of rain and lots of grey clouds. Last weekend we were on high fire danger watch again. This week we are trying to squeeze every last drop from the rain clouds above. For me, I love and await the rains but am not so happy about the stormy seas as it means I cannot get into the ocean. Even though I am known to swim on BIG wave days, these stormy waters are too much for me. The icy cold waters are what I have come to depend on and look forward to each and every day to pick me up, hold me and carry me through.

The ocean is the place I go where I feel completely at home. Safe. Held. Alive. Happy. Sad. Whatever it is I am feeling it is mine. Ours. The ocean and me. The minute my body hits that cold water all of the ways I “show up” for everyone around me cease to matter and I am there with the water floating, diving, sliding along the calm sandy ocean floor while huge waves crash above me pulling at my feet trying to suck me in back to shore. Every ounce of my attention is on the weightless, burning cold that becomes me. I am able to stay in for about thirty minutes at the most. Then my fingers become stiff and I can't make a fist. My feet and hands begin to burn or ache or something I can't describe and I know it's time to get out.

My walk from the house with the dogs to the beach has purpose. I feel the ocean calling me. I hear her thundering waves crashing on the shore, or if I'm lucky, the gentle rumble of smaller waves rolling in. I have my towel, and the dog leash draped around my shoulders like an open scarf. I bring the leash just in case I might see a ranger or an unfriendly dog on my way to the ocean. This is new. I used to always leash the dogs. I was a good citizen. But now, there is a trail between my house and the ocean and it belongs to me. The dogs walk it with me and we know exactly where we are going. The tourists in the parking lot, on the bridge – they are background figures on the landscape. If you had an aerial view of the path from my home to the ocean you would see how it is warmed and worn from our footsteps – the dogs and mine, and for a little while there, Eli's as well.

Some days it's cold out, in the 50's. Not the East Coast cold I grew up in but the West Coast cold I have grown used to. I don't feel the cold at all when I have just my bathing suit and denim button down shirt and sandals on. Honestly – it's the strangest thing. When my brain knows it's headed for the ocean it wraps me in an invisible cloak that protects me from the cold. People comment on my lack of clothing as they wrap their scarves and down jackets around themselves a bit tighter. I smile. No time to talk. I have a date with my friend, I hear her calling.

As soon as I hit the sand and see the waves crashing or rolling in I begin to assess. Where are they the least dangerous. Where do they

*Continued on next page*



*Continued from previous page*

roll more than they crash? Is there a rip tide? An undertow? I scan the water's edge. I look for a cluster of surfers and head towards the other end of the beach. Some days I'm out there with them, suited up in their thick black neoprene skin layers perched upon their floating fiberglass boards. I wave and smile and they inevitably comment on the cold. But I don't notice the cold, not on my skin. Just occasionally, for the first five or six underwater dives, that intense, stabbing brain freeze. When I come up for air with my skull cracking in two I hold it together, hands squeezing around the ears or sometimes pressing the crown wishing I could exorcise the pain magically. But it passes, quickly and only lasts for a few plunges. Other than that, there is no cold. Just an exhilarating sensation telling me that I am more alive in that moment than at any other time in a day.

When the waves are big, which they tend to be this time of year, timing is everything. My body and breath know what to do. I don't have to think about it any longer. There's a pull, a place in space and time where my lungs fill with air, my hands raise over my head and I push off from the floor of the ocean and dive forward skimming the sandy bottom, kicking with all my might to avoid being tugged into the tumultuous pull of the momentous wall of water headed for the shore. If I do get pulled in, if my mind misjudges or the wave is just too big and strong to avoid, I relax my entire body. I notice my breath. I hold it in longer, letting only small amounts out my nose so as to keep the water from coming in. I know that if I can hold my breath and become one with the water's

movements it will settle and calm and I can pop my head out and take a breath.

Some days, the surf is relentless. The waves come in, one right after the other. I admit, on these days I plead with the ocean, out loud, (I actually talk to the ocean quite a bit - especially when she delivers those brain freeze blows), I ask her to just give me a break. I tell her I have enough tumult in my life on shore, enough to contend with, I could use just a bit of calm, just a moment of quiet where she might just hold my weightless body for a moment or two. Some days I feel like she hears me, the wild sets come in pounding one after the other and then, even if just for a few moments there is quiet, flat waters. I immediately bring my feet up, floating on my back parallel to the shore line so that I can keep my eye on what's coming my way. I thank her in those breathy moments of calm.

But when she's pounding me, one wave after another I am focused, alert, alive. I lay flat and clutch the sandy bottom and let out just a little bit of air, then I come to the top, hoping my hair isn't obstructing my

vision. I peek out as water streams over my eyes to see if I can take another inhale or if I have to hold with what's left in my lungs before I am able to breathe again. There have been a few times where the hold is a challenge. Where I feel a desperate need to exhale and inhale air again. But for the most part (I'm knocking on wood here), my brain and lungs seem to be able to work it all out. If only I could grow gills, if I really were a dolphin or a mermaid - this bothersome need for air in my lungs wouldn't be such a momentous issue at times. But alas, I am in need of periodic gasps of air and am grateful for the wisdom of my body/mind which knows when to take them!

My heart is hurting these days. I am grieving. I am healing from years of trauma and trying to be everything I could for my child knowing that it just wasn't enough. When people ask me "How I'm doing," I pause, deciding whether or not they really want to know or I really want to tell. Some days, during that pause, I think of the ocean - my teacher, my therapist, my lover, my friend - and I say with absolute certainty, "I'm doing alright."



*Juvenile Turkey Vulture*



*Western Pond Turtle*

*Photos by Dave MacKenzie. See Critter Report on next page.*

# *The Critter Report: Notes from 2021*

By Dave MacKenzie

Here's a list of my notes and observations for this year at Muir Beach. (Many people share their observations, and if you have any other wildlife notes, let me know or write your own story for the next issue of the Beachcomber!) Many of the issues relating to critters this year concern the continuing drought, and the complete cessation of flow in Redwood Creek.

*Coho Salmon:* Lack of flow and drying pools led to a rescue of some of the fingerlings in pools. Thanks to help from Ernst Karel, a bit of artificial oxygenation may have helped this group to survive and reach the ocean!

*Red-Legged Frogs:* Another of our endangered critters has made a great comeback, according to NPS biologist Darren Fong. Years of restoration, including several ponds dug specifically for the frogs, has resulted in a true success.

*Western Pond Turtles:* About a dozen more of these species of special concern were released into the remaining large pools of Redwood Creek in September. Previously released turtles are also around, including one that went fairly far up Green Gulch Creek. They have tracking devices so that they can be detected in the thick riparian habitat.

*Gray Foxes:* Despite the devastating outbreak of Canine Distemper last year, there is at least one pair of foxes still around, maybe more. But that is down from perhaps 10 foxes last year, many of which were juveniles when they caught the bug. Make sure your dog is vaccinated to stop the spread (of distemper virus).

*Sonoma Chipmunks:* Probably due to the dry creek conditions, both Sonoma Chipmunks and Western Gray Squirrels were present this summer and fall up around Starbuck and Seacape Drives, which is unusual. Watch for freshly and completely stripped Monterey Pine cones as a clue to the Gray Squirrel's presence.

*Long-Tailed Weasel:* Shannon Brundieck reported this fascinating and gorgeous critter in his backyard with three Sonoma Chipmunks. Weasels are very skinny and long (12-18"), blond with a black tail tip and, if you can get a good quick look, a white face mask. Amazingly, it was a Red-Shouldered Hawk which grabbed one of the chipmunks, not the weasel! But beware, you local chicken farmers, there have been resident Long-Tailed Weasels in Muir Beach for years!

*Red-Shouldered Hawks:* Muir Beach seems to always have one or two Red-Shouldered Hawks around in

the last year or so. This is the more spotted of the two common hawks (the other being the Red-Tailed). Both adults and immatures have been around, occasionally three at a time. This is the hawk that does the repeated serial screaming notes which you may have heard.

*Barn Owls:* Our dairy barn owls did it again this year, with several chicks set to do battle with small rodents!

*Black Vulture:* Since 2014 a lone Black Vulture (BLVU), not the common Turkey Vulture (TUVU) which we see every day, has been wandering around Sonoma and Marin Counties. This rare vulture has fully dark underwings, instead of the two-tone of the TUVU, and it also has whitish wingtips and a black head. John Paul and Jim White spotted this overdue bird in Muir Beach in October, right over my house, when, of course, I was in Safeway over the hill!

*American Crows:* For some reason, a flock of 200-300 crows have been in Muir Beach lately, roosting in the riparian areas along the lower creek. This is a malevolently massive murder of crows.

*Gray Whales:* Where were they this year? Only a few mother/calf pairs were seen that I am aware of, and yet the population is robust on the west coast. There may have been fewer calves due, basically, to overpopulation, so the females and males migrated further offshore.

*Humpback Whales:* Same question: where did they go? Apparently there were lots of humpys out by the Farallons and beyond, so may be a question of offshore Krill abundance, and a lack of inshore anchovies or other small fish. Same question for Bottlenose Dolphins, which were scarce here too.

*River Otters:* Otters have gotten rare in Redwood Creek, likely due to low flows and few fish. But in June a single otter was photographed regularly at the front lagoon, and in September a mother otter with two pups was recorded in the lower creek. This is the first time since 2016 that juvenile otters have been found at Muir Beach!

And finally, *Black Bears:* A single Black Bear was seen in Marin in 2021, from San Anselmo to Mt. Tam and into Pt. Reyes National Seashore. Sonoma Co. has a fair population of Black Bears, and there may be a trend for them to move south into Marin. In 2003, a Black Bear was detected in Muir Woods, then Green Gulch, then all the way to Kirby Cove campground near the Golden Gate Bridge. Although that bear apparently did not stay in Marin, it may just be a matter of time before there is a bear-trashed garbage can somewhere near you! Maybe we need stronger bungee cords!



# RUN to PLAY, PLAY to RUN: *The Pelican Inn Track Club*

*Story and photos by Sarah Nesbitt*

When you come across the Pelican Inn on the corner of Highway 1 and Pacific Way, you see a cozy English pub with white walls and a welcoming patch of green grass. Each season, the lawn flourishes beneath the tread of visitors, indulged pets, unleashed children, thirsty cyclists, keen hikers and windswept equestrians. On Tuesday nights, for almost 30 years rain or shine, the Pelican has also hosted a dedicated group of runners. They later established the Pelican Inn Track Club in June 2010, with 100s of miles of trails in “their own” backyard. Brits call trails “tracks”, so it was declared cool. During June, the average age of the PITC team tying their shoes becomes much younger. This is due to the oldest trail race in America, the Dipsea.

You know it. But, if you need reminding, it is 7.5 miles and has been held annually since November 19th, 1905. The start is in downtown Mill Valley on Throckmorton Avenue and after runners ascend (these days) 700 stairs, they hit the edge of Mount Tamalpais, push up through Muir Woods National Monument and Mount Tamalpais State Park, then the Golden Gate National Rec Area as they charge down to Stinson. Since 1983, the Dipsea has been held on the second Sunday in June. Due to COVID-19, the 2020 Race committee announced it would be cancelled for the first time since 1945.

This year, in the face of the pandemic and with mounting hope, the 110th Dipsea is scheduled to be run on November 7th. By the time you read this article, about 1,500 runners will have competed. Thousands apply each year. It makes sense to those who have successfully gained entry that they will endure punishing, steep terrain, technical single track paths, around 671m of elevation gain and no prize money, save a Black Shirt to just 35 frontrunners. Those shirts are more coveted than the Championship Trophy. According to Dipsea lore, they are worn only within the context of the Dipsea or race celebrations and ritual gatherings. If you’ve ever owned one, you will understand this tradition.

Competitors can choose “alternate routes”, so local knowledge means everything. Happily, being old also counts because there are handicapped head starts for runners according to age, gender and past performance. The oldest and youngest are given up to 25 minutes. So, when my son Oscar (a PITC team member) first ran in 2014 at the age of 9 he began with 70 year-olds. The staggered starts create exciting competition and by the finish, the young bucks at the back of the

pack have fought hundreds to catch up. Winners have been as young as 8 (Reilly Johnson 2010) and as old as 72 (Hans Schmidt 2012). Indefatigable Senior PITC founders, Tomas Pastalka and Roger Gordon have 7 Black Shirts between them and a combined age of 164 years. Roger is 84 and has run 45 consecutive Dipseas. Tomas is 74 and has the best highly confidential “alternate routes.” (And they’d have been nowhere without good old Jack Burns behind the scenes.)

Yes. There are amazing runners out there and some of them train every Tuesday from the Pelican Inn. In 2010 the PITC ran its first official Dipsea and took the Team Trophy in 2011, upsetting the 34-year streak of Tamalpa, beginning in 1977. Five more wins followed with the top five finishers. Can they do it again this year? They’ve had the fastest individual runners. Alex Varner recorded his ninth Best Time trophy (109th Dipsea). He and Mark McManus have had the combined fastest times, 17 times. The PITC also has some of the most decorated team members. Married couple Jamie Rivers (winner 2007, 2011) and Roy Rivers (winner 2008) are also the only two runners to have won the Dipsea, the Double Dipsea and the Quad Dipsea.



*Oscar, Jamie and Roy celebrate Dipsea 2016.*

If you’re around, ask them about it on a Tuesday night at the Pelican. Listen for laughter and look for a frisbee in the parking lot at around 6:30pm. Or join in for a beer until maybe 8pm. Some of them run and some of them play and run and some of them just play. Or ask Oscar, anyday. You can see him running through our neighborhood putting in the miles before his next Dipsea, this one will be his seventh. He is now a high school Senior with a starting handicap for a 17 year-old male (“Get to the back of the pack, young man!”). He is and always will be, a PITC member and if fortune favors the brave, he will be running with them again next year in the first week of June. Happy trails...

# Psychiatric Firefighting

*By David Taylor*

I have been a psychiatrist for three decades and in the nearly dozen years that I have served on our fire department I've had a chance to develop my own theory that firefighting is a branch of psychiatry. I like to think of it as applied psychiatry. To a hammer everything is a nail. Applied psychiatry happens at many levels and is a reminder that all of our actions are driven by either unconscious motivations, behavioral patterns, both adaptive and maladaptive.

As a community faced by growing risk of fire and climate change we have to work on being prepared and not in denial. Many of us are familiar with the stress/anxiety response of FIGHT OR FLIGHT. In this situation at the wildland urban interface we suggest FIGHT AND FLIGHT. Everyone should be prepared with a go bag and access to the most up to date information on safe evacuation routes. And flee. The fire department and our neighboring agencies will stay and fight the fire and if people are safe then we won't need to consider rescue and can focus on structure protection.

Healthy defense mechanisms such as humor, altruism and sublimation are a psychological aspiration for everyone. We encourage you to broaden your healthy defense mechanisms to your home and yard and increase the defensible space to protect your home. Think of it as doctor's orders.

There are certain types of emergencies that we encounter over and over again that are caused by psychiatric or substance abuse problems and we implement applied psychiatric interventions. We frequently respond to calls involving drunk drivers who have wrecked their vehicles. We have had to call helicopters to rescue teenagers on the beach with alcohol poisoning. Many times we are called to the Muir Woods parking lot to assess someone having a panic attack following or contemplating a drive on our very windy roads. We are often called to rescue people who have used hallucinogens on a hike and become dehydrated and disoriented. We recommend fully hydrating your mushrooms (and also staying home). Frequently people take risks such as trying to scale our cliffsides only to panic/freeze on the way up requiring complex

and dangerous helicopter rescue. We suggest that other feats of daring might be wiser, such as walking on your hands along the beach.

We carry doses of naloxone on the engines to treat opioid overdoses. Please remember that if anyone has overdosed we are able to respond promptly. The sheriff also carries naloxone.

Recently we have noted a very frightening increase in suicide attempts in our area. There have been three in the past quarter. Two were at the Overlook where the consequences can be immediately lethal. If you notice anyone at the Overlook who is alone/intoxicated or out there very late please ask if they need assistance and/or call 911. Please be very careful as people could be intoxicated and unpredictable in that dangerous location. One call involved someone who was literally on the rocks in the dark and fog. These events are traumatic for everyone involved and we are glad that each time people were speedily evacuated and we hope they got the care they needed. Most people who survive attempted suicide are greatly relieved to have another chance at life.

**The San Francisco Suicide Prevention crisis line is 415-781-0500 or textline 415-200-2920.**

Death is a major cause of anxiety and existential reflection. While we regularly recertify in CPR and stand prepared to administer it along with our AED devices we also would like people to think about whether they wish to be resuscitated following a cardiac arrest.

We recommend that all older adults complete and have accessible a POLST form. You can complete this with your physician and the reason it's helpful is that unlike more formal advance health directives this will be honored by medics in the field. You can download a POLST form at [https://capolst.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/POLST\\_2017\\_wCover.pdf](https://capolst.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/POLST_2017_wCover.pdf)

If anyone would like to discuss the POLST form feel free to email me at [david@muirbeachfire.com](mailto:david@muirbeachfire.com).



HAPPY 50TH ANNIVERSARY

# Muir Beach Volunteer Fire Department!

50 Years Protecting Muir Beach • 1971- 2021 and going strong!



In 1971, the Muir Beach Volunteer Fire Department was established by John John and a few others with help from the CSD and the many donated bits of used equipment. At the age of 27, John John became Muir Beach's first fire chief.

Prior to that time, the Bello Beach fire department was a private organization that charged fees, and as a result of that exclusionary arrangement, the homes of non-members burned to the ground.

The proud history of the fire department's beginnings—a from-scratch effort with absolutely

no funding—is available to read on their website: [muirbeachfire.com](http://muirbeachfire.com).

That glimpse into those extraordinary efforts 50 years ago—and every day since—brings home with crystal clarity how much we all rely on our fire department to save lives and property, and how much it provides peace of mind every day in a community that's breathtakingly close to nature, yes, but far from county services.

*Thank you will never be enough, but a thousand thanks to the Muir Beach Volunteer Fire Department!*

*Continued on next page*







**Chief John John Sward**  
*1971 to 1991 and 2001 to 2012*



**Chief Bill Farkas**  
*1991 to 1995*



**Chief Michael Moore**  
*1995 to 2001*

## HAPPY 50TH ANNIVERSARY MBVFD

Our fire department is comprised of well-trained volunteers that include a medical doctor, EMTs, and EMRs from our small community. The MBVFD averages about 80 emergency calls a year. The calls arrive at any time of the day or night--weekdays, weekends, holidays--and the majority are medical emergencies and public assistance call-outs, even cliff rescues, with a minority of the calls being fire related. When the pager goes off and the team activates, they might be responding to a heart attack, a mental health crisis, a car accident, a fire, or a search and rescue operation. They might be asked to provide assistance in a local home, on the highway, on the beach or trails, or in remote, hard-to-access hillsides.



*2014 Car fire training, Conti*



*2019 Fire on the coast*



*2005 Jaws of life training, Moore*



*2011 Medical training,*





**Chief Steve Wynn**  
*2012 to 2016*



**Chief Chris Gove**  
*2016 to present*

**FEATURED FIREFIGHTER:**  
**Rob Allen**



Rob is the longest-serving member of the current crew. His service on the fire department has spanned 32 years and counting, from 1989 to 2021, with over 1,000 emergency calls and more than 3,000 drills. He's state certified as an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) and a certified firefighter who has served as Assistant Fire Chief to five Chiefs: John John Sward, Bill Farkas, Michael Moore, Steve Wynn, and now Chris Gove. In addition to his life-and-property-saving duties, in his role as Assistant Chief he has focused on the crew's vital needs for equipment and training, which have evolved greatly over time. It's been an extraordinary commitment for Rob to spend 32 years with a pager, 24 hours a day. His wife Deb and his children have been right on board through all the late night calls in all kinds of weather, so the contributions of Team Allen can't be overstated.

– Beth Begault



*2015 Beach safety training, Wynn and crew*



*Allen, Groneman*



*2015 Fire drill, Rauh*

*Continued on next page*



## Our 2021 Fire Department

*Continued from previous page*

This 50th anniversary of the Muir Beach Volunteer Fire Department is a remarkable milestone.

Thank you, thank you to the current crew that serves with Chief Chris Gove and Assistant Chief Rob Allen, and deep thanks to all who have served before them.

*Contributors:*

Beth Begault  
Durand Begault  
Julie Smith \*\*

Chris Gove  
Rob Allen  
Deb Allen  
Steve Wynn  
Jon Rauh  
Denise Lamott  
Kathy Sward  
Melissa Lasky  
Michael Moore  
Janet Tumpich

Photos by Julie Smith,  
Steve Wynn, and  
MBVFD crew

\*\* Somebody get this  
woman a cape!



*at left: Rob Allen (Assistant Chief and EMT, 32 years of service), and Chris Gove (Chief and EMR, 18 years with the department)*



*above: David Taylor (Medical doctor and EMR)*



*left to right: Jon Rauh (EMR, over 20 years on the crew), Brad Eigsti (EMR and 25 years on the crew), and Sandor Hatvany (EMR)*



*above: Sefton Murray (EMR)*

*left to right: Elena Sanchez-Corea; Annabelle Conti and Austin Moore (Interns); and Jackson Moore (EMR, in training for EMT)*

HAPPY 50TH ANNIVERSARY MBVFD  
*Thank you for your service.*



# Never Say Never

*Story and photos by Steve Wynn*

Just about every kid at some point in their life plays out the fantasy of being a firefighter. I was no different, but having taken the path of a Director of Photography/musician/artist type, it just didn't look like that kind of thing would be in the cards for me, especially in the latter part of my forties. Well, as they say, "never say never" because life has a way of surprising you.

On a bike ride up Mt. Tam one day, my neighbor Brad started talking to me about joining the Muir Beach Volunteer Fire Department. At that time, my biggest concern in joining was that I wouldn't have the bandwidth to truly commit to the position. The last thing I ever wanted to do was to let anyone down. If I were to join this band of brothers, I wanted to make absolutely sure that I could make a positive and substantial contribution. After several more rides and debating the pros and cons, Brad convinced me and I joined the MBVFD.

I trained and studied hard. I read all types of firefighter books to learn about fire behavior, vehicle extrication, trail rescue, and emergency medicine. I made connections with various members from Marin County Fire, Stinson Beach fire, Bolinas Fire. I listened, asked many questions, and learned as much as I could. After a short time, John John decided to step down and asked if I would take over as the next chief. Finding myself fully invested in the department and understanding the gravity of the position, I accepted.

For almost a decade, my pager went off at all times of the day or night. I responded to structural fires, countless trail and helicopter cliff rescues, vehicle accidents, heart attacks, and other medical calls. I also got personal



*left to right: Steve on his 4th birthday; Steve, Joanie and Ryan; Coffee farmer Steve*

calls from folks in the community. Someone got their car stuck in a ditch, or someone needed help moving their disabled mother from the couch to the bed. I got to know Muir Beach and the community from a very unique and personal perspective. When my pager went off for someone in Muir Beach, it was like responding to a family member. Entering their house, I could see fear and concern in their eyes. As soon as I called them by name and my team started attending to their needs, I could see them take a breath and relax a bit. We were first responders but also family members of sorts. These people knew they were in good hands and that things would be handled, even after they were stabilized and taken to the hospital. From locking up their house to notifying family members or taking care of any pets in the house, we made sure things were handled so that all they needed to focus on was getting better. I was not just their fire chief, I was a friend, a neighbor that was on their side ready to help in any way I could, and I loved it. This kind of personal connection was a reflection of the strong community bond among Muir Beachers and was an incredibly rewarding aspect of the job.

I loved helping folks when they needed it most. I loved heading out into a storm and working chainsaws to clear trees that fell across roads or on homes, I loved pulling hose and working the engine, I loved the excitement of racing down the road with lights and siren, conducting

search and rescue, working with helicopters and multiple agencies. I loved being a part of a fantastic community and a brotherhood of men and women dedicated to the pursuit of helping others, saving lives and property.

I have been very fortunate to have experienced many things in my life but having the privilege of being Muir Beach's fire chief has been one of the most rewarding things I have ever done. It was the first time that I truly felt like an essential cog in the wheel of a community.

Never did I ever think that I would leave Muir Beach but life has a way of throwing you a curveball sometimes. Joanie, Ryan, and I had to sell and move. The fabric of our business had forever changed, and we were forced to find another way to make a living. Unfortunately, it wouldn't be in Muir Beach. As hard as it was, I had to say goodbye to 57 years of living in Marin, goodbye to Muir Beach, and a painful goodbye to the MBVFD.

Five years later, we've succeeded in re-inventing ourselves. We sold everything, moved to Kona, and bought a coffee farm and business. We have started our new chapter as owners and operators of Kona Earth. Being a farmer may not be the fantasy of every kid like being a firefighter, but it has been an extreme and exotic pivot for us, full of excitement and hope. This may be the last chapter in our lives... but, as they say, "never say never" because life has a way of surprising you.

# Drug Use For Grown-Ups

Chasing Liberty In The Land Of Fear, by Dr. Carl L. Hart

Review by Gerry Pearlman

To the extent that drug use in this country, and around the world, is more rampant than ever, this book is a must read for anyone wishing to understand drug use, abuse; and the sad state of media induced fear of drugs. Contrary to the false way drug use is reported by the media with its bias toward the sensational, “Drug Use For Grown-Ups” offers a more rational and enlightened way of viewing drug policy. Dr. Hart. is a scientist and a professor of psychology specializing in neuroscience at Columbia University. He is well known in his field for his work on drug abuse and addiction. He states quite bluntly that:

*“It has taken me more than two decades to come out of the closet about my personal drug use. Simply put, I have been a coward.”*

But what could be more compelling than his coming out of the closet about his personal drug use and putting himself at risk to prove points in his argument. Not a coward by any means, rather a very courageous academic and scientist!

He argues that opioids are extreme pleasure producers; and confesses that he is now entering his fifth year as a regular heroin user; and that **he does not have a drug problem**. Each day, he says, he meets his parental, personal, and professional responsibilities; and that he pays his taxes, serves as a volunteer in his community on a regular basis; and contributes to the global community as an informed and engaged citizen. He claims he is “better for his drug use” and indeed could be considered a model citizen.

In view of the fact that recreational drug use is practiced by millions of closeted adults around the globe he wants others, particularly professionals, to come out of closet as he has done, so that more people could see that “there are far more respectable drug users than our criminal justice system and popular culture would have us know.”

He is particularly good in deconstructing the myth of drug use being the root of the troubles that confront impoverished neighborhoods and marginalized sectors of the population. Again his personal experience gives more credence to his ideas because these are

precisely the streets and neighborhoods he grew up in. To the extent that members of his own family were victims of misguided drug policies that ended with their incarceration, his personal experience is more compelling with regard to his findings. He demonstrates with great clarity how simplistic it is to blame drugs for all of the ills confronting poor neighborhoods and avoid taking into account real causes of the problem like racism and economic inequality.

Another myth taken to task by Hart is the misguided notion of addiction and the media’s fixation with it as being inevitable for everyone who takes drugs. Research shows repeatedly that addiction affects only 10% to 30 % of those who use the most stigmatized drugs such as heroin and methamphetamine.

He claims that simply knowing that a person uses drugs even on a regular basis does not provide enough information to tell whether that person is “addicted.”

He prefers to use the most widely accepted definition of addiction is found in psychiatry’s Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th edition in which a person may be considered addicted: “if they are distressed by their drug use; and their drug use must interfere with important life functions like parenting, work, and intimate relationships. Their drug use must take up a great deal of time and mental energy and must persist in the face of repeated attempts to stop or cut back. Other symptoms include needing more of the drug to get the same effect and suffering withdrawal symptoms if use suddenly ceases.

Still one of the most prevalent misunderstandings about harmful effects regarding drug use is that its use invariably leads to addiction. Hart points out how the media have fostered this notion by concentrating their stories on addiction despite the fact that it only represents a minority of drug effects. To blame drug use for all of society’s ills is merely a convenient way of covering up more significant causes of addiction like co-occurring psychiatric disorders-such as excessive anxiety,depression and schizophrenia-and socioeconomic factors-such as resource deprived communities and un-and-under employment.

*Continued on next page*



*Continued from previous page*

Dispelling the myths surrounding actual drug use and drug policy takes up most of the book, but there was also Dr. Hart's interesting foray into constitutional law. He looks at our Declaration of Independence's Bill of Rights and examines one of its most popular ideas about inalienable rights. These are the rights which can not be infringed upon by government among which are: **"life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."** He equates drug use with the pursuit of happiness; therefore a right enshrined in our Constitution and which rights governments are created to secure, not take away. This interpretation of recreational drug use leads one directly to his examination of drug use and the law; and civil disobedience in face of unjust laws governing contemporary drug policy.

The question becomes why anyone should be required to conceal an activity that one enjoys, especially if it doesn't harm you, nor have a negative impact on others, becomes paramount. The facts are that thousands of people are sitting behind bars today merely for possession of drugs (even very small amounts for personal use as was the case in most southern states). Why has our government been arresting so many Americans for possession of drugs? Why it has been necessary for so many drug users to be hiding in the closet is directly related to its unfair designation as an illegal drug.

The punitive sentencing for drug use is only a matter of recent history. In the early history of America drug use was much more accepted and tolerated. But there was a deliberate change of policy beginning at the turn of the century leading to the enactment of Prohibition and culminating with The War on Drugs under Nixon. *Nixon's top aid Ehrlichman claimed the War on Drugs was manufactured by Nixon to contain both the civil rights movement and the anti-war movement both of which were supposedly populated with large numbers of drug users;* and were coincidentally Nixon's biggest headaches for their anti- Viet Nam and pro Civil Rights protests.

Hart is also critical of the prevailing practice of ACS (Administration for Children's Services) to separate

children from parents who use drugs. When in fact "marijuana use in and of itself-or any other substance use for that matter-does not compromise an individuals ability to perform parental duties" He says he has served as an expert witness in multiple court cases in which "ACS sought to remove youngsters from their mother's custody simply because mothers tested positive for marijuana on a urine toxicology exam and/or acknowledged prior marijuana use." According to Hart a drug positive urine test does not provide any information about the users current state of intoxication or their ability to function appropriately. He says it's like saying "I saw an empty beer bottle in your house, therefore you are an unfit parent. It's ridiculous."

Even more ridiculous given the amount of injustice involved is the question of legalization and decriminalization of drugs. It should be high up in any nations reform agenda. And in fact a few nations have already done so with Portugal leading the way having decriminalized the use of drugs in favor of treatment options for several years now. But America unfortunately is not an example of intelligent drug policy. A large number of inmates behind bars are there because of harsh and unfair sentencing laws disproportionately impacting African/American and Latino populations for small amounts of drugs for their personal use.

One of the best road maps to be found as to the nature of the reforms necessary for an enlightened drug policy is Dr. Hart's book. I can't do full justice to *Drug Use For Grown Ups* in this brief review but Professor Hart does give us one of the best compendiums of all the drugs currently in use in the opiod and psychedelic categories much of which is based on his own experience and academic research.

It is clear that much more research on drug use and its effects is necessary. A better government policy on drug use must be enacted rather than the sensational reporting currently employed by the media and the other government institutions that benefit from the poor policies currently in place.

# THE MAINE REASON

*By Victoria Hamilton*

In 2008 when I first bought the cottages belonging to Jack & Judy Martin, thanks to some divine intervention and a kind introduction from Misti Norton, I truly felt I'd found heaven on earth.

As the daughter of a Colonel in the British army, I'd been used to "traveling abroad" and exploring the globe from an early age. As a family we moved every two and half years – new location, new home, often new schools, new experiences, new friendships made – many for life.

Muir Beach had something different though: not least a view of the Pacific and beaches that would rival some of the best I'd ever seen but also a charming quirkiness to it that reminded me of many beach towns I'd visited over the years, particularly at home in England along the Devon and Cornwall coastlines. With a warm community spirit and an English pub down the road to boot, I wasn't sure life out west could get much better. I've held that view over 13 years of living here and always will, no doubt. I've enjoyed many friendships and fun times in Muir Beach and learned more in my 5 years serving on the CSD board, than I probably learned in my 5 years of study for my Bachelor of Arts degree back in the day. Clearly listening more and talking less, has been one of those valuable takeaways!

I've also come to realize though that there's a price to pay in paradise and sometimes that price is more than the average worker bee like me, can manage on a single salary over time and however ambitious. With the steep jumbo mortgage repayments, upgrade costs and \$18K property taxes I was attempting to juggle along with my business expenses, I became overwhelmed by the financial burden of it all at times. The dawning of vacation rental platforms greatly eased that pressure thanks to guests who wanted to come and experience this utopia and were prepared to pay for the privilege.

As someone once said to me: our solutions can often become our problems though. In this sense, I noticed how the very life-line of vacation rentals being a solution for me, was causing problems for others in my beloved community. There were growing concerns as more and more began to do what I was doing to raise additional income. These concerns grew over shifting demographics, an influx of strangers to our once quiet streets and an unrest as to how these changes were affecting the fabric and volunteerism of our community.

In short, VRBO appeared to become a local four-letter word for many and that bothered me deeply. Then the wild fires in Napa, Sonoma and many Californian communities, began to grab the headlines and our thoughts, along with drought concerns and subsequent rolling black outs to say nothing of living a mile from a fault line! Scheduled guests began to contact me asking if I could smell smoke at Muir Beach during these times and when I answered honestly, they dropped like flies.

For Christmas 2018, my brothers and their families joined us to celebrate the Holidays together having lost our Mum in the previous year. The family stayed in my cottages at that time. We talked (as close families do) about the rise in costs of living here and the stress we were under as self-employed siblings to keep up. We talked about our family game plan and what made most sense for our health, sense of wellbeing and security. Where did we need to place ourselves geographically, to ensure we had less stress, spent more time together and less money? "Would be great if you invested further east Vic" was one such suggestion after my English contingent proclaimed they wouldn't be coming west again to visit given the distance and costs associated.

In early 2019, I found myself awake at night worrying about the "what if's" of life – What if there's a huge disaster and I can't rent my cottages or work? What if the years go by and I see less and less of my family and so on? So in February 2019 with a four-day gap in my work schedule, I jumped on a plane to explore the northeast coast of Maine - a place that had remained on my bucket list to visit. I figured if I loved Maine in February, I was going to adore it in the summer and fall and maybe, just maybe, I could find somewhere with breathtaking water views that was special enough that people would want to vacation there, not least my English family and friends.

In four days with a realtor I'd met online late one night, we drove up and down that north east coast from 7 a.m. – 5 p.m. each day looking at property with investment possibilities. When I returned to Maine for subsequent reconnaissance, time and again I was drawn back to a waterfront community called Brooklin. World renowned for its wooden boat building, Brooklin is home to the Wooden Boat School and Wooden Boat Magazine, Brooklin Boat Yard and the Eggemoggin Reach Regatta that draws boat and yacht enthusiasts from far and wide each year. It's a truly enchanting part of the world on the Blue Hill Peninsula that really captured my imagination.

*Continued on next page*



It was also the home town of E.B. White the famed author of Charlotte's Web among others. In a funny sort of way, Brooklin reminded me of Muir Beach (or a colonial version) with its local fire department and "unspoiled" coastal presence steeped in maritime history.

In December 2019 my cottages sold to the delightful Suzanna, Klaus and family and I purchased 3 Flye Point Road on a 1031 exchange. In January 2020 the pipes in one of the bedrooms burst (a harsh reality of buying an older property in a less forgiving climate) so work began on renovating the property to make it not only winter-proof but also and inevitably, with a designer's touch as one thing lead to another. Had it not been for my work on the CSD, I would never have entered into a discussion about the importance of water purification from the well on my property that was smelling like Sulphur. Prior to the CSD, I would not have had the foggiest idea what anyone was talking about – thanks Leighton, Mary & Ernst! When the septic failed its inspection, I wouldn't have had a clue about replacement modern treatment systems had I not met Al West and Noadiah Eckmann and when it came to preparing and paving my driveway, again I would have glazed over mentally had it not been for the repaving of Sunset Way project and what I'd learned with Osbin and his crew.

I don't believe any of us could have foreseen what was to follow by spring of 2020. In my lists of "what if's" in early 2019, a global pandemic for sure wasn't one of them! As with many billions impacted by Covid 19, my work on staging and interior design totally dried up as we weren't allowed inside other people's houses. So did the vacation rental business. I would have been bankrupted had I still owned my cottages. Consequently, I realize what a strain this pandemic placed on everyone around the world and counted my blessings. With very little work, I shifted my focus and began to re-design Brooklin House, as it's now known (you know how the Brits love to name their houses) and mastered designing remotely and having crew meetings via FaceTime so we could all stay on the same page. I travelled back and forth a lot to Maine in 2020 to check-in on progress and probably had more Covid tests than anyone I know as a result - both prior to departure and after return. Thankfully I remained safe during that scary time to travel.

I am happy to say that in July 2021 after filming completed on the TV show Maine Life which featured the town of Brooklin and fortunately a segment specifically

on Brooklin House, with the help of Kathy Johnston we launched the property for rental. Within 30 seconds we had two bookings and have been busy all summer and continue into the fall with even Thanksgiving week now booked. Summer of 2022 is already almost completely booked as many east coasters continue to seek vacation time further north. Maine has experienced an absolute boom in demand for property as many migrate north from New York and other major cities south and west of Maine. As Mainers (or Mainiacs as they refer to themselves) greatly rely on tourism for their livelihoods, they have a very different view of vacationing guests compared to our neck of the woods. Contractors struggle to keep up with demand currently as do suppliers, restaurants and even grocery stores at times.

Timing, as my Dad used to say, is everything. I'm therefore grateful that I did what I did when I did it, albeit more by accident (or fear) than by design. When my first guests arrived in Maine in mid- July this year, I was on a plane back to London. I was fortunate enough to reconnect with family and friends for a month this summer. It had been over 3 years since we had seen one another in the flesh (thank goodness for Zoom and Teams though) and much longer in the case of reconnecting with other longstanding relationships.

As many of you know, my personal circumstances have changed dramatically this year not least with the sad loss of my beloved furry companion Maggie, on September 10. With these changes came a period for reflection and thus a shift in my vision and future direction. I look forward to this next chapter of my life and to exploring the road ahead. I welcome the prospect of spending more time in the UK and Maine with my family and close friends and to traveling in Europe in the years to come. I'm also looking forward, as I'm sure you are, to rekindling old friendships that I've cherished over the years, like countless I have enjoyed here and hope to continue to do so.

One of the many things this Covid-19 pandemic has taught me is how precious our relationships are with family and friends and how life can change on a dime without choice or warning.

My thanks to many of you for your interest and encouragement regarding what I was up to in Maine and for taking such loving care of Maggie during those absences - you know who you are. Thanks also to the Beachcomber for asking me to share some of this story with you.

For further info, please visit: [www.brooklinhouse.com](http://www.brooklinhouse.com)

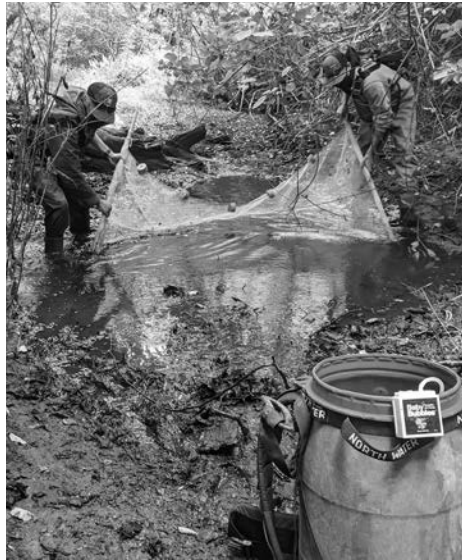
# Water Element

By Ernst Karel

The drought this year almost caused Redwood Creek, especially below Santos Meadow, to resemble a new walking path for land animals, rather than a swimway for salmon and others. As you may have noticed while on the beach, last winter's rains were so slight that Big Lagoon, the mouth of Redwood Creek, was mostly not even connected to the ocean, except for a short period last January. This meant that spawning coho salmon only had very brief access to the creek. As a result, only one adult coho was seen all season by monitoring crews, far lower than had been anticipated. Steelhead were also affected: only five live adult steelheads were seen between mid-February and mid-March.

By August, the creek had fallen so far that there were extensive dry stretches in-between isolated pools. When this happens, dissolved oxygen in the separated pools rapidly diminishes. Crews monitoring the creek habitat saw fish in the pools showing signs of distress, such as coming to the surface of the water for air. NPS Fishery Biologist Mike Reichmuth got into the pools with a snorkel system to look more closely, and found significant numbers of juvenile coho and steelhead that would likely die if left in the pools with their rapidly diminishing oxygen levels, with no rain in sight that would create flow between the pools.

So it was decided to mount a rescue effort – to collect as many young coho and steelhead as possible from the pools and to relocate them farther upstream, where the creek still flowed. A team was coordinated,



*Crews use a net to rescue coho and steelhead from an isolated pool.*

including Reichmuth, GGNRA Alcatraz Biologist Lidia D'Amico and Aquatic Ecologist Darren Fong, staff from the Point Reyes National Seashore Association (PRNSA), and Watershed Stewards Program Corpsmembers with the California Conservation Corps, to collect and relocate the fish. However, with the plan coming together quickly in response to changing conditions, it would be a few days over a long weekend before they could all meet, and with oxygen levels rapidly decreasing, Fong asked for volunteers to help maintain aerators in several of the pools near the MBCSD footbridge below Santos Meadow. The aerators would hopefully keep oxygen levels from decreasing too much. I volunteered to help with this, and quite enjoyed the several days of morning and evenings traversing up and down the creekbed from the pedestrian bridge, wading into the pools in high rainboots to change the batteries in small aerators of the type normally used to keep fish alive in buckets and other such small containers, trying to keep the bubbles happening in the parts of the pools where it looked like fish might be

lurking. In addition, I ran a long tube from a more powerful aerator into the large pool closest to the footbridge, a backup unit that we had on hand in one of the containers, of the kind we use to keep the water fresh in our large tanks of drinking water.

The combined efforts of the small aerators and the larger tank aerator successfully kept the oxygen levels sufficiently high so that over the course of three days that week, the crew was happy to be able to rescue over 100 juvenile coho and over 150 tiny steelhead, and to transport them upstream to their new home in Muir Woods. Reichmuth later noted that without these actions, the entire cohort of coho could have died; now there is hope that if creek conditions allow, they will leave as healthy smolts in the spring.

For the creek to dry out so much of course affects many more species than just fish. For example, Darren Fong told me that the turtles they released near Big Lagoon last year grew at only half the rate that those released the previous year had done, and that they think that the reduced growth was due in part to the fact that the dryer creek bed meant less habitat for them to use.

The lengths of dry stretches occurred mainly downstream from the area where the MBCSD pumps water from a well near the creek. This is clearly illustrated in the maps included here from surveys done at the end of September, which show a mostly continuous stream from Muir Woods to Santos Meadow, and then a clear transition to separated pools and dry stretches downstream from the MBCSD well site. With the coming

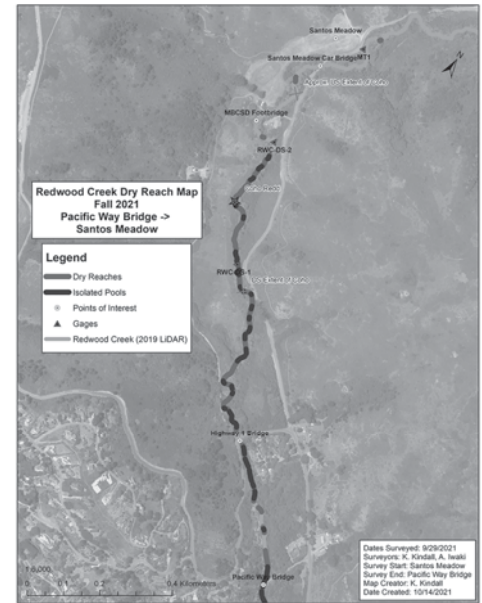
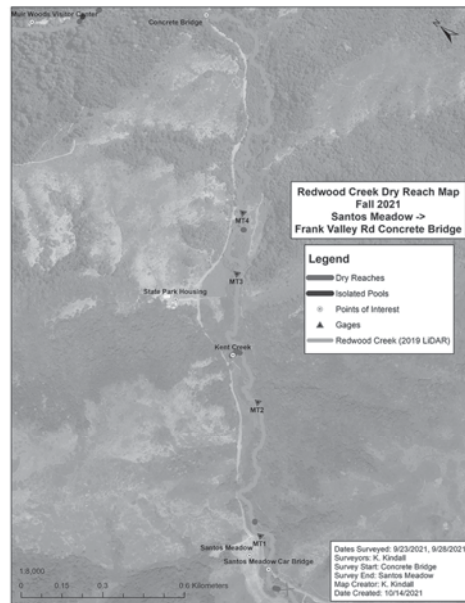
*Continued on next page*



## Water Element

*Continued from previous page*

of rains the third week of October, at the time of this writing, it's wonderful to see water flowing in the creek again. And yet the USGS monitoring device at the Highway 1 bridge also shows that flow decreasing markedly at night, which is when the pump is running. (Google USGS Redwood Hwy 1 bridge, or USGS monitoring location 11460151, to see the live graphs for water level and discharge rate for yourself.) May we use that precious water, which we share with beings of many species, with care, and in generosity, use less.



## What is left on the sand

*By Lucky Shannon, October 2021*

I keep losing track of it. Sometimes it is on top of the bench by the front door, or I discover it leaning against the corner of the tall glass window, looking out. The next day it's in the closet, perched above the peg holding the thin slicker that keeps off the salty morning mist.

Yesterday I found it behind my hiking shoes. I don't remember putting it in any of those places. But I must have moved it, nudged it over when I sat on the bench to put on my shoes.

It just never quite makes it out the front door.

Her old straw hat has been hanging around for many months. Sometimes I see it, sometimes it disappears for days. She left it on the sand when she last visited, before she got sick. It was her favorite beach hat.

The hat long ago softened from its stiff original shape. But you can still feel the angle of the brim; more cocky than slumped. Like her. Even

the wrinkled head band has a lot of attitude. From the side, you can almost see the angle of her jaw along the ridge. Jade had a firm active jaw — she was always ready to sing, to offer a sharp rebuke, or to open wide to laughter. Once she was told what to expect, that jaw of hers was angry, as it was all so unfair. And way too soon.

So she fought. She hadn't had enough of the man who was her current lover. And her shining new amps had hardly been plugged in.

There is a small basket of hard dried wood right outside my front door — just enough to start a fire in the damp driftwood on the beach. Just enough wood for an easy carry down to the night sand. The plan is to make a bright evening bonfire. Set the straw hat on the pyre and say goodbye. That's what she would want: a burst of eager sparks flowing up towards the sky.

The straw hat is faded now. Sunburnt. The once intense purple is bleached. Parts have washed into gray, and the

straw is rougher from being tugged across the sand. But it's not broken. She found it at an upscale shop and it's very strong. There are no holes; the straw weave still hangs together. It has just found a different shape.

You'd think my images of her would be kind enough to bleach out. But no, they pop up rudely at odd times, when I bump into her hat. And then I agree with her — it was unfair for her to go so soon.

She argued with her doctors, tried every new trick that she could. But once the adjustable metal hospital bed went into her living room, she stopped arguing. She started paying more attention to the others surrounding her. And soon she was quietly taking care of us.

The day before she left us, she grinned at me as I painted her toenails an outrageous bright purple. Her sheets were stubbornly white, but her toes were studded with sparkles. She wriggled them, and slowly winked at me. We were again co-conspirators in daring life to glisten.

# Remembering Edna

By Wendy Johnson

I first met Edna Rossenas at Green Gulch Farm in the 1990s. She was a generation older than me, spry beyond measure and full of life force and zealous vigor. We practiced Engaged Buddhism together with Vietnamese Zen monk and poet, the peace activist Thich Nhat Hanh. We attended meditation retreats throughout California and practiced at Plum Village, Thich Nhat Hanh's international Zen center in southwestern France, where we joined a world-wide community of dedicated meditators for summer-long Zen retreats.

After training at Green Gulch Farm Zen Center for twenty-five years, from 1975-2000, our family moved to Muir Beach where we shared a home with Mayumi Oda. When Mayumi moved to Hawaii we were delighted that she decided to rent her side of the house to Edna, with whom we lived in tandem for more than ten unforgettable years.

I remember the first time Edna came into Mayumi's house. She reveled in the openness of her new space, gravitating to the huge floor-to-ceiling windows that looked out over our wild feral garden. "I am sleeping right here," Edna declared, gesturing to the floor beneath the windows where she immediately set up her comfortable futon bed with thick down quilts and a menagerie of stuffed animals. She was most at home there, beneath the whirl of a night sky resplendent with stars. Edna loved the ancient cyclical rhythm of the waning and waxing moon, and the sound of the ocean in the dark. Every dawn at sunrise she luxuriated in the promise of a new day.

Edna was a vivid character, sizzling with keen life force. She always reminded me of Walt Whitman's Song of Myself: "Do I contradict myself? Very well then, I contradict myself. I am vast, I contain multitudes." And so she did. Trained as an early and innovative Feldenkrais teacher, Edna was alive to the intricacies and power of the human body. She walked Mt. Tamalpais every day, and also swam in the Pacific well into her seventies. Edna rowed regularly on the Bolinas Lagoon, rising and falling with the inland tides. At the same time she knew how to rest and be restored by a good nap and deep, unmoving stillness.

Edna was a sovereign person. She was both unpredictable and fiercely disciplined. She loved life with an old, wild fire that would not be extinguished. Always in fine fettle, she ate lightly and well, with definite gusto. I made her a weekly cauldron of fresh soup right from the garden and she always sat at her dining room table in the evening eating by candlelight. She also loved to drive to town with Peter as her squire for a decadent, multi-layered roast beef sandwich after her weekly acupuncture appointment. She was in her mid eighties with an insatiable appetite for life.

Although our two households unfolded close together, there was always dynamic spaciousness in our time with Edna. She loved to surprise me with vibrant gifts—a spray of fragrant Regal lilies, or a handful of bright chartreuse-green fir tips from the mountain, still wet with rain.

Although Edna was personally frugal, always monitoring her use of natural resources with precision and

care, she also knew how to celebrate life fully. She was abundantly generous. Every summer when the cold Muir Beach fog penetrated to the marrow of her old bones she fled for a month to Bali to go deep sea scuba diving with her dear friend Natalie from the heart of New York City. And, usually dressed subtly in black polartec topped with a slim windbreaker, Edna was a knockout in her cardinal red turtleneck festooned with her fine, heavy necklace of New Mexican turquoise.

Edna took special robust joy in the intimate embrace of her beloved Feldenkrais students and teachers, especially Keith Johnson and his partner, Charisse, who visited regularly from the East Coast, along with Cathie and Gerald who made the pilgrimage to see Edna from far-away Strausberg where Edna also loved to travel and visit them.

These were the happiest times in Edna's later life, when she was surrounded by her colleagues and friends like Linnea and Glen, Dr. Sherry, Ginny Finch, Bill Broder and Marlena, among many others. She also waited eagerly for long visits with her daughter Shelly who came to the West Coast from Arizona, and for time with her other nearby children, Julie and David, who visited more regularly with their families to celebrate Edna's birthday or the winter holiday season.

Edna cherished our Muir Beach community. She kept a well-worn beach phone directory at her bedside. We always celebrated Thanksgiving with her here in our Muir Beach home. She ate ravenously, perched between Peter and Jesse at the table,

*Continued on next page*



*Continued from previous page*

cracking fresh crab from the ocean. And when Alisa grew old enough, Edna magnetized our daughter with raucous tales of her Bohemian youth. Danny and Jon joined us for pumpkin pie and when Anna and Jessica were small they climbed up on Edna's lap while she entertained them with her animated hand puppets. David Taylor and Fletch were at the table, regaling her with adventure and philosophy. And no matter what calamity arose in Edna's life, Cuco was always there to help her and save the day.

Our closest Zen and farming friends also loved to visit Edna when they came over to see us. I remember she and Natalie Goldberg in earnest conversation about Holocaust survival, and Edna holding court with front-line environmental activists about the importance of growing California native plants while our brilliant musician-composer friend Colin took his place at Edna's old Steinway piano to regale her with wave after wave of Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue, flowing from all 88 keys.

When she was ninety Edna moved to The Redwoods retirement home. She was broken-hearted to leave Muir Beach and we were devastated to see her go. Keith and Charisse came from Virginia to help her move and friends and family pitched in to ease the challenge of this transition. To my amazement and relief Edna was assigned a lovely apartment in The Redwoods right next door to my cherished and massively creative undomesticated friend, Harriet Hope, with whom she became fast and furious pals. "I'm in a FACILITY," Edna used to whisper when I visited her regularly at The Redwoods.

Then she and Harriet would lift their steamy cups of Starbucks coffee to toast the good future of their shared and plucky institutional plight.

Edna died peacefully at the full age of ninety-six, in a wonderful facility close to her children, Julie and David. The Variegated Ceanothus that I planted in Muir Beach for Edna's eightieth birthday now stands some fifteen feet high, covered in a blue blur of blossom, flowering just outside her old bedroom window. She was thrilled when Graham and Brett Groneman moved into her cherished Muir Beach coastal home especially when their first child, Charlie Graham, was born on April 5, 2018, Edna's exact ninety-second

birthday. She chortled with unbidden delight at the baby's auspicious arrival date.

"There will be no one like us when we are gone," Oliver Sachs reminds us. "But there will be no one like anyone else, ever. When people die they cannot be replaced. They leave holes that can never be filled, for it is the fate—the genetic and neural fate—of every human being to be a unique individual, to find her own path, to live her own life, and to die her own death."

*Thank you, beloved Edna Rossenas,  
for the gift of your enduring  
presence in our lives!*

---

### *About Edna: The end of an era*

I first met Edna when we bought our house at 190 Sunset Way in 2002. The 'old Sam Keane house'. Edna rented the main house at that time and later moved into Mayumi Oda's house in the flats.

I would often run into Edna whilst running on the northern coastal trail, from highway 1 to the dipsea.

Edna regularly hiked that trail and I would stop my run for a chat. They were always rich conversations. Edna told me all kinds of (sometimes racey) stories. I learned a lot about Edna and the community and the region in those conversations, from Edna's favorite places for early wild-flower sightings to how to find deer antlers - by walking barefoot on the deer trails (Edna had a HUGE collection of them).

I had the honor to be invited to tea with Edna at her home in Mayumi's house. It was always a treat and tea was always a ceremony. Our

daughter, Daniella, also came to tea. Edna's home was a very special place with countless precious objects that could keep a child entertained for hours, including a huge collection of hand puppets.

It was Edna who introduced us to the puppet crafter, Folkmanis, in the east bay. We took a trip there together and Edna was as excited about the characters as Daniella and I were. We still have the puppet prince that we purchased on that trip.

Edna loved younger people and took easily to my own circle of girlfriends. I will never forget meeting up at a cocktail bar in San Francisco, and Edna pulling a stash of ladybug gloves out of her handbag which we wore, at Edna's insistence, as we sipped our libations.

Independent, wise, strong, intelligent, playful. Edna was an inspiration and a great model for Daniella.

— Lynda Grose

# Ode to Edna

I saw Wendy Johnson on the beach yesterday. We stood together on the shore line, me dripping wet from a long and wonderful swim and Wendy, towel draped over her shoulder, getting ready to take a plunge as well. Wendy told me that Edna had died a month or so ago and asked if I would share thoughts or words about her for the Beachcomber.

I didn't know Edna Satt Rausenaeau well but our paths crossed often enough over the years since I came to Muir Beach in 1980. I don't know if she was already living at Sam and Jan Keen's, now Matt and Lynda's place, but it is around that end of Sunset Way I remember meeting up with her the most.

Edna was my kind of woman. She was unapologetically strong, opinionated, confident, and capable. She would give advice and counsel whenever she felt moved to do so. I recall walking along the old wooden bridge that connected the parking lot to the beach, the one that we loved to jump up and down on in order to bounce the children as we headed towards sand and ocean. On this day I was on my way to the beach, Edna on her way home. She must have had her Feldenkrais trained eye on me from her end of the bridge all the way to the point where our paths met. She stopped me and with barely a salutation and without warning she firmly put her right hand on my left shoulder and her left hand on my belly and she pressed and pushed and said, "Here. This is where you should be moving from. Your leaning too far back, your hands need to drape like an ape," or something along those lines. I was taken aback for a split second but once our eyes connected I knew that Edna was doing what Edna

did – and what she did was to care for people in a firm and skilled way.

I recall the day I saw Edna walking Sunset and noticed her short cut hair was almost entirely grey. I hadn't seen her for a time but not such a long time that she could have gone completely grey. Perhaps she noticed my noticing or perhaps as is my way I said something blunt and honest in much the same fashion that Edna might. 'Wow, your hair looks greyer than I remember,' may have been my greeting to her. However it came about, I remember well Edna saying to me, "I just turned 75 and I've decided I'm not going to dye my hair anymore. I am not going to hide my grey. I earned every single one of these grey hairs and I'm going to wear them proudly." Right On Edna!!

I would sometimes see Edna on her way up from Little Beach having just been in for a swim. I would bow to her in respect and awe – she was

in her seventies and still swimming in the chilly waters. It is only now, as I write this that I realize, I have discovered what Edna may have known all along – swimming in the chilly Pacific Ocean every day is without question one of the most exhilarating, peaceful, healing, spiritual practices I can imagine and perhaps that is why Edna did it. Or perhaps she just liked to get her feet and body wet or loved the challenge or the exercise or something else. In any case, when I go for my swim today I will think of Edna and I will remember the strong, self-assured, powerful woman that she was and will always be. I will hope she left the essence of those parts of herself in the ocean waters and I will call them in and soak them up because Edna was a woman with a force of character and determination and I would love to infuse even just a few drops of the woman she was into the woman that I am.

– *Nina Vincent*

---

## Edna the Hostess

When I was told about the Beachcomber article remembering Edna, I immediately recalled the wonderful going away party we had for Allison at Edna's home (see photo next page), and how the entire evening was filled...the rooms in the house were filled ...with the most magical and deepest affection. This was our Edna who had the special ability to bring this amazing energy together. After I submitted the photos from that evening, I contacted Erin knowing she and Allison would want to contribute to the article. Once Erin's contribution arrived along with Allison's drawing, I wasn't sure what I could add. So... I simply want to say, like so many others, I have missed her too, ever since she moved

away. I have missed her feistiness, humor, sense of community, stories of adventures (including being rescued during the flood!), and her tales of Bali, and swimming in the bay. I still miss cooking with her, and going out for lunches and dinners, and events at the Marin Theatre Company.

I always admired the openness in the way she was able to teach and share, and bring a richness and significance to just about everything she did, and everyone she knew. And when I think about her opinions about current political scenarios... I can only say to the other side "Watch Out!"

There are so many tales to be told...

I miss you Edna.

Happy Trails To You.....

– *Charlene Modena*

*Continued on next page*



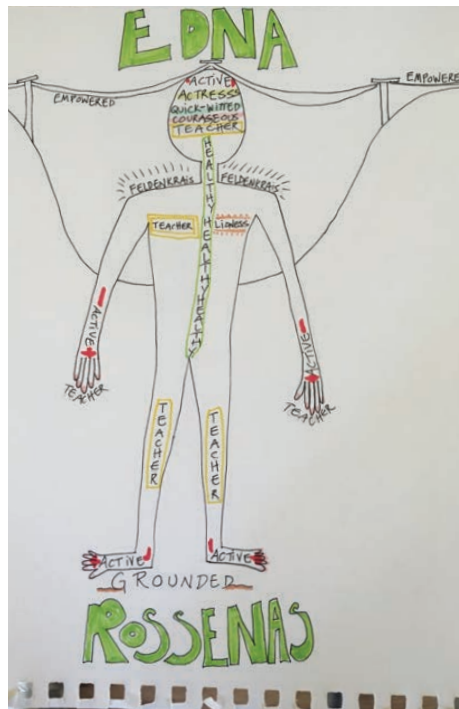
## Cherished Memories of Edna

*From Erin and Allison Pinto, Maui*

Allison and I lost touch with Edna in recent years, but we still felt a close connection to her despite the years and miles apart. I can still hear her voice like it was yesterday. We have many fond memories of time spent with her. We could always count on Edna for a poignant story, maybe a lesson or two, and a good laugh. We loved her wisdom, kindness, elegance, and sense of humor. She was a model for a life well lived with healthy habits, many interests, strong friendships and even adventure in one's later years.

She threw a lovely going away party for Allison when Allison, Everaldo and Benjamin moved to Brazil in 2008. It was a warm, wonderful, very memorable send off for Allison's forthcoming adventure. Because of Allison's 2016 stroke, she has difficulty with speech and writing, but she drew this tribute to

Edna, displaying some of the many ways Edna touched Allison and, undoubtedly, many others. We are fortunate to have cherished memories of Edna and we send our love to her family.



## EDNA CAILE ROSSENAS 1925-2021

When I think of Edna, I remember with deep fondness her bright intelligence, keen smile and generous heart. She lived just a few doors down from



*Edna at her 90th birthday.*

*Photo by Danny Hobson.*

our home for several years before she left Muir Beach. Our friendship began with neighborly chats – running into each other on the way to get the mail, or on the trails. An avid hiker, she was climbing the Dias Ridge Trail at 86! She remains a role model for me of staying fit and active in body and mind at all ages.

When I became a mother, our friendship deepened as she was so welcoming toward my daughters. We made many spontaneous trips to Edna's house to bring her cookies – which was just an excuse to stop by and spend time with her. She had a marvelous basket of animal puppets that was a testament to her childlike playfulness. My girls delighted in those and were intrigued by her collection of masks from her travels and her Groucho Marx mustaches. A generous spirit, over the years, she plied us with gifts – tasty treats, puppets, nature videos, and books on marine biology. But it was the less tangible gifts that were the most valuable and remain with me – her kind affirming words, stories of her adventures, and her direct curiosity and presence. She enriched our lives. I am so grateful to have known her.

– Danny Hobson

## Edna the Hostess...

*Continued from previous page*



*Kathy, Edna, Nina, Linda, Tayeko, Charlene, Allison, Lonna. Photo by Liz King.*

## ON THE COVER

*Burnt Orange*  
Watercolor 11" x 9"  
Bonnie MacKenzie



Bonnie MacKenzie

Twenty-six years ago, Dave and I moved to Muir Beach from San Diego to be near the grandchildren. We have loved it here by the sea and the grandkids love to visit and celebrate with big family dinners, no matter if we sit in more fog than sunshine. After years of pen and ink drawing, medical illustration and computer graphics I finally decided to add some colored pigments to my artistic endeavors. Five years ago I picked up some brushes, paper and a few tubes of paints. Now my growing collection of pigments and tools bears witness to my complete obsession with watercolor. But it's not been an easy road to travel. I've thrown away more ruined paper than I care to admit. And I'm still throwing more away than I keep. But even with all the frustration, I just love this medium. Every fresh piece of paper brings new hope and enthusiasm, maybe this time I'll get it right!

---

## Eloise and Graham



Ed Hyman and Deborah McDonald are pleased to announce the birth of their second grandchild, Graham Duncan Jarrett-McDonald, born on September 13th to proud parents Beth Jarrett and Cam McDonald-Hyman. Big sister Eloise is excited to have a little brother, too. While Cameron grew up here in Muir Beach, the family now lives in St. Paul, Minnesota.

---

## Mending Bar



Kathy Sward.  
Photo by Paige Green.

Kathy Sward and Janice Kubota attended a mending bar event (pre-Covid) at California College of Arts, sponsored by Fibershed. Fibershed is a local NGO which works with wool ranchers to develop regenerative grazing practices to sequester carbon in the soil. The non-profit also re-connects people with their clothing.

At the mending bar, participants brought their own projects and shared skills with others. A pile of discarded garments was also available for reuse. Kathy and Janice of course had a lot of skills to share! Participants had photos taken against an upcycled denim backdrop and this lovely photo of Kathy was selected for Fibershed's recent newsletter.

Perhaps post-Covid we can have a future mending bar in Muir Beach?

— Lynda Grose

## Pelican Inn Track Club

On Tuesday nights, for almost 30 years rain or shine, the Pelican has also hosted a dedicated group of runners. They later established the Pelican Inn Track Club in June 2010, with 100s of miles of trails in "their own" backyard.

*Photos by Sarah Nesbitt, see story page 11.*



Oscar, Dipsea 2019



Proud Mom and Oscar, Dipsea 2014