

# BEACHCOMBER

SINCE 1946



# Storms, flooding and waterfalls

*Top to bottom at left: Pacific Way flood, photo by Chris Gove. Jesse cleaning the log jam under Pacific Way bridge in his wetsuit! photo by Beth Nelson. Pelican Inn parking lot flood, photo by Janet Tumpich*

*Below: Tree down on Seacape, photo by Kasey Corbitt. Waterfalls in Camino del Canyon, photo by Diane McDonald*



# Big Screen Entertainment System Donated to Community Center

By Paul Jeschke

Thanks to the generosity of Bob Jacobs, the Muir Beach Community Center is now equipped with a giant, state-of-the-art television set and entertainment system.

In the last weeks of his life, Bob, with the help of Ernst Karel, worked tirelessly to find just the right combination of components to guarantee the best possible viewing experience. His goal was to create a place where the community would come together to view videos by local filmmakers, watch historic films of Muir Beach projects, gather to watch important televised events and cheer for Bay Area teams in championship competition. For Bob, who passed away just as the project neared completion, it was a way to commemorate Nina White, his late wife and the love of his life. "She was an artist, an actress and a gifted entertainer," Bob said, "and she always enjoyed the pot luck dinners at the Community Center."

The 85-inch TV is installed on the outside of the balcony railing for

optimal viewing. The QLED set is known for "bright vivid colors that pop off the screen even in the brightest rooms," according to the manufacturer.

Bob made sure that high quality audio was included in the professionally installed system. Ernst, who works with sound and taught at Harvard's Film Studies Center, chose an audio system driven by Sonos speakers mounted throughout the room. The donation includes a Blu-ray DVD player and can be expanded and upgraded. When not in use, the equipment will be stored in a locked, custom cabinet built by Mike Moore.

Working with Muir Beach Friends and Neighbors, Bob arranged a special showing of "Gospel," a spirited documentary co-directed by David Leivick.

*Everyone is invited to a special showing of Gospel on Saturday, February 18, 7:00 pm.*

*Muir Beach Friends and Neighbors will provide snacks and beverages.*

The *Beachcomber*, our neighborhood news, is published quarterly by and for residents, friends, family and former residents of Muir Beach. Published since 1946 (on and off), circulation 170 (more or less).

**Email:** Submissions, request to subscribe, or questions to: editor@muirbeachcomber.com

**Mail:** *Beachcomber*, 19 Seacape Dr., Muir Beach, CA 94965

**Visit:** muirbeachcomber.com

**Donate annually:** \$25 for local delivery, \$35 for snailmail

Contribute your essays, poems, stories, photographs, artwork, announcements, reviews – anything that celebrates Muir Beachers and our community. 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 except for readability and general appearance.

Acquisitions: Kate Somers

Circulation/Finance: Beth Begault

Website: Julie Smith

Design: Janet Tumpich

FEBRUARY 2023

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## ON THE COVER

*Little Beach*

60" x 48"

Oil on canvas

Darcy Fitzpatrick



Darcy has always been a passionate Artist. In her Muir Beach home studio, Darcy's uses the impasto techniques to deepen and layer texture, and colorist methods to exaggerate the palette, which she hopes will inspire "a feeling," tell a story, or invoke a memory. The texture on the canvas creates its own shadows during the day's changing light and has a three dimensional effect. Some of her fondest childhood memories are of painting classes at the De Young Museum and painting wildlife at California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco - where her father was Curator of the Steinhart Aquarium. As an exchange student in Glarus, Switzerland, Darcy's studies abroad also included advanced painting classes, and traveling around Europe studying art of the masters. She holds a BA in Fine Arts from UC Santa Cruz, and a Graduate Degree in Education from San Francisco State University.

Her current exhibition runs through April 2023. See back page for exhibit information.

Her paintings can be purchased at [darcyfitzpatrickfineart.com](http://darcyfitzpatrickfineart.com) and to view her most recent work, visit

 @darcy.fitzpatrick

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## Catastrophe in the Rain:

### *Two Downed Trees, Runaway Puppy & 6 Saviors*

*By Julie & Brent Smith*

After dark an especially fierce blast of wind late on January 4th, all we could see out the kitchen window was an odd arch over the driveway that turned out to be a tree pinned under an uprooted 46-year-old cypress that stretched far into the adjoining yard.

At dawn we discovered that a huge Monterey pine had also fallen on the south side of the property, crushing the fence that contained our Irish Setter puppy in his safe “play yard.” Rugger immediately discovered an escape route before we did and embarked on an exploration of Muir Beach. We frantically searched for the wayward dog in the rain, and neighbor Olivia found him joyfully romping on the Community Center deck about an hour later. Brent and our son Brett retrieved the escapee.

By that time, Chris and Joseph had arrived at our house to assess the situation. Along with Brett, they worked tirelessly all morning wielding the fire Department’s mighty chainsaws to start clearing the tree. After noon Chris and Joseph were relieved by Firefighters Jon and Sefton and they finished cutting out the tree’s trunk and branches. In Brett’s final cut to relieve the trunk of its heavy burden of wet limbs, what was left of the cypress sprang up like a tightly coiled spring. By late afternoon the tree was cut into rounds, and the branches cleared to make an exit route for the car.

The fence destroyed in the Setter’s play yard was repaired the next day by our regular Contractor, but Rugger went AWOL later in the week when someone left a gate open. He was found running down Highway One.

We count our blessings for the good fortune to live in this beautiful tight-knit community with its generous, dedicated Volunteer Fire Department and other volunteers who make Muir Beach tick. We didn’t call for help, people just showed up and voluntarily offered to help.

Kudos and hearty THANKS!



## And a whale of a tale!

*go to bold (below) for the latest salty story!*

Quietly this fall the big news was the Redwood Creek Trail reopening! Mellow days offered a chance for us to see the new bridges, sensitive re-placement out of creek channel especially designed to be horse-friendly and link to other roads/facilities for equestrians (Frank Valley Horse Camp and Deer Park Fire Road). We hoped our cycling friends would respect the regs (no bicycles on RCT) while also appreciating the new features at the GGDairy end of the Dias Ridge Trail (chicane, bench, veg clearing for better sightline, better signage).

We learned that trail crews were busy historically upgrading the Ben Johnson Trail, making long awaited improvements to Deer Park FR and soon would be tackling the Coast View Trail, too! Other trails were moving higher on the list such as Fern Creek. Bridge designs were rec'd for the Dipsea Crossing! Funding was secured to replace the bridge on Steep Ravine (still scheduled to happen this spring). And we appreciated those who helped brush the Owl Trail (while hoping all respect the Owl Trail as a walkers' only experience).

Then the storms of '23 descended with waters flowing in every which way! Now the trail crews are fixing sinkholes, removing fallen trees and more! whew!

**But those same storms uncovered a treasure on the beach! The cranium of a female gray whale who beached, killed by a ship strike, in April '21 had been buried in sand and was now exposed! MBVFD Chris Gove saw an opportunity to share this specimen with many more and requested help to relocate. 7 park neighbors volunteered to haul it off the beach and then NPS found a good spot at the Tunnel Tops Field Station (Presidio of SF) to permanently and safely display. More than 500 people/weekend will view, youth ambassadors nearby will share her story of migration to and from Baja calving grounds, returning each spring to feeding waters off the coast of Alaska. This awesome journey is often seen from Muir Beach/MBO enroute (watch this March - April, since they have calves they come closer to shore).**

**But it wasn't always that way and maybe some of you remember when gray whales almost went extinct? A hunting ban recovered this species in our lifetime and the local fishing/crabbing industry is working hard to now minimize the shipstrike/net entanglement threat.**



*Anna Rauh and whale head skeleton photo taken by Chris Gove at Big Beach in January.*

**None of us “know” this way-back story but once, not too long ago, condors flew overhead and the big mammals sustained these scavengers, esp beached whales!...now that's a sight many of us may wish to see again. And may be possible thx to recent introduction by Yurok peoples up in northern CA and the southern re-introduced population from Pinnacles south favoring the Big Sur coast!!!**

**Hope you get over to the amazing new parklands at the Presidio to see the skull, ponder her latest pause in life's journey and appreciate the unexpected gifts of the sea.**

Meanwhile, I'm in awe over the other health benefits of being near the ocean, experiencing storm events: negative ions! They are released whenever water collides (the Lenard Effect) so the seashore or a waterfall are perfect places to soak up the health effects of these powerfully charged molecules...sunshine (UV) does it too so...

...breath deep at the beach and in the sunshine!!!

– Mia Monroe, GGNRA

# Muir Beach Fire Safety: *Vegetation Removal*

*By Chris Gove*

If you have recently driven along Highway 1 near Muir Beach you've likely seen tree and brush removal activity. This work is the result of a grant secured by Chris Gove and David Taylor from the Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority (MWPA) using funds they receive from parcel taxes. The effort is officially named the Highway 1 Evacuation Corridor/Banducci Ranch project. The objective of the project is to reduce wildfire fuel and create a fire break to the northeast of the Muir Beach community – as this is the likely direction of a future wildfire due to the location of extensive wildlands, the typical dry northeast winds in fire season (late summer and autumn), and the upward sloping topography. This phase of the project included vegetation thinning and removal over 12 acres on National Park Service (NPS) lands in the southwest corner of Banducci Ranch, which is roughly a 100' buffer along the north side of Highway 1 between the intersections of Frank Valley Road and Muir Beach Overlook.

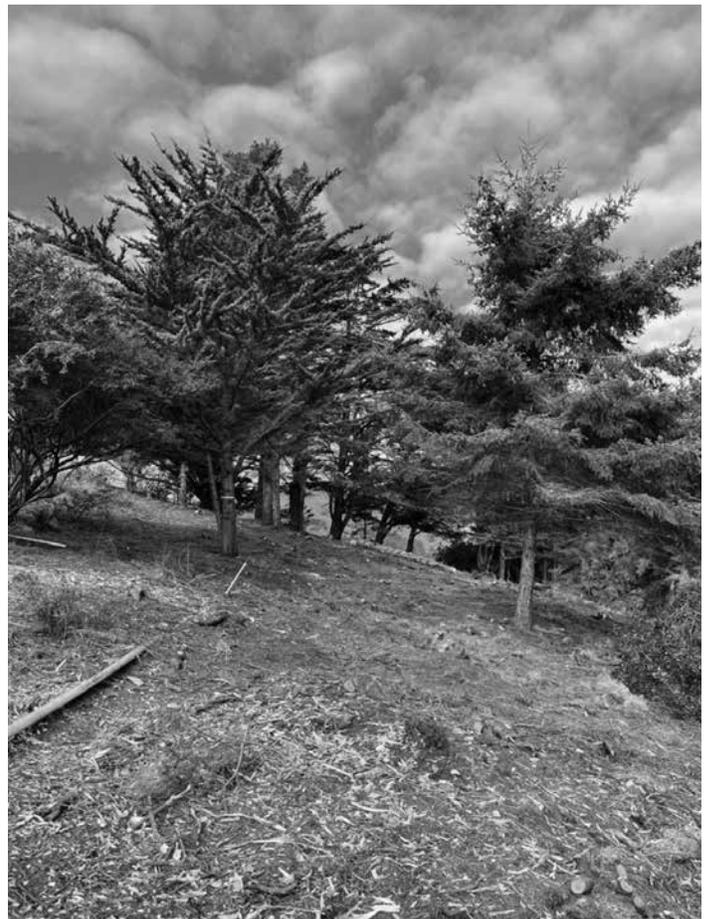


*Brush and tree removal and chipping in-progress.*



The MWPA conducted the project in collaboration with Muir Beach Fire including Muir Beach Firewise, the Muir Beach CSD, and the NPS. Muir Beach CSD is the agency funded to do the work. MWPA managed the project working with the landscaping firm Forster & Kroeger and others. MBCSD was not the contracting agency and did not receive or disburse any funds but relied on the MWPA, a joint powers authority.

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*An area after completion of tree and brush treatment.*

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The project has had excellent results. The work was completed in less than one month with minimal disruption to the Muir Beach community and through traffic. During the project, Muir Beach Fire worked with Mike St John and Steve Peters from MWPA, their environmental consultants, and the Park Service. The NPS and MWPA teams reported that the area had the densest growth that they had ever seen in Marin, including extensive overgrowth of invasive species. All the biomass was chipped and distributed on site. The way in which the treatment was done was to preserve islands of habitat and remove invasive plant species and ladder fuels.

In the future, state and local agencies are expected to make investments in treatment of new high-risk wildland areas and in maintenance of previously treated areas. Muir Beach Fire will work collaboratively with the various agencies, the Muir Beach CSD, and Muir

Beach residents to direct investment for the benefit of our community.

The recently completed project, combined with recent efforts by Muir Beach homeowners to create defensible space through vegetation clearing and “harden” their houses and outbuildings, are parts of an ongoing process to greatly reduce Muir Beach’s wildfire risk exposure. We hope to make progress each year by implementing new fire mitigation measures on public lands and to work with homeowners to do the same on their property. While these future efforts will take funding and work, they will greatly reduce our risk of loss of life and property and make Muir Beach a model for other Firewise communities. We are grateful to the many agencies and Muir Beach residents that have contributed to-date and look forward to future collaboration.



*Project command post, with members of collaborating agencies, including Muir Beach Fire.*

# Red Dog

*By Charlie Stump*

The best days on the beach were in the summer when the fog burned off quickly in the late morning and the seaweed that had washed ashore emitted a vaporous haze as it dried out. The air still. The earthy mineral smell of the beach intensified by the rising temperature. Even though the water was relatively serene, there would be waves breaking on Big Beach. Their crashing reminded me of the booming sound coming from Fort Cronkhite down the coast when surplus ammunition was detonated. From the sunporch at my house, I could see the inviting swells in the bright morning glare. I knew then that it would be a good day at the beach – the best kind of day for bodysurfing.

When the phone rang it would be Mike (Moore). “Are you seein’ ‘em, Charley?” He, too, was watching the waves, and we’d make plans for a day riding the rollers. Sometimes the best wave break would be in the center of Big Beach, but mostly it was at the southern end – a place we named Red Dog because it somehow made the area sound daring and dangerous. The waves were usually bigger and faster at Red Dog and they had a roll – they didn’t close out right away like waves elsewhere in the cove. It was here where we’d meet in cut-offs and t-shirts, beach towels in hand, to scope out the break. Hector and Sun Dancer would run off, tails wagging, to bark at shore birds.

Aran (Collier) wouldn’t be with us because he and his family were in Taos where they had driven their big, grey Pontiac station wagon with a bundle of goods tied to the top. They spent two months of every summer in the adobe house they’d constructed on ranchland outside the city. But Bruce (Belfour) would usually show up, already wet having crossed the warm lagoon instead of using the trail below Mayor Joe’s house on Pacific Way. Bruce was fearless in the surf and would purposely bob up and down right where the biggest wave closed out. As it came crashing down on him he would yell something and disappear for a minute, only to resurface with a crazy smile on his face as he choked on seawater soup. Todd (Lamont) sometimes joined us in a t-shirt taut over his stout body of white, freckled skin. Dorsha always pleaded with him to stay covered to avoid sunburn, but he’d always abandon both his mom’s advice and his shirt, and he’d always get burned. It wasn’t until we all started using Sea & Ski in the green plastic bottle with the orange cap that

Todd stopped getting sunburned when he came to body surf with us, along came Fudgy who would find our dogs to play with.

Once we determined that the best break was at Red Dog, we’d run into the surf until the cold water reached our zippers – then we’d slow considerably, shoulders hunched, bouncing on our toes. Easing in from that point, as our bodies adjusted to the numbing chill, we’d swim out to the break to wait for the next set of waves to roll in. Rarely did we take the first wave of the set – anticipating that a bigger wave with a better break would be right behind it. When there was a bigger wave bearing down, we’d yell “Outside! Outside!” pulling out and frantically re-positioning ourselves to catch it. If we were late on that big wave, we’d drop down the falls, somersault head over heels, and tumble to the sandy bottom. It was hairy being slammed underwater by a powerful wave – if you didn’t curl into a ball, you’d be tossed wildly until the wave passed above and you could make your way to the surface. Todd and Bruce went over the falls all the time because they didn’t swim fast enough to get out in front of the waves. But Mike and I learned to lean into the break ahead of the curl, and kicking hard, to slither down the face of the wave until it closed out. There’s nothing like catching a good smooth ride on a big wave.

Satisfied, and sufficiently numb from the cold water, we’d emerge to bury our shivers and goosebumps in the hot sand. Lying on our stomachs, we scooped the sand to tuck it around our chests and under our chins. When the sand cooled we shifted to a new warm spot and did it again. Standing to return to the water, we were covered front side in sand, toes to chin. Our beach towels lay dry and clean, neglected and unnecessary. Hector, Fudgy and Sun Dancer would follow us to the shore and bark as we dove into the water.

I’ll never forget the day when Sun Dancer, a beautiful Golden Retriever, made his way into the surf leaving the other dogs hemming and hawing on the shoreline. To our amazement, he began riding the waves along with us. Paddling rapidly with his paws, head above water and nose in the air, he glided gracefully over the face of the waves. Sun Dancer was bodysurfing!

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In the late afternoons as the wind picked up, we'd be hungry and sunburned, our skin stiff with dried salt. Sometimes we'd dunk in the tepid freshwater lagoon to warm up and wash off the sand, but usually we all headed home. Todd wound his way up the path to Pacific Way, then passed the Souza vegetable gardens to the old Machado house. Bruce swam across the lagoon and walked past the Circus House to his home on Redwood Creek at the edge of the forest. Mike traveled up the path near the Ponte house, crossed Sunset Way and took the trail up to Seacape Drive. I navigated over the rocks to Little Beach, careful not to scrape my bare, cold, sandy feet on the sharp barnacles – nothing worse than that. I

made my way to the cliff trail and scampered up to my house at the end of Sunset Way.

My mom would be there with the garden hose to wash the sand off of me. She insisted I remove my cut-offs – no easy task with a sand-clogged zipper. I stood shivering, knees bent, struggling to unzip my jean shorts. Mom hosed the zipper – sending a cold shock through my body – until the zipper gave and I could drop my shorts. She finished me off with a full body blast. After drying my feet, I was released to the shower where I'd linger in the warm water, recalling the best waves of the day and marveling that Sun Dancer could body surf.

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## THE TREE

The texts started to come in about halfway through the storms... "The tree is damaged." Like a family member, no one even had to specify what tree on Little Beach they were referring to. It felt like the equivalent of those phone calls before the internet "Your Grandmother is in hospital."

At the first break in the storm I rushed down to Little Beach and there she was, broken and battered but still standing. The beach looked like a war zone...it was difficult to get ones bearings. The waves were crashing hard against the cliff, water reaching as far back as the canoes and kayaks behind the tree. Her beautiful bespoke fence was destroyed, her roots laid bare, branches were broken across the path, there was no beach at all, just rocks and massive wood debris everywhere.

When we first moved to Muir Beach Tenn would sit in her generous limbs, comfortable, cradled, and read. And I would seek her shade on a hot day, and fall asleep feeling protected. When I'd go out for my swim I actually felt like she would protect Tenn.

Trees have personalities and I would describe our Little Beach cypress as benevolent. Her sister is there beside her, also the victim of a now forgotten storm. You can see one of her curved elegant limbs gracing the front of Arlenes's house.

If this cypress could talk we know she has seen plenty of kisses, more than likely some love making, lots of bon fires, and so many sunrises and sunsets. This cypress has always felt like the protector of Little Beach.

Today I swam out to the mark past Linda's house and took a good long look at our beautiful cypress. Still standing. I thought about how I always use this tree as a marker when I swim. I always enter the ocean directly in front of her, like a ritual. And in this entry, I know the topography of the ocean floor. (I believe the proper term is bathymetry.) And when I swim back in, I keep her in my sights as my destination. Like a good friend, foul weather or fine weather, there she stands in all her majesty welcoming me back to shore.



*Cypress tree, photo by Kate Somers*

***This is a love letter to our Little Beach  
cypress tree.  
Hoping she survives.***

*–Beth Nelson*

# Muir Beach Disaster Council

Maybe you received a few emails and WhatsApp messages about the storms? Updates on the power outages, road closures, downed power lines, flooding or the Golden Gate Bridge closure? This may have helped you make decisions about travel and generators?

**This was the first implementation of our new Muir Beach Disaster Council communication network.** It didn't work everywhere, as not everyone has reliable internet, not all residents have WhatsApp yet and some liaisons were out of the country. We are still working out the kinks on all of that. But the feedback indicates many people were happy with the new protocol.

**What is this network?** Muir Beach has 15 'neighborhood pods', and each of these has a Disaster Council liaison. Ideally, liaisons should know all their neighbors - including which pets and children live nearby, whether there are any unusual health needs, if a house is occupied or is a short-term rental, and if there are any residents with added emergency skills and equipment.

**Why?** Marin coastal community guidelines dictate that in the event of a large-scale natural disaster, county emergency services will likely be overwhelmed and Muir Beach will need to respond intelligently. The liaisons would thus help transfer information to limited First Responders, and in the event of a longer shelter-in-place (for example, a mudslide or earthquake), the Disaster Council would coordinate basic medical care, water and food for residents.

**Who are we?** We're a friendly group that meets monthly to update safety preparation protocols. For example, we organized the Fire Evacuation Drill last June and we are currently looking at each

pod's communication gaps (some areas have cell coverage, some don't, there are residents with no internet). We have chosen email for general information updates and *WhatsApp* for information about power outages and nature-related disturbances.

Muir Beach is a vibrant community with mostly full-time residents. We want to remain so. A community pulls together when we know each other. Please get to know your liaison and share your basic information which can help in an emergency. There is no other obligation.

- Susannah Kennedy and Robin Terra,  
*Co-leaders, Muir Beach Disaster Council*

## **MUIR BEACH DISASTER COUNCIL** **Your Neighborhood Liaisons:**

Pacific Way: **Liz Salin**

Sunset Way: **Alexis Chase, Robin Terra, Susannah Kennedy, Timothy Hinkle, Stephen Somers**

Shoreline: **Danny Hobson**

Lagoon: **Alexis Chase**

Seacape: **Sarah Nesbitt, Denise Lamott, Barbara Piotter**

Ahab: **Kerry Wynn**

Charlotte's Way: **Skip Rudolf**

Starbuck: **Shawn Roberts, Nicki Clarke, Nikola Tede**



**(Clockwise) Flooding and stranded car on Pacific Way near the Pelican Inn (top); rockslide on Highway One; each Muir Beach Disaster Council liaison has a radio and takes part in a monthly drill; Redwood Creek flowing into the Pacific at Big Beach creating a mini-canyon during the storms**



PHOTO BY LEAH KENNEDY



Neighborhood liaisons were in active communication during the storms keeping each other and our neighbors informed

# Remembering BOB JACOBS

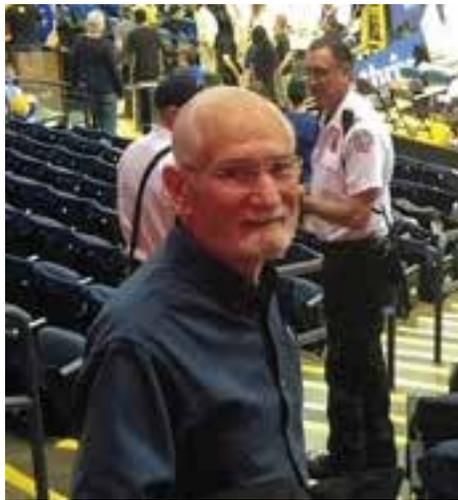
By Paul Jeschke

Longtime Muir Beach resident Bob, Jacobs, who died last month at the age of 94, met the love of his life without the help of dating apps or online matchmaking. As his friends tell it, Bob, still a bachelor at 52 and living at home with his mother, was invited to a pool party in San Rafael. He and another guest, Nina White, were the only two who brought swimming suits and it was in the water that they met for the first time and fell in love.

Bob was born and raised in San Francisco where he graduated from Lowell High School in 1946 and went on to academic success at San Francisco City College and the University of San Francisco. Always a whiz at math, Bob spent his entire professional career as an auditor for the Internal Revenue Service. He managed the large case program.

Totally captivated by the woman he met in the pool, Bob proposed and he and Nina were married June 14, 1981. Bob moved into Nina's house at 1 Great White Way. Much later, a neighbor petitioned the county to change the street name to Butterfly Lane. Nina objected and with Bob's help, the county settled on White Way.

Bob and Nina were inseparable. He hurried home after a day at the IRS office in San Francisco and they would sit on the deck having a martini and watch the sun setting over the beach.



*Bob Jacobs was an enthusiastic Warriors fan.*



*Nina White and Bob Jacobs at their 1981 wedding.*

Bob idolized his wife. Nina developed serious health problems about 10 years ago and Bob dedicated himself to her care. "I was awe struck as Bob managed the years of care for his beloved Nina," said Marilyn Laatsch. "He honored her every wish with immense generosity and they both glowed in their love for one another."

"No one loves like Bob Jacobs," agreed Michal Strange whose grandmother was Nina's cousin.

"The love he had for Nina was beyond words. And if you got to be loved by Bob, then you are a lucky one and I sure am lucky."

Bob suffered a series of heart problems after Nina's death and recently had heart valve surgery.

Cousin Sid Burger was tasked with sorting through Bob's possessions. "He couldn't throw out anything that had to do with Nina," Sid said while sorting through boxes of memories.

Although he developed heart problems toward the end of his life, Bob never stopped being involved in his community. He served as a director of the Community Services District in 2006-2007. Leighton Hills remembers Bob carefully scrutinizing annual audits.

He was a founding member of the Elderberries, later renamed Friends and Neighbors. He was an enthusiastic Warriors fan and closely followed local and national politics.

Donations in Bob's memory can be sent to the Southern Poverty Law Center and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

*A memorial service is set for February 19, 11:00 AM, Hills of Eternity, Colma.*

## A Muir Beach Love Story

By Pamela Tom Swarts

The passing of Bob Jacobs on January 13, 2023, marks the loss of another Muir Beach icon. At 94, Bob remained active and sharp, even participating at October's CSD Candidates' Night as the speakers' timekeeper. However, my fondest memory of Bob will always be his devotion to his wife, Nina White. Nina passed away nearly five years ago. According to "muirbeach.com" ... *She passed away February 24, 2018 after a long illness. She and her immediate family managed to be on the last ship to leave Europe as WW2 began. Nina was an artist, an actress, a teacher, a model, a photographer, a political activist and a confidant to numerous friends.*

White Way (named after Nina) houses only two homes: Bob and Nina's, and ours. Over the years, we would see Bob and Nina taking their daily stroll down White Way to enjoy the expansive views. They would pause and then return home, always hand in hand. I always wondered what they may have said to each other in those moments; or perhaps, they simply admired the ocean and surrounding hillside together in silence, not needing any words. Either way, their walk demonstrated a cherished ritual of love. Over the years, their walks became less frequent as Nina's health deteriorated. One day, I decided to grab my phone camera



to capture what always brought me joy. Whenever I see an elderly couple walking together in a park, or on a walking path, I hope that my husband, Jeff, and I will be that couple as we age. After Nina's passing, I shared these photos with Bob. I hope they brought him joy.

One day, we will get new neighbors on White Way. I will share this Muir Beach love story with them in hopes that Bob and Nina's spirit blesses their home for many years to come.



# All's Fair in Arts & Crafts

By Laurie Piel

The 2022 Muir Beach Holiday Arts Fair has come and gone and the new year is here! We didn't let the rain stop us on Saturday as Cuco and his guys wrapped the Center in plastic sheeting, and a tent in front of the shed created our new music venue - LOL! Some strategic placements of containers to catch the water on the deck and good humor by all, made it a memorable start to the weekend. Fortunately we were greeted with lovely weather on Sunday. Due to Covid concerns, we again had a smaller number of artists and with accommodations made for spacing. After all of the bills were paid, the Fair donated \$1,000 to the CSD to be used for community events.

As always, there are many thanks to be given. It's a labor of love from the community and somehow a simple thank you never seems sufficient although it's all that I have.

Photos by Robin Terra

None of it happens without the hard work of setting it up... no one sees your dedication... it's from the heart ... so my heartfelt thanks to Ken High & Ellen Litwiller for their time and efforts. As you can see we were a little light on folks strong enough to deal with early heavy lifting. It doesn't take long so I'm hoping more folks will volunteer next year.



Ellen Litwiller shows her gorgeous cards. Background: Kasey Corbit and her yummy truffles

Let's start with the kitchen .... Alecia Singer assumed the responsibility for the kitchen again which is now set up to take donations via Signup Genius. We learned a lot from this  
*Continued on next page*



Clearly the Garden Club is making lots of sales... just ask Tayeko Kaufman & Janice Kubota; (below) Stella Eigsti making sure no one misses the MBVFA logo; and Jessica Rauh's earrings are always a big hit at the JR. Artisans table



The MB Grass Band-Front Row: Mark Pandapas & Paul Tollefson, Back Row: Bob Bowyer, Renee Boeche & Chas Kingsbury. Missing: Bryce Bowyer & Robin Terra



first round... It worked so well and we had so many donations that next year we will be doing some editing to the donation requests. Our food donators were Angie Banducci, Beth Begault, Suzanne Bender, Beatrice Chorinsky, Joey Groneman, Bernard Halliwell, Gail High, Danny Hobson, The Jeschkes, Susannah Kennedy, Marilyn Laatsch, Carol Lankford-Gross, Barbara Piotter, Jackie Russell, Liz Salin, Alecia Singer, Julie Smith and Kate Somers... as always, a special thank you to Gabe Leis who is always there with his full scale donations of burritos. I know there were some people who did not sign up but brought food any way... like Tayeko Kaufman and, unfortunately, I don't remember who else... everyone please accept my thanks. The Kitchen's running team of Paul Jeschke, Susannah Kennedy, Jamie Kimmel, Janice Kubota, Marilyn Laatsch, Melissa Lasky, Trish McCall, Barbara Piotter, Lonna Richmond, Liz Salin and Pam Swarts, although swamped with lots of food, managed to get it all organized and keep it running smoothly.

Next I'd like to thank Alexis Chase who took on the Junior Artisans table AGAIN. Leigha Heydt, Danny Hobson, Jackie Russell and Heidi Stubler-Brown oversaw the juniors. The Junior Artisans, not surprisingly, had some of the most fun items for sale... I know I spent my hard earned cash at their table! We had some new folks at the table and some moved up to their own table. Our Jr. Artisans were Paige & Callie Brown, Ella Brundieck, Charlie & Hadley Groneman, Chloe Kirk, Francesca & Vincent Piazza, Jessica & Anna Rauh and Tommy Vallee.

This year we had more people sign up as Floaters which gave me and many others a break... I am personally grateful to Darcy Fitzpatrick, Bernard Halliwell, Anne Jeschke, Carol Lankford-Gross, Sonia Martin and Nikola Tede.

The Beverage Bar held up well under the resourceful watch of Harvey Pearlman and his team of Paul Jeschke, Tennessee Nelson and David Piel. This year the Beverage Bar was lucky to be the beneficiary of left over wine from the BBQ that had to be donated to be used. Since all of the profit goes to the CSD to be used for the community, it was a perfect combination.

Needless to say, we missed Simon Littler but our new Music Maven, Bob Bowyer took our live music to the next level and created "The Lounge at the Fair" with a fire pit and comfy seating. Something tells me that's here to stay! Everybody loved having a place to sit and enjoy the music, each other, food from the kitchen and warm drinks from the beverage bar. Over the two days our musicians were: The Acoustic Trio (Bruce Barrett, Joe Massey, and Johnny Walsh), the Muir Beach Grass Band (Bob Bowyer, Renee Boeche, Bryce Bowyer, Chas Kingsbury, Mark Pandapas, Robin Terra and Paul Tollefson), The Monday Group (Chris Boateright, Brent Babow, Bob Bowyer, Bryce Bowyer and Katherine Stebner). To round out the musical performances Larry Lasky, Robin Terra and Steve Utstein got together and played a set. We would love to add to the fair musical talent so if you would like to perform next year, please contact Bob Bowyer at [bigbowyer@gmail.com](mailto:bigbowyer@gmail.com) who will be heading up the Lounge again next year.

There is more than one way to support the fair and financial donations are a major part of the equation. Because of the MBVFA wine donation, Peter Lambert & Linda Lotriet were kind enough to give a monetary donation in lieu of their normal wine contribution. Our other contributors were: Katherine Bicer, Christine & Sefton Murray, Garrett Paul and Bethany Villere.

Lest not we forget, our incredible Muir Beach artists: Debra Allen, Florence Buchenroth, Emily & Becky Carroll, Kasey Corbit, Craig Eichenbaum, Jill Hamilton, Hilary Gross, Mira Klein, Ellen Litwiller, Janet Tumpich Moore, Leslie Riehl, Tom Soltesz, Bethany & Lola Villere, Liv Weisel, me and, of course, our three legacy community organizations... The Garden Club, MBFVA and the Quilters. Needless to say, without them there would be no fair at all!

Looking forward, I will be working with Lynda Grose Silva to partner with the California College of the Arts to bring in up and coming talents. Just as we nurture our own Junior artisans, I've always felt that the fair should be a place where new artists can find a welcoming home. You may not know that Lynda was the Chair of the Fashion Design Program at CAA and is still a professor of critical studies there. She is a Founding member of the Union of Concerned Researchers in Fashion and a board member of [remake.world](http://remake.world). It is an honor to have her join the fair to bring her knowledge, expertise and connections to the fair.

A good time was had by all and I look forward to seeing everyone Dec. 2nd & 3rd for the Muir Beach Arts Fair 2023... see you all at the Fair!

# Preparing for Winter

*By Jeff Swarts*

When I grew up it was all about getting ready for winter. I spent my summers and parts of fall with my grandparents. They were small town rural California folks of modest means. When I was young I would help my grandmother and aunts with the fruit picking, from blackberries, wild grapes, to all other tree fruit that came into season. I probably ate half of what I picked before it made it into the basket or coffee can, but I never went out without some sort of container for the fruit. I can still feel the summer heat and the dirt under my feet.

I remember wandering into the kitchen sleepy eyed to witness the clanging of pots and the chatter of my aunts as the canning process was already in full operation. The fruit would be washed, pitted or peeled and cooked. And the smell of the apple sauce or peaches would be thick in the air. It was wonderful. And a small bowl of hot fresh fruit was always shared with us kids. It was hot outside during those late summer months and even hotter in the kitchen where the women scurried around those hot kettles and stove all day. When finished, the counters and table were covered with cooling jars of fruit. The delicacies these jars held were enjoyed by all that coming winter. I loved to go down in the basement and pick out a few jars to take home when in town for the holidays.

My favorites were the canned pears, peaches and apricots with the apple sauce a close fourth. Although the wonderful jellies and jams were a school staple in my daily peanut butter sandwiches, I had no interest in the various jars of vegetables and venison mincemeat. For me it was all about the fruit.

As I grew older I gravitated to other outdoor activities, fishing first then hunting. And again, it was all about filling the freezer. I was fortunate to have a grandfather who owned a sporting goods store. Not like the ones today but one that had deer heads all around it, with an occasional lion or wolf hide draped across the balcony. There were rifles along the walls with aisles of ammunition and fishing gear. And of course old

men spitting into a shared spittoon fabricated out of a WW1 12” brass casing from some battleship cannon. I remember the stories, dogs, cigars and laughter and rarely saw a woman in there.

My grandfather, after selling his interest in the store, became a patient mentor for all his grandchildren. He enjoyed driving me, my brother and our other boy cousins out on fishing and shooting expeditions. We loved it and all excelled at it. At age 12 I passed my hunter safety course and was immediately hunting all types of fowl and small game with a single shot 410 shotgun and single shot .22 rifle.

We caught big trout and killed some nice bucks. I remember bringing my first buck antlers into my 6th grade class from a buck I had shot with my father in the High country to share. Most of the girls cried, claiming that I killed Bambi. I remember curious looks at the lunch table when tearing bites off a tough, smashed up and ketchup smeared piece of venison on my wonder bread sandwich. This was the education I learned from my grandmother and grandfather. First the fruit gathering, then later fishing and hunting experiences that we always re-lived at holiday meals. They were the best years.

To this day my teachings and adventures are with me. My children love fresh trout and venison steaks. And an occasional jar of homemade canned fruit. But the times have changed. We get fresh fruit from around the world year long now. And my kids would rather photograph and play in the outdoors, rather than exploit them. I’m old school. I grew up under the influence of a grandfather who believed your hobbies should pay; if you’re not bringing home a wage you should be bringing home some meat.

So I carry these old ways and stories with me to this day. Always be prepared, plan for tomorrow because winter is on its way.

## Heavenly Hummingbirds:

A Muir Beach winter storm story

By Sarah Nesbitt

The Allen's Hummingbird or *Selasphorus Sasin* is one of at least 69 bird species said to fly around Muir Woods. We used to have a pair in our Muir Beach garden all year round. They'd do what they've evolved to do, beating their wings at more than sixty times a second, glittering, rocketing, hovering, flying backwards, fighting, feeding and astonishing us. Naturalist and author Sy Montgomery calls them "tiny creatures delicate as froth".

In her book, *the Hummingbirds' Gift*, she writes, "Hummingbirds are made of air. Their tiny bodies are crammed with no fewer than nine air sacs, in addition to their two huge lungs and enormous heart". They are feisty, fast and territorial and also impossibly active, needing to consume the largest quantity of food by body weight of any invertebrate. On an average day, they must visit around 1500 flowers and eat an additional few hundred insects.

She says hummingbirds are emblems of irrepressible life. Sadly, an estimated three billion birds have disappeared from North American skies in the last fifty years. With human-induced climate change and other challenges, they are fighting to survive. Our last winter storms proved too much for the hummingbirds in our backyard. After the first week, I saw only one rocket magically skyward in a ray of light between heavy showers. There was no joyful mate or sparkling rival in the foreboding skies.

Following the second week of biblical weather and until now, I haven't seen any. Unable to feed or remain safe, torpor brought on by chill during such a long period may have killed them? Apparently, hummingbirds were considered to be "resurrection birds" by early Spanish explorers to this part of the globe. Sy mentions they believed "anything that glittered so brightly had to have been made new each day." Ironically perhaps, the Mayans believed they brought rain.

We have a beautiful hand-stitched hummingbird made by Danielle, lovingly brought home by our children from the Muir Beach Christmas Fair about 12 years ago. It perches on our tree each year and this coming holiday season it will be placed at the very top. We'll craft a dime-sized nest for her in memory of our magical hummingbirds and all creatures great and small lost in the storms of January 2023.

## Hurricane Hunters

It was the night of January 4th, what I like to call, "the wind night." The power, communication and internet were out in Muir and Graham had been at work for several days. After a few hectic sleepless nights of putting Christmas away and getting the house into "flood-mode", I decided it was safest to take the kids to my parents house in Kentfield.

My parents house is perched on the top Northeast corner of Mt. Tam, nestled amongst a grove of Redwoods. We lost power at around 8:45 and all headed to bed. I was restless and couldn't sleep. I sat in the living room looking up at the Redwood canopy.

In over four decades at that house, I'd never seen our staunch Redwoods being tossed around like rag dolls. The wind at the top of the canopy was blowing in my estimation 85-100 mph. The energy and howling was beautiful, yet nerve racking as I feared for a tree toppling down on us.

At close to 9:30 the windows of the house started to vibrate and an extremely unsettling rumbling sound emerged quickly gaining intensity. My mom ran into the living room with a flashlight screaming, "Brett what is that?!"

"I think it's a plane?!!!" I yell.

She screams back, "Is it going to hit us?!!!"

"I don't know?!!!"

Just then the rumbling turned into a roar and we both ducked, covering our heads as if we were somehow going to save ourselves from a plane crashing into the house. At that moment the sky lit up and a MASSIVE airplane roared by, its lights flashing through the mist.

I immediately texted Graham that a plane might crash into Tam. It was flying due West, straight into the storm. I texted a friend, he said all commercial flights were grounded. I looked on the internet to try and figure out what it was... nobody seemed to believe us.

Days later stories began popping up on the news about the "Hurricane Hunters" a Mississippi based U.S Air Force Reserve Unit flying into California's atmospheric rivers for data collection. In the end it was a C-130 cargo plane, so close I swear I saw the dual propellers on the wings.

— Brett Sibley

# Privilege

*By Steven J. Moss*

Home for winter break, my daughter, Sara, was eager for help deciding which study abroad program to take during her last semester in college. Society, Culture and Gender in Amsterdam? Social Movements and Human Rights in Argentina? International Perspectives on Sexuality in Prague? More than 20 different opportunities, in a dozen and a half countries, were available on her university's website. "I have to warn you," Sara grimaced. "The website is a bit wonky when it comes to searching."

While Sara was mulling over her options, my wife, Debbie, and I were simultaneously grappling with a mirror image challenge, if the mirror was in a carnival house: how to secure a student visa for a Rwandan teenager. Jessica is a charismatic 16-year-old who dreams of becoming a doctor. We know her family from my work in Rwanda. When she expressed interest in attending high school for a year in the United States, we offered to sponsor her. With the help of former San Francisco Supervisor Sean Elsbernd, we secured a full scholarship for her at Archbishop Riordan High School. Despite this support, her visa application had been rejected twice, with no explanation. Dejected, and wondering whether it was her race or character that were at fault, she mustered the courage to try one more time.

Sara chose the Multicultural and Conflict Resolution program in South Africa. The application process required answering a handful of short essays, uploading a resume, and wrangling a letter of recommendation from a university advisor. All were completed within a few hours. After she pressed the send button on her submission, Sara worried out loud, "I hope I get in."

For Jessica's third try we retained an immigration attorney, who revised her application, making sure every "i" was dotted, every "t" crossed, and drafted a letter outlining why she qualified for an F-1 visa to study in the U.S. The family collected testimonials about Jessica's dedication to her church and community, to demonstrate she would not overstay her travel permit, the U.S. State Department's biggest worry.

America doesn't give visas to Africans easily, something I confirmed with a friend at the State Department, who told me that Rwandans illegally and indefinitely prolong their stay 80 percent of the time, a factually incorrect assertion oft propagated by U.S. representatives in Africa. Official State Department data put that number at closer to 10 percent. The real problem, according to our attorney, is that Africans are Black. To bolster Jessica's chances, we asked former San Francisco Mayor Art Agnos and State Senator Scott Weiner to connect us with Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi's Office, which they promptly did. Pelosi's staff, in turn, sent a letter to the U.S. Embassy in Rwanda, asking that Jessica's file be fairly evaluated. Having done as much as we could, we fitfully waited for Jessica's visa appointment, scheduled just a week before the start of Riordan's second semester.

Sara received an email from the School for International Training, the program to which she'd applied, requesting her transcripts, which she passed on to her school's Office of International Programs.

Debbie and I nervously monitored WhatsApp on the day of Jessica's visa appointment, anxious for good news. We heard nothing, a silent indicator that things went badly. The next day we received an email from Jessica's father, Eric.

Jessica was denied a visa again and reasons weren't disclosed to us. The officer refused to take the letter from the lawyer. I know it is very frustrating and devastating news to all of us, especially Jessica.

Eric said he told the officer that he had a letter from an attorney addressed to him, but he declined to review it, saying “it is my right to get a lawyer, but he is not obliged to take the document.” Eric went on to detail the questions the consular had asked Jessica, which revolved around her relationship with Debbie and me and how she secured a scholarship.

A few hours later our lawyer responded to Eric’s message.

Based on the questions and answers, I believe the officer had made up his mind to deny the F-1 visa even before the interview began. Nothing in your responses would sensibly explain why Jessica was denied. The only logical conclusion is that the officer had this mindset before you got to the window for the interview. This is not how the process is supposed to work and Jessica deserved both a full review of her application and a full explanation as to why she was denied.

The attorney promised to follow-up, and Debbie continues to lobby public officials to pay attention to the racist undertones of America’s visa process. But there’s little hope of any kind of remedy. Consular offices, unlike most other parts of the government, have little oversight and less transparency. Riordan started its second semester without Jessica, who remains in Rwanda, wondering if it’s her fault she wasn’t able to secure a U.S. visa, maybe because she’s Black.

Sara probably won’t hear back about her South Africa application until the Spring. Her college assures her, though, that she’s likely to get in.



*Jessica on the right and her mom on the left.  
Photo taken by Steven in Rwanda last year.*

# Long, Long Ago

*By Gail Falls and Anne Jeschke*

Inspired by charmingly different versions of stories told by John John and Kathy Sward, we decided to use that as a base for learning how some of the ‘old-timers’ came to Muir Beach.

Gail remembers chatting with John John and asking how he met Kathy. He remembers being at home and looking out at the beach when he saw a lone figure walking aimlessly. He went out to check and thought she seemed confused and unsure where she was. John John talked her into coming home with him for safety and warmth, and then, John John said, “She never left.”

Sitting by a big fire in the fireplace of the community center, Kathy told Anne her story of how she came to Muir Beach. Driving in an old car with a group of girlfriends all the way from the upper mid-west, the group finally got to Muir Beach. They were unsure where they were and what was around, but saw a pair of legs sticking out under an old truck. Finally getting his attention, a young man rolled out to greet them. That was John John and the beginning of a legendary Muir Beach family.

We asked some other long-time residents how they got here. Here’s what they said:

## **Gary Friedman and Trish McCall**

Trish and I were living in San Francisco. We moved from Connecticut in search of all the exciting developments in consciousness and humanistic psychology at Esalen and UCSF. California was teeming with new ideas. In training in a new program in psychology, Trish and I went to dinner at the home of the Gallands. 25 minutes from San Francisco – spectacular views and filled with people on the cutting edge of the human potential movement. It seemed like Paradise. Over coffee after dinner we were joined by Richard Beckman, architect, and Dave Gillespie, builder, both of whom lived here. We located a choice lot that Beckman knew about covered in poison oak, fell in love, built the house in 6 months and have lived happily ever after since 1976.

## **Nina Vincent**

I arrived in Muir Beach on a trip West with my grandmother during my Christmas break in my freshman year of college in New Hampshire. I had cared for

Trish’s first two sons in the East Coast and was visiting her and Gary for the first time in Muir Beach. Trish was pregnant with Cassidy. When I returned to the cold New Hampshire winter with visions of the Pacific Ocean crashing on the rocks beneath Trish and Gary’s home, the idea of my becoming an au pair was born along with Cassidy. I moved here in the summer of 1980 and other than years abroad, have been here ever since.

## **Marilyn Laatsch**

I and some other students were invited to the Muir Beach home of the Collier’s in 1970 for a wonderful pot luck dinner. I immediately fell in love with the magic & beauty of Muir Beach and by some miracle met Les Smith, a resident & the developer of Seascape, walking on Sunset Way. We talked about living in Muir Beach and it was then he told me of a property on Sunset which had just hours ago become available. It would be perfect for me, Les said. And he was absolutely right!!!! I’m forever grateful to all that came together to make this a reality for me.

## **Michael and Tayeko Kaufman**

We first discovered Muir Beach during the sixties hippy, dippy days when live concerts with the likes of Janis Joplin performed at the tavern on the beach. Many years later Michael taught kindergarten in Mill Valley and had Jessie Sward, Katelyn Pervier, and Sean Onorato as students. Katelyn’s mother Tinker, who ran the barn, kept in touch with us when we went abroad to let us know which houses were coming up for sale. After three years and three tries we were successful in getting 240 Sunset Way from the original builder, Vidart in 1976. At the time we were living in Japan. We weren’t quite ready to come home yet so after 2 years in Isfahan, Iran and 3 years in Antwerp, Belgium we came back to the beach in 1981 to our little piece of paradise.

## **Bryce Browning**

The Browning’s discovered Muir Beach in the summer of 1971, when we came to visit an old school chum of my wife’s who was renting the house where Matt and Linda are now. The weather was foggy and miserable,

*Continued on next page*

# BEACHCOMBER FINANCIAL REPORT JANUARY 2023

*By Beth Begault*

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the *Beachcomber* membership drive this year. Your donations allow Muir Beach's local news quarterly to keep on keeping on—now in its 77th year!

Printing costs account for the majority of the annual budget, and all of the staff labor is volunteer. Costs per issue vary by number of pages and by design decisions (color pages vs black-and-white). On the low end, it costs about \$600 for a black-and-white issue with a color cover. Costs run to \$800 and up in issues that print some interior pages in color. We're always hoping to gather at least \$3,000/year in donations to keep the *Beachcomber* going. So far in this fundraising season we have fewer donations, but donations are gladly accepted and appreciated year-round, and no amount is too small!

YEAR	\$ AMOUNT	# OF DONATIONS	AVG \$ PER DONATION
2014	\$3,100	83	\$37
2015	\$2,005	59	\$34
2016	\$1,850	51	\$36
2017	\$125	5	\$25
2018	\$1,655	40	\$41
2019	\$2,445	65	\$40
2020	\$2,590	67	\$39
2021	\$3,160	65	\$48
2022	\$1,430	27	\$53

## ACCOUNT BALANCES AS OF 1/28/23

BUSINESS CHECKING	\$1,967.94
BUSINESS SAVINGS	\$1,853.99
<b>TOTAL CASH ACCOUNTS</b>	<b>\$3,821.93</b>

*Continued from previous page*

the roads were treacherous-- no barricades on Hwy. 1, and Sunset Way was a bombsite. A few years before, because the drinking water was brown and there was no fire protection, the county designated this a "depressed area". You could find it labeled on their maps.

We moved here anyway. The reasons were that the setting was gorgeous, the weather was mild, the schools were good and the neighbors were easy to love.

And it was cheap.

So by the spring of '73 we had purchased a lot on Cove Lane, completed construction and moved into the same house I'm living in now.

And fifty years later the reason I'm still here is that unlike every other place on the planet, Muir Beach is still itself. Except for that last thing.

People move here, stay awhile, then move on. I wonder if some look back and reminisce how generous Muir Beach was to them.

## Outi and Terry Onorato

Terry and I met at the Tavern in the summer of 1966. Fast forward 4 years, with two boys, we returned when we bought a home on Lagoon Dr. We spent 2 years fixing the house before it was livable and have lived here for 51 years. We lived in San Francisco and Kentfield but needed to get away from urban life and closer to the ocean.

## Gail and Anne

Gail first learned of Muir Beach through a dinner at a friend's house here. Both she and her then husband, Mal, were enchanted and quickly decided to buy some land and build their home. Gail has lived here ever since.

Anne and Paul looked up and down the California coast for a place to retire. They became more familiar with Muir Beach when their son became a student and resident of Green Gulch. Eventually they realized that Muir Beach would be perfect for their later years, with two of their children nearby.

# Critter Report: Science at the Speed of Light

By Dave MacKenzie

So many things in research are happening, critter stuff and way more, that it seems to me that science is advancing incredibly fast on so many fronts! Some of my recent favorites discoveries:

**Junco Smell:** Research continues to show that Northern Juncos, a common bird in Muir Beach, can identify family members via smell. It was thought that only vultures, like our common Turkey Vulture, could really smell. Probably most birds use smell much more than we had any idea. Interestingly, these odors may come from the bird's gut biome.

**White-Throated Sparrow Has 4 sexes:** A uncommon winter sparrow in Muir Beach (mostly along Pacific Way), has two forms – white-striped and tan striped (we have both). It turns out that white-stripes can only mate with tan-stripes. There are male and female white-stripes, and male and female tan-stripes, thus acting like 4 sexes. Huh?

**New Domain of Life:** Certain predatory microbes, which came to light in 2020, seem to be part of a new domain of life called Provora. The other domains are Bacteria, Archaea, and Eukaryota, which includes us, and typical plants, fungi, and other animals. We may even be more closely related to Provora than to Bacteria or Archaea, which if true changes much of what we know (or think we know) about our own biology.

**Virus Eating Protists:** Small single-celled protists, common in seawater, may consume lots of viruses in the ocean as part of their food supply. Studies suggest that the entire food

web of the ocean, and thus the planet, may involve viruses as a primary food source, which is not something we knew about. Another fundamental change to understanding life on earth!

**Image of Our Own Black Hole:** An image of Sagittarius A\*, the black hole at the center of our own Milky Way Galaxy was created using the Event Horizon Telescope (EHT). Using telescopes around the world simultaneously, including one in Antarctica, the EHT was essentially the size of the earth! This was the second black hole to be imaged, but “Sag A\*” is the driving force in our own galaxy, and yet only a small black hole at 4 million sun masses!

**Dinosaur Ate a Mammal:** Microraptor wasn't too big as dinosaurs go, maybe the size of a crow, but it was quite a predator as a fossil from China showed. It seems that a small mammal was its last meal. This was about 120 mya, so I guess “we” mammals got even when we got to be in charge after the big meteor hit!

**Helicopter on Mars:** It is so amazing that we humans are driving/flying the (semi-autonomous) robot helicopter *Ingenuity* to explore another planet!

**Protons are Very Complex:** The heart of a Hydrogen atom, and the basis of our sun's tremendous fusion energy, the proton was long thought to be a “basic” particle. In the 60's, evidence and theory identified three Quarks as combining into a Proton. Recently, protons have been determined to be an even more complex and varying combination of up-quarks, down-quarks, charm-

quarks, anti-quarks, gluons, pions, and neutrinos, and maybe more stuff; whatever all of that means! Again, there is so much we don't know!

**New Wasps Discovered:** Eighty-five new wasp species were discovered in 2022. These were in the (British) Natural History Museum collection, but were never before described, just collected. Overall the museum found 351 new species, including more insects, geckos, fish, and frogs. What more is there to find?

**Protein Folding Maps:** Proteins are the work horses of life including providing organs and tissues with structure and influencing many chemical reactions. Given their large molecular size (thousands of atoms each), the structure of the complex folding of proteins, which makes them work in certain ways, has been very difficult to determine or observe. Now AI engines have managed to predict, very accurately, the actual structures of all known proteins (about 200 million!). Maybe the best result from AI software yet!

**2 Trillion Galaxies More with Webb:** The Hubble telescope increased the estimated total of all galaxies by a factor of 10, and the new Webb telescope is discovering even more. So now, it looks like there are roughly 2 trillion galaxies in the universe! 2 trillion is 2 million millions, or 2 thousand thousand thousands. And a typical galaxy is at least as complex as our own Milky Way, with an estimated two hundred billion stars. So how many habitable planets is that, or even intelligent civilizations? Incomprehensible!

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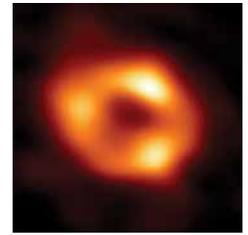
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**Bald Eagle Adopts Red Tailed Hawk in Inverness:** A Bald Eagle was seen this last year carrying a hawk (probably a Red-Tailed) chick into it's nest. But rather than having its own predatory chicks feast on it, it seems that this family of eagles has decided to raise the much smaller hawk as one of it's own. Amazing local nature story.

So watch for the latest scientific breakthroughs in the news. Something amazing almost every day! And if you cannot Google more information on any of these tidbits, let me know and I will search for my sources!



*Bald eagle and chick, photo credit: huntwildpa.jpg*



*Sag A\*, photo credit EHT Collaborative.jpg*

## Little Beach Clean-up on 1/28



Getting down to the beach from Cove Lane had been hazardous for weeks ever since the storms rolled in. Tons, literally and figuratively, of all manner of debris had washed up blocking the path. Chris Gove organized a Saturday morning Little Beach clean-up. By the end, a new path was created thanks to many community helping hands and Chris's chainsaw.

– *Kate Somers*

*Photos by Beth Begault*

## Cali in the Owl House

By Samantha Melendy

In the wild, finding a suitable nesting cavity in a dead tree is a macaw's version of winning the lottery. A bonded pair will spend many hours chewing the entrance hole, and it has even been proposed that this act actually enhances bio-synchronization between mating male and female in courtship.

Sadly for local blue and gold macaw, Cali, his mate Girlscout will not be able to fly to this owl house he's discovered in his own backyard. He calls to her with excitement as she calls back from the deck nearby. They have a less ideal nest box in their aviary that will have to do for now. The owl house is still for rent for qualified owl applicants only: please inquire with Cali the macaw, the new landlord at 77 Starbuck.



## New Muir Beach Puppy

By Liz and Ralph Rogers

Liz and Rogers (180 Pacific Way) belatedly announce the arrival of their new puppy Boogie!, a working lines German Shepherd. Boogie! is now almost 9 months old and loves treats, chasing balls on the beach, obedience/scent training, and solving partial differential equations.



Boogie at 2 months Boogie! at 7 months

## DARCY FITZPATRICK

2023 LANDSCAPE EXHIBITION • FEBRUARY - APRIL 2023



Pacific Professional Building, 2100 Webster, San Francisco, CA.  
(masks are required)

## A Noteworthy Omission

Every year we are heart-warmed by reading in the Beachcomber Laurie Piel's acknowledgments of every single Muir Beach volunteer who helped make the Christmas fair the lively, smooth running, successful event it always is. However, the one person she leaves out time and time again is herself. Laurie works tirelessly on this project: signing up the artists; putting out the fliers; creating artwork for the website; soliciting and organizing the volunteers to make sure there is enough food and drink; and planning for the set-up and take-down. And somehow she manages to have lovely things to sell at her own booth as well. AND this is a woman who has a day job flying around the country. Not only does she make the Christmas Fair happen but she is a major presence behind so many other wonderful Muir Beach events, including her essential newsletter. Laurie: we are so grateful for YOU!

— Kate Somers