

MUIR BEACH QUILTERS

Holiday Arts Fair

SATURDAY AND SUNDAY
December 5th, 11 am – 5 pm & December 6th, 10 am – 4 pm

MUIR BEACH COMMUNITY CENTER
19 Seacape Drive, Muir Beach, CA

FREE SHUTTLE FROM MUIR BEACH PARKING LOT | NONPROFIT

"Rice Farming in the Sacramento Delta" Quilt, 42" w x 48" h, and Prairie Dolls by Judith Yamamoto. Photograph Stylist: Outi Onorato; Photographer: Julie Smith

BEACHCOMBER

Muir Beach Neighborhood News

Issue 247 October 2009



Move over Tomales, Mill Valley, Mt. Tamalpais,
Point Reyes Station. Make way for a historic first:

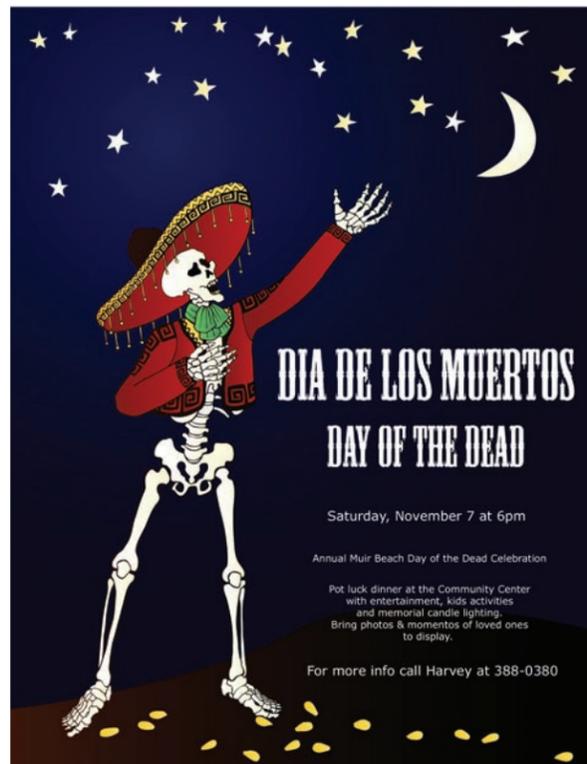
BEACH
COMBER

Muir Beach, California

The Muir Beach Refrigerator Magnet!

A tumbled Italian marble tile
with the famous *Beachcomber* masthead. 1 3/4" x 1 3/4"
\$10 for one, \$9 each for two, or \$8 each for three or more.

All proceeds benefit the *Beachcomber*.



DIA DE LOS MUERTOS
DAY OF THE DEAD

Saturday, November 7 at 6pm

Annual Muir Beach Day of the Dead Celebration

Pot luck dinner at the Community Center
with entertainment, kids activities
and memorial candle lighting.
Bring photos & mementos of loved ones
to display.

For more info call Harvey at 388-0380

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FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Reader:
It’s been a busy time for the *Beachcomber* since our last issue. Taking advantage of the break in print publishing, we now have a website—muirbeachcomber.com—at long last! (See story on page 3). And we have added another merchandising item to the great *Beachcomber* brand: The Muir Beach Refrigerator Magnet (see back cover). The custom-made marble tile magnet and the plush *Beachcomber* beach towel enable us to build our coffers to support publishing costs. So please be generous this holiday season and support your community magazine.

Many thanks to the writers, illustrators, and photographers who made the *Beachcomber* possible this year. Much appreciation goes to: **Julie Smith**, *Beachcomber* Photographer, for enriching the *Beachcomber* pages with so many wonderful photos (she is game for going almost anywhere for a photo shoot!); to **Anne Jeschke**, our Circulation Manager, for cheerfully and enthusiastically maintaining the subscription records, collecting the fees, and not giving up on those who may have forgotten to renew their subscription!; and to **Laurie Piel**, our Archivist, who kept on keeping on to build an Archives for all to enjoy, and who collected many years of back issues for the Marin County Library Archives.

Special thanks to **Dee Turman** whose graphic design talent continues to dazzle. Dee not only designs the print edition but she created the website as well. Her generosity to this nonprofit endeavor is greatly appreciated.

Everyone at the *Beachcomber* wishes you and yours a wonderful holiday season. We are taking our winter break and will see you next year. Keep those stories coming in 2010!

Next issue: March 2010
Submissions Deadline: January 18, 2010

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Front Cover Painting by Julian F. Knox (1930 - 2005)
“Mom Reading” oil on canvas, 24” x 36”
Photograph by Black Cat Studio

UPFRONT

The 63-Year-Old *Beachcomber* Joins Cyberspace!

By Linda Gibbs

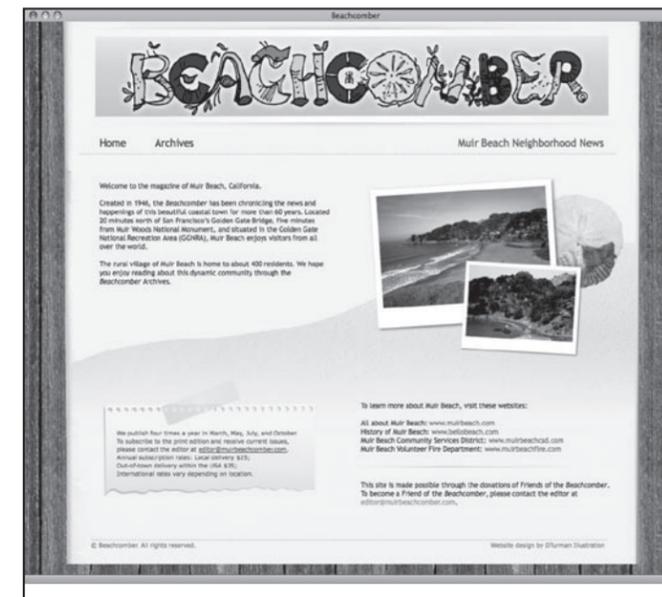
It’s finally here, muirbeachcomber.com!

After three years the *Beachcomber* dream to join cyberspace has been realized, albeit a modest beginning with just three years archived, but a beginning. Check out the *Beachcomber* website made possible by the generous donations of Friends of the *Beachcomber*.

Dee Turman, *Beachcomber* Graphic Designer (dturmanillustration.com), has done an outstanding job of designing the site. And Julie Smith of Polaris Interactive (polarisinteractive.com) was most helpful in setting up the web hosting services. And we can’t thank Friends of the *Beachcomber* enough for making the website construction possible.

We hope you enjoy it.

Please note the Archives begin with the 2008 issues. The current year, 2009, is only available through subscription to the print edition. In the fall of next year, the 2009 issues will be uploaded to the website. In the meantime, support the *Beachcomber* by keeping your subscription current.



Laurie Piel and I have the ambitious goal of going back through the years and adding more issues to the website. Donations to Friends of the *Beachcomber* are welcome to help us achieve the full digital archiving of the *Beachcomber* backlog.

3 years down,
60 years to go!

MARIN ORATORIO

Boyd Jarrell, Musical Director

The Community Chorus at the College of Marin, in celebration of the 200th anniversary of the birth of Felix Mendelssohn, will perform his Epic Oratorio,

ELIJAH

with guest soloists and professional orchestra.
Our calendars fill up early, so save the date:

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12, 8:00 PM

OR

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13, 3:00 PM

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Graduation 2009 Redux

By Christian Riehl

“Supplicam reverentiis vestries viri mulieresque Trinity Aula quorum nomina...”

And so began the graduation. Leslie and I sat on a bench in the gallery of the Senate House in the center of Cambridge at five o'clock in the afternoon. Below us on the main floor sat our daughter Rebecca and her classmates of Trinity Hall who were about to receive college degrees. Earlier in the afternoon, at tea, the Master confided to me that he was a bit anxious about remembering the correct Latin masculine and feminine forms of the various degrees he must confer, and so he had been practicing.

Leslie and I had arrived in England the day before. It's easy to get to Cambridge from Muir Beach: overnight flight to Heathrow; underground to Kings Cross Station (crowded, especially between platforms nine and ten what with the kids returning for summer break from their boarding school up north); train to Cambridge, and you're there. Nevertheless, because of the distance we traveled for graduation, we were afforded rooms right in the college.

There are thirty-one colleges at Cambridge, and because all graduations take place at the University Senate House, three days are set aside at the beginning of summer for the conferment of degrees. By custom, graduands of the three royal colleges—Kings, Trinity, and St. John's—are presented first, followed by the other twenty-eight in order of their foundation. Trinity Hall, established in 1352, is the fifth oldest. Graduation was scheduled to begin at 5:00 pm. That gave us plenty of time to go punting on the river Cam. The weather was warm and sunny.

Tea was served early, at 3:30. Afterwards, the graduands gathered in their robes and hoods. Each college has its own color and style of robe, which students wear to college functions throughout the year. At graduation, each also wears a hood. The hood isn't actually worn on the head, but rather, it hangs down the back so that the colored lining signifying the student's degree can be seen. For example, a Master of Engineering—Rebecca's degree—wears a hood “of black cloth lined with bronze silk.”

Shortly before the appointed time of graduation, the graduands are led by a Praelector in a procession from their college through the streets of Cambridge to the Senate House. Friends and family shout greetings and congratulations. Tourists take pictures. The graduands proceed into the Senate House, followed by their families who fill the galleries.

The Vice-Chancellor's deputy—in this case, the Master of Trinity Hall—enters the Senate House preceded by an *Esquire Bedell* bearing an ancient gold mace. Also entering



Rebecca Riehl
Photograph by Christian Riehl

are the *Registry*, two *Proctors* and their deputies, the *Pro-Proctors* who carry the bylaws of the University (two large leather bound books suspended by chains), and another mace-bearing *Esquire Bedell*. The Congregation is then called to order.

“Supplicam reverentiis vestries viri mulieresque Trinity Aula quorum nomina juxta senaculum in portico proposuit hodie Registrarius nec delevit Procancellaria ut gradum quisque quem rite petivit assequatur.” “Those men and women of Trinity Hall, whose names the Registry has today posted in the arcade beside the Senate House, beg your reverences that they may proceed to the degree for which each has properly applied.”

There is a brief pause to allow anyone to object to the award of a degree to any of the students. Actually, there have been times when objections have been raised—most recently, when an honorary degree is being conferred upon a controversial person. Happily, no objections were raised at this graduation, and so a Pro-Proctor declared “*Placet*”, meaning “it pleases.”

The Master of the College sits in a large chair on a dais facing the students, ready to confer the degrees. Ancient custom, again, determines the order in which degrees are given. Master of Law is conferred first. Next is Master of Engineering. The law degrees are conferred. Then the first four engineering students advance forward and receive their degrees. Then another four students advance down the aisle. Each takes hold of one of the Praelector's outstretched fingers. The Praelector doffs his mortarboard hat, bows to the Master, and says “*Dignissime domine Domine Procancellarie et tota Academia, praesento...*” “Most worthy Vice Chancellor and the whole University, I present to you these men and women, whom I know to be suitable both by character and learning to proceed to the degree of Master of Engineering, for which I pledge my faith to you and the whole University.” One of the Esquire Bedells calls out “Rebecca Custis Riehl.” Rebecca releases the Praelector's hand, walks forward, and kneels in front of the Master. She clasps her hands together and the Master clasps his hands around hers. “*Auctoritate mihi commissa admitto te ad gradum...*” “By the authority committed to me I admit you to the degree of Master of Engineering, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” Rebecca stands, takes one step back, bows to the Master, and leaves the Senate House.

After the last graduand has been conferred their degree, the congregation is dissolved. The Master, the Esquire Bedells and the other officers leave in full procession. Then the families and friends leave the galleries to join the new graduates.

Muir Beachers Inundate Washington, DC

By Gerry Pearlman

SYDNEY FRIEDMAN AND ISAAC PEARLMAN, two more Muir Beachers, spent the summer in Washington, DC, hoping to put new life into the faltering Obama administration.

Isaac interned at Oceana, which is the largest nonprofit in the country devoted to the health and sustainability of the world's oceans. Sydney interned at Convergence, a nonprofit organization that employs dialogue and consensus building to forge enduring solutions to important domestic and international issues where disagreement and division stand in the way of progress.

Can Muir Beachers alone stem the tide of inanity emanating daily from our nation's capitol? Good luck to them and the Red Sox!

Sydney graduated from the Elliot School of International relations at Georgetown University with a B.A. She spent two years in the Peace Corps serving in Bolivia and went on from there to work for the United Nations in Geneva.

The Trinity Hall graduation ceremony lasted thirty minutes, start to finish. Every word was in Latin. It was great.

We milled about on the lawn in front of the Senate House, taking pictures, greeting the families of other graduates, and generally being happy. After a time, we returned to Trinity Hall and the festivities continued, first with the Tutor's Drinks Parties, hosted, incidentally, by the students' faculty Tutors, and then with dinner in marquees set up in the Fellow's Garden along the river Cam.

When Rebecca was young and I wanted to get her to do what I wanted, she sometimes hit me with the inevitable question:

“Why should I do what you say?” Rebecca would ask.

“Because I have a Master's Degree. In *Business Administration!*” was my ready reply.

As the sun was getting low and Leslie and I were preparing to call it a day, Rebecca reminded me of this old rejoinder.

“You can't use that anymore, you know. Because now I have a Master's Degree, too. In *Chemical Engineering!*”

“Yes, you do my dear,” I said. “And congratulations. But just remember: I have *forty years' experience.*”

“Oh for crying out loud! If you employ that logic, how can I ever catch up?”

“Perseverance, my dear, perseverance.”

And with that, Leslie and I retired to our rooms, leaving the new graduates to continue enjoying themselves in the college bar.

Isaac graduated from UC San Diego with a B.S. in Environmental Systems and a B.A. in English. He then served in the Peace Corps in Peru for two years before entering the graduate program in environmental studies at UC Santa Barbara. He returned to Santa Barbara to complete his graduate work after the summer.

Interestingly enough all the Muir Beachers now in Washington D.C. grew up on Sunset Way in houses not too far removed from one another, and with only a slight age difference between them, yet they have never met.

CONCLUDING UNSCIENTIFIC POSTSCRIPT: PLEASE MARK NOV. 28, 2009 IN YOUR CALENDAR AND JOIN ME AT THE MUIR BEACH COMMUNITY CENTER TO CELEBRATE MY 75TH BIRTHDAY!

I am also now working as a volunteer counselor for HICAP (Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program). HICAP provides free information about the federal Medicare program. If anyone needs information on Medicare, please feel free to contact me at 380- 5056.

Last but not least- congratulations to the other Pearlman (Avram) who just passed the California State Boards for his environmental engineering license.

New Instructor for Tuesday Night Yoga



Laura Calhoun

Laura Calhoun is teaching Tao Flow Yoga on Tuesday evenings, 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm, at Taylor's zendo, 1821 Shoreline Highway, Muir Beach.

Laura found her love for yoga 35 years ago. An original of California, it was in Brazil, where she was raised, that she started her practice and studies with Gloria Amoras and De Rose. In the late 1980s, she returned to California and became a Graduate of the Shiatsu School of California in

Los Angeles. She continued her studies in Japan, also focusing in the Do-In and Qigong healing arts, which are deeply rooted in the philosophy and practices of traditional Chinese medicine. In 2000, Laura moved to New York and established herself as a yoga instructor and massage therapist. There, she studied with Donna Farhi, Erich Schiffmann, and Master Yang Fuku. Since moving to San Francisco, she has studied with Judith Lasate and Liping Zhu. Laura's practice and teaching brings her extensive and diverse experience together, combining the



Laura Calhoun in the Utthita Parsvakonasana (Extended Side Angle) pose.

deep reflective strength and relaxation of Yoga Asana, with acupuncture and meridian circulation.

For more information, call Laura at 197 6015299 (cell) or email her at lauracalhounart@gmail.com.

Photographs by Lino Caminha

Help Avoid Collisions!

By Dave MacKenzie

When I ride a bike around cars, I see traffic quite differently from when I am the car driver. Having had several close calls with cars right here in Muir Beach (not including the fairly hazardous Hwy 1), I have talked to the Marin County Maintenance crew regarding vegetation which obscures viewing. In Muir Beach we have rushing commuters and tourists from other parts of the world, even tour buses on our narrow roads. I have had some close car-to-car confrontations as well, and I am not the only one.

If you are a homeowner in Muir Beach, and you have some vegetation overhanging or obscuring the county road or even the visibility from a driver's point of view, you may be in violation of one or more county ordinances. The county road

widths in Muir Beach are typically 40 feet, so your may not even own that bit of property edge on which you have grown plants! In any case, your plants cannot overhang or obscure the public roadway, as a safety hazard may occur. (And we are not even discussing potential fire hazards here.)

The county has identified Muir Beach Overlook Drive, Starbuck Drive, and Ahab Drive as among those which have potentially hazardous encroachments. The county can require the property owner to remove the plants and follow-up with legal action if necessary. So how about it homeowners? Can't you cut some of those bushes or pines which are overhanging the road or potentially obscuring views? Would you really want to be responsible for a serious or life-threatening accident? Please be a good neighbor and get trimming! Oh yeah, how about also slowing down on our little country roads?



Photograph by Julie Smith

Muir Beach Community Center Notice

Laurie Piel, Community Center Rental Coordinator, will be out of the country Nov. 20th - Dec. 26th. Kathy Sward will be handling rentals during

Laurie's absence. If you have rental needs or questions during that time, please continue to email your queries to BooktheMBCC@aol.com or call Kathy at 415.383.6762.



Wag's Revue Online-Only Literary Quarterly Releases Third Issue, Fall 2009 Edition of Wag's Revue

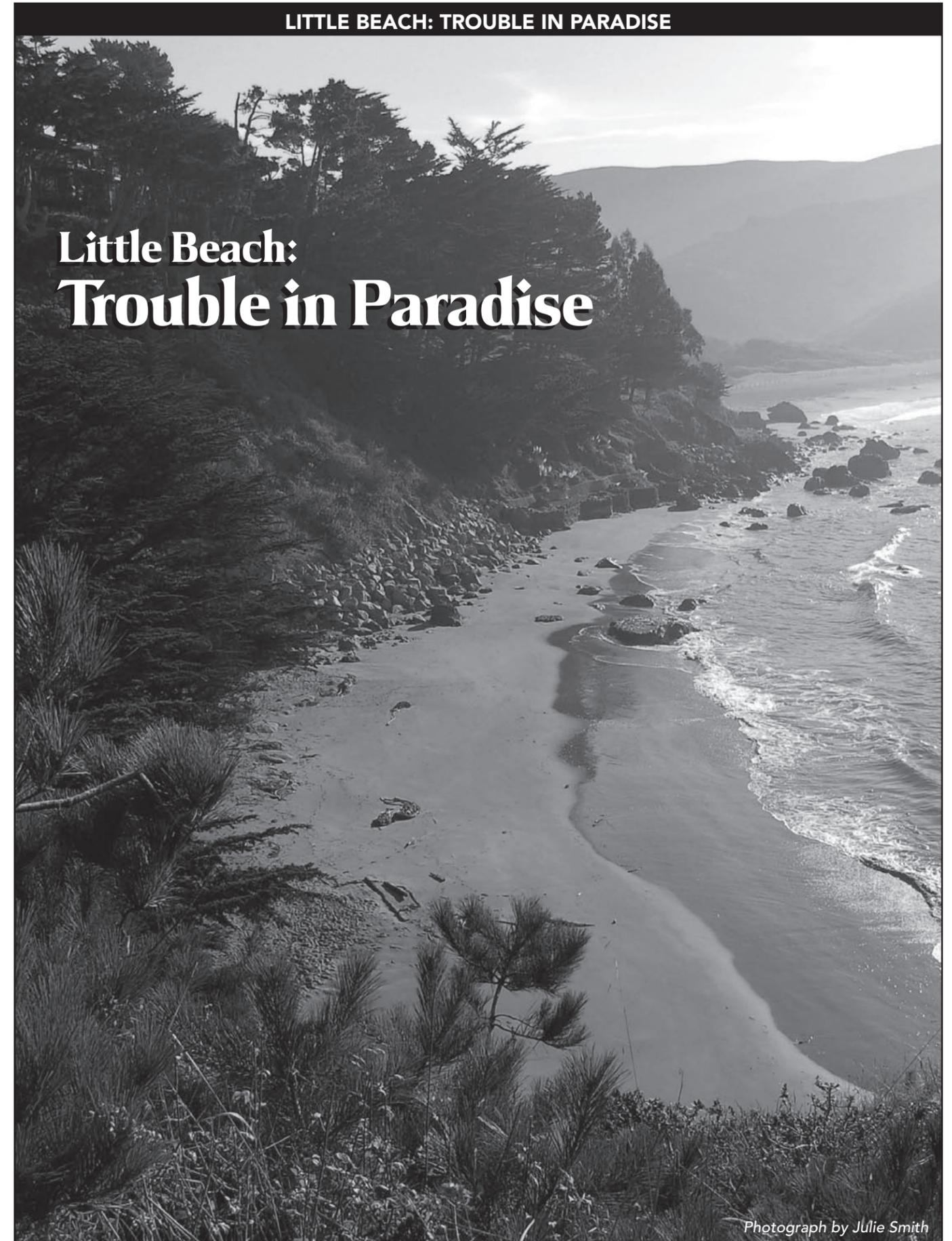
Features George Saunders, Lee Gutkind, John D'Agata, Daniel Wallace and others

Visit Wag's Revue at www.wagsrevue.com

The arrival of Issue 3 also heralds the opening of the Wag's Revue Winter Contests in fiction, nonfiction, and poetry. The winners receive a \$500 prize and publication in Issue 4. Find submission guidelines here www.wagsrevue.com/submit.php. Contest deadline is November 30th.

—Sandra Allen, Nonfiction Editor

Little Beach: Trouble in Paradise



Photograph by Julie Smith

**Please Join Us for an Important Meeting
with Supervisor Steve Kinsey
at the Muir Beach Community Center
Tuesday, June 16th at 7pm**

As some are already aware, there has been a dramatic escalation of lewd behavior on Little Beach. In the past few months, there has been an arrest of a man for masturbating on the beach. On another occasion, a man masturbated in the presence of 2 unsupervised pre-teen girls and a three year old and her mother who were on the beach. In this latter instance, Sheriff's officers were phoned but no arrest was made, as the perpetrator was able to run away before officers could respond.

There has been an increase in exhibitionism, intimidation, public urinating, sexual harassment and openly sexual behavior on the beach. Many residents have stated that they feel that it is not safe or enjoyable to let their kids play on the beach without close supervision. And many women do not feel comfortable using Little Beach alone. This beach is a treasure in our community and the fact that many residents are deeming it unsafe or unusable is something that must be urgently addressed.

We are very alarmed about the recent escalation in frequency and severity of these violations, and Supervisor Kinsey has agreed to meet with us and the Sheriff's Department to discuss our concerns and formulate a response. Please come to gather information and share information at this very important neighborhood meeting.

THIS MEETING IS OPEN TO RESIDENTS OF MUIR BEACH ONLY.

Concerned Neighbors of Muir Beach

- | | | | |
|-------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|
| Kent Andrews | Eric Groneman | Chas Kingsbury | Scott Sampson |
| Troy Bassett | Graham Groneman | Vicki Longoria-Passalacqua | Eric Scalera |
| Bryce Browning | Joey Groneman | Aran Moore | David Schwartz |
| Shamini Dhana | Chris Gove | Misti Norton | Isis Schwartz |
| Brad Eigsti | Victoria Hamilton-Rivers | Shirley Nygren | Toni Simmons |
| Lisa Eigsti | Bob Hayden | Laura Pandapas | Cori Valentine |
| Dave Elliott | Dee Hayden | Mark Pandapas | Laura Van Amburgh |
| Stephen Gillespie | Kathy Johnston | Antonio Pares | Bethany Villere |
| John Gillette | Michael Kaufman | Felipe Passalacqua | Richard Weiner |
| Daniel Gott | Tayeko Kaufman | Arlene Robertson | Yukiko Weiner |
| Heather Gott | Al Kile | Edna Rossenas | Laura Wright |

MUIR BEACH CONFABULATION

Nude, Lewd Behavior at Little Beach

By Paul Jeschke, Muir Beach, Special to the Citizen

Nude isn't necessarily lewd, even if the naked man walking toward you on Little Beach has an erection, the District Attorney told Muir Beach residents Tuesday night.

"It depends on your reaction—what's in your mind," District Attorney Edward Berberian said at a meeting at the Muir Beach Community Center. "If you don't feel threatened, if it doesn't offend you, then no crime has been committed. If you're frightened and upset at the behavior and are willing to complain, then it's a violation that's punishable."

The DA spoke at an emotional community meeting arranged by Supervisor Steve Kinsey to discuss allegations of inappropriate sexual activity at Little Beach, a tranquil, somewhat inaccessible sliver of sand that that has apparently garnered notoriety as a place to cast off both clothing and sexual inhibitions. Several residents complained that lewd acts, facilitated by the Little Beach's historic "clothing optional" reputation, had created a dangerous and perverse atmosphere. Families with children, they said, were afraid to frequent the beach for fear of being subjected to public sex.

"We need this lewd behavior to stop," said Laura Pandapas who moved to Muir Beach two years ago. Pandapas' written complaints resulted in the meeting with county and federal officials. Visibly shaken by what she had witnessed, Pandapas described several instances of men masturbating while a young child was nearby and another situation where a couple masturbated each other in plain view of other beachgoers.

"I've seen men down there with hardware on their genitals," Pandapas told a reporter after the meeting, "and a strange man, completely shaven, waxed from head to toe, posing on the rocks and parading up and down the beach."

Neighbor Dan Gott said his wife and three-and-a-half-year-old daughter were on the beach, accompanied by two pre-teen girls, when a nude male stood up and began masturbating "pretty obviously trying to get the girls' attention."

"People in this community are fearful, intimidated, and are afraid to use the beach," Pandapas said. "There are people who have some utopian ideal about being naked and free. But when you allow people to take their clothes off in public, you just invite misbehavior."

Pandapas cited a 1975 ordinance by the Board of Supervisors that prohibits "nudity in public places, places open to the public, and places open to public view" unless there is a specific exemption. Little Beach, she argues, is no exception.

"I do distinguish between clothing optional beaches and lewd behavior," Kinsey said, citing a 40-year history of law

enforcement efforts to deal with complaints about naked antics at Little Beach. "We need to reestablish societal norms on this beach, but I don't sense that people want to change the long history of nude sunbathing."

"It's like the tide, it comes and it goes," the supervisor said.

"It's not a tide, it's a tsunami," countered Tayeko Kaufman. "It's way off the charts. This is a safety issue of utmost importance to this community."

Marin County Sheriff's Lt. Cheryl Fisher acknowledged that it often takes half an hour for deputies to drive over the hill to the relatively remote hamlet. Frequently the perpetrator has left before law enforcement arrives. She advised beachgoers who witness inappropriate behavior to remember descriptive details "or better yet, discretely take a picture with your cell phone." Fisher cautioned against aggressively confronting sexual offenders and "getting yourself between a rock and a hard place."

Instead of calling 9-1-1, Fisher suggested phoning the sheriff department's dispatch center at 479-2311.

Confrontation with sexual miscreants works, said Chris Gove, who visits the beach several times a day and has "yelled at people to knock it off." He laughingly insisted, however, that he was "not against nudity at the beach" and even "encouraged some people to take their clothes off."

Kinsey asked the Community Services District to send him a letter suggesting appropriate language for a sign at beach entrances. It might say, the supervisor said, that while clothing was optional, lewd and lascivious behavior is prohibited and would be prosecuted. But District Manager Maury Ostroff balked at the suggestion and told Kinsey after the meeting that it "wasn't part of the CSD's jurisdiction" and that beach nudity wasn't anything the CSD should get involved with.

Kinsey also said he'd ask his colleagues on the board for additional money for beach patrols.

The beach's popularity with nudists is promulgated by an online guide to nude beaches published by the San Francisco Bay Guardian, Kinsey said. The guide gives Muir Beach an "A" rating ("Recommended") and provides detailed directions on how to get there. The reviewer declares that Muir Beach visitors "can wear as little or as much as you want." The crowd might number 100 on a warm day and includes "straights, gays, singles, couples, families, seniors, young people and others," according to the Guardian. Kinsey said he would call the paper and suggest a warning about lewd behavior.

Little Beach is separated from its big beach neighbor by a craggy boulder barrier and law enforcement is spotty at best. Sheriff's deputies have primary jurisdiction, officials agree, but federal rangers patrol the main beach and can respond and enforce local laws if requested, said Marybeth McFarland, a law enforcement specialist for GGNRA.

Chief Ranger Yvette Ruan said she had researched GGNRA records and found only two complaints of lewd behavior during the past year. "There is no federal law against nude sunbathing discretely conducted," the park ranger said.

On a languid Sunday afternoon the weekend before the community meeting, 15 beachgoers were enjoying intoxicating sun and enticingly warm sand on Little Beach. Most visitors wore swimsuits or street clothes, but two people were soaking up rays *au naturel*. The unclothed couple shared a beach blanket with a swim-suited female companion. The nonchalant nudes did not seek or attract attention from passing beachcombers or the trio of kayakers paddling just offshore. Although stretched out near a path that connects the secluded beach to nearby residences, it appeared unlikely the naked bodies were visible from houses perched on the hill.

Nude, Rude, and Lewd on Little Beach – Emails to our County Supervisor

By Walt Postle

Every so often the "problem" of offensive behavior on Little Beach raises its ugly head when someone from out of town strips off and is rude to someone living in Muir Beach. The cops are called and the miscreants (who are never properly identified or clearly described) disappear before the officers arrive. Everyone in the community gets an opportunity to vent about the outrageous behavior of the strangers in our midst; the cynical among us get a good laugh and life for all goes on as before.

The most recent episode in June of this year prompted a rather titillating flyer from the offended parties and resulted in a sold out meeting at the Community Center led by County Supervisor Steve Kinsey, and aided by heavy duty law enforcement officers from the various agencies with real or imagined jurisdiction over the local beaches. A good time was had by all.

Because I was familiar with this issue, I sent a couple of emails to Mr. Kinsey before and after the meeting. Here they are, slightly modified:

Sent: Saturday, June 13, 2009, 3:15 PM

Steve: Got a note in my mailbox that you and talent from County Sheriff's Office are going to come out to Muir Beach to deal with the "dramatic escalation of LEWD BEHAVIOR on Little Beach." I am shocked, shocked, and shocked again to read that people strip down on Little Beach and parade around in the buff.

Soaking up sun in the altogether at Muir Beach has a history that goes back at least as far as the "Summer of Love." Hippies made their way from San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury to hear the Grateful Dead and Quicksilver Messenger Service play at the beach and many dropped clothes and inhibitions along with mind-altering substances. Sixteen Marin sheriff deputies broke up a Sunday beach party in 1969 where an estimated 100 hippies were cavorting in the nude, but made no arrests.

Newspaper archives document a 1991 crackdown on nude lollygagging at Little Beach. Instead of issuing the customary warning to get dressed or get cited, deputies ticketed six naked miscreants. While a fine could have settled the violation, the skinny dippers asked for a trial by jury. Berberian dropped charges, pointing out that nudity was "a practice there for many years. It's been a long established custom."

Originally appeared in the June 18, 2009 issue of the West Marin Citizen. Reprinted by permission of the West Marin Citizen and the author.

What goes on on Little Beach is nothing new. When I first moved here almost 40 years ago, Little Beach was the place where Marin's high school kids came to drink cheap beer or Gallo wine at a dollar a gallon, experiment with controlled substances, and prayed that they would get the opportunity to engage in "openly sexual behavior." Nothing new today except that the folks living around Little Beach now have million dollar homes and a keen interest in protecting their investment.

I suspect what they would really like you to do is to help them to turn Little Beach into a private beach for residents and their guests only. Fat chance! Unfortunately for them Little Beach is a public beach and a famous upscale nude beach. The offensive riffraff comes from far and wide. You get plenty of hits on the net when you link some variation of the theme of nudity with Muir Beach, almost all with glowing testimonials to the beauty and convenience of the site.

The Sheriff's able officers, being at least 30 minutes away by road, are powerless to do anything about the intermittent Little Beach "crime" waves. They also have better things to do than waste their time running around telling people to put their pants on.

Over the years I've learned to never to take young children to Little Beach and to stay away from it during hot weather when the folks are stripping off. I do however walk the beach just about every day of the week in the early morning. I've found some really nasty stuff—dead seals and birds, trash, garbage

and rubbish of every sort, and worst of all, corpses washed over from the GG Bridge. None of these issues, however, have the sex appeal of "exhibitionism, intimidation, public urinating, sexual harassment, and openly sexual behavior..."

I don't know if the Press knows about this meeting yet. It is certainly newsworthy—Marin County—lewd behavior, public nudity, rich folk, liberals, politics, etc. I think the SF papers would have a lot of fun, and if it had good visuals, might even make the Daily Show.

Sent: Wednesday June 17, 2009, 11:37AM

Steve: I think you conducted last night's meeting very skillfully. I also learned a thing or two—that folks around here are really not too keen on what goes on on Little Beach. Sun bathing in the buff may be all well and good but lewd and lascivious behavior is quite intolerable. No one should be compelled to view this activity from their house or in the course of a casual walk on a public beach and absolutely not when they have young children in tow.

It was clear from the discussion that given the location of the site (way out in the sticks) and the nature of the offenses that not much can be done by local police. Citizen's arrest, provision of detailed descriptions of the perps, cell phone photos, etc., are fine suggestions for citizen action but are extremely unlikely to produce any result. Confronting the perps is not a job for housewives and little old men like me. Signage will also help but will probably be stolen within a month to adorn some kid's bedroom. I remember the signage for the "Elizabeth Terwilliger Butterfly Grove" on Pacific Way disappeared within a month of being put up. The butterflies departed a few years later.

A "naturist group" based in Wisconsin is appealing the July decision in which a state appeals court overturned a 30-year-old California policy that informally allowed nudity on some state beaches. West Marin's Red Rock beach, perhaps the most popular nude beach in the area, is included in the ban. The ruling could not have come at a worse time for residents in Muir Beach who—already beset by a rise in lewd behavior at Little Beach, the unofficial clothing-optional cove north of the federal beach—are now bracing for the Red Rock diaspora.

Previously, concerned Muir Beach residents on June 16 called for a meeting with Supervisor Steve Kinsey to address the

What is needed on Little Beach is a webcam/surveillance camera that would scan the beach every few minutes. Fortunately the beach is quite small (around 400 yards long) and almost all of it can be viewed from the end of Sunset Way. The MBCSD has a right of way to the beach from this point. A properly configured camera set up here (hidden in a tree top), hooked to the Internet, could keep what goes on down there on view 24/7. Everyone would have access to the images: local, federal, and State police agencies; local residents; and indeed, people across the world, anyone with an Internet connection could tune in. More eyes mean less crime especially of the sort we are afflicted with out here. Of course there may be blowback. A webcam aimed at discouraging nude, rude, and lewd behavior might attract to the community large numbers of exhibitionists eager to perform on a worldwide stage.

Surveillance technology is well developed, cheap, and readily available. Several Marin police departments have both expertise and wide experience in this field. Grant money from the Feds could pay the capital and maintenance costs of the system. Since lewd conduct is considered criminal activity, there should be no privacy issues.

This modest proposal flew with the buoyancy of a lead balloon. There was no response from Supervisor Kinsey. I think we should forget about the nudes on Little Beach. All in all, it's a minor annoyance just like the raccoons in the garbage cans and the deer among the flowers.

escalation in lewd behavior. Since the meeting—in what seems like an almost farcical twist—the residents have read news reports where Kinsey is quoted to say that he may move to formally designate Little Beach as clothing-optional—the first such beach in the county.

Below, Muir Beach resident Laura Pandapas tries to scale some rocks and get some perspective to figure out, 1) what happened and, 2) what her community wants for its neighborhood beach. —JK [Jim Kravets, editor of the West Marin Citizen]

GUEST COLUMN

What Cost Nudity?

By Laura Pandapas, Muir Beach

This past spring a disturbing incident took place on Little Beach, at the north end of Muir Beach. A naked man stood up on a rock, focused his attention on two pre-teen girls who were

playing unsupervised in the adjacent tide pools, and began to masturbate. Also on the beach at that time was a Muir Beach resident with her three year old. The mother immediately

called the sheriff who did respond, but the perpetrator ran off in the time it took for the deputy to arrive. This incident prompted a June 16 meeting with the county, held here in Muir Beach with Supervisor Steve Kinsey, the Sheriff's Department, the Park Service and the D.A. to discuss what options were available to address growing concerns about public safety on Little Beach.

Muir Beach residents have been very tolerant of the nudity on Little Beach over the past four decades, and that has resulted in the county being very lax about prosecuting violations on Little Beach of the Marin County ordinance that prohibits nudity in places open to public view. Though the aforementioned incident was particularly bad, it was sadly not an isolated occurrence. Stories of encountering openly sexual, lewd or intimidating behavior on Little Beach are common. Rather than phone in each incident to the sheriff, many just shrug it off because they know that by the time a deputy arrived there would be nothing to see and nobody to arrest. For many in Muir Beach, the live-and-let-live vibe on Little Beach is an integral part of its character, and most have learned to live with the errant behavior.

But when these encounters start to happen in the presence of children and are aimed at children, all bets are off. Hopefully that is something we can all agree upon, no matter how we personally feel about nudity on the beach.

Lately there have been too many visitors to Little Beach who seem to have completely lost sight of where they are—which is on a neighborhood beach surrounded by homes and families with young children. Little Beach is not some far-flung remote destination. It is literally the front yard of this community, especially for the many homes that sit directly above it. Because of its unique setting, Little Beach requires a level of respect and sensitivity that may not be required at more isolated and remote beaches. If, as some feel, tolerance of nudity is considered a part of the character of Little Beach, we must make sure that “seedy” and “creepy”—words I’ve heard even residents who support the nude bathing use lately to describe Little Beach—are not also a part of that character.

Nobody I know in Muir Beach is in an uproar over respectful individuals trying to enjoy the beach and avoid tan lines. There are many residents who would prefer to allow the nude sunbathing to continue provided the beach is rid of the sexual, lewd and intimidating behavior. Views on nudity notwithstanding, no community would allow such activity to persist unaddressed, and Muir Beach should be no different. Muir Beach shouldn't have to sacrifice the character, safety and well being of its community for some idealized notion of what nude beaches represent, while ignoring the reality of what Little Beach feels like to the people who have to live with it every day.

The reality is that there is a fair amount of sexual activity on Little Beach, as well as exhibitionism and intimidation. Many women don't feel comfortable on the beach alone. The beach is not considered safe for kids to play on without extremely close supervision, and families have stopped using Little Beach

because of all of the above problems. At the same time, the beautiful sheltered cove and inviting tide pools remain at the heart of this neighborhood. This is a very sad equation for this community, and if these things are the cost of tolerating nudity on Little Beach, then the cost is too high. It is not a reasonable request to ask the women, children, parents and grandparents of this community to stop using the spectacular beach that sits right at their doorstep. Little Beach must be safe and enjoyable and useable for everyone, not just for a few.

The intent is not to end the tolerance of nudity on Little Beach. There is a dedicated group of residents in Muir Beach committed to addressing the sexual, lewd and intimidating behavior, without having to end the tolerance to nudity that many have enjoyed without incident for years. For it to work for everyone, the onus is on the visitors to Little Beach to act respectfully towards their fellow beachgoers and the surrounding community.

The county plans to post signs that warn visitors that lewd, sexual and intimidating behavior will not be tolerated, along with the direct dispatch number for the Marin County Sheriff's Department.

At the June meeting, residents were instructed to be more vigilant about reporting offenders seen on the beach. We all have a responsibility to make sure Little Beach remains a place that is safe and comfortable for everyone. I am very proud of the community of Muir Beach for its continued commitment to caring for Little Beach, and for trying to do it with a nuanced approach that respects the unique character of this very special place.

Originally appeared in the August 6, 2009 issue of the West Marin Citizen. Reprinted by permission of the West Marin Citizen and the author.



Photograph by Julie Smith

Welcome to Little Beach!

Some things to remember while you are here:

- First and foremost, this is a neighborhood beach surrounded by homes and families with children. This beach is the front yard of this community. Please have respect for everyone who uses this beach.
- Please help us to maintain a safe environment on the beach by immediately reporting lewd, sexual or intimidating behavior to the Marin County Sheriff's Department at 415.479.2311.
- Please do not use our beautiful beach as a toilet. There are facilities in the main parking lot just for this purpose. There are also trash cans and recycling bins located there. Please leave behind only foot prints.....
- Please remember that all of us who love to use Little Beach have a responsibility to keep this beach clean, safe and enjoyable for everyone.
- Tell a friend.....or a stranger.....

Thank You!

By working together, we hope to make Little Beach safe and enjoyable for all!

The Neighbors of Muir Beach

The Little Beach Ad Hoc Committee has been passing this flier out to visitors on Little Beach since June 27, 2009. It has been received positively by most. The proposed signage for the beach will include points 1 and 2.

Dave Elliot	Michael Kaufman	Arlene Robertson
Dan Gott	Tayeko Kaufman	Scott Sampson
John Gillette	Al Kile	Steve Shaffer
Leighton Hills	Laura Lovitt	Eric Scalera
Kathy Johnston	Mark Pandapas	Cori Valentine

Little Beach Ad Hoc Committee

Little Beach is one of the jewels of our community. For many of us, it also effectively serves as our front yard. Little Beach is a community and public beach surrounded by County, State and National Park lands. It has never been a legal “clothing optional” beach. Although residents have tolerated nudity for years, this tolerance sets a social precedent rather than a legal one. It is the neighborhood’s historic tolerance that has led the County to choose to not enforce the Marin County ordinance prohibiting nudity in places open to public view. Nevertheless, offensive sexual behavior at Little Beach periodically results in a neighborhood call for action. Recent acts of sexual behavior gave rise to the June 16 meeting at the Community Center.

As a result of these incidents, an informal group of Muir Beach residents, the “Little Beach Ad Hoc Committee,” has been formed to address these issues. It is not the intent nor desire of this committee to eliminate nude sun bathing on Little Beach. Our focus is on public safety and restoring an atmosphere to Little Beach that allows neighbors and visitors to feel comfortable and safe while enjoying this precious treasure. Following a June 16th meeting with Supervisor Kinsey and the County, we have been working to determine how to make Little Beach a safer, more comfortable place for women, children and families while maintaining the tolerance to nudity enjoyed on Little Beach for many years. For those residents unable to attend the June 16th event, the meeting and subsequent discussions resulted in the following agreements and actions:

- 1) The Sheriff’s Department will respond to calls pertaining to lewd, sexual, intimidating, or harassing behavior and will issue citations. The importance of phoning in incidents to the Sheriff Department was stressed repeatedly, because phone calls provide the only public record of such incidents. In addition, it is important to provide as much detail as possible to the dispatcher (e.g., a detailed description of the offense and offender; if possible, a photograph of offender’s license plate).
- 2) With regard to incidents of illegal behavior, the DA will prosecute as appropriate, if they have the proper evidence (e.g., photograph/video, corroborating witnesses).
- 3) The County will provide signage that warns against lewd, sexual, intimidating or harassing behavior (exact wording not yet agreed upon). The sign will also have the direct dispatch number for the Marin County Sheriff’s Department.
- 4) Supervisor Kinsey will contact Bay Area publications, print and online, to reinforce that such behavior is illegal and will be subject to prosecution.

After the meeting, some neighbors voiced concerns about the feasibility of women confronting an offending male and trying to secure a photograph. At a second meeting of the Little Beach Ad Hoc Committee on June 22, it was decided that women should not be placed in the awkward and potentially dangerous position of collecting evidence or documenting an incident. A group of eight Muir Beach men were recruited by Dave Elliot to be on call and assist anyone exposed to lewd, sexual, intimidating or harassing behavior. The names of these men will also be on the incident report, so that women will not feel as exposed. If you would like a copy of the list of Muir Beach men who have offered their assistance, please contact Dave Elliott or Tayeko Kaufman. In addition our committee will also maintain a log of incidents at the beach.

Given that the production of signage will take some time, the committee further agreed that additional and more immediate actions were appropriate to support our efforts. It was acknowledged that most nude bathers are not a problem and that, if they were made aware of the issue, they might be enlisted to help. As a result, since June 27th, we have been distributing a flier (shown on the back of this page) to Little Beach visitors. Results to date have been encouraging, with most of the nude sun bathers approached agreeing to help “police” the beach. We are hopeful that our efforts will encourage Muir Beach residents to use the beach to “balance the energy” and ensure that this wonderful place remains suitable for a residential neighborhood filled with families and children.

GREEN GULCH FARM



If it’s Thursday, it’s Pain American, Corn Rye, Rustic, Roasted Potato...or...

The Beachcomber invited Muir Beach bread subscribers to express their appreciation to Mick Sopko and the Green Gulch Bakery, conveying what it means to them to receive freshly baked—sometimes still warm—artisan bread every Thursday afternoon. Here are their responses. —LG

In Appreciation of Green Gulch Bakery

By Maury Ostroff

A recent study has concluded that for the first time in human history, more people on earth are now living in urban cities than in rural areas. For countless millennia, village life was the norm for human experience. My grandparents were born into that world in Eastern Europe just over a century ago, and grew up in a setting just like the one in “Fiddler on the Roof” before coming to America. In that world, most people had a simpler, down-to-earth profession or trade: butcher, baker, candlestick-maker, farmer, blacksmith, etc.

But the current world we live in has grown so much more incredibly complex and abstract. I could not really explain to my own parents what it is I do for a living in the corporate world, and I couldn’t even begin to think about what I’d say to my grandmother (deceased many years) other than to just say that I worked in an office with computers.

Yes, it is a cliché to cite how everything we consume these days is packaged and processed and shrink-wrapped so as to not fold, spindle or mutilate. And we are all familiar with the various movements to consume locally grown and prepared food. All of which I would love to support,



Head Baker Mick Sopko and his assistant, Melissa Dimmitt



It’s a busy morning for Mick and Melissa who are preparing the dough for Muir Beach bread subscribers, baking loaves for a local farmers market, and baking rolls for dinner. Also on the list: focaccia!

and try to do, but find the pressures of daily life just make it easier to go for convenience at the supermarket.

But we do have the Green Gulch Bakery and the bread program. I enjoy looking forward every week to making the choice, and every Thursday I get to pick up the fresh loaf of bread. I always tear a piece off the end when I pick it up and eat it right there. (When I get home, I use a serrated bread knife to cut off a real slice and hide the fact that I tore off a piece by hand.) I have also had the opportunity to see the bread oven down in the kitchen at Green Gulch, and see for myself how they do the age-old craft of baking bread.

Muir Beach is our little village. The bread program is our connection to a basic pattern of life, that ties us to our ancestors with that most staple of foodstuffs—our daily bread. ♡



We in Muir Beach are SO blessed to have the Green Gulch bread program. Sometimes it’s hard to decide which bread to order. Each and every loaf is delicious!

—Deborah McDonald

GREEN GULCH BAKERY



Mick and Melissa prepare Pain Americain dough, one of the choices for the next day's Muir Beach delivery.

We look forward to every Thursday and our wonderful gift from Mick and Green Gulch. It is the finest, the best, the tastiest bread, made with quality ingredients and love. We brag about Green Gulch bread to our friends 'over the hill', knowing it is one more attribute that makes our community so special. Many thanks to Green Gulch, and most particularly Mick, for bringing us such pleasure every day.
—Anne Jeschke



As a longtime baker, weekly pizza maker, and general student of bread baking, the amazing variety and quality of crust and crumb emanating from Green Gulch is pure poetry. My admiration and appreciation go out to Mick and his crew for making Thursday the highlight of the work week.
—David Leivick



We have become so spoiled, having such good bread delivered every week, that now we can no longer enjoy eating any other bread. We just hope this arrangement will last for a very long time!
—Linda and Steve Hulley



We usually tell Mick "one of each" when he emails the choices. How can one choose between such great offerings? And sometimes there's a little "surprise" mixed in since Mick can't seem to stop trying to make the breads even better. I absolutely fell in love with a recent potato bread which had a little pepper added for a mildly assertive spiciness. That bread got even better toasted. No breakfast would be complete without Mick's bread. To my taste buds, Green Gulch breads are the best in the Bay Area.
—Paul Jeschke



There's something special about Thursdays in Muir Beach. It's the delicious bread lovingly made and delivered by our friends at Green Gulch. What a special wholesome treat. Thank you.

—Joanie Wynn (#1 Starbucks)

Every Thursday, I look forward to walking the short distance uphill from my front door, to pick up a freshly baked loaf of the best bread Richard and I have tasted in many years. Sometimes, if I arrive early enough, the bread is still warm. We then dive into it immediately, before dinner, just to enjoy the freshness. We both are so grateful to Valorie and Mick, and now Mick, for this delicious and healthy addition to our meals. It is yet another benefit of having such great, and talented, Green Gulch neighbors.
—Brenda Kohn, 5 Ahab Drive



To Mick and all the fine bakers of Green Gulch, Thank you so much for baking bread every week. I only recently started buying bread, and I will continue because you bake the best bread I've ever tasted! Thanks for the nourishment every week.

Sincerely, Vicki Longoria and Felipe Passalacqua



Mick checks the Rustic loaves baking in the Italian hearth deck oven.

Cooling Rustic bread destined for the Mill Valley Farmers Market at the new Whole Foods on E. Blithedale.

Alas and alack, my faithful and aged sourdough starter languishes in the back of the refrigerator. He's fed once or twice a month, and I stare somewhat guiltily into the trashcan as I replenish him only to toss half of him out once again. How can he compete with Mick's Muir Beach Sourdough? Or the children's favorite, Pain Au Levain? The poppy seed the other week was a risk for the young ones, yet gobbled up in one sitting once we all tested the little black dots. Our new tradition of "soup, salad, and bread" Thursday night dinners whisks me back 30 years and I sense the memory of the entire extended family eating those simple yet delicious meals. Leftovers? Hardly. But croutons and toast never settled so sweetly on the tongue. My daughter is finally eating her crust, sopping up the remnants of the soup. My son has become such a crust snob that when I finally broke out my own sourdough bread recipe this weekend, an arduous and lengthy labor of love, he bluntly told me that he leans Green Gulch way. Alas and alack indeed... but what a tasty way to go. Thank you, Mick and friends.

—Suzanne Bender-Van Spyk

Photographs by Julie Smith

MUIR BEACH VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT



MBVFD Incident Log

Compiled by Paul Jeschke

June 9, 9:15 am

Muir Beach Overlook: Rappel by rope to retrieve body of apparent suicide victim 600-feet over the edge.

June 29, 5:30 pm

Shoreline Highway: Call cancelled.

July 11, 11:00 am

Muir Woods: 47-year-old woman with possible broken ankle taken from Hillside Trail to parking lot and transported by ambulance to Marin General Hospital.

July 11, 9:30 pm

Muir Beach Parking Lot: Trash can fire extinguished.

July 13, 4:10 pm

Muir Woods: 73-year-old diabetic with low blood sugar administered glucose.

July 16, 10:45 am

Muir Beach: Sunset Way resident treated for eye injury.

July 18, 9:45 am

Slide Ranch: Cyclist down on Highway One. Transported to Marin General Hospital.

July 26, 10:30 am

Muir Beach: Report of surfer or unmanned surfboard in water. Unable to locate.

August 1, 11:45 am

Muir Woods: Visitor with possible fractured ankle transported from Fern Trail to main parking lot. Drove self to hospital.

August 8, 11:40 am

Highway One North of Muir Beach: Report of bicyclist with possible seizure. Unable to locate.

August 9, 5:35 pm

Muir Beach: Dog bites 8-year-old boy on hand. Treated and transported to Marin General Hospital.

August 22, 8:50 am

GGNRA: Abandoned military flare.

August 22, 9:20 am

Muir Woods Road: Report of injured bicyclist. Unable to locate.

August 29, 1:20 pm

Muir Woods: Medical aid to visitor who fell from bridge.

August 30, 12:00 pm

Coastal Trail: Cyclist down at Heather Cutoff. Head and spine injuries. Transported to Marin General Hospital.

September 6, 11:00 am

Muir Woods: Fire 40-feet up a large redwood tree.

September 11, 7:00 am

Muir Beach: Smoke alarm at Shoreline Highway residence apparently triggered by low battery.

The History Project

By Nataya Bassett

Have you heard about the Muir Beach Fire Department? I'll tell you all about it. The exhaust from the fire truck smells like underwear that hasn't been washed in a million years. I hear the firemen talking about the fire training. Our firemen's safety equipment (like their clothes) is like wearing a down sleeping bag all day. The truck engine sounds like tap, tap, tap, and a rockslide in a thunderstorm. The truck looks a little different from other trucks. The Muir Beach Fire Department does eye-popping training. I, Nataya, have watched the Muir Beach volunteers take giant jaws and cut a car, pry off the roof, pry off the doors, take an ax to the windows, and cut the steering wheel. Creak...there goes the car! The men are always wearing halos over their heads. I think the firefighters are always on their toes.

INTERVIEW

I interviewed the marvelous John John Sward, who is the fire chief at Muir Beach. The fire department only has room for two fire trucks. The community elected the strong chief John. John is big and looks really strong. He could probably throw me up to the sky, and I would still be on the way up at nightfall with no problem. They park the truck in a shack at the dairy farm where there are horses and no cows. John told me it took the designer Bryce Browning two weeks to design the Muir Beach logo of a dog doing its "business." The logo is a black puppy lifting its leg. I have a baseball cap and a sweatshirt with the black puppy doing its duty. I think the Muir Beach Fire Department is awesome. I think John is not super nice...I know he's super nice!



Nataya displays her history project with her third grade teacher, Ms. Putalik, from last year at Strawberry Point Elementary. This year Nataya attends Willow Creek Academy as a fourth grader. Photograph by Troy Bassett

HISTORY OF THE FIRE DEPARTMENT

The Muir Beach Volunteer Fire Department was formed in 1970. The Muir Beach Volunteer Fire Department was created because two houses burned to the ground at Muir Beach and you had to be in the Bello Beach Fire Department's club for you to get help. The houses crumbled because no one helped them. And so, the Muir Beach community created a volunteer fire department.

The MBVFD gets money from the people who go to the firemen's BBQ. They sell food, raffle tickets, drinks, Muir Beach shirts, jackets, hats, and baby wear to raise money for the MBVFD. The money goes towards buying fancy equipment for the 12 men on the team. To equip a new volunteer with brand new equipment would cost \$3,500. The MBVFD is equipped to handle wild land fires, off road crashes, structural fires, and roadside and medical emergencies.

The MBVFD is very extinguishing!

MUIR BEACH QUILTERS
Holiday Arts Fair



SATURDAY AND SUNDAY

December 5th, 11 am – 5 pm and December 6th, 10 am – 4 pm

By Kathy Sward and Judith Yamamoto

Here comes the holiday season—and with it our famous Muir Beach Quilters Holiday Arts Fair. Once again, our fabulous bazaar of holiday gifts and good cheer will gently envelop the community center in a magical cloud. And once again the Fair will feature many of our favorite artists from years past and, as always, introduce several new ones.

One of the exciting goals of our Fair is to celebrate our marvelous artists by giving them a place to show and sell their work. Now, perilous times have made it even harder for our always-struggling artists. We urge you to add your support to the cause of fine, local, wonderfully creative art and the talented folks who make it!

This year we have added even more new members to our venerable Muir Beach Quilters, which is, unbelievably, around 40 years old. Our new Quilters bring a rush of energy and enthusiasm, and so we have two raffle quilts in the making! One is a Japanese-inspired quilt, featuring a beautiful collection of old yukata squares donated by Kristin Shannon, which we're quilting right now on our quilting frame at the community center; the second is a hand-knit creation that is being knit square by square and assembled into a stunning coverlet that will glow in all its woolly warmth. Tickets going on sale soon!

Our Fair is truly a humungous fundraiser! The proceeds from it continue to raise funds for our community organizations, for programs and capital improvement projects at the community center, and for our Vision Project, where, for a third year, we gave \$1000 grants to Marin Organic, Senior Access, and Drawbridge, An Arts Program for Homeless Children.

This year, thanks to the inspiring impetus of our new members, we expanded our horizons even farther, upping our causes to four worthy organizations. The proceeds from raffling our knitted wool quilt will now go to assist women on the other side of the world in their struggle for financial independence.



Beautiful silk painting hints of a dreamy landscape. Painting on silk by Laura Calhoun

So grab your shopping bags and get ready for a wonderful array of arts and crafts, the perfect solution to every holiday desire. There will be great art for everyone on your gift list, as well as can't-miss buys from our community booths that range from the indispensable MBVFD's T-shirts and beyond to beautiful wreaths and plant presentations from the Garden Club. Also, subscriptions to the *Beachcomber*, the only way to get all the community news and art, and the Children's Calendars, which fund children's programs at the community center.

And, not to be forgotten, the party! Gourmet food from the inspired and green cuisine of KT, liquid refreshment from our jolly Quilters' Class Bar bartenders who keep us all happy, Café Q on the mezzanine where we can sit and sip a cup of tea or coffee while revving up for another round of shopping, and the Gingerbread Attic for those great future artists, our children, as they make (and nibble on) their fantastic gingerbread houses.

Come on out and celebrate our artists, our community, and the whole world stretching around us!



Quilting on the Quilt Frame

NEW 2009 FAIR ARTISTS

At the age of ten, **LAURA CALHOUN** moved from Los Angeles to a colonial city at the mouth of the Amazon River in Brazil, Belem do Para, with her mother and brothers. She has spent most of her life there, splitting the last seven years between Belem and New York, and now lives in Muir Beach. At the Curro Velho Foundation she developed a program teaching underprivileged teenagers to paint on textiles. She has since become known for her site-specific installations, including Arvore dos Pedidos, an interactive event in Belem, and a "transit tempo" collaboration with the Central Park Conservancy in New York, to celebrate "Earth Day" in the spring of 2001. There, her circle of 18 massive blocks of ice, filled with flowers, pods, leaves and branches, melted over the course of 36 hours and was captured on video. She just returned from Brazil after having produced a new installation. We're fortunate to have her in our Fair this year, where she'll be showing her media of choice, painting with inks, pigments and dyes on silk over canvas. She achieves a vitality of colors that produce strong

contrast and a tension which creates harmonious interactions. We heartily welcome Laura to our special community.

JOY PERRIN finds herself in beautiful Muir Beach, where she paints almost daily, in addition to working 8-hour days as a self-employed music specialist for seniors. Her intent is to share the freshness, immediacy and joy of the plein air experience with you, the viewer. "The combination of surrender and control of watercolor is a fine balancing act, with the ever-changing light, the wet-to-dry continuum, and the varying properties of the paints themselves. It's about impressions of light and rhythm, color, composition and value, and the delicious feeling of successfully capturing a fleeting magical moment in a painting." We look forward to seeing her landscape, seascape, wild life, and farm scenes coming to life again in her paintings and note cards.



Just one of Lauren's unique bags created from materials that previously had another purpose.

LAUREN ODELL USHER loves printmaking, but finds herself experimenting a great deal with her art, and sewing is one of those things she "just jumped into one day." She's a collector of random items and loves to challenge herself with different materials. This interest in recycling, or re-imagining, has led her to create these fun and eclectic bags and purses. Each piece is a one-of-a-kind creation, unearthing itself as the materials show her the way to the finished piece. It's fabulous to see what happens when she begins to play.

RETURNING FAIR ARTISTS

After winning a few Sumi lessons in a raffle, **CHARLOTTE BERTRAM** became hooked on Chinese Brush Painting, which utilizes the four treasures: paper, brushes, ink stick and ink stone. The process and technique has remained the same for centuries—it calms the spirit. She has traveled to France, Italy, Australia and New Zealand on painting trips, studying with known artists in this art form. Her favorite subjects are birds, flora and water, which you'll find delightful when you see her cards and book marks.



Mona Bourell's crochet necklace with agate

MONA BOURELL, a professional botanist for 26 years at the California Academy of Sciences, now works in collections management of live plants at the SF Botanical Garden at Strybing Arboretum. But we have her back at the Fair with her distinctive crocheted bead bracelets and necklaces. Each bead is strung onto cotton crochet thread and then brought up one at a time and crocheted in a spiral. For each bead there's a 'stitch', so they are sturdy and durable, and roll gently onto the wrist. The necklaces are unique and elegant. This jewelry was popular in the Victorian Era, and then again with the Flappers during the Roaring Twenties. You'll enjoy watching her crochet these beauties right before your eyes.

CATHERINE DAMELE, a self-taught and always evolving artist, first fell in love with making jewelry during the '70s while helping her father, a dentist. While he was making crown wax-ups for casting, she made rings, and they cast them together. Her love for the art form sprang from those endearing evenings with him. Her travels and her parents' encouragement and appreciation for all her creations gave her the impetus to continue. She found herself gathering items from around the globe and arranging them from her heart's eye. You'll be amazed at the variety of her pieces, all of which are limited to precious and semi-precious stones, sterling silver, 18Kgf and 18Kgold. Her pieces are stunning!



Catherine Damele's fabulous crystal glass bead necklace



"Beachcomber" Lithograph by Craig Eichenbaum

CRAIG EICHENBAUM returns again with his wild and colorful creatures, surely drawn from his dreams and imaginings of life's strange twists and turns. His lithographs are first drawn on limestone with each color applied separately, then hand-cranked through his beautiful press; he works in his home studio overlooking the beach. His studies with Kenji Nanao allowed him the means to express his love of drawing. Now, after 37 years, it is a life-long commitment for him.

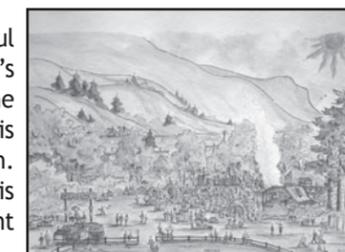
You may recognize this image from the July '08 *Beachcomber* cover which introduced us to the intricate ink and watercolor drawings of **BRAD EIGSTI**. We'll again get to see many of our favorite local spots as note cards, prints and full sized paintings. We're certainly glad he has the patience to draw with such detail, because he manages to capture the essence of so many places we all recognize and love!



"Cowtrack Ranch, Nicasio, California" Watercolor by Joy Perrin



A card produced from one of Charlotte Bertram's original sumi paintings



"MBVFD BBQ 2008" Watercolor and ink painting by Brad Eigsti

MUIR BEACH QUILTERS

Watercolorist **BEN FARNHAM** will again delight fairgoers with his friendly way and of course, his plein air paintings, cards and calendars. For more than fifty years, at first considered a Sunday painter, he's worked with an impressive list of teacher/artists, and many times traveled to points all over the world. He's been invited as a guest artist to various groups, and is a member in too many prestigious watercolor groups to mention. We're thrilled that he continues to choose our Fair as one of his many treasured venues.



"Sam's"
Watercolor by Ben Farnham

FITTING ARTS is the work of husband and wife artists **CHRISTOPHER FITTING** and **JUDY STEMEN**. Chris is a sculptor whose work in wood, stone and bronze is inspired by nature, and his pieces have been exhibited at the Oakland Museum and the California Academy of Sciences, as well as many West Coast galleries. Judy is a contemporary gourd artist and basket weaver who combines natural materials and uses a variety of surface techniques to create unique, one-of-a-kind art pieces. Judy was the featured artist at the annual luncheon of the San Francisco Botanical Garden Society in 2008. You'll be amazed when you visit their booth.



Gourd with woven pine needle lip and antler handle
Gourd Art by Judy Stemen



Abalone set in silver with hand woven chain by Diana Lerwick

Bolinas jeweler **DIANA LERWICK** first studied casting techniques in sculpture at Parsons school of design in New York, where she discovered the intimacy embodied in the smaller scale of jewelry, and she was hooked! Her studies continued, working in metal fabrication under the renowned hollow form metalsmith, Heiki Seppa. She formed various metal embellishments to complement the glassware on the fixtures at Lightspan Illumination Design, and as a result, she was drawn to working with slumped and molded glass, and began incorporating delicate melted glass forms suspended in silver settings into her jewelry. Because excavation practices across the world tend to exploit the people who live in those areas, her emphasis remains on glass rather than gemstones. She also works with found surfaced stones and, most recently, wood. Her original designs and attention to detail, combined with her sense of personal style, show her enjoyment of her work.

Sonoma plein air artist **MELINDA MOORE** will again be showing her oil paintings reminiscent of the turn of the century Arts and Crafts movement. New this year will be her acrylic and mixed media paintings. Her impressionistic and lyrical abstract bird paintings are immediate and absolutely charming. Her work captures the beauty of "quiet moments" frequently missed in our fast-paced and busy lives.



Needle-Felted Indian princess and friends by Beth Nelson

Printmaker, illustrator and writer **BETH NELSON** lived abroad where her company, Printed Matter London Ltd., produced a range of ecologically sound paper products. Her many clients have included the royal Academy of Arts, Fortnum and Mason, Harrods, the Conran Shop, Barneys, Takashimaya, and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. While visiting Beth at her booth, you'll be able to look at a copy of her 1998 book, "Postcards From the Basque Country," published by Stewart, Tabori, and Chang; it documents her life there where her son, Tennessee, was born. Once back in America she began practicing needle felting, a time-consuming, but wonderfully meditative process. Her delightful, beautifully crafted hand-felted dolls, toys and objects of beauty are made from organic wool roving, plant dyes, and sustainable materials. Her little works of art are incredibly satisfying to hold and are such special treasures that you'll want to get there early before they're all gone.



Carved lizard
Sculpture by Chris Fitting



Hand-built ceramic critter pot by Pati Hays



"Muir Beach Trees"
Oil painting by Melinda Moore

MUIR BEACH QUILTERS



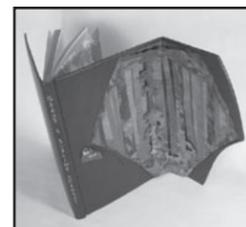
Marie-Louise Porti's hand-crafted silver link bracelets



These lovely candles charm any area with a bright flame and warm fragrance.
Hand rolled bees wax candles by Lesley Segedy



"Blissed-Out" by Marilyn Stiles



Coleen Curry's book, "Grand & Sublime Scenery," is currently showing at the Marking Time Exhibit at the San Francisco Public Library on Larkin Street.

Our group of quilters has grown dramatically over the last couple of years. It's fabulous! Even though many of us come and go, busy with family and work and life in all its complexities, we're all here in spirit. Which means lots of surprises when our booth opens on Fair Day! There may be fabric tetrahedrons for tiny tots by **NANCY KNOX**, heart-shaped lavender sachets by **ANNA TOM**, and beach-treasures-into-art from **PAM BARLOW**. Who knows what lies in the unfettered imagination of **PAM EICHENBAUM**, who last year produced flowing painted-on-silk tunics. **COLEEN CURRY**, crazily creating art books to meet deadlines for various Book Binder Shows, here and across the water and up in Canada, is working on journals and other special items. **PEGGY CHIANG**, **JOANNE SALZ**, **OUTI ONORATO**, and **PAM MCCOSKER** are busily knitting footies, wristlets, anklets, neck warmers and felted bags. **OUTI** is also making Christmas ornaments and quilted pillows. **PAM MCCOSKER** will bring back her FABS! (fabric necklaces) and eyeglass cases, and **JOANN SALZ** works in very contemporary textile collage and woven textile sculpture. **TAYEKO**

MARIE-LOUISE PORTI designs and assembles spectacular necklaces, bracelets and earrings made with silver and precious and semi-precious stones, pearls and glass; she has added a new line of jewelry called chain maille, which she combines with stones in a distinctive and personalized way. The variety of her jewelry is an absolute delight to see, and each is a unique work of art.

ARLENE ROBERTSON's rum cakes are surely known the world over by now! The recipe must be a deeply-kept family secret, because there seems to be no rum cake around anywhere that even comes close to evoking the pleasure one enjoys from a single slice of hers - but of course, that means it's impossible to have only one piece. Better get there early and claim your cake, or possibly even split a second one with a friend. Fabulous!!!

The friendly smile shining from **LESLEY SEGEDY** is as comforting as the scent of bees' wax candles and Judith's beautiful quilt in the background. Lesley's been making these lovely faceted, rolled, sometimes honey-colored natural and sometimes softly colored candles for more than 20 years. Remember to get there early for the colors, shapes and sizes you want, because they disappear quickly. She also has lovely gift-wrapped offerings which are perfect for giving or decorating packages. Check it out!

MATT SILVA, our very creative neighbor, returns this year, this time with his handsome toy sail boats, available in three sizes. They're actually made to sail, but they are also beautiful enough to be a piece of sculpture in their own right.

JULIE SMITH creates a special holiday mood at the hearth with her fog-dried tomatoes, (quite famous, they are!) chutneys, jellies, spreads and holiday breads. We're hoping she'll return with her bread-in-a-bottle again this year! She even offers tastings so yummy that you'll surely fill your basket with all kinds of goodies, some for you and just as many for gift-giving. Her booth definitely says "It's holiday time again."

Living in a Eucalyptus grove above Muir Woods, **MARILYN STILES** slab constructs her sculpture from various clays chosen for their natural colors and her trademark turquoise glaze which is as distinctive as the works themselves. She combines nature, fantasy and humor, and it's loaded with the visual puns created by her unexpected juxtapositions of "critters" in "human" occupations. You'll love her "Blissed Out" lizard, and who knows what other activities her frogs, lizards, snails or slugs will be involved in!

NINA VINCENT keeps her fingers busy crocheting the wildest, most colorful, and fun hats imaginable, almost comparable to the vivacious flurrying of daughter, Tiana. These hats come in all shapes and sizes, for infants to adults, males to females. You'll surely find just the one for you!

MUIR BEACH QUILTERS

Our group of quilters has grown dramatically over the last couple of years. It's fabulous! Even though many of us come and go, busy with family and work and life in all its complexities, we're all here in spirit. Which means lots of surprises when our booth opens on Fair Day! There may be fabric tetrahedrons for tiny tots by **NANCY KNOX**, heart-shaped lavender sachets by **ANNA TOM**, and beach-treasures-into-art from **PAM BARLOW**. Who knows what lies in the unfettered imagination of **PAM EICHENBAUM**, who last year produced flowing painted-on-silk tunics. **COLEEN CURRY**, crazily creating art books to meet deadlines for various Book Binder Shows, here and across the water and up in Canada, is working on journals and other special items. **PEGGY CHIANG**, **JOANNE SALZ**, **OUTI ONORATO**, and **PAM MCCOSKER** are busily knitting footies, wristlets, anklets, neck warmers and felted bags. **OUTI** is also making Christmas ornaments and quilted pillows. **PAM MCCOSKER** will bring back her FABS! (fabric necklaces) and eyeglass cases, and **JOANN SALZ** works in very contemporary textile collage and woven textile sculpture. **TAYEKO**



Happy baker, Arlene Robertson, shines with her famous rum cakes.



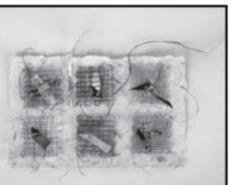
Yummy goodies from Julie Smith



Tiana's definitely happy with Momma Nina's purple crocheted hat.



Outi Onorato makes a small treasure for your computer.



Waxed Linen Textile Collage by Joanne Salz

MUIR BEACH QUILTERS



FABS! by Pam McCosker

KAUFMAN is stitching up her “Golly Dolls” and bunny families, and **CLAIRE JOHNSTON**, our premier photographer with an artistic and creative vision, **LESLIE RIEHL**, **FLORENCE BUCKENWORTH** (**LESLY’S** sister), **KATHY SWARD** AND **JUDITH YAMAMOTO** are busy making lap quilts and wall art quilts and framed miniature quilts, prairie dolls and patchwork pillows, and yes! Potholders! And, of course, none of this would happen without our hard-working Quilters! **BONNIE MACKENZIE**, back with us after several years, is knitting away on the knit quilt raffle and working with **PAM BARLOW** on the Vision Project, and **LAURIE PIEL** is becoming indispensable in her roving “administrator/techi” role.

JUNIOR ARTISANS



Kathy Sward adds the final stitches to her hand-sewn, reconfigured tee shirts quilt/wall hanging, “Old Tees, New Wrap: My Cozy Cover-Up”

One of our quilter’s talented daughter, **LAINIE JOHNSTON**, is busy again creating all kinds of hand crafted items, from potholders and sachets to a promised basket full of surprises. You never know what she might add at the last minute, and in addition, she’s one of our great photographers!

MOMO YAMAMOTO brings her lively graphics to the Fair this year. Her mixed media works include pen, crayons, pastels, and watercolors and her subjects range from landscapes to still lifes, all done with her inimitable joie de vivre.

HOLIDAY ORNAMENT AND GIFT BAZAAR EXTRAVAGANZA

Holiday ornaments and clothespin dolls, handmade cards, gift tags, Fimo creatures, and more can be found at the **HOLIDAY ORNAMENT AND GIFT BAZAAR EXTRAVAGANZA**, where they’re hung on the little “tree” to be sold by volunteers. You’ll love these holiday delights, which are very affordable, and handmade-with-love-and-verve! Start making special little items in your spare time, and call Kathy Sward at 383-6762 to sign up.

CHILDREN’S CALENDAR

Linda Silva has bravely taken on the production of our **CHILDREN’S CALENDAR**, a not-so-small task that Debra Allen did for years and years; imagine trying to round up twelve children’s paintings, right at the busiest time of year! And then there’s the production process...The money raised from calendar sales goes into CSD coffers, and comes out to be spent on children’s programs, most spectacularly, the annual Children’s Halloween Party at the community center.

MUIR BEACH AUTHORS

More books by Muir Beachers! A local star is our very own **WENDY JOHNSON**, whose best-seller, *Gardening at the Dragon’s Gate: At Work in the Wild and Uncultivated World* was published to nationwide acclaim. **BARBARA MEISLIN’S** *No One Can Ever Steal Your Rainbow*, now in its second printing with a bilingual edition in Hebrew and Arabic, is a rare and inspirational book about children, love, and peace in Israel and Palestine; *A Stitch In Time*, by **LEBA WINE**, is a gripping family saga. Poetry sings in **REG WHITE’S** “View from Sunset,” with cover design and drawings by Larry Yamamoto, **RICHARD MOORE’S** “A Selection for Ruth,” and **JOE CONNOR’S** *Love Poems*.

BEACHCOMBER

Just three years ago, Linda Gibbs took over the **BEACHCOMBER**, our neighborhood newspaper begun in the forties by a group of Muir Beach children who drew pictures, wrote stories about the life around them, listed objects found washed up on the beach, and hand-colored the masthead of each mimeographed copy with crayons. It continued on through many editors and work parties, and now Linda brings it into the twenty-first century with a new magazine format, many full-color covers featuring local artists’ paintings, and all-encompassing community reportage, accompanied by enough photography to satisfy our great consuming curiosity about each other. Also nature columns, society pages, eye-catching ads, poetry, fiction—and more! The **BEACHCOMBER** booth at the Fair is



Linda Gibbs decorates her Beachcomber booth—the tiniest space at the Fair—stuffed with history and the news of the day!



Tayeko Kaufman’s Golly Doll, waiting to be hugged



“Yukata Garden” by Judith Yamamoto



“Still Life With Flowers and Wine Bottle” Marking pen drawing by Momo Yamamoto



Edna Rossenas shines at the Holiday Ornament Extravaganza & Gift Bazaar.

MUIR BEACH QUILTERS

the place to buy annual and gift subscriptions, and maybe snag an extra copy (if it hasn’t been sold out); and you’re always more than welcome to donate to Friends of the Beachcomber! Linda will introduce another historic first: the **BEACHCOMBER** Refrigerator Magnet (see back cover). Also on sale: **BEACHCOMBER** beach towels emblazoned with the famous masthead. Even more fun: Linda loves to hear the old Muir Beach stories. Drop by and live it up!

MUIR BEACH VOLUNTEER FIRE ASSOCIATION

All those worker bees in the **MUIR BEACH VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT** and **ASSOCIATION** will again pile their shelves to overflowing with tons of wonderful and famous Muir Beach Dog tee shirts of all colors and shapes—for ladies too, hooded sweats and sweatpants, and ladies’ yoga pants, ball caps and berets, etc. And thermal mugs and the ever-popular fleece vests! Also, kids’ tees and sweats and cute little onesies and infant tees, and on and on and on. Load up here, and your holiday shopping will be off to a great start! And on top of that, you’ll be helping to support our always-first-on-the-scene fire department!



Get Your \$18 MBVFD Ball Cap!

MUIR BEACH GARDEN CLUB



Joey Groneman, Tayeko and Michael Kaufman arranging just-made fresh green wreaths—enough for everyone’s front door.

The **MUIR BEACH GARDEN CLUB** goes on and on, and we watch in amazement as the community center landscaping grows ever larger and more beautiful! Their latest challenge and inspiration will be planting around John Sward’s beautiful stone work - we can hardly wait to see our gardens grow! As ever, they go all out at the Fair with evergreen wreaths and herb wreaths, and also wonderful succulent wreaths for year-round enjoyment. Garden arts and crafts, Paper Whites, whimsical rock gardens and planters (what better use for an abalone shell?), napkin holders and beautiful garden benches designed by Steve Shaffer will surely make great holiday gift-buying, and they promise even more surprises! If you would like to join the Muir Beach Garden Club, please contact Joey Groneman at (415) 383-2898 or Tayeko Kaufman at (415) 388-5018. They meet quarterly to discuss all things green and growing, and to plan their annual Community Center planting project.

QUILTERS’ GINGERBREAD ATTIC

The **QUILTERS’ GINGERBREAD ATTIC** is the place to be while parents are shopping and socializing at the Fair. Kids can let their imaginations go wild, and build a house or a castle out of graham crackers and icing and gummi bears and gum drops and all sorts of goodies. There’ve been some amazing works of art built in this fun “attic”—and it’s free!

QUILTERS’ CLASS BAR

Enjoy a glass of wine or beer, or better yet, have a cup of hot, spiced, apple cider—absolutely yummy—with or without the brandy. The bartenders, Steve Shaffer and Peter Lambert, and an occasional other helper, will treat you well. It’s a great place to hang when you need to mellow out before another round of shopping.



Benjamin Pinto Souza hard at work in the Gingerbread Attic

CAFÉ Q

The mezzanine upstairs in the main hall offers a place to sit and enjoy a plate of homemade food from the gourmet buffet, or a free cup of coffee or tea, and visit with friends and neighbors. It’s fun to sit on the stools, look over the railing, watch the shoppers, and marvel at the beautiful booths filled with art.

GOURMET BUFFET

Our gourmet food will wake up everyone’s taste buds, melding fresh California cuisine with a French flair. We are hooked on Catherine Broomhead and her West Marin Green Cuisine! She buys her produce from West Marin farms and ranches, and we love her snazzy menu!

Sweet August Bistro

By Pam Goldsmith-Jones

“How we spend our days is, of course, how we spend our lives.” —Annie Dillard

Bistro in early August this summer turned into an eclectic art show, as the quilters called around and

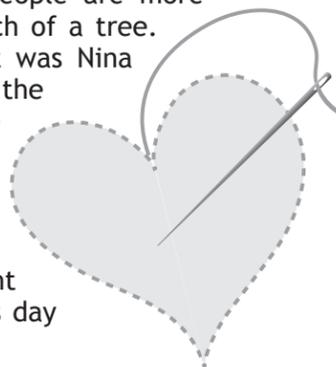
asked us to bring what we’ve been working on—from book binding to knitting and of course, our quilts. For me, I was coming from West Vancouver, British Columbia, and so I brought two quilts for the show.

Our family lived in Muir Beach from 2000-2001, and we experienced one of those too-short times in life that seem, in retrospect, to have lasted forever because it was so perfect.

MUIR BEACH QUILTERS

The first person I met was Don Cohon because our moving truck snapped off a branch of his tree. He told me that day that people are more important than one branch of a tree.

The second person I met was Nina Vincent, who came up the steps to officially welcome us. The third person I met was Allison Pinto, who felt that because we had a copy of the *Utne Reader* on our pine trunk, we might be okay people. That was day one.



After a few months of playing with Baby Benjamin, shoving goats out of the little kitchen, and a bit of homeschooling, Allison suggested that I go to Bistro, and that I stick around to meet the quilters. I was not a quilter, but Allison insisted that these were the people I needed to know. In those days, Everaldo didn't speak very much English, and Benjamin, at two, had his own language. And so off we went, the de Souza-Pinto boys and their unlikely Canadian consort, to meet the quilters.

I don't remember talking to very many people at Bistro, really. Lonna poured the coffee, Harvey said hello and Nancy Knox passed me a scone for sure. I do remember when the community centre cleared out a bit after coffee, and the quilters started quietly fooling around with their bits of fabric and the things they'd brought for lunch.

I happened to have cut some beautiful old shirts of my Dad's into squares that summer on Gabriola Island. I put them in a chocolate box and brought them back to Muir Beach, with no plan in mind. And so, as Bistro emptied out and quilting started to take shape, I asked what to do with these squares. The kind of lesson you get, if you go, goes like this: "Just start sewing pieces together." I sat on the floor and started arranging squares. "These are great squares," is the kind of encouragement you can expect. And you can expect to be left alone with your thoughts and your fabric and your hands.

Lunch is also pieced together at some point. Someone will start a salad, or cut up some fruit, toss around a stir fry or heat up some soup. Usually there's a bit of wine. Sometimes there's tea in the afternoon. If you are deep into your quilting, you don't have to stop. If you'd rather fool around in the kitchen, go right ahead.

Participating without being forced, collaborating without signing up, and being together without a plan became the whole point of the day, and of living in Muir Beach. This became the one true thing.

The next week I came back with the squares sewn together and an old tablecloth to use for a border. Old tablecloths and feed sacks are held in very high regard, especially if they come with a good story, if they were found, or if you didn't pay more than a dollar or two for this piece of inspiration. And so on went the border, and I became a Muir Beach Quilter out of two Wednesdays of quiet contemplation, some scraps from home, and the kindness of Muir Beach people.

Many, many Wednesdays have gone by since the summer of 2001 when we moved back home. I have managed to get to quilting at least one Wednesday a year in most of those years, and for one of the Holiday Arts Fairs. Not a Wednesday goes by that I don't imagine who is folding in and out that day, what they're working on, and what's for lunch.

In August this year, our little spontaneous art show at the Muir Beach Quilters unveiled Coleen's beautifully hand-wrought bookbinding treasures, Outi's squishy felted purses, the brilliant colours of Leslie's Hawaiian inspired quilts, and Peggy's hand knitted squares casually placed on the soft wood of the big table so we could play with pattern and colour. Judith and Kathy unrolled old and new quilts for loving hands to touch. I brought a very scrappy quilt that meant Outi had to go home and get a quilt of hers that used the same colours. We went over old ideas and new ones. We talked about Ellen and how much we miss her.

On Wednesday we shared our obvious delight in doing things with fabric and thread and wool and paper. Without saying it, we shared the meaning that time spent in a solitary pursuit brings to our individual lives. Most of all, we shared the energy between us that comes from being together, and the security that comes from knowing it will all happen again next Wednesday.

Editor's Note: Pam Goldsmith-Jones is the Mayor of West Vancouver, which is also a Venue City for the 2010 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games. She visits Muir Beach often, and we have invited her to contribute to the Beachcomber from time to time.

MUIR BEACH COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT

Muir Beach Community Services District Election to the Board of Directors

The CSD Board of Directors election will take place November 3, 2009. The Beachcomber invited the candidates—Scott Bender, Dan Fitzpatrick, Mary Daniel Hobson, Paul Jeschke, Peter Rudnick, and Sheré Stoddard—to submit their candidate statements. Fitzpatrick, Hobson, Rudnick, and Stoddard are competing for three 4-year seats. Bender and Jeschke are running for one 2-year seat.

Scott Bender Candidate to the CSD Board

My wife, Suzanne, and I moved to Muir Beach in 2001. Having immediately fallen in love with the community and surroundings, our specific intention was and is to live here for the rest of our lives. At the time, our son Christian was 4 months old. Our daughter, Adrianna, was born here in 2003. However, by Muir Beach standards, perhaps we're still considered newcomers to the community!

I believe I have several unique perspectives and talents to offer if I were elected to the Muir Beach CSD Board. First, I am a parent of school-age children, and as such would bring a longer-term perspective to the Board. We have a sizeable and growing family community here in Muir Beach, as documented in an article my wife Suzanne wrote for the *Beachcomber* this year. We need to build infrastructure around not only what's best for the Muir Beach community at large, but also for the family community within it.

Second, I have been a management consultant for nearly 25 years, working with a wide range of organizations, from Fortune 100 corporations to small community non-profits. In this role I have helped generate consensus and driven action across an extensive range of complicated problems. Very often the trickiest problems facing organizations involve balancing the needs of disparate constituents against the resources they have at their disposal. Facilitating solutions in these kinds of situations is the core of my profession.

Third, some of you may know me from my involvement in Muir

Mary Daniel Hobson Incumbent

It has been my pleasure and privilege to serve on the Muir Beach Community Service District's Board of Directors for the past four years. If re-elected, I would be honored to continue that service for another four years.

In addition to being a member of the CSD board, I have also served the Muir Beach community in other ways including being a Neighborhood Liaison and a part of the Disaster Preparedness Committee; acting as a juror for the Quilter's Crafts Fair; and supporting the Volunteer Fire Department by selling MBVFD clothing and making lots and lots and lots of cookies.

Professionally, I am a fine art photographer and exhibit and sell my work nationally. I also teach art courses and mentor students at places like JFK University in Berkeley, CA. In addition, I am the Director of the Arts and Healing Network, an online resource on

Steve Shaffer is in the middle of his 4-year term and is not up for re-election.

Statements from Scott Bender, Mary Daniel Hobson, and Paul Jeschke follow. The other candidates did not respond to the Beachcomber's request. You may find information about them in the following Beachcomber issues: Dan Fitzpatrick (May 2008), Peter Rudnick (October 2008), and Sheré Stoddard (October 2007). These stories also appear online at muirbeachcomber.com. —LG



Suzanne, Adrianna, Scott and Christian Bender, in a recent photo taken at home in Muir Beach. Photograph by Suzanne Bender-Van Spyk

Beach LAN. Much of my work with Leighton Hills for the LAN has focused on how we fundamentally improve our infrastructure, in turn improving quality and reliability of the service. If elected to the CSD I would use the same problem-solving skills and experience for all of the issues facing the CSD.

Let's take a real example here in Muir Beach. The Upper Tank, which is a critical part of our water service here, is in very rough shape. In fact, parts of the redwood exterior have rotted away, exposing the liner that holds in the water. My position is that in situations like this we need to "fix it right," up to and including a complete replacement if needed. While more expensive to do so in the near term, if we address it properly it will not come back as an issue in the foreseeable future.

I am committed to the future of our unique and beautiful Muir Beach, and am eager to contribute my part in supporting the community and the CSD.

the healing power of creativity at www.artheals.org.

A Bay Area native, I have lived in Muir Beach for the past nine years. I am a parent and a homeowner and am here for the long haul. I am very grateful to live in such a beautiful, natural environment amidst such an interconnected community of people.

If re-elected, I would bring to the position an open mind, good listening skills, creative problem solving, a diplomatic nature, a thoughtful presence, careful deliberation, and a willingness to be of service. Thank you for your consideration.



Mary Daniel Hobson
Photograph by Charles Hobson

Community Services District Candidacy Statement

By Paul Jeschke

For a small community, Muir Beach has some big decisions to make in the next few years. I would very much like to join the board of the Community Services District to help find appropriate solutions.

Muir Beach has obtained a substantial grant to cut down scores of Monterey Pine trees that dot our hillsides. This tree removal project covers not only diseased trees on CSD property, but will also help homeowners take down large trees on private property. The result should be a more fire-safe Muir Beach, but major tree removal may also have a dramatic effect on privacy and the environment. So far, there has been no public discussion about this project. If I am elected, I will make sure that residents are asked for their opinions.

A new or remodeled fire station is also in the planning stage. Still to be decided is whether to enlarge the dairy barn, which currently houses fire equipment, or to build a new structure on the west side of Highway One just beyond the Pelican. Again, there are serious financial, historic and esthetic considerations and if I am elected, I will make sure every viewpoint is considered and every resident has an opportunity to take part in the discussion.

As a board member, I will reach out and seek community input. The decision by the current CSD board to officially ignore complaints about lewd conduct at Little Beach as "not

our jurisdiction" was, in my opinion, a mistake. Not a single elected CSD member attended Supervisor Kinsey's meeting at the community center on the Little Beach problem and concerned neighbors had to form the Little Beach Ad Hoc Committee to deal with community concerns.



Paul Jeschke
Photograph by Anne Jeschke

I will also urge the CSD to explore the financial and political feasibility of building a sewer system to replace leaky and environmentally undesirable septic systems. It's not a clear choice for a number of reasons, but the time to begin the planning process is now before it is forced on us.

Since my wife, Anne, and I moved here nearly a decade ago, I've voluntarily attended numerous CSD meetings, served as a fire association board member, volunteered at the barbecue and crafts fair and reported for the *Beachcomber*. Anne and I are both committed to living and volunteering in this community.

During my professional career, I learned to ask tough questions in order to get good information. I hope you'll allow me to exercise these skills as a CSD board member and help build community consensus for continued improvement of Muir Beach.

Upcoming Elections and the Role of Government

By Maury Ostroff

In previous articles for the *Beachcomber*, I have written on various aspects of the Muir Beach Community Services District in context of the CSD's role and jurisdictions. With the election for Board Members coming up on Nov. 3rd, it seemed opportune to share some further observations on this topic.

In general, people tend to view government as surrogate parents. No matter how old we get, we always carry with us that deep imprinting of a Mommy and Daddy to take care of us. So in our debates on government and social welfare you hear terms like a "safety net" to provide for us, or "defense" and "law and order" to keep us safe. But just like all kids, we want our independence; we want to be able to do what we want to do when we want to do it and not to have to listen to our parents, and yet we also want them there when we need them. In later years, as we come to grips with our own mortality, we tend to turn

to religion for comfort. (But that's another topic.)

In recent years, the CSD has "stuck to its knitting" and focused on those services and areas that are under its jurisdiction, such as the water system, the roads and easements, and maintenance of the Community Center. But from time to time issues of general importance to the community of Muir Beach have come up, and the CSD has realized that it can play a constructive role in helping to forge consensus and represent the community to other government agencies that affect us, such as the County of Marin or the National Park Service.

The problem is that it is neither practical nor desirable to have a plebiscite on every issue. (In my personal opinion, I think the current trend in California to have umpteen measures on every ballot is dysfunctional; rather we should stick with the basic premise of

representative democracy and let elected officials make decisions, without having to worry about the passions of the moment.) In this respect, the form of government that the CSD has works quite well—a Board of Directors which oversees policy and to a certain extent acts as judges and arbitrators of various points of view. I don't believe that a Board has to necessarily follow the will of the majority in the moment; rather the Board has to take the longer view and sometimes make unpopular decisions. But more to the point, when there are diverse opinions within the community, as there always are, any decision is likely to be unpopular with someone. Hence we have the notion of politics as the art of compromise.

When people bring an issue before the CSD, to a large extent they must be prepared for and accept the outcome, even if it may not be completely to their liking. This is no different than bringing a dispute to arbitration or a case to a court of law. If one has already made up their mind, and is not going to abide by the decision if it goes against them, then what's the point of bringing it to arbitration in the first place? Some people view it as a no-lose proposition, where they'll try with arbitration first to get the seal of approval, but if they don't they'll keep fighting anyway. I suppose it depends on the cause whether it is right to continue fighting, but I suspect that most of the time it isn't.

After attending numerous public hearings, held by the CSD, Marin County, NPS, and other agencies, I frequently hear the complaint that they "didn't listen and the process doesn't work." In all cases this is expressed by people who didn't get their way ("Mom and Dad are being so unfair by not letting me stay out late."). Sometimes this does happen, but more often than not the governing board of whatever agency listened to a lot of different points of view and came to a decision based on many competing factors. Too many people confuse a vote with a veto. Just because you have a right to express an opinion or state your case does not in of itself give you the right to block a decision or course of action that you do not agree with.

Getting back to the position of Board Member, it is also important to note the distinction between the CSD Board and the staff, which run things day to day, and who serve under the Board. Within general policy guidelines, the staff has, and should have, a certain amount of discretion and decision-making authority to run the affairs of the District. It is not necessarily the

responsibility of Board members to get things done; rather it is their responsibility to make sure that the staff gets things done. It is also the responsibility of the Board to ensure that the right people are hired as employees of the district and to make changes when necessary.

So here we are with an election coming up for four open seats on the Board, and the question is what kind of person would make a good Board Member? In my opinion, we want people with good judgment and common sense, and someone with a good feel for the community and the spirit of Muir Beach. We want someone with the appropriate perspective and that knows the difference between a mountain and molehill. We'd also like a broad range of experience; someone who can communicate well with other government agencies, and has a sense of how things get done in the world.

I also think that it's a fair question to ask of each candidate why they want to be on the Board. Since it is a completely volunteer position, money and compensation are certainly not a factor. People decide to serve for a variety of reasons. Some have a particular agenda or axe to grind. Others may be in it for the ego trip. There are times when I think the best Board members are not necessarily the most activist or outspoken. But for the most part I think people are sincere in their desire to serve their community and contribute in a way that is appropriate to their particular abilities.

These are just my observations, based on my experiences as a board member, the district manager, and a private citizen. Each of you may have a different view on what you'd expect from the CSD. My only advice would be to consider each candidate in light of how you would like to see the CSD, and the Board in particular, fulfill their function. And be sure to vote.



In The Center Of things

Story and Photographs by Laurie Piel

It was a pretty quiet summer this year and it looks to be the same way for the fall and early winter. We had a few weddings and events but nowhere near as many as last year. That gave Master Stone Mason John John Sward and his team the time to build the new granite stairs. The stairs are done but the work on the walls is ongoing including the handrails that still need to be inserted. The stone bench at the top of the stairs is a beautiful spot to take a rest.

There is more news on the upgrade front. Not only do we have new stairs but Cuco Alcala and his son-in-law Ricky have been hard at work putting in a new retaining wall down by the playground.

Since my last update the Garden Club has created a beautiful succulent garden along the entrance pathway. Hopefully the deer will give the garden a chance to grow as the rains arrive to give the plants nourishment.

The 2nd Annual Garden Club FUNraiser was a success and I believe some of the funds are earmarked for more plants to beautify the Community Center (see story on page 30). They will hold the event again next year on August 28th & 29th so start saving your donations now.

By the time you read this the potluck gathering for families with kids (and grandkids) hosted by Nina Vincent and Harvey Pearlman will be a fond memory for all who attended. The flyers around town showed that it was the place to be if you wanted a fun day for the whole family.



What a stunning new entrance to the Center... Just picture the bride coming down these stairs to her waiting groom.

Still to come is the 7th Annual Day of the Dead celebration on Saturday, Nov. 7th. The Day of the Dead is an event I had never celebrated until I moved here. It is a fabulous gathering and it is done here the Muir Beach way, as a potluck with lots of folks pitching in to help and a special spot for the kids. Harvey and his band of volunteers will be setting up on Friday the 6th and early on Saturday so c'mon down and lend a hand.



The new stone bench invites a conversation.

And, of course, The Quilters are hard at work in preparation for the Quilters Holiday Arts Fair coming your way December 5th & 6th. So save your pennies and join the town in helping to make it another success. There must be something you want for a holiday gift that you can find at the fair.

During the winter of '08 there was an impromptu "freezer feast" when we had a power failure that lasted into the third day. We didn't have any unplanned outages last year, but if we do this winter, c'mon down to the Center with all your food that is about to go bad and we'll cook it up and have a party! The shared experience of that evening made me fall in love with Muir Beach for the community that it is and not just its beauty.

One last thing, I will be out of the country Nov. 20th - Dec. 26th and Kathy Sward will be handling the rentals. While I'm gone Kathy will have access to the email account that was set up just for rentals - Bookthembcc@aol.com. If you have enough time to use email, please do. If you need to book the Center on short notice during my absence, please contact Kathy Sward 383-6762.

Believe it or not that's it for 2009. Here's to 2010 and another wonderful year at the Beach.



The new retaining wall not only looks good but will provide seating for parents who want to hang out while their kids play nearby.



District Manager's Report - September 2009

By Maury Ostroff

In the spirit of informing the public on where your tax dollars are going, we have just completed two capital improvements on our water distribution system.

1) We installed a new 6" diameter water service line for Cove Lane, superseding the old 1.5" inch galvanized steel pipe. You can see from the attached photo the difference—over the years the old metal pipe had accumulated all kinds of deposits (kind of like hardening of the arteries.) The new pipe is made of HDPE (High Density Polyethylene) and is the new standard in the water industry. We have also installed a new fire hydrant at the bottom of Cove Lane, and with the new 6" line it has much better water flow in the event it is needed. Thanks to the Marin County Fire Department for their donation of the new hydrant.

The new pipe comes down off the Sunset line near the end of Sunset Way, to the west of Cove Lane. The old 1.5 inch pipe used to come down to Cove Lane along the easement and steps down the east side of Cove Lane. That pipe has been capped at the top and will no longer be used. Future generations of archaeologists may speculate as to its purpose and function.

2) We have completed the installation of the Highway One to Sunset Way intertie, also with 6" HDPE pipe. The pipe that goes up along Highway One is the main pipe that connects our well to the Lower Tank, and every night we pump water through that line to the Lower Tank. There are various valves that prevent water from being diverted into the Sunset Way line on the way up to the Lower Tank while we are pumping, but if there is a drop in water pressure in the Sunset Way line the valve will open and will allow an additional path for water to flow from the Lower Tank into the Sunset Way line. This will increase the available water flow for the fire hydrants near that location.



Cross-section of new 6" HDPE pipe installed at Cove Lane, compared to cross-section of old 1 1/2" pipe. Note accumulation of mineral and iron deposits inside old galvanized pipe.

In general, our goal is to have as many interties and "loops" in the water distribution as possible, so as to eliminate all dead ends, to improve the flow of water to fire hydrants, and to provide alternative paths for water to flow in case we have to shut off a section of the system for repairs.

Over the last several years, every chance we've had to replace or install a new water distribution line, we have used 6" diameter pipe. However, we are keenly aware that we are connecting new 6" pipe to the old 4" PVC pipe that runs along most of Sunset Way. We are looking at several sources for grants or other funding alternatives to address replacement of the Sunset Way line, but suffice to say at this point that it would be a major project and requires more planning and coordination and will probably not happen this coming fiscal year.



Note that we do have the ability to pump from the well to the Lower Tank or directly to the Upper Tank, if needed. But our normal operating procedure is to pump approximately 30,000 gallons a day to the Lower Tank from the well, and from the Lower Tank we pump an additional 10,000 gallons to fill the Upper Tank. Most water is used in the Lower Zone than in the Upper Zone.

View of new pipe connecting Sunset Way service line to the water main along Highway One, near the entrance on Sunset Way. Note this is all buried under Sunset Way and paved over, albeit with access to the shut off valves.

The next big capital improvement that we are pursuing is a replacement of the Upper Tank. The Upper Tank is made of redwood and is over 40 years old, and is nearing the end of its useful life. We are looking at various alternatives for tank materials, and the choices that would work best for us given the ocean climate are concrete or another redwood tank. We are pursuing grants and other funding sources for this project as well, but we expect to pay for a portion of it directly out of the Water Capital Improvement fund that we have been accumulating from the Water Property Tax Assessment.

The Lower Tank still has many years of use left, but we have had to address some maintenance issues and had a small leak in the bottom of the tank repaired.

But in general, for a system as small as ours, we are in relatively good shape when it comes to both our water supply and our water system infrastructure.

Photographs by Leighton Hills

The 2nd Annual Garden Club FUNraiser

Story and Photographs by Laurie Piel

The last weekend in August heralds the Garden Club's Annual Rummage Sale "FUNraiser." As Saturday dawned bright and clear there was hope that this year would surpass last year's inaugural weekend.

By 9 AM John John Sward and Eric Groneman had already returned from bringing tables down from the Community Center. Then the setup crew—Joey and Eric Groneman, Kathy and John John Sward, Kent Andrews and Bethany Villere, Outi Onorato, and my husband, David, and I—went to work. Fortunately, Kathy Sward provided a coffee pot filled with the necessary morning pick-me-up and Joey brought her homemade poppy seed cake.... yum. It wasn't long before the next wave of sellers, Matt and Linda Silva and Michael and Maxx Moore, arrived. They had lots of goodies including the fabulous sign made by the kids last year, which was now on its way to be posted in front of the dairy to send the tourists in our direction.

Many folks, such as Dee and Bob Hayden, Lainie Case, and Peggy Chiang, had already given their donations ahead of time. Deb Allen dropped off a trunk-load of items on her way to work. Leslie Riehl, Shirley Nygren, and Arlene Robertson arrived willing and able to work... and work they did. After helping to set out the wares, Arlene tagged all of the clothing, Leslie worked on the books, and Shirley started something new—haircuts—a steal at \$20! Judith Yamamoto and



Janice Kubota is a willing advertisement for Shirley Nygren's alfresco haircuts.

Janice Kubota, with her dog Sierra in tow, were all-around helpers offering their services wherever they were needed. With clothes, shoes, books, house wares, furniture, linens, jewelry, and toys, it was a cornucopia of shopping opportunities.

Last year we nearly froze to death but this year the weather cooperated and the beach parking lot was full early in the day. The arriving beach goers were met with a hard working team of lemonade sellers. Nina Vincent and Linda Silva supervised the making of fresh lemonade by Tessa and Camila Pares, Daniella Silva, Tiana Vincent-Pearlman, and Hanna Eigsti. At 50 cents a cup, the intrepid salesgirls were a hit. By



Judith Yamamoto entices Janice Kubota at the jewelry table.

the end of the day Tessa had the stand all to herself and did a fabulous job!

Once again the sale was well patronized by our own Muir Beachers. Among others, Harvey and Nina Pearlman, Janice Kubota and Maury Ostroff, Lisa Eigsti, and Peggy Chiang were joined by Everaldo Cardoso de Souza who was visiting from Brazil. We were sorry he wasn't accompanied by his lovely wife, Allison, and young Benjamin. By early afternoon everyone was hungry so John John fired up the hot dog maker and he and Eric Groneman sated the appetites of not only the sellers but buyers as well. Judith Yamamoto brought homemade cookies for the workers... a big hit.

A stray dog came to visit and provided some unexpected excitement. Fortunately, she had a tag with a phone number. We called and her owner came and took a happy dog back out to the beach. It just serves as a reminder to make sure your pets are collared and tagged.

At the end of the day we moved the remaining inventory into the Sward's garage and went home content with a good first day.

Sunday morning had a 2008 déjà vu feel to it ... foggy and cold. 9 AM brought the setup crew out again, but this time huddling around the coffee pot. We



Emberleigh Brightwood, Tiana Vincent-Pearlman, and Tessa Pares invite the passing motorists to buy their lemonade while a watchful Nina Vincent helps Everaldo Cardoso de Souza choose a toy to bring back to Brazil for his son, Benjamin.

were happy that, although it wasn't as pretty a day as Saturday, we had a crowd more interested in spending. Since the second day also brings out the bargains, this time the later birds got the worm. The lemonade team was back for another round of selling and succeeded even though the sun was late to appear.

Shirley's reputation had spread and her chair was filled again. By the time both days were over Kathy, John John, Janice, and Rob were all sporting a Shirley haircut. It was also another doggy day. Rob Allen brought their new dog Laia.... but not for sale!

The bargain hunters were out in full force and we were happy to accommodate them. As the day wound down we managed to sell not only a set of five chairs but an old exercise machine enthusiastically demonstrated by Rob Allen.

The chill in the air was chased away by the warmth provided by John John's margueritas. It's amazing how well they go with hot dogs.

Before we knew it, it was time to pack up. That, of course, meant a final round of discounted selling to each other as items that hadn't been noticed during the weekend seemed to shout "take me, take me."

Once we had packed the cars to take the remaining items to Goodwill, we shared what has become a tradition at the end of the weekend—limoncello made by Peggy Chiang and artfully served by John John.



Rob Allen and Eric Groneman convince some chilly beach goers that they REALLY need an old exercycle when it's too cold to run around on the sand.

Joey Groneman was happy to report that total sales were approximately \$1,000. We made more than last year and there's no reason we can't surpass that next year. So, start saving your contributions, mark your calendars, and plan on coming down and joining us for the 3rd Annual Garden Club FUNraiser the weekend of August 28 & 29, 2010.



Linda Silva plans to replace this very sad impromptu sign next year with one made by the kids.



The Critter Report: Comeback Tales

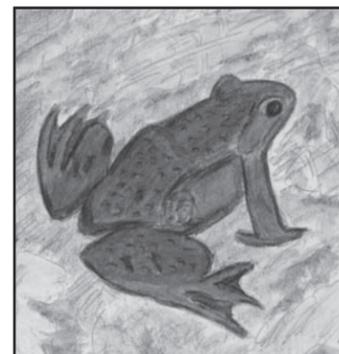
By Dave MacKenzie

The arctic ice is melting, fires sweep the forests, pine beetles attack, fish have disappeared. Is there any good environmental news these days that all of us critters can look to?

Well, admittedly, things could be a lot better. But we have had many successes with restoration and sometimes it helps to focus on what works, celebrate it, and work hard for more of the same. So here are some tales of local critter successes that will help us see the value and payoff for more restoration such as the Redwood Creek Restoration at Muir Beach project which is hard to miss now that it has (finally) started.

Brown Pelican. This pterodactyl-like sea predator is hard to miss at Muir Beach in the summer, but interestingly it is on the federal Endangered Species list. Back in the 1960s (as Rachael Carson warned us in the classic book *Silent Spring*), the effects of pesticides (in this case DDT) were disastrous. Brown Pelican populations crashed and the bird was protected, but most importantly a ban on the use of DDT was implemented. The result: lots more Brown Pelicans whose eggs no longer broke due to thin shells.

Peregrine Falcon. Another bird seen around Muir Beach (mostly in the winter), the Peregrine is considered by many as the ultimate avian predator. With its ability to catch a fleeing shorebird at over one hundred miles per hour, the Peregrine is always exciting to watch. It also was decimated by the DDT problem, but now is abundant enough that it has been taken off the federal endangered species list specifically due to the success of legal controls on pesticides.



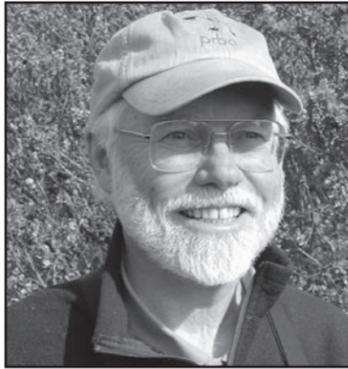
Red-Legged Frog

California Red-Legged Frog. This now rare resident of the former Big Lagoon may even be locally extinct in Muir Beach, but it was definitely present a few years back in small numbers. Nevertheless, the Redwood Creek Restoration at Muir Beach will specifically target helping this threatened species. By the time you

read this article the new frog pond on the Green Gulch property just below Hwy 1 may be completed, awaiting some new frogs (and a good amount of water). Red-Legged Frogs have been successfully restored to many other areas in California, so this should work. At one time, the frog was so common in California that it was sold to gold-rush miners in San Francisco for gourmet dinners, and was the main competitor in Mark Twain's story, "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County." They are now very rare, and I have seen only one, and heard only one other in many years of tromping around western ponds.

Coho Salmon. OK, we don't know what happened to them in the last couple of years, but we still hope for a big comeback (they have a multi-year cycle and are very sensitive to creeks flows). But big gains for these and other fish have occurred due to the Clean Water Act, one of the great federal legislative successes for the environment. If you think the waters in the US are bad now, they were much worse in the past! (Does anyone remember when the Cuyahoga River in Ohio caught fire in 1969?) Restoration of salmonid habitat in Redwood Creek (including the improved front lagoon) will give the Coho the best shot yet at a big comeback.

Northern Spotted Owl. The icon of western old-growth forests, such as Muir Woods National Monument, this medium-sized owl has led to significant forest protections and park expansions by being on the endangered species list. Another case of the ESA (Endangered Species Act) doing wonderful things for the critter world by forcing legal agencies at all levels to do some kind of management of habitat for the species. In Marin the current threat is pressure from the newcomer the Barred Owl, which displaces the Spotted from good habitats and even attacks them. Spotted Owls have been extirpated (locally

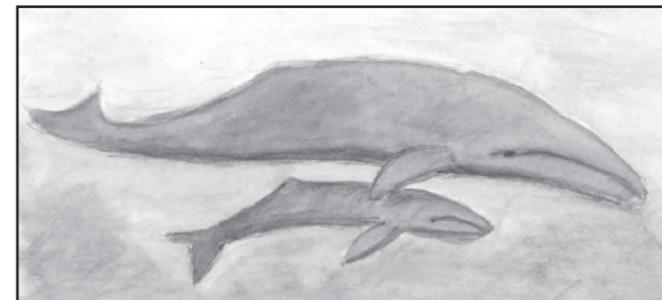


Dave MacKenzie has been contributing nature articles to the Beachcomber for 13 years, which is when he and his wife Bonnie moved to Muir Beach. Dave does engineering consulting from his home office, but also spends a lot of time searching the Redwood Creek Watershed for interesting critters. His unfulfilled desire is to see and photograph a mountain lion in the wild. At this point he has only seen tracks, kills, pets and photos. Help him out with timely reports and primed cell phone cameras! Photograph by Bonnie MacKenzie



Northern Spotted Owl

extinct) in Muir Woods for several years, although they do nest nearby. The Barreds are to blame. A project for removing Barred Owls from such habitat has shown that the Spotted will return, so this may be next in the Muir Woods case as well.



Gray Whales - mother and calf

Gray Whale. Another Muir Beach specialty (in April and May when they come right past the shore), the Gray Whale was one of many species hunted mercilessly in the past. But due to protection, the numbers have swelled, with

thousands moving up past the Muir Beach coast in 2009! (Did you see any?)

Barn Owl. This ghostly owl was the victim of unintentional poisoning in Muir Beach and many other areas in the past. If you put out an anti-coagulant rat poison such as warfarin, not only do the rats bleed to death but any owl (or dog or cat) that eats them can as well. Although there weren't too many Barn Owls seen around Muir Beach this year, they regularly nest at the dairy barn and have made quite a comeback on the coast. Please, no rodent poison (don't trust your exterminator!), as it doesn't take much to kill a local population of these excellent rodent hunters (1000 mice per pair per nesting season!).



Barred Owl

Well, you get the idea. There are many comeback tales. I could add Gray Foxes, which are now seen nightly in Muir Beach after being decimated due to canine distemper about 15 years ago. In this case, nature apparently took its course, and the population had to rebound on its own, perhaps with a better immune system this time. Let's hope the same will occur with sudden oak death!

So one way you can help with these comeback tales is perhaps volunteer to plant a few bushes on the new Diaz Ridge trail, or donate to your favorite environmental organization (plug here for PRBO Conservation!), or help get some key legislation passed. We are our own best hope!

Illustrations by Dave MacKenzie



THE TRUTH ABOUT CATS AND WILDLIFE

CATS INDOORS!
The Campaign for Safer Birds & Cats

- Cats with bells on their collars still kill wildlife.
- Even well-fed cats kill wildlife.
- Cat-injured wildlife seldom survive, even if they escape.
- Outdoor cats are exposed to many hazards, including cars, disease, and parasites

Protect cats, birds, and other wildlife by keeping cats indoors!

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AMERICAN BIRD CONSERVANCY
 Cats Indoors! The Campaign for Safer Birds and Cats
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 Washington, DC 20009
 Phone: 202-243-7181; Fax: 202-234-7182;
 E-mail: abc@abcbirds.org; Web: www.abcbirds.org



AMERICAN BIRD CONSERVANCY

What's Going On Around Here

By Lee de Barros 5 Sunset Way

At about 6 am I take a hot bath. The hot tub is at the lower end of the back lawn. It's a little dark at first but the predawn light helps. The birds are chirping but the low light mutes their colors. Soon the sun clears Coyote Ridge to the east and lights up the tall Monterey pines up hill to the west. I can see and hear the ocean as I enjoy the jets in the tub. There are some Western Blue Birds that hunt from a perch ten feet away. They are flycatchers and like to perch eight feet or so off the ground. As soon as they spot an insect they shoot down and land, arising immediately with the morsel and re-land on a perch. Last year, Blue Birds nested in a dead tree across from the driveway. Soon they multiplied and liked to sit on the telephone wire up there. Unfortunately they seemed to fall in love with their own images in the side view mirrors of the cars parked by the house. The copious bird droppings streaking down the side of the cars became a cause for murderous thoughts. We never were able to stop them. They finally migrated.

A couple of Red Shouldered Hawks have found the vantage point of the tall Monterey Pines to their liking. Those hawks can make a lot of noise. A long loud screech over and over again. This was the first thing I heard as I fumbled for my bathrobe this morning. Last year they raised a family up there. Their cousins the Red Tailed Hawks like to hunt the area by floating in the updrafts supplied by the prevailing winds off the ocean. These hawks, however, prefer to hunt from a high perch overlooking a likely small animal habitat. These guys get plenty to eat around here. Their only obvious source of anxiety is being harassed by a bunch of crows that roost in adjacent trees.

One of the crows is gimpy, he hops around on one foot. I take pity and throw peanuts on the lawn half way down to the hot tub. Crows are big birds, slow to take off so they don't let you get near to them. However, I have fed this one closer and closer to the house. Well, after a few days of that, I looked out the window and counted 10 crows chowing down right outside the window. It made me a little nervous.



A buck rests just a few feet away from the small deck outside Lee de Barros' office.
Photograph by Lee de Barros

From the tub I can see container ships moving from left to right as they leave the Golden Gate for distant ports. This morning a ship was lit up by the rising sun streaming through the Gate before the sun cleared Coyote Ridge; a bright ship in the ocean while Muir Beach was in predawn light.

Lately we have been seeing deer every day on and around the property. Martha has fenced off the vegetable garden, but sometime the deer nibble her other plants when she neglects to spray them with deer repellent. To help dissuade the deer we have installed a movement activated water sprayer on the path to the meditation hut. It was not unusual for some unsuspecting soul to get blasted with water while exploring the property.

Yesterday there was a buck resting in a small open area near my office at the end of the flower garden. Although his ears greeted me as I walked by he didn't bother to get up. No respect.

BARK



Bay Area Rescue Keeshonden

Loving the Dogs

By Bernard Halliwell

In 1995 I was suddenly, unexpectedly, and unceremoniously fired from the corporate job I had. This was a shock that rocked me to my foundations. One week I was being told how highly professional the operation of my department was, how absolutely indispensable I was to the organization, and the next week someone else gave me an exit interview, a pink slip, and sent me on my way. I was appalled. This was contrary to all my experience in life. And this from an organization known to everyone, an organization that should have known better. Yes, I had found myself caught in the middle of corporate politics. I suspected that a vice-president wanted the salary of my job for his wife.

I did not know how to deal with this experience. I was not sure I could trust anyone ever again. So I went out and bought a dog, and took this marvelous creature for walks and for training. That was Papageno. I have always loved dogs. Their company has always been a delight to me, and the story of that affection is a rich and complete story in itself. Today, however, I want to tell you how my experience with people in the rough and tumble work-a-day world led me to having a Keeshond, a medium size breed I chose for its size, intelligence, and long coat, and how that led to greater things.

Papageno's breeder invited me to join the Keeshond club, which I did, and one day in the mail at the beginning of summer I received a letter from the woman who ran the Keeshond rescue organization. Summer was a busy time for them. People dump dogs in shelters when they go on vacation, and on the 4th of July many dogs run off because of the noise of fireworks. She was seeking people to foster a dog.

I thought about whether I could do this. It seemed reasonable. I was already walking one dog twice a day. It would not be difficult to introduce a second into the fold. I was, however, dealing with a lot at the time. My father was sinking into dementia; my mother was slowly becoming paralyzed by Parkinson's disease. I had lost my job and my professional identity. Everywhere I looked the world seemed grim. So I said to myself, "Yes, this is a little gesture to make the world a better place. I can fit it in." This sort of rationale was natural to me. I try to live thoughtfully. Every day, in every way, I try to take actions, even on my small individual level, that make a difference.



Bernard Halliwell with his two Keeshonden: Arabella, left, and Parson Brown.
Photograph by Julie Smith

And thus have followed years of rescuing dogs, one or two dogs at a time. It has been a rich experience and rewarding. For the most part the dogs are not a great deal of trouble. Usually the biggest problems are housebreaking problems. Occasionally there are other behavioral problems to deal with. Shyness, for example. Or food protection. But for the most part these dogs flourish when given constant, consistent love and care. I do not know how many dogs I have rescued over the years. A hundred and fifty? Two hundred? Many of these dogs would have gone to slaughter had I not taken them in.

I have always worked within the Keeshond rescue organization run by Debbie Eldredge. This remarkable woman has dedicated much of her life to finding dogs in need, giving them a place to stay, and then finding new homes, which people in rescue refer to as 'forever homes.' The dogs arrive in rescue in two ways. Some are retrieved from shelters. Others are surrendered by owners who can no longer keep them. Once in rescue, the dogs visit a vet, any health problems are dealt with, and then the dogs go into foster care for at least two weeks for evaluation of temperament and style. Once we feel we know the dog, the dog is matched to a prospective owner, who has submitted a written application and has been interviewed both on

the telephone and at home. There is a large effort made to insure that the dog is the right dog for the individual and that the dog will be loved and cared for until the end of its life.

The Keeshond rescue organization rescues Keeshonden and dogs that appear to have been crossed with Keeshonden. This is not to say that this breed is superior to any other type of dog. It is just that we are familiar with these dogs, and this is a way to define our place in the world of rescue. There are all sorts of rescue organizations. Each defines itself in a particular way. What they all do is take dogs out of shelters or from situations where they are not wanted.



Cassie, in foreground, was so shy that she would let no one approach. One day she jumped on the bed and gave Bernard a delicate kiss. Bernard's Arabella is in the background.
Photograph by Debbie Eldredge, RVT

Homes can be found for most dogs if only they have a place to stay until a new home is found.

I remember the first dog I fostered. I met a woman at Larkspur Landing. She had the dog in a crate in the back of her truck, and she took him out. He was friendly, but he was smelly and dirty and one big mat. He had been picked up roaming around the hills south of Mt. Diablo. I brought him home. I combed him out, bathed him, and suddenly he was a new dog. But he went into his crate and stayed there. He would not come out for a week, except to go for a walk. Finally, after a week, he decided to come out and join us in the house. He left the crate, and I noticed

that he pranced. This dog, whom I had named Orlando, went to live with a handsome Irishman in a large house in Piedmont. I shed a tear when he climbed into the fellow's Jeep and left.

The next dog I picked up at Fort Funston, where I met the volunteer who had retrieved the dog from a shelter. The bitch was bedraggled and unattractive. I thought, "I don't know that anyone will want this dog. What are we going to do?" But I took her home, cleaned her up. I named her Miranda. Every night I fed her and she threw up her food. I was quite worried. And then after a week she relaxed. She began to keep her food down. The shape of her face changed, and she became a beautiful dog. She was a bit of a pill at times. She would bolt. There are stories that recently rescued dogs can run off looking for home. Actually I don't think that Miranda ever did that, for she came back. But I feared that she might. There were moments when I was scrambling all over the hillsides of Muir Beach trying to corner her. In the end Miranda became a lovely dog. She went to live with a Coast Guard family, with two boys. The last news I had of her was of life on Kodiak Island in Alaska.

And since then there has been such a steady stream that I have to stop to remember them individually. One memorable dog was Francine. An old gal, affectionate and joyful, but obese. She weighted 65 pounds and should have weighted 40. She waddled like a duck. I slowly began to take the weight off, and then one day she collapsed in the garden with a blue tongue. Scar tissue from a debarking procedure had nearly closed off her airway and she required a laryngeal tieback procedure. We applied to the Sunshine Fund of the Keeshond Club of America for funding, and we had the surgery done. Francine had a wonderful spirit. Eventually she went to live with a fellow who had had a serious brain tumor. He took her out on the boat he kept in Santa Cruz. People chartered the boat for scattering ashes at sea.

All the dogs I have fostered were right for someone. The issue was always finding the right person. I had one dog whose name was Woody. He was a lovely dog. Big, dark, and handsome, but he had a most penetrating bark. I worried about whether we could find a home for him. One day a gentleman was introduced. I opened the door to a round man with a feeling of warmth and openness. He had red cheeks and silver hair in curls. I thought of a cherub. He came into the house and sat down and was charmed by the dog. The dog barked, and I thought, "Oh, no! Here we go!" And the fellow said, "Oh, what a beautiful tenor voice!" And then he turned to me and said, "I would like to adopt this dog, and I would like to give your organization a check for a thousand dollars." Woody went off to a house in Berkeley, where he had home-cooked meals every morning and night.

Over the years I fitted the dogs into my life fairly seamlessly. When my mother had a crisis and was airlifted to a hospital in the East Bay, I learned that a shelter just around the corner from the hospital was holding a Keeshond. While my mother was resting, I nipped around the corner, picked up the dog, put him into the back of the car, and brought him home. He was a beautiful dog, mahogany golden brown in color, and very affectionate. A day or two later, I made the decision to end my mother's life, a moment that was handled in an inhumane way that I have never been able to forget. The next day I fought to bring her home from the hospital so she could die at home as the sun shone over the sea. After she passed, this little fellow wanted to sleep with me. I was tempted to keep him. But he went to live in San Jose with a family of beautiful girls.

I have never kept any of the dogs I have fostered. Many people who attempt to foster dogs fall in love with a foster dog and decide to adopt. Of course, one cannot continue doing that for long. For my part I have from the beginning felt that I was saving a dog's life and that I was going to give someone else joy. And I know I will love the next one that comes along, even though I know that some are special.

Dog ownership cuts across the entire social-economic spectrum of society, and one meets all sorts of people in the course of fostering dogs. Yes, one learns a great deal about human nature; one begins to discern. There are the flakes who get the dogs into trouble, or will if you let them have a dog. And then there are a remarkable number of people out there who really care. This is heartwarming. I remember one bitch who came to stay. Small and sweet, but she had breast cancer. My heart sank. Who would want to take a bitch with breast cancer? We had the mastectomy done. And then a young woman appeared on the scene. "I can deal with this, vet bills and all," she said. "I will take care of her." And off she went. Time and time again people have stepped up to give a dog with problems a comfortable and loving life. This has been heartwarming in these years when I have felt so often that indifference has come to prevail in our society.

I must mention a couple of dogs I have had recently. One was a Keeshond mix, whom I named Eliza Doolittle. A young woman in Sacramento had adopted her. All went well until she and her new boyfriend moved into a communal living situation. Eliza was suddenly kept outdoors all day with dogs she had not known previously, and then she was fed while the other dogs watched. No surprise, she started guarding her food, which is not good behavior for a dog, but perfectly natural. Had I not taken her, she would have been euthanized. She was such a lovely and beautiful dog. She just needed someone who would work with her 'behavioral issue.' We found that in the form of a woman and her husband in Half Moon Bay. This summer I received a postcard of a beautiful wolf, not unlike Eliza in appearance, from Canada. Eliza had been



Hope was treated for breast cancer by Bay Area Rescue Keeshonden and placed with a young woman who would care for her, vet bills and all.
Photograph by Debbie Eldredge, RVT

traveling to Banff in an RV, loving the snow and being a perfect traveling companion.

And then there was Willie. He was a puppy mill pup, sent to a pet shop, but the pet shop was going to put him down because he was sick. A fellow working in the shop took him home and later gave him to his girlfriend. The malady, whatever it was, had been minor. His life flourished, and then his owner lost the lease on the house she had been renting, because of a foreclosure. She felt she had to give him up. He was the favorite of her four dogs, but she thought him the easiest to place. She brought him to me in Oakland. A dignified woman with tears in her eyes. He was a delightful dog, though he jumped on the table a few times. One friend after another said, "Oh, that's a great dog. I want to take him home." We placed him with a young couple in Benicia, whose lives as they started out, believe it or not, were still going according to plans.

I am very busy these days. I do not foster as many dogs as I used to because I am away for long hours. But I shall always have, I suspect, an odd dog or two around, a dog happy to be here but happy to go on to another home. It is good to do a little good as one goes through the days. And certainly the dogs are always happy and grateful. And they never think of pink slips!

For more information on Bay Area Rescue Keeshonden (BARK), visit www.keeshondrescue.org To contact them: BARKinfo@keeshondrescue.org

The Paintings of Julian F. Knox

By Rachel Knox Alesse

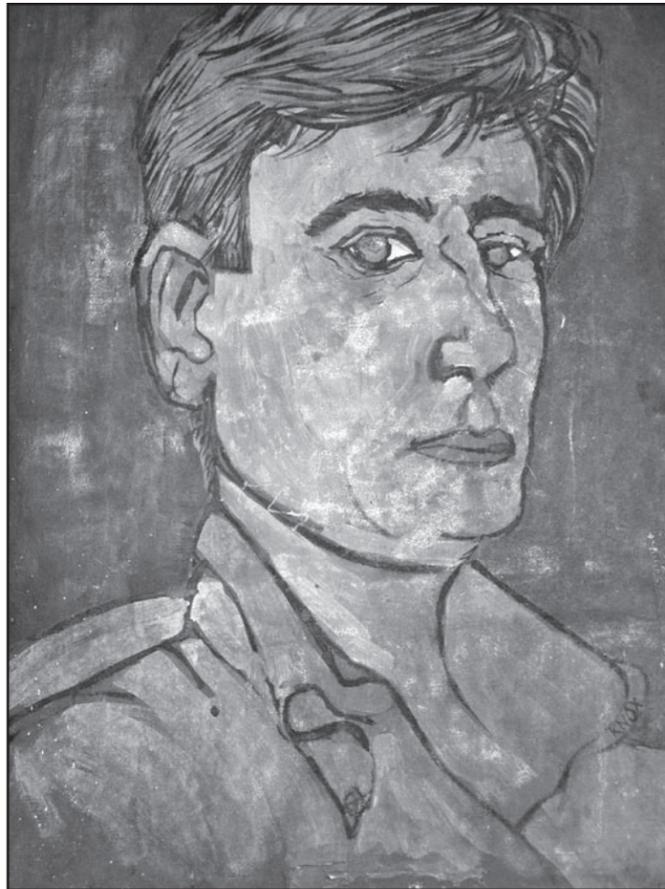
We moved to Muir Beach in 1967, into a house smelling of new wood. Some of the walls still needed to be painted and so my brother and I were told to stay away from the cans of open paint and the roller brushes resting temptingly in their pans. One day Dad allowed Tyler and I to paint a small space beneath a window. It was my bright idea to paint a large game of tic-tac-toe. As I was applying a victorious slash across my three X's he came in to check on our progress, perhaps knowing that we would paint anything but a nice clean white rectangle. Somehow he knew we would swerve drastically from the conventional method of painting a small innocent space. I, on the other hand, was surprised when he became furious and ordered us away from the wall.

Looking back, of course, I realize that not only was it unfair to challenge my 5-year-old brother to a game of tic-tac-toe (I was a solid seven at the time), but an oversized hash mark with sloppy O's and X's is really more like graffiti than an artistic contribution. My defense, and this is a good one, was that Dad had been using stencils that he had made to paint clusters of geometric shapes around most of the windows. He was obviously having a lot of fun doing it, too. Why should he have all the fun, why should he be the only creative source in the family? Well, answers his daughter who is now the mother of two pernicious boys, because when it comes to a brand new house, he is the artist and architect trained at the University of California, Berkeley, and you, young lady, are not.

In fact, we had moved into a house that he had designed specifically for his family. Although many years later he would tell me (probably just to see my aghast reaction) I should let my children draw on the walls of *my* house, I can understand why he would be so touchy about a tic-tac-toe game that actually dripped in several places and pooled lavishly on the tarp. Fortunately Tyler and I had been painting with some boring version of white that could easily be painted over. Not so transient, Dad had been adding his enhancements using some of the colors he loved: olive, oxblood, ochre, tomato, and a dark, storm-tinged blue. He used oxblood to paint the



For the one I named "Hub Pub" - what was I thinking? (oil on canvas, 15" X 23") Part of the fun of looking at this piece was figuring out the symmetry of the pattern. And how could a child not fall in love with these colors? He balanced subtle colors like sand, green olive, and a softened chartreuse with bold diamonds of aqua and tangerine. He was fond of adding borders, like this one in aqua dotted with tangerine squares and deep red circles, to all of his later work.



For the one I named "Self-Portrait" (oil on canvas, 16" x 26") This is the self-portrait that I believe Dad painted in Muir Beach. The nose and the shadow on his far cheek are blue, a color I had suggested.

walls of the window seat that faces the ocean, forming a bold frame for the ever-changing light on the coast, the ocean, the occasional barge creeping towards the golden gate. Most of the windows of the house are outset rather than flush with the walls. He painted the surfaces around the glass the same oxblood color, and then stenciled patterns of diamonds, triangles, and squares of blue and green over it. These small decorations were only the beginning. As years passed, during which he managed to eke out time to himself, his paintings appeared one by one on the walls.

The first memory I have of him painting is in Berkeley in a narrow strip of a room that faced the back yard. As a toddler, I was understandably not encouraged to go in that room. Nevertheless I remember half-rolled tubes of oil paints, and my father, slim with short dark hair, sitting with a painting in front of him. I also remember the heavy smell of linseed oil, which he used to mix colors and clean his brushes. After we moved to Muir Beach, he painted in the loft above the living room, providing me easy access to watch and pepper him with questions before he politely asked me to leave. One time, when I must have been watching more than asking questions, he was painting a self-portrait and asked me what color he should paint the nose. I looked at it closely and, in all

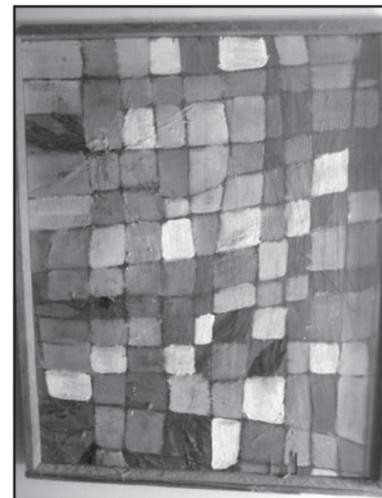


For the one I named "Orange Flowers" (acrylic on canvas, 12" x 17 1/2") This is one of the paintings my father painted in Berkeley. I think it must have been hung somewhere prominent because I remember being quite young when I first appreciated the colors and shapes.

earnestness, said blue. He paused, and then told me it was an excellent idea.

To ensure himself more privacy, he eventually moved his studio into the basement. Determined to follow him, not because I was interested in painting but because I adored him, I visited him there as well. Once he showed me how to stretch canvas onto a wooden frame. As I recall, my efforts produced a baggy, useless mess that he had to dismantle. Later, when he started his own business, he built a studio on the edge of our property where he worked and painted in peace.

Some of his early works were of my mother, and our young family. He later moved away from portraits, possibly because



For the one I named "Rectangles" (oil on board, 12" x 14 3/4") This an early work painted on a piece of wood rather than canvas. This is the first painting I know of that consists entirely of shapes.

no one in our family had the time or the self-control needed to sit for one. Instead, he began producing complicated and intricate shapes in brilliant colors. These fascinated me. Some had repeating patterns of geometric shapes and some were composed of shapes of his own design that seemed to interlock impossibly so that my first thought after 'wow' was always 'how?'

Those have always been my favorite. I used to think of them as his 'wild' paintings, that they revealed a part of my

father that would not be detected otherwise. I've always felt that unlike paintings of people or landscapes or objects that exist, you can't talk about Dad's wild paintings in terms of accuracy or capturing a mood of a particular time or place. They are pure Julian F. Knox, perhaps coming from a part of him directly opposite the cool, calm, straight lines of architectural drawing. I think also, living in Muir Beach, surrounded by what is possibly the most engaging landscape in the world, he felt that



For the one I named "Beautiful Pieces" (acrylic on canvas, 16" x 20") I was sure there was a secret message in this one. Some of the shapes look like people, and some of them are shaped like letters. C, H, O, T and V in particular.

just being able to see it was enough. I like to think he wanted to create paintings that didn't resemble anything, not even other artists' work that he admired. Or perhaps it was simply a matter of painting what or how he felt, or whatever it was his fingers were itching to do. I can only imagine what drove him to paint, or how he felt when he did. It is only my own opinion that believes he found a one-of-a-kind beauty in the strong shapes he designed and the bold colors he loved.

Getting lost in something my own father had created: paintings, in which I searched for hidden messages, or imagined myself as one of the shapes, was a privilege, a rare kind of joy that I doubt most adoring daughters get to enjoy. Now, as an adult with the luxury of years to step back and watch myself, to think of my childhood as a big still life, I realize that growing up in a house designed by my father, gazing frequently and thoughtfully at his artwork, was like growing up inside his vision, his unique view of how different forms of beauty mix with life. Growing up in that house, watching him hang new paintings and standing back with him to study them helped form my own. I would tell him what I liked and he would ask me why. Without the gift of a mature vocabulary, and perhaps with a shrug or two, I struggled to explain my feelings. Somehow, he always found the root of what I was trying to say, and he always appreciated and praised my instinct.

He was like that, always seeing the one-of-a-kind beauty in people, too.

Photographs by Rachel Knox Alesse

About the Front Cover
For the one I named "Mom Reading" (oil on canvas, 24" x 36") Although she wore clothes like this when I was much too young to remember, I recognize the capable look of her arm and the straight set of her back. The curtain behind her looks a lot like the one that hung in our living room in Berkeley.

Muir Beach Couple Exchanges Home for Foreign Destinations

By Anne and Paul Jeschke

(Editor's Note: Anne and Paul Jeschke are among an increasing number of inveterate travelers who have discovered the excitement of home exchanges. They trade their Muir Beach home for short periods of time with people who are interested in exploring our amazing corner of the world. Now that this year's vacation season is over, Anne and Paul are planning the next trip.)

PAUL: Florence, Kyoto, Johannesburg, Budapest, Buenos Aires—so many great cities in so many fascinating countries. Those of us with the “travel bug” are constantly pouring over maps and guides trying to pick the next great adventure. Travel, however, can be expensive. I’m old enough to remember “Europe on \$5 A Day” (1957), but today it’s difficult to find a hotel room for less than \$100 a night and by the time meals for two people are added in, the tab is likely to end up somewhere south of \$200. That’s \$6000 for a thirty-day vacation, not exactly in the ballpark for a retired couple living on a fixed income. That’s why I got really excited when Anne browsed the Internet a few years ago and discovered HomeExchange.com, the organization that invites you to “make yourself at home ... anywhere in the world.”

ANNE: But inexpensive isn’t everything. Hotel rooms tend to be claustrophobic and confining. They are impersonal and sterile. A home is warm, well-equipped, and has a number of rooms to relax in. You can even invite your children or another couple along if you like, because nearly all exchange homes have 2 -3 bedrooms. I like getting up in the morning - maybe a bit earlier than Paul - and going into the kitchen to make some coffee and toast. After a busy day in a new country, I can read in one room while Paul might want to watch TV or work at the computer in another room. Most kitchens are well equipped with all the staples like spices, flour, sugar, and such. And exchange families always leave a bottle of wine, or homemade cookies, or another special treat. A hotel is a poor second to that kind of living. In addition, exchangers leave a list of



Anne in front of the Copenhagen condominium where she and Paul lived for three weeks while the Danish owners visited Muir Beach. The home was centrally located in an upscale neighborhood just 15 minutes by bus from downtown.
Photograph by Paul Jeschke

recommended restaurants, sights, stores, and activities for the neighborhood, city, and country. And often neighbors stop by to say hello and offer to help if needed.

PAUL: It really is a convenient and comfortable way to settle into a new place. We plan on at least one home exchange a year and have lived for two or three weeks in France (Trouville and Montpelier), Denmark, Turkey, New Zealand, and domestic destinations including Florida, Virginia and Southern California. Frequently we exchange cars; our visitors are free to use our car and we use their vehicle. On a couple of occasions, we’ve exchanged car keys in advance and left the car at the airport along with maps to the house. For one exchange with a couple who lived on Chesapeake Bay, we even exchanged dogs. We took care of their dog and they took care of ours. We’ve also put together a binder with information about the house (emergency telephone numbers, location of circuit breakers, shutoff valves, satellite TV operation) to answer any questions our visitors may have. They do the same for us.

ANNE: Friends often ask me how we know the house will be decent and appropriate for us. HomeExchange.com has a fact sheet on each home exchanger. It includes a description of the house with photos, a description of the exchangers and their interests, including when and where they’d like to travel, and lots of other useful information. You can make a pretty good judgment using this info.



The view from the Alanya, Turkey, living room where Anne and Paul vacationed last year. The three-bedroom apartment was right on the Mediterranean and close to fantastic restaurants.
Photograph by Anne Jeschke



Anne and Paul stayed three weeks in this beautifully landscaped and appointed home in Deltaville, Maryland, on the shores of Chesapeake Bay. They even used the owners’ car and cared for their dog while they did the same in Muir Beach.
Photograph by Anne Jeschke

You can tell from photos whether the home and yard are tidy and well kept. And we nearly always e-mail back and forth a while, and eventually talk on the phone to finalize details. Home exchangers tend to really care for their home and are proud of it. You’re staying in their house, and they’re staying in yours, and you each want your home to be respected. We have always come home to an immaculate house, with clean linens in the bathroom and on the beds. And we always leave our hosts’ home in the same condition. It is almost a point of honor with exchangers. We have, on occasion lent our home to friends when we were away. They are seldom as careful as home exchangers are. Being an exchanger has its own rules and ethics. There is pride in returning the home to its owners in top-notch condition, and of course there is pleasure in returning to your own home and finding it immaculate as well.

PAUL: Hurrah! Guess I’ll have to learn to say that in Italian as we just got email confirmation of a home exchange next summer with a family from Milan, Italy. It’s a great three-story, three-bedroom house about 10 miles from the center of town with public transit at the front door. It’s near the Lakes District and about an hour from the Swiss border. We’re working on the dates now—sometime in July



The market in Trouville on the coast of Normandy, France, was a fantastic place to shop for locally grown produce and fresh seafood, not to mention those great baguettes.
Photograph by Paul Jeschke

or August. Gianni is an HR manager for Dell Computer in Italy. He and his wife, Michaela, have two children. Our daughter, Christine, and her family plan to join us. Both we and our Italian home exchangers want to get the dates fixed pretty far in advance because we both intend to use

airline “miles” for tickets. We’ll use the savings to travel to other areas in Italy. HomeExchange.com recently added free trip cancellation and supplemental property damage insurance, making home switches even more worry-free.

ANNE: We do travel inexpensively, using airline miles for our plane fare and home exchange for most of our housing. We tend to have 2 -3 weeks in an exchange, then another week or two traveling. We’ll often have breakfast and a light supper at home, then a main meal out mid-day. It doesn’t have to cost much more than staying at home. But looking for the next trip is almost as much fun as the trip itself. I love going through Home Exchange listings in Kenya, Morocco, and South Africa, as we’ve never been to Africa. On the other hand, living in such a primo location as Muir Beach with easy access to both San Francisco and the Wine Country, we get lots of offers from other people. They are often so tempting that we let that decide where we are going next. Italy wasn’t high on our list, but Gianni and Michaela’s home looks so nice that we’ll be off there next summer.

PAUL: We’re not the only Muir Beachers who do home exchanges. Dee and Bob Hayden have done a couple of exchanges and from what they’ve told us, had great experiences. If you’re interested, we’d be happy to share information about home exchanges. You can also check out listings for yourself at www.homeexchange.com. Among the 28,000 listings is this one for a three-bedroom, two-bath home in Brazil: “Home to dolphins & turtles, the village of Pipa is part of the district of Tibau do Sul, an Indian name meaning ‘between 2 waters.’ Even on arriving, from the road you are bewitched by beaches with clear, warm waters, immense coconut palms plantations, natural pools ...” Maybe they’d be interested in exchanging for a home in a coastal village about seven miles northwest of the Golden Gate Bridge.



Paul with two friends he and Anne visited in Mt. Maunganui on New Zealand’s North Island while staying at a great vacation condo on the Bay of Plenty. The two women had previously vacationed in the Jeschke’s Muir Beach home while Anne and Paul traveled cross-country in their RV.
Photograph by Anne Jeschke

Choque de Peru: Mabel and David's Travels

By David H. Taylor, MD

Mabel and I are back from our incredible journey. Three weeks of trekking, shoveling, scratching, fevers and of course testing out every type of toilet very frequently. Yes, it has been another Global Citizens experience—this time living in the Peruvian rainforest village of Chirapa in the north central state of San Martin with our wonderful host family.

Traveling with my 13-year-old daughter was really the best part of the whole experience. Mabel was fearless, funny and a great traveling companion through sickness and health. For instance, one day when we were in a *combi* (minivan) and Mabel had been throwing up quite often, I opened the sliding door and hit her in the head while she was leaning out the window, which of course made her sick again and gave her a small lump on her brow. Did she complain—far from it—she got plenty of mileage out of it though and that's what everyone loves about Mabel. She's a virtuoso of spin and wit. (She did accuse me of child abuse for whacking her in the head, but hey at least it was funny.) She rose to the challenges and matured well beyond her thirteen years. We went together to mark Mabel's turning 13 and to do our secular equivalent of a bat mitzvah, and I can report it was a great success even if the nearest Jews were hundreds of miles away (other than our fellow volunteers of course).

We started our journey in Cuzco feeling dizzy and out of breath. Cuzco is a tourist magnet and, of course, a picturesque and bustling spot. We spent two days there and in the nearby Sacred Valley racing through the usual forced march of Inca ruins, museums and markets. The most interesting discovery was the cluster of very tripped out white hippies working in the indigenous market in Pisac (tucked behind the tourist market). Like some ancient lost tribe.

Inca culture is a total puzzle as they wrote nothing down and we have only sixteenth century Spanish commentaries to shape our understanding of their world. Just to give you an idea of this, the word Inca actually only referred to the emperor, i.e., there was only ever one Inca at a time. Peru's archeological and cultural history spans millennia and features numerous complex pre-Columbian civilizations each centered in various regions. The Inca were the last of these civilizations to rule the region before the Spanish invasion and incorporated many of the cultures they dominated but had only been in power a few hundred years before the Spanish arrived and wiped them



David and Mabel at the highest point on the Inca Trail, Dead Woman's Pass, 14,000 feet.

out. Many of their dwellings and towns reminded me of old Italian villages of similar late medieval vintage weirdly. The tragedy of the Spanish destruction of this world is still felt to this day. The astonishingly sturdy, trapezoidal unmortared ceremonial Inca architecture made of enormous polished stones has survived numerous earthquakes intact. Their sculptural rendering of living rock and their reverence for the landscape is unsurpassed. If anyone is interested, read *The White Rock* by Hugh Thomson.

Our purpose in going up to Cuzco, like 99 percent of all visitors, was to go to Machu Picchu. Delightful idea. We walked. It was hard. We went with Peru Treks, a popular trekking company which has a humane reputation for its porter policies. An Inca Trail trek is probably the best deal in tourism if you can hike. Not only do they carry all the gear, set up and break campsites, cook and serve multi-course meals on tablecloths no less but they arrange all fees, transport, etc. The trail itself is marathon distance and covering it in four days is pretty simple other than being at 14,000 feet at the aptly named Dead Woman's Pass. That makes it hard to walk too far without pausing to catch your breath. The course record, when they ran a race, was 3 hours 50 minutes so really doing it in four days is almost shameful. Porters constantly whiz past you carrying heavy loads. I chewed lots of coca leaf, not clear if it helped, opinions varied. Mabel was a superstar on the trail though no fan of the coca leaf. The young British and Canadians with us felt the coca made them very energetic and to prove it charged up the hill and took nude pics at the top (which sadly no one would show me). Magnificent views, spectacular ruins that can only be seen from the trail are the reward for the hot dusty trek. Dry and hot cloudless days with very cold nights when we wore all

of our clothes at once. Very little wildlife, only saw one llama and some other livestock. No spectacled bears. When you finally arrive at Machu Picchu it's simply out of this world and dwarfs all the other Inca sites both in scope and majesty. The more adventurous people in our group also raced up the dizzyingly steep Huayna Picchu (the adjacent peak). Machu Picchu is of course extremely crowded and we were then forced to spend several hours in the overpriced and dull town of Aguas Calientes to wait for our train back to Cuzco. And in the morning, after showering several times and repacking everything, we flew back to Lima to rendezvous with our Global Citizens team and do our laundry.

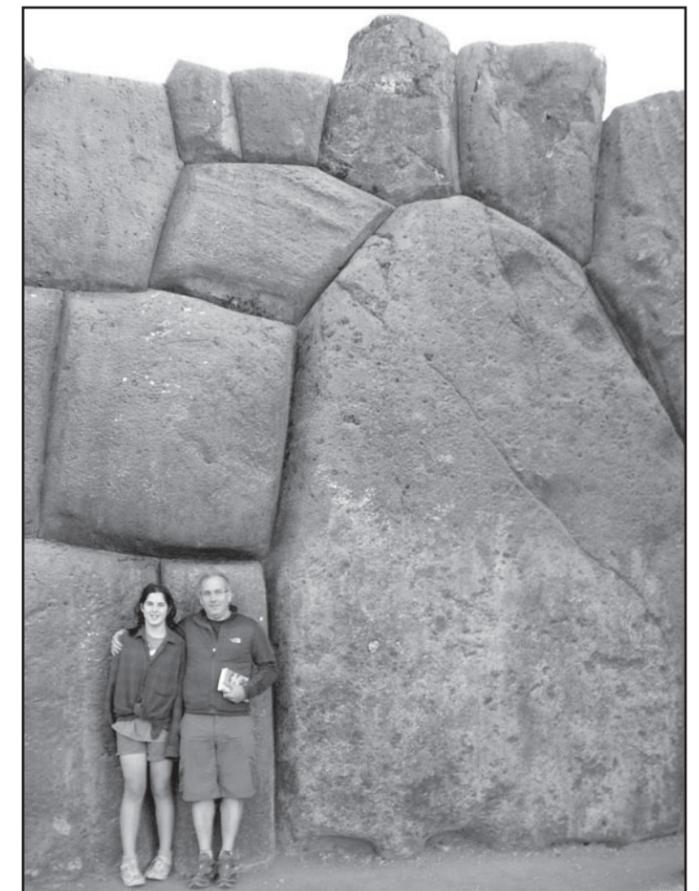
The bizarre hostel in central Lima with stuffed condor flying over the stairs turned out to be a pretty busy brothel—very interesting for Mabel to learn about the Lima prostitution scene. She drew a lovely picture of a working girl she spied on the street. Central Lima is really not too pleasant, very crowded, dusty, noisy, and doesn't feel safe, and I was always getting lost which didn't add to my sense of well-being. Laundry, however, was done, two loads wash/dry/fold: \$6.50—nothing could make us happier. Empanadas and other wonderful pastries are delightful. We visited the Peruvian Wal-Mart "Metro" and were overwhelmed and charmed by the wonderful school supplies.

Zipped off to Tarapoto the next morning, a "rainforest metropolis" per *Lonely Planet*, and a world away from Cuzco's altitude, tourism, and expense. Apparently Tarapoto has one of the highest concentrations of motorcycles perhaps on the planet. Whole families riding around on small motorcycles, motorcycle dump trucks, they've got it all. Lots of Chinese manufactured motorcycles. Certainly the high point of the trip was riding in the moto-taxi/rickshaws around town. If nothing else it was a cheap way to cool down. As usual, we spent our free time buying drugs at the local pharmacy for our many ailments. The hostel in Tarapoto was quite quaint and airy, nice change. Tarapoto was once a center of the international cocaine trade but now is just a rainforest metropolis, all good things must come to an end, I guess. The village of Chirapa is about forty-five minutes from Tarapoto...naturally most of that is deeply rutted rock strewn mountain track that we zoom up in an overloaded ancient Mitsubishi minivan—no problem at all.

Our daily life in Chirapa is delightful but also a challenge. While we struggled with the lack of running water, insects the size of small dogs, heat, intestinal troubles and, for at least half of our group, an inability to communicate, the really interesting story was how people lived in Chirapa. What can be discerned in ten days, even in this type of cultural immersion, is very limited. Not

being able to speak Spanish or Quechua meant my usual curiosity was severely curtailed. I have to admit that my personal understanding of Chirapa could be expressed best in a children's board book. Nevertheless, I will intrepidly try to describe what I saw.

Although it is utterly irrational and random I kept comparing Chirapa to Kilomeni, Tanzania, the previous village I visited with GCN. Rural poverty is rural poverty on any continent. Lack of access to running water, good medical care, employment, the cash economy, adequate education, transportation is the theme. Chirapa once had running water but a pipe broke and for the lack of government services and about \$7000 everyone has to haul their water up from local springs. In Chirapa the school was staffed with teachers, a dozen of them. There were a few vehicles, mostly motorcycles owned by teachers who commuted up the hill and the odd truck. A rickety minivan provided some routine transport to Tarapoto. Most village homes had electrical hookups and many had TV and radio. There were books in the school and other modest school supplies, however the children only went to school half days due to overcrowding. There was a small clinic staffed by a nurse and several micro bodegas selling goods. Most families were subsistence farmers and



Saqsaywaman fortifications above Cuzco

TRAVEL

there is a coffee and cacao cooperative to which most seemed to belong. Any other types of work would require leaving the community.

Our host family seemed to be comfortable by village standards, part of their home was newly constructed cement and they had a television. The parents were named Rigoberto and Belen. The kids were Jerzen and Kenlli. Other than the front room all the floors were dirt that was always well kept, swept, and clean. Kitchen/dining areas were made of bamboo with thatched roofs to allow for smoke from wood fires to dissipate. Mabel and I each had our own room which was pretty upscale for Chirapa (this was accomplished by the family squeezing into two rooms during our stay). Sadly after Mabel caught a glimpse of the spider the size of a man's hand on the wall next to her bed, she spent the next ten days cozily in my bed, which was not designed for one American adult, let alone two of us, a mosquito net, and our down sleeping bags. Most nights it poured rain but we had only the most occasional leak. Once we learned to no longer need to use the latrine in the night, we could sleep pretty consistently. The combination of needing to go to the latrine and not wanting to go to the latrine in the middle of the night can really mess with your sleep pattern. At least our latrine was not also behind barbed wire as some of our other group members had to scale fences to pee. We were also blessed not to have experienced a cockroach swarm like one other GCN volunteer on her first night in Chirapa. She awoke covered in roaches that were so dense that they actually ate her shoe. Apparently her family had placed

her in the kitchen to sleep. Despite this Hitchcock level of trauma we were all amazed as she soldiered on with the program, though she did move houses, causing intense village gossip and feuding as a result, a price worth paying when weighed against the alternative.

The family had two older children living and working in Lima and two younger children ages 9 and 14 who were delightful. Their days were long and challenging, starting early building a fire, boiling water for coffee, hauling 20 liter drums of water up the hill from the spring, tending to livestock, farming, and doing laundry. Our host mother was harvesting cilantro when we were there and the entire kitchen would be filled with bundles that we would clean and she would tie off into one kilo bunches. She would then go to the market in Tarapoto at around 1 AM in order to sell this and other produce and be back in the morning for her regular chores. She processed over 130 kilos of cilantro in several days. We took our meals together with the other volunteers in another home that doubled as a guesthouse for migrant workers. GCN typically pays a cook to prepare meals for the whole team as it's a lot of work obviously and there can be a higher degree of quality control in terms of boiling water and using bleach to clean dishes to minimize damage to our sensitive American stomachs. Nevertheless our family endlessly plied us with food, mostly coffee, fried plantains, bread, etc. Needless to say everything they ate was locally grown and produced—not because everyone's a chic locavore but because that's all there is. The Quechua word for farm is *chakra* and it took me some time to figure out why everyone was



Spectacular Inca ruins at Llactapata alongside the Inca Trail

TRAVEL

always talking about yoga. In some villages where there are GCN projects, families do provide breakfast and are compensated for that expense. In Chirapa families were modestly compensated for hosting us, which seemed reasonable since even though we weren't eating their food they did have to haul more water for us and give up their rooms for us and graciously did our laundry once or twice.

We spent a lovely evening visiting with Rigoberto's extended family in the compound they occupy on a gorgeous grassy hilltop in Chirapa. The children played volleyball and we all had fresh coconuts to eat—horses, chickens, and pigs ambled around. The feeling of quiet reverie and family warmth reminded me of any wonderful summer vacation I have ever had or dreamed of, it made me think of those wonderful images of the Kennedys playing touch football decades ago, idyllic and safe. It was always astonishing to us how people, whose lives were objectively difficult would always make time for family and enjoy their lives as much as they could. These were folks most of whom had never left the immediate region, whose multigenerational experience of poverty, exploitation, guerrilla warfare, and drug trafficking is

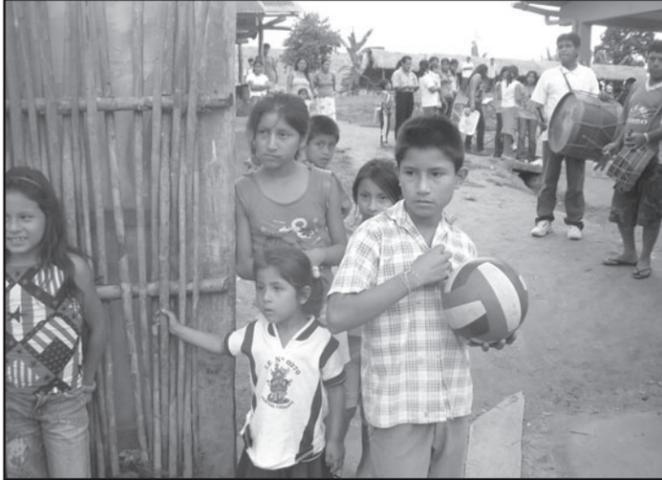


Chirapa School kitchen construction project. We excavated and raised the columns and put up the roof. Work will continue on footings and walls.

daunting to contemplate, yet they were perfect hosts, gracious to each other and proud of their children. On that evening I was troubled to recognize one of the schoolgirls breastfeeding her baby which was a reminder of how accelerated life can be for the rural poor. Many in the village were surprised that the teenagers in our group weren't already betrothed.

The farm animals lived in and out of our house. The hens were brooding in the kitchen and when their *pollitos* hatched often came pecking around for handfuls of rice and corn tossed on the kitchen floor for them. Every family had chickens that wandered around everywhere and our sleep was interrupted by crowing roosters about every 30 minutes all night long. The chickens spent the night in the trees in the yard. Many people raised gamecocks and cockfighting is a national pastime. There were two pigs who also lived with us. Mabel would try and blame her snoring on the pigs which was really not fair to the pigs. One evening we ran outside because of some very plaintive squealing (when pigs are distressed they sound like people) to watch the entire family working together to castrate the young boar. (Castrating boars is done to make their flesh edible and to prevent them from growing tusks and being too aggressive.) The castration was done with a rather dull pocket knife and the pig was poulticed with some lime/alcohol and insecticide. Amazingly it lived. Mabel, observing her first castration, wondered whether it was worse for the farmer or the pig...clearly a female perspective. The pigs were, like the other animals about town, thin and forlorn. I have never before seen pigs not bother to finish their food. The horses were the thinnest, smallest, most broken down I have seen. The family dog, Crespa, was, like all family dogs in Chirapa, simultaneously beloved and abused. It was generally shooed away, was afraid of people, and yet served as an alarm system and scavenger of waste around the house. Crespa was of course rail thin but not as mangy as many local animals and I think, rather proud of her association with such a prominent local family. One of the most touching things about living in Chirapa was to watch people, who had spent their lives caring for and living amongst their animals, fuss, talk to and chide their livestock. As a keeper of chickens myself I very much identified with this simple fascination with the activities and relationships amongst the flock. This deep affection and protectiveness is of course in jarring contrast to the sudden violence with which these animals are castrated, killed, eaten, etc. This is the basis of our interdependence on domesticated animals. With their thin, forlorn and hungry aspect the animals of Chirapa shared the life experience of their human neighbors.

Our purpose in Chirapa, other than deep cross-cultural immersion, was to work on a school construction project. This involved building a kitchen adjacent to the classroom building. There were two school buildings and a playing field with extensive bamboo bleachers for spectators. The project was the best organized of any GCN project I have participated in. This was a result of extensive pre-planning by our team leader who was returning to the region. She was able to consult in advance with one of the local teachers. The result was a mobilized parent



Villagers bid us farewell at the school. Music, storytelling, dancing, and speeches marked the occasion.

teacher association that hired a contractor or *maestro*, to run things as well as a daily corps of parent volunteers. A schedule posted in the school showed a daily roster of 12 *gringos* and 8 *padres*. And people showed up and worked very hard. These projects work only if the villagers work and bring their tools with them. Everything is done by hand, from excavation to hoisting roof beams. Third world construction methods do not vary across the world as far as I can tell. Cement is hand mixed on the ground and hauled in buckets. Ladders are made from branches and branches are used as supports, scaffolding, etc., everything is recycled whenever possible. The only power tool used was an enormous chain saw that was brought out to rip planks to frame the columns. We accomplished a lot in 10 days of work and the building was well on the way to completion. It remains to be seen how long it will take to finish but everyone was very pleased with the work. The main safety challenges on this job were the black tarantulas that live in the soil and every day as we would dig and haul earth they would scurry out only to be chopped up with shovels and machetes. Apparently they were quite poisonous and no one was in the mood to find out just how poisonous. While it often rained at night the days were generally hot and dry so work could proceed daily which was fortunate. The soil is so rich we dug through probably six feet of topsoil. Fence posts would routinely sprout leaves in Chirapa.

At several times during our stay with Rigoberto and Belen we had minor health problems. I had developed a nasty abscess on the Inca trail that flared up just in time to be in a place without running water. When I finally communicated my need for hot water to apply my filthy compress they added some leaves to the mixture and applied some salve that seemed to be one part saliva and two parts alcohol. It all worked pretty well, though I might have a thinner layer of skin now where that abscess once was. When the GCN group traveled to the city of Moyobamba

for a weekend excursion, Mabel developed a bad case of traveler's diarrhea with fevers and vomiting. When we returned we explained this to our family who exclaimed that her fevers were doubtless the result of the climate change. It must have been the *choque de Moyobamba* that caused her illness. The residents of Chirapa, which was at an elevation of 1000 meters, were always extolling the virtues of its cool climate and often asked us if we were cold or in need of extra blankets. We were usually too stifled by the heat and humidity to even respond to these gentle inquiries. To treat her fevers Belen insisted on dousing Mabel with a brew of fermented *ruta* leaves that she was to leave in her hair. When later that evening Mabel couldn't take the smell any longer and rinsed her hair, she caused quite a stir amongst the village women who scolded her for being non-compliant with her treatment. As an American doctor I was asked by the family for advice and treatment of several problems including Belen's bad back which I healed with a loan of my spiky massage balls for the night and Jerzen's congestion which did not respond to the Sudafed I proffered. Watching Jerzen stick an infant nasal suction device to probe his ear fruitlessly was poignant. In urban areas Peru was in the grip of swine flu fears and as a result school was cancelled nationwide for two weeks just before we left, causing outrage and disruption in the village as no one felt the slightest bit at risk nor would anyone have bothered to treat an outbreak if it had arrived. The biggest health threat was *choque de moyobamba*, not swine flu.

While we were growing accustomed to living in Chirapa the knowledge that we would return to living with adjacent indoor toilets, running and even hot water made us start to count the days. There are advantages to showering with a bucket and a basin and we usually felt clean, well rested, and well fed. We loved the food which was mostly bananas and rice but my inexhaustible capacity for *chifles* or fried plantains hit a wall on the last day and the thought of enjoying a crunchy banana slice right now is still premature. An elaborate village celebration or *despidida* was held at the school to thank us for our work in the community. And we were off. Back to spending more for a meal than whole families earned in a month. Back to washing more clothes than whole families ever wore. Back to shopping in vast groceries where more products were for sale than existed in the entire village. Back to flying on airplanes that no one had ever even seen. Back to California where no one can really even imagine what it was like in a place like Chirapa.

Photos from our trip are at: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/20688370@N06/sets/>

Photographs by David H. Taylor, MD

Trekking to Machu Picchu

By Mabel Capability Taylor

Now that it is over, I must reach back into the dusty corners of my frontal lobe and fetch the memories of Peru. The country that I chose to volunteer in. To become a woman in. To learn, to bond, and to tour in. June 26th. The day that we left. If I remember correctly the alarm went off somewhere around 3:00 am. Unlike my usual grumpy self, I was fine with awakening. I hurried to the closet and slipped into the previously chosen outfit. The one with the heavy clothes, not only to keep me warm on the plane, but also to avoid the packing of them.

My first thought once we arrived in Cuzco was something like this: "Oh my god, it's cold. I can't breathe." There is a high chance it was even cold, (see the pun?), the altitude was just shocking. Breath came short at first and I gladly grabbed our luggage and ran out of the airport, thinking that it may be better outside. I was unpleasantly surprised; the situation was just as bad outside.

Sunday, our third day in Peru. Father, who is always doing something, signed us up for a daylong tour of the Sacred Valley of the Incas. We hopped on a bus and watched as it filled up. Now in a completely filled

full-size bus we started to drive. We went up the way we had ventured yesterday to see Saqsaywaman, but didn't stop. The bus drove and stopped at various small towns and we were led by a guide through them until we reached their ruins. They were all really beautiful. I was looking forward to Machu Picchu, knowing that it would be more than any of these. But for the time being I was satisfied with these beauties. It surprised me how intricate and smartly built they were.

The day and night before Monday the 29th were filled with self-doubt and nervous behaviors. For this was the day we were to start on trek to Machu Picchu. I didn't think I would be able to handle the hiking and I simply freaked myself out. But somehow I managed to sleep and the next morning I pulled myself out of my nerves and waited to be picked up by the Peru Treks company. The bus arrived and we started to drive. Yet again we went in the direction of Saqsaywaman, but continued to drive. On and on we went through extremely narrow roads in a full-size bus. Within an hour or two we stopped and got out at the starting point of the Inca trail, Kilometer 82. This is where we first met with the group. We were told to have our passports ready and we walked in a line to the checking point. After too much time spent waiting for stamps we gathered at the Inca trail sign, right before a rather rickety bridge over the



Fog rises from Machu Picchu as David and Mabel first catch sight of the awe-inspiring ruins early in the morning.



Mabel beaming after making it to Machu Picchu

Urubamba River.

After our picture was taken under the sign we started to walk. For the next six kilometers we walked, and walked, and talked. After four or so kilometers this was my thought, "Oh god I am screwed, this is supposed to be the easiest day!" I wasn't completely wrong, but I turned out to be a much better hiker than I had ever imagined, you can't not be. There is really no turning back. But somehow I made it to lunch. Across a small creek, through various other campsites, we reached our tent, where the porters had set up camp in a way none of us deemed possible. Soon we were served a four-course meal, that literally came out of nowhere. The porters had carried a very large tent, two tables, two tablecloths, thirteen stools, multiple tarps, buckets, and towels, and thirteen full sets of silverware and dishes. It was rather amazing. After lunch, we headed out again and walked for the rest of the day until early evening.

The first campsite was above a very small village and surrounded by very large mountains. When we arrived, there were tents lined up for us. The large tent was set up again, and the porters were cooking again. We took this opportunity to set up our sleeping bags and rest. As in usual Andes fashion, the sun set right at six o'clock and something inside me wants dinner right away. My prayers were answered and we soon were inside the large tent, and those who had been sweating two hours ago were now shivering, for with this darkness came sudden and intense cold. I had wrapped myself in a down jacket and long pants while earlier I had been in shorts and a T-shirt.

Yet another night was spent worrying, for I had many negative feelings about day two. We awoke at 6:30 am and quickly headed to the meal tent, where the group

of people created more warmth. Breakfast went by as the rest of the meals would. The food was never bad, but the altitude made me lose a lot of my appetite, so I never ate much. Before we started walking that morning, we met the porters. Eighteen men wearing bright yellow and black jackets. During the summer they were mostly farmers. During the winter they carried many kilos of camping equipment on their backs to help the wimpy tourists. Soon, the meeting was over and we started to walk. From early on we could tell this trail was exactly like we had been told it would be, hard. The first fifteen or so feet were flat, then they went up, and up, and up. We continued to hike until three o'clock, with more than a few stops. About halfway through the morning my heart was beating 20 more times per minute than my father's, and I was feeling very tired. HE took my backpack for me and looked like a humpbacked, pregnant beetle with those bright red bags on either side.

The goal for us all was to reach Dead Woman's Pass, the breast to be specific. For from there on, the going was all downhill. I really wanted to be able to just walk and not stop every ten paces. To reach the top without looking at how little I had achieved and how much more I had coming. But that was deemed impossible. There was no way not to look at the endless path straight ahead of me. I learned that is part of hiking, there is no way around it. I will not spend too much time on this day, it was not very exciting, and rather embarrassing, for the amount of time I spent giving up and sitting in the dirt was much more than that spent walking. I will tell you this, at one point or another my Father and I did make it to the top of Dead Woman's Pass, and collapsed on the breast at 14,000 feet. For two hours we walked straight downhill, which proved to be just as difficult as uphill, for there seems to be a higher chance of falling, rolling, and breaking bones. Walking down steep, narrow steps takes more thinking, and puts too much strain on your poor toes. We did make it to the camp though. We gladly threw our bags in the tents, went to the bathroom, and ate lunch. Afterwards we were done for the day and we lay around until dinner, which was thoroughly enjoyable.

The next day I awoke feeling a bit more queasy than I had on previous mornings. For yet another day I was not hungry, and for yet another meal Father forced me to eat. When he tried to get me to swallow a pill I quickly threw up outside the tent. But there was no chance to rest after giving up my breakfast and we were soon walking again. The third day started out with uphill and for most of the morning my Father held my bag and we dragged ourselves up the mountain. The unfortunate part about the third day is the large amount of false

passes. Where it looks like you have completed hiking the mountain, and you are done with the uphill, but it turns out you still have a good forty-five minutes left of hiking. The fortunate part of the third day is the supply of ruins along the way. Every few kilometers was another beautiful ruin, not only providing a good dose of history and culture to our day but also an opportunity to sit down and let the wind cool us down. Between the ruins the trail was mostly switchbacks, and was not too difficult. Another delightful part of the third day was the beauty. That day we entered the cloud forest, saw beautiful mountains, and even got to enjoy the shade of gorgeous clouds. The day ended at an unusual camp. There were many trekking groups and each had their own area to camp. There were also many people crowded into the first bar we had seen in days. They were all squeezed in to the first building we had seen not made entirely of stone in a while.

The next morning was the one we had been waiting for. The 4:30 am wake-up time didn't bother us, we just wanted to see what we had been hiking to for three days. Machu Picchu was what we were here for and we wanted it. Of course, that was what every other hiker wanted as well, and we all waited in line to pass through the gates to the last hour of hiking. Finally we were let through and we started to walk. Past the trail was fog that went on forever. Everything to our right was gray. Most of this last walking was downhill, but in the last fifteen minutes there were extremely steep stairs that required hands and feet to maneuver. But past the stairs was the Sun Gate which didn't fit the name at the time, since it, too, was completely immersed in fog. If that fog would lift, we were told we would be able to see Machu Picchu. So we waited. Soon, we could.

Father and I started to walk towards it, and in fifteen minutes we were there. I remember it being hard to focus on walking while a wonder of the world lay to my right. I'm surprised I didn't fall off the cliff trying to get closer to the ruin. Somehow I made it in one piece. Before we could start touring we had to get our passports checked, get our tickets, and such other dull activities. After this break from the beauty into tourist land once more, we started to walk around. I don't think my words alone could describe it. For I really have little to compare it to. Never before had I seen something of such immense size, beauty, and character. The only thing I could say is that all the ruins we had seen before were nothing compared to Machu Picchu. We went through the many levels, saw bedrooms, intricate water systems, temples, llama pens, farming areas, a sun dial, condor sculptures, stairways leading into the rock, and a massive, huge, unbelievable amount of stones. Until about one in the afternoon we circled around and through the ruins. Not

only was the ruin itself truly amazing but the mountains that surrounded it were gorgeous. It was almost like we were seeing all the different landscapes of the past four days put in to one beautiful area. Machu Picchu is mind-blowing and its surroundings are equal. The Inca emperor who supposedly lived here had good taste in real estate.



Mabel outside her Chirapa family's home with parents, children, and one neighborhood toddler.

On July 15th when our stay in Chirapa was finished, the school kitchen we helped construct looked almost ready for use, there was a roof and a packed dirt floor. But sadly we were not to finish the building this year. In the morning we went up to the school for our going away party. Unfortunately no one showed up until hours later. But when they arrived groups of children came up and sang, we embarrassingly danced, and stories, cookies, and presents were exchanged. We were even offered puppies by the children. It seemed to go on for a long time but soon we were in the combi van with our bags, leaving the village. People I had no memory of meeting we were hugging, and those we did know, the ones who had taken care of us and opened up their homes generously, we were hugging even tighter. The kids crowded around our van and waved. It made all us *gringos* sad. As the van went down the uneven road for the last time we were silent. After we had left Chirapa we spent time in Tarapoto and Lima. Those were memorable days, but the time we spent in the village without running water and toilets, fun activities and museums, were what we had come to Peru for, and we would always remember them. No matter how many cockroaches we lived with.

Photographs by David H. Taylor, MD

COMMUNITY INFO



Photograph by Julie Smith

WEEKLY IN MUIR BEACH

These activities take place at the Community Center unless otherwise noted.

MONDAY

- Tai-chi - 6:30 - 7:30 pm, \$22.50 per month
- The Bookmobile - Noon - 1:00 pm - 1st and 3rd Mondays, Mailboxes, Highway One across from Pelican Inn. For more information, 415.499.7544.

TUESDAY

- Tao Flow Yoga - 6:30 - 8:00 pm. Taylor's zendo, 1821 Shoreline Hwy. Instructor: Laura Calhoun - lauracalhounart@gmail.com

WEDNESDAY

- Tai-chi - 8:00 - 9:00 am
- Bistro - Wednesday mornings, 9:30 - 11:30 am Organic fair trade coffee, \$1.50 per cup; additional cups 25¢ each. Featuring fantastic fresh-baked organic scones by Nancy Knox, \$1.50 each.
- Muir Beach Quilters - 11 am. No fee.
- CSD Board of Directors Meeting Meetings of the Board of Directors of the Muir Beach Community Services District are open to the public and are generally held on the 4th Wednesday of the month, every other month, at 7:00 pm. Notice of Board Meetings are posted 72 hours in advance, as exact dates may vary.

THURSDAY

- Tai-chi - 6:30 - 7:30 pm
- Volleyball - 6:00 pm - late At the courts on Muir Woods Road. No fee.
- Iyengar Yoga - 6:30 - 8:00 pm. Taylor's zendo 1821 Shoreline Hwy. Instructor: Susy Stewart 415.388.1549

SUNDAY

- Green Gulch Zen Center 8:15 am Meditation Instruction 9:15 am Meditation (zazen) 10:15 am Lecture 11:15 am Tea 11:45 am Discussion with lecturer 12:45 pm Lunch for Program Attendees (\$8 donation) Children's Lecture and Program - 1st Sundays 10 - 11:30 am

Community Center Drop-in Use

Daytime hours if the Center is not scheduled for other activities. Users responsible for cleanup.

Community Center Rental Policies

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

CLASSIFIED

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