

BEACHCOMBER

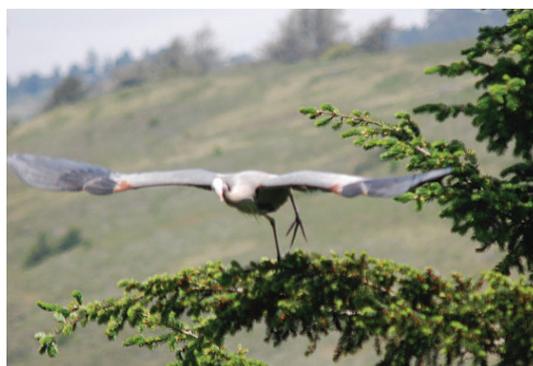
SINCE 1946



A PICTURE STORY OF THE MARVELOUS GREAT BLUE HERON



Photo submitted by Dave MacKenzie



Submitted by Judy Coleman

Every Spring after a good weed whacking the blue herons seems to magically appear almost daily to hunt the ever present gophers. Their meditative stance belies an unbelievably fast stroke into the mounds at any movement of the little pests. Rarely do they miss the mark, and with up stretched head swallow their prey. Nature's balance at work ... but why only Spring?

—John Murray

Tai Chi at the Muir Beach Community Center

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By Janice Kubota

Tai chi calms the mind, develops balance and builds muscles. Those seeking greater peacefulness will discover meditation in motion.

Tai chi takes place three times a week under the coaching of longtime students, most often Kathy Sward. New students receive one-on-one instruction. And of course, beginners are always welcome.

The Muir Beach community center provides a dreamlike setting for tai chi. Surf breaks below, the sun sets the hills aglow and dogs rollick across the deck. A variety of sights and sounds accompany the tai chi students as they step in silence through a slow set of over eighty movements. Minds may wander watching the fog roll in and tomorrow’s chores may nag; then the student returns to the path of practice... embracing peacock’s tail, carry the tiger to the mountain, cloud hands, retreat and seal...and soon the set ends with a soft exhale.

Teachers Emiko and Caden Wang give this class in the traditional long form Yang style of tai chi once a month at our community center. They began their study under Master Tung Kai Ying in Los Angeles and continue to travel to workshops and master camp offerings around the world. While their Muir Beach class has been ongoing for over twenty years, Muir Beach tai chi began over thirty years ago with a resident teacher who also practiced the same Yang style.

At the Muir Beach monthly class with Emiko and Caden, all students are guided to improve form often through demonstration. Different sets are introduced: a fast-paced set that is quickly over in five minutes, a set with mixed pace and a chi kung set that focuses on arm movements and cultivation of chi.

Cost is \$24 per month which covers three one-hour sessions per week: Monday 5 p.m. to 6 p.m.; Wednesday 8:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.; Thursday 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. and the monthly Monday instruction by Emiko and Caden from 5:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. For more information, call Kathy Sward at 415-383-6762 or email at kathylovesquilts@yahoo.com.

Beachcomber is a community newsletter published quarterly by and for residents, friends, family and former residents of Muir Beach. Published since 1946 (on and off), circulation 200 (more or less).

Submissions may be sent to the **Beachcomber mailbox** on mailbox row or emailed to editor@muirbeachcomber.com

Contribute your essays, poems, stories, photographs, artwork, announcements, reviews and kid stuff – anything that celebrates Muir Beach and our community.

Everything printed should be considered solely the opinion of the writer and printed in the form and condition as submitted.

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Fire Department Update

By David Taylor and Chris Gove

We have had a very busy start to the year. Following several big storms with many trees and wires down (five calls in one day!) we have been working hard to train our new volunteers and respond to emergencies in our community and the surrounding park areas.

The whole crew is now trained at a minimum of Emergency Medical Responder (EMR) following completion of a six month course taught by Otis Guy. Cosmo Taylor and Robert Allen are both certified at the higher level of EMT and EMT Paramedic respectively.



Cosmo Taylor is leaving the fire department after a three year stint to pursue a degree in History at UC Santa Barbara where he will be starting as a junior and a Mellon Humanities Fellow. We will all miss having Cosmo as a fellow firefighter, trainer, and as an actual young person.



We completed another year's Sidewalk CPR event on June 7th at the beach parking lot where we trained 106 visitors in bystander hands only CPR and how to control bleeding. MBVFD topped the county charts yet again with the most new people trained.

In May we responded to an unconscious teen on Little Beach and were joined by the extraordinary crew of a CHP helicopter that landed in minutes right on the beach and carried the young man to John Muir Medical Center for emergent care.



In June we responded to a small but growing vegetation fire on Panoramic Ridge near Four Corners that was caused by a blown transformer. This experience helped us gain new skills in wildfire management and we all learned a great deal about how to respond to this type of event. We also noted as many of you also did that traffic backed up to the Pelican Inn from Three Corners during this small event.



As fire season has begun we would like to remind you to make sure your property has sufficient defensible space and that you HAVE A PLAN in case of emergency. Please visit FIRE SAFE MARIN <https://www.firesafemarin.org> for more information.

Muir Beach is looking for someone to volunteer to help create our FIRE WISE COMMUNITY <https://www.firesafemarin.org/firewise> We look forward to planning an annual disaster drill soon.

We await the distribution of our first Measure W funds later this summer and have applied for a Cal Fire grant with the help of Kevin Corbit, President of the MBVFA. It is an honor to be part of such a great team and to be of service to our community and neighbors.

Congratulations to Muir Beach Graduates!

By Amy Utstein

On Thursday evening, June 13, our three Muir Beach seniors graduated from Tamalpais High School. Christian Bender, Tessa Pares, and Maud Utstein were celebrated by their families and friends on the occasion of this important milestone. All three will be going on to attend college in the fall and you can read more about their achievements below.

Well done Chris, Tessa, and Maud! We wish you all the best and know that you will make Muir Beach proud as you move on to this next of life's adventures.

Christian moved to Muir Beach when he was 4 months old and in early June he turned 18. As a little kid, he used to love lying in wait for Anne Jeschke ("Teacher Anne") to pass by walking her dog every day, so he could run out and join her on the path up the hill. Throughout high school, he loved being a Junior Firefighter with the Muir Beach Volunteer Fire Department and worked part time as a parking lot attendant at the Pelican Inn. Christian played defense on both the JV and Varsity Soccer teams at Tam High, as well as on the Tiburon Sharks, a competitive soccer team. This last year, he was Concert Master of the Tam High School Orchestra, after playing violin for 11 years. He spends a chunk of his free time composing music on his computer and playing video games. Christian graduated from Tamalpais High School with Highest Honors and is headed to Northeastern University in the fall to study Engineering.

As a 7 year old, **Tessa** was received by the community with open arms, and friendships grew with Muir Beachers of all ages. Elementary

school homework club was the perfect time for Tessa and the other neighborhood kids to play together on Christian Bender's swing. Tessa's brief aspirations to write her own music in middle school were backed by Steve Shaffer's piano lessons. Tessa completed the Emergency Medical Response course with the Volunteer Firefighters and was able to use her acquired knowledge in her one-thousand plus hours with Marin Search and Rescue. In high school, Tessa swam and played water polo for the Varsity Girls Team, and in the off season continued her 11 year swim career by swimming and coaching for the Strawberry Seals. Tessa also took on a big role in Tam's leadership class by becoming treasurer, site council representative, rally commissioner, and prom commissioner. Her hard work carried through her academics as well, graduating as a four year honor student, and leading her to UC Santa Cruz in the fall. She plans to go premed and major in Human Biology.

Maud did not make it to Muir Beach until the summer before she started high school, but she wishes she did. From the moment she arrived she fell in love with the community and the natural beauty. Growing up in Albany, CA, Maud spent a lot of time learning music. She took voice and piano lessons, and took part in musicals and choirs. She continued with music in High School where she participated in the Tam High concert choir and joined the Marin-based a cappella group Til Dawn. While in High School, Maud also started rock climbing at Planet Granite in San Francisco and ended up joining the team. In addition to these extracurricular activities, she did an exchange program in Greece, and also participated in the Tam exchange program in Pamplona. Maud graduated with Highest Honors from Tam and is very much looking forward to attending the College Wooster in Ohio this fall where she has no idea what she is going to study!

Sunset Way

By Michael Miller

The repaving of Sunset Way project is off to a good, if not a little slower than expected start. Work has been ongoing at the west end of Sunset Way where the emergency vehicle turnaround is being built. Grading to widen the area on both sides of the street has been done, holes have been dug for the piers to reinforce the retaining walls on both sides of the street and concrete should be poured any day now. The next step is to remove the asphalt from the roadway. Once that is done the work of moving the water mains to the center of the road will begin. The goal is to be able to replace the water mains and connect the existing houses to water on a daily basis. No one should be without water for more than a day as this project is being worked on. While many of the people involved have been optimistic about early completion of the Sunset Way project, the contractor initially quoted October as the completion date. Some patience on all our parts is required. Be sure to check your email regularly as Leighton has been very diligent about communicating changes, timelines, and suggestions while work is ongoing.

The Community Comes Together for Another Successful BBQ

By Brenda Kohn

It's been said that "it takes a village." That certainly was the case with this year's 47th Annual Muir Beach Fire Association sponsored BBQ for our volunteer fire department. Preparations for the Memorial Day weekend event got started in earnest after MBVFA Board member Denise Lamott volunteered to take on the monumental task of chairing the event. Denise was perfectly suited for this job as a result of her day to day real life work as public relations specialist for big time events.

The first order of business was to find replacements for the many long serving committee chairpersons and other volunteers who had either retired from their years of hard work or left the area. After hours of deliberation at MBVFA Board meetings, and lots of phone calls and arm twisting by Denise, MBVFA Board President Kevin Corbit, Muir Beach Fire Chief Chris Gove, and other Board members, community volunteers stepped forward as they always do in Muir Beach to take on the various responsibilities. Several Saturday work parties, overseen by Chief Gove, left the Santos Meadow BBQ site ready for the big day – almost.



A forecast for significant rain on Sunday found some of the musicians reluctant to perform, Denise spent an anxious Saturday night. When she awoke to a rain-free, albeit not entirely sunny morning she breathed a sigh of great relief, donned her cowgirl hat and boots, and announced that everything was a go. Notwithstanding a smaller attendance than in recent past years, and therefore less monetary profit, the BBQ was a great success. Folks liked that the lines were shorter and there seemed to be plenty of room to spread out and dance. The chicken, tamales, and desserts were cooked

to perfection. The donated beer and wine were first class, and people took advantage of the MB logo wine and beer cups they could purchase from Lisa Eigsti's merchandise booth, to avoid excess plastic. Lisa also had ordered lots of new swag for the booth, plus totes, dog collars and caps. As always, the musicians played longer than scheduled which provided an opportunity to promote the raffle with its over-the-top prizes secured once again by Debra Allen. Everyone left in a happy mood, many with surplus chicken and desserts they had purchased on the way out.

Continued on next page



BBQ

Continued from previous page

Special mention goes to those who came forward to chair BBQ committees for the first time: Tom Passow who took over from John John Sward as chair of the BBQ sauce and charcoal committees; Chas Kingsbury with help from Ellen Litwiller who oversaw baked beans for the first time; Sarah Nesbitt who did an awesome job as chair of the wine committee, taking over from Jane McAlevey, and continuing to solicit more than enough caseload donations of wine; Avram Pearlman who stepped forward to handle ice deliveries; David Leivick who assumed responsibility from Maury Ostroff for purchasing and cooking delicious veggie tamales; Deborah McDonald who arranged for a yummy home cooked BBQ day breakfast for volunteers, catered by MB Quilters and other local cooks; and, newcomer Steve Somers who headed up the newly created security committee to oversee folks entering the BBQ grounds via the bridge.

Kudos also to those stalwarts who returned as committee chairs for yet another BBQ: Graham Groneman heading up the beer committee; Board Treasurer Frank Schoenfeld in charge of finances; super chef Steve Shaffer, assisted by Matt Silva and their loyal crew providing perfectly cooked chicken; Joey Groneman and her lovely decorations; Tayeko Kaufman and the dessert team baking delicious cookies, brownies and poppyseed cake; Don Piotter in charge of trash collection and recycling; Dr. David Taylor on call at the first aid tent; Laura van Amburgh and her loyal team running the food preparation and service; Debbie Ketchum, who once again arranged for Jubilee

Jumps to keep kids entertained; Andre Pessis and Michael Kaufman in charge of music; Amy Utstein overseeing non-alcoholic beverages; Julie Smith, paparazzi coordinator; Brad Eigsti producing his fantastic signs and printed material; Debra Allen, superhero of the annual raffle; Cuco Alcalá and Nina Vincent, who organized the Saturday night volunteer dinner; Denise Lamott and Michael Kaufman with the important job of obtaining necessary permits from various state agencies; Brenda Kohn in charge of the security entrance gate; Nina Vincent who provided pre-BBQ Saturday night security; Lisa Eigsti, with her awesome selection of merchandise and hard working sales crew in the tee shirt booth; Laurie and David Piel, whose purchasing of supplies allowed the BBQ to go forward smoothly; Greg and Debbie Ketchum, in charge of ticket sales; John Rauh who made sure that we had plenty of toilets; and, Kevin Corbit who provided tasty food for the Saturday work parties. Also, yeah to all of the other 200 plus volunteers too numerous to mention individually here who stepped forward to make this another great day in Muir Beach.

Special mention goes to Muir Beach Fire Chief Chris Gove who once again spent countless hours overseeing the clearing and setup of the BBQ grounds; to Volunteer Coordinator Debbie Ketchum who made sure the over 240 volunteers were in their places at the right times; and especially to Denise Lamott who made another fun and successful BBQ happen. This year's outpouring of support is essential if the BBQ is to continue.



The Owl Who Comes

by Mary Oliver

*The owl who comes
through the dark
to sit
in the black boughs of the apple tree
and stare down
the hook of his beak,
dead silent,
and his eyes,
like two moons
in the distance,
soft and shining
under their heavy lashes-
like the most beautiful life-
is thinking
of nothing
as he watches
and waits to see
what might appear,
briskly,
out of the seamless,
deep winter-
out of the teeming
world below-
and if I wish the owl luck,
and I do,
what am I wishing for that other
soft life,
climbing through the snow?*

—Submitted by Diana Estey

The Critter Report

By Dave MacKenzie

Once again, it has been a lively critter season in the Spring and Summer at Muir Beach.

Some of the sightings of our new community members include:

As many as 8 Gray Foxes (two families, apparently) seen in June along Pacific Way. Fox scat is every where on top of key scent posts (usually a rock, stump, or a Bott's Dot in the road). Lots of plum seeds buried inside their scat show that the foxes are having a grand time climbing into the wild plum trees in the area, indulging in the sweet, juicy fruit. Gray Foxes, unlike Coyotes, are excellent climbers, and the kits can have quite a time chasing each other around on the branches, as I once saw in Green Gulch. (Note that the plums are also very tasty for humans). Why do we have so many foxes in Muir Beach? Well, in addition to the plums nearby, there are also plenty of rodents to hunt (voles, gophers, and rabbits!). Also, foxes often prefer shelter using human habitats (decks, old structures) which gives them protection from larger predators such as Coyotes, which usually stay out of the areas with houses (and dogs!). But the Coyotes sure are heard a lot from in Muir Beach as they sing together in the hills (native peoples called them the "singing dogs").

A family of four Long-Tailed Weasels was seen along Pacific Way. These are really cool looking, very skinny critters with a stunning white face mask. Try to get a close (binoculars) look if you can. I think they are just the right size to slither into gopher

tunnels, and I have seen them poke up from such a tunnel to see who was disturbing their underground hunt!

Four seems to be a magic number, with our Barn Owl chicks caught on video at the Dairy. The rodents are in for a lot of pressure this year! How fun to be raised in a box of mouse and vole pieces!

A big disappointment this year was the number of Gray Whale young seen from Muir Beach. I only heard of a couple of sightings, which is an extremely low number. Apparently food was scarce in the breeding lagoons in Baja California, and so not many were born. That means that when the females journey north to Canada and Alaska in the spring, they will travel far offshore since they do not have babies to protect from predators by swimming close to shore. This should be temporary, however, since Gray Whale numbers overall are basically at record high levels since whaling was stopped years ago.

I am pretty sure the Peregrine Falcons once again fledged two chicks in the cliff nest in Muir Beach, but they have been very stealthy, so not sure how that turned out. Peregrine chicks are at risk from Ravens and even other Peregrines when young, so life is tough even if you are an apex avian predator!

At least one juvenile Red-Tailed Hawk was screaming and flying around Muir Beach in early July; basically begging for food from mom. Soon it will be time for it to migrate, probably south, to find a new territory of it's own, and it's own mate.

In our yard we have seen young Striped Skunks which are small enough to slip through the 2 X 4 inch mesh of our dog fence. This made for some sketchy evenings trying to keep the dog under control as the skunks paraded by on our deck!

In addition to all this, I have seen baby Western Bluebirds, American Robins, Northern Juncos, Steller's Jays, and Spotted Towhees just in our yard alone. Must be a large crop of critters overall this year. And we aren't even counting the throngs of insects such as Painted Ladies (sometimes confused with Monarchs, but smaller, very fast, and often landing on the trails) and other butterflies.

There have been quite a few sightings of spotted fawn Mule Deer in the community also. Another crop of "giant rabbits" to chomp on just about every plant we have!

Also some very rare things showed up. Point Blue (which does the bird banding along Redwood Creek), found a pair of American Redstarts (an eastern species which has a very flashy red or yellow wing and tail patches; maybe they have nested?), and also a Rose-Breasted Grosbeak, who some may know from eastern U.S. bird feeders. And an amazing report of a possible Red-Tailed Tropicbird was heard from a group of experienced birders right off of Big Beach in early July. This stunning tropical ocean bird, white with a long red tail plume, might have shown up here due to the warmer waters and who knows what other climate issues. Times are 'a changin'.

So keep the reports coming in, and watch out for your critter neighbors!

Muir Beach Holiday Arts Fair 2019

By Laurie Piel

Believe it or not, it's time to start thinking about registering for the annual Muir Beach Holiday Arts Fair. Suzanne Miller and I are excited to be back at the helm.

We hope everyone had a chance to come to last year's Fair as it was a magical event with the MBCC beautifully decorated by Suzanne. Overall there were 32 individual artists and once you add in the members of the Quilters, Garden Club and Junior Artisans we had over 50 fabulous artists...and that doesn't include the great options at the Muir Beach Volunteer Fireman's Association's table.

We have many new residents here at the beach who may not know that the Quilters began the fair over 40 years ago with just themselves. By the time Suzanne and I took it over a few years ago there were juried artists along with the Quilters and some residents. When we took over, we had two priorities...to showcase the many artists of Muir Beach and to donate money to the CSD specifically for community events. Every Muir Beach resident or family member who wanted to participate could...and did.

Once everyone is accommodated, we open it up to others from around the bay and have had artists from as far away as Nevada City. Previously the profit from the beverage bar was the basis for all of the donations to the CSD and averaged around \$1,000. Last year Carol Gross instituted a food donation program and now both the kitchen and the beverage bar, headed by Steve Shaffer, are profit centers. Carol and Steve had a friendly competition and

there's nothing better than a little competition to spur people on. So, last year we were proud to donate \$2,800 for community events.

Suzanne and I would like to thank all of the people who stepped up to make it such a great event. It's a labor of love from the community and somehow a simple thank you seems insufficient and yet it's all we can offer... and, of course, the opportunity to do it all over again! The fair is December 7th & 8th. We are bringing back the best of the past fairs... Café Q (free coffee and tea for all), the Junior Artisans/Kids table (it's never too early to get the kids' creative juices flowing), donated yummy food for purchase (yes, there will be hot dogs again) and, of course, the Beverage Bar. We will be looking for volunteers to help it all run smoothly. For those who want to sell their wares, here are the particulars to join in on the fun... and make some money.

Dates:

Set up: Fri., Dec. 6th (all day)

Fair: Sat., Dec. 7th (10-5)

Sun., Dec. 8th (10-4)

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

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

Cost: \$65/table. Two people can share a table.

Sales: Each vendor is responsible for their own means of getting paid.

Registration: By email only starting 12:01am Aug. 9th through midnight Aug. 12th. to muirbeachartsfair@gmail.com That's the 96 hour period from Friday through Monday of the second weekend in August. Please include your name, contact information (including phone number, MB address & email address) and your medium.

Acceptance: First come, first served basis -1 table available to each Muir Beach resident. Requests for extra tables will be assessed close to the event.

MB Organizations: Organizations that support MB such as the MBVFA, Quilters and the Garden Club are offered 1 free table. Please register!

Non-Residents Vendors: Once all Muir Beach residents have been accommodated, we will reach out to other vendors. We hope to get some of our favorite artists & jewelers from the past as well as new ones. Suggestions are always welcome.

We will be putting a flyer in your mailbox with all of this information closer to registration. Please feel free to email us at muirbeachartsfair@gmail.com if you have any questions.

For those of you who are new to the Beach or missed the fair last year, take a look at our website: <https://muirbeachartsfair.com>. It's not too soon to start thinking about being part of this community tradition.

We can't wait to see what this year will bring and we look forward to seeing everybody there.

Muir Beach Garden Club - Hungry Owl Project

By Tayeko Kaufman

The Muir Beach Garden Club is pleased to announce that we are piloting a Barn Owl project at Muir Beach. With the approval of the CSD Board and the help of the Hungry Owl Project of WildCare, we will be placing 3 Barn Owl boxes in the neighborhood. In order for our project to be successful we need a rodenticide free Muir Beach for 3 months before we install the owl boxes. Rodenticides take time to kill their targets. During that time the poisoned rodent becomes easy prey for foxes, owls, house hold pets and other predators which consume

the poisoned rodents and in turn become prey to larger animals up the food chain with devastating results.

To combat the destructive use of rodenticides the “California Assembly passed AB 1788 in May. AB 1788, the California Ecosystems Protection Act, has moved into the final stretch for approval with the ‘do pass’ action at the Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee on July 9, 2019. AB 1788, would ban the use of Second Generation Anticoagulant Rodenticides (SGARs) throughout

the state of California, with certain exceptions, and would also ban the use of First Generation Anticoagulant Rodenticides (FGARs) on state-owned lands. The high toxicity and persistence of these rat poisons is responsible for the poisoning and contamination of mountain lions, bobcats and hawks and other wildlife that prey on poisoned rats and animals that have consumed the rats.” Once passed we do not know how long it will be before AB 1788 becomes law.

For more information see: <https://markets.businessinsider.com/news/stocks/california-bill-to-ban-sgar-rodenticides-clears-senate-natural-resources-water-committee-1028342565>

A Barn Owl will typically eat 3-4 prey items a night. During the breeding season, a pair of Barn Owls will (ideally) find this amount for each owlet as well. This works out to almost 4,000 prey items a year to feed a pair and their offspring, a much more efficient and humane way to reduce our rodent population and to save our foxes, bobcats, hawks and mountain lions to name just a few from a terrible death.

Owl Facts: <http://idahoptv.org/sciencetrek/topics/owls/facts.cfm>

The Dairy has had a successful pair of breeding Barn Owls for several years now with 3-4 owlets

Continued on next page

Lethal Dose: Rat Poison & Local Wildlife

Local residents may inadvertently be poisoning wildlife. National Park Service researchers have found a direct link between exposure to anticoagulant rodenticides, commonly known as rat poison, and the deaths of wildlife in and around the Santa Monica Mountains. How rodenticide works its way through the food chain:

- 1 Targeted rodents**
Rats and other rodents who eat rodenticide do not die right away and may even become lethargic as they approach death, making them easy prey for larger predators.
- 2 Predators**
Raptors, snakes and larger predators consume poisoned rodents.
- 3 Top of the food chain**
Mountain lions feed on smaller predators laced with lethal poison.

Unintended victims

In the Santa Monica Mountains...

- 21 of 22 mountain lions tested positive for exposure and four died from poisoning.
- 93 of 105 bobcats tested positive for exposure and 70+ died from related secondary disease.
- 23 of 27 coyotes tested positive for exposure and 12 died from poisoning.

Updated as of April 2019

How anticoagulant rodenticide kills

These compounds interrupt blood-clotting, which leads to uncontrolled bleeding and death. They may also suppress the animal's immune system, making it susceptible to other diseases. **Symptoms include:**

- Nosebleeds
- Bleeding gums
- Ruptured blood vessels, causing bruising
- Internal hemorrhaging

Secondary disease, such as mange.

Blood in urine and feces

What is mange?

A microscopic mite that burrows into the skin and causes...

1. Extreme itchiness and skin lesions.
2. Fluid and nutrient loss through the skin.
3. Infection, starvation, hypothermia or other complications, eventually leading to death.

Check the label

Here are the most common anticoagulant compounds:

- Bromadiolone
- Brodifacoum
- Diphacinone
- Difethialone

SOURCES: Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area research, L.E.K. Serieys, UrbanCarnivores.com

CREDIT: National Park Service <http://1.usa.gov/1SuhsXv>

Image reprinted from <https://www.nps.gov/samo/learn/management/rodenticides.htm>

Hangin' out ...

By Michael Miller

each year. By placing the Barn Owl boxes in key locations at Muir Beach, selected with the help of Ian Elwood, from the Hungry Owl Project, we are hoping to entice and keep these owlets at the beach. The cost of the survey was paid for by the Garden Club. Steve Shaffer has generously offered to build the boxes in August, and Chris Gove, Eric Groneman, Michael Kaufman, and Steve Somers (to date) have offered to help install the boxes in September. If successful we hope to have 3 additional breeding pairs of Barn Owls by next year. The initial cost of this pilot project will be paid for by the Garden Club. There are maintenance issues of annual clean up of the boxes that we will have to deal with if successful.

Barn owls are not territorial so we have a chance of building a colony of 20+ more habitats. We will keep you apprised of our progress and thank you in advance for not using rodenticides. Some neighbors have already heard about our project and have asked if there is a sign up list for future installations. Right now we are just hoping that our 3 boxes will be successful. But stay tuned. To support our efforts a donation to WildCare in the name of the Muir Beach Garden Club would be appreciated.

Thanking you in advance for your support.

—The Muir Beach Garden Club

In my long lost youth, I used to hang out at the local sporting goods store looking at and trying on the newest baseball mitts, taking my batting stance with Louisville Sluggers and holding Wilson baseballs with my best two seam fastball grip. I could only fantasize about playing for the Yankees alongside Joe DiMaggio, Yogi Berra and Phil Rizzuto. But I was happy with my Little League team buddies Charlie Nelson and Billy Riddle.

A few years later it was hanging out at Village Music in a private listening booth previewing new albums by Fats Domino, Elvis Presley, The Everly Brothers, Johnny Mathis and Buddy Holly.

I hadn't given up on the sporting goods store but it had new meaning as I coveted the newest bamboo fly rods, and woven creels. The mayfly, caddisflies, stoneflies and brown hackles displayed under glass as if expensive pins in a jewelry store were always a treat to look at. I must admit though, I always had better luck catching trout with salmon eggs. And the shotguns! Oh to have a Browning over and under to take to the duck club or to hunt quail and pigeons in the valley. (Many years later while living in London I had the thrill of using a Purdy on a pheasant hunt in Hampshire.)

Ben Hogan irons, beautifully polished MacGregor persimmon woods and Titleist golf balls in the ProShop. Pictures of Ben Hogan,

Sam Snead, Arnold Palmer, Jimmy Demaret, Cary Middlecoff, Ken Venturi and others dotting the walls. What a glorious place the golf course was to hang out. Hitting balls on the range, practicing chipping and putting while experimenting with different clubs and techniques. Hoping for the day I would get an invitation to play in the Crosby. Cheese dogs and chocolate milk shakes at the soda fountain, and finally, playing the course when the long afternoon shadows from the pines and cypress trees turned it into a truly magical place.

Now it's wine shops with bottle after bottle lining the walls and filling the bins. While we have so many great wines from California it's always a treat to try a Pinot Noir from Oregon, a Cabernet from Argentina, a Barolo or Brunello from Italy, a crisp Sauvignon Blanc from New Zealand or a Pinotage from South Africa. Maybe an Albarino or Tempranillo from Spain or a Syrah from Chile. The choices are seemingly unlimited. But it's still hard to beat a good French Burgundy or Bordeaux. Once in a while I'll pop for a Puligny-Montrachet or maybe a red burgundy from Meursault or a Bordeaux from Pomerol or St. Emillion.

I've been hangin' out at a lot of places over the years though it's pretty much now down to golf courses and wine shops. But – I still dream about playing for the Yankees.

SOME NOTES ON AN EXHIBITION, BY VARIOUS LOCAL BEINGS

* * * * *

caveat

we don't usually use words, let alone do we have names for ourselves or others
we don't need them because they aren't necessary for taking care of ourselves
and each other, nor for knowing who we are in relation to each other,
but since this is for humans to read, we are using human words to describe us

preamble

an acquaintance of ours (*who lives near the Muir Beach Overlook - ed.*) was asked
to write something for this publication about the context of her participation
in an exhibition,* and instead of doing this herself, she asked for our help
we don't have a name for her, as we explained above, but for clarity here, we'll
call her by her initials, hm, which seems okay, since 'hmmm' is inbetween
a word and wordlessness, so it seems like a reasonable middle ground
thanks to Er (*cohabitant human animal - ed.*) for transcribing our observations

* * * * *

* *No Horizon: Helen Mirra and Sean Thackrey*, Berkeley Art Museum, 3 July – 25 August

* * * * *

SKUNKS we notice hm most mornings before dawn
(on Seacape or the community center stairs - ed.)

RABBITS we are aware of hm most mornings after sunrise (on the meander - ed.)

BANANA SLUGS kindly nothing doing, all is well

SERPENTINITE OUTCROPPING (on the northside of Tamalpais - ed.)
hm often sits with us around midday and has a snack

SQUIRRELS she eats seeds (among other things - ed.)

OWLS from the top of a standing dead monterey pine around dusk, would see hm inside the window, standing with a small tapestry loom set upon an easel, extending one arm and then the other; not sure if she still does that - the tree fell down in a storm last winter

LOOM yes, she still does that

SPIDERS the things hm makes are kind of like webs, but less delicate,
and serve no purpose

PACIFIC SLOPE FLYCATCHERS they are kind of like nests, but less complex,
and not as round

THIMBLEBERRY BUSH awareness of the sufficiency of the minimum is contentment

PELICANS who? what?

* * * * *

JUMP IN MIDSEASON TO SUPPORT & BE SUPPORTED BY WEEKLY VEGETABLES FROM GREEN GULCH FARM * \$30/BOX

* OCEAN RIDERS BARN EVERY TUESDAY AFTERNOON SIGN UP FOR ALL REMAINING WEEKS (THROUGH 19 NOVEMBER) OR JUST A FEW *

* PLEASE EMAIL greengulchveggies@gmail.com *

* * *

Q & A with Scott and Toni

By *Lonna Richmond*

Scott Sampson and Toni Simmons have owned their home in Muir Beach for almost 14 years, and lived full time in Muir Beach with their daughter Jade for most of that time. They left several years ago when Scott took on a museum role in Denver, and then another in his hometown of Vancouver, British Columbia. In a few weeks, however they will be coming home to Muir Beach. Scott will start September 1st as the new Executive Director of the California Academy of Sciences. He is a dinosaur paleontologist known to millions of children around the world as “Dr. Scott the Paleontologist,” host of the hit PBS Kids television

series, *Dinosaur Train*. He is also a well known museum leader, which is what attracted the Cal Academy’s attention.

Was this something you were hoping or planning for, or was it a surprise opportunity?

I was invited to apply for the role earlier this year, and the opportunity came as an exciting surprise. To say that I am honored and thrilled to be stepping into this position would be gross understatement. For me, having the chance to return to the Bay Area to take on this role is a dream come true.

The position is extremely prestigious. What do you find most exciting about it?

Most exciting? It’s hard to narrow down! The Cal Academy is an amazing organization, with a distinguished history dating back to 1853, just three years after California became a state. Today, entering its eleventh year in that amazing facility in Golden Gate Park, the Academy houses a world class collection of 46 million objects, together with a natural history museum, aquarium, planetarium, and tropical rainforest, all under a single wild roof with more than a million plants native to California! Add to that all the scientists doing ground-breaking research around the world, and the outstanding exhibits and programs aimed at inspiring wonder about nature. Yet I think what excites me most is the Cal Academy’s is its potential. We live at arguably the most pivotal moment in human history. Thanks to the joint climate and biodiversity crisis, the decisions we make in the next decade will have cascading effects for all life on Earth, including humans, for thousands to

millions of years. My strong belief is that natural history museums and related organizations can be powerful catalysts for social change. So I’m excited to explore how the California Academy of Sciences can play a significant role in helping the planet move into a thriving future.

What are Toni and Jade’s plans? How old is Jade now? Where will she go to school?

Toni has been working part-time here in northern California for the past several years. She is very excited to return to practicing anesthesiology full time here in the Bay Area. Meanwhile, Jade is now 16 years old and she is pretty pumped up to be coming back to the community she grew up in. (More than a few Muir Beach residents have been surprised to see her behind the wheel of our car driving around the community!) We are still working out what school she will be attending in the fall, but she has been approved to begin the TEEM (Teen Environmental Education Mentorshop) program at the NatureBridge Coastal Camp in the Marin Headlands this fall. Twan, our grown-up daughter, just completed a physician’s assistant program at the University of Florida, and she will be coming out to visit us whenever possible!

When will you be arriving?

We will be back starting in mid-to-late August, and we’re pretty darn excited about it. For all three of us, Muir Beach is home. We have never fallen out of love with this community and the magical surroundings. Thanks to the many Muir Beachers who have supported us in our absence and have already welcomed us back. We look forward to seeing old friends, and to making new ones!

In Loving Memory



Nancy Knox, resident of Muir Beach since 1967, passed away on July 23, 2019; she was 91 years old. An active member of our community, she served on various Boards, and was a member of the Book Club and Quilters. Nancy is well known for bringing her famous scones to Bistro. She is survived by her son Tyler, and daughter Rachel.

This photo was taken with the iPad that she was just learning to use.

Our Solstice Celebrations

By Laurie Piel

One of the many things that makes this community so much fun to be a part of is we enjoy each other's company. We love to come together for all sorts of reasons... from supporting our fire department to celebrating birthdays, retirements or a newly minted citizen. When I arrived in 2007 the "official" community gatherings were a spring fling and the Day of the Dead, and, of course, the Fireman's BBQ. The Arts Fair was run and staffed by the Quilters and there was not a Solstice to be found. The Community Center was not yet the heart of the community that it has become.

The shared love of various types of music is one of the ways to bring people together. We're lucky to actually have a "house band" in Freddy and the Freeloaders and they've provided the music of the beach for many years. As the new generation of Muir Beachers took on events like Day of the Dead and new folks moved to the beach they brought with them the love of other music genres and the desire to bring those sounds to the beach as well. Lisa Eigsti brought the mariachi sound to the beach for the first time in 2018 with her Day of the Dead celebration.

Alexis Chase and Frank Piazza arrived in Muir Beach in 2010 and they enjoyed our community events. After a few years, Frank realized he wanted to bring more live music to the community. Winter is Frank's favorite time of year... he loves the sports and the joy of the season. He realized the Winter Solstice is a special moment in the cycle of a year... it is the promise of a new beginning that speaks to everybody.



So, in 2013 Frank and Alexis hosted their own Winter Solstice Celebration. Needless to say, it was a great success. At the time, I was the Volunteer Rental Coordinator for the MBCC. Those who know me know that anything that brings the community together is something that I support. I explained to them that if the entire community were invited we could go to the CSD with the idea of an "official" Winter Solstice Celebration. Everybody loved the idea. There was such a great event that I couldn't imagine not having a Summer Solstice as well. I approached Steve Shaffer and asked if he would commit Freddy & the Freeloaders to the event for the following year. When he said yes, and Suzanne Miller said she would handle the decorations, I decided to take on the 2014 Summer Solstice and the CSD provided some money from the recreation budget to get it started. The Summer Solstice was embraced by the community and we were off and running. That winter, with the help of Leah Vermulen and Ricardo Lopez and decorations by Angela Garret, Frank & Alexis embarked upon a community Winter Solstice celebration at the Community Center. To say it was a big hit is an understatement. They brought in former MB'er Brett Simondson's band, The Rustangs,

as well as providing the food. It was such a big hit that we asked them to add the Summer Solstice to their plate. But with Francesca being two and Vincent on the way, it wasn't the best of choices for them. So, Steve, Suzanne and I decided to continue hosting the summer event. Frank & Alexis realized that music was the essential part of what the celebration was to them. Now with the help of Gabriel Leis, the event is partially pot luck and they use the contribution from the CSD to pay for more interesting music options. You can count on the Winter Solstice to expand your musical vocabulary. This past year it was Angelo Moore and The Brand New Step and we all look forward to this year's bands. The Summer Solstice has gone the other direction. We've decided to keep the traditions of the beach with Cuco Alcala providing his tacos as he has for decades, and Freddy & the Freeloaders for the music in our souls. If anyone wants something extra or desserts, those are potluck. Suzanne is always the ace in the hole for her outstanding decorations.

That's how the Solstices came to be here in Muir Beach. Hopefully, there will be many more Solstices celebrated and the next generation will take over honoring the seasons at the beach in their own way.

Exciting Opportunity!

By Anne Jeschke

Are you interested in journalism?
Community service? A name for
yourself?

The *Beachcomber* is looking for
a student editor in order to better
represent the younger residents of
Muir Beach. As the first "Student
Editor" you can essentially define
the job.

We want stories by and about the
young people in Muir Beach. You
might opt to write a story for each
issue yourself, or you might decide
to ask other students to submit
their writings. Articles can be about
school, about achievements, about
talented young people here, about
activities here for those in the under
18 years group. It can be factual
reporting or it can be fictional pieces
by one of our students. Be creative!
Make it fun and interesting!

This job entails at least one article for
each issue. If you have short pieces,
you can make it more than one.
So just 4 times a year you write or
solicit material for the *Beachcomber*.
Our publication comes out in the
first week or two of February, May,
August, and November. You will
need to make sure that your material
is submitted by the due date, usually
2 -3 weeks before publication.

To apply for this position contact
Anne at ajeschke@gmail.com.

And we would be happy to sign for
community service hours for this
job, and even encourage you to list
it as one of your activities on college
applications. *Apply now, before the
position is taken!*

Dreaming Horses For Tink

By Jessica Pinto

My dreams still echo with hoof beats
drumming out my childhood
molding the clay of my memory
until all that I ever saw, ever
breathed and
dreamed and lived
were horses
but it was more than just a pony fetish
a little girl fixation cured
by a couple hundred prancing toy models
it was a wish on every star
a passion that took me over
took me cantering wherever I went
switching leads on my own two legs
it was a first love,
an undying, irreplaceable love
like breathing
like never again being able to gaze across a waving field
down a sandy beach
without feeling the rumbling in your soul
without hearing the thunder
and feeling more alive than you ever could alone
but it was more than the horses
for me
it was more than the grooming and the ride
and the un-tacking
because it was also
the grumble of the gravel under the wheels as our car pulled in the driveway
it was the smell, like oats and sunshine and fuzzy, winter coats
it was the hay barn with its graying streaks of
sun and fog and sea air
its mountain range of alfalfa
each nook in the straw
every cranny in the noble wood
holding little pockets of laughter
hiding tiny pots of quarrels
and knowing stories and secrets
as old as the dust that gathers on everything still

Continued on next page

Ocean Riders of Marin

By Jessica Pinto

And it was the back hill
hikes searching for runaway ponies who dragged
halters and carrots away with their luck
mud and curry combs
rubber boots
pale, numb fingers
snapping cold metal clasps on warm, winter blankets
and the brief embrace between broad chest and round jowls
pressing down on your back,
armful of wonderful horse
and as dusk sneaked in around the stall posts
gliding over dusty arena
the creak of the wheelbarrow coaxes nickers
from stall windows
and satisfied munches fall over quiet haven
are carried on breezes over the garden gate
it was more than just the horses
because it was also the quaint, ivy-covered house
as faded and weather-worn as the hay barn
the light sidelining in through the windows and dancing on a
table set for tea
a cat on the counter and another purring at your leg
each a puzzle piece
an essential bolt or screw
dab of paint
slab of clay
and it was the horses
more than just them
but it was the horses that I breathed for
and I breathed more deeply
there
with them
so that I could never stay away for long
and I will always
dream horses.

This poem was written by Jessica when she was 15 years old and read to Tink at her farewell party. Jess is now a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT) specializing in equine therapy and Program Director of Ocean Riders of Marin.

It all started with a horse. A malnourished horse named Charlie they said would never survive but a young British woman disregarded that and convinced a man who would later become her husband to take Charlie in and help her nurture him back to health. Actually it started even earlier than that when a Portuguese immigrant named Constantino Bello purchased “Ranch M” in the late 1800s and built the original structures that would become the Golden Gate Dairy, but the history of horses at this special place started with Charlie when he became the first equine resident. Charlie’s story is significant because its about survival and how survival depends on compassion and community. Ocean Riders of Marin has survived as an organization against many odds because of the compassion, collaboration and commitment of its community.

Ocean Riders has always been a community organization. When I was a kid at the Golden Gate Dairy Stables (which we always referred to simply as “the barn”) Ocean Riders was a social club that formed to help Tink and Dick Pervier support the insurance for riding lessons, horse shows, and Pony Club events and to maintain the Santos Meadow arena where many local children learned to ride. I cannot imagine a more magical place to be a child. As one of the Muir Beach “barn rats” I spent my days roaming this beautiful valley with a gaggle of other tangly-haired, dusty girls who traveled everywhere on the backs of ponies or cantering on our own

Continued on next page

Ocean Riders

Continued from page 17

two legs as if we were horses. We built jump courses with fallen logs in the woods behind the Pelican Inn, rode bareback on the beach, had sleepovers in the hay barn, cleaned our tack and groomed our horses together, and scampered across the yard to show Tink a splinter or scrape and hear her respond in her nurturing British accent, “its a long way from your heart, Lovey.” Tink was Grandmother to us all but that was especially meaningful to me having never known my own grandmothers and I could not have asked for a better one to adopt. Of course it was Tink who rescued Charlie and that horse not only survived, he thrived. He eventually carried Caitlin, daughter of his saviors, to a National Championship at the Cow Palace. But Charlie’s rags to riches story also set the stage for the Dairy being a horse operation that would continue to serve the community in various ways.

The Golden Gate Dairy Stables came under the oversight of the GGNRA in 1999 and we began the grueling process of becoming a 501(c)3 non-profit, mitigating environmental damages from years of overuse, first as a dairy, then as a horse farm. Between 1997 and 2000 Ocean Riders spent thousands of dollars and hundreds of volunteer labor hours to ensure no manure or contaminated run-off or sedimentation would reach nearby Redwood Creek, home to several endangered species. With help from our neighbors, Green Gulch Farm, Ocean Riders has become a ‘green’ horse keeping stables who’s manure is recycled to compost and eventually enrich the soil for their delicious produce.

Due to those mitigation efforts and our public outreach programs which uphold our mission of connecting young people to horses and nature and inspiring them to value conserving public lands for future generations, the NPS finally granted Ocean Riders a 10 year lease in July 2015. Our programs have expanded over the years due in part to our three facilitators who hold certifications in equine guided growth and learning. As one of those facilitators I am proud and grateful to be able to offer therapeutic learning experiences with horses to children in the same place where as a

child horses taught me to be my best self. Over the past 7 years our outreach programs have served under-resourced people from all over the bay area, hosted workshops and camps created by our facilitators, incorporated equine experiences into Bob’s camps and offered adventures for Katja’s Barn Owls. With these programs we continue the tradition of connecting humans with horses, nature and one another on our small one acre ranch, and those connections foster an ever-growing community.

Our first fundraiser honored Tink and Dick and the history that allowed us to be here today. With funds from that event we were able to replace the roof on the 100 year old hay barn (a cost of \$44,000). This diverted money from our ultimate goal of building the covered arena that will allow us to offer year-round programs but saving that iconic structure is worth every penny. Over the years the majestic hay barn at the Dairy has hosted Pony Club sleepovers, countless camps and programs that have inspired learning and connection, the births of many barn owls, and even my wedding (a perfect space to share vows as it has been my sanctuary all my life).

*Please join us “at the barn” on
**October 5 for Ocean Rider’s
3rd annual Blues in the Barn party
and a fun afternoon of blues music,
delicious food, meeting the horses, and
a demonstration of
horse-human partnership.***

We have raised close to half of what we need to reach our goal and this event will bring us closer to the covered arena necessary for offering year round programs regardless of weather. Our hay barn houses more than just hay, it has held learning and love, connection and community... and it all started with a horse named Charlie, and the community that grew from the compassion that saved him.

The Tide Don't Care *By David Leivick*

At the edge of the edge is another edge
And they're happy to put you on trial
When you're standing there on the highest ledge
An inch is as good as a mile...
So look toward the camera
But try not to stare
The curfew is ready to roll
The bells are all frozen
And the season is old
But Brother, the tide don't care

By the shore there's a cabin that's vacant now
And the spiders are holding their own
There's weeds growing over a rusty plow
In a field we used to call home...
It ain't Chutes and Ladders

It ain't Truth or Dare
It's no game we played as a child
The rules are forgotten
And the joker is wild
But Brother, the tide don't care

Do you think it all happens by accident?
Or do you think there's some master plan?
When your dreams of the future have all been spent
Whose left to be holding your hand?
It's only a moment
A day at the fair
It's gone in the blink of an eye
You can take it for granted
Or laugh till you cry
But Brother, the tide don't care

Garden Club Work Party

Another successful Garden Club work party at the Community Center. Wendy Johnson came to check out places to plant Natives in the garden. We had three new neighbors joining us on this day in May, Heidi with her daughter Taylor, Diana and Kate, also Buddy enjoying the shade. We weeded, fertilized and trimmed before a great lunch provided by the garden club. Thanks to all the members, and neighbors Outi, Julie and Kathy who always show up to dig, plant and weed. The Garden looks Beautiful.

Photos and text by Joey Groneman



Tam Grads



On Thursday evening, June 13, 2019 our three Muir Beach seniors graduated from Tamalpais High School. Tessa Pares, Maud Utstein, and Christian Bender. See story page 5.

Solstice Parties



How the Muir Beach Solstice parties came to be. See story page 15.

Preventing the Unintentional Poisoning of Local Wildlife.

Rodenticides aimed at killing mice, rats and other rodent pests, endanger the natural food chain. The poison can work its way up the food chain, causing the grisly deaths of hawks, owls, eagles, bobcats, mountain lions, coyotes, pet dogs and cats, and even predators far away from cities. See story page 10-11.

Elderberries Organize S.F. Nightclub Outing

By Paul Jeschke

An enthusiastic troupe of Muir Beachers enjoyed an uproarious night of entertainment recently at Beach Blanket Babylon, the over-the-top musical review that holds claim to being “three world’s longest running musical review.”

Traveling by chartered bus to avoid chaotic, traffic jammed San Francisco streets, the partygoers had up-front seating at Club Fugazi, the satiric musical’s North Beach home for 45 years. Beach Blanket, with its intentionally ostentatious costumes and really, really big hats, has been around longer than many of the cultural landmarks and celebrated personalities it relentlessly lampoons. The show follows Snow White as she travels around the world to find her Prince Charming. Along the way she meets pop icons including Nancy Pelosi, Bernie Sander, Elvis, Oprah, Stormy Daniels, Vladimir Putin and the Trump entourage.

Club Fugazi, originally an Italian social club, seats just 214 people. On the night the Muir Beachers were there, they were joined in the audience by former Secretary of State George Schultz and his wife, socialite Charlotte Maillord who bought out the house for the opening performance in 1974.

The BBB excursion was organized by the Elderberries who bought out preferred seating in the crowded club and arranged transportation on a luxurious bus chartered from Marin Airpoter. It was the first of what the Elderberries say might be a series of outings to popular theater and entertainment venues.

Firemen’s BBQ

Photos by Julie Smith.
See story page 6-7.



ON THE COVER

The Basket

Succulents, in a wood basket made of grape vine twigs. 11" x 10" x 3"
Shirley Nygren



I had my best year ever entering Succulent Gardens at the Marin County Fair. – Shirley