

# BEACHCOMBER

SINCE 1946







*Offshore photos by David Gilbert and David Schwartz who spotted the fire while fishing.*



## Slide Ranch Fire

*By David Taylor*

On Thursday 10/24 at about 10:45 AM a fire ignited just north of Slide Ranch that eventually burned 58 acres in a few hours. Muir Beach firefighters Jon Rauh, Rob Allen, Chris Gove, Brad Eigsti, Sandor Hatvany and David Taylor responded along with teams, engines and water tenders from Marin County Fire, Stinson, Inverness, Mill Valley, Novato, Central Marin and Cal Fire. Fixed wing aircraft, helicopters and a D-6 bulldozer were all required to put out the fire. The retaining walls supporting Hwy 1 were badly damaged. Fortunately the response combined with the wind direction helped prevent a major catastrophe for Slide Ranch and Muir Beach but please remember to be prepared for evacuation if ordered. We all learned a lot from this event and will continue to train for wildland urban interface protection.

Firemen who participated in the Slide Ranch fire:

Chris Gove  
Rob Allen  
Brad Eigsti  
Jon Rauh  
Sandor Hatvany  
David Taylor



*Photos by David Taylor*



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

Submissions may be sent to the **Beachcomber mailbox** on mailbox row or emailed to [editor@muirbeachcomber.com](mailto: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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## Another Great Elderberries Event!

Muir Beach seniors are invited to a free half day art outing in Bolinas including round trip bus transportation. The **Thursday, Nov. 14, Bolinas Museum** event features the work of three local artists, a video presentation, contemporary fashions, costumes and photography.

The West Marin Fund is paying for transportation. A Whistlestop bus will pick up Muir Beach participants at the **Community Center at 12:15 pm** and will make a stop for others in Stinson. Once at the Bolinas Museum there will be a docent tour and an opportunity to meet other West Marin seniors. This completely free event is a lovely opportunity to both share in and advance support for seniors.

An RSVP for the bus is required. To reserve a place please email [muirbeachelderberries@gmail.com](mailto:muirbeachelderberries@gmail.com).

*Submitted by the Elderberries*

### ON THE COVER

*An Artist in Training: Self Portrait*

Mixed Media, ceramic and textiles. 14" 8" 12"

Leslie Riehl, Marilyn Stiles, Tayeko Kaufman: 2018

*Photo by Florence Buchenroth*

*Our creative “dolls” began as a collaboration between close friends looking to enhance their artistic talents in a forum where each artist built upon the talents of the others, thus pushing us all into new skills.*

All three award winning artists: Marilyn Stiles, a well-known ceramicist, and Leslie Riehl and Tayeko Kaufman, quilters with the Muir Beach Quilters, decided to make mix media dolls (creatures). Marilyn was to provide the ceramic heads, feet and hands, and Leslie and Tayeko were tasked with creating a personality and costume befitting the faces. The anthropomorphizing of animals familiar to Muir Woods and Muir Beach began in earnest and the resulting critters captured our hearts. Each doll (creature) is one of a kind and will not be replicated.

Sadly, Marilyn Stiles passed away last December so Leslie and Tayeko have taken this year to reflect and appreciate the work we have done and also have begun to look forward to another creative venture without our dear friend. Marilyn Stiles was a resident of both Muir Woods and Friday Harbor, WA. Leslie Riehl and Tayeko Kaufman are longtime residents of Muir Beach, CA.



# Fire Department Update - Fall 2019

By David Taylor, Chris Gove, and Kevin Corbit



As the season changes we are all much more alert to the dangers of wildland fire as we live on the WUI (Wildland-Urban Interface) front lines. 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.

We are very excited to announce that in August we were awarded a CAL FIRE Volunteer Fire Assistance Program Grant. This is a matching grant of \$20,000 – our VFA puts up \$20,000 and the state puts in \$20,000 – and is designed to help departments purchase new personal protective equipment (PPE). Our PPE consists of the coats, pants, helmets that are designed to be fire resistant. We use different types of gear for wildland and structural fires and these funds

will allow us to update gear that has exceeded its functional lifespan.

We trained last month with Marin County Fire Dept (MCFD) on how to do an initial mobile attack on a wildland fire. In that approach we use 660 driving at very low speed with two firefighters manning the hose as we flank a fire (see photo above).

We are continuing our wildland fire preparations through this dry period.

At 0100 hours on September 23rd we responded to a fire at the beach parking lot. Most of you have likely seen the damage to the bathroom structure resulting from careless disposal of hot coals. We were the first on the scene with local resident and MCFD Battalion Chief Graham Groneman taking charge and were quickly backed up by Southern Marin Fire Engine 4. The damage to the structure was contained and no fire spread to any surrounding vegetation during the cool damp night (see photo below).

As everyone knows the PG&E Public Safety Power Outage last week was a challenge to all our patience and ingenuity. At least there were no fires in Marin. Please prepare for future such events with adequate batteries/lights/phone backup batteries/

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## **Fire Dept. Update**

*Continued from previous page*

supplies of water and alert us if you have any medical equipment that may need to be attached to a generator as we can help facilitate that. Since the winter storm season will follow closely on the heels of these outages your preparations will be of ongoing value.

The planning process for a long-awaited new fire house has made some recent progress. The planning committee under the leadership of Jon Rauh has convened several times this year. We have engaged Laura Van Amburgh as the architect and are working with the Dept. of Public Works and Marin County Planning Dept. to obtain the relevant approvals. We hope to maintain our momentum in the coming months.



Another young MBVFD trainee has headed off to college. Chris Bender is attending Northeastern University and we hope will return to serve the department in the future. His sister Adrianna continues participation in our department thankfully.

## **Firefighter's Appreciation Dinner** **Saturday, November 23**

Please join us for the 3rd Annual Firefighter's Appreciation Dinner on Saturday evening, November 23, at the Muir Beach Community Center to honor our volunteer force.

We will open the doors at 5:30 pm for wine and appetizers and begin the four course meal at 6:30 pm.

100% of proceeds go directly to the MBVFA to support the VFD. Cost is \$150 per person and includes all food, wine, coffee, and tea.

Please email [kevinccorbit@gmail.com](mailto:kevinccorbit@gmail.com) to RSVP and **include entree choice**.

### **First course** (vegetarian):

Wild mushroom bisque (gluten-free)

Toasted Tamales cheese with caramelized onion jam

### **Second course** (vegan, gluten-free):

Roasted Green Gulch root veg salad with pomegranate

Served on a bed of Green Gulch greens, Gove style

### **Entree** choice of:

1.) Roasted quail with honey, cumin, and orange glaze

Winter squash gnocchi (gluten-free) with brown butter and sage

2.) Fresh local fish

3.) Grilled fig pizza with balsamic onion, arugula, and Gorgonzola

### **Dessert** (vegetarian):

Cardamon spice cup cakes with orange mascarpone frosting

Truffles (gluten-free)

# Muir Beach Gets a Fulbright

By Gerry Pearlman

Isaac Pearlman (actually born here at the beach at 296 Pacific Way) received the prestigious award.

Now Isaac is off to Panama to research sea level rise and flood plain issues. With the data collected through his research, he will be developing resiliency plans for those areas most threatened by the effects of climate change.

His proposal is entitled:

*Building Resilience: The Value of Community-Scale Sea Level Rise and Flood Risk Data in Coastal Panama.*

His first impressions of Panama:

*Dear friends and family,*

Last Thursday marked my one-month anniversary in Panama, and it blows my mind how quickly time is passing here. Most of my first month has been spent at the university, which sits on a hill overlooking the Pacific terminus of the canal, on the western edge of Panama City. Around a thousand students, the Universidad Maritima Internacional de Panama – or UMIP, as everyone calls it – is pretty small, and resides in a dozen box-like buildings and offices that used to be part of the extensive United States military installations. Up until the 1970s, the buildings were part of the former United States Canal Zone, a wide-ranging cluster of towns and military bases all of which were handed over as part of the process of transferring canal operations to Panama.

My co-workers in the marine science department have been phenomenally welcoming in making me a part

of their “family”, as they call the group of four full-time faculty and two staff. From the beginning, they all teamed up to help me get settled and include me in their numerous field projects, which range from lionfish capture tournaments and ocean cleanups with Juan, coral propagation monitoring with Yessenia, to a visit with Yehudi to a nearby fishing port (which just happened to be where baseball legend Mariano Rivera grew up) to inspect the commercial fish catch.

The university students are decked out every day in full cadet uniform, which varies according to what year they are, and they study maritime industry skills like nautical science, transportation, and marine civil engineering. Though not military, the campus is fairly regimented – there are frequent 7 am flag ceremonies replete with full uniform marches, and students will straighten to attention and respectfully greet faculty and when they enter the classroom. A common punishment (for being late, for example) doled out by faculty or upper class students is pushups, to be performed on the spot. So walking around campus I will occasionally see cadets in full uniform knuckles down on the concrete sidewalk, counting them off.

Fortunately the department I work with is much more informal, and due to the large amount of fieldwork the marine science students are spared having to wear cadet uniforms. The marine science students boisterously romp through the marine science building to and from classes in

marine ecology, oceanography, and fisheries management. They cutely call me “Prof-e” for “Profesor”, and on one of my first field trips when Yessenia told them I was writing down all the Panamanian slang I didn’t know, they were so eager to share words like “pelado” (student, though literally means a bald person), “rofeear” (to provoke), “bam-bam” (booty), “pinta” (beer, like a pint but any size and “pintear” is the verb to drink beer), and “manga larga” (large, 22-oz beer but literally means “long sleeve”) that after over a page of slang I finally had to tell them to stop.

The language here in Panama is fascinating, as it has been so heavily influenced by the 70+ years of U.S. occupation in the Canal Zone. One result is that the most random American words have been adopted – like “que pretty/power”, “korn-flaeks” (cornflakes, generic name for any cereal), “focop”, and even the French influence appears with “bucu” used in the same sense of “beaucop” or “very” which is sometimes used as “bucu cool”. The confusing amalgamations, combined with the Panamanian enjoyment of inverted words and phrases (like “que sopa” actually means “que paso”, or “what’s up”), makes for an engrossing if not difficult language adjustment – as if just normal Spanish wasn’t hard enough!

At around 2 million people Panama City is the second largest in Central America (behind Guatemala City); and getting around the city has

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## **Fulbright**

*Continued from previous page*

been both easy and hard. Given the perpetual state of traffic in the city (“tranque” was one of the first new words I learned), walking and taking the metro is often much faster than even a taxi. Incredibly, the Panama City subway is sparkling clean, runs every 3-5 minutes, and only costs 35 cents a ride. In a month of riding it almost every day, I have yet to experience a delay or shutdown. The public bus system is just as impressive, offering air conditioned buses to every part of the city for only 25 cents (with a free transfer to the next bus or subway). Yet it still takes me over an hour to get to the university (which begins classes at 8 am), despite the fact that I live only about 7 miles away.

Outside of work I’ve been exploring the city, taking long, sweaty walks around neighborhoods like Casco Viejo (the historic district) near the waterfront, and Cangrejo for a Panamanian hipster-like experience with microbreweries, vegetarian restaurants and even coffeshops sporting avocado toast. Some favorite spots so far include the Parque Metropolitano, a park in the middle of the city where in an hour of hiking I saw wild sloths, monkeys and a toucan; Panama Viejo which is the original Spanish settlement and now a UNESCO world heritage site; and the city waterfront which on Sundays is closed to cars and will have hundreds of cyclists and people strolling along the water (especially at night when the day’s heat has faded). I have to take my jacket everywhere for the inevitable rain, which ranges from a light sprinkle to

a torrential downpour (“aguacero”) that will leave rivers of runoff pouring off streets and backing up out of stormdrains. The rain is often heralded with impressive thunder, which doesn’t so much peal like a bell, but explodes like bombs reverberating in the sky strong enough to set off car alarms in the streets.

There’s lots more, but that’s probably enough for now! Hopefully this gives everyone at least a little flavor of

what my experience in Panama has been like so far. The next dispatch will focus more on the sea level rise work I’m doing in Panama.

Feel free to forward this to anyone I missed, and let me know if you want to be taken off the list. For anyone who wants to see photos, they are available on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#). And I would love to hear how you all are doing!

*Abrazos,  
Isaac*

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## **Muir Beach Holiday Arts Fair Semi-Potluck Kickoff Dinner**

Sunday, Nov. 10th. 6pm- 9pm at the Community Center

*By Laurie Piel*

It’s hard to believe that the holiday season is upon us especially when the sun is so bright and warm. But Thanksgiving is only a few weeks away and that heralds the Muir Beach Holiday Arts Fair the following week, Dec. 7th & 8th. The fair has taken a page from the BBQ playbook and this is our Second Annual Semi-Potluck Kickoff Dinner. It won’t be the same with the recent passing of one of this fair’s founders, Suzanne Miller, but she would have wanted the fair to succeed and be part of her legacy to the community she loved. To do that the fair needs your help.

The Fair Kick Off Dinner is Sunday, Nov. 10th 6pm-9pm at the Community Center. The main course and first glass of wine is on us. Chris Gove is making his famous tri tip so bring a side dish, salad or dessert and your favorite beverage and join your friends at the MB Community Center to sign on to help.

I am looking for all ages and talents from someone with a few hours on one of the fair days, to those willing to roll up their sleeves as a committee chair, and everything in between. Some fresh faces with new ideas would be fabulous. This is the year for you to do it. Now is the time. C’mon down and share in the food and be part of the fun. We’ll start with the meeting and then dine and toast Suzanne and the start of the holiday season.

Any questions contact Laurie Piel at [muirbeachartsfair@gmail.com](mailto:muirbeachartsfair@gmail.com) or (415) 595-7411. Julie Smith has started work on the updated website <http://www.muirbeachartsfair.com> ... we have a fantastic line up this year so come be part of a living legacy of the community.

# The Critter Report - A Murder of Crows

By Dave MacKenzie

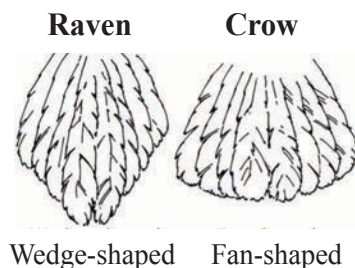
So just how many crows are too many? Sometimes in Muir Beach we can see a flock of 25 crows all flying together, cawing, or rummaging around some trash or compost piles. American Crows are one species which seems to do just fine around human civilization, thank you very much! The “Murder” title is probably from the middle ages, referring to the crows of Europe, which are different, but with similar lifestyles, including the Rooks, which famously sit atop ancient castle keeps (where, perhaps, ghastly murders occurred).

But crows are not the only members of the family Corvidae which seem to do OK around human habitation. Common Ravens, seen daily in Muir Beach, do well as denizens of our community foraging naturally in the wild and on human trash heaps. But how do you know you are looking at a raven and not a crow?

First, the ravens are bigger, and normally come in pairs. Of course, crows can be paired up too. I generally can separate crows and ravens quickly by their call notes when they fly. Crows definitely have a bit of a drawl to their “caw”, but it is quite variable. Ravens have a hoarse “croak”, and up to 4-5 in a sequence (which even a human can hear for miles). I almost always hear ravens before I see them. Another trick of ravens is to do “barrel rolls” and other acrobatics while flying, which is rare in crows.

In flight, crows and ravens can be most easily separated: crows have squared off tails, while ravens have wedge-shaped tails. Probably the best field mark. If you are looking at a black corvid, sitting in front of you

on the ground, identifying it as crow or raven can be perplexing without a size or tail comparison.



The Corvidae actually include crows, jays, and various other species such as Magpies. In Muir Beach we have 4 corvids: the other two are the California Scrub-Jay, and the Steller's Jay. The Scrub-Jays are the common jays which are basically blue and gray above, and white below. The Steller's Jays are the ones with the dark blue-black crest, and cerulean blue coloration. Like their family members the crows and ravens, Scrub-Jays and Steller's Jays do well around humans. Scrub-Jays like the coastal scrub habitat or oak forests (much of the coast of California), but the Steller's Jays prefer coniferous forests or riparian habitat, such as along Redwood Creek. Thus the Steller's are probably a bit more



*California Scrub-Jay*



*Steller's-Jay*

common in lower Muir Beach, and the “Scrubs” more common in upper.

By the way, there are (almost) no Blue Jays in California (only a few records). If you are calling our jays Blue Jays, you are probably from the Eastern US, where Blue Jays (which also have a crest like Steller's, but are much whiter overall and have a very different call). So let's call a Scrub-Jay a Scrub-Jay! By the way, there are three other very similar, but definitely different species, of Scrub-Jay in the United States; none found in Muir Beach.

All of the corvids are very smart birds. It is not uncommon to see a raven or crow near big beach flapping off with someone's sandwich or chips! Researchers have documented tool invention and use among certain types of crows, and also documented complex food storage methods (hundreds of refindable stash locations!) of the Clark's Nutcracker, a beautiful large corvid with black, white, and gray markings which is common in the Sierra Nevada. Another characteristic of the corvids is their habit of “mobbing” things that might harm them. Red-Tailed Hawks, owls, and even snakes or foxes get mobbed by corvids. If you hear a real cacophony of crows or jays, take a good look. You might find an owl hiding in the middle of the day which the jays are excitedly trying to expose and chase away. Worldwide there are many species of corvids, which attests to their success at evolving into many habitats. Linguistically, it's a Murder of Crows, a Congress (or an Unkindness) of Ravens, and a Scold of Jays.

So let's appreciate these special neighbors, and accept their stealing and creative ways!



# the FOXES

By Zoey B. Prakin

11:30pm, there should NOT be a random person walking around our yard, right?

That is exactly what I thought, when I clearly heard footsteps right outside my window.

As I slowly pull back the shade and peek outside, I see a fuzzy silhouette run towards the front yard.

Upon realizing it was an animal and not a person, my heart began to beat again. I quickly ran into the front room to look outside.

Much to my delight, SIX baby foxes, frolicking in our front yard and eating the bread sticks I “accidentally” left by the trampoline.

All foxes, playing, having a good time and eating are paying no attention to me. When suddenly out of nowhere, another fuzzy animal runs into the middle of the foxes,

causing them to scatter frantically. Except ONE fox remained, (let’s call her Miley), Miley must have been really hungry to not be scared off by the SKUNK. And now, is when my story gets really good (get out your popcorn!).

Okay so, the skunk (lets call her Hildegard), turns around, tail in the air ready to spray, but Miley the fox, was too quick and ran around to the face Hildegard head on. Suddenly Hildegard bites Miley right on the nose. Miley jumped, yelped and backed up. Realizing Hildegard was not messing around, two of the original six foxes return to defend their friend and chased Hildegard the skunk away. Then, Miley the fox spots me watching all of this action through the window, runs towards me and right at the window begins to bark, bark and more BARKING.

Caught off guard, I step back when suddenly our fearless cat, Spartacus, jumps in the windowsill and instantly with his hair raised is growling at the fox. And, I mean growling like I’ve never heard before. Through the window Spartacus and Miley are growling and barking back and forth at one another. Staring intently into each others eyes, neither backing down, I wasn’t certain how long this would continue. Thankfully, my Dad heard the ruckus, and came into the room to see if I was okay. What felt like an hour, was ten minutes and finally Miley the fox backed down and ran away. Still reeling, Spartacus was SO proud.

Wow, Friday night, Muir Beach excitement! And to think, my Mom and Tessa slept right through all of the action!

## Can you guess who this is?

*Photos by Dale Hopkins*

*(1977 Muir Beach Volunteer Firemen’s BBQ)*



*See page 19 for answers.*

# A Labor of Love

By Tayeko Kaufman

Dear Neighbors,

The Muir Beach Garden Club installed 4 Barn Owl boxes in the neighborhood over the Labor Day weekend. Thinking globally but acting locally we can help preserve the beautiful wildlife we are all privileged to enjoy here at the beach. We love our foxes, coyotes, chipmunks, bobcats, hawks, vultures, herons, smelly skunks, bodacious raccoons and the occasional mountain lion, and house hold pets, but would be rid of rodents who invade our gardens and frequent our homes and automobiles.

The ample amount of rain this year has produced a bounty of wildlife and rodents. By installing the Barn Owl boxes we are trying to preserve our wildlife and control the rodent population without the use of rodenticides (SGARs) and other chemicals known to be harmful to the eco-system. Rodenticides take time to kill their targets. During that time the poisoned rodent becomes easy prey for household pets, foxes, owls and other predators which consume the poisoned rodent and in turn become prey to larger animals up the food chain with devastating results.

CA AB 1788, the California Ecosystems Protection Act of 2019 that bans the use of pesticides with anticoagulants (SGARs) passed the Assembly in May, and is currently in the Senate Budget committee. WE are hopeful that it becomes law this year. But in the meantime to insure that we do not harm the wild life that enhances our lives here at



the beach we are asking everyone to not use rodenticides. The barn owl fledglings usually will be seeking their own homes in late August to the end of October and we are hopeful that they will find one of our boxes as a comfortable place to nest in a rodenticide free space.

We could not have completed the Hungry Barn Owl Project in 3 months without the guidance of WildCare: the support of the MBCSD, the contribution of Steve Shaffer who made 8 Barn Owl Boxes, the painting team of Leslie Riehl, Kate Somers, Joey Groneman and Tayeko Kaufman, the help of Chris Gove who purchased the materials and organized the installation team of Mike Moore and Janet Tumpich, Joey and Eric Groneman, Kate and Steve Somers, Michael and Tayeko Kaufman,

Janice Kubota and Maury Ostroff, Scott Bender and Aran Collier, and the scrumptious lunch provided by Anne and Paul Jeschke.

Now the waiting game begins. How long will it take before our boxes have residents? Listed below are sites which provide more information about the Barn Owl.

Horned Owl and Barn Owl cohabitation:

<https://www.featheredphotography.com/blog/2015/05/16/a-question-of-compatibility-among-owl-species/>

Cycle of a Barn Owl:

<https://barnowlboxes.com/barn-owl-boxes/life-cycle-barn-owl/>

Barn Owls in Summer:

<https://www.barnowltrust.org.uk/barn-owl-facts/owlets-young-barn-owls/>







# Meet Your Neighborhood Liaisons

*By Kasey Corbit*

As fire season peaks, several people have asked what will happen if a fire breaks out in Muir Beach. In the event of any emergency or natural disaster, know that the fire department will work with a team of dedicated neighborhood volunteers, called “neighborhood liaisons,” to identify any individuals who need assistance or medical attention. Most liaisons are CERT-trained (CERT stands for Community Emergency Response Team) in basic disaster response skills, such as fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization, and disaster medical operations.

Muir Beach is currently divided into fifteen different service areas for the liaisons. A list of liaisons is below. **Please note that we have several vacancies and could always use additional help even for the covered areas.** Additionally, we could use help planning and coordinating. As the saying goes, many hands make light work, and there is little work more important than securing our neighborhood and caring for its residents in the event of a disaster.

We will be having a community-wide meeting on fire safety. The date is still to be determined, but look for it in late fall. Additionally, your liaison will be reaching out to you sometime in the next couple of months to schedule a meeting for your neighborhood division to meet new neighbors and get reacquainted with long-time residents. Our liaisons maintain a list of who in their block has medical or emergency training, who has useful devices such as chainsaws or generators, and who might need additional assistance. Please proactively reach out to your liaison if you have any valuable skills or tools or if you have someone in the home with a mobility impairment or other disability. Please also let us know if you need electricity to power medical devices or to refrigerate your medication. The latter, obviously, is becoming a bigger issue with all of the current and projected PG&E outages to prevent fires in inclement conditions. We would like to ensure that everyone who needs assistance during these times has the requisite help. Your information is kept confidential and will only be used in the event of an emergency.

**It also is helpful to connect with your liaison if you run a vacation rental, even if it is part-time.** Most Muir Beach residents know their neighbors and are

acquainted with the liaison system. We will run an emergency drill in the spring with the fire department so that all current residents are up to speed on our community-wide disaster protocol. However, transient visitors are unknown to the community and liaisons may either waste valuable time trying to identify if someone is trapped inside a vacant property or overlook a rented property. Additionally, we have information we can provide for you to share with your renters about how to respond in an emergency.

Your neighborhood liaisons (and open positions) are listed below.

## Starbuck

Denise Lamott  
Starbuck One  
1, 5, 6, 9, 14, 15, 19, 23, 27

Janice Kubota  
Starbuck Two  
28, 31, 32, 35, 39, 40, 43, 44, 47

Anne Jeschke  
Starbuck Three  
50, 51, 55, 60, 66, 69, 77

## Seacape

Brenda Kohn  
Seacape One  
1, 7, 8, 11, 19, 21, 25, and 5 Ahab

Sarah Nesbitt  
Seacape Two  
34, 38, 39, 43, 46, 47, 50, 51, 54, 55, 59

Barbara Piotter  
Seacape Three  
60, 63, 64, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 80, 81, 88, 15 Muir Beach Overlook

## Ahab

Elizabeth Benedict  
Ahab One  
9, 17, 21, 25, 35

Gail Falls  
Ahab Two  
9, 11, 37, 38, 48, 51



## **Sunset**

### **\*Open Position\***

Sunset One

3, 5, 10, 15, 20, 30, 35, 40 – Sunset

2, 4, 6 – White Way

1853, 1855 – Shoreline

160 – Pacific Way

Robin Terra

Sunset Two

45, 50, 60, 70, 75, 90, 100

Joey Groneman

Sunset Three

120, 130, 150, 161, 170, 175, 180, 185, 187 – Sunset

295, 308, 310, 320 – Pacific Way

### **\*Open Position\***

(Currently being filled by Tayeko Kaufman)

Sunset Four

190, 195, 200, 209, 210, 219, 220, 226, 230, 240

Ciana DeBernardo

Cove Lane One

260, 267, 280, 285, 290, 300, 310, 320, 330, 342 – Sunset

20, 21, 30 – Cove Lane

## **Pacific Way**

Nikola Tede

Pacific Way One

65, 75, 85 – Sunset

170, 180, 190, 235, 235A, 240, 250, 270, 280 – Pacific Way

## **Shoreline**

Danny Hobson

Greenway One

1795, 1796, 1801, 1815, 1820, 1821, 1850 - Shoreline

48, 70 – Lagoon Drive

# The Sanderlings

*By Ronan Corbit*

The sanderling,  
as brown as sand.  
A tiny thing,  
a color bland.  
Look for things  
down in the mud  
They play and chirp  
until the flood.  
When tide comes  
it's a race to the sand.  
Settle down  
right in the nest,  
warm and cozy  
like a vest.  
These beachy birds  
in the nest at night  
can finally rest  
until the light.

*Ronan is in 5th grade at  
Strawberry Point School*

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# Curves and Shapes

*By Lea Woods*

Just wanted to let you know that one  
of my paintings has been included  
into a group show with the San  
Francisco Women Artists.

If you or any other Muir Beachers  
might be interested, love to see  
some dear and familiar faces.

San Francisco Women Artists

Irving and 8th

Show is called Curves and Shapes

Opens Nov. 7th 5:30 - 8:00 PM

10am to 6pm Tuesday - Saturday

12 noon to 4pm Sundays

[http://sfwomenartists.org/artist/  
leanne-wood/](http://sfwomenartists.org/artist/leanne-wood/)

[http://sfwomenartists.org/  
exhibition/curves-shapes/](http://sfwomenartists.org/exhibition/curves-shapes/)

# To Sing in West Marin is to Build Community

*By Beth Nelson*



*Photos by Devi Daly*

When you become older, you often forget that you have a voice. Even if you've been singing all your life, things take over; children, death of parents, divorce, responsibilities. Just at the time you should be singing, you often forget about singing, or feel that you haven't got time for singing. Or even feel that you have lost your voice.

Had it not been for a scholarship offering to West Marin Choir, I too may have forgot how to sing. Song is the voice that connects us to ourselves, and to others. Song is the equalizer. Song is our connection to our common humanity. Song is the voice I grew up with.

In West Marin, where nature is bigger than us, and where we are accustomed to being rather remote,

West Marin Choir gave form and shape to something that was missing. Six years ago Devi Daly and Tim Weed created a choir for residents on this side of the hill; a choir for those living between Muir Beach and Point Reyes Station – the unincorporated and most isolated parts of West Marin. Born of their love for music and their love for community, they believed that making music together creates a more healthy, vibrant and connected community.

In beautiful West Marin, their mission was to build community through music, a goal that has been utterly manifest over the past six years.

Every Monday night I drive over magnificent highway 1 as the sun

is setting, to the Stinson Beach Community Center to begin making music with others from West Marin. Every Tuesday night at 7 o'clock, the Point Reyes chapter meets to do the same. These sessions usually take place for six consecutive weeks, culminating in a concert where the two groups come together for one night and invite the public to listen. The choir sings a-capella songs, folk songs, spirituals and more – all learnt by ear, without sheet music, in four-part harmony. There is a "fellowship" that happens amongst its members – a rather old fashioned word now – but very much real. I now have friends from all four villages in West Marin that I love to sing with.

*Continued on next page*



# Elderberries Music Project

*By Bob Jacobs*

## **To Sing**

*Continued from previous page*



It has been found that singing together improves your sense of well-being, and that within a minute of singing with others, all hearts beat at the same rate.

I have always been the only member of Muir Beach to attend this choir, but I hope if some of you like to sing, you will reach out for more information or simply go on-line to [www.westmarinchoir.org](http://www.westmarinchoir.org)

There is no requirement to read music, and no audition, just the desire to sing and be with others who enjoy singing. I can't say enough good about this lovely choir that I have been part of now since the beginning. A true labor of love by Devi and Tim, I encourage Muir Beachers to have a look at their website or better still, come to a concert. You will not be disappointed.

**[Westmaringchoir.org](http://Westmaringchoir.org)** for more information.

On Friday, November 15, 2019, the Elderberries will **PREMIER** what it hopes will become the first of a regular series of musical performances featuring some of our own Muir Beach musicians. It will be free to all, and will be in the relaxed atmosphere known as "cafe style". The Community Center will be set up with small candle-lit tables. The usual warming fire in the fireplace will help set the mood. The performance will be approximately one and one half hours long with a short break. The Elderberries will supply nuts and other noshes, and drinks will be on a BYOB basis.

**PLEASE SAVE THE DATE - NOV. 15 AT 7:30PM  
in the Community Center**

The performers for this premier will be Steve Utstein and Steve Shaffer playing jazz and other sophisticated styles.

Their bios:

Born and raised in New Zealand, Steve Utstein has been involved in music for most of his life. Starting with many years of classical cello and piano, Steve played in multiple orchestras small group ensembles before discovering rock and roll guitar in his teens. He graduated with a degree in Music Composition from the University of Auckland before putting classical music on hold and concentrating on a growing love of blues, jazz, rock and funk. This culminated with a move to Chicago and full time jobs playing with Junior Wells, Lonnie Brooks as well as freelance shows with Buddy Guy and Bo Diddley, among others. The chapter in Chicago was quickly followed by a few years in Honolulu performing in cover bands in Waikiki, and then a move to Los Angeles with steady work touring and recording for many different original artists. Shortly after the birth of his daughter, the whole family moved up to the SF Bay area and a career change for Steve - but, the music is never far away, currently Steve performs with the LA blues band Cafe R&B, as well recently joining an 8 piece original funk band The Humidors.

Steve Shaffer made his mark as head of an early communications company. It wasn't long after he moved to Muir Beach that he started serving on the CSD Board. Ultimately he served as the Board President for more years than most can remember; no one else has ever come close to his years of official service to the community. He still serves on the Board after a short break. Presently, most Muir Beacher's are more familiar with Steve as the lead and saxophone player of Freddie and the Free loaders, who have provided many community gatherings with great upbeat music for dancing. So, with this performance, he will be exploring a new role as part of a duo of Muir Beach musicians.

# Field of Dreams - The Infamous Muir Beach Softball Team

By David Brandt

*Writer's disclaimer: Nothing that follows is entirely factual. Some of it is close to the truth but bare in mind that it is based on this correspondent's failing memory and the memory of other ex baseball stars whose remembrances are equally handicapped by the dictum: the older I get the better I was.*

You've walked by it dozens of times: the overgrown patch of shrub and chaparral at the corner where Frank Valley Road meets Route One. A former Banducci iris field now overgrown with weeds, it's easy to ignore. But perhaps you do not fully realize that in another time in a younger universe, this patch of scrubby lowland was a field of dreams. A baseball diamond like no other with it's own local team that finished first in the West Marin Softball League. Back in the early eighties when Muir Beach was not a publicized destination, but a place people thankfully drove by, some of those old grey stooped neighbors of yours could run the bases, hit the long ball, and turn a double play like the pros. Heck, we were the pros in our own minds at least. This is the story of the Muir Beach Fog, the only competitive sports team Muir Beach has ever fashioned.

We were sitting around the firehouse on a spring day when someone, probably John John, suggested we consider building a baseball diamond. Previously we had talked about maybe a tennis court or a swimming pool. I think Harvey Pearlman was lobbying for a bowling alley. The point was "why not" and why not here in the land the gods had chosen as the perfect place to

set down roots. We were young (sort of), we were athletic (sort of) and we were without shame. The perfect combination of grit and gusto. And so it came to pass. Jim White who could build anything and had the energy and persuasiveness to talk the Zen Center into loaning us its harrow, swept through that corner field for three days and nights, leveling it and smoothing it to a fine perfection. It really looked like Candlestick if you squinted mightily and wore someone else's prescription glasses. Of course if you played the outfield you were as likely as not to step in a gopher hole. And if you played the infield you could more or less count on the ball bouncing off a rock directly onto the bridge of your nose. Bob Kriegel, one of our original infielders, used this explanation multiple times to explain that if there were any ground ball errors, it was entirely the field's fault. But what the heck, the diamond was flat mostly, and it was big, and it was all ours.

Here was the roster from our first game.

Pitcher: John Sward

First base: Jim White

Second Base: Bob Kriegel (also played third)

Short stop: David Brandt

Third Base: John Nelson

Left Field: Steve Jackson

Center Field: Terry Onorato

Right Field: Tyler Knox

Catcher: Jerry Pearlman

We drew a huge crowd that first season consisting of our wives and kids who brought lawn chairs and more or less socialized with each other while the game proceeded. The most vociferous fans were Laurie Brandt, Kathy and Erica Sward, and Kim Nelson. They wildly cheered

us on even when we made an error which was not infrequently. They talked of building bleachers for the expected crowds but it was doubted the Park Service, who was legally responsible for this piece of earth, would approve. We played 7 inning games against Stinson Beach, and four or five other teams from Point Reyes, Bolinas and Olema including the Master Batters (an all park ranger team), the Hammerheads, Rodonis, The Bushmen, Smileys, the Hoselayers and several others.

I think most of our games were scheduled on Thursday at twilight during the spring and summer. When we weren't playing on our field, we'd jump into a couple of cars and blast out of the beach heading north. Stinson Beach had a team but no field so they sometimes used ours. We often played games at the Bolinas elementary school where the right field was somewhat obstructed by the school itself. If you hit the ball into right, it would generally land on the roof of the building and be ruled a ground rule double. Consequently the Smiley's team had a plethora of left handed hitters who practiced placing the ball onto that roof. I remember they had 6 ground rule doubles in a row while we watched helplessly wondering how we could put a building in the left field of our diamond since everyone on our team hit right handed. Our pitcher John John had a solution. In slow pitch softball which is what we played, the pitcher lofts the ball in an arc so that the batter has to gauge his swing to hit the orb just at the perfect moment. Too soon and you'll pop up. Too late and you'll ground out to the infield. John had a trick though. As

*Continued on next page*



## ***Field of Dreams***

*Continued from previous page*

soon as we got to the visitor's field he would check the sun and modify his pitching arc so the glare from the afternoon sun, low in the horizon, would blind the batter. Swing and miss. Swing and miss. It was hard to hit his pitches once he'd figured the angle of the sun's path.

The first season was tough and we didn't win a lot of games, but we were competitive with the other teams and that was saying something since most of them were stacked with former semi pro players. We practiced on the weekends. The crowds grew. The team hit its stride and several other Muir Beachers joined in. Tony Moore was fast and could cover vast distances in right field. Steve Jackson was rangy and a solid player. Tyler Knox had an amazing arm but he tended to throw the ball in from the outfield with such ferocity that it invariably cruised over the infielders heads into the bushes. He used a high step like the 49ers Roger Craig to avoid the gopher holes in the outfield and played with the exuberance of a dionysian god. He claims he was not taking performance enhancing drugs.

One of the team's important rituals: When we were in a tight spot we would gather at the pitchers mound to discuss how to handle the next play: who would cover which base, how the outfielders should be positioned, which infielder would take the cut off throw and so forth. We had no real coach so we more or less coached ourselves. Here was democracy at work. Everyone had

a say and everyone had an opinion. Somehow it worked.

In our second season we lost a few players to injury but Steve Dybsky took over at second and played other positions wherever there was a need. His wife Debbie was our loudest cheerleader in the "stands." Steve could hit a pretty good line drive over the shortstop's head. Bob Kriegel insisted he hit a home run to left but others claimed the other team's fielder was talking to his girlfriend and missed the ball entirely. Tyler slid into second so hard that when the dusk cleared the shortstop was unable to continue. Jim White remembers a triple play that he and I pulled off to win a game. On another remarkable play John John lobbed a pitch to Billy Scott, the owner of the Parkside at the time. Scott was a lefty who played shortstop. Now you'd be hard pressed to find a left handed shortstop anywhere in baseball because the angle of play requires a one motion throw to first base, but Billy's arm was so strong that he could field a grounder, then turn and fire the ball to first to catch the swiftest runner. Billy had played semi pro ball and when he swung at John John's high arc lob, he hit a line drive directly back at the pitcher. John had no time to move and that was lucky since the ball came off the bat and lodged itself into his armpit for a surprising out. This was a play you could never replicate in a hundred games though John insisted he'd been practicing it all season long.

In season three and four, Tyler brought in a few of his friends to supplement the MB locals. Alright some of them

were ringers like Crusher Dave who lived up to his nickname, and Little Mikey who was in fact little but could hit any pitch thrown his way. We had a winning season and earned the esteem of the West Marin League who until then had thought of Muir Beach as a suburb of Mill Valley. We even won the league that fourth year.

The memories are fading. In fact, when I spoke with a few of these softball veterans for this article, most of them remember only their moments of greatness. John John insists he had a wicked curve ball, not the result of hours of practice, but due to a bent, swollen finger he acquired during the first season. Harvey Pearlman claims to have smashed a Barry Bonds home run to win a game. As for myself, I can visualize turning graceful double plays at second, sliding into home to wild applause, backhandling a grounder in the hole between short and third. Not a single one of us mentioned the pulled hamstrings, sore backs, and swollen ankles; the painful gyrations and their aftermath that good play sometimes requires.

I guess that's the way of memory. It's selective and it favors distortion. The older you are, the better you were. Still, we were the golden boys of summer. We hit the long ball. We ran with abandon. We battled the odds to victory. Eventually, all good things must end. So when the Park Service cancelled our liability insurance, we let the dream go and moved on. But for one bright, shining moment...

*David Brandt is a best selling author who has lived in Muir Beach for 44 years*

# If These Walls Could Talk, *Julian Knox edition*

By Beth Begault

When we stumbled on an open house in Muir Beach six years ago—our future home—a great curiosity was born: how did such a frozen-in-time, 70s-era, architecturally-imposing-yet whimsical coastal house come to be? When you really, really love the house you wander around in every day, you wonder these things, and the story led to Julian Knox.



*Julian Knox*

Many of you knew Julian Knox as a neighbor and a friend. He was a UC Berkeley-trained architect who lived in Muir Beach for four decades with his wife Nancy (of Quilters, bistro scones, and book group fame!) and two children Rachel and Tyler (Tyler remembers lots of dad discussions about axial symmetry and architectural proportions). He designed dozens of homes in the greater Bay Area and at least 9 of the 160+ houses in Muir Beach.

Julian made his way from his 1930 origins in Ponca, Oklahoma to Stockton, CA to the US Army, where he served in the Korean War to his professional rebirth at Cal in the 50s, to his home base in Muir Beach from the 1960s-on. From there Julian's career unfolded, and he unleashed his creativity and passion for design. He was progressive for his time in utilizing architectural design to bring the outdoors in with atriums, skylights, and generously-scaled windows, at the same time seeking ecological efficiency and a lived-in-feel through the use of re-used, repurposed soft woods and the sun as a strategic and eternal source of warmth. His long-time collaborator Jim White, of Jim White Construction, described him as an architect who listened to his client's needs and who sought to build homes that would last.

Julian's Muir Beach legacy includes:

- 1) The Knox home at 59 Seacape Drive (1967)
- 2) 23 Starbuck Drive (1972) where Julian's daughter Rachel remembers being paid 25 cents an hour to shingle the detached studio with her mom Nancy, back when Rachel was saving up to buy her first bodyboard.
- 3) 35 Sunset Way (1974)—Jim White's first build as a contractor
- 4) 63 Seacape Drive (1975)

- 5) 28 Starbuck Drive (1976)
- 6) 14 Starbuck Drive (1978)
- 7) 38 Seacape Drive (1981)
- 8) 290 Sunset Way (1981)
- 9) 79 Seacape Drive (1985)

Julian designed prolifically in the East Bay and Marin, mostly single family homes, some in partnership with other architects and others in his own solo practice. After the 1991 firestorm in

the Oakland Hills that destroyed over 2800 homes, Tyler Knox remembers his father as an in-demand architect who designed a number of residences that stand today in the rebirth of the hillsides of northern Oakland. A partial collection of Julian's architectural drawings and sketches can be found in the UC Berkeley Environmental Design Archives.

Many thanks to Tyler Knox, Rachel Alesse, and Jim White for sharing stories about Julian that bring his designs to life, and gratitude to Julian Knox himself for the gift that keeps on giving: home.





# Ocean Riders' BLUES in the BARN 3 Fundraiser

*By Maureen Pinto and Ocean Riders*

We had a glorious sunny fall day for Ocean Riders' Blues in the Barn 3 on Saturday October 5. Due to many competing events, attendance was down from last year, but we were pleased to see several new Muir Beach faces this year. This was our fifth fundraiser and third year in a row of hosting the Blues in the Barn party, with Muir Beach's very own Bruce Barlow and friends providing great music. We added some fun new activities this year including a Pin the Tail on Apache contest, and a painting demonstration by Rooster, our resident equine artist. In the horse demo this year Pico and Bear were joined by two young program participants for a display of partnership skills before giving their lively performance to music.

This event takes a great deal of time and effort from our small organization, and so does our program planning. Our programs teach leadership skills, promote an appreciation for our local watershed and inspire future stewards of the land. Most of our outreach programs are scheduled during the school year when we are at the mercy of the weather. Last year's extremely wet winter forced us to cancel or reschedule several programs which resulted in disappointed students and reinforced our determination to build our covered arena. We are moving forward with the project and have hired a civil engineer to help us resolve some of the drainage issues we face. Once we reach our goal and build the covered arena and expand our programs, we will significantly reduce our fundraising efforts because our for-profit programs with Ocean Riders partners



will be able to fund and support our not-for-profit programs for under-resourced communities. The facility fees accrued from these for-profit partnerships will also allow us to continue preserving the beautiful historic buildings of the Golden Gate Dairy.

A special thank you to Green Gulch Farm, the Pelican Inn, Kathy Johnson, and Peggy and Ted Elliott, who continue to contribute to our many Silent Auction items. We are grateful to our longtime partner Bay Area Barns and Trails for being a champion of our mission since 2001, offering a \$2,500 grant for matching funds, and to the many residents who attended and who raised their paddle for our Fund-A-Need. We are now a big step closer to our goal. It certainly does take a village!

*Photos courtesy of Bob Hemstock*



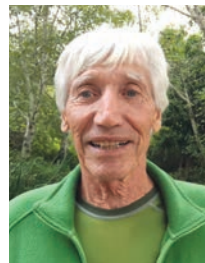
## Can you guess who this is? *By Anne Jeschke (from page 9)*



*Outi Onorato*



*John John Sward*



*Jim White*



*Kathy Sward*



## Baby Callie



Callie Josephine Brown arrived on 9/4/19 @ 8:15pm  
6 lbs, 8 oz, 20 Inches



Callie with big sister Paige, and her parents Adam and Heidi.

## Isabel and Juliet

David Leivick and Linda Gibbs are overjoyed to announce the birth of their identical twin granddaughters *Isabel Lily and Juliet Marie Szczerban* born August 7, 2019 to their daughter Sarah Gibbs Leivick and Christopher Szczerban.  
*Congratulations Sarah and Chris!*



*Isabel Lily (on left and one minute older!) and Juliet Marie.*

*Photograph by Deborah Fischman*  
*Photography*



*Jessica Rauh created this sign as part of the celebration of Monarch Butterflies at this year's Day of the Dead Party.*

## Halloween 2019 at the Muir Beach Community Center



*Photo by Alexis Chase*