



SINCE 1946

# MUIR BEACH FIREMEN'S BBQ

## Sunday, May 29, 2022



## 48TH ANNUAL

*Sponsored by the Muir Beach Volunteer Fire Association  
Proceeds benefit the Muir Beach Volunteer Fire Department*



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*Thank you for your continued support.*



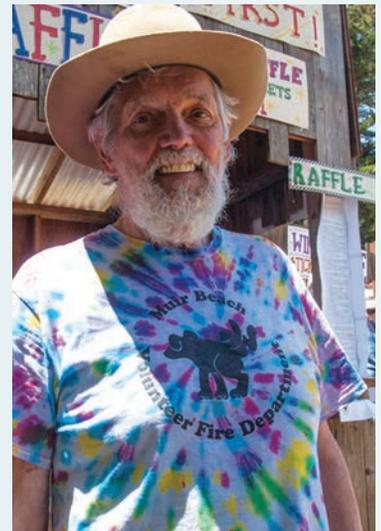
*Andre's All Star Band will rock the stage once again, their 48th as well.*



*Lisa Eigsti sports some of the new Dog logo wear.*



*Wreckless Strangers will take the stage at this years BBQ. Photo by Jay Blakesberg*



*John John Sward, retired MBVFD Chief and a founder of the Firemen's BBQ, will celebrate his 48th too.*

*See story page 4.*

# Earth Day 2022

By Mia Monroe

Earth Day Muir Woods-style just celebrated 30 years of service work. Shirley Nygren, as part of the park's concession, was there at the first one and "invited" Steve Shaffer to help with the thank you bbq! She rarely missed one. Once again this large event was a team effort, got lots done and brought in nearly 100 people for first time in over two years to volunteer.

Stewardship is a profound way many of us connect with a place. To help out, make a special place a little better, see things change over time, meet other like minded people are reasons many offer about why they share time, returning again and again to service events. Young people often step up as interns, seasonals and maybe see a profession in this work! Sure great way to put "public" in our public lands. And a chance to work among the fragrant billowing lupine, ceonothus to glimpse the breathtaking shimmer of a large pipevine swallowtail or flash of a red-winged blackbird!

Our place sure is wondrous! At the edge of the North American plate, at the mouth of Redwood Creek, overlooking the mixing of land and water in the dunes and Big Lagoon: wow! And so sensuous it is easy to feel we are part of this place with each breath and unique scene, recreation and nourishment of the creative spirit!

How do you recognize this place? Feel at home here? Do you have your own favorite vista or regular walk? A place you visit to check out what's blooming or nesting? Always share with someone special? How do the pieces add up? What will you do

to help take care of it? What do you call it? Place names help anchor us such Golden Gate Dairy or Muir Beach. Sometimes they connect us to the area's long lineage as maybe Ka'ashi Way or Dias Ridge Trail does. Do you feel proud to connect to legendary figures whenever you say you live in Marin County (thus honoring Chief Marin) or at Muir Beach/Overlook/Woods? And we still wonder just who was Frank! But maybe at this years MBVFD bbq you might toast Shirley Nygren's father and call the bbq site as she always wished it would be known as: Sousa Meadow!

The cycles of the seasons, the rhythm of the tides and such events that are touchstones: Earth Day for the park, the MBV Firemen's bbq for the community...what else helps us feel connected to this place and each other? Maybe it is knowing we share it with so much else: turtle and otter, pelican and barn owl, frog and fish!

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## ON THE COVER

*Untitled*

8" x 10"

Pen and ink illustration, reconfigured with pastel and digital art

Brad Eigsti

Brad Eigsti reconfigured this original drawing done by Mark Felix in 1990. Brad said: "Mark grew up in Muir Beach – his parents constructed and operated the Pelican Inn. Mark sadly passed away last year. Dan Skurow, another ex-Muir Beacher helped with the graphics, text and color [on this year's flyer]."

## Inside

48th Annual BBQ Sunday, May 29.....	2,4
Earth Day 2022 .....	3
Firewise Muir Beach .....	5
An Interview with Bryce Browning.....	6-7
Good News!.....	7
Side Notes.....	8
Passing the Baton: Q&A with Anne Jeschke.....	8-9
Muir Beach Real Estate News.....	9
Cold War Redux .....	10
Why Not You?.....	11
Muir Beach Speaks Out.....	11
Jonah and the Whale.....	12-13
BBQ Raffle Update and Prize List .....	14-16
Reparations.....	17
MBVFD Save the Date - June 11 Practice Evacuation Drill.....	17
Ponchos, old friends & community ..	18-19
PRNS Update .....	19
Ocean Riders.....	20,23
The Horse Girls.....	21
Here Kitty Kitty.....	21
Call for Beachcomber Volunteers .....	21
Critter Report.....	22-23
Firewise Ember Stomp.....	24

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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:  
[editor@muirbeachcomber.com](mailto:editor@muirbeachcomber.com)

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

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

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# 48TH ANNUAL Muir Beach Volunteer Firemen's Barbecue RETURNS ON SUNDAY, MAY 29

By Denise Lamott

After a two-year hiatus, the **48th Annual Muir Beach Volunteer Firemen's Barbecue** returns on **Sunday, May 29** from **noon to 5 pm** at Santos Meadows on **Frank Valley Road**. Enjoy all of your favorites: delicious food, fantastic live music, tasty craft beers, premium wine, and a whole lot of fun for the family. As most of you know the Firemen's Barbecue is a festive gathering and fundraiser for the **Muir Beach Volunteer Fire Department** and a favorite Memorial Day Weekend tradition in Marin. A huge thank you to everyone working hard behind the scenes to line up volunteer crews, raffle prizes, tasty meals, desserts, amazing merchandise, event poster and signs, decorations, porta-potties, garbage collection bins, permits, entertainment, supplies, donated

beer & wine, and everything that it takes to get this puppy off the ground! It truly takes a village to produce such an amazing event and we will welcome all volunteers. There's a place for you. Please contact Nina Vincent to find out how you can join the fun and help out, at [ninavp@earthlink.net](mailto:ninavp@earthlink.net).

What can you expect this year? Well, keeping the nearly-50-year tradition going, local favorites **Andre Pessis and his All-Stars** will be back to get the spirited crowd on the dance floor with their classic rock and R & B tunes. **Wreckless Strangers**, a collective of six seasoned Bay Area musicians known for their collaborative songwriting and high-energy live shows, will kick off the afternoon with their infectious blend of music they call "California Americana Soul."

Muir Beach firefighters and community members tend to smoky grills. Barbecue chicken and vegetarian tamale lunches, handmade desserts, plus sodas, beer, and wine will be available for purchase, as are clothing and other items featuring the famous **Muir Beach Volunteer Fire Department** iconic dog logo. We have some super cool new items this year...as well as all the classics. Note that we will NOT have the inflatable jumpys this year but are working on a fun zone for the kids. Stay tuned for more details. The day's activities end with a raffle of dozens of prizes that include fantastic accommodations, and gift certificates from popular Bay Area and beyond restaurants and attractions.

The **Annual Firemen's Barbecue** is a fundraiser for the **Muir Beach Volunteer Fire Department** and donations and purchases of merchandise, food, beverages, and raffle tickets are encouraged and appreciated. Parking is \$30 per vehicle; carpooling is encouraged. There is a suggested donation of \$10 for walk-in and bike-in attendees. For further details, please call (415) 381-8793 or check out [www.muirbeachfire.com/bbq](http://www.muirbeachfire.com/bbq).

*Covid protocols will align with Marin County health guidelines and are subject to change. Check [MuirBeachFire.com](http://MuirBeachFire.com) for all updates. Please note that any interaction with the public poses a risk of exposure to COVID-19. We encourage folks to be fully vaccinated and follow CDC recommendations.*



in cooperation with



# Firewise MuirBeach

## How Are We Doing?

In our first year as a Firewise community, Muir Beach is off to a good start. There's more to be done—here's what and why.

**Since our initial neighborhood survey completed January 2021**, Muir Beachers have made some good progress in better protecting our community from wildfires. Participation in Chipper Days was high with 800 cubic yards, or about 80 truckloads of brush being hauled away. There are residents who cleared the immediate zones around their houses and created more defensible space. Others have used non-combustible materials when re-modelling their homes. In our gardens, fire safe plant choices are being integrated. While these are great beginnings, over half of Muir Beach residents have an opportunity to improve the immediate zone (0-5 feet from your house) and intermediate zone (5-30 feet). This includes removing wildfire fuel such as overgrown vegetation and plant litter near homes, thinning vegetation, moving lumber and wood piles away from structures, replacing plants known to be highly flammable, and "home hardening" through building modifications.

Perhaps you or someone you know has asked: *Why should I take the time and money to make my property Firewise?* Here are some critical reasons why:

**We are surrounded by many potential fire ignition factors**, such as dense weekend and holiday vehicle traffic on Highway One that can spark dry brush and beach fires. There are many favorite tourist areas around us — and

unfortunately, many people are just not careful.

**Climate change** is lessening coastal fog production, **creating dangerously longer dry periods** which activate "red flag warnings", especially worrisome when accompanied by high winds.

**Communities with high participation rates in fire safe practices are much less likely to suffer catastrophe.** While fires may start elsewhere on public lands, our responsible care and management of our personal properties makes the crucial difference. All Muir Beach homeowners play an important part in helping our community adapt to living with wildfires. Data shows that the creation of defensible space on your property is a critical factor in the survival of your home.<sup>1</sup> Firewise building and landscaping practices will increase insurability and property values.

Firewise Muir Beach can help residents with physical or financial limitations by assisting them to secure grant funding to pay for vegetation removal and building modifications. The Firewise team can also help guide you to resources for fire safe landscaping and building modifications. Please reach out to any team member: Don Piotter, Rick Bernard, Joani Marinoff, Klaus Poppensieker, Ron Rosano and Robin Terra working with Chris Gove, Fire Chief.

1. Valachovic, Quarles and Swaim, *Publication 8695*, (University of California, Agricultural and Natural Resources, July 2021), 3.

### SAVE THE DATE

**The Muir Beach Volunteer Fire Department will conduct a Muir Beach Practice Evacuation Drill on Saturday, June 11 at 9am.** In addition to preparing our homes and landscapes, Muir Beach residents need to be ready to take immediate action in the event of an actual wildfire. All Muir Beach residents are strongly encouraged to participate. Please mark your calendars and be on the lookout for more details to come!

# An Interview with Bryce Browning

By Steve Somers

**S. Somers:** It's March 26, 2022 and I'm sitting with Bryce Browning at his home in Muir Beach.

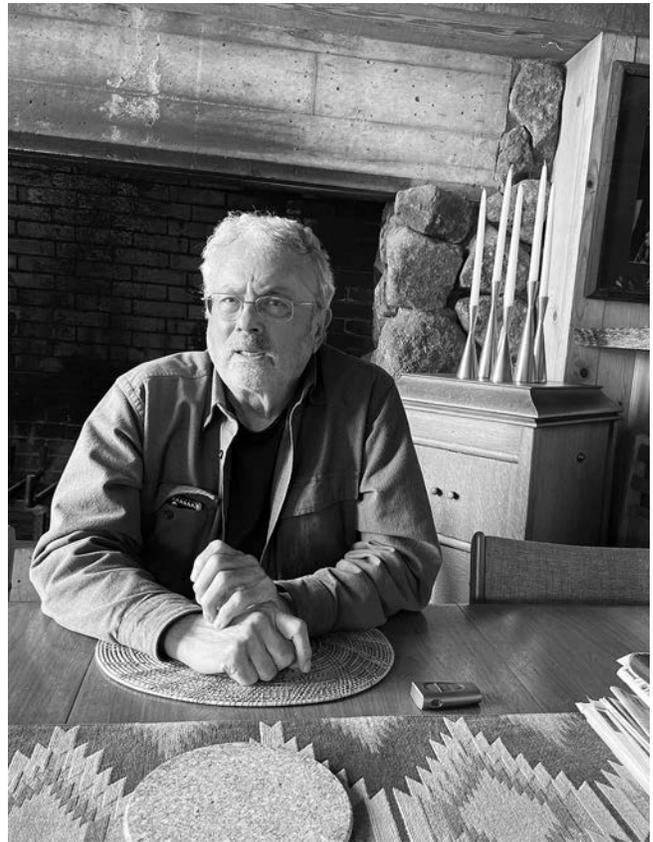
*I have a couple of questions for you, Bryce. Ever since I moved here several years ago I've been trying to get the story behind the ubiquitous Muir Beach Fire Department logo. Word has it that you are uniquely positioned to satisfy my curiosity. Do tell:*

**B. Browning:** In 1972, the Volunteer Fire Department, learning that I was a graphic designer by trade, asked if I'd volunteer to draw up a logo for the department-- newly sanctioned by the Community Services District-- hoping to give this Gashouse Gang the appearance of an actual organization. It was intended to be used to decorate the turnout gear, the truck, and so on.

Muir Beach fire-folk did not see themselves as ordinary people-- no one in this community saw ourselves as ordinary people-- so the logo needed to reflect our curious personality: Easy-going and totally independent, by geography and by constitution. Self-sufficient, not because self-sufficiency was cool but because it was required in order to sustain life here for everyone. Muir Beach was, and is, a small and singular community. We are isolated in a stunningly gorgeous setting, often left to our own devices. A lot of our functioning infrastructure is self-created and maintained.

**S. Somers:** *That's a very Muir Beach perspective, but there's a personal connection here too, isn't there? As I understand it this dog was not just any old dog running around town.*

**B. Browning:** My kids Gail and Gary, were 13 and 11, give or take a year, when the family moved into our newly-built house in the early seventies. Right away they wanted a dog to go with their new life. At school Gary had heard of a last-of-the-litter runt available in Redding that if not adopted would probably have to be euthanized, so of course we all ran to save it sight unseen. It turns out this was not just going to be a docile, cuddly pet. This dog was a McNabb, bred for professional sheep-herding; a working-class dog.



*Photo by Kate Somers*

It needs mentioning that Muir Beach was a wholly-owned subsidiary of its resident dogs-- like now only more so-- and within a month of arriving here this dog had found his place. He recruited his own little gang, and like all great leaders, he led by example. He soon taught his squad how to herd the cattle that regularly grazed up on Cow Hill at the time (...they were shot at more than once). On occasion he'd attempt to stop a car from pulling away by hanging onto it's rear bumper with his teeth and skidding on all fours. He was the first dog I ever saw who could vertically leap his full height, twist his entire body around and grab a Frisbee in midair.

And that's why his name was Elvis the Pelvis. (...due credit to Elvis Presley, of course.)

All this is to introduce the fact that Elvis was the actual living animal that modeled for the MBVFD logo. The profile, the tail, the ears, the feet... all his. (Maybe not the tail.)

*Continued on next page*

## Interview with Bryce

*Continued from previous page*

**S. Somers:** *Elvis the Pelvis, because he gyrated in mid-air, eh? Okay, my next question for you, Bryce: you mentioned that the powers that be at first thought that this image was too risqué. How do you feel today about that attitude they had back in 1972?*

**B. Browning:** When the finished logo was formally presented to the CSD board, it took only seconds for them to reject it outright. Too controversial—too “risqué”. The explanation was that they were squeamish that the dog might be interpreted by some as lifting its leg to urinate-- volunteering its services to help extinguish a fire, as it were. I assured them that heaven forbid I would even imply such a thing, but they killed it anyway.

Fortunately, Fire Chief John John Sward had no such qualms, and responded to the CSD Board by flatly ignoring them. He had a vision that this image could be printed on T-shirts and sold at the annual Firemen’s BBQ-- which was just getting on its feet-- providing the department with its own source of regular income. That idea is still going strong 50 years later.

Which today would make old Elvis about 350 in dog’s years.

Looking back, the CSD wasn’t entirely wrong to be so reticent. Years later, I was approached by a good citizen during some function at the new Community Center, to be scolded that the logo was environmentally offensive because it encouraged dogs to urinate in the bushes, a blatant source of pollution.

I’d like to throw in that, long-retired now, I was a print designer in San Francisco, then London, then Stockholm, then SF again, for 40-odd years. During that time, I’ll guess I designed at least 150 logos, and the Muir Beach Volunteer Fire Department dog logo has outlived them all.

Something more serious, though: I joined the Fire Association board long enough to get the dog logo officially registered and copyrighted in the Fire Department’s name. My worst nightmare is of some enterprising souvenir hustler, learning how popular the image has been, rips it off to sell by the thousands from Fisherman’s Wharf. It’s the MBVFD’s sole and legal property, which means it must never be changed,

and must never be reproduced without the circle (R) attached. The only concession to my having produced it is that if you turn the image counter-clockwise 90%, you’ll see the padded feet spell out BAB. Ha!

**S. Somers:** *Well, Bryce. I think that the image totally works and I want to congratulate you for a very successful contribution to Muir Beach. I’ll just note for our readers, that that logo will adorn T-shirts, hats, sweatshirts, coasters and other items on sale at the Memorial Day Barbecue to benefit the Muir Beach Fire Department. See you there.*

### Good News...



*Photo dated 1928. [www.bellobeach.com](http://www.bellobeach.com)*

We are delighted to share some multi-generational good news with the community!

Lifelong Muir Beach residents Jesse Rudnick & Graham Groneman along with Graham’s wife Brett Sibley Groneman were able to purchase Shirley Nygren’s home at 320 Pacific Way!

Each of us has a unique relationship with Shirley and we are honored to be able to work together to restore and bring new life to one of Muir Beach’s original landmark properties.

Because we all care deeply about preserving the history legacy of our community we welcome any memories, stories, artwork or photographs you might want to share. Please email Brett at [brettsibley@gmail.com](mailto:brettsibley@gmail.com).

– Brett Sibley

## SIDE NOTES

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### **THE TRUCK ON THE COVER**

The pen and ink artwork on the cover of this issue was illustrated by Mark Felix in 1990. The truck is Engine 680 on the way to a call with John John at the wheel and Michael Moore in tow.

Mark's original artwork hangs proudly in the firehouse and was featured on the 1990 BBQ flyer.

– *Michael Moore*

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### **Errata for the “After the Fair” article in the last issue of the Beachcomber:**

Missing from the “After the Fair” article about the Holiday Arts Fair are these Muir Beach Grass band members...Paul Tollefson on the mandolin and the vocal stylings of Robin Terra.

– *Laurie Piel*

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### **BEACHCOMBER**

The next issue will be due out in August. You may send your submissions at any time, but to meet the deadline for the August printing, we ask that you send them in by **July 28**.

Submissions may be sent to [editor@muirbeachcomber.com](mailto:editor@muirbeachcomber.com).

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### **MBCC UPDATE**

The MBCC is back open for rentals as of April 1. Our new rental coordinator is Joani Marinoff who does the scheduling. The Quilters meet on Mondays from 1 - 4pm.

## *Passing the Baton: Q & A with Anne Jeschke*

*Intro by Janet Tumpich*

The Beachcomber has been spearheaded by many members of our Muir Beach community, including Anne Jeschke who has contributed and supported our neighborhood news for over 15 years. Anne has decided to retire from the Beachcomber this year, and has recruited Kate Somers to fill her spot.

In 2007, after taking on subscriptions from Anne Browning, and as a new recruit to the Beachcomber team formed by Linda Gibbs, Anne stepped up to report on the MB Volunteer Firemen's Assoc., and then in 2008, added the Beachcomber circulation task to her resume. Back in 2013, she was really concerned about the future of the Beachcomber as volunteers started to dwindle, so she decided to hold an emergency meeting and a call for volunteers. After successfully enticing the attendees with wine and snacks, kudos and high praise, she had recruited a new team to continue our neighborhood news.

Anne has been an avid proponent for the Beachcomber, from soliciting volunteers, to framing the Beachcomber covers at twice the actual size and displaying them in her home. Anne, you were instrumental in keeping our neighborhood news alive and we thank you for your dedication and service.

Kate and I asked Anne two questions as she was passing the baton as Editor.

**Q:** What have you liked most about this job, and what has surprised you the most about it?

**A:** *From Anne:*

### ***What I've liked most***

I never had an interest in journalism, other than as a reader, so I was surprised and honored when Ann Browning, a highly respected and much loved member of the Muir Beach community, asked me to take over subscriptions for the Beachcomber. Linda Gibbs soon took over as editor of the publication, and Linda was very focused on making the Beachcomber an excellent local magazine. She also wanted to make it very self supporting. So she instituted a new policy of required yearly subscription fees for those who wanted to receive the Beachcomber. I was in charge of collecting the fees and keeping track of who needed to renew, and who was entitled to receive a copy in their mailbox. I loved working with Linda over the years and we became very close friends until her sad passing last year.

Several editors followed Linda, but none remained for an extended period of time. Editing requires many hours of work, and few were

*Continued on next page*

able to give that time. So Maury Ostroff and I sat down one day and decided we needed to divide the job up, making each part of the job less onerous and less time consuming. It was at that point that Janet Tumpich took on the design segment, which she had done before at various times in the Beachcomber's history. Maury took on circulation and the web site. Kate Somers agreed to be the editorial assistant, making sure articles were in the correct form to go to Janet. And I took over acquisitions - i.e. seeking articles from residents. It worked! None of us has felt overwhelmed, and we've been able to get the Beachcomber out regularly 4 times a year. Subscriptions in the form of donations are requested, but not required, in order to receive a copy of the paper.

The Beachcomber helped me to feel an integral part of this community. Learning names, working with residents, making friends, and having that lovely publication come out was simply very rewarding. I've had fun, I've made friends, and I've seen a great product that benefits Muir Beach. A good deal all around!

### ***What has surprised me***

A big and very pleasant surprise has been discovering the large number of good writers in our community, and their willingness to share their time and skill. The articles are the backbone of the Beachcomber, and if community members don't write them, it is no longer a community publication. I loved being surprised by a new writer unexpectedly submitting an article. New writers mean new viewpoints and new ideas. But equally surprising have been the regular contributors, who despite busy lives and other responsibilities, take the time and energy to write something meaningful to them and to us. What a gift!

It has been a real joy to be part of the Beachcomber. My thanks to Ann and Linda, both no longer with us, who got me involved and learning new skills. And to Janet for her fantastic design skills, a real professional. The time and training needed for this job are enormous. Thank you, Janet. And Kate, my gratitude for coming into the group and finding a way to prepare articles for Janet, verifying information and translating it into the correct computer form. And of course Maury, who has always been instrumental in keeping the Beachcomber going - by dealing with the finances, but also urging us all on when we've begun to think the publication couldn't continue. We couldn't have done it without you, Maury.

So if you're looking for a way to become part of the community, to meet a few new neighbors, to keep the sense of neighborliness in Muir Beach, share your thoughts by writing and submitting an article. Or volunteer to help with the publication, whatever might be needed. I can guarantee that the payback is big and more than worth the effort.



From March 2020 to June 2021, Marin Realtors were not allowed to hold public open houses. Selling homes off-market/off MLS was common. Since the beginning of 2022, Muir Beach and surrounding areas are now in more demand than I've ever experienced in 30 years of selling homes; as those who had been forced to work from home, now prefer to work from home. These work-from home buyers are searching for homes with inspiring views farther from downtowns and closer to nature. Add in to this mix, the owners in these areas who seem content staying put; so things are off balance for now. Well-prepared homes are creating competition, but too many buyers for too few properties have really caused our sale prices to soar. Even though Marin loan brokers are warning us that increasing interest rates will affect buyers' ability to continue to qualify for their loans, and may cause some buyers to leave the market, I am still encountering buyers who can pay cash at offer time, especially in Muir Beach. Best advice: Prepare, be patient, be flexible and stay positive.

*(Above is a photo I took of an actual house in Minas Gerais, Brazil, which reminds me how everyone feels about real estate right now!)*

– Debra Allen, Realtor

# Cold War Redux

*By Gerry Pearlman*

The current animosity exhibited by the U.S. and Russia is not new. At the end of the First World War the U.S. Expeditionary Force sent 13,000 troops into the Soviet Union to support the Tsarists White Russian army fighting against the Bolshevik government. It turned out to be the only time in history that American troops directly fought Red Army troops. The existing conflict today remains just as much a conflict between Russia and the United States as it is between Russia and the Ukraine.

At the end of the Second World War after being allies in the fight against fascism for the war's duration, Russia and the U.S. quickly reverted to antagonistic policies in what became known as the Cold War. The Cold War occupied center stage for the last half of the 20th century coming to a slight thaw under Russia's Gorbachev short lived era of Perestroika and Glasnost.

Now it appears that we are about to launch a new chapter in Cold War history with U.S. support of Ukraine in its battle to survive the Russian invasion; and the threat to its sovereignty. It's extremely disheartening to have to face a cold war mentality again. It signifies the sad state of progress in human affairs. It is particularly sad since the ideological basis for the different view points has been attenuated to such a large degree.

Most countries these days do have mixed economies incorporating both sides of the political and economic spectrum. At the beginning of the cold war in the last century

ideological factors did point to differences of belief that supported the inevitable armed conflicts that occurred. Belying the realities of the moment both sides actually did believe they represented superior ways of organizing human society and they were willing to support their belief systems through armed conflict.

Reconfiguring human society and eradicating human exploitation were sincerely held beliefs by the leaders in the Kremlin. Central to their beliefs were the elimination of private property and the end of a market economy. Planning would replace the anarchy of the market place. Human greed would be replaced as the force behind human progress, with workers no longer exploited by their employer; and oppressed people no longer subject to imperial domination.

It was a rosy picture foretelling the end of capitalism, perpetual peace, universal justice, and the emancipation of mankind. But men in the White House had a different set of ideas which would prevail under the rubric of democratic capitalism. Under this system individual freedom was paramount, and markets were to remain open. Political parties were meant to compete for power in government, and, along with individual rights, private property was sacrosanct. These ideas were the key to human advancement and the personal opportunity it engendered. And contrary to the Russian anti-religious fervor, God was on the American side.

Both of these competing ideologies ultimately failed to deliver on their promises. And it is time to acknowledge that reality rather than crow about the triumph of one over the other. Neither the centralized planning efforts of the Soviets; or the free market posturing of the Americans represented the best direction for the future of mankind.

There is a delicate balance between the need for government regulation and the need for the freedom that allows for the preservation of the space needed to expand opportunity.

The ideals of both systems can be preserved and the excesses eliminated to the benefit of the future of mankind. But as long as the mindless chatter of the superiority of one form of a limited approach over the other limited approach continues to dominate discourse on these matters, nothing approaching a sensible method of charting a future course for humanity is in the offing. We will never get on to achieving the balance necessary to emerge from our present quagmire by prattling on about the virtues of one or the other ideology, while ignoring the failures of both. It only further removes us from realizing the necessity of amalgamating both viewpoints into a coherent vision of:

Adequate government regulation to prevent what is clearly not in the public interest, and sufficient freedom to discover what truly is.

## Why Not You?

*Nancy Pelosi ...  
Kamala Harris ...  
Ketanji Brown Jackson ...  
and now you!*

With women increasingly taking on powerful government positions, it's way past time to bring the female perspective to our own Muir Beach Community Services District.

As someone who came into my prime adult years during the 1960's and 1970's, I have enjoyed the excitement of watching women become increasingly active and increasingly respected in all sorts of leadership roles. Although the US has lagged behind countries like the UK, India and Germany in selecting women to lead, nonetheless the changes in women's rights over the course of my lifetime have been monumental. It is a thrill to see more than one woman on the Supreme Court. And although our country has yet to elect a woman

President, we have at least a female Vice President. And in both cases we are talking about women of color. "We've come a long way baby!" as an old cigarette ad used to say.

But here in Muir Beach we seem to have a difficult time finding women to serve as board members for the Community Services District. There are five elected board members. And not meaning to be derogatory, but generally 4 and frequently five of those members have been "old white men". This isn't a wildly diverse community, so the 'white' isn't surprising. And while there are a large number of old-timers here, we have many young and middle-aged people, men and women, who are more than capable to serve on the Board.

My plea is for our relatively younger residents, and especially the women of Muir Beach, to consider joining our relatively unique local

government. Your perspective and your experiences need to be represented. You can bring new approaches and new ideas as you consider the varied administrative responsibilities and decisions facing the community leadership.

Currently our District Manager is an extremely competent, very knowledgeable, and pleasant woman to work with. She is an accomplished leader, an inspiring role model and a major asset to our village.

Let's work together over the next few months to encourage capable and interested women to run for our Community Services District Board.

Look around among your neighbors, and examine your own skills and willingness, and let's see if we can diversify and bring new ideas along with a few new faces onto our Board.

– Anne Jeschke

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## Muir Beach Speaks Out to Protect Abortion Access



*Impromptu rally held at the Muir Beach mailboxes across from the Pelican Inn at 5:30pm on Tuesday, May 3, 2022, to mobilize to protect abortion access! Photo by Denise Lamott*

# JONAH AND THE WHALE...A TALE OF REMEMBERING

As the tide comes in, the whale's majestic tail sways back and forth in rhythm with the waves, bringing it to life again. I think of it as the little whale on Little Beach that came here to finally rest in peace.

From the ship strike, I can now see the baleen exposed – a long white saw - toothed comb, that looks like precious ivory.

From the dictionary I read that there are between 200 and 270 baleen plates on either side of a whale's upper jaw. They work like a giant sieve to catch the whale's food as it pushes water out through the baleen and filters the krill and other sea food. The baleen is made from a strong substance much like our fingernails, flexible but strong.

From Sunset Way I check on her whereabouts, as I come and go in my car; what the tide has wrought in the night with its rising and falling. For the first few days the seagulls didn't touch the little whale, but flew 'round and 'round overhead calling out, like they too understood the tragedy... where commerce and nature collide.

From my Grandmother's lap I am reminded she read to me the story of Jonah and the Whale. I still recall the illustration of Jonah inside the whale, its large ribs exactly like our whale on Little Beach.

## **Dear Neighbors,**

On Monday, 4 April, a juvenile grey female whale washed up dead on Little Beach.

A necropsy was performed by the Marine Mammal Center. It was determined the whale was killed by a ship strike directly to its head, as it migrated north on its 10,000 mile journey between Mexico and the cold Arctic seas. We are witnessing the last 6 weeks of grey whale migration before the Humpbacks begin appearing.

There was a big swell that day, along with gusting winds. The Mammal Center determined it was too dangerous for personnel to attempt to take it out to sea.

Dead whales are taken past the Farallons to avoid having them drift back to land.

The necropsy was performed in such a way that it is hoped that a big swell would begin to break the corpse into pieces. The day, time and place, and reason for death are documented.



*Juvenile grey female whale washed up dead on Little Beach.*



*Photo by Kate Somers*

To tow a whale out to sea is an expensive endeavor. A drift map is made, the NOAA partners with The Academy of Science Dead Whale Response Team to manage the best possible scenario and solution. They are our liaison at Muir Beach.

Over the past few weeks I have spoken with:

- The Marine Mammal Center
- The California Academy of Science Dead Whale Response Team
- The Army Corps of Engineers
- The NOAA

They have all been incredibly compassionate and helpful in trying to find a solution for our little whale on Little Beach. Their conclusion is to let nature take its course. The tides did not cooperate, the money we as a community needed (\$8,000), was not found. By the time I really understood the process and who holds responsibility for the various steps, it was already too late.

It has given me pause both in thinking about the relationship where commerce meets the sea, where small beaches become the burial ground of large mammals, and where a community needs a plan of action when this happens. I am thinking of starting A Muir Beach Whale Response Team, so that in the future we would have funds available to give to the organizations above to find immediate solutions if this happens again. A tow can cost up to \$20,000, as the whales must be dragged 70 miles out to sea on average.

They also reminded me that no one is allowed to disfigure the whale, steal bones or blubber for oil, or in any way interfere with the little grey whale. Should you see a tourist or anyone wanting to steal whalebones, you can call any of these agencies or Fish and Game. It is strictly forbidden.

Hope this helps our little neighborhood as we watch this beautiful grey whale go back to where it came from.

I'd love to hear from anyone who might be interested in this idea of forming a response team. Feel free to ring me on 415 497 7387. Alternatively you may email me on [nelsonart@ymail.com](mailto:nelsonart@ymail.com).

*Your neighbor,*

*Beth Nelson*

# BBQ Raffle Update

## Dear Neighbors:

You probably already have rec'd. your 25 raffle tickets in your MB mailboxes for this May 29th's Firemen's BBQ/Fundraiser. Here is the prize list so far. **The raffle tickets are \$1.00 (checks payable to the "MBVFA").** Please let me know if you'd like more tickets, and I'll put them in your mailbox ASAP. Need not be present to win, as we can get the prize to you later. Good luck and thank you for supporting the MBVFD.

– *Debra Allen, Raffle Person*

415-279-3751

deballen@deballen.com

## THE MUIR BEACH VOL. FIRE DEPT. RAFFLE PRIZES 2022 (so far)

### Restaurants/food:

1. Sam's Anchor Cafe in Tiburon, meal card for \$100.
2. Gravity Tavern in Mill Valley, food card for \$50.
3. Cowgirl Creamery in Pt Reyes, a Cheese Card for \$125.
4. Grilly's in Mill Valley, 4 entree certificates for approx. \$50.
5. Perry's restaurant in Larkspur, certificate to dine for \$100.
6. Cafe del Soul in Tam Valley, food card for \$50.
7. William Tell House Saloon/Inn in Tomales, certif. for \$100.
8. Pig in a Pickle BBQ in Corte Madera, meal card for \$75.
9. Drivers Grocery in Sausalito, store card in a cute pouch, \$50.+
10. Hog Island Oyster Co. in Marshall, meal card for \$100.
11. Grilly's in Mill Valley, 4 more certifs. for entrees, approx. \$50.
12. The Spinnaker in Sausalito, dinner letter for \$100.
13. Joes' Taco Lounge in Mill Valley, meal card for \$50.
14. Sam's Anchor Cafe in Tiburon, another meal card for \$100.
15. Buckeye Roadhouse Restaurant in Mill Valley, meal card donated by Sean Maley of Guarantee Mortgage, \$150.
16. Picnic Basket prepared with lots of goodies (for 21+) and a gift card from Palace Market in Point Reyes, \$205.

### For you/your home:

17. Proof Lab in Tam Valley has donated a beanie, a ball cap + gift card, \$252.
18. Muir Beach candle from North Bay Candleworks, \$24.
19. Emergency Crank weather radios (2) from Midland, \$100.
20. The Coasts of California, A California Field Atlas by Obi Kaufmann, from Heyday Books, \$55.
21. Golden Gate 14 inch pillow pair by Wool Street, SF, \$90.
22. Tivoli Decor in Sausalito, store certificate for \$100.
23. Ella & Mila, eco-friendly nail polishes (12) & soy remover, \$146.

24. Autographed Marin Hiking Maps from Tom Harrison, \$25.
25. Yoga Classes (unlimited one month) at The Studio in Mill Valley, \$165.
26. Headlamp from Lightbar, \$70.
27. Multi-purpose Carrier made from Upcycled Fire Hoses by Oxgut \$168.
28. Knockaround Polarized Sunglasses (2 pairs), \$52.
29. A San Jose Sharks Autographed Puck by #47 James Reimer, \$50.
30. Sloat Garden Center, gift card for \$25.
31. The Chore Coat (L) from Ecologyst, Victoria, BC, Canada, \$205.
32. The Songs of Trees and Sounds Wild and Broken, Autographed Books by David George Haskell, \$46.
33. Juniper Ridge Incense 6-Pack Gift Set, \$60.
34. Cabaline Country Emporium & Saddlery in Pt. Reyes, gift card for \$40.
35. More Emergency Crank weather radios (a pair) from Midland, \$100.
36. Tamalpais Walking by Tom Killion/Gary Snyder, from Heyday Books, \$25.
37. Muir Woods candle from North Bay Candleworks, \$24.
38. Golden Gate Doppkit by Wool Street, SF, \$30.
39. Garden Gloves, The Digger, from Woman's Work, \$20.
40. Sausalito Picture Framing, a Prisma frame and a certificate for custom framing or digital printing, approx. \$200. total
41. More Ella & Mila eco-friendly nail polishes & soy remover, \$146.
42. California's Wild Coast by Tom Killion/Gary Snyder, from Heyday Bks, \$30.
43. Denium Pot Holder and Apron by Mi Cocina, SF, \$147.
44. More Polarized Sunglasses (2 pairs) by Knockaround, \$56.
45. A Waxed Canvas Doppkit by Wool Street, SF, \$40.
46. The Woolies Socks (2 pair), from Ecologyst, Canada, \$40.
47. Juniper Ridge, Cascade Forest Candle, \$39.
48. Another Headlamp from Lightbar, \$70.
49. Rene's Gardens, e-gift card for \$35.
50. The California Field Atlas by Obi Kaufmann, from Heyday Bks, \$45.
51. More Emergency Crank weather radios (2) from Midland, \$100.
52. A Clutch made from Upcycled Fire Hoses, by Oxgut, \$35.
53. Mt. Tam candle from North Bay Candleworks, \$24.
54. Another Waxed Canvas Doppkit by Wool Street, SF, \$40.
55. Yoga at Cloudbreak in Sausalito, a 10-Class Pack, \$249.
56. More Ella & Mila eco-friendly nail polishes & soy remover, \$146.
57. A Football from the SF 49ers #16 Jesse Sapolu, \$50.
58. Eastern Forest Playing Cards by Ellen Litwiller & David G. Haskell, and Original Art of Card #6 & 9 by Ellen Litwiller

*Continued on next page*

# Raffle Prizes (so far)

*Continued from previous page*

## **For the kids/pets:**

59. Earthbath's Oatmeal & Aloe dog/cat grooming wipes, \$51.
60. Clue Box Escape Room Puzzle (14+) from The Art of Play, \$40.
61. Sea Otter Jack-in-the-Box (3+), from Jack Rabbit Creations, \$40.
62. More Earthbath's Oatmeal & Aloe dog/cat grooming wipes \$51.
63. Smokey Bear Playing Cards from The Art of Play, \$15.
64. A Fire Plane from Green Toys, \$20.
65. Helicone Kinetic Sculpture (13+) from The Art of Play, \$65.
66. Down at the Station Firehouse Suitcase play set (3+) from Jack Rabbit Creations, \$55.
67. Discovering Nature's Alphabet by Krystina Castella/Brian Boyl, from Heyday Books, \$16.
68. A Child's Delight (toy store) in Corte Madera, GC for \$25.
69. More Earthbath's Oatmeal & Aloe dog/cat grooming wipes, \$51.
70. Another Fire Plane from Green Toys, \$20.
71. National Parks Board Game (10+) from The Art of Play, \$50.
72. Even more Earthbath's Oatmeal & Aloe dog/cat grooming wipes, (3 more containers), \$51.
73. A Day at the Beach Surf Shack Suitcase play set (3+) from Jack Rabbit Creations, \$55.

## **Places to go/stay:**

74. A Ride for 2 on the Willits or Ft. Brag Skunk Train, \$99.
75. SF MOMA, 2 Museum Passes, \$50.
76. UC Berkeley's Botanical Garden, 4 one-time passes, \$60.+
77. Seaplane Adventures in MV, 2 Seats on a Golden Gate Tours Flight (SF/Marin Skylines, 30 min), \$480.
78. Dream Inn, Santa Cruz, a night's stay, \$300.
79. The Inn Above Tide in Sausalito, one night stay, \$490.
80. Claremont Hotel in Berkeley, an overnight, \$495.
81. Cavallo Point The Lodge at the Golden Gate in Sausalito, one night stay in a contemp or historic room, \$900.

## **Prizes coming:**

- Something from the Schultz Museum in Santa Rosa,
- A surprise from In-N-Out Burger,
- Soap from Heavenly Soap Co,
- Photo greeting cards by Laurie Piel,
- Some food/wine items from Simon Littler,
- A basket of goodies from Amoeba Music...

To donate a prize or to buy more raffle tickets (\$1.00 each), please contact [deballen@deballen.com](mailto:deballen@deballen.com).

# Reparations

By Steven J. Moss

In Mendocino County, 523 acres of rugged forest is studded with the ghostlike stumps of ancient redwoods harvested during a logging boom that eliminated 90 percent of the species on the West Coast. But about 200 acres were spared the saw, still dense with old-growth redwoods.

The land was the hunting, fishing and ceremonial grounds of generations of Indigenous tribes like the Sinkyone until they were largely driven off by European settlers. Earlier this year a California nonprofit reunited the land and its original inhabitants. Save the Redwoods League, which acquired the property as part of a deal with Pacific Gas and Electric Company, transferred it to the Intertribal Sinkyone Wilderness Council, a group of 10 native tribes whose ancestors were forcibly exiled by European American settlers.

“Fundamentally, we believed that the best way to permanently protect and heal this land is through tribal stewardship,” Sam Holder, Save the Redwoods League’s chief executive said in a *The New York Times* interview. “In this process, we have an opportunity to restore balance in the ecosystem and in the communities connected to it.”

For more than 175 years, tribal members didn’t have access to economically and spiritually valuable land. As part of the agreement, the forest, known previously as Andersonia West, has been renamed Tc’ih-Léh-Dũñ – pronounced tsih-ih-LEY-duhn – “Fish Run Place” in the Sinkyone language.

“It is rare when these lands return to the original peoples of those places,” Hawk Rosales, former executive director of the Intertribal Sinkyone Wilderness Council, told the *Times*. “We have an intergenerational commitment and a goal to protect these lands and, in doing so, protecting tribal cultural ways of life and revitalizing them.”

Save the Redwoods League’s action should spread like a healing kind of wildfire to other such organizations. The Nature Conservancy in particular is in need of institutional transformation. According to the New Alpha Community Development Corporation and Dogwood Alliance, TNC is America’s biggest, richest

and most influential environmental organization, with a \$1 billion annual budget. Yet while its mission is to “preserve the land and water on which all life depends,” TNC works closely with the logging and wood products industries, lobbying governments at all levels to increase timber harvesting and expand markets for wood products, often calling these efforts “natural climate solutions.” In doing so, TNC has made it easier for policymakers to ignore logging’s damaging effects on the climate.

TNC and other “nonprofits” should offer lands they’ve been gifted to their original inhabitants to serve as protectors. Spindrift, Bishop Pine Reserve, Romero Ranch, and lands in the Central Valley should be transferred to representatives of the Coastal Miwoks, Pomo, Sierra Miwok, and other dislocated tribes.

Responsibly relinquishing its properties would transform TNC, and the historically white-dominated conservation movement, as much as the recipients. If done properly, providing sufficient resources to damaged tribes to engage in self-determined cultural and environmental protection practices, TNC can reinvent itself as a champion of environmental justice. And what better way to fulfill its charge to safeguard lands for the benefit of future generations than to return them to descendants of past generations from whom they were taken.

**Save the Date**

## Muir Beach Practice Evacuation Drill



**Saturday, June 11, 2022 / 9am**

**Santos Meadow**

*stay tuned for more details*

In cooperation with Muir Beach Volunteer Fire Department,  
Office of Emergency Services and Marin County Sheriff  
assisted by the Muir Beach Disaster Council.

**All Muir Beach residents are encouraged to participate.**

## Ponchos, old friends, and community

Recently I posted a photo of Trish McCall and myself on one of our Sunset Way walks. That day we were blessed with the company of Trish's daughter Sydney and son Enso. Trish and I were wearing our matching ponchos...both of which I'd knit. The story behind the ponchos is one I love to tell, so I will.

Before I knit the poncho Trish was wearing, I'd knit another. I only knit during basketball season. Don't ask me why, I have no idea. Well, I know why I knit while watching basketball...sitting beside Harvey during a Warriors game can be hard on my nervous system at times. Harvey's countenance when the Warriors are playing well is even and mild but woe to anyone sitting within earshot of his anger and disgust when stupid plays and blunders occur. The only way I can survive Harvey's excitement and my own during the games is to knit. The sound of furiously fast knitting needles clicking out the multi-colored ponchos goes unheard because along with Harvey's loud enthusiasm is the loud volume on the television, a necessity because Harvey can't hear the ongoing commentating that creates the frame around the game if the volume isn't set at 72.

In any case, I finished my first poncho – it took half the season. I wore it for the first and last time at our mostly outdoor COVID Thanksgiving in the city with the kids. Then weeks later a friend came for dinner and saw one of the children's ponchos I'd knit of the same colors. "Ohhh, she exclaimed.



*Trish and Nina, photo by Joey Groneman*

Those colors are amazing." And in fact, one only need know her and her wardrobe to know that they were in fact the colors she loved best. After she left I looked at my poncho and thought, 'Shawna would love this poncho of mine to wear in her new home in Sebastopol. I'll give it to her for Christmas.' And I did. And she loved it. She mentions to me often how warm it keeps her and how much she adores it. That makes me so happy.

So, luckily for me the basketball season is long and Harvey is loud, and my knitting chops strong...I knit another poncho for myself. I wore it for the first time on a Sunset Way walk with Trish. She must have mentioned how beautiful she thought it was half a dozen times. And when we parted in front of her gate we hugged and she grabbed the corner of the poncho and remarked again at the lovely colors. I'd only made it as far as Papa Joe's garage to decide that the poncho I was wearing of course had to go to my beloved friend Trish. I was happy for the decision and when I got home I folded it neatly and put it in a bag and drove it down to her

house on my way out to work. I left it on the kitchen table for her. Trish often tells me how much she loves her poncho and how she feels she is wrapped in my love when she wears it. She is wrapped in my love all the time and it gives me such joy to know that the poncho reminds her of that.

If you are "friends" with me on Facebook you might have seen my post of the photo Joey Groneman took of Trish and me in our matching ponchos...because of course, I knit myself another and for now I'm still wearing it. I wrote in that post:

"I grew up in the East Coast and I moved every few years so it was tricky holding on to people. This beautiful woman (Trish) has been in my life since before I was 10 years old. I babysat for her first two kids (on the east coast) even though I was probably not much older than either Will or Nick. I moved to California to live with her to take care of sweet Cassidy, another of her beautiful children. And now together we walk and talk about children and grandchildren. There are few people on the planet I love more deeply than my beloved Trish. So blessed to have her in my life."

Maybe it's because I turned 61 this year, or more likely because we have lost quite a few truly dear friends over the past few years, several of whom are from Muir Beach, that I am remembering those first years when I came to Muir Beach in 1980.

I am blessed to have known so many of the elders who first came to Muir

*Continued on next page*

## PRNS Update

*Submitted by Lonna Richmond*

For those of you interested in an update regarding our PRNS, here's the latest from Chance Cutrano of the Resource Renewal Institute:

<b>Coastal Commission</b>	<b>Park Service</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>0</b>

On Thursday, April 7, the California Coast Commission (CCC) unanimously rejected the National Park Service's (NPS) "First-Year Water Quality Strategy and Climate Action Plan," for Point Reyes National Seashore. One year ago, the Commission, by one vote, approved a controversial General Management Plan Amendment (GMPA) for the Point Reyes National Seashore on the condition that NPS come up with a "strategy" to fix the water pollution and greenhouse gases spewing from private cattle operations in the national park. It gave the Park Service one year to do so. To the surprise of exactly no one, the NPS failed to follow through.

Dubious that the NPS has either the ability or the intention to meet its agreements, Commissioners rejected the NPS's water quality and climate plans by a vote of 9 to 0. Commissioners clearly were frustrated and wanted to do more, but have few options to remain involved. They directed the CCC staff to work with the NPS and the RWQCB to come up with a plan that includes goals, timelines, and benchmarks—as well as consequences for non-compliance.

The Commission will take up the matter again in September, so stay tuned as we prepare for the hearing this fall.

*Continued from previous page*

Beach as dairy farmers, immigrants and hippies. So many of them are gone now. Reg and June White were so dear to me, (Reg the founder, I believe, of the Beachcomber). I would walk Sunset Way with them and Tim McElhaney with Cassidy on my back. I would sit at the bus shelter (no longer standing) with Joe Rodriguez, Tony Leal and Mr. Harris waiting for Dan the mail man to bring the hope of a letter or two. Those were the days when letters from Europe and the East Coast would arrive with familiar handwritten addresses scrolled on the front of envelopes. I think about Papa Joe and the picnic tables on his back patio that were lined with sun dried kelp. I loved the way the seaweed showed itself woven into the spaces between his teeth when he smiled. And, of course, the days when after the Barbeque Harvey, John John, Jim, and David, to name just a few, would spread a blanket on the floor of our living room and dump the days winnings - piles of cash - on it and sort and count over and over. Of course, the beer, wine, and weed continued to flow and the count was rarely consistent among the counters so they'd begin the process all over. What I remember most was the spirit of the counting. It was joyous, relaxed, unofficially debauched and fun. The money always got counted and the sense of accomplishment for the day's successes swirled around our living room. I feel so lucky to have these memories and to be a part of this magical community in which we live.

Muir Beach has changed quite a bit since I came here in 1980. The very nature of the community seems to have shifted some. The need, or perceived need, for regulations, rules, concerns about lawsuits and liabilities, and of course the extreme number of visitors moving in and out of the community...the parking lot 'improvements' and so much more have taken much of the beautiful mess and trusting laid back feel from the heart of the community for me. And while I hear and don't necessarily disagree with the voices that chime in about the multi-million-dollar homes and liability risks, and need for change, improvement etc., I will still hold dear the nostalgia and magic of the days when, perhaps only an illusion, things were more simple, easier, and certainly a great deal of fun. And the fact that the strength of community is still alive and the knowing that in times of need we will be there for one another, and that one day soon, I hope, we will dance, eat, drink, and celebrate together again, helps ease the profound sadness I feel at times when I realize that some of the elders who built this community are gone and others will be leaving us sooner than I'll ever be ready for.

I hope that we can continue to support one another, and keep the essence of community alive together. I hope that we can show our gratitude for what our beloved neighbors, friends and visionaries dreamed up and created for us all. We are indeed blessed beyond belief to be living in this rare and wonderful place we call Muir Beach.

*– Nina Vincent*

# Ocean Riders

By Maureen Pinto

Sadly, and for unknown reasons, our barn owls did not return to nest in our hay barn for the first time in a couple of decades. One lonely barn owl was spotted in the rafters the first week of January – and was later found on the path to Green Gulch, obviously ill. One of our firemen gently collected him, but the owl died on the way to WildCare. Unfortunately, he was not taken in to be evaluated, which would have allowed us to better understand what had caused his demise. He was foaming at the mouth before he passed, so we are afraid it may have been due to rodenticides.

We are so lucky to share this beautiful valley with an abundance of wildlife. It's important to note that the natural chain of life from prey to predator is extensive. We've written about this in the Beachcomber many times, but please be sure to help anyone new to the neighborhood understand why it's critical not to use rodenticides. These contain poisons that can be passed down to the creatures who depend on rats and mice for their meals: bobcats, owls, hawks, foxes and many others (including your pets). Electronic traps are the safest and most humane way to help control rodent issues.

Though we are missing our owl residents this year, Ocean Riders has been feeling revitalized with the arrival of new horses, owners and sponsors. Misty, the 21-year-old daughter of 37-year-old Rain (who lives in the mare pasture at Green Gulch) has joined our community. Misty "mom-sits" Rain when her



*Rain and Misty reunited, enjoying a shared grooming moment.*

*Photo by Lene Pederson*

pasture mates are out on a ride, and it's beautiful seeing them together grooming each other during these times.

A little bay quarter horse named Power Pony arrived a few weeks ago from the Miwok lesson program. He has now found both a forever home and vibrant new role as a happy trail horse – and is joyfully finding 'his power' as a member of one of our herd combinations.

And currently we are having an 'Icelandic boom,' thanks to the little mare named Skuggsja who arrived last fall, becoming an ambassador for this amazing breed. Persi, a dappled grey gelding arrived at his new forever home in April – and two more Icelandics are here as guests for a month.

Persi (which means polar bear in Icelandic), is social and curious. He's taking hand walks to learn about his new surroundings as he discovers a much different landscape than that of his homeland. Skuggsja, our Icelandic matriarch, with her experience and reliable

nature, will be his mentor when he's ready to go on trail rides. Meanwhile, we've been working to help Persi shed the double-thick coat he needed in Iceland's harsher climate. He's already settling in to enjoy being groomed – and becoming an enthusiastic partner in our programs.

Icelandic horses are four to five gaited, the most famous being the tolt – a smooth running walk which is so comfortable on trail rides. Though pony-sized, they are sturdy, with amazing stamina and known for their cheerful dispositions. Since they come from a land without predators, they tend to be calm and trusting – therefore steady on the trails, once introduced, and wonderful partners in our youth programs. Needless to say, all of us here at Ocean Riders have become huge fans of these small but steadfast little horses.

You are welcome to come by for an introduction to our delightful new horse partners.

*See page 23 for more photos.*

# The Horse Girls

Old Muir Beach was a time of simplicity. Bad water, foggy weather and the windy road kept rents down and fostered a unique cast of characters. There were cold war heroes drinking their memories away but most were men and women who had known the meaning of hard work. All could appreciate the way the loving arms of the cove and the hills wrap around a person who stays here long enough. I moved here when I was 5 years old (1959) and it soon became an expanding wonderland for me. Little Beach, Big Beach, Frank Valley, Pirates Cove, Muir Woods and Mt. Tamalpais became the playground of my youth.

Of course we all had to go to school, which was a challenge and an opportunity. It was hard to fit in with the white bread suburban kids but that difficulty was balanced by the long school bus ride—our home was the furthest away from our school. Bus #2 was driven by the fatherly and gentle Vic Avila. The bus time gave the kids a chance to create strong bonds and a sense of identity as Muir Beachers. We knew we were different because we lived in Muir Beach, and we were so glad to get home after that long bus ride. No one expressed the joy of coming home better than did the Horse Girls.

It seemed to start with the toy horses on the school bus, but as the Girls got older, they somehow manifested real horses. The boys were happy playing ball games but we mostly ran around like a pack of dogs, climbing every rock, tree and cliff, running up and down all the foot trails and across the beach. The Girls would have none of that; once they got into horses they were all business. Horses were always a lot of work but from the get-go the Girls loved it.

The Girls had been watching the older horse girls, Mary Rodriguez and Joyce Fullam, at the Old Golden Gate Dairy where Joe Rodriguez was leasing the hill and the barn for horses and a few cows. So the Girls did odd jobs and saved up their money till their families realized they were serious and helped them. Sisters Franny and Olivia Balfour, Marsha and Laurie Smith, Laura Mcurdy and Melanie Pervier had Red, Ladybird, Candy and Ringo, if I remember the horses' names correctly. The Girls kept the horses well fed and spent hours grooming them, having to pull off endless ticks that filled up their jars.

Soon the Girls were in their glory, out on the beach with their long hair flying behind them like the manes and tails of their horses. They were one with their horses and they were pretty as a picture. When we were coming home on the school bus, passing Green Gulch and coming down the last few turns of the road, the Horse Girls would pull down their windows and call out a tremolo of hoots and hollers of pure unbridled joy to be back at the beach with their beloved horses. Their joy was contagious; we were all happy to be home.

– Vian Collier

# Here kitty kitty...



*A visitor at 7 am April 15, to Starbuck Drive, transfixed by gopher holes....he left before he could get in the hot tub.*

*Photo by Durand Begault*

**BEACHCOMBER**

## Call for Volunteers!

The *Beachcomber* is seeking volunteers. The magazine, published since 1946, has been kept alive by volunteers who know how much it means to our community.

You can help us in any number of ways – just ask how!

To volunteer, or for more information, please send an email to: [editor@muirbeachcomber.com](mailto:editor@muirbeachcomber.com)

Thank you.

– Kate and Janet

# *The Critter Report: Natural Perceptions*

*By Dave MacKenzie*

There are obviously many ways to look at the world. Or we might say there are many views of reality. The artist, the biologist, the engineer, the geologist, the archaeologist, or the poet might all perceive the “same” scene quite differently. Maybe one of the tricks to a rich life is being able to slip from one to another of these realities whenever we choose.

Recently I hiked with my family, and most particularly, my grandchildren, on the Coastal Trail south of the beach. Since this leads to Pirates Cove, I suggested to 4-year old Benjamin that we look for pirate clues along the way. Who were these pirates? When were they here? Did they leave any evidence?

The abundance of “clues” which resulted almost every few feet was astounding. Large beams shoring up the path were certainly from the wreck of a huge galleon. Overgrown and little-used trails must have been parts of ancient camps. And perhaps this unnatural pile of rocks was a clue to the treasure which still lay buried in these hills? The richness of my grandson’s reality was profound.

On a hot early autumn night in September, I experienced a different but also rich layer of reality along the same path. Due to too much work, my bike ride started late. I reached the trail through Green Gulch just before sunset. At the horse riding ring near the Pelican Inn I was sidetracked by a rare Prairie Warbler which I had located there the day before. This small but bright yellow bird was vigorously hunting for insects in the willows, and I paused for a long time to study it. The rapid tail-twitching, streaked flanks, and distinctive face pattern separated it from the other yellowish warblers which frequent Muir Beach. Only a handful of these eastern birds occur in California each year. Finally, as I broke away to start up the newly-opened Middle Green Gulch Trail to Coyote Ridge, the sun was just setting. I need the aerobics, I thought, so I pushed on. The dark was coming on fast as I reached the ridge, but I had to stop and watch the perfect buck and doe I had interrupted busy in their autumn ritual. At the ridge it was almost dark, with a long way down to go home.

Suddenly two large birds flew erratically over my head. Short-eared Owls! Another rarely seen species! These owls tend to fly around toward sunset, and will spend the day sitting in grassy fields. They have a dark patch at the bend of the wing, and a streaked breast. They were probably migrating through the Muir Beach area (as do many of the hawks during the day), and I was lucky enough to be in the right place at the right time. My late night trip was paying off! As I proceeded down Coyote Ridge, and upright silhouette with a white “mustache” flew from one of the fence posts to another. Burrowing Owl! How lucky can I be! This owl lives in excavated animal burrows, like fox dens, and often sits on the ground, or a fence post, during the day. It has long legs, a rounded head, and staring yellow eyes. Except for a few birds in Terra Linda, there are only a few other reports of it still occurring in Marin County. In the central valley or southern deserts it can be more commonly found. And here it was just above Muir Beach! It too was probably a migrant, but it would be great to find one living up there. If anyone sees a small owl during the day, please let me know.

By now it was very dark. I picked my way down the Coastal Trail cautiously. The weak light on my bike suddenly revealed a pair of eyes on the trail ahead. The eyes flew up and around my bike, settling down again above me in the middle of the trail. No white in the wings, it was a Poor-will! What a bike ride! The Poor-will is the western equivalent of the Whip-poor-will to those of you from the east, and occurs from time to time in Marin. It’s call is “poor-will”, as opposed to “whip-poor-will;” The scientific name of this bird, *Caprimulgus* or “goat-sucker”, comes from a myth in Aristotle’s time that these birds used their large and whiskered mouths for sucking milk from the udders of goats! Nighthawks are also goat-suckers. These voracious birds actually eat insects which they grab on the wing in the dark. They probably do a lot to cut down on mosquitos and other pests.

*Continued on next page*

*Critter Report*

*Continued from previous page*

Pirates, owls, goat-suckers. My perception of the Coastal Trail that night was very different from my grandson's. What a rich world it is when we can see it in many layers.

[Note: This article originally ran in the Beachcomber in November 1996. The grandson in this story is now a dad, and great-grandson Shepherd Elliot Schmidt was born on April 12, 2022. Many layers of perception to him in life!]



*Grandson Benjamin Elliot Schmidt, with son Shepherd.*



*Great-grandson Shepherd Elliot Schmidt, born on April 12, 2022.*



*Persi looking past our Alter to say hello to Pico the Elder. Photo by Karen Valentine*



*Nugget welcomes Power Pony to our horse family. Photo by Mary Howard, Power Pony's owner*

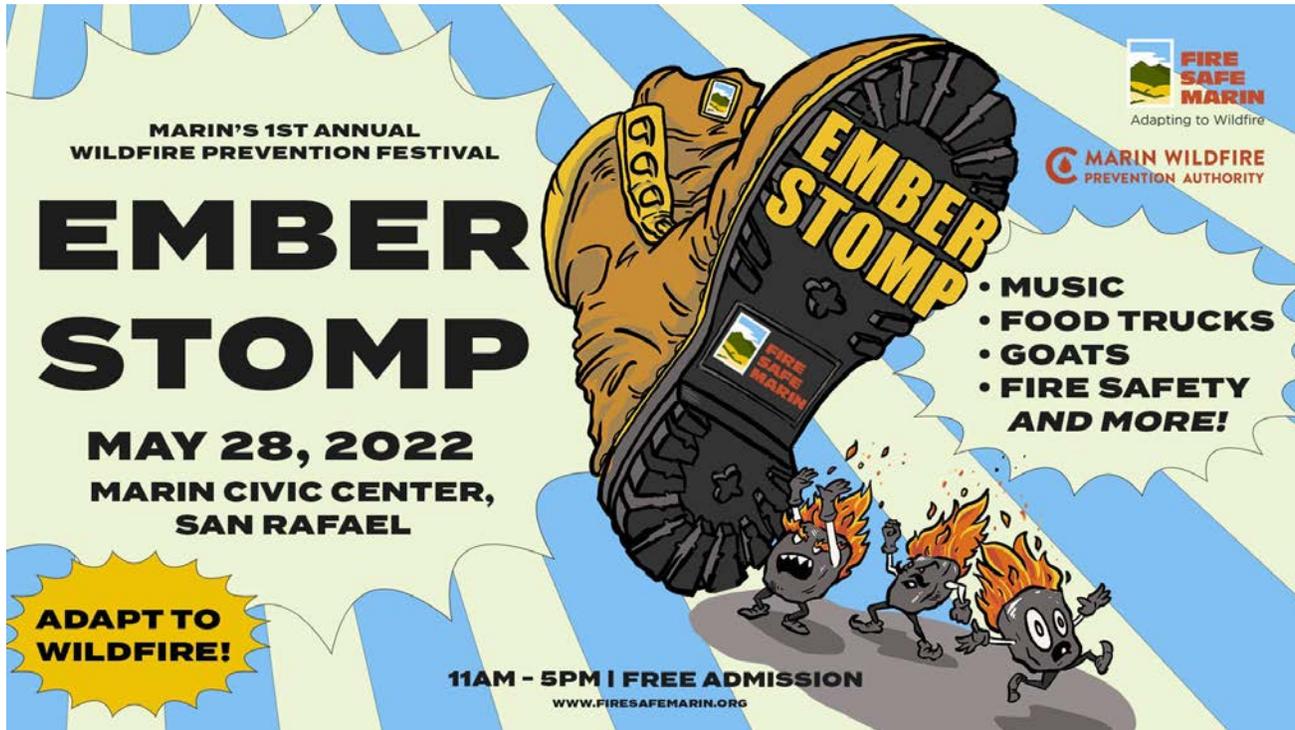


*Skuggsja's smile of approval upon meeting Persi. Photo by Karen Valentine*

Submitted by Robin Terra and Klaus Poppensieker

**Firewise**  
**MuirBeach**

encourages all residents to attend



graphic by Fire Safe Marin

**Ember Stomp! is the first-ever wildfire prevention festival in Marin County.**

This free festival on the Civic Center Fairgrounds Island will feature a main stage with 4 live bands, a kid's stage with entertainment, hands-on activities, awards, and lots of great food.

Featuring: "Demo House" a fully constructed small model house that showcases home hardening features

and materials. "Demo Garden" organized by UC Master Gardeners, with experts sharing the principles of fire-smart landscaping. The Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority, fire agencies and Firewise USA communities will be there to answer questions.

**Saturday, May 28, 2022\***  
**11am-5pm**  
**Marin Civic Center,**  
**San Rafael.**  
**Admission FREE**

\*We know it's our Muir Beach Volunteer Firemen's Barbecue weekend, but this will be a worthwhile event where you'll gain important knowledge about protecting your property from wildfire. Join the fun and get informed after your BBQ prep duties!

[firesafemarin.org/programs/wildfire-preparedness-festival](https://firesafemarin.org/programs/wildfire-preparedness-festival)